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**Imprisonment in Jean Rhys's Novel *Good Morning, Midnight***

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## Abstract

Nowadays, when women are actively fighting for their rights and becoming more independent, women's literature is very important because it reveals many significant aspects about woman's position in the male-dominated society. This BA paper analyzes the novel *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939) written by the Caribbean writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Jean Rhys. Jean Rhys's novel *Good Morning, Midnight* depicts the life of woman who is poor, homeless, depressed, alienated as well as imprisoned in the male-dominated society. The aim of the present BA paper is to examine how imprisonment of the female protagonist is expressed in this novel and what makes the main character imprisoned. The analysis is launched on the close reading of the text and is based on the feminist literary theory, mainly on the works of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, and Susan Bordo. In addition, Michel Foucault's ideas about the Panopticon and surveillance are applied in order to strengthen the analysis of the confinement of the female. The analysis shows that the most significant aspects that reveal psychological and social imprisonment in this Jean Rhys's novel are the imagery of confinement, the language of the oppressed female and the pervasive idea of the cult of beauty.

# 1. Introduction

Nowadays, when women are actively fighting for their rights and achieving more and more, women's literature is very important because it reveals many significant topics about the life of female and her position in the male-dominated society. Alienation and imprisonment are the most important topics of women's literature, because nowadays a lot of women still feel confined by social and ideological constraints. Many writers and feminist literary critics in their works also talk about female characters who are oppressed, alienated and entrapped by social constraints and who have no rights or voice in the patriarchal society.

The Caribbean writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Jean Rhys (1890-1979) is probably the best known for her postcolonial novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) in which she discusses power relationship between men and women. By the time this novel was published the feminist movement was developing and becoming more important that is why Rhys aroused much feminist interest and criticism (Savory 2004: 14). According to Savory, "Rhys began to write seriously in Paris right at the exciting moment when then Modernist movement was taking the city by storm, and, whilst she walked her own aesthetic road, inevitably she was influenced by ideas vibrant in contemporary literary circles" (2009: 14). She employed modernist strategies such as ellipses, stream of consciousness as well as irony (ibid.). Rhys's identity and experience are complex, because "she is both colonial and postcolonial, white but Creole", and her works and views clearly demonstrate these contradictions (Savory 2009: 22). Also, the development of postcolonial studies meant that Rhys became a central literary icon (Savory 2004: 14). Rhys's literary legacy is really significant and extraordinary: it consists of many novels and short stories such as, *The Left Bank* (1927), *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* (1931), *Voyage in the Dark* (1934), *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), *The Collected Short Stories* (1987) and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939) which is the object of the present study.

*Good Morning, Midnight* is Rhys's masterpiece, "mordantly funny and at times highly satirical, very stylized and brilliantly observed but it has generally been far less noticed and definitely far less loved than other novels" (Savory 2009: 66). Jean Rhys in the novel *Good Morning, Midnight* shows that women bristle with many difficulties and are usually alienated. Rhys's personal life was marked by loss, pain and depression which are dominant topics of this novel as well as of other Rhys's works. That is why some of her experiences, such as, the loss of her child, disappointing love experience, alcoholism, suffering from depression are similar to those, which are presented in the novel. It could be said that Jean Rhys partially depicts her own life story in *Good Morning, Midnight*, because many of her life experiences

correspond to the life of the heroine (Pizzichini 2010; Savory 2009). The protagonist of the novel clearly unveils the traits of the woman who is an outcast and the lowest of the low. According to Savory, “*Good Morning, Midnight*, is about woman falling into self-destructive middle age, and abandoning even the will to survive” (2009: 66). The critic also claims that *Good Morning, Midnight* is “Rhys’s bleakest novel, bleak as the year in which it appeared, 1939, when the Second World War broke out” (ibid.).

Many recent studies have focused on the topic of confinement in Jean Rhys’s *Good Morning, Midnight* and in those studies critics try to explain what makes the main character Sasha imprisoned. For instance, Tomansulo in her essay “‘Out of the Deep, Dark River’: Rhys’s Underground Woman in *Good Morning, Midnight*” talks about the marginalized woman and claims that the novel is perhaps “Rhys’s starkest portrayal of female alienation” (2011: 2). Pizzichini, who is interested in Rhys’s life and literary works claims that *Good Morning, Midnight* is related to “the female experience of urban alienation, poverty and loneliness” (2010: 306). According to Kennedy, *Good Morning, Midnight* “combines a pervasive sense of broad social injustice, along with parallel sexual injustices and also compels us to face the particular, to show us a protagonist destroyed not only by her own fatal flaws, but by those of the society around her” (2000: 10). She adds that the main character Sasha “knows she can no longer make the grade in every day life, she has become irretrievably alien and isolated” (ibid.). Savory says that Rhys in *Good Morning, Midnight* “offers a subtle and damning demonstration of the bankrupt spiritual context of a Europe flirting with the threat of totalitarianism” (2004: 110). Therefore, the environment, in which Sasha lives in, is ruled by social constraints which destroys her. Also, Savory adds that “in both Rhys’s life and her fiction, the temporary, cheap rented room provides no encouragement to pursue the higher things of life” (2009: 19).

Another critic, Gardiner, in her article “Good Morning, Midnight, Good Night, Modernism” talks about alienation and raises the issue of woman’s home and the space of the room which is significant in order to explain the confinement (1982: 234). She claims that language is a very strong tool which can show power. According to Gardiner, the language of the oppressed reveals alienation as well as oppression and can tell us more about the inner state of the oppressed (1982: 236). Harrison says that “the tone of Rhys’s early novels is that of the heroine ‘talking back’ (but without tangible effect) to the man or men controlling her life” (1988: 64). Taylor-Batty in her work “Multilingualism in Modern Fiction” (2013) talks about the language of Rhys’s protagonist Sasha. The critic points out that “French – explicitly not

Sasha's 'own' language – here emphasizes her lack of cultural or linguistic 'belonging'" (2013: 102). Czarnecki's article "'Yes, it can be sad, the sun in the afternoon': Kristevan Depression in Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight*" (2009) deals with another important aspect of female confinement – depression. She observes that "the aberrant behaviour and nonsensical language" of the heroine may be understood as symptoms of Kristevan depression (2009: 63). The critic adds that "particular controversy surrounds Sasha Jansen of *Good Morning, Midnight* whose problematic language and actions render her perhaps the greatest conundrum among Rhys's women" (ibid.).

Despite the fact that critics have analyzed many important aspects of female alienation and imprisonment as presented in Rhys's novel, there are still some interesting points for interpretation that have not been widely discussed or have not been exhausted. Many recent critics of *Good Morning, Midnight* have not paid much attention to the cult of beauty and various stereotypes and norms that are constructed by the male-dominated society and which make her imprisoned. The relation between Foucault's Panopticon and the patriarchal society as presented in the novel has not been widely elaborated or might have been even overlooked by critics.

Moreover, the language of the oppressed woman is also a very interesting and rather unresearched topic which could be widely discussed by paying more attention to the language of the novel because Rhys's writing style and the language of the narrative can reveal many gripping points about the heroine. Therefore, it would seem that a further investigation is needed in order to analyze the language of the oppressed female and to explain how the cult of beauty and obsession with her look make Sasha psychologically, physically and socially imprisoned.

