



# Jean Rhys and the Novel As Women's Text

*Nancy R. Harrison*

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## **Jean Rhys and the Novel As Women's Text** Nancy R. Harrison

Is a woman's writing different from a man's? Many scholars -- and readers -- think so, even though here has been little examination of the way women's novels enact the theories that women theorists have posited. In *Jean Rhys and the Novel as Women's Text*, Nancy Harrison makes an important contribution to the exchange of ideas on the writing practice of women and to the scholarship on Jean Rhys.

Harrison determines what the form of a well-made women's novel discloses about the conditions of women's communication and the literary production that emerges from them. Devoting the first part of her book to theory and general commentary on Rhys's approach to writing, she then offers perceptive readings of *Voyage in the Dark*, an early Rhys novel, and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys's masterpiece written twenty-seven years later. She shows how Rhys uses the terms of a man's discourse, then introduces a woman's (or several women's) discourse as a compelling counterpoint that, in time, becomes prominent and gives each novel its thematic impact. In presenting a continuing dialogue with the dominant language and at the same time making explicit the place of a woman's own language, Rhys gives us a paradigm for a new and basically moral text.

Originally published in 1988.

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