Chapter IV: ‘Home’ and ‘Homelessness’ in Rhys’s European Novels
Chapter IV

‘Home’ and ‘Homelessness’ in Rhys’s European Novels

The importance of the Caribbean islands as a psychospace as well as a topospace has been discussed in the preceding chapter. This chapter will focus on Rhys’s representation of her protagonists’ European experience. It aims at analysing three novels – Quartet, After Leaving Mr Mackenzie, and Good Morning, Midnight – which fictionalize her experiences in Europe. The works mentioned above has been categorized as ‘European’ because of their geographical setting. In Rhys, the issue of ‘home’ and ‘homelessness,’ foregrounds two geographical locations – the Caribbean islands and Europe. The events in these three fictions take place primarily in two cities of Europe – London and Paris. For the women protagonists, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, England has been a site of broken home. Paris, on the other hand, brings some hope, relief and even temporary wish fulfilment. In the two Caribbean novels, Voyage in the Dark and Wide Sargasso Sea, as has already been seen, the women protagonists are Creoles who cannot assimilate with the black culture of West Indies or with the white culture in Europe. So the Caribbean novels also focus on the problems of the Creole women’s relocation in Europe. Thus the absence of a space called home, both topographically and culturally, is very much prominent in the novels.
Quartet, After Leaving Mr Mackenzie, and Good Morning, Midnight revolve round the spatial dilemma of Rhys's women protagonists. They seek to establish close relationship with people as they journey between England and France. Their experience is, however, far from satisfactory. The three novels mentioned above narrate the process of victimization of the female characters. They try to create social identities but are inevitably confronted with obstacles which are reinforced by the contemporary turmoil caused by the First and the Second World Wars. These three novels reveal the unstable socio-cultural situation of Europe caught between the two great wars.

Rhys was in Europe during the critical inter-War period. She was affected by the environment of uncertainty that prevailed there. In a letter to Maryvonne she registers the psychological damages and cultural transformations caused by the war:

Personally I've always thought the Lost Generation a good name for us.

To start with – eight nearly nine years of war is a lot out of a life. The 1914 – 1918 war spoilt our youth, and the other one smashed anything one had achieved between. And how!

You see I have not been often happy. I haven't a happy nature to start with. But really few of my lot have come through, and those not the best it seems to me. (53)

When Rhys arrived in Europe from the Dominican islands, she was already morally and spiritually drained. In the Caribbean islands she had seen Christianity supporting slavery and racism. She had seen the prejudice and racism of the white. On the other hand, in the European Front, the two World Wars and Depression in between marked
her early experiences. Some of these experiences are used as incidents in her fictions.

A series of turmoils followed the War – the Stock Exchange uneasiness in New York in 1920; upcoming of Fascism in Italy in 1921, hunger in Vienna in 1922, and the German inflation in 1923. Emery observes: “Her novels expose the specific crisis – felt from the period of the First World War through the present – of the dissolution of moral values and traditions delineating the foreign from the “civilized” and those separating private from the public lives” (419). The effects of the two Wars along with her experience of the interim Depression is revealed in Quartet and Good Morning, Midnight. They will be discussed in section I. and section II respectively.

Crisis between and during the Wars affected the common mass in general. But women were particularly victimized. Jung surveys the impact of the war on the European women during and after the end of the Wars. Jung portrays the extent and intensity of domestic and financial exploitation of women in post-War Europe. They also faced the pressures of public expectations to be ‘respectable,’ while they indeed craved for independence and felt that ‘love is beyond law’ (Jung 81). The unmarried ventured to earn their own livelihood. Jung in his essay “Women in Europe” comments on the responses of men and women to terrors of the Wars on gender lines:

The European psyche has been torn to shreds by the hellish barbarism of the war. While man turns his hand to repairing the outer damage, women – unconsciously as ever – sets about healing the inner wounds, and for these she needs, as her most important instrument, a psychic relationship…. For this reason the unconscious tendency of woman aims at loosening the marriage structure…. (84)
Women had been exposed to a systematic oppression and degradation since the beginning of twentieth century. There were the moral expectations that women should abstain from the activities encrypted as vile or immoral. But there was also a distinct collapse of familial and social norms regarding chastity and modesty associated with the concept of womanliness. In the early 1920s, women were treated as the object of sensual pleasures, and the pleasures were usually obtained in exchange of material gifts like money, clothes, jewellery, or of luxuries and amusements like a motor car ride or a night out. These women were categorized as prostitutes and amateurs. Such women were usually confined to the economically marginal spaces of the city. Hubbard sees prostitution as

a part of a continuing (but contested) process involving the exclusion of disorderly prostitution from orderly sexuality (or “bad girls from “good girls”), removing prostitutes from areas where they would stand out as unnatural or deviant, potentially “polluting” civilized society. (135)

So the nature of ‘prostitution’ changed as ‘bad girls’ apparently became undistinguishable from viewpoint of residential locations. The ‘unatural’ or the ‘deviant’ became, on the surface, part of the ‘normal’ world. But they remained objects of scorn because the exploitation was very visible. The deviant women now began to live on the fringes of other families (as ‘kepts,’ for instance) and in hotels (as amateurs or prostitutes). These women were also accused for being agents of the changing attitudes to motherhood during this period. Looked upon as the ‘female vampires’ in Europe, they were represented as a ‘monster in conflict with the family, the couple and the institutions of patriarchal capitalism’ (Creed 61). Emery surveys the contemporary situation in the following way:
An increase in divorce and a decrease in the rate of marriage, agitation for women's economic and political emancipation, recruitment of young single women into industry and other occupations during the First World War, replacement of local patriarchal power with that of the corporate state, and greater individual mobility due to advances in technology and communication all chipped away at the solidity of the bourgeois family, often casting out into the public world the women whose domestication made that family possible. (424)

A survey of the post-War period thus reveals that the idea of a 'healthy,' feminine, domestic attitude of women was gradually collapsing, giving rise to the 'abnormal' women like the spinsters, the prostitutes, the schizophrenic, and the insane. Such 'abnormal' women occupy central positions in Rhys's novels. Rhys is one of the early writers who created this new geography of marginality. Mellown describes the condition of these marginalized women in the following way:

These women are forever alone outside the realm of everyday society and cut off from the ordinary patterns of life. In them we see a... demimonde, for theirs is only a partial existence. They know that they are alive because they suffer and because money passes through their hands. The respectable world views such women as commodities to be bought and as hostages who must pay their way. (464; emphasis original).

These women in fact live in the exclusionary space of 'crisis heterotopia' (kriz heterotopyasi) and 'heterotopias of deviation' (sapma heterotopyalari). These 'heterotopic' spaces can in no way be equated with a home. They live in non-home
spaces. The women characters live in hotels; they also live in families, mostly on its fringes. They enter into relationships with male characters. But the gender hierarchy and the lack of security in the relationships inevitably push them to the fringes. Thus, in Rhys, 'homeliness' and 'homelessness' are not only related to place but also to the interactional social and familial spaces.

Along with unconventional living, the inter-War period also brought in its trail psychological turmoil among men and women which was discussed in most of the works of that time. Glover and Kaplan contend that psychoanalysis had gained importance during the period because of this. Fictions and writings concentrated more on the thought processes of the women. They argue:

Psychoanalysis becomes a common referent in the fiction of the interwar years, a signifier of new and 'modern' ideas about the self in everything.... Fiction's view of psychoanalysis is rarely friendly, but the novel's theorization of gender, and perhaps especially femininity, betrays some of the same contradictions and uncertainties that we find in Freud, his followers and his psychoanalytic adversaries. One way of approaching Freud's 'Femininity' and other writings on the same subject in this period is to place them in the context of the imaginative writing by women in the interwar years, approaching psychoanalysis not as an orthodoxy in the making but rather as a discourse that was part of a spectrum of analytic and speculative texts on gender – and women in particular – in this particularly volatile period in the history of gender. (28)
Rampant expressions of women's emotional disturbance, sexuality and the rejection of what was thought to be feminine were the 'excesses' which became evident during the period. Writers like Joyce and Lawrence probed into the sensuality of women and their sexual ambivalence. Rhysian women protagonists also disrupt the social norms and order. They are figures of demimondes who highlighted the social transformations taking place at that time. The illusions of moral order are broken down in the literary works. Emery makes an interesting observation:

Were they to walk the streets of nineteenth-century novel, the authorities would arrest these women under the rule of the Contagious disease Acts and subject them to the medical examinations required of all suspected prostitutes; perhaps they would be confined in workhouses or asylums. Thus the Victorians attempted to control the potential ambivalence created by women who ventured alone onto public territory; an independent woman could only be a prostitute and was most likely mad. (424)

The women characters attempt to re-define and re-construct the definition of a new woman. Security and intimacy in relationships were given more importance than marriage. In many cases even married women transgressed the bonds of marriage. The unmarried women sought intimacy outside marriage. Even in Rhys's fictional works we find that marriage as a relationship fails for her protagonists Marya in Quartet, Julia in After Leaving Mr Mackenzie, Sasha in Good Morning, Midnight and Antoinette in Wide Sargasso Sea. It is never realized for Anna, the protagonist in Voyage in the Dark. Marriage as an institution does not hold any promise for them.
Peace and homeliness may lie outside marriage. The characters try how not to be women cast in the frame of their mother or aunt.

