The Criterion: An International Journal in English
Bi-Monthly Peer-Reviewed Open Access e-Journal
(ISSN: 0976-8165) Vol. 17, Issue-V, October 2026
www.the-criterion.com

Against the Tide: Gender, Disability, and Social Control in *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Mr. Indranil Adhikary
Assistant Professor,
Dept. of English,
Jogamaya Devi College,
Kolkata, India
indraliterature@gmail.com
https://doi.org/10.66376/criterion.v17.n5.42

Abstract:
This article examines how gendered norms shape the interpretation and management of women's psychological distress in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Bringing feminist disability studies into dialogue with feminist and postcolonial criticism, it uses the concept of "femininity as disability" to explore how departures from socially privileged expectations of rationality, emotional stability, and acceptable feminine behaviour may be interpreted as deficiencies. Through a comparative textual analysis, the article investigates Esther Greenwood's experiences of psychological distress and psychiatric treatment alongside Antoinette Cosway's vulnerability within colonial hierarchies, marital authority, and imposed identity. While Esther's encounters with Dr Gordon and Dr Nolan reveal contrasting experiences of psychiatric intervention, Antoinette's relationship with Rochester exposes how unequal marital power, racial hierarchies, and geographical displacement restrict her autonomy. The article argues that feminist disability studies offers a productive framework for analysing the relationship between gendered expectations, psychological difference, and social power when used without treating disability as a metaphor for oppression. By reading the novels together while preserving their distinct historical and cultural contexts, the study demonstrates how literary representations of women's distress and suffering reveal the consequential relationship between norms of femininity, interpretive authority, and individual agency.
Keywords: feminist disability studies, femininity, madness, gender, colonialism, The Bell Jar, Wide Sargasso Sea.

Article History: Submitted-02/10/2026, Revised-10/10/2026, Accepted-23/10/2026, Published-31/10/2026.
Copyright vests with the author. Licensing: Distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Introduction

Ideas about normality are never wholly separate from the social values through which bodies and minds are interpreted. Feminist disability studies offer a way to examine how differences become meaningful and political within systems that privilege and prioritize particular forms of bodily capacity, behaviour, and independence. Applied to literary representations of women's distress, this approach can illuminate how gender expectations shape the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable conduct. It must, however, be used carefully: disability should not become a loose synonym for oppression, and psychological suffering should not be treated as unreal simply because social forces affect how it is understood.

This article reads Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* together to explore how gendered norms often impact the interpretation and management of women's distress. The novels emerge from different historical and cultural contexts. Plath's novel follows Esther Greenwood, a young American woman negotiating professional ambition, sexuality, and the expectation of conventional domestic fulfilment in the 1950s. Rhys's novel revisits the story of the white Creole woman who becomes known as Bertha Mason in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette's experience is shaped by the afterlives of slavery, racial exclusion, English imperial authority, marriage, and the loss of control over her name and movement. Their situations are not interchangeable, but their juxtaposition critically explores how gendered expectation often determine who is accepted as rational, respectable, and socially manageable.

Existing Scholarship and the Contribution of the Present Study

Critical approaches to *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* provide an established foundation for examining the relationsghips among femininity, psychological distress, literary

representation, and social power. Rather than treating madness, disability, or colonial identity as neglected subjects, this article builds on existing scholarship to explore how different forms of authority shape the interpretation and management of women's distress in two distinct literary and historical contexts.

Postcolonial criticism of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* provides an essential starting point for understanding Antoinette Cosway's vulnerability. In "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak examines the relationship between feminist literary representation and imperial power, drawing attention to the colonial hierarchies that complicate readings of women's emancipation (Spivak 243–61). Her argument cautions against interpreting women's oppression exclusively through gender, overlooking the racial and imperial structures within which it operates. Veronica Marie Gregg's *Jean Rhys's Historical Imagination: Reading and Writing the Creole* further examines the relationship between Rhys's fiction, Caribbean history, and the contested formation of Creole identity. Her work helps situate Antoinette within the racial and cultural hierarchies that shape her experiences of belonging and exclusion (Gregg 32). These critical approaches establish the importance of reading Antoinette's vulnerability in relation to colonial history and patriarchal domination. The present study draws on this scholarship to examine how gendered and colonial authority influence the interpretation of her psychological state and the justification of her confinement.

