

**Title:**

The Role of Women in the works of Jean Rhys

**Author:**

Bc. Petra Schnebergerová

**Department:**

Department of English Language and Literature

**Supervisor:**

PhDr. Tereza Topolovská

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze three female protagonists of Jean Rhys's novels and the role they play in the entirety of Rhys's work - Anna Morgan of *Voyage in the Dark*, Marya Zelli of *Quartet* and Antoinette Mason of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The thesis focuses on three topics connected with Rhys's heroines that recur in all the discussed novels: female passivity, objectification of women, and female escapism and self-destructive behaviour.

The analysis proves that there is a significant autobiographical input in all Rhys's main female characters which is manifested through the conformity of their depiction. It is found out that through the coherence of their portrayal, Rhys employed the autotherapeutic role of fiction and instinctively brought questions of race and female suffering in view. Although this thesis highlights the common features of Rhys's writing, it also observes the development of Rhys's approach to her topics throughout her life. The negativity with which Rhys constructs her female characters is ascribed to her lifelong dedication to maximal truthfulness of the representation of reality.

## **Keywords**

Jean Rhys, autobiography, escapism, female characters, objectification, passivity, self-destructive behaviour, therapeutic writing