Thus, the outbreak of the Wars and its aftermath had resulted in a chaotic political, cultural, social and economic situation in the twentieth century Europe posing threat to the rules and the traditionally patterned existence of the past. The collapse of the ‘order’, of the cohesive forces created disintegration, fragmentation and dislocation which were focused in the literary writings of the period. The fictions of Rhys are no exceptions. On the whole, modernism as a cultural force made its presence felt and there were experimental forms in painting as well as in writing.¹ Midori Saito mentions that after the First World War, war-torn Europe, especially France, became ‘negrophile,’ seeking refuge in the black culture for consolation. Apart from jazz which became popular during the times, ‘pre-civilized societies were elevated in the critiques of the barbarity of the war, and black culture was associated with purity and childlike innocence’ (par. 3). This is found in the works of Guillaume Apollinaire and Paul Guillaume’s Sculptures Negre (1917), Henri Clozat and André Leval’s L’Art Negre et l’Art Oceanian (1919). The movement of Surrealism, in painting, also originated from these turmoils of the modern mind aiming to combine the duality and split of human existence. McFarlane speaking about the representational reality of these art forms expressing the duality of existence quotes from Hauser:

We live on two different levels, in two different spheres, but also that these regions of being penetrate one another so thoroughly that one can neither be subordinated to nor set against the other as its antithesis. The dualism of being is certainly no new conception, and the idea of the coincidentia oppositorum is quite familiar to us… but the double
meaning and the duplicity of existence, the snare and seduction for the
human understanding which lie hidden in every single phenomena of
reality, had never been experienced so intensively as now. (86)

The Rhysian protagonists also lead their dual existence, living with unrealised
dreams. They are trapped in their own longing. They build new relationships but each
is destined to end disastrously. Almost all her protagonists are dreamers. Balance
between the real and that of unreal are repeatedly confused with their constant shift
between these two worlds. The world of the imagination and dreams become the
whole Weltbild. Reality and unreality, logic and fantasy, the banal and the sublime
merge indissolubly and inexplicably in it.

Rhys’s European novels trace the journey of the women protagonists in
Europe seeking an atmosphere of congeniality and acceptance. Their movement
recalls Rhys’s own travels to many polyglot cities like Paris, Germany, Vienne and
Budapest. These cities provided intellectual and cultural exchange to the people
during those times. The cities were known as ‘culture-capitals’ and they were the
places of creative exchange. They created ‘a fervent atmosphere of new thought and
new arts developed, drawing in not only young native writers and would-be writers,
but artists, literary voyagers, and exiles from other countries as well’ (Bradbury 96).
Among these places, Rhys had been most fascinated by Paris. Harold Rosenberg finds
that as the modernist evolution gathered momentum during the inter-War period, Paris
became ‘the only spot where... it was possible to shake up such “modern” doses as
Viennese psychology, African sculpture, American detective stories, Russian music,
neo-Catholicism, German technique, Italian desperation (Bradbury, Modernism 26).
Although Rhys had spent a major part of her writing career in England, England,
through her fictions, evolve more as a ‘non-home’ than a home. Perhaps the rigidity
of rules, its unreceptive approach to changes and its coldness for the settlers who arrived from other countries made Rhys associate it more as *unheimlich* than a home. While Paris gave impetus to the fount of bohemia, tolerance and the émigré life-style, London became infamous for disregarding and rejecting the unconventional or experimental works of the writers. Paris became the true capital of the modernist art forms, while London was just the opposite. Paris, as discussed by the critics Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, conforms to the concept of “new city,” a space of cooperation, community and hybridization. It served as a point of intersection, cohabitation and collective dwelling. Fussell observes that during the War there was “in England a loss of amplitude, a decay of imaginative and intellectual possibility .... The tone of England turned stuffy, complacent, cruel, bullying, and small-minded” (10). Rhys also had her own reservations about England. She had shown it as a country that is colourless, hostile, snobbish, and rigid. In 1936, staying in London, she writes to Evelyn Scot about the English people:

For as a well trained social animal I’m certainly not the goods.

*But*

I do not agree that there’s nothing to defend myself against – I do not agree that my way of looking at life and human beings is distorted. I think that the desire to be cruel and to hurt... is a part of human nature. Parties are battles (most parties), a conversation is a duel (often). Everybody’s trying to hurt first, to get in the dig and that will make him or her feel superior, feel triumph. (*Letters* 30; emphasis original)
Like other young experimental writers, Rhys had found Paris and its people livelier and less artificial, their way of living more human and natural. In her letter to Diana Athill, she writes about Paris:

It was fortunate for me starting at that particularly exciting time – and in Paris – don’t you think?

Of course some people won’t admit the spirit of the place (jealous??), but everything is so much easier, they must admit that. All those little cheap hotels where, rent paid, one feels so safe and not noticed and nobody cares a hoot about anybody anyway. It is a free feeling. In London and England one has to pay a high price for privacy – how can you write without that? (226; emphasis original)

Rhys, after her arrival in England in 1907, joined as a chorus girl in Our Miss Gibbs in 1909 to earn her living. But later she abandoned it and married Jean Lenglet with whom she had travelled to Holland, then to Brussels and finally to Paris. In course of her stay in Europe, Rhys had visited some of the significant cultural capitals which were the hub of modernism – Berlin and Vienna, the centres of Germanic modernism, New-York, the centre of American modernism, and of course Paris. Rhys loved travelling to all these places. As a budding writer she had spent quite some time in Paris where modernism had had its greatest impetus. Mellown states: “Jean Rhys… employed not only the mise en scène of the Continent, but also the European Zeitgeist – its new ideas in psychology, its aesthetics application of certain philosophical ideas. and, most of all, its between-the-wars appreciation of the plight of the individual, the isolation of existentialism” (474). She became an apprentice under the writer Ford Madox Ford with whom she later developed an unfruitful relationship. Her love and
sweet memories of Dominica and her stay in Paris, as she expresses in her *Letters*, gave spur to her writing: “When I say I write for love I mean that there are two places for me. Paris (or what it was to me) and Dominica, a most lovely and melancholy place where I was born, not very attractive to tourists!” (171). Paris, as is found in the European novels, acts as a place of refuge, of hope, filled with the sweet memories of relationships that are no more. Rhys had loved and preferred Paris for its openness and the privacy that the people were allowed there. But Paris, it must be admitted, lacks the vibrancy and liveliness that is found in the setting of West Indies. It cannot provide the components of an ideal life that the West Indian islands have been endowed with.

The tradition of selecting the urban backdrop to display the perils of modern men was effectively used by Baudelaire. It was later popularized by Eliot.² Creswell relating homelessness with metropolis opines: “Homelessness, it seems, has its place – and that place is the city” (113). The protagonists in the fictions are ‘out-of-place’ drifting in urbanity seeking self-definition.