In this BA thesis I will continue the line of research established by the critics and I will analyze what makes the main character Sasha imprisoned. Thus, the purpose of the present paper is to disclose in what ways the theme of imprisonment is expressed in Jean Rhys's novel *Good Morning, Midnight*. The most significant aspects of imprisonment caused by patriarchal structures that will be discussed are the imagery of confinement (e.g. the rooms, hotels, shops, restaurants), the language of the oppressed female as well as social imprisonment of woman intailed by the cult of beauty.

The close reading technique will be used in order to analyze this novel. The analysis will be based on the feminist literary theory, mainly on *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* written by Sandra Gilbert and Susan

Gubar and Susan Bordo's work *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*. Also, in order to strengthen the analysis some ideas of Foucault's Panopticon will be applied.



## **2. Conceptualizing the Female's Position and her Imprisonment in the Male-dominated Society**

Theoretical background that helps to conduct the literary analysis of Jean Rhys's novel *Good Morning, Midnight* will be presented in this section.

Feminism and feminist literary theory play an important role in literature and society. According to Freedman, democratic systems created the necessity of feminism and the means to strengthen it (2002: 2). She claims that "feminist politics originated where capitalism, industrial growth, democratic theory, and socialist critiques converged as they did in Europe and North America after 1800" when "women began to agitate for equal education, economic, and political opportunities" (ibid.). Braidotti describes feminism as "the movement that brings into practice the dimension of sexual difference through the critique of gender as a power institution" (1997: 60). Therefore, the feminist movement is very significant because it "continues to be one of the most powerful struggles for social justice taking place in the world today" (Hooks 2014: 4).

Feminist literary theory developed from feminism which is a social movement. This literary theory focuses on gender inequality, women's rights, power relations and sexuality of women. Feminism influenced the way how literary texts are evaluated, interpreted and read. According to Braidotti, "feminist theory is a two-layered project involving the critique of existing definitions, representations as well as the elaboration of alternative theories about women" (1997: 61). Rooney describes feminist literary theories as "the collective conversations – often contradictory, sometimes heated – of feminist readers concerning the meaning and practice of reading, the intersections of subject formations such as race, class, sexuality and gender and the work of literature" (2006: 17). This school of thought, also, tries to define and analyze how female writers are restricted in patriarchal society as well as in the literary world, in which male writers dominate. Feminist literary theory addresses the exclusion of women writers from literary canon. According to Kowaleski-Wallace, feminist literary theory "engages with the political and social goals of feminism, and it concentrates on literary culture and theory as a possible site of struggle and as a means of eventual change" (2009: 7).

It is significant to mention that feminist literary theory is divided into French literary theory and Anglo-American feminist literary theory which is crucial for the analysis. Kowaleski-

Wallace describes Anglo-American feminist literary theory as “an approach to literature that analyzes literary texts, the conditions of their production, reception, circulation, and their cultural effects from the perspective of gender difference” (2009: 22). During the years Anglo-American literary criticism has changed and “the object of feminist literary analyses has shifted from the portrayal of women in men’s writing to the construction of gender in both male and female authors’ literary texts” (ibid.). As Kowaleski-Wallace claims, feminist literary criticism concentrated on the “literature by women that was still considered a marginal and minor phenomenon within literary history” (2009: 23).

The feminist literary theory is essential for the analysis of *Good Morning, Midnight*. Gilbert and Gubar’s work entitled *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979) plays a crucial role in the Anglo-American feminist literary theory. In this work they concentrate on Victorian literature and analyze it from the feminist perspective. The critics claim that women writers are confined in their writing by the patriarchal structures. Also, women writers did not have their female precursors in the literary society. Therefore, women writers were excluded from literary world and had to fight for their acknowledgement because male writers were dominant and the process of writing was understood only as a male activity.

In this work Gilbert and Gubar speak about two different types of female characters the “angel in the house” and “monster or madwoman” (2000: 20). The angel in the house is expected to be devoted and submissive to her husband, while monster is the contrast of the angel. The authors claim that this classification of female characters stems from the works of male writers who usually ascribe their female characters to those groups.

Furthermore, Gilbert and Gubar in their work, which is the masterpiece of feminist literary criticism, present and discuss the issue of female imprisonment which has been a relevant topic for many years. Gilbert and Gubar claim that „women’s literature is marked by obsessive imagery of confinement that reveals the ways in which female artists feel trapped” (2000: 64). Also, dramatizations of imprisonment and escape are pervasive in female literature: “works in this tradition generally begin by using houses as primary symbols of female imprisonment [but] they also use much of the other paraphernalia of ‘woman’s space’ to enact their central symbolic drama of enclosure and escape” (2000: 85). The authors say that “ladylike veils and costumes, mirrors, paintings, statues, locked cabinets, drawers, trunks, strong-boxes and other domestic furnishing appear and reappear in female novels” (ibid.).

Therefore, imagery of confinement plays an important role in women's literature and depicts emotional and physical imprisonment of woman in the male-dominated society.

In addition, Gilbert and Gubar try to explain why the imagery of confinement is used in female literature, and claim that "women authors, reflect the literal reality of their own confinement in the constraints they depict, and so all at least begin with the same unconscious and conscious purpose in employing such special imagery" (2000: 87). Thus, the metaphor of confinement is applicable to women writers. The house image becomes "a topography of women's inmost being" (ibid.).

It should be added that according to Gilbert and Gubar, confinement can be both literal and figurative (2000: 83). They explain that "literally, women like Dickinson, Brontë, and Rossetti were imprisoned in their homes, their father's houses; indeed, almost all nineteenth-century women were in some sense imprisoned in men's houses. Figuratively, such women were <...> locked into male texts, texts from which they could escape only through ingenuity and indirection" (ibid.).

Interestingly enough, women writers were trapped in both the houses and the institutions of patriarchy (2000: 85). That is why it is not surprising that "spatial imagery of enclosure and escape, [which usually becomes obsessive] characterizes much of their writing" (2000: 83). Gilbert and Gubar stress that the imagery of confinement is dominant not only in the literature of nineteenth-century women but also in the writings of their descendants (ibid.).

Also, the distinctively female diseases such as "anorexia and agoraphobia are closely associated with the dramatic/thematic pattern" of imprisonment and escape (2000: 85). Gilbert and Gubar add that "defining themselves as prisoners of their own gender <...> women frequently create characters who attempt to escape, if only into nothingness, through the suicidal self-starvation of anorexia" and other suicidal actions (2000: 85-86).

Moreover, women are in a way related to the special imagery, to be more precise, the images of the houses. According to Gilbert and Gubar, "the female womb has certainly, always and everywhere, been a child's first and most satisfying house, a source of food and dark security, and therefore a mythic paradise imaged over and over again in sacred caves, secret shrines, consecrated huts" (2000: 88). Confinement is related to childbirth and as the authors claim, "a womb can be transformed into a tomb" because "the confinement of pregnancy replicates the confinement of society" (ibid.). Thus, the notion of imprisonment is related to women not only because of the attitude of society towards women, but also because of certain biological

aspects which are related to childbirth, female body and biological usefulness of women. The authors prove this idea by claiming that “women can feel imprisoned within their own body” (2000: 89). It is clear enough that the aspect of the female body is central when describing the feminist literary theory.