Feminist criticism provides a complementary framework for understanding the cultural construction of women's madness. Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980* traces the historical relationship between gender and psychiatric discourse, while Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* examines women's literary

representation in relation to patriarchal expectations. These works critically explore the historical and representational conditions through which femininity and madness can be interlinked. Their insights also highlight the need to attend to the specific contexts of the two selected novels: the colonial hierarchies shape Antoinette's identity in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and at the same time the material consequences of psychological distress and the differing effects of psychiatric intervention are central to *The Bell Jar*.

Published scholarship on *The Bell Jar* has likewise examined the intersections of femininity, disability, language, and psychological distress. Marilyn Boyer's "The Disabled Female Body as a Metaphor for Language in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*" investigates the relationship between disability and the novel's language (Boyer 199–223). Shae Kirkus and Monika Shehi Herr's "Femininity as Disability in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*" explicitly considers how disability rhetoric relates to the social norms through which femininity and psychological difference are evaluated. Jeni Maple's study, "The Intersection of Feminism and Disability Theory in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*," also considers the value of reading Esther's experiences through feminist and disability frameworks (Maple). These studies establish that the relationship between femininity and disability has already received critical attention. The present article extends this conversation by placing Esther's experiences alongside Antoinette's and examining how different historical, institutional, and colonial conditions shape the interpretation of their distress.

Disability studies and Mad Studies offer further resources for examining the social authority through which mental difference is interpreted. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory" demonstrates the importance of bringing disability into feminist analysis by questioning and re-examining the standards through which some bodies and identities are treated as normative and others as deficient. Margaret Price's *Mad*

at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life investigates how institutional practices and rhetorical conventions privilege particular expectations of productivity, independence, and acceptable behaviour. Although Price focuses on academic life rather than the psychiatric and marital settings represented in these novels, her work helps clarify how institutional norms influence the recognition and evaluation of mental difference (Price 45). These perspectives argue a distinction between psychological distress itself and the cultural judgments and institutional practices that shape responses to it.

Taken together, these critical approaches inform a comparative analysis of how historically specific configurations of power shape the interpretation and management of women's psychological distress. Esther's experiences of psychiatric treatment in *The Bell Jar* reveal the possibility of both institutional harm and therapeutic care. In contrast, Antoinette's confinement in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is shaped by marital authority, property relations, racial hierarchies, and colonial power. These experiences are not equivalent: psychiatric treatment and marital confinement operate through different forms of authority and have different consequences for the women concerned. By bringing feminist disability studies into dialogue with established feminist and postcolonial criticism, the article examines how these distinct structures of power regulate femininity and finds the concept of women's distress as multilayered and intensely problematic. Its contribution lies not in claiming that previous scholarship has overlooked madness, disability, or colonial identity, but in showing how these concerns can be brought into comparative dialogue without reducing either character's suffering to a metaphor for gender oppression.

Femininity, Disability, and the Interpretation of Madness

The phrase "femininity as disability" is used here to describe a rhetorical and cultural process, not an identity claim. It refers to the way women's bodies, desires, emotions, and ambitions have been

measured against norms that present themselves as universal. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's feminist disability theory provides a useful framework for analysing how bodily difference is interpreted through cultural standards (6). Her concept of the "normate" describes the position from which some bodies and minds are treated as ordinary and others as marked or deficient. The normate is not simply an individual; it is a privileged social position that can remain unmarked while differences are named and evaluated.

This approach extends rather than replaces feminist criticism. Feminist readings illuminate how patriarchal expectations constrain women's identities and choices; feminist disability studies adds a focus on how departures from socially privileged norms of rationality, emotional stability, and acceptable behaviour are classified as deficiencies, with consequences for how women are treated. The distinction is one of analytical emphasis, not a claim that feminist criticism has overlooked normality or social exclusion. "Femininity as disability" therefore names a process through which judgments of feminine inadequacy can acquire social and institutional force, rather than suggesting that gender nonconformity necessarily produces psychological distress or disability.