City becomes the centre for interaction between the characters who primarily come here in search of financial stability. It is not a place for settlers; it serves as a place of convergence for drifters, the hobo and the travellers. Rhys’s novels bring before us a set of characters who are of diverse origins and who come to Paris for better prospects – Stephan Zelli, who is of Polish nationality, travelled to England, then to Paris and finally plans to shift to Argentine; the Heidlers who are from England, are in Paris dealing in unconventional art objects; Julia travels from Ostend to London and then to Paris; Mr Horsefield and Mr Mackenzie are also travellers; Sasha Jansen move from London to Paris, Brussels and then to London with her husband Enno; the gigolo René, a French-Canadian, who pursues rich women and
exploits them, decides to explore his chances in England. When the male characters shift to Paris to seek pleasure in leading a bohemian life, the female characters travel in search of security, both financial and domestic. Home, which is related to warmth and stability, is what they try to realize in their lives. Interestingly, no picture of the domestic space or of familial warmth can be found in any of the European novels. The identities of the male characters are described in relation to places rather than to their families. Apart from the knowledge that most of them are well off, we do not get any glimpse into their occupation or household affairs. They are engaged with female characters in affairs which turn out to be temporary. It is also notable that the characters in Rhys do not have any conventional jobs with a stable earning. Both the male and the female characters move around aimlessly, sometimes with considerable amount of earnings but sometimes too little to fend themselves. The female characters usually manage to earn livelihood through manicure business, serving as assistants but primarily as amateurs. Shifting from one place to another in search of better prospects adds to their feeling of insecurity and homelessness. It is noteworthy that most of the characters in the Rhysian fictions are rootless and bohemian. Marya Zelli, in Quartet, comes to Paris after her marriage to Stephan Zelli. The protagonist Julia Martin, in After Leaving Mr Mackenzie, journeys frequently between London and Paris. Good Morning, Midnight shows us Sasha Jansen’s preference for Paris where she comes to get away from the depressive feeling of being abandoned by her husband Enno. Paris has been variously presented in these three novels. Each of the sections that are to follow shall detail the protagonists’ experiences of homeliness and homelessness in the three fictional works of Rhys.
1

The novels of Rhys had been often been studied as autobiographical. But although scraps of incidents had been taken from her own personal life, they have been moulded through her imagination and artistic capacity into subtle works of art. Of all the works of Rhys critics find in *Quartet* the closest semblance to her life. The raw material for *Quartet* is a part of her own personal life – it narrativises her broken relationship with Ford Madox Ford and his lawful wife, Stella Bowen. Apart from Rhys, this personal affair had been written about by the three persons who were affected by it – Ford defending himself in *When the Wicked Man*, Bowen condemning Rhys in *Drawn from Life*, and Rhys’s husband Jean Lenglet who justifies himself in *Barred*. In *Quartet* we find Marya, Lois Heidler and Mr Heidler the ménage-à-trois and Stephan as the husband. Although the book has been considered as an autobiography by Stella Bowen, Rhys in her letter to Francis Wyndham denies it:

> I was pleased especially because you thought well of “Quartet” (“Postures” as it was called here). [...] I think it was angry and uneven as you say, but it has some life and it wasn’t an autobiography, as everyone here seemed to imagine though some of it was lived of course…. I was astonished when so many people thought it an autobiography from page 1 onwards and told me that it should never have been written. (171)

The narrative focuses on how Marya is tortured constantly by the feeling of being a homeless alien. Stephan, Marya, Lois Heidler and Mr Heidler are the four characters around whom the story revolves. Marya who was unhappy living in England with her aunt marries Stephan and accompanies him to Paris. She leaves her job of a chorus
girl. Stephan has an unstable earning as he does not have any permanent job. He does not confide to Marya the nature of his job. Stephan’s lies make Marya more uncomfortable as she envisages in it their failure of their relationship. Soon he is arrested for dealing in stolen art objects. The uncertainty and lawlessness that followed the Wars find expression in the novel in the arrest of Stephan. He is arrested for dealing in stolen art objects but his arrest is linked to his alleged complicity in the ‘bolshevist plot in Paris” (22). The narrator depicts the situation wryly — “They arrest this one and that one. Meanwhile the voyous go free” (22). While the innocent becomes the suspect, the offenders or law-breakers roam about freely. Stephen’s arrest results in monetary and psychological crisis for his wife Marya who had no relations in Paris to help her out. Marya asks help from Lois Heidler and Mr Heidler. They promise to help her out and invite her to live with them. However, she finds herself reduced to an object of pleasure for Mr Heidler. She is dismissed as soon as his whim is satisfied. Marya having no other means of support waits helplessly for Stephan to return. However, after he is released she is disillusioned. Stephan wanted Marya to bring enough funds to escape from Paris. She is instructed to ask the help of Heidlers. Marya fails to arrange the money. She longs to spend some time with Stephan. But Stephan, who was now more occupied with himself, realizes that Marya was nothing but a burden. So he accuses her of betraying him, beats her mercilessly and deserts her. He leaves with another woman who can help him to get a passage out of Paris.

Marya, now traumatized, is left to fend for herself. She is in a state of trauma. Theorizing on trauma, Judith Herman elucidates the way one is reduced to helpless passivity: “When a person is completely powerless, and any form of resistance is futile, she may go into a state of surrender. The system of self-defence shuts down
entirely. The helpless person escapes from her situation not by action in the real world but rather by altering her state of consciousness” (qtd. in Linett 441). This is exactly what happens to her as she submits herself to unscrupulous men in a state of utter helplessness. Two years in Paris is spent moving from one hotel to another. She loiters in the streets of Paris aimlessly and reflects on her isolation. When she lives with the Heidlers, in the beginning she feels happy and secure. She relishes the warmth of the surrogate family space that she had long desired. But soon her world is shattered. She finds that all the goodness of the Heidlers is a pretention to avoid scandals about his illicit relationship in which Mr Heidler has been all along involved. No understanding exists between the husband and the wife and the ‘home-peace’ becomes ironic as it rests on a deal that was struck between them. It is Lois’s duty to bring in young girls who would satisfy Mr Heidler’s lust and he in turn would not desert her. Staley points out that “Lois’s submission offers the security and certitude that Marya knows she will never possess. In spite of her despicable traits these are the very ones which ultimately sustain Lois’s place with Heidler and make her a necessary part of his life. As much as Marya, Lois is a victim of male subjugation.... Both women are victims of that psychic and physical oppression...” (216). This immoral practice is easier to follow in Paris than in England as conventional relationships is not that much important in Paris. Marya tries to believe that Mr Heidler loves her but realizes that she is nothing but a mistress who is also paying for her food and boarding.

Stephan, like the Heidlers, comes to Paris in search of financial stability and to get out of the rigidity of traditional rules that dominate England. But while the Heidlers succeeds in their attempt, Stephan cannot. Roaming all alone in the endless streets of Paris, Marya discovers that ‘the four years she had spent in Paris seemed to
Loneliness and boredom pursues her even after marrying Stephan. Her sense of security and homeliness is more prominently attached to persons than to places. Shifting places topographically could not give her psychological security. She is as lonely in Paris as she feels in England. Familial comfort that she enjoys in the company of people is temporary. The unstable situation of the post-War Europe and the anxiety of the people are focused in Marya: “... there were moments when she realizes that her existence, though delightful, was haphazard. It lacked, as it were, solidity; it lacked the necessary fixed-background” (10). When Marya recollects her past in England, she finds that she is not ‘transplanted’ from any kind of solid comforts and she was ‘used to the lack of solidity and of fixed background’ (14). Familial ties give a sense of security and the solidity that Marya wants. But the absence of Stephan and her unstable monetary situation does not give her the ‘solidity’ she desires. One reason for this alienation is her lack of acculturation either in England or in Paris. Her longing for permanence and a strong self-identity makes her befriend people who have the confidence and ‘solidity’ that she lacks. Psychologically she suffers from depression and roams around aimlessly. She has always felt like a weakling and she is attracted to Stephan for his tremendous self-confidence. She also likes Lois Heidler at their first meeting for Lois’ ‘voice of a well-educated young male’ (11) or ‘a masterful voice’ (36). Miss De Solla, the French painter who is the only person whom she knows in Paris, also has a ‘deep masculine voice’ (22). Mr. Heidler attracts her for his sturdy looks, ‘as if nothing could break him down’ (11). He is described as a ‘rock of a man’ (35) and also ‘paternal’ (47). She, on the other hand, rejects Cairn as he looks uncertain when he tries to reassure her of security either monetarily or emotionally. In short, her need for security and confidence in relation to the male characters makes her close to the persons who can
potential gives her a sense of protection. Stephan was a promising lover but becomes an uncaring husband. Constant rejection by individuals and society creates uncertainty in her. Her identity is always in a state of flux as she goes through one experience after another. Identity is not static, as Said contends, 'each age and society re-creates... over historical, social, intellectual and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions' (113). But Marya's identity has no positive re-construction. She stands outside the institution of marriage, of the codes of morality, of the norms which determine relationships.

The image of a caged animal is persistent in the novel. Marya moving in search of a home exchanges her freedom for basic necessities in the Heidler's house. In Paris she loses her English identity, although she is unlike the English and cannot identify with the French also. After Stephan's term of imprisonment is over, she feels once more secure and wants to start anew. Stephan has, however, considerably hardened and casts her away. She pleads with Stephan, "Because I'm so unhappy that I think I'm going to die of it. My heart is broken. Something in me is broken.... Help me!" (141). Stephan finds that she cannot help him further; he rebukes her, hurts her physically and leaves her to her own fate. The end confirms Lois Heidler's words that 'Nobody owes a fair deal to a prostitute' (125). Staley commenting upon Lois and Marya's relationship to Heidler observes: "Lois has adjusted to the relationship far better than Marya; Lois has reduced her to an object – a toy not only of Heidler, but her own toy too" (212 – 3).

