

EXPLORING THE WOMAN AUTHENTICITY IN “DIVING INTO THE WRECK”: ESSENTIALISM FEMINISM APPROACH

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis representasi perempuan dalam *Diving into the Wreck* karya Adrienne Rich melalui sudut pandang teori feminis esensialisme Simone de Beauvoir. Penelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana puisi tersebut melibatkan prinsip-prinsip feminis esensialisme khususnya gagasan tentang kebebasan individu, tanggung jawab, penolakan identitas yang telah ditentukan sebelumnya, dan bagaimana feminisme esensialisme berkembang di era modern. Dengan meneliti kata-kata, tema-tema utama, dan simbol-simbol dalam puisi tersebut, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi perjalanan pembicara perempuan dalam menemukan jati diri dan perlawanan terhadap batasan-batasan masyarakat. Penggunaan citra dan simbolisme oleh Rich, dikombinasikan dengan teori feminis de Beauvoir, menggambarkan bagaimana *Diving into the Wreck* menantang peran gender tradisional dan mengkritik penindasan sistemik terhadap perempuan. Analisis ini menyoroti peran puisi tersebut dalam mendefinisikan ulang identitas perempuan dan mengadvokasi otonomi dalam masyarakat patriarki. Penelitian ini pada akhirnya berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih luas tentang representasi perempuan dalam literatur dan relevansinya dengan wacana yang sedang berlangsung tentang kesetaraan gender.

Kata Kunci: Esensialisme, Feminisme, Adrienne Rich, Simone De Beauvoir.

ABSTRACT

*This research analyzes the representation of women in Adrienne Rich's *Diving into the Wreck* through the lens of Simone de Beauvoir's essentialism feminist theory. The research focuses on how the poem engages with essentialism feminist principles particularly the notions of individual freedom, responsibility, the rejection of predetermined identities and how essentialism feminism developed in modern era. By examining the words, key themes and symbols within the poem, this research explores the female speaker's journey of self-discovery and resistance against societal constraints. Rich's use of imagery and symbolism, combined with de Beauvoir's feminist theory, illustrates how *Diving into the Wreck* challenges traditional gender roles and critiques the systemic oppression of women. This analysis highlights the poem's role in redefining female identity and advocating for autonomy within a patriarchal society. The research ultimately contributes to a broader understanding of women's representation in literature and its relevance to the ongoing discourse on gender equality.*

Keywords: Essentialism, Feminism, Adrienne Rich, Simone De Beauvoir.

INTRODUCTION

A primary concern in Rich's "Diving into the Wreck" is the search for female identity within a complex and layered patriarchal society. The poem vividly illustrates how women are often constrained by social norms and expectations that not only limit but actively distort their potential. This pressure typically originates from various sources, ranging from family and immediate surroundings to social structures that systematically define women's roles and restrict their agency. Women are compelled to conform to culturally and historically predetermined roles that often disregard personal aspirations and desires, even demanding significant sacrifices of individual ideals and ambitions. Consequently, the search for identity becomes a strenuous struggle, filled with self-doubt, profound uncertainty, and feelings of alienation from oneself. This process is often accompanied by intense internal conflict between the desire to meet societal expectations and the need to express an authentic self. This highlights the importance for women to discover and accept an identity that

emerges from within, independent of persistent and often invisible social pressures, rather than one defined by society. More than a narrative, this work is a profound reflection on the complexities of women's experiences in a patriarchal society, revealing how the existing social system contributes to creating and reinforcing inequality. Therefore, this work remains a highly relevant social critique, even more so today, as the fundamental issues it raises such as gender-based violence, unequal access to education and employment, and the representation of women in public spaces continue to resonate and pose significant challenges in the realities of women's lives across the globe, including Indonesia.