The concept must nevertheless be used carefully. Disability should not become merely a metaphor for women's subordination, since such a reading tend to risk obscuring the material realities of disability and psychological distress. Esther's despair, disorientation, and suicide attempt cannot be understood simply as products of sexism, nor does Antoinette's suffering become unreal because Rochester's authority helps intensify it. Rather, the analysis distinguishes the women's psychological experiences from the social judgments and institutional practices that shape how those experiences are interpreted and managed.

Psychoanalytic and Foucauldian approaches offer distinct perspectives on the representation of psychological distress. Psychoanalytic criticism can illuminate how a narrative represents psychic conflict, desire, repression, and the meanings attributed to symptoms, and Michel Foucault's work invests attention to the historical discourses and institutional practices through which madness is classified and managed. These approaches should not be collapsed into a single explanation: an account of psychic conflict does not establish the social causes of distress, and an account of institutional power does not fully explain an individual's psychological experience. This article therefore uses them as distinct analytical perspectives, in dialogue with feminist disability studies, rather than as competing diagnoses of the characters.

The framework developed here brings feminist disability studies into dialogue with established feminist and postcolonial criticism while preserving the distinctions among them. It examines how standards of normality determine and shape the interpretation of women's behaviour as normal or deviant and how particular forms of authority make those interpretations consequential. The comparison also tests the limits of this approach: Esther's experiences include both distressing treatment and supportive care, whereas Antoinette's confinement operates through marital and colonial relations of power. "Femininity as disability" is therefore not a universal explanation of women's psychological distress but a way of examining how judgments of feminine inadequacy acquire significance within specific historical and institutional contexts.

Esther Greenwood: Gendered Expectations and Psychiatric Authority

In *The Bell Jar*, Esther Greenwood's crisis unfolds amid conflicting messages about what a young woman should want. Her professional ambition and literary aspirations coexist with social expectations that women should marry, become mothers, and find fulfilment in domestic life. The

magazine internship that initially appears to offer opportunity instead intensifies Esther's sense of estrangement. She cannot easily reconcile the futures presented to her, and the apparent abundance of possibilities becomes a source of paralysis rather than freedom.

A disability-oriented reading asks how Esther's distress is interpreted and how psychiatric practices shape her experience of treatment. Her early experience of electroconvulsive therapy under Dr Gordon is frightening and alienating, exposing a gap between the authority of a clinical intervention and the patient's experience of it. Under Dr Nolan's supervision, however, the treatment is presented differently. Esther receives an explanation of the procedure and experiences the subsequent treatment as less frightening. This contrast complicates any interpretation of psychiatric authority as uniformly coercive. Rather than presenting psychiatric care as a single, uniformly oppressive system, the novel distinguishes between treatment experiences that intensify a patient's fear and those that, within a more supportive relationship, contribute to recovery. These scenes invite an examination of how care is administered and experienced without establishing that every psychiatric intervention is harmful or that Esther's distress can be explained entirely through gendered assumptions.

Esther's recovery remains provisional rather than conclusive. At the end of the novel, she prepares to attend an interview that will determine whether she can leave the institution. The narrative therefore closes without offering an unequivocal resolution of her psychological difficulties. Her progress suggests the possibility of renewed participation in social life, but it does not establish that her distress has disappeared. The ending preserves an open ended tension between recovery and uncertainty. From a feminist disability perspective, this unresolved conclusion resists reducing Esther's experiences either to a straightforward story of individual

illness or to a narrative in which rejecting restrictive gender expectations automatically produces liberation.

Sexuality is another area in which Esther encounters conflicting expectations. The novel presents a culture in which women's sexual conduct is morally scrutinised, while conventional marriage is promoted as a desirable future. Esther's decisions and anxieties cannot be reduced to a single act of rebellion; rather, they expose a narrative disjunction, an unending conflict between a woman's desire and the inherent tension for not being able to conform to normative social strictures. Her distress is therefore both personal and social. The novel does not offer a simple equation between nonconformity and diagnosis, but it does show how the pressures surrounding femininity form part of the world in which Esther attempts to understand herself.