Marya feels herself to be 'like a grey ghost walking in a vague, shadowy world' (46). This image of a 'ghost' gives us the impression of an unsubstantial existence. Marya moves in the world almost like a schizophrenic. Abel's contention
about the schizophrenics can be applied to Marya. She argues that for the schizophrenic

[T]he real self becomes increasingly associated with the mind and the false self with the body. Because the real self attempts to remain unembodied in order to escape the threats to its identity, it tends to grow increasingly detached from concrete things. The split within the self thus leads to a secondary split between the real self and the external world, which is experienced in relation to the false self of the body and therefore as an empty and meaningless place.... Because of this split between the true self and the world, the schizophrenic experiences the physical world as flat and empty, a two-dimensional setting through which the body wanders. (158)

Through the portrayal of the Heidlers, Rhys critiques the English characters, and also the English culture. When the Heidlers invite her to stay with them, Stephan argues, “They’re your country-people, aren’t they? You understand them and they understand you” (45). But the Heidlers expose the snobbishness of the English culture. Englishness itself is critiqued here. The English who prides themselves for constancy, conventionality and perfectness are exposed as most imperfect hypocrites. They pose to be English, call the French licentious, but they themselves are immoral. Living in France they try to pose as an English couple who appear to be respectful to the institution of marriage but in reality flout its rules and shake its foundations. They just keep the façade. Mr. Heidler explains to Marya: “...one had to keep up appearances. That everybody had to. Everybody had for everybody’s sake keep up appearances. It was everybody’s duty, it was in fact what they were there for” (89). When the
Heidlers move together in the public space posing as husband and wife, they engage in feuds and quarrels in the privacy of their so-called ‘home.’ So even though they try to maintain an ‘English’ appearance, their Englishness becomes an object of ridicule. ‘Liberty’ that they enjoy under the garb of ‘respectability’ is nothing but licentiousness. Neither can the Heidlers accept her as an individual. She is just an object of desire. Marya is reduced to ‘a captive attached to somebody’s chariot wheels’ (90). With Mr Heidler’s pleasure satiated, Marya is coldly dismissed. She finds her whole world crumbling and her stability vanishing. Love and stable relationship, for Marya and other Rhysian protagonists, becomes elusive. In the Kristevian sense, they have a highly ‘disappointing adventure and love’ (Kristeva 13) which renders the characters schizophrenic at the end. Kristeva sees the depressive characters as wanderers, moving ‘in pursuit of continuously disappointing adventures and loves; or else retreats, disconsolate and aphasic, alone’ (13).

Marya is clearly ‘unhomed’. At one point, when she met the Heidlers, she felt that a semblance of home could be established on the basis of their Englishness: “They discussed eating, cooking, England and, finally, Marya, whom they spoke of in the third person as if she were a strange animal or at any rate a strayed animal – one not quite of the fold” (12). So it is quite apparent that she is excluded from the category of the English. The references to ‘strange’ or ‘strayed’ animal are indicative of such difference even within the national category of the English. Her own inferiority of status is also clearly discernable to her. So Marya, though brought up and bred in England, is unlike the mainstream English men and women. Now living in Paris she feels that she isn’t as sophisticated as the Parisians either. She is in a flux, trying to relate to both the cultures, and failing to do so. This has a profound psychological impact on her: “What mattered was that, despising, almost disliking,
love, he was forcing her to be nothing but the little woman who lived in the Hotel du Bosphore for the express purpose of being made love to... she, miserable weakling that she was, found herself trying to live up to his idea of her " (92). This clearly suggests that she lacks agency. She reflects as the story opens: “Everybody pretends.... French people pretend every bit as much, only about different things and not so obviously” (9).

*Quartet* opens with an epigraph from R. C. Dunning:

... Beware

Of good Samaritans – walk to the right

Or hide thee by the roadside out of sight

Or greet them with a smile that villains wear.⁴

The epigraph appropriately points out the theme of duplicity that marks the characters of the novel. There is an emphasis on social pretention. It is a novel about such pretensions. The original title of the novel was *Postures*. But Rhys later renamed it *Quartet*, after its first publication, to focus more on the relationship between the four characters. Staley states: “There is not a single victim in this novel; all four of the major characters are victims; all are motivated by their lusts or needs and driven to a numbness and moral blindness in their hatreds, illusions, and self-pity” (221).

II

As the last section dealt with the 'unhomely' life of Marya, this section will detail the plight of Julia Martin, the woman protagonist of *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie*. She is caught in between 'non-places' as she tries to locate herself in the
familiarity of home. The background is that of Paris after the end of World War I. Julia is an admixture of Brazilian and English background. She had been disowned by her family living in England. Her family consists of her mother and her sister and, an Uncle. The family is ruled by the ‘law of the father’ which is entrusted in the character of Uncle Griffiths. Julia had disobeyed him by deserting her husband as he could not support her monetarily. Financial crisis had led to the death of her child. Abandoning her husband, Julia depends on men more for economic sustenance. She divorces her husband as he does not have any fixed income to support her. Her family refuses to help her after the breaking of her marital relationship. Julia decides to shift to Paris to earn a living. She leaves behind her much loved mother and sister Norah. In Paris, she makes her living as a mistress of Mr Mackenzie. The story opens in media res. Mr Mackenzie has decided to dismiss Julia. Perturbed about an uncertain future, she meets Mr Horsfield who comes from London. She wants to meet her family. She returns to her family but she is greeted with scorn and detestation. Death of her sick mother effectively ends her relationship with her family. She returns to Paris and tries to settle down, albeit as a deviant woman.

Already disillusioned by the futility of her relations with men, she tries her best to mask her age and her emotional turmoil and parades boldly around. Unlike Marya in Quartet, she pleads with nobody as she accepts the brutal reality she is ordained to live through. She is not vulnerable by nature: “I wanted to get away. I wanted it like – like iron. Besides, I wasn’t frightened of anything. So I did get away” (51). Marya, as we have seen, breaks down as she is abandoned by her husband and is forced into the profession of an ‘amateur,’ but Julia is determined to make her living as an amateur ‘principally living on the money given to her by various men. Going
from man to man had become a habit” (26). England condemns her as a prostitute, but Paris accepts her with its openness.

Julia Martin is a ‘bad’ sister, as she is morally deviant and is also a ‘free’ female. She exists as a foil to Norah, socially upheld as a ‘good’ sister and an ‘ideal’ daughter. Attending to her sick mother, Norah transforms herself into a slave:

The slave had no hope, and knew no change. She knew of no other sky, no other water, no other forest, no other world, no other life. She had no wish, no hope, no love.... The absence of pain and hunger was her happiness, and when she felt unhappy she was tired, more than usual, after the day’s labour. (103)

The society applauds her as she is a dutiful daughter. But it has assisted her in no way: “Everybody had said: ‘You’re wonderful, Norah.’ But they did not help her. They just stood around watching her youth die, and her soft heart grow hard and bitter. They sat there and said: ‘You’re wonderful, Norah.’ Beasts.... Devils....” (104). Her sick mother becomes more a cause of Norah’s resentment than the centre of affection.

Familial responsibility becomes a burden and not a secure space filled with warmth and happiness. Julia’s evasion of duty and the career of a prostitute make Norah detest and envy her. In Uncle Griffiths’s house she feels that she ‘sat outside the sacred circle of warmth’ (79). The ‘sacred’ circle suggests an ‘ideal’ family atmosphere of security and cordiality. Julia has been excluded from this ‘sacred circle’ by her uncle: “You always insisted on going your own way. Nobody interfered with you or expressed any opinion on what you did. You deserted your family. And now you can’t expect to walk back and be received with open arms” (84). Ironically, Norah is a slave living within the ‘sacred’ circle. Family which is usually seen as an institution
constituting of relations providing sustenance, takes on a different meaning here. It becomes a representation of a space held in high esteem, an institution to reckon with, but also a place where subservience is demanded. Further, it exists as a space controlled by patriarchy. There is clearly a hierarchy which brooks no opposition, particularly from its women members. And Julia does not protest when she is charged of being a deserter. Uncle Griffiths is a person with autocratic power. For the family he is a representative of a 'large and powerful male' (80). Familial comforts and security are shown to be absent both for the traditional woman and for the deviant as well.