Poetry as a literary form, frequently employs symbols and words with implicit and profound meanings that extend far beyond their literal interpretations. Rich's work is rich in symbolism and metaphor, offering a deep exploration of women's experiences within social and cultural contexts. In "Diving into the Wreck," symbolism is dominant, using the wreck ship as a primary metaphor representing various aspects such as buried history, past trauma, or even the female body itself. Rich's word choices are laden with meaning, often containing ambiguous nuances that challenge readers to interpret and uncover the hidden meanings behind them. Analyzing these symbols and words is crucial to unveiling deeper and more complex layers of meaning, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the poem's themes. This requires a careful interpretative approach to uncover the implicit meanings embedded within the poem. A thorough understanding of the symbolism and implicit meanings in this poem is essential to fully appreciating Rich's work.

The fundamental paradox of women's existence ontologically, women are human, equal to men is systematically denied by social and cultural realities, as de Beauvoir articulates in *The Second Sex* (1949:14). The statement "women are human" should be an unquestionable truth, yet ironically, women continuously face inequality and oppression. De Beauvoir's phrase "I am she: I am he" is not merely a simple statement of identity but a powerful cry expressing the loss of voice and recognition for marginalized women. These words serve as a shield, offering symbolic protection to women who have long been objectified by male dominance. This dominance persists not only in the past but also in the modern era. Women are continuously instrumentalized to fulfill men's needs and desires, often forced to adhere to oppressive norms that restrict their freedom. This is evident in various aspects of life, from the domestic sphere to the worlds of work and politics. Women are forced to adapt to undesirable circumstances, often having to conform to expectations imposed by a society that views their essence of life. Women face a difficult dilemma, forced to choose between traditional roles as housewives or pursuing careers and economic independence. Consequently, women often experience significant psychological and social pressures. Therefore, creating space for women in a male-dominated society is not only an ethical necessity but also crucial for achieving gender justice and equality. The poem "Diving into the Wreck" is a metaphor illustrating women's struggle to find themselves amidst oppression and to reclaim their long-lost identities. De Beauvoir's theory of essentialism (1949) encourages to look beyond abstract statements and confront the reality of inequality that continues to threaten women's freedom..

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs qualitative research methods to explore data based on meaning, perspectives, and experiences of individuals or groups. Qualitative research, as defined by Creswell (2018), focuses on in-depth and descriptive understanding of human phenomena, social processes, or specific contexts. This study utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach to comprehensively understand the context of a poem depicted through words. The chosen poem is "Diving into the Wreck" by Adrienne Rich, renowned for its feminist themes in

American literature. Composed in 1972 and published in 1973, this poem reflects the feminist and civil rights movements of that era. "Diving into the Wreck" broadly portrays a woman's journey diving into the ruins of a sunken ship, symbolizing women's struggles against oppression, self-discovery, and unveiling truths hidden within male-dominated historical narratives. As a significant work in feminist literature, this poem, awarded the National Book Award for Poetry in 1974, is often interpreted as an attempt to dismantle and challenge patriarchal narratives that have shaped history and culture. "Diving into the Wreck" not only solidifies Rich's position as a prominent voice in the feminist movement but also provides rich insights into women's struggles and experiences in society, particularly the turbulent social dynamics of the 1970s when women began actively challenging restrictive gender norms.

Data collection in this research utilizes documentation methods and recording techniques. According to Sugiyono (2018), documentation methods involve gathering data in the form of written materials, documents, figures, or images within a research study. Creswell (2018) further defines documentation as a method used to acquire data and information in the form of books, archives, documents, written figures, and images, including reports and information that support research. Recording written information is crucial for understanding Adrienne Rich's "Diving into the Wreck," especially for analyzing its feminist elements. Documentation methods, encompassing access and analysis of relevant documents and written sources, are key to data collection. This allows for in-depth examination of the poem's text by connecting it to feminist theory. Recording, an integral part of this process, involves meticulously documenting details from various sources, including the poem's text, to ensure accuracy, completeness, and well-organized data for facilitating comprehensive analysis and interpretation. Practical steps for data collection include: 1) locating the poem; 2) accessing and downloading the text; 3) reading the entire poem to understand the storyline, characters, setting, and themes; 4) recording significant details such as events, dialogues, and descriptions; and 5) identifying and marking key sentences to be used as supporting data for further analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Elements of Essentialist Feminism in "Diving into the Wreck"

Since time immemorial, social norms have pervaded individual lives, particularly those of women. These norms, akin to a gilded cage, confine women within societal expectations. This research will examine these social norms as depicted in Adrienne Rich's poem, "Diving into the Wreck."