Another work which is meaningful for the analysis and helps to look at the notion of the female body as well as social confinement in Rhys’s novel is *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (2003) written by Susan Bordo. In this work Bordo presents the notion of the female body which is complex and can be related to confinement. She claims that “women are more obsessed with their bodies than men, less satisfied with them and permitted less latitude with them by themselves, by men, and by the culture” (2003: 154). The body is essential for woman because woman and her awareness of herself are closely linked with the perception of her body. Bordo adds that “for women, associated with the body and largely confined to a life centered *on* the body (the beautification of one’s own body and the reproduction, care, and maintenance of the bodies of others), cultures’s grip on the body is a constant, intimate fact of everyday life” (2003: 17). The author says that one’s body – the way one dresses, how one takes care of their body and “the daily rituals through which we attend to the body – is a medium of culture” (2003: 165). Bordo supports the idea of other critics and scientists (e.g. Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault) that the body is “a direct locus of social control” (ibid.). The female body and certain stereotypes which are related to woman and beauty can restrict and imprison her emotionally as well as socially.

The cult of beauty and all standards of a beautiful and attractive woman require a lot of endeavor of the female. Women spend a lot of time “on the management and discipline of their bodies” (2003: 166). That is why this discipline of female body does not let woman to feel free but makes her imprisoned. In addition, Bordo mentions that “no female can achieve the status of romantic and sexual ideal without the appropriate *body*” (2003: 154). She claims that “female bodies become docile bodies – bodies whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation and ‘improvement’” (ibid.). Bordo points out that “through the organization and regulation of the time, space, and movements of our daily lives, our bodies are trained, shaped, and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, femininity” (ibid.). The author also says that through various disciplines, women “continue to memorize on their bodies the feel and conviction of lack, of insufficiency, of never being good enough” (ibid.). Bordo adds that “viewed historically, the discipline and normalization of the female body – perhaps the only

gender oppression that exercises itself, although to different degrees and in different forms, across age, race, class, and sexual orientation – has to be acknowledged as an amazingly durable and flexible strategy of social control” (ibid. p.166).

Similarly to Bordo, many other authors also write and discuss the female body and social as well as physical confinement of the female. It is claimed that “historically, women have been determined by their bodies: their individual awakenings and actions, their pleasure and their pain compete with representations of the female body in larger social frameworks” (Conboy et al. 1997: 1). Conboy et al. explain that in order to define a woman the notion of the female body, which plays an essential role not only in female’s emotional state, but also in the feminist theory, cannot be missed. It means that woman is usually defined according to her body which plays a very important role and makes her emotionally imprisoned: “for woman, this entrapment is particularly centered in the biological processes of childbirth that have delineated her productivity and circumscribed her movements” (ibid.). Therefore, the details of woman’s biology and certain stereotypes limit her.

Moreover, in order to satisfy the established stereotypes and as the authors say “to guarantee our man-made place in culture, we are still exhorted to ‘become’ women through increasingly complex regulatory practices of ornamentation such as weight control, skin and hair care, attention to fashion, and, above all, resistance to aging” (Conboy et al. 1997: 3). Women must take care of their body and enhance their beauty; otherwise they will not be appreciated by the patriarchal society and they will lose their value. That is why the ideal femininity is related to beauty rules, which must be followed. All these rules, standards and stereotypes in a way make women prisoners. Bartky claims that “a woman who is unable or unwilling to submit herself to the appropriate body discipline [will] face a very severe sanction in a world dominated by men: the refusal of male patronage” (1988: 144). Bartky compares the woman, who takes care of her look intensely, who checks her make-up many times a day, who worries about her hair, who tries to look young and to stop the process of aging, to the inmate of Foucault’s Panopticon as well as to a self-policing subject or a self committed to a relentless self-surveillance (1988: 149).

The French philosopher and poststructuralist thinker Michel Foucault in his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) discusses the notion of Panopticon – a type of building theorized by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham. According to Foucault, the Panopticon “is the architectural figure of the composition” which ensures disciplinary power (1975: 200). However, the idea of the Panopticon can be useful in order to analyze the

imprisonment of female in the male-dominated society. Foucault explains that “the Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen” (1975: 202). The French philosopher says that “the Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power” (ibid.). The Panopticon can be treated as a mechanism of observation and as an instrument of social control. Foucault also adds that “the Panopticon was also a laboratory; it could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behavior, to train or correct individuals” (1975: 203). Hence “the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (1975: 201). Thus, the Panopticon creates a sense of constant observation and being under someone’s thumb. Women can also feel as the inmates of the Panopticon because they and their bodies are observed by the patriarchal society and that is why they must conform to standards and norms that are established by the male-dominated world.

According to the attitude of patriarchal society “female’s body is designed to please or to excite” (Bartky 1988: 149). Therefore, the cult of body may lead to certain illnesses such as “anorexia nervosa which is to women of the late twentieth century what hysteria was to women of an earlier day: the crystallization in a pathological mode of a widespread cultural obsession” (Bartky 1988: 133).

Furthermore, it is important to mention what Bartky says about physical imprisonment of the female body. She claims that “there are significant gender differences in gesture, posture, movement, and general bodily compartment: women are far more restricted than men in their manner of movement and in their lived spatiality” (1988: 134). The critic adds that “woman’s space is not a field in which her bodily intentionality can be freely realized but an enclosure in which she feels herself positioned and by which she is confined” (ibid.). The author explains that a woman sits “with arms close to the body, hands folded together in their laps, toes pointing straight ahead or turned inward, and legs pressed together” (1988: 135). Therefore, “women make themselves small and narrow; harmless; they seem tense; they take up little space” (ibid.). The author points out that “men, on the other hand, expand into the available space; they sit with legs far apart and arms flung out at some distance from the body” (ibid.). It is clear that the posture of female’s body and the posture of man’s body differ from one another, and woman’s posture shows her restriction and confinement.

All in all, Export's words about the female body that "the body of woman is the site where culture manufactures the blockade of woman" very clearly summarize the presented ideas of this work as well as reveal the idea that the female body makes woman emotionally and socially imprisoned (1989: 111).

### **3. Imprisonment in Jean Rhys's Novel *Good Morning, Midnight***

In this part the main aspects that reveal how imprisonment is depicted in the novel such as the imagery of confinement, the language of the oppressed woman and the representation of the cult of beauty will be analyzed.

The main character of Jean Rhys's novel *Good Morning, Midnight*, Sasha Jansen is a middle aged woman. According to many critics, Sasha, whose real name is Sophia Jansen, represents typical Rhys's protagonist: lonely, poor, unambitious, unhappy and desperate woman (Angier 1991; Frickey 1990; Savory 2009; Tomansulo 2011). In order to forget and recover from her past which was painful, dark and complicated she comes back to Paris, where she lived a few years ago, and spends her time wandering through the city and drinking in the cafés.

Therefore, psychological, physical as well as social imprisonment of woman is the topic that is clearly depicted in this novel. Rhys, also, reflects that confinement is closely linked to feminine identity. Sasha's story reveals the female's position as well as how woman is psychologically and socially imprisoned in the male-dominated society.

According to Gilbert and Gubar's classification of the female characters into angels and monsters, Sasha is monster rather than angel in other words she could be described as a degrading woman (1979: 597). In a way she represents the dark side of female because of her unconventional features. James describes Sasha as a "women without worth" (2007: 40). According to Savory, "Sasha lives in a pre-feminist world in which women are still confined within many stereotypes and conventions" (2009: 68).

Sasha's life was not easy: the loss of her baby, unhappy marriage, betrayal, difficult financial situation and alcoholism led her to depression and caused her psychological imprisonment. Little by little everything leads her to hopelessness and she becomes psychologically as well as emotionally exhausted. The main character stands on the edge of the precipice. Her life goes to pieces, that is why she suffers in isolation and feels imprisoned because the society she lives in is the male-dominated society, in which a woman who is drunk, poor, desperate and pathetic is treated as the lowest of the low.