Julia shares a strong relationship with her mother. She longs to identify herself with her. With the death of her mother the tie with her mother snaps and "she was tortured because her brain was making a huge effort to grapple with nothingness" (130). On the verge of death, Julia’s mother accepted her. With the death of the mother, the identity of Julia in relation to her family dissolves. Julia becomes nostalgic and she remembers her childhood days when her mother ‘was the sweet, warm centre of the world, remembering it so vividly that mysteriously it was all there again’ (107). Julia’s mother too suffers from displacement and even on the verge of death she recollects the ‘orange trees’ of South America. Incomprehensive mumblings of her mother that could only be understood by the daughter unties the mother with the daughter in women’s language. As Hollenberg points out, “Rhys... encodes the dead mother both as a trope for textlessness and an inscription of the ‘other side’ of language, a space in which women, through the syntactical equivalent of snorts and howls, might find the means to signify within and to subvert the symbolic” (281). Julia recalls the times when “she had woven innumerable romances about her mother’s childhood in South America.... Julia remembered her saying ‘This [i.e.
England) is a cold, grey country. This isn’t a country to be really happy in’” (105). Perhaps it is this cold and colourless world that destroys her mother. The hostility in the English atmosphere is, perhaps, what ruins Julia’s mother. Coldness in England is not only topographical but also metaphorical as the English are uncaring, self-centric and unfriendly. The ‘orange trees’ at the topographical level represents fertility of ‘home’ in contrast to the barrenness of England. Julia’s mother and Norah can be identified with the traditional images of motherhood as ‘the violated one, the virgin or saint, and the weeping/ sorrowful/ suffering one’ (Brown-Guillory 9). Julia, on the contrary, is the self-determinant woman, and yet, the unconventional ‘other’. She at the same time identifies herself with and distances herself from the mother, breaking in the process the silence which destroyed her mother and is ruining her sister Norah.

At the psychological level the mother’s nostalgia highlights her last desire to return to her lost homeland. Even on the verge of death she successfully creates ‘imaginary homelands...of the mind’ (Rushdie 10). The detestation of Julia’s mother for England and her belief that a return to South America might help her regain her strength makes the contrasting nature of the two places clear. Home for her mother gets equated with the ‘homeland.’ And, possibly, Julia too shifts to Paris for the hatred she nourished towards England. She too is nostalgic of her Brazilian home and imagines it also through the words of her mother’s ‘orange trees’ and the song ‘Go rolling down the Rio” (125). She also remembers the warmth of the sun and the blue seas. But in reality her desire to return to her childhood days of the homely security is impossible.

Carter’s *The Sadeian Woman* speaks about the indistinct interplay of voices between the mother and the daughter: ‘If the daughter is a mocking memory to the mother… then the mother is a horrid warning to the daughter. ‘As I am so you will
be’ (qtd in Meaney 96). Baym points out the dichotomy between the mother-daughter relationship. The frame of the mother is not always the mould for the daughter who is the representation of the new woman. She cites from The Lost Tradition:

confronting the Terrible Mother in order to move beyond the entanglements of the mother/daughter relationship... claiming her as metaphor for the sources of our own creative powers, women are creating new self-configurations in which the mother is no longer the necessary comfort but the seed of a new being, and in which we are no longer the protected child but the carriers of new woman whose birth is our own.” We have made the mother our child, we are self-mothered, we move beyond the entanglements of our real mother by imprisoning her in metaphor. The Terrible Mother is called on to perform a matricide. (Warhol 164)

The patriarchal definition of mother who stands more as a hindrance to the independence and freedom of the daughter is cast away and a projection of an assertive woman becomes the icon for the new woman figure. Non-existence of a mother may also tend to symbolize the nonexistence of a land, a nation, a community, a génitrice. The existence of the woman is necessary. The feminist critic Michie finds

The Other woman, exiled from the family, provides a convenient and articulate space for the exile of Otherness. All that is troubling, adulterous, troublingly adulterous within the family and within the wife can be impersonated by the Other woman. (60)
Julia by going against the social dictates rejects the traditional codification. Julia seeks a new definition of the self. Although in contrast to Norah she is viewed as the ‘other,’ it is Julia who truly understands and appreciates her mother’s desire for a nostalgic return to her ‘homeland’ dotted with the orange trees. It is in the deviant daughter that the mother realizes herself. Kloepfer rightly argues that “in Rhys... the writing self and the mother intersect: when the mother is absent or repressed, the daughter’s voice fades; when the daughter’s voice is censored, it is the mother who disappears” (458).

III

After the publication of Good Morning, Midnight, Rhys was mysteriously forgotten until she resurfaced. She was sought by the BBC to broadcast this fiction and Selma Vaz Dias re-discovered her in 1949. When she introduced herself as Rhys, her neighbour next-door had called her an imposter “impersonating a dead writer called Jean Rhys” (Wyndham 64). Rhys was accused of “every crime in the calendar from adultery through dog poisoning to... Zenophobia” (Wyndham 64). Rhys had never found acceptance within the English community. Good Morning, Midnight focuses on Sasha Jansen around whom the story revolves. Sasha Jansen is rejected by her family for travelling, against tradition, with an unmarried young man called Enno. Her actual name is Sophia. Enno renames her Sasha and they live in hotels in Paris. But one day even he deserts her after the death of the baby. Financial instability leads to their child’s death when he is few days old and Sasha’s identity as a wife and mother collapses. She returns to England and takes to excessive drinking to unburden
her grief. Now she is neither Sasha nor Sophia. A friend lends her money for a trip to Paris for a change that might help her to forget the bitterness of her past and to regain her composure. Now in Paris, through her memory, she ‘re-lives’ her happy days as she had spent with Enno. Streets, rooms and hotels swarm with stale memories. Here she meets the gigolo René who gives her company, assuming her to be rich woman. However, both Sasha and the gigolo René face financial crisis that haunted Europe after the Wars:

I haven’t any money. He hasn’t any either. We both thought that the other had money. But people are doing crazy things all over the place. The war is over. No more war – never, never, never. Après la guerre, there will be a good time everywhere.... And not to go back to London. (114)

So, both of them are exposed to the perils of tremendous monetary and psychological uncertainty causing immense anxieties. In the end she dismisses him when she realizes that René is about to desert her as he has found a better catch. However, René abuses her physically before leaving. Streip comments about René: “... he is just a gigolo in need of money, and his pretence of wishing to make love first is the real comedy. His need for her cash is all their encounter has ever been about” (134). Thus, René shares no emotional attachment to Sasha. Psychological desire for his company and the fear of isolation makes her intimidate the commis voyageur or the commercial traveller residing in the next room.

For Sasha, England is a miserable place filled with rejection and bitter memories. The narration centres upon the series of Sasha’s experiences in England and France. England is her home-country where she stands rejected by her family.
Paris becomes symbolic of her bygone happy moments of her youth spent with Enno. Visiting Paris after a considerable period she finds that she could vividly re-live her old memories. The sad realization that the happiness is a ghost of the past and has vanished like her youth haunts her more desperately. There is a sharp contrast between her past and the changing circumstances of the present. Sasha too splits into two personalities, and happiness of her past and the bitterness of her present are juxtaposed. Linett observes:

... Rhys complicates the story of how splitting functions: in some cases, she shows, a victim may reverse the typical roles of her two selves. Instead of submitting to abuse while inwardly resisting by imagining another self, a victim may at times protect herself in the real world while another part of herself is content to continue with the dangerous encounter (442).

The role of the family and of the society cannot be ruled out in the creation of this split personality. Adorno comments: “The family’s mission... is to produce neurotics by... its system of impasses, its delegated psychic repression, without which social repression would never find docile and resigned subjects, and would not succeed in chocking off the flow’s lines of escape” (361). The conflict between a sense of strong individuality and the family/social pressure gives way to a fissure that manifests itself in behavioural patterns.

The novel Good Morning, Midnight, interestingly, opens with the citation of one of Emily Dickinson’s verse:

Good morning, Midnight!

I’m coming home.
Day got tired of me –

How could I of him? (7)₅

The title of the novel displays the importance of night over day and these lines from Dickinson prepare us for the hopeless circumstances and derelict character of the protagonist. Happy times spent in Enno’s company were her mornings; the death of her child and desertion by the husband makes it midnight. She now resides in perpetual gloom waiting for the dawn of light. What Andrienne Rich commented about the reading of Dickinson’s work as a revisionary re-reading of her life, also poignantly applies to the protagonist of this novel: “...that Dickinson chose her seclusion, knowing what she needed.... She carefully selected her society and controlled the disposal of her time.... Given her vocation, she was neither eccentric nor quaint; she was determined to survive, to use her powers, to practise necessary economics” (160). Sasha Jansen is different from other Rhysian protagonists. She is monetarily more secure and can make decisions. She leaves her job at Mr Blank’s, dismisses René, and buys the painting of the Banjo player. This shows that although she is schizophrenic with a history of broken home, she is still trying to be assertive in her present crisis. She undergoes psychological turmoils. But she does not divulge to René her crisis in spite of her emotional attachment to him.