Esther's distress is represented not only through her thoughts and perceptions but also through her bodily experiences. Her physical symptoms and the bleeding episode extend the novel's exploration of the relationship between psychological distress, the body, and gendered expectations (Plath 37). These experiences should not be treated as transparent evidence of a particular diagnosis. Rather, they invite attention to how Esther experiences distress physically and how her experiences are interpreted within the social and medical frameworks available to her. A feminist disability-oriented reading can examine these representations without assuming that every bodily symptom is reducible to gender oppression or that the novel establishes a specific disability identity.

Antoinette Cosway: Colonial Identity, Marriage, and Confinement

Antoinette's subjectivity in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* is shaped by the intersecting hierarchies of race, class, gender, and colonial power in post-emancipation Jamaica. As a white

Creole woman, she occupies an ambivalent position within a society whose social relations remain structured by the economic and racial legacies of plantation slavery. Her relationship with Tia reveals both an intimate desire to be within the Black community and the racial divisions that make such belonging precarious. Although Antoinette's family background associates her with the former slaveholding class, her Creole identity also exposes her to English prejudice and exclusion. Her position therefore complicates any straightforward distinction between colonial privilege and social vulnerability. She is neither wholly outside the structures of racial privilege nor securely incorporated into the dominant English social order. Rather, her identity emerges through conflicting relations of proximity, exclusion, and displacement. Rhys's representation of Antoinette consequently resists reducing her experience to a single axis of oppression, foregrounding instead how racial, social, and gendered hierarchies shape her sense of self. This precarious position provides an important context for understanding how her marriage to Rochester intensifies her vulnerability and further restricts her capacity to define her own identity.

The power imbalance within Antoinette's marriage becomes more pronounced through Daniel Cosway's intervention. In his letter to Rochester, Daniel makes allegations concerning Antoinette's family history, her mother's mental condition, and the possibility of inherited instability. His account is also intended to undermine Rochester's confidence in Antoinette and the legitimacy of their relationship. These allegations, however, are mediated through Daniel's perspective and should not be treated as an objective or conclusive account of Antoinette's psychological condition. Their significance lies not simply in their content but in the interpretive authority they acquire within the marriage. Daniel's claims provide Rochester with a framework through which he increasingly views Antoinette with suspicion, encouraging him to interpret her behaviour through assumptions about familial instability and mental disturbance. Rhys thus draws

attention to the processes by which a woman's identity is judged by others' accounts, particularly when unequal marital and social power relations support those accounts. Daniel's letter contributes to Rochester's changing attitude, but it neither establishes the truth of every allegation nor provides a sufficient explanation for the subsequent deterioration of their relationship.

Marriage consequently becomes a central structure through which Antoinette's autonomy is progressively restricted. Rochester's growing distrust is shaped by Daniel's allegations, his own suspicions, and the unequal conditions under which their relationship operates. As his interpretation of Antoinette increasingly displaces her account of herself, the authority to define her character and behaviour shifts towards him. This authority extends beyond the interpersonal dynamics of the marriage: it is reinforced by financial dependence, gendered marital conventions, and the broader colonial structures within which their relationship is situated. Antoinette's vulnerability thus arises not simply from Rochester's individual attitudes but also from the institutional and social conditions that enable him to exercise control over her circumstances. From a feminist disability studies perspective, this dynamic invites examination of how behaviours and experiences become interpreted as signs of instability and even dis-ability. Such an interpretation does not require the claim that Rochester alone causes Antoinette's psychological distress; rather, it highlights how unequal power relations shape the meanings attached to her experiences and the responses those meanings enable.

