Homi Bhabha describes a stereotype as a form of representation of 'otherness' and as colonialism's 'major discursive strategy'. In Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (WSS) (1966) and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (SMN) (1966), stereotype is employed as a way for colonizers to regard themselves as the 'Self' and classify the colonized as 'Other'. This essay will argue that in WSS, Rochester employs the common stereotypes about white Creoles to interpret Antoinette's actions as an affirmation of her sexuality and her inherited madness. In addition, Rochester's feelings of strangeness and alienation concerning the menacingly named town of Massacre force him to reject the stereotypical perception that white men exclusively master the West Indies. In renaming Antoinette, Rochester establishes himself as the dominant figure and stereotypes Antoinette's identity as racially or culturally 'Other'.

This essay will argue that in Tayeb Salih's *SMN*, although Mustafa's female partners view Mustafa as 'Other', Mustafa is also able to stereotype his partners as being part of the oppressive West as a way of both rejecting the West and restoring the dignity of Africa's heritage and history. Both Rochester and Mustafa employ colonial discourses to construct a superior image of themselves through stereotyping the 'Other' as

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1 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p.68.
inferior in order to avoid being represented as the colonised ‘Other’.

In WSS, Rochester perceives the common stereotypes about white Creoles to interpret Antoinette's action as an indication of her sexual orientation and her inherited madness. Sue Thomas also argues that Rochester 'comes to read his wife through ethnographic stereotypes about white Creoles' being rebellious, sexualised and unclean. As the colonial English gentleman finds himself in the role of the alienated outsider, he tries to relate his understanding of the island and its strangeness through the familiarity of England. In this way, Antoinette's white dress, which is once appreciated by Rochester, is seen as a sign of her obsession with sex. As Carine Mardorossian argues that the dress that 'had slipped untidily over one shoulder and seemed too large for her' is associated with female sexual desire and prostitution, which suggests Antoinette's intention to arouse Rochester's sexual desire.

Even though Rochester's response demonstrates his sexual desire for Antoinette, 'as for the happiness I gave her [...] one afternoon the sight of a dress which she’d left lying on her bedroom floor made me breathless and savage with desire' (WSS, p.105), his narrative increasingly attempts to interpret Antoinette's purposeful intention of leaving the dress on the floor as stereotypical of unrestrained sexuality. Lorna Burns explains that Rochester is 'involved in a process of making Antoinette like what she would have to be like to deserve her fate'. This explanation is further demonstrated through Daniel Cosway's accusations of Antoinette as 'worthless and spoilt [...] madness that is in her, and in all these white Creoles, come out' (WSS, p.80).

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reinforces the common stereotypes that madness is the fate of 'all these white Creoles'. Daniel's use of emotional language, 'give my love to your life-my sister [...]

you are not the first to kiss her pretty face' (WSS, P.104), eventually convinces Rochester to secure Antoinette and her fortune by returning to Thornfield, his estate in England. This metaphorically indicates his preconceived stereotypes about the white female Creole's sexuality associated with prostitution; 'she thirsts for anyone-not for me [...] she'll not care who she's loving' (WSS, p.110). Confronted with the discrepancy between Antoinette and the ideal expectations of the 'lovely English girl', Rochester ultimately stereotypes Antoinette as the contradictory example of female sexuality by renaming her as Bertha and bringing her away to England in revenge for her suspected betrayal of having affairs with different men. Rochester's fear of miscegenation reveals the pre-established stereotypes of the white Creole's licentious behaviour which determines Antoinette's fate from the beginning of the novel. However, it is his awareness of the existence of the stereotypes of white Creole and his intention to exercise control over Antoinette. It is his psychological defence of his feelings of strangeness and alienation in West Indies.