Joyce’s Ulysses through the character of Molly Bloom reveals the three domains in which a life and identity of a woman is concentrated – bridebed, childbed and deathbed. Bridebed or bedroom space is an important space in the relationship between a man and a woman. It plays a significant role in the sprouting of emotional relationship. Image of ‘homespace’ regenerates the image of the hearth or the kitchen and that of the bedroom. Domesticity centring on the hearth is absent in Rhys. The
women protagonists have no family life and there is no reference to cooking, for example. They loiter and have their meals in cheap hotels. For them, bedroom space is only a space of physical indulgence. Their relation ends soon as the passion is spent. Childbed, the second stage in a married woman’s life, also is not found in Rhys’s novels. Usually, the protagonists are not mothers. The strong bond and warmth shared between a mother and a child does not exist as they either abort or the child dies. Children are symbols of love and affection in a successful marital relation. But marital relations are a failure for the protagonists. Thus motherly relationship, perhaps, never sprouts for them. The protagonists as daughters, also, do not share a very intimate relationship with their mothers – Julia’s (After Leaving Mr Mackenzie) mother dies and Antoinette’s (Wide Sargasso Sea) mother is a mad woman who detests her. The mothers of Marya (Quartet), Anna (Voyage in the Dark) and Sasha are not mentioned at all in the narratives.

For Sasha the first two domestic spaces of bridebed and childbed are nullified. Though the protagonist of the novel is schismatic, she is the most independent of all the Rhysian female protagonists who can afford to satiate her desires economically. She suffers from psychological loneliness as she is abandoned by her husband and for the death of her child. She comes to Paris with the hope to re-live her by-gone days filled with happiness and security. Paris becomes symbolic of the bygone happy moments of her youth. Visiting Paris after a considerable period she finds that she can have vivid glimpses of the good times. Financial stability for Sasha, though temporary, is denied to the male characters of this fiction and she enjoys some superiority as she is better placed than most of them.

The protagonist is not different from the other non-conventional female characters created by Rhys. She problematizes her circumstances by journeying with a
man named Enno to whom she is in no way related. Situation becomes unpleasant after she returns to London from her trip with Enno. Her family disowns her directly: “We consider you as dead... why didn’t you drown yourself in the Seine” (42)? They had even refused to call her by her English name Sophia. Strictness of English conventionality is revealed here and it is ironic that in the English social and moral codes of conduct, reputation become primary to the attachment shared between the family members. Family space becomes a closed and stifling space that punishes her for unconventionality rather than accepting her. Instead of protecting her they disown her candidly. The dissolution of the English name suggests denial of the English identity and thus her English past. She was unconventional and un-English and England has no consolation for its females. René (Good Morning, Midnight) tells Sasha: “You talk like that because you’re a woman, and everybody knows England isn’t a woman’s country. You know the proverb – “Unhappy as a dog in Turkey or a woman in England”” (157). English snobbishness is also criticised in Serge Rubin’s (a Russian Jewish émigré) narration of his experience to Sasha when he was in London. The incident centres upon a drunken Martinique woman, brought to England as a mistress of the Englishman who lived in the flat above him. She is exploited by this Englishman for almost two years. She is confined to a room which is almost equivalent to an attic. In the entire span of a day, she is allowed only two hours of fresh air at night. Though she maintains the interior domestic space, she is inhumanly treated, not recognised as an individual by the man she serves. He, at the same time, is heedless to her perils and miseries. But the little English girl living next to them calls her as a ‘dirty woman, that she smelt bad, that she hadn’t any right in the house’ (97). The child also tells the mulatto woman, “I hate you and I wish you were dead” (97). This child who is only seven or eight years old knows ‘how to be cruel and who it was
safe to be cruel to’ (98). Czarnecki observes: ‘...she, a white English child, has absorbed her country’s color and gender bias and knows that brown-skinned women with accents are suitable targets for derision, even from children’ (27).

Sasha re-emerges not as an English girl any more. Seine, which is suggestive of France and its libertine lifestyle, brings her a new identity. But this identity is also short-lived. Shortly after the birth of their still-born child, the husband deserts her. He blames her of sexual ‘passivity.’ Birth of a child is a creative process symbolic of fruitful relationship. But the death of the infant suggests the failure of their relationship. Johnson mentions that:

Whether or not men and women would “naturally” write differently
When a woman speaks about the death of children in any sense other
than that of pure loss, a powerful taboo is being violated.... any death
of a child is perceived as a crime committed by the mother, something
a mother ought by definition to be able to prevent. (641)

Sasha also fails as a mother as she cannot feed her child as she is dry of milk. The lack of money which is the real reason for its death becomes insignificant. She was a ‘bad’ mother and a wife as she fails in her societal responsibility. Thomas comments: “Her sense of herself as a bad mother because she does not have the money to nourish and support him, maternal love expressed as “torture”(50), is exacerbated when insomnia and anxiety dry up her milk” (124). Physicality of the mother is also emphasized here to reinforce the effect of psychological unwillingness. Maternal love rests unfulfilled, the dead child is wrapped in white and the mother is bandaged by the midwife to wipe off all the traces of childbirth. Children also connote a sense of ‘rootedness’ and brings in a familial atmosphere. The death of the child denies this
prospect of homeliness to her. Everything is gone but memory of the dissolution of
hope remains. Carr reflects on the loss of Sasha’s child: “What is so disturbing about
the death of Sasha’s son is how clean it is, how quiet, how orderly, how separate; the
closeness, mingling, embodiness, messiness of motherhood is hardly there” (71 – 2).
Sasha accepts her fate calmly and is equally silent when deserted by Enno. She
reflects about the broken relationship: “Did I love Enno at the end? Did he ever love
me? I don’t know. Only it was after that that I began to go to pieces. Not all at once,
of course. First this happened, and then that happened...” (143). Fragmentation,
uncertainty and indecisiveness result after the shattering of the last relationship she
has for herself. She once more relapses into the state of non-identity resulting from
the shattering of all familial ties:

I have no pride – no pride, no name, no face, no country. I don’t
belong anywhere. Too sad, too sad.... It doesn’t matter, there I am, like
one of those straws which floats round the edge of a whirlpool and is
gradually sucked into the centre, the dead centre, where everything is
stagnant, everything is calm. (44)

Enno and her family belong to the past. Life for her becomes a series of meaningless
custom and existence itself becomes absurd with the tarnishing of bonds:

Eat. Drink. Walk. March. Back to the hotel. To the Hotel of Arrival,
the Hotel of Departure, the Hotel of the Future, the Hotel of Martinique
and the Universe.... back to the hotel without a name in the street
without a name.... this is the Hotel Without-a-Name in a Street
Without-a-Name, and the clients have no names, no faces. (145)
Even her experience with René and the commis voyageur whom she befriends in Paris with her second-coming are no exception. The voyageur living next to her room sees her as a ‘female’ who can satiate him and for René she is a woman with money who can temporarily sustain him. Sasha’s fear of alienation returns to haunt her. She muses: “You fall into blackness. That’s the past – or perhaps the future. And you know that there is no past, no future, there is only this blackness, changing faintly, slowly, but always the same” (172). Perhaps it is this feeling of loneliness that makes her impassively reject René even before he leaves her. Her relationship with René, the gigolo, is for companionship. But her embittered and schizophrenic self simultaneously accepts and rejects him as he tries to intimidate her, violating the personal space of her physical self. But emotionally she cannot deny him. Loneliness and bitterness of the experience fills her with a sense of loss.