### 3.1 Imagery of Confinement

The imagery of confinement, especially the space of the room, is very significant because it reveals how Sasha is confined. Even the title of this novel indicates the importance of imagery of confinement and home. The title, *Good Morning, Midnight*, is taken from the 19<sup>th</sup> century poet Emily Dickinson's poem, which starts with the same words, the stanza of which Rhys also uses as the novel's epigraph. Gerard Genette defines an epigraph as "a quotation placed *en exergue* [in the exergue], generally at the head of a work or a section of a work" (1997: 144). By taking the title from Dickinson whose works are the source of inspiration to women writers, Rhys alludes to the women's writing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as having no established place next to literature written by men. In addition, she is probably making a comment on her writing as that of women's and it emphasizes the importance of women's writing. According to Gardiner, Dickinson's poem introduces the topic of female rejection: "in this scenario of symbolic personifications, times of day and degrees of light appear as places, persons, and states of mind. A vaguely female speaker wishes to remain with a male 'Day' who no longer wants her" (1982: 234). Gardiner adds, that "she seems eager for 'home', a refuge that is defined in opposition to him" (ibid.). As the epigraph implies Dickinson's poem speaks of "coming home", the relationship between man and woman as well as the rejection of female. Thus, the link between Dickinson's poem and Rhys's novel is clear because Rhys's work also discusses the theme of female rejection and the relationship between man and woman. It should be added that the topic of female rejection could also symbolize the rejection of women writers by the society which made canonical only those works that are written by men.

It is important to mention that Sasha is homeless, she does not belong to any particular place. She is from England, more precisely, from London but there is no strong bond between her and her homeland. Sasha's relationship with her parents is very poor and there is no one who waits for her in England. Thus, she is wandering through the streets of Paris, but she does not belong to this city, because she does not have her home, her own place. Sasha is living in cheap hotel rooms that are not homely. As James says, Sasha like other Rhys's protagonists is a "transient in one world or another, never quite belonging, just as Rhys never quite belonged to any place or time" (2007: 39). Sasha is a Victorian woman who is "thrown out of one world but not quite ready for the other, a conflict precipitating their downfall" (James 2007: 39-40).

Moreover, Sasha stays in Paris which is a cosmopolitan city. She is surrounded by foreigners: Rene from Morocco, the Russian and the painter Serge who is a Jew. According to Bowlby, “the city is peopled almost entirely by foreigners, non-French, but foreigners does not imply a diversity that might be linked to specifiable places of origin” (2005: 43). As it was mentioned Sasha’s name is not the real one. She was originally named Sophia, but she decided to change her name in order to change her fate and called herself Sasha, the name which originated from Eastern Europe and is linked with Russian culture. Bowlby claims that “the adoption of a new identity, connoting a different country of origin derives from nothing more than a superstitious whim” (ibid.).

Her choice of the new name is thought-provoking because the name, Sasha, is diminutive of Aleksandra or Aleksander. Therefore, Sasha is a unisex name which is given more often to men. This name is ambivalent as well as presupposes an ambivalent and mixed identity. Having acquired a new name which is usually linked with a male identity, the identity of her oppressors, Sasha tries to gain more power and identifies herself with men who are more powerful and who dominate.

Coming back to the significance of space, Savory claims that there are a lot of rooms where Sasha lives or has lived that are described in the novel for instance “large white-and-gold room” where Sasha worked as a *venduese* of expensive clothes, “the showrooms, the fitting rooms, the mannequins’ room”, the “nice room” or the painter Serge’s empty and cold room (2009: 75). The frequency of the descriptions of those rooms shows that physical spaces are very significant and can tell us about the main character.

To that matter, the novel begins with a personification, the words of the room, which emphasizes the importance of physical space: “‘Quite like old times’ the room says. ‘Yes? No?’” (Rhys 2000: 9). It should be pointed out that the novel has a circular structure because novel begins and ends in Sasha’s hotel room and the answer to the previously mentioned question is possibly found at the very end of the novel when the man with a white-gown enters Sasha’s room and Sasha says: “then I put my arms around him and pull him down on to the bed, saying: ‘Yes – yes – yes. ...’” (Rhys 2000: 159). According to some critics the last words of the novel are the same as the ending of Joyce’s *Ulyses* (Savory 2009: 79). Therefore, the ending of the novel shows that Sasha’s situation is “quite like old times” because her life does not change and she still stands on the edge of the precipice.

It should be added that the main character has neither money nor her own space of the room. Sasha is poor and she moves from one cheap hotel room to another and spends much of her

life in hotel rooms. According to Virginia Woolf, money and the space of the room are essential for the feminine identity, because they give woman more freedom and confidence (1977: 7). However, the absence of her own private space, which is usually related to security, calmness and comfort and in which one can feel safe and free, shows that Sasha does not feel the sense of security and freedom. Sasha's room is not her shelter, but her prison.

*Walking in the night with the dark houses over you, like monsters. If you have money and friends, houses are just houses with steps and front-door – friendly houses where the door opens and somebody meets you, smiling. If you are secure and your roots are well stuck in, they know. They stand back respectfully, waiting for the poor devil without any friends and without any money. Then they step forward, the waiting houses, to frown and crush. No hospitable doors, no lit windows, just frowning darkness (Rhys 2000: 28).*

According to Gardiner, “the speaking rooms give the effect of an echo like a reverberation inside her head” (1982: 235). Czarnecki points out that Sasha's “inner voice warns her never to get her hopes up, never to expect anything better than her demoralizing life” (2009: 64). Sasha says, “the musty smell, the bugs, the loneliness, this room which is part of the street outside – this is all I want from life” (Rhys 2000: 95). Thus, the space of the room shows that Sasha is suffering and her inner state is broken. Her passivity and desire of loneliness reveal some features of depression.

In addition, alcoholism which is a disease reveals the motif of imprisonment and escape. The protagonist, Sasha, breaks social conventions, because she drinks strong drinks and usually drinks alone and that is not a proper behavior for woman (Savory 2009: 70). Sasha drinks heavily because she wants to forget her dark and painful past which haunts and imprisons her. She is a prisoner of her memories. Therefore, alcohol becomes her remedy which help her to escape, but only for a short time.

Furthermore, a room is a space that is supposed to protect us from the outside world and “outside wolves”. Rhys writes that “a room is, after all, a place where you hide from outside wolves. That is all any room is” (2000: 15). However, the rooms that Sasha inhabits do not protect her because they are barely separated from the outside world. The spaces of the rooms and streets overlap “rooms, streets, streets, rooms” (Rhys 2000: 90). The room in which Sasha lived when she was married clearly illustrates the proximity of those spaces. The room had thin curtains, which created the image of cage and transformed that room into the space in which she was confined and restricted. Through those curtains the light shone and she heard the noises from other rooms:

*the curtains are thin and when they are drawn the light comes through softly. There are flowers on the window-sill and I can see their shadows on the curtains. The child downstairs is screaming* (Rhys 2000: 109).

Therefore, “the street outside is also inside” (Gardiner 1982: 235). In the novel public and private worlds are confused. The absence of the boundaries between public and private spaces shows that the main character Sasha is never fully protected from the “wolves outside” and that she never feels safe. The space which should be related with privacy and comfort does not provide the shelter.