Representation of the Female Body and the Sea

The representation of the female body and the sea is most clearly evident through the speaker's exploration as a wreck diver. The poem examines how the imagery of the sea, commonly associated with power and freedom, can also represent the constraints and limitations experienced by women.

[Data 3-1] (5)

"the body-armor of black rubber"

This line depicts the diving suit as protective gear, illustrating the protagonist's preparation for the challenges and dangers of the ocean depths. The black color symbolizes the darkness and mystery to be faced, while "body-armor" represents self-protection, creating a contrast with the figure of the woman diving into the sea.

The diving suit made of "black rubber" becomes a metaphor for the protection the protagonist needs on her perilous journey. "Rubber", a relatively hard and rigid material, symbolizes the self-defense required to confront a harsh and challenging environment. The

black color is associated with danger, mystery, and uncertainty, reinforcing this imagery. The phrase "black rubber" also symbolizes the oppression and limitations faced by women in society; the thickness and rigidity of the material represent the burden and social expectations that suppress women's freedom. The choice of the phrase "body-armor" explicitly links the diving suit to combat gear, indicating the protagonist's readiness to demonstrate that her journey is not merely a physical adventure but also a struggle to overcome social and cultural obstacles. The rigid "body-armor," with its necessary limitations of movement during diving, represents the protagonist's internal conflict between the need for self-protection and the desire for free movement or exploration. By donning the body-armor, the protagonist symbolically rejects social limitations and asserts her desire to control her own destiny. In the context of de Beauvoir's (1949) feminist perspective, this often depicts women as more emotional, illogical, or less capable of self-protection, while men are considered more rational and physically and mentally stronger. The female protagonist diving alone challenges gender norms that associate women with weakness and vulnerability. By wearing body-armor, she symbolically claims her strength and ability to confront the challenges ahead. This act constitutes a rebellion against societal expectations and an affirmation of female autonomy and strength.

[Data 3-2] (30)

"I crawl like an insect down the ladder"

This line depicts the protagonist's slow and cautious descent into the sea, highlighting her humility and awareness of the lurking dangers. The comparison to an insect underscores the protagonist's physical weakness and limitations in a difficult situation, this can be interpreted as a woman's struggle to enter a male-dominated world.

The ladder symbolizes the protagonist's journey into the ocean depths, both literally and figuratively. Each rung represents an obstacle to be overcome. However, this phrase also depicts an ungainly and tiring movement, contrasting with the image of a gentle and graceful woman. The crawling movement, associated with small and fragile creatures, demonstrates the protagonist's vulnerability in the face of nature's power. The slow and cautious movement, like that of a crawling insect, shows the woman's awareness of each step, indicating that this journey is full of challenges and requires great effort, as mentioned by de Beauvoir (1949:7). The comparison to an insect can be interpreted as a symbol of a woman's struggle for recognition and a place in a male-dominated society. The act of crawling can also be seen as a survival strategy and a way to overcome obstacles. By crawling, the protagonist demonstrates caution and environmental awareness, avoiding conspicuous or hasty movements, showcasing the protagonist's intelligence and adaptability in difficult situations. Overall, this imagery demonstrates the protagonist's tenacity and adaptability in the face of challenges.

[Data 3-3] (72)

"And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair"

This line depicts the protagonist's transformation into a mythological figure, merging with the underwater world and symbols of feminine power. The phrase "I am here" in the ocean asserts the protagonist's presence and crucial role in the narrative, demonstrating women's potential to seek freedom.