Abel, speaking of schizophrenic patients, analyses them as persons with “impoverished affect, apathy, obsessive thought and behaviour coupled with the inability to take real initiative, a sense of the unreality of both the world and the self, and a feeling of detachment from the body” (156). Frickey feels that the ending becomes a ‘symbolic affirmation of her own condition when she embraces the wretched travelling salesman, “another poor devil of a human being” who comes into her room as the gigolo leaves. In giving herself to the one who embodies her own wretchedness, she is finally reconciled with herself” (8). She is determined to change her fate and instead of being the rejected seeks to avenge by rejecting. Previously, she had been judged by her employer Mr Blank with his fixed and abominable eyes. But she decides to rebuff the oblique gaze of the world of the Blanks finding a different way of looking at her place. Mr Blank is the hegemonic authority who has the economic power to dismiss her at his will. He aims at the mechanism of ‘thought
control.’ He tries to control her self-definition by making her accept that he has the	right to nominate her as ridiculous and despicable. Mellown calls it a ‘reversed
mimicry of her own life’ (462) as she turns down the gigolo. Traumatic experiences
leave her embittered, broken and neurotic at the end:

I cry in the way that hurts right down, that hurts your heart and your
stomach. Who is this crying? The same one who laughed on the landing,
吻ed him and was happy. This is me, this is myself, who is crying. The
other – how do I know who the other is? She isn’t me. (184)

Gregg notes: “An artist manqué, Sasha interprets her “life” through language,
books, music, painting, writing, and memory” (154). Art becomes therapeutic. In
Moore’s opinion, “art is not about the expression of talent or the making of pretty
things. It is about the preservation and containment of soul. It is about arresting life
and making it available for contemplation” (303). She engages in the weaving of her
experiences through polyglotal fusion of German, French and English. Sasha Jansen
moves from a schizophrenic’s division of self to a creation of intra-psychic
relationships. She replaces her relationships with the external world. Laing explicates:

The individual’s self-relationship becomes a pseudo-interpersonal one,
and the self treats the false selves as though they were other people
whom it depersonalizes.... From within, the self now looks out at the
false things being said and done and detests the speaker and doer as
though he were something else. In all this there is an attempt to create
relationships to persons and things within the individual without recourse
to the outer world of persons and things at all. The individual is
developing a microcosmos within himself. (qtd. in Abel 161)
‘Home’ space becomes non-existent. All she can do is to console herself. She tries to dissuade her uncertain personality and give a meaning to her life through memory. She poses to display her confidence by purchasing artistic objects that would to define and express her. Music and poetry are left as reminiscences of her bygone days. They sometime relieve her troubled mind tortured with embittered experiences. By shattering spatial boundaries, travelling in multilocality, decentered and psychotic, she remains an eternal voyager. She nullifies the perceived space and is confined to the lived space. The two spaces are in no way the personal space where the Rhysian female can relocate her distorted self. She becomes a solitary recluse in the conceived space through nostalgic recollections of the selective memories of the past. It is here that she belongs, and re-‘living’ this space facilitates in concretizing her fragmented self as she journeys away from the psychological space of the social other.

Deleuze and Guattari uphold the fragmented self of the schizo-subject visualizing and admiring the individuality and multiplicity within them. As has already been discussed in Chapter I, the schizo-subject, they argue, negates all chances of homely confinement as it can never be territorialized into ego formations. ‘Home,’ for them has become a harmful site of repressions of individuality. To promote a positive individuality, a subject must flee these subjugations within the home where it resides uncomfortably in the hierarchy of representations. They have seen homelessness as an ideal state of pure movement outward, and find that an individual like a nomad can explore its varied possibilities. As there are no suppression, sacrifice or boundaries between the private and the public there is an infinite possibilities of dispersal and intensification, a continual movement of nomadic existence valorizing the state of homelessness.
In the Caribbean narratives, as we have seen in the earlier chapter, the concept of home operates at three levels – landscape, family and memory. But in the European fictions home as the first two categories are absent. Female protagonists’ journey away from England, and their stay abroad, does not evoke any sense of nostalgia. On the other hand, they find the English social space as manipulative and exploitative. England, as a space, is a ‘non-home.’ It may exist as a ‘homeland,’ but, it is not a welcoming place with which they can identify politically, ideologically, or socially…” (Saffron 91). They reject England and are rejected by England. Paris gives them some consolation but it does not offer any feeling of home and of belonging. For instance, Marya’s (Quartet) existence in Paris was no different from which she had in London. She lacked ‘solidity’ and ‘the necessary fixed-background’ (10) as she had in England. As she walks in the streets of Paris, the houses looked ‘tall, grey, closely shuttered’ (29) and equally unfriendly. Alone in Paris, she felt like a ‘ghost’ and not like an individual belonging to a place and finding acceptance. For Julia (After Leaving Mr Mackenzie), the sensation in Paris is almost similar – meeting Mr Mackenzie in a café she felt ‘pale as a ghost’ (28) and returning to Paris after her mother’s death she looked ‘transparent, like a ghost’ (181) and in a street filled with ‘grey’ shadows she was caught in an hour ‘between the dog and wolf’ (191). For Sasha (Good Morning, Midnight) also, Paris does not bring any consolation. It invokes her old memories making her aware of her happy bygone days and the gloominess of the present. When she feels alienated, the streets in Paris become ‘dark, powerful, magical’ (107). England completely suffocates them, Paris partially relieves them. Totality of belonging and cordiality that they desired is even eluded in Paris.
They were denied acceptance in England and they are exploited in Paris. As a result, metaphorically, Paris remains an ‘unhomely home’ and England a ‘non-home.’ There are only slight glimpses of Adorno’s ‘period house’ or Lefebvre’s ‘lived’ spaces through the selective experiences recalled by the women protagonists which give them momentary solace or heightens their present misery. Kinship relationship that makes a family is nullified in each of the novels — for Marya after being deserted by Stephan (Quartet); for Julia after her mother’s death (After Leaving Mr Mackenzie); for Sasha after the child’s death and Enno’s desertion (Good Morning, Midnight).

This is quite in contrast to what we find in the West Indian novels. Coldness, loneliness, insecurity is all that the protagonists find as they journey between London and Paris. The women in the novels forever live in a ‘heterotopic’ space. They are the outsiders, the amateurs or the prostitutes, the psychotic or the schizophrenic. Home/homelessness boundary which is more prominent in the West Indian novels is not much evident, as homelessness is what they know as the constant element in their lives. The home space through its absence becomes an important space to aspire after. The intensity with which the Creole protagonists could relate themselves to their happy childhood is absent here. There was no happiness of innocence but the punctuated bitterness of experience. Psychologically, also, the sense of familial warmth and homeliness remains absent. Homing desire in the protagonists make them traverse multiple locations and experiment with multiple relationships. But at the end they emerge more isolated and disillusioned than before, living in a ‘heterotopic’ space of ‘crisis heterotopias’ or kriz heterotopyasi and ‘heterotopias of deviation’ or sapna heterotopyalari.

Francis Wyndham raises an important issue about the identity and development, or lack of it, of the female characters in some of Rhys’s works. He
maintains that the women characters in *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie, Voyage in the Dark and Good Morning, Midnight* are similar – they are caught in different circumstances. Ramchand mentions that Wyndham links *Sargasso Sea* with the preceding fictions by recognising Antoinette Cosway as “a logical development of Marya (*Quartet*), Julia (*After Leaving Mr Mackenzie*), Anna (*Voyage in the Dark*), and Sasha (*Good Morning, Midnight*) who were also alienated, menaced, at odds with life” (194; titles within bracket added). Naipaul also insists:

Jean Rhys’s novels, written over a period of thirty-seven years, modify one another and make a whole. They record a total experience, with varying emphasis. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the vision of nightmare at the end, with the historical setting giving distance, as in a nightmare. (56)

Thus the critics observe the linear development of the female protagonists in Rhysian novels. Dilemma of categorizing these females as a single woman at different stages of development or as separate women makes Savory emphasise on Rhys’s autobiographical aspect, “... if ‘the’ Rhys woman is thought to exist, she is often connected to Rhys herself: my view is that Rhys created fiction out of her experience and eventually her autobiography owed as much to her fiction as to her memory” (58). Carr feels that the similarity found in Rhys is not that of ‘character’ but of ‘position’. She states:

Seeing how organized society treats others who are not acceptable, others living in the margins, her protagonists have more understanding of their own lives; they can recognise in them the emotional storms, despair, anger, hope, compassion hatred and need, which their position brings. (60)
This means that the protagonists found in the different fictions of Rhys are not the same character. They are women who face the similarity of situations. Although we find much similarity in the situation of the women protagonists each one has a different attitude towards crisis. When Anna and Marya are premature enough to trust Stephan and Walter, Julia knows that the home she longs for is non-existent and Sasha’s search for it makes her schizophrenic. Antoinette’s vision of ‘home’ is realized through the colour and memories of her home Jamaica as she jumps into the fire to embrace the past where her identity resides. All the women protagonists are psychologically distressed, and financially insecure – they are drifters, vulnerable, exploited. If the thematic structure of the fictions be considered each narration has the same crux – the dilemma of a derelict female, monetarily insecure, victimized by the society. But their essence lies in her treatment of the theme. Rhys concentrates more on the inner recesses of the protagonists’ mind as affected by their external experiences than on the drabness of reality. This, moreover, reminds us that they still struggle on in life with a quest for homeliness, but their attempt is nullified and they realise its nonexistence. Comfort, at times, is attained through their selective memories of pleasant experiences.