*A girl is making-up at an open window immediately opposite. The street is so narrow that we are face to face, so to speak, I can see socks, stockings and underclothes drying on a line in her room. <...> A terrible hotel, this – an awful place* (Rhys 2000: 30).

Also, Sasha calls her space an impasse which indicates her entrapment. An impasse indicates the space which has no exit that is why it strengthens the motif of confinement. Sasha’s life can be compared with an impasse too, because she is lost and she is unable to straighten her life out as well as to find “the exit from her emotional decline” and re-established her life.

Another interesting factor about the space of the room is that the room, as Gardiner claims, is polarized by gender and sexual tension (1982: 235). Sasha’s room is described as follows: “there are two beds, a big one for madame and a smaller one on the opposite side for monsieur” (Rhys 2000: 9). The woman’s bed is bigger than man’s bed because man can come to woman’s bed. This aspect shows that Sasha cannot be safe in her room because of those “wolves outside”, in other words, men, who occupied her private space and with whom she has to share her space.

In addition, the space of the room may metaphorically show Sasha’s imprisonment because the space of the room is a closed space with walls that is why the room may be treated as the symbol of female’s confinement. The images of the rooms as symbols of imprisonment are very frequent in *Good Morning, Midnight*. For instance, the description of “the room at the Steens” clearly presents the room as a space of imprisonment:

*There were several vases of tulips and two cages with canaries and there were two clocks, each trying to tick louder than the other. The windows were nearly always shut, but the room wasn’t musty. <...> In that room you couldn’t think, you couldn’t make plans...* (Rhys 2000: 95).

The two cages with canaries also symbolize imprisonment, because it is a typical symbol of the confinement of female and power relations between man and woman which is frequently used in literature. The cage that is a closed object presents man’s will to restrict woman’s

freedom and power. Moving on, the other hotel room is presented as “dim and the ceiling seems to be pressing on [her] head” (Rhys 2000: 105). This description also shows that Sasha cannot feel free in that room. Furthermore, the clear image of confinement suggesting power relations between man and woman can be implied in the scene when Sasha teaches the Russian who tells her the story about “the Russian princess who was shut up in the prison of Peter and Paul to be eaten by rats, because she was a revolutionary” (Rhys 2000: 115). The story reveals the idea that woman should not be powerful or revolutionary and explains what happens to woman when she acts in a way that is not proper to woman by the rules and standards of the male-dominated society.

The images of cafés, bars and restaurants are also very frequent and important to the meaning of the novel. Sasha spends much of her time in bars and restaurants where she is trying to drink herself to death. Despite the fact that restaurants and bars are open as well as public places, which are not directly related to the notion of confinement, Sasha does not feel good there because she is surrounded by many people who, through Sasha’s eyes, are constantly observing her. She thinks that they judge her lifestyle as well as her look and understand that her life is not successful.

*I order sole and white wine. I eat with my eyes glued on my plate, the feeling of panic growing worse. <...> However, it’s nearly over. Soon I shall be out in the street again. I feel better. <...> The girls turn and stare at me. <...> ‘Oh my God!’ the tall one says. <...> ‘Et qu’est-ce qu’elle fout ici, maintenant?’ the tall girl says, loudly. Now everybody in the room is staring at me; all the eyes in the room are fixed on me. It has happened. I am calm, but my hand starts shaking so violently that I have to put the coffee-cup down (Rhys 2000: 43).*

Moreover, Sasha is afraid of people and sometimes tries to avoid them: “Last night was a catastrophe. ... The woman at the next table started talking to me” (Rhys 2000: 9). This fear also shows that Sasha suffers from psychological illness and her inner state is damaged.

Interestingly enough, Gilbert and Gubar talk about the importance of imagery of confinement in women’s literature. They claim that depicting the constraints and entrapment of their characters, women writers reflect the literal reality of their own imprisonment (2000: 87). Hence, Rhys’s protagonist Sasha and her imprisonment in the male-dominated society may reflect Rhys’s as the writer’s position in the patriarchal society in which she feels confined as a female writer.

Also, the notion of house is related to female’s body and biology. Confinement is related to childbirth and as the authors claim during the pregnancy and after it women are imprisoned

(ibid.). The main character Sasha was also pregnant, but her baby born not alive. This bereavement has affected her inner state as well as her life because Sasha cannot recover. Her situation is strange because she is a mother and not mother at the same time. Sasha was pregnant, gave birth and had a baby which means that she is a mother; on the other hand she is not a mother, because her child is dead.

In addition, the notion of tomb is significant for the analysis, because Sasha's room becomes a tomb for her. Her hotel room is marked by the images of strange man, her neighbor, who looks like a ghost. He wears a white gown and sometimes makes Sasha scared.

*The man who has the room next to mine is parading about as usual in his white dressing-gown. Hanging around. He is like the ghost of the landing. I am always running into him. He is as thin as a skeleton. He has a bird-like face and sunken, dark eyes with a peculiar expression, cringing, ingratiating, knowing. What's he want to look at me like that for? (Rhys 2000: 13).*

This strange man is like a symbol of death. Symbolically her room becomes her tomb which is marked by the symbols of death and eternal confinement. Her neighbor is present in Sasha's room at the end of the novel, when Sasha has visions and is drunk. The ending of the novel is ambiguous and it is not clear what happens, because Sasha is heavily drunk and she might be called an unreliable narrator.

### **3.2. Language of the Oppressed Female**

Another aspect which shows that Sasha is imprisoned is her language. Language is very significant for everyone, because it reveals our identity and we form ourselves through our speech. Also, language is a cultural and social marker which tells who we are. Sasha speaks English, French and a little bit of German, but she is not certain of her language skills. Her communication skills, however, usually depend on her inner state, which is damaged by her complicated life and affected by alcohol. Sasha says: "of course, sometimes, when I am a bit drunk and am talking to somebody I like and know, I speak French very fluently indeed. At other times I just speak it" (Rhys 2000: 20). Therefore, Sasha's language could be seen as the language of the oppressed, because she cannot express herself freely and her inability to communicate properly is linked with emotional dysfunction as well as her inner state which is usually unstable.

*Please, please, monsieur et madame, mister, missis and miss, I am trying so hard to be like you... <...> Every word I say has chains round its ankles; every thought I think is weighted with heavy weights. Since I was*

*born, hasn't every word I've said, every thought I've thought, everything I've done, been tied up, weighted, chained?* (Rhys 2000: 88).

Czarnecki looks at Sasha's language through the perspective of Kristevan depression. She sees "Sasha's silences and expressiveness, her self-destructiveness and moments of hope not as irrational vacillations but as symptoms of Kristevan depression" (2009: 64). Having looked at Sasha's life story, her emotional state and her downfalls, it becomes clear that she suffers from depression and melancholia. Czarnecki uses Kristeva's explanation of melancholia which states that "melancholia can stem from one thing or many things, an infinite number of misfortunes that weigh us down every day and awaken echoes of old traumas" (Kristeva in Czarnecki 2009: 64). Having read the novel, it is obvious that Sasha has faced with many misfortunes and challenges which affected her. Sasha's memories of her past haunt her, she constantly remembers painful events, betrayals and the loss of her baby. These traumas restrict her as well as do not let her to change her life and to be happy.

Furthermore, Sasha's language can reveal some features of depression. Kristeva says that "depressives experience language retardation and their speech delivery is slow, silences are long and frequent, rhythms slacken, intonations become monotonous" (Kristeva in Czarnecki 2009: 69). According to Czarnecki, Sasha's psychomotor retardation infuriates those around her, who construe such behavior as laziness, apathy and stupidity (ibid.). Thus, Sasha's language, which is not fluent and clear because of alcohol and sleeping pills, can reveal her inner state as well as her suffering from depression and through the eyes of people who surround her she sometimes looks like a fool.