Rochester's renaming of Antoinette as "Bertha" further consolidates this struggle over identity. In this discussion, the name Antoinette is retained when referring to her identity, while "Bertha" designates the identity imposed through Rochester's renaming. The act connects Rhys's protagonist to the woman confined in the attic in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, while allowing Rhys to reconstruct the personal histories and colonial power relations obscured by the earlier

novel's representation. Renaming functions as more than a symbolic expression of marital domination: it demonstrates Rochester's capacity to impose an identity upon Antoinette and to undermine her authority over the interpretation of her own life. It forms part of a wider process of dispossession involving financial control, geographical displacement, and eventual confinement.

A Foucauldian perspective illuminates how power operates through the production and circulation of authoritative interpretations, particularly when one person's account becomes more socially consequential than another's. Rochester's interpretation increasingly governs how Antoinette is understood and treated, while her own perspective is progressively marginalised. Nevertheless, this argument should not reduce her psychological experience to a mere effect of discourse. The significance of renaming lies in the material consequences of an imposed identity within a relationship marked by unequal authority.

Psychoanalytic criticism offers a related but distinct approach to the novel's representation of Antoinette's inner life. Her memories, fears, desire for affection, and responses to rejection provide insight into the emotional conflicts represented in the narrative. These features can illuminate how she experiences relational insecurity and the instability of her circumstances, but they do not warrant retrospectively diagnosing her as a "conversion hysteric." Such a designation risks transforming a literary representation into a clinical case and imposing a diagnostic framework that the narrative does not conclusively establish. It may also shift attention away from the historical and social conditions that give Antoinette's experiences meaning. Her distress cannot be adequately explained solely through repressed desire or intrapsychic conflict, just as it cannot be attributed exclusively to colonial and marital oppression. Psychoanalytic interpretation can explore the representation of psychic conflict, whereas Foucauldian analysis examines the operation of authority and the production of socially consequential accounts of the individual.

Although these approaches may illuminate different dimensions of the novel, neither provides a complete causal explanation of Antoinette's condition. Their critical value lies in enabling a more differentiated reading of the relationship between psychological experience, social interpretation, and institutional power.

The novel's representation of place further complicates Antoinette's search for belonging. Jamaica, despite its association with childhood and familiarity, is not presented as an uncomplicated site of security. Her early experiences are marked by racial hostility, family instability, and social exclusion. England, which she sometimes imagines as a place of transformation, ultimately becomes associated with isolation and confinement. The movement between these geographical spaces does not resolve the instability of her identity; instead, it reveals the unequal power to determine where she belongs and under what conditions she may inhabit a particular space. Her displacement is therefore both geographical and interpretive: she is separated from familiar environments while increasingly losing control over the meanings attached to her identity. Read through feminist disability studies, this trajectory draws attention to how vulnerability is produced and intensified through social arrangements that restrict agency and participation. Such a reading must nevertheless preserve the specificity of Antoinette's colonial and marital circumstances rather than treating displacement as an interchangeable expression of disability or psychological distress.

The novel's ending requires particular interpretive caution. Antoinette's final dream brings together fire, Tia, remembered voices, and her movement towards the house's anticipated destruction. These images suggest the possibility of escape or self-destruction, but the narrative ends before the act is explicitly carried out. Antoinette's death is therefore implied rather than directly narrated, leaving the precise outcome unresolved. The dream's significance lies partly in

this ambiguity: it brings together the violence of confinement, the persistence of memory, and the possibility of resistance without offering a definitive resolution. Although the anticipated fire may be read as an attempt to escape the identity and circumstances imposed upon her, it cannot be treated simply as an uncomplicated act of liberation. Its potential consequences remain bound to the structures of domination from which Antoinette seeks release. Rhys's ending thus sustains the tension between resistance and destruction, refusing to resolve Antoinette's story into either a narrative of emancipation or one of conclusively established self-destruction.

Comparative Discussion: Gender, Authority, and the Interpretation of Distress

Reading *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* together reveals both similarities and significant differences in the interpretation of women's psychological distress. Esther Greenwood encounters psychiatric institutions whose authority can produce fear but can also facilitate care. Antoinette Cosway, by contrast, experiences increasing restrictions on her autonomy within a marriage shaped by colonial hierarchy, financial dependence, and unequal authority over identity. The comparison therefore does not equate psychiatric treatment with marital confinement. Instead, it examines how different institutions and relationships acquire the power to define women's behaviour and determine the consequences of those definitions.