With the protagonists being constant drifters, and with the absence of the permanent ties of the home, the constant journey of the protagonists are from country to country, place to place, room to room and men to men. They frequent continually in impermanent spaces or non-places or hotels and streets which serve more as places of communication, transience and transactions without promising any stability or lodging lastingly. They fail to identify themselves with a permanent place or person. With a longing to realize the reality of their perceived image of psychological home, they are in constant motion trying to accept the absence of their realized idea.
They are denied the sacred space of 'home' to settle in, and their idea of 'home' is a mismatch with that they realize in reality. A hotel, where the protagonists are lodged, is, as is already pointed out, a temporary place of residence with no or little scope for interaction with others. Living in a hotel with strangers gives the sense of impermanence to the female characters who desire to be settled in a familial domestic space which would not be a threat to their happiness and female agency. Owing to diverse circumstances, they are forced to change their lodging frequently moving from one hotel to another.

The Rhysian characters have often been described as passive victims of circumstances. But they are not really passive. Their will to live on and their hope for wish fulfilment bring constant disillusionment for them. Marya shouts and protests in front of the Heidlers and she finally slaps Mr Heidler when she can bear him no longer. Julia in the restaurant hits Mr Mackenzie with her glove to show his insignificance. Anna jams the cigarette butt on Walter Jeffries’ hand when he and Vincent ridicule her. Sasha coldly dismisses René when he wants to make love. And Antoinette stabs her step-brother Richard and sets Thornfield Hall on fire to match her hatred to that of Rochester.

They might be victims of circumstances but they do have a strong voice of protest. Emery argues: “Seemingly passive victims, they resist social violence and degradation – through dreams, hallucinations, memory, and madness. The formal devices that structure these apparently subjective events allow the heroines to create and re-create their displaced selves, defiantly refusing a one-dimensional reduction of identity (419). In fact, everyone was a victim to the fast changing attitudes and circumstances of modernism.7 Rhysian protagonists ‘belong’ to the fragmented post-World War I era but they do not ‘really live’ on any topographical land. They fail to
establish the close connections existing between place, identity and morality and in the world they linger as people 'without place.' Their idyllic world construed of selective happy experiences is where they linger and it is this domain that helps them living on. Home, as we find in these novels, is through fragments of selective memories of pleasant experiences that they had found at various points of time.

Notes

1. Rhys living in the culture-capitals in the heyday of Modernism was also influenced by the movements in paintings that developed during those times. Her fictions integrate paintings symbolically with the thematic crux of the text and reveal the situation of her women protagonists. Instance of naturalistic painting is found in the description of the exotic wallpaper in Julia’s (After Leaving Mr Mackenzie) hotel room of a strange, wingless half-bird, half-lizard creature prostrating itself with its beak open before a large bird sitting on a branch. Julia also is a flightless ‘creature,’ an outsider and dependent to the predatory males, large and powerful, living in the society. Similarly, the second painting, a reproduction of Modigliani of a woman lying in a couch with ‘a sort of proud body.... A face like a mask, a long, dark face and very big eyes’ (52; emphasis added) laughs and speaks only to Julia, “I am more real than you. But at the same time I am you. I am all that matters of you” (53; emphasis original). It mocks Julia. Both are ‘framed’ women, the woman as a painter’s model and Julia commoditised as men’s mistresses. Moreover the dark skin of the woman displays that she is a non-European other, like Julia who belonged to Brazil. The mask is
symbolic of the European incomprehensibility of the non-white women, for whom such women represented nothing but primitivism and sensuality. The picture makes her aware of her subordination mocking at the same time her inability of self-representation.

Anna (Voyage in the Dark) also finds the picture on the cover of Emile Zola’s Nana reflecting her. Nana, interestingly, an anagram of Anna is also a commoditised woman who makes her living devouring the Parisian masculinity. But when Nana was successful Anna isn’t. The cover displayed ‘a coloured picture of a stout, dark woman brandishing a wine-glass... sitting on the knee of a bald-headed man in evening dress’ (9; emphasis added). When Nana had avenged herself and conquered the masculine, Anna is used by them. Nana’s sad lonely death in the end, consumed by small-pox, serves as an exposition to the critical situation of Anna after her abortion. However, it at the same time reveals the colonial disjuncture and the sense of non-belonging faced by the amateurs.

The painting of the two headed four arms banjo player singing a song given by serge to Sasha (Good Morning, Midnight) is also significant. It is given to Sasha for therapeutic purpose to rid the psychological pain. Her history of loss and her present state of exposure to being ridiculed is reminded through his ‘gentle, humble, resigned, mocking, a little mad’ (109) attitude depicted by the painter. She is reminded of her traumatic past and also of an uncertain future. But the unheard note of his song that he sings in timelessness is understood by Sasha with René’s desertion. His song sings of the past, the present and the future of Sasha which is nothing but of endless misery.
Antoinette (Wide Sargasso Sea) associates herself with the picture of the Miller’s Daughter, a lovely English girl with brown curls and blue eyes with her dress slipping off her shoulder which symbolizes promiscuity and wantonness. For Rochester she existed in a similar frame as when after their initial estrangement she tries to makeover she wore the white dress he loved and it too had slipped off over one shoulder.

Thus Rhys through her pen painted naturalistic paintings with which were ekphrastic. That means, the static work of art within the narrative in her fictions becomes articulate while the main narrative remains temporarily suspended. The plot becomes better emphasized through the detailed picture than through the mode of straight forward narration.

2. Homelessness, fragmentation and degeneration in the life of modern men had also been the crux of T.S. Eliot’s “The Wasteland.” In the entire poem Eliot critiques the post First World War situation which resulted in the collapse of true psychological and marital relationships. People led their lives submerged in sensuality. As men were materialistic, women also were perceived as nothing more than the object of exploitation. No understanding between the man and his wife makes the wife neurotic and insane. Pubs and prostitutes as Lil is introduced and professional woman as the typist girl reflects that after satiating the ‘carbuncled’ clerk, he leaves and she heaves a sigh of relief. No domesticity and cooking is there as men and women survived on canned and junk foods.

3. Jean Lenglet’s novel Barred or In de Strik was published in 1932. Its French equivalent Sous les Verrous was published a year later. Lenglet narrates similar episode as is found in Quartet but from his perspective he condemns Stephan’s
wife more than him. Diana Athill in her preface to *Smile Please* tells us that Rhys had translated and edited Lenglet's work and had 'given way to the temptation to cut a few — a very few — sentences about herself which stuck her as “too unfair”' (15). Interestingly, she had cut only one sentence in *In de Strik* which read: “Stania was not free from coquetry” to “Stania was not free.”

Ford Madox Ford in his novel *When the Wicked Man* villainizes Rhys and hints at Heildler's ‘savaging’ of Marya and her abjection like a dog before her master. Kineke points out: “The character who “represents” Rhys in this novel is notable for three things: the indecipherability of her color for the male protagonist, the rapaciousness of her sexuality, and, a characteristic no doubt linked to the first two, her penchant for underworld contacts” (292). He exposes the ambiguity of a mixed-race Creole defined appropriately by a white male and the novel sums up her type as: “Creoles are as noted for their indolence as for their passion. On that basis she becomes entirely comprehensible” (Kineke 293).

Stella Bowen had written about the affair in her memoir *Drawn from Life* where Rhys had been too horridly portrayed. Bowen states Ford's dependence on women to “keep him young... refresh his ego... restore his belief in his powers” (Kineke 283) and Rhys had played both the roles and became his ultimate disciple. Thomas mentions that Bowen represents Rhys as a Pandora figure in the bourgeois, homely world clinging to Ford for mercenary motives and not for love.

4. This poem of R. C. Dunning cited as an epigraph was originally published in Ford’s journal *Transatlantic Review*. 
5. The complete poem of Dickinson has been cited by Rhys before she begins her novel:

Good morning, Midnight!
I’m coming home,
Day got tired of me –
How could I of him?

Sunshine was a sweet place,
I liked to stay –
But Morn didn’t want me – now –
So good night, Day!

6. Henri Lefebvre categorizes space into three kinds – the conceived perceived, and the lived. The measurable and mapable space is defined as the conceived space, the social space consisting of daily experiences the perceived, and, the subjective and imagined space filled with representations and images is the lived space.

7. Gertrude Stein observing the spirit of modernism writes: “Writers have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they really live” (qtd. in Bradbury102). Rhys also belonged to the period when modernism had its full sway and she did not ‘live’ or ‘belong’ to any country in the true sense of the term. Her characters are also representation of the fragmentation suffered by the modern men. She had to spend her years in England. Geographically, she shifted to several places in England trying to be comfortable, but psychologically she led an ‘unhomely’ life here. Like her characters, she was psychologically dislocated. Alienation for her becomes stronger as she is caught between the adversities of cultures and broken relationship apart from the geographical dislocation that she
suffered from. In Europe the collapse of traditional values welcome her and she is left with no other consolation apart from that she acquired from reading and writing. Writing itself became the absent space for which she longed in real life and in the blank white pages she documented scraps of thoughts of her flotsam self drifting in search of a familiar space