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Subject: Discussion Question for Wide Sargasso Sea
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TK

1. Why never use the man's name? Why call Antoinette Bertha? (I am going to call him R. even though he's never named. Perhaps called Edward once?)
2. Explore why R's voice changes in Section 2.
3. Puzzled by the title--no boundaries to the Sargasso Sea--yet filled with nutrients, plant life, etc.
4. Significance of Dream #2 (p. 54-55)? Also we discussed at Dream 1 (25) and Dream 3 (168-171).
5. Sense of being dropped inside something happening but no sense of what it is that is happening. Sense of being lost. Intentional?
6. The enigma of the man R--we know a lot about Antoinette and what colonialism has done to black population and women but we know less about the man.
7. At the Convent, no mirrors though Antoinette desires to see herself; no mirrors at Granbois. Sees self in mirrors at Thornfield...Role of mirrors (in *Jane Eyre* too)
8. Christophene--a force for good/evil/both?
9. If Charlotte Brontë could speak to Jean Rhys, what would she say? Where in *Jane Eyre* would Rhys have found a compassionate way to view Antoinette?
10. Madness in women--inherent? result of colonialism? Patriarchism? (Later--can one be driven mad or are the seeds already there? Was A destined to become mad?)
11. What was in it for Rochester to take her back to England?
12. Does R go mad in Section 2? :(Later discussion of whether he reaches any kind of self-realization)
13. Not sure of the question--but a good discussion of how West Indian Creoles were regarded as exotic and nymphomaniacs--a participant pointed out that R awakened A's sexuality (that took us back to early dreams).
14. Whose voice do you least trust in the novel?

Discussions:

*the effect of the lush vegetation, jungle, on R's sensibilities and on A's.

*conflicts in R--masculinity impugned, he's over his head, loses control of his own humanity, conflicted over passion, hides what he feels (very British), is he sympathetic or not?

*role of the "other"--Martinique (French), Jamaica (British), Dominica, England.
White Creoles "cockroaches", Black Creoles, Whites, Blacks.

**Jane Eyre* set in 1780s-1808. Rhys changed the time period for *Wide Sargasso Sea* to the 1830s after West Indies Emancipation (although plantation owners not reimbursed for their losses and the plantations went from rich to poor)..
ren/illegal children/stepchildren, half-cousins, etc.

*motif throughout of feeling safe/unsafe--

*role of alcohol (rum)--remember water was mostly not pure

*love vs lust (we never talked about this in relation to A, only to R)

*Christophene--C mothers the motherless child, is devoted, wants to protect A's vulnerability, a proto-feminist, unafraid, grounded, who never took money from or relied on any man OR is C jealous of R and manipulative, not trustworthy? (She will, after the book ends, end her life in prison because of R)

*Antoinette's childhood, her time in the convent--was her life ever ok/happy?

*Discussion of the book's ending: the parrot symbol: Sandi: the crab. I'm sure I've left much out as you all had so much to

Discussion of the book's ending, the parrot symbol, Olan, the crab. I'm sure I've left much out as you all had so much to say!!!

*IF ONLY--therein lies the tragedy.

AND MUCH MORE....

Thank you ALL.