Mermaids in mythology are often considered symbols of femininity connected to the vast and deep ocean. The protagonist's transformed identity as a "mermaid" indicates a blend of reality and fantasy. As mythological creatures, mermaids are often associated with the sea, freedom, and mystery, therefore the use of "mermaid" highlights the themes of identity exploration, liberation, and self-discovery. The addition of the phrase "whose dark hair" after "mermaid" emphasizes a specific physical attribute that implies symbolism related to

power, mystery, or even the darker side of the protagonist's personality. The phrase "I am here" affirms the importance of the protagonist's presence in the world and her self-identification as a mermaid to demonstrate selfhood according to de Beauvoir (1949:238). Identifying with a mermaid is interpreted as self-discovery, the acceptance of inner strength and mystery. The sea, as a symbol of the subconscious and the unknown, becomes the place where the protagonist finds freedom and power. This self-discovery is manifested through the physical and identity transformation into a powerful mermaid connected to nature, symbolizing women's struggle to overcome obstacles and achieve freedom and strength.

[Data 3-4] (79)

"whose breasts still bear the stress"

This line illustrates the connection between the female body and the sea, highlighting the burdens carried by women, often perceived as social obligations. The phrase "breasts," as a symbol of femininity and fertility, indicates that these burdens are closely related to the social roles and expectations placed upon women. The phrase "stress" signifies significant physical and psychological pressure and weight.

This line uses the phrase "breasts" as a symbol of burden, referencing *The Second Sex* (1949:369), not merely as a physical description but as a metaphor. "Breasts," as a characteristic feature of the female body, are often associated with reproductive and nurturing roles, therefore the "stress" borne by the breasts can be interpreted as the social and cultural responsibilities imposed on women. This is the pressure to fulfill societal expectations as a mother, wife, and good member of society. The "stress" borne by the breasts is linked to women's struggle to find selfhood and freedom in an essentialist society. The protagonist depicts this burden physically, highlighting the pressures and difficulties women face in navigating life. This indicates that the burden is not merely personal but also a consequence of unjust social and cultural structures, making this phrase a critique of gender inequality and the pressures experienced by women in society. In conclusion, it demonstrates women's strength and resilience in the face of challenges and difficulties. The phrase "still bear" indicates that this burden has existed for a long time and continues into the modern era, illustrating the systemic nature of gender inequality. Thus, this phrase becomes a symbol of women's strength and resilience in confronting social and cultural pressures.

The Use of Symbolism in Revealing the Essence of Womanhood, Identity, and Self-Discovery

The symbolism revealing the essence of womanhood, identity, and the search for identity is clearly depicted through the protagonist's exploration as a wreck diver. This poem examines how the metaphors of the wreck, mythical texts, and the like often associated with the attainment of freedom, can also represent the freedom attainable by women.

[Data 3-5] (52)

"I came to explore the wreck"

This line states the protagonist's intention to investigate something broken and hidden, both literally and figuratively. The phrase "wreck," representing more than just a sunken ship, symbolizes buried history, suppressed identity, and the search for selfhood. The protagonist's journey is a quest for knowledge and understanding of women's experiences that have been obscured by society.

The phrase "wreck" is interpreted as a key symbol, carrying a double meaning. Literally, the wreck on the ocean floor represents a place of mystery and hidden danger. Figuratively, however the "wreck" is understood as a representation of forgotten and marginalized women's history. The destroyed and submerged ship symbolizes how women's experiences and stories have been suppressed, ignored, and buried under layers of social

constructs. The protagonist's intention to explore the "wreck" demonstrates a desire to uncover and understand this forgotten history. Exploring the "wreck" is a process of self-discovery for the protagonist. By diving into the ocean depths and investigating the wreck, the protagonist symbolically enters her subconscious and confronts various aspects of her identity and experiences as a woman. This process, undertaken by a woman is fraught with challenges and dangers, in line with de Beauvoir's (1949:695) exploration of women's essentialism, as symbolized by the damaged and dangerous condition of the ship. But through this exploration, the protagonist finds new strength and understanding of herself and her place in the world. This discovery is not always easy or pleasant, but it is a crucial part of the process of self-discovery. The essence of this line is not merely a statement of intent, but also a declaration of the protagonist's aim to understand and reclaim women's history and identity that has been obscured by society. This experience is an act of rebellion against social norms and an affirmation of the importance of understanding women's experiences in forming a more complete understanding of history and society. Exploring the "wreck" can be interpreted as a challenging yet rewarding process leading to self-discovery and a deeper understanding of the world and the protagonist's place within it.