In addition, it is important to emphasize the relationship between language and patriarchy because men can make females speechless. There are a lot of differences between men and women and they hold a different amounts of power in the society. More precisely, men dominate in the patriarchal society and they hold the power. Also, men's understanding and thinking differ from women's that is why sometimes men are unable to understand women's language. As a result, they reject, silence and restrict women and their linguistic abilities. The incident when Sasha misunderstands her boss, Mr. Blank, shows her vulnerability and speechlessness:

*I at once make up my mind that he wants to find out if I can speak German. All the little German I know flies out of my head. Jesus, help me! Ja, ja, nein nein, was kostet es <...> Now panic has come on me. My hands are shaking, my heart is thumping, my hands are cold* (Rhys 2000: 21-22).

According to Gardiner, “Mr. Blank terrorizes Sasha with an inquisition into her linguistic abilities” (ibid.). She forgets the German language and misunderstands some French words as well as “fails to understand that the destination of the language of the rich is always “la caisse”, the cashbox” (ibid.). Sasha says: “kise – kise ... It doesn’t mean a thing to me. He’s got me into such a state that I can’t imagine what it can mean” (Rhys 2000: 22). This situation reveals the patriarchal attitude towards woman, because Sasha is treated as cash. When she misunderstands the language she becomes speechless and she is ejected from the system (Gardiner 1982: 241). Rhys writes “just a hopeless, helpless fool, aren’t you? Jibes Mr. Blank” (2000: 28). This shows how Sasha is treated in the male-dominated society because of her inability to understand and communicate properly. Thus, she becomes powerless, speechless as well as linguistically imprisoned and Sasha also understands that she is an “inefficient member of society” – the society in which men are superior to women.

*Well, let’s argue this out, Mr. Blank. You, who represent Society, have the right to pay me 400 francs a month. That’s my market value, for I am inefficient member of Society, slow in the uptake, uncertain, slightly damaged in the fray, there’s no denying it. So you have the right to pay me 400 francs a month, to lodge me in small, dark room, to clothe me shabbily to harass me with worry and monotony and unsatisfied longings till you get me to the point when I blush at a look, cry at a word (Rhys 2000: 29).*

The conflict between men and women is represented through language: “today, this day, this hour, this minute I am utterly defeated. I have had enough” (Rhys 2000: 25). According to Gardiner, Sasha represents typical Rhys’s character who is “misdefined by a language and literary heritage that belong primarily to propertied men” (1982: 233). Moreover, Savory adds that, the situations when Sasha hears the conversations, which consist of repeated phrases, in French which is not her mother tongue, emphasize the distinction between the community and Sasha as an outsider (2009: 69). It means that her language and disability to communicate as well as use foreign language not only reveal that Sasha does not belong to certain community but also marginalize and imprison her.

Moreover, her husband Enno restricts Sasha’s linguistic abilities, because he silences her. Sasha is unable to stop this and prevent him because she does not have enough energy and power. Enno says: ““you mustn’t talk about love. Don’t talk...”” (Rhys 2000: 98). Therefore, he restricts her and does not let her to express herself. Sasha, however, obeys his order and says to herself: “you mustn’t talk, you mustn’t think, you must stop thinking. Of course, it is



like that. You must let go of everything else, stop thinking..." (ibid.). Together with the loss of her voice, Sasha loses her power.

Another situation also proves that Enno feels superior and commands Sasha, he says: "peel me an orange" (Rhys 2000: 108). This commandment shows that Enno treats her as a servant. Sasha understands that she has to resist and not to obey his orders but she does not find enough strength. She says: "now is the time to say 'Peel it yourself', now is the time to say 'Go to hell', now is the time to say 'I won't be treated like this.' But much too strong – the room, the street, the thing in myself, oh, much too strong... I peel the orange, put it on a plate and give it to him" (ibid.). Therefore, once silenced by man Sasha becomes a victim who clearly feels the need to resist, but lacks courage and is entrapped.

It could be added that not only men restrict Sasha's linguistic abilities. The situation in the café proves that women also can make Sasha speechless, because when Sasha hears that women in the café are slandering her she becomes angry and wants to tell them what she thinks about them. However, she is unable to say a word:

*I would give all that's left of my life to be able to put out my tongue and say: 'One word to you,' as I pass that girl's table. I would give all the rest of my life to be able even to stare coldly at her. As it is, I can't speak to her, I can't even look at her. I just walk out (Rhys 2000: 45).*

However, the interesting thing is that Sasha who sometimes is speechless and who cannot express herself properly teaches English. In order to teach languages one must be well-versed in that field. The fact that Sasha teaches language proves that she has authority and some power but the power of language which she has is not enough in order to be a successful and strong personality in the patriarchal world. Furthermore, when Sasha writes fairy stories her voice, her creativity and her personality are silenced, because her boss tells her how to write. She has to write what she does not mean, to use the words which are not typical for her, which are not her own words (Gardiner 1982: 242). This inability of self-expression in writing shows that she is restricted and confined as the words are imposed on her. According to Gardiner, "telling happy endings in which she does not believe, Sasha becomes equivalent to Rene, the male prostitute" (1982: 242). Therefore, Sasha is deprived of her own language as well as unable to express herself and communicate properly. Her speechlessness leads her to confusion and figurative imprisonment which are clearly depicted in her language.

In addition, the language of the narrative is also significant. The novel is full of ellipses and gaps. Linguistic abilities of the readers are challenged not only by the presence of the gaps which they must fill in, but also through the use of French in the novel, because there are no

translations given. Multilingualism is present in this Rhys's novel, because Sasha's environment is multilingual and multicultural; Paris is full of foreigners. Moreover, the reading of the novel is complicated by incoherence and fragmentation. The narrative is not coherent because Sasha's memories shift from the present moment to her past and from her past to the present (Savory 2009: 70). Sasha is not a reliable narrator, because most of the time she is drunk and inebriated by sleeping pills and alcohol. Savory claims that "Sasha's memory is bound to be impacted by her many years of heavy drinking" (2009: 69). Therefore, the first person narration is quite relevant choice of Rhys because it lets the readers to look more deeply at Sasha's minds as well as emphasizes the importance of Sasha's inner state and her consciousness.

### **3.3. Cult of Beauty: Social Imprisonment of Woman**

Another significant aspect which also reveals how and why the main character Sasha becomes imprisoned is certain social stereotypes and standards to which woman must conform. These stereotypes are constructed by our society in which the understanding of the female is always closely linked with her body.

Rhys's protagonist, Sasha, can be described as a poor, drunk, hopeless and pathetic woman. Despite the fact that she is a marginalized and unattractive woman she also takes care of her look and constantly thinks about aging. The images that are related to beauty, style and look, such as shops, mirrors, clothes and mannequins are very frequent in this novel. Rhys's attention to the elements of modern culture, capitalistic world and the cult of beauty show that they influence Sasha's life and self-perception.

Sasha's life has changed dramatically, she, the former mannequin, has become a prostitute, the woman who is the lowest of the low. It is clear, that she is not satisfied with her appearance and it has an influence on her inner state, because woman's look is very important to her. As Bordo claims, women's life and the success of it depend on her body (2003: 17). Thus, dissatisfaction of her look as well as of herself is one of the reasons why she is unhappy and depressed.