Rochester's feelings of strangeness and alienation concerning the town of Massacre force him to reject the stereotypical perception that white man is the exclusive master of the West Indies. In giving a voice to the unnamed male protagonist, whom a reader of Jane Eyre (JE) (1847) perceives as Rochester, Rhys marks him out as the alienated intruder while also a representative of colonial power. In the opening section of the novel, Rhys establishes Antoinette's association with the vibrant nature of the Coulibri estate to reveal her identification with the landscape. Rochester reinforces that connection with the landscape but his descriptions provide contrasting

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6 Mardorossian, p.1082.
7 Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (London: Vintage, 2007)
interpretation as he is disturbed by the untamed beauty of the island. Mona Fayad argues that Rochester's rejection of Antoinette's exoticism results in his own identity crisis as an Englishman in the West Indies since he 'is not sole master of this miniature world'. Bhabha suggests that the coloniser endeavours to repress the colonised 'Other' by stereotyping the colonised as inferior and alien in order to control his anxiety. This is exemplified when Rochester employs a series of negative descriptions to refer to the colourful setting underlined by repetition of the intensifier 'too', 'Everything is too much [...] the hills too near' (WSS, p.58), to convey the excesses of colour, size and effect. For Rochester this nature is alien, paradoxically unnatural, but it is also intrinsically linked with Antoinette as suggested when he says 'And the woman is a stranger' (WSS, p.58). His detachment from Antoinette is reinforced by his reluctance to use her French name and Antoinette is referred as 'the woman'. This illustrates how he constructs Antoinette as racially or culturally 'Other' due to his anxiety about his own being in this landscape. Rochester registers the apparent violent extremes of the landscape, 'a wall of trees on one side, a drop on the other'; and the lurking dangers beneath the surface of the 'serene blue, deep and dark sea' (WSS, p.59) to indicate his feeling of alienation in the West Indies. Thus, Rochester feels a loss of authority due to his inability to feel his belongingness to the West Indies, which motivates him to stereotype the West Indies as unnatural and rejects his desire for Antoinette. By stereotyping the 'wide' nature of the place and by the reminder that white man is not the master of this place, he attempts to reject Antoinette and the wild nature surrounding him in order to allow him to overcome his feeling of insecurity and alienation.

In renaming Antoinette, Rochester stereotypes Antoinette's identity as racially or

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9 Bhabha, p.67.
culturally 'Other'. As Bhabha suggests, the coloniser creates stereotypes of the colonised by constructing their identity as an object.\textsuperscript{10} By refusing to recognise Antoinette's uniqueness as a white Creole, Rochester reshapes her identity and moulds her into his sense of a 'proper' Englishwoman by anglicising her name as 'Bertha'.

Antoinette evidently understands this process, crying 'You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name' (\textit{WSS}, p.115). This renaming process of referring to Antoinette as Bertha is a way to alter Antoinette's true 'Self', which is necessary for Rochester to regain his Englishness. Such an act of depersonalisation eventually forces Antoinette to accept her identity as an 'Other' when Rochester says 'on this of all nights, you must be Bertha' and she replies 'as you wish' (\textit{WSS}, p.136).

Rochester's use of imperative and Antoinette's simple and straightforward language showcase Antoinette's forced acceptance of this identity as an 'Other', which reveals her loss of her former 'Self' and her inability to affirm her true 'Self'. I further argue that Antoinette's self-annihilation at the end of the novel allows her to truly become her own 'Other': Brontë's Bertha. The process starts during Antoinette's time in the attic, where she is unable to view herself, since there is 'no looking-glass in the dormitory' (\textit{WSS}, p.146). This divorce from her 'Self' is exhibited during her confinement in Thornfield Hall: 'I don't know what I am like now [...] now they have taken everything away' (\textit{WSS}, p.147). Her transformation as Bertha is further developed when she unexpectedly sees herself in a mirror: 'It was then that I saw her-the ghost [...] but I knew her' (\textit{WSS}, p.148). The use of past tense 'knew' reinforces that by seeing herself in the mirror, she no longer recognises herself as Antoinette, but in this moment she sees herself as her 'Other', Brontë's Bertha-figure in \textit{JE}. This marks the cessation of Antoinette, her symbolic death and her physical transformation into Bertha which signifies her true self's retreat into nonexistence. Thus, Rochester's motivation of stereotyping Antoinette as 'Other' eventually leads to Antoinette's

\textsuperscript{10} Bhabha, p.75.
rebirth as her 'Self' as Bertha. Antoinette is forced to abandon her own perception of her identity as Antoinette and acknowledge her true 'Self' as Bertha which demonstrates her complete loss of her former 'Self', no longer obtainable even in the form of mirror-images.