In *The Bell Jar*, Esther's experiences expose the tension between clinical authority and the patient's own experience. The contrast between her treatment under Dr Gordon and Dr Nolan demonstrates that psychiatric care is not represented as uniformly harmful. Her distress cannot be explained entirely through restrictive gender expectations, yet those expectations form an important part of the social context in which she struggles to understand her future. The novel

consequently invites attention to the relationship between psychological experience, social pressure, and the conditions under which care is provided.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the authority to interpret Antoinette increasingly rests with Rochester. Daniel Cosway's allegations contribute to Rochester's suspicions, while renaming Antoinette as Bertha and removing her from familiar surroundings further restrict her control over her identity and circumstances. These actions operate within broader colonial and marital structures rather than through individual intention alone. Antoinette's distress is neither adequately explained by Rochester's behaviour alone nor separable from the unequal conditions in which she lives.

The concept of "femininity as disability" helps illuminate how judgments of inadequacy can acquire social consequences in both novels. However, it does not mean that gender nonconformity is itself a disability or that psychological distress is merely a metaphor for oppression. The comparative value of the framework lies in examining how norms of acceptable behaviour intersect with different forms of authority, while preserving the specific historical, institutional, and psychological circumstances of each protagonist.

Conclusion

The comparison between The Bell Jar and Wide Sargasso Sea demonstrates how interpretations of women's psychological distress are shaped by gendered expectations and historically specific relations of authority. Esther's experiences reveal the contrasting effects of psychiatric intervention, while Antoinette's confinement exposes the consequences of marital control within a colonial order structured by racial and economic inequalities. Although the novels present

different circumstances, both draw attention to the power to define women's behaviour and determine how their experiences are understood.

Feminist disability studies helps illuminate these processes when used alongside feminist and postcolonial criticism. Its contribution lies not in treating disability as a metaphor for oppression or femininity as inherently disabling, but in examining how particular standards of normality influence the recognition and evaluation of psychological difference. By preserving the distinctions between Esther's psychiatric experiences and Antoinette's colonial and marital confinement, this study demonstrates the value of a comparative approach that attends to both social power and the complexity of individual suffering.

Works Cited:

Boyer, Marilyn. "The Disabled Female Body as a Metaphor for Language in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*." Women's Studies, vol. 33, no. 2, 2004, pp. 199–223. https\://doi.org/10.1080/00497870490272812.

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated by Richard Howard, with an introduction by David Cooper, Routledge, 2001.

Freud, Sigmund, and Josef Breuer. *Studies on Hysteria*. Translated by James Strachey, Basic Books, 2000.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *NWSA Journal*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2002, pp. 1–32. https\://doi.org/10.1353/nwsa.2003.0005.

Gregg, Veronica Marie. *Jean Rhys's Historical Imagination: Reading and Writing the Creole*. University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Hwang, Jung-Suk. "Historicising Madness in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*." Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction, vol. 64, no. 1, 2023, pp. 46–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/00111619.2021.1887073.

Kirkus, Shae, and Monika Shehi Herr. "Femininity as Disability in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*." University of South Carolina Upstate Student Research Journal, vol. 15, 2022, article 3, https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/uscusrj/vol15/iss1/3.

Maple, Jeni. "The Intersection of Feminism and Disability Theory in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*." *UCLA Centre for the Study of Women*, 2009, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/16j6q39s.

Phillips, Jessica Louise. "Searching for Connotations and Connections: Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, Paul Ricoeur, and the Language of Madness." *Plath Profiles*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2019, pp. 37–56.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. HarperCollins, 2015.

Price, Margaret. *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life*. University of Michigan Press, 2011.

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. W. W. Norton, 2007.

Showalter, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980*. Pantheon Books, 1985.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1985, pp. 243–61. https\://doi.org/10.1086/448328.