*Yes, I am sad, sad as a circus-lioness, sad as an eagle without wings, sad as a violin with only one string and that one broken, sad as a woman who is growing old. Sad, sad, sad. <...> In the middle of the night you wake up. You start to cry. What's happening to me? Oh my life, oh, my youth. ... (Rhys 2000: 39, 75).*

Sasha, on the other hand, dreams of being beautiful, but this wish is always postponed to the other day or to the future: “it’s all right. Tomorrow I’ll be pretty again, tomorrow I’ll be happy again, tomorrow, tomorrow ...” (2000: 48).

Also, Sasha feels a strong need of being pretty and accepted by the male-dominated society. She dreams, as many other women, about fashionable clothes and beautiful look:

*In this fitting-room there is a dress in one of the cupboards which has been worn a lot by the mannequins and is going to be sold off for four hundred francs. The saleswoman has promised to keep it for me. I have tried it on; I have seen myself in it. It is a black dress with wide sleeves embroidered in vivid colours – red, green, blue, purple. It is my dress. If I had been wearing it I should never have stammered or been stupid. Now I have stopped crying. Now I shall never have that dress. Today, this day, this hour, this minute I am utterly defeated. I have had enough. <...> Then I start thinking about the black dress, longing for it, madly, furiously. If I could get it everything would be different. <...> I’ll get the money. I’ll get it ... (Rhys 2000: 25, 28).*

She believes, however, that a new and better look or clothes can make her happier. Her inability to buy a dress and her poverty reveal that the wish to conform to the standards and norms, which declare the idea that women must be beautiful in order to be successful and accepted by the male-dominated society, makes her imprisoned.

By having the enormous power, money plays an important role, because the woman who is poor becomes more dependent on the man and her freedom as well as choices are restricted. In addition, such a woman as Sasha cannot improve her look without money and her poverty does not let her to increase her value in the patriarchal society. Moreover, when Sasha feels a little bit more beautiful she feels happier and thinks that other people treat her better. All small details that improve Sasha’s look restore her to life as well as restore her confidence, but unfortunately only for a short time.

Various changes and especially those which are related to her look and beauty play a crucial role in her life. For instance, Sasha wants to dye her hair and this act shows that her look is crucial for Sasha:

*Again, I lie awake, trying to resist a great wish to go to a hairdresser in the morning to have my hair dyed. <...> I try to decide what colour I shall have my hair dyed, and hang on to that thought as you hang on to something when you are drowning. Shall I have it red? Shall I have it black? Now, black – that would be startling. Shall I have it blond cendre? But blond cendre, madame, is the most difficult of colours. It is very, very rarely, madame, that hair can be successfully dyed blond*

*endre. It's even harder on the hair than dyeing it platinum blonde. First it must be bleached, that is to say, its own colour must be taken out of it – and then it must be dyed, that is to say, another colour must be imposed on it. (Educated hair. ... And then, what?) (Rhys 2000: 44).*

The wish to change her hair colour reveals Sasha's wish to change her fate and her life. The old colour must be taken out of her hair as well as her past memories and pain must be deleted and forgotten. The new hair colour symbolizes the need of changes and something new in her life.

Moreover, aging is very important to Sasha who thinks that she is old. The images of mirrors show her obsession about her look and aging. The presence of mirrors not only in hotel rooms but also in public spaces depresses her and forces Sasha to think more intensively about her look. Mirrors in a way haunt her and Sasha's reflections in the mirrors remind her that she is not a "successful member" of the male-dominated society in which women must be pretty and attractive.

*My God, how awful I looked in that mirror! If I'm going to look like that, there's not a hope. <...> I can see myself in the mirror. I look thin – too thin – and dirty and haggard, with that expression that you get in your eyes when you are very tired and everything is like a dream ... (Rhys 2000: 102).*

With reference to what Bordo (2003) expressed about the female body, discipline and dissatisfaction with one's appearance, the protagonist, Sasha, is not an exception. She feels that she is not good enough, that she is not beautiful enough. Sasha thinks that she is treated like an alien, an outcast as well as a misfit of the society: "what the devil (translating it politely) is she doing here, that old woman? What is she doing here the stranger, the alien, the old one? ... I quite agree too, quite. I have seen that in people's eyes all my life" (Rhys 2000: 46). She tries to change the situation and improve her look that is why the details related to clothes, make-up and beauty are very frequent in this novel.

*Tomorrow I'll go to the Galeries Lafayette, choose a dress, go along to the Printemps, buy gloves, buy scent, buy lipstick, buy things costing fcs. 6.25 and fcs. 19.50, buy anything cheap. Just the sensation of spending, that's the point. I'll look at bracelets studded with artificial jewels, red, green and blue, necklaces of imitation pearls, cigarette-cases, jeweled tortoiseshells ... (Rhys 2000: 121).*

Sasha is involved in and affected by the cult of beauty that is why she must conform to certain discipline and beauty rules: "three hours to choose a hat; every morning an hour and a half trying to make myself look like everybody else" (Rhys 2000: 88). Therefore, women must perform habitual acts that are related to their look and beauty and it means that women are

involved in certain discipline, for instance, to put on make-up, to be on a diet and to wear fashionable clothes. All these standards and stereotypes in a way make women prisoners of their bodies. Thus, Rhys's protagonist is not only a prisoner of her memories but also a prisoner of her body, because her poor look makes her unhappy. As a result, her inner state and self-esteem are affected.

In addition, Bartky claims that a woman who cannot manage body discipline is rejected because men lose the interest in that woman (1988: 144). Similarly to Bartky, Bordo says that without appropriate in other words beautiful body and look women will not be accepted by the patriarchal society (2003: 154). Rhys's protagonist who is a member of the patriarchal society in which body discipline and various stereotypes exist, is affected by them. Sasha's situation is even more complicated because she is "unable to submit herself to the appropriate body discipline" because she is poor (Bartky 1988: 144). In addition, Sasha cannot conform to the norms because she does not have enough strength and courage. Sasha suffers from depression as well as alcoholism and her memories drain her off.

Furthermore, Sasha's portrayal as a victim of the cult of beauty is comparable to her being as an inmate of Foucault's Panopticon. Bordo mentions that the female body is an instrument which helps to restrict women (2003: 166). With reference to what Bartky (1988) said about the inmate of Foucault's Panopticon and self-surveillance, Sasha also feels the pressure and the necessity to be beautiful and attractive because she understands that she is "under surveillance". She decides to buy a hat which can be treated as a symbol of elegance and an elegant woman. Sasha's purchase raises her social status in the eyes of society and makes her feel better about her look. She says: "I feel saner and happier after this. I go to a restaurant near by and eat a large meal, at the same time carefully watching the effect of the hat on the other people in the room, *comme ça* [like that]. Nobody stares at me, which I think is a good sign" (2000: 60). Having avoided the negative gaze of the male-dominant society, Sasha feels satisfied and more valuable. Thus, the presented patriarchal society functions like a female's prison or a disciplinary mechanism that imprisons and restricts them. Women can feel as the inmates of Panopticon because they are observed by the patriarchal society and that is why they must conform to norms that are established by the male-dominated world. The same can be said about Sasha who is depicted under surveillance of the male-dominated society and omnipresent male gaze. She must conform to beauty rules and stereotypes, but most of the time she is unable to do that. Thus, she is rejected and imprisoned by those norms. In addition, the image of Sasha as an inmate who is entrapped in and by the patriarchal society

becomes a narrative strategy which helps to challenge standards of that society. According to the attitude of patriarchal society, female's body should be beautiful and excite men (Bartky 1988: 149). It is clear that Sasha does not excite men because she is poor, hopeless as well as constantly drinking woman and she can afford only the small improvements of her look. She says:

*I want to shout at him 'I haven't got any money, I tell you. I know what you're judging by. You're judging by my coat. You oughtn't to judge by my coat. You ought to judge by what I have on under my coat, by my handbag, by my expression, by anything you like. Not by this damned coat, which was a present...' (Rhys 2000: 63).*

Sasha understands that her look plays a crucial role and that the society is judging her by her appearance. The whole society is involved in the "game" or "fight" which is called the cult of beauty in which every woman tries to win; otherwise she will be rejected and treated as an outcast.