On the other hand, in SMN, Mustafa's female partners employ the colonial stereotypes to represent Mustafa as an African 'Other' in order to satisfy their sexual fantasies. Sander Gilman argues that the 'notion of exoticism and other stereotyped sexual characteristics' were associated with the African male which increased 'the sexual desire of white female for the black man as an attractive Other'.\(^\text{11}\) This is exhibited when Ann, a young university student, says to Mustafa, 'I want to have the smell of you in full - the smell of rotting leaves in the jungles of Africa [...] smell of rains in the desert of Arabia'.\(^\text{12}\) Ann metaphorically associates Mustafa's smell with 'tropical spices', 'paw paw', 'rotting leaves' and 'mango' which establishes a primitive figure of an exoticised outsider. Ann also associates Mustafa to 'the smell of rotting leaves' (SMN, p.142) and the pleasure that Ann gains from the unpleasant scent of 'rotting leaves' indicates an abnormal enjoyment in what is typically perceived as loathsome. By reducing Mustafa to a 'smell', he is no longer seen as an equal partner or an individual. Rather, he is viewed as a scent which satisfies Ann's senses. For Ann, having a relationship with Mustafa allows her to experience the Oriental world, which for her has associations with exoticism and mystery. Although at first Ann's attraction to Mustafa can be seen as a separation from the notions of race, the reader can identify that by stereotyping Mustafa as a figure of an attractive 'Other', it reveals that Ann's intimacy with Mustafa is motivated by her desire to explore the primitive Oriental world.


Although Isabella reveals her genuine love for Mustafa by rejecting socially constructed views on interracial relationships, she nonetheless showcases her stereotypical perception of Mustafa as 'Other'. This is demonstrated when she says 'the Christians say their God was crucified so that he might bear the burden of their sins [...] O pagan god of mine [...] Just because a man has been created on the Equator some mad people regard him as a slave, others as a god [...] where [is] the middle way' (SMN, p.108). Danielle Tran argues that even Isabella's 'subconscious employment of colonial discourse betrays a habit of mind in which she shares with the guilty public a reflexive image\textsuperscript{13} of 'Other'. Although Isabella explains that it is inappropriate for Christianity to consider her relationship with Mustafa as an act of 'sin', her incorporation of typical public comments regarding the otherness of foreigners reveals her awareness of the societal expectations and condemnations of interracial relationships. This is also demonstrated when Isabella employs hyperbole to praise Mustafa as her 'pagan god' (SMN, p.108). Even-though Isabella attempts to elevate Mustafa to holy status, this directly puts him in contrast with the accepted Christian 'God' (SMN, p.108). The contrast between the capitalised word 'God' and the phrase 'pagan god' reveals Isabella's internal conflict as to whether she should view Mustafa as an object of desire or an object of mockery or both. Isabella's attempt to dissociate her relationship from society by restraining Mustafa within her own territory, 'O pagan god of mine' (SMN, p. 108), reveals her desire to claim ownership of Mustafa. This further illustrates Isabella's struggle to view Mustafa either as an individual in full domination of a self or as an object of desire. Since she is unable to perceive 'the middle way' (SMN, p.108), she must see an African man as either a 'Self' or an 'Other'. Thus, both Ann and Isabella's speeches reveal their inability to ignore

\textsuperscript{13} Danielle Tran, 'An exploration of the use of colonial discourse within Mustafa Sa’eed’s interracial relationships in Season of Migration to the North', eSharp, 16 (2010), 1-18 (p.13).
the colonial stereotypical perception of race which prevents them to divorce themselves from stereotyping Mustafa as 'Other' since they view their relationships with Mustafa as a way to experience the Oriental primitive world.