*I read magazines – Féminas, Illustrations, Eves <...> the Hairdresser's Weekly and a curious journal with large section called 'the Hive' – answers to correspondents. 'Pierrette Clair de la Lune – No, mademoiselle, your letter is nonsensical. You will never get thin that way – never. Life is not so easy. Life, mademoiselle, is difficult. At your age it will be very difficult to get thin. But... <...> No, mademoiselle, no, madame, life is not easy. Do not delude yourselves. Nothing is easy. But there is hope (turn to page 5), and yet more hope (turn to page 9). ... I am in the middle of a long article by a lady who has had her breasts lifted...' (Rhys 2000: 52-53).*

All in all, Rhys in her novel *Good Morning, Midnight* clearly reveals the topic of female's imprisonment both literally and figuratively. Sasha feels confined in the male-dominated society because she is poor, hopeless and depressed woman. Also, she is confined because she is unable to conform to certain beauty rules and standards. Therefore, the protagonist is psychologically, physically and socially imprisoned by patriarchal structures. The imagery of confinement, inability to communicate properly as well as the obsession with the cult of beauty show that Sasha is imprisoned.

## 4. Conclusions

Imprisonment and alienation are one of the most significant topics of women's literature because they depict the female's position in the patriarchal society and show how woman is restricted. The present BA paper analyzes the theme and the motif of imprisonment in Jean Rhys's novel *Good Morning, Midnight*. The primary focus of the analysis is the confinement of the woman who is the lowest of the low as well as poor, alcoholic, depressed and hopeless and who lives in the male-dominated society. The purpose of this BA paper was to find out how the theme of imprisonment is revealed in Jean Rhys's novel *Good Morning, Midnight*.

The analysis based mainly on the feminist literary theory and supported by some ideas of Foucault's Panopticon showed that issues of female confinement is clearly depicted in this novel. The imagery of confinement, the language of the oppressed female and the cult of beauty are the main aspects that reveal imprisonment.

The metaphorical imagery of the confinement and the absence of Sasha's private space shows that she does not feel safe as well as her space is occupied and she has to share her space with men. Disease as alcoholism also reflects the motif of escape and confinement, because Sasha is confined by her memories and alcohol helps her to forget and escape. Moreover, as the last scene of the novel implies, Sasha's room is suggestive of her tomb because Sasha's life is "quite like old times", her situation does not changed and she goes through the mill. Therefore, the space of the room symbolically suggests Sasha's eternal confinement because Sasha is at the dead end.

Another important aspect which reveals the theme of imprisonment is the language of the subjugated female. The main Rhys's protagonist cannot communicate properly and express herself freely, because both the society and men restrict her linguistic abilities. Sasha is silenced and she does not find enough power and energy to resist as well as express her feelings and thoughts. Thus, Sasha feels imprisoned by the patriarchal society because her linguistic abilities are restricted.

The third aspect of the analysis that proves the claim that Sasha is socially imprisoned is the cult of beauty and certain norms and stereotypes constructed by the male-dominated society. Sasha, whose previous life was related to beauty and the world of mannequins, feels dissatisfaction with her present look, which is affected by constant drinking, depression and poverty, and is obsessed about her aging. She feels a strong need of being beautiful again and tries to conform to the norms because she understands that she is constantly evaluated by her

body which means that she is under surveillance of the male-dominated society and omnipresent male gaze. Therefore, Sasha is involved in certain discipline and her portrayal as a victim of the cult of beauty is comparable to her being as an inmate of Foucault's Panopticon. In addition, the presented patriarchal society functions like a female's prison or a disciplinary mechanism which restricts and confines her.

All in all, the theme of imprisonment is indistinguishable from the female identity and women's texts. In Jean Rhys's novel *Good Morning, Midnight* the theme of imprisonment is literally and figuratively depicted. Her main character Sasha is psychologically, physically and socially imprisoned by various patriarchal conventions. The imagery of confinement stresses the powerlessness of woman in the society and has a character building function. Also, the image of the female protagonist as a victim and inmate who is entrapped in and by the patriarchal society serves as a strategy to oppose standards of that society.

Also, it should be mentioned that the analysis was restricted due to the fact that the time given as well as the length of BA paper were limited. It is important to notice that the results of BA paper could provide a basis for further research examining the position of female in the male-dominated society.



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## 6. Summary in Lithuanian

Šiais laikais, kai moterys vis labiau kovoja už savo teises ir įgyja vis daugiau laisvės, yra svarbu išanalizuoti moters padėtį visuomenėje, kurioje dominuoja vyrai. Šiame bakalauro darbe yra analizuojamas 20-ojo amžiaus Karibų salų rašytojos Jean Rhys romanas *Good Morning, Midnight*. Darbo tikslas yra išsiaiškinti kaip ir kokias būdais moters įkalinimas yra pavaizduotas bei atskleistas romane. Kūrinio analizė yra paremta feministine literatūros teorija, daugiausiai S. Gilbert and S. Gubar veikalų *The Mad Woman in the Attic: The Women Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* bei Susan Bordo darbu *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*. Taip pat analizė yra sustiprinta pasitelkiant Michel Foucault idėjas apie panoptikoną bei nuolatinį sekimą.

Romano analizė parodė, kad pagrindinės veikėjos įkalinimą atskleidžia trys pagrindiniai aspektai: įkalinimo vaizdavimas pasitelkiant įvairius motyvus, ypač kambario erdvę, taip pat prislėgtos arba engiamos moters kalba bei grožio kultas ir įvairios normos bei stereotipai, sukurti patriarchalinės visuomenės. Kambario erdvė yra tarsi įkalinimo simbolis, kuris perteikia moters įkalinimą, atskyrimą bei nuosmukį. Pagrindinės veikėjos kalba, nuolatos apribojama vyrų, ir nesugebėjimas savęs išreikšti atskleidžia Sašos izoliavimą. Veikėjos nepasitenkinimas savo išvaizda, troškimas atitikti grožio stereotipus, mąstymas apie išvaizdą bei suvokimas jog ji yra nuolat matoma ir stebima patriarchalinėje visuomenėje paverčia ją panoptikono kaline.

Taigi šis tyrimas parodo, jog degradavusios moters įkalinimas visuomenėje, kurioje dominuoja vyrai yra aiškiai pavaizduotas Jean Rhys romane *Good Morning, Midnight* pasitelkiant įvairius aspektus.

Taip pat svarbu paminėti, jog šis darbas gali tapti pagrindu tolimesnei šio kūrinio bei temos analizei, kuri galėtų plačiau išanalizuoti nusivylusios, nelaimingos, degradavusios moters padėtį visuomenėje, kurioje dominuoja vyrai bei paaiškinti kas įkalina moterį.