Although Mustafa is viewed as 'Other' by his European female partners, he is also able to stereotype his partners as the oppressive West, reject the West and restore the dignity of Africa's heritage and history. Patricia Geesey argues that Mustafa's sexual relationships with women in England is 'an attempt to re-establish the dominance of the emasculated, colonised male by attacking the women of the colonisers'. Mustafa refuses to be stereotyped by the coloniser and he employs sexual relationships as a tool to take revenge for colonisation and 'liberate Africa with [his] penis' (SMN, p.120). Mustafa recalls his first meeting with Isabella and he 'closely examined her face: each one of her features increased [his] conviction that this was [his] prey [...] a city of secrets and rapture' (SMN, p.43). Salih allows Mustafa to be in control though his close examination of Isabella's face rather than being gazed by the coloniser. Moreover, Mustafa sees Jean Seymour in a similar way as he recalls how 'she appeared to [his] gaze' (SMN, p.29). As David Goldberg suggests the colonial gaze was employed by the West in order to stereotype, objectify and 'classify with [...] scientific distance those who were believed to be racially inferior'. This explains that Mustafa’s colonial gaze emphasises the concepts of racial superiority and difference during the colonial period. Mustafa's choice of referring Isabella as 'this' in the quote further dehumanises her existence as an object which directly mirrors his white female partners' stereotypical perception imposed on him. The word 'prey' is deliberately employed by Mustafa throughout the novel and it metaphorically

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personifies his partners as animals to be killed. Through stereotyping his female partners as powerless, he concurrently classifies himself as superior, holding the predominant power within his relationships with his partners. This further supports the essentialist notions of the West and East proposed by Edward Said that Mustafa's effort to repress the white world is 'a reversal of the hierarchy of values: the East is intelligent and power, while Europe is inferior'\(^\text{16}\).

In addition, Mustafa compares Isabella to 'a city of secrets and rapture' (\textit{SMN}, p.43). The reference between a woman's body and place is made by Mustafa previously in the novel as he portrays Mrs. Robinson as the embodiment of 'Cairo' (\textit{SMN}, p.25). This reference made with Mrs. Robinson further suggests how 'the West had violently conquered the Sudan empires'.\(^\text{17}\) Consequently, Mustafa's repetitive use of this reference demonstrates his belief that it is sexual exploitation which allows him to 'conquer' his European female partners, and metaphorically conquers and colonises territory owned by the West. This continuing belief motivates Mustafa to explain that 'I, over and above everything else, am a coloniser' (\textit{SMN}, p.94). Through Mustafa's use of colonial discourse, which belongs to Western colonisers, he metaphorically represents the whole of Africa to reclaim the African power which was diminished by the West. Isabella is also compared to a 'figure of bronze' which can be considered in connection to Aime Cesaire's suggestion that 'the bronzes of Benin are a key aspect of the Sudanese Empires which have been destroyed by colonialism'.\(^\text{18}\) By portraying Isabella as the embodiment of a lost Africa, Mustafa's sexual exploitation symbolises the act of retrieving the African ancestry and heritage which was relinquished by the colonisers. Thus, it is not only through Mustafa's sexual exploitation, which

\(^{17}\) Tran, p.11.
symbolically ‘conquers’ his partners, but it is also through his use of colonial discourse, which is ironically belonged to the West colonisers, that is being used to stereotype his partners as the oppressive West as a way to reject the West and reclaim the dignity of Africa's heritage and history.

Both protagonists in the texts, Rochester and Mustafa, are able to employ colonial discourses to construct a superior image of themselves and stereotype the 'Other' as inferior. In WSS, Rochester employs the common stereotypes about white Creoles to interpret Antoinette's action as an indication of her sexual orientation and her inherited madness. By renaming Antoinette as Bertha, Rochester establishes himself as the ‘Self’ and stereotypes Antoinette’s identity as racially or culturally ‘Other’. As a result, this allows Rochester to overcome his own personal feelings of ambivalence and insecurity that he experiences in the West Indies. On the other hand, in SMN, Mustafa's female partners' employ the colonial stereotypes in an effort to represent Mustafa as an African 'Other' and directly tie him to the stereotypical Oriental primitive image which the West had established. In an effort to achieve racial vengeance, Mustafa stereotypes his partners as the oppressive West, through employing both colonial discourse and sexual oppression as a way to showcase his ultimate rejection of the West and reclaim the dignity of the African heritage. This affirms Bhabha’s observation that by creating stereotypes of the colonised ‘Other’ the coloniser to gain control over the anxiety about his own racial purity and his own identity. Both texts reveal Rochester and Mustafa's ability to employ colonial stereotypical perceptions as a tool to establish their superiority and status as coloniser in the West Indies and in Britain respectively, rather than being represented as the colonised 'Other'.

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19 Bhabha, p.67.
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