[Data 3-6] (7)

“grave and awkward mask”

This line depicts the diving mask as a symbol of a false identity or social role imposed on women, according to de Beauvoir (1949:82). The adjective "grave" signifies the burden or pressure associated with that role. The phrase "awkward" emphasizes the discomfort and mismatch between the imposed identity and the protagonist's true identity in the poem.

The ill-fitting and heavy mask symbolizes the incompatibility between the social role played and the protagonist's true self. This reflects the internal conflict experienced by women when they are forced to conform to societal expectations and standards. This discomfort indicates that the imposed social role is not something natural or comfortable for the protagonist, who is a woman. "Mask," in this context, is not merely diving equipment but a metaphor for the social identity imposed on women. In patriarchal societies, even in the modern era, women are often expected to play specific roles that may not align with their true selves. This mask becomes a symbol of the oppression and limitations women face in authentic self-expression. Women are forced to meet expectations and standards that are often unrealistic and exhausting.

[Data 3-7] (39)

“the sea is another story”

This line portrays the women's experience in the poem through diving into the ocean, transcending dominant narratives and representing an alternative reality, a different and more complex story about women's identity and experience. The ocean serves as a metaphor for women's experiences that remain untold and unrepresented in traditional narratives.

The phrase "the sea" functions as a rich and layered symbol, extending beyond a literal description. It is used to represent the depth and mystery of women's experiences, often hidden or ignored in dominant narratives. The sea is not merely the setting for the dive but also a metaphorical space where the protagonist can explore her complex identity and challenge internalized gender norms. The uncertainty and potential dangers of the sea reflect the challenges and risks women face in defying social and cultural expectations. The sea, with its depths and mysteries, becomes a place where women can find strength and freedom not found elsewhere. de Beauvoir's (1949) perspective on essentialism states that women do not possess an essence or inherent nature that defines their identity. This poem illustrates this by depicting the sea as a space where women can transcend predetermined definitions. The sea is not a definition of freedom obtained by women, but rather a space where women

can define themselves outside the limitations imposed by society. Through the diving experience, the protagonist is freed from pre-determined roles and discovers a more authentic and complete identity. This dive becomes a journey toward the discovery of her true self, where women can shed societal expectations and find their own strength and freedom. Therefore, this line implies that there is an alternative narrative about women that needs to be told.

[Data 3-8] (92-94)

“a book of myths in which our names do not appear.”

This line illustrates how dominant narratives, symbolized as “a book of myths,” systematically ignore and erase women's contributions to history and culture. The absence of women's names in this book of myths highlights the invisibility and erasure of women from the grand narrative, leading to limited and inauthentic identity constructions.

The “book of myths” in this poem can be interpreted as a representation of the narratives that have shaped our understanding of history and culture. These narratives are dominated by male perspectives, resulting in the neglect and erasure of women's experiences. The absence of women's names in the book of myths reflects how women's contributions and achievements are often overlooked in the grand narrative, creating a system that systematically diminishes women's roles and limits their potential. The concept of women's erasure from dominant narratives has been extensively discussed in feminist studies. Feminists have identified how patriarchal power structures erase women from historical records by portraying women as objects or stereotypes and refusing to acknowledge women's contributions in various fields. The poem is interpreted as a response to this erasure, an attempt to reclaim the narrative and create a more accurate and inclusive representation of women's experiences. By rejecting the dominant narrative and creating an alternative narrative, this line challenges the power structures that have long constrained women. The poem challenges this system by attempting to create space for women to tell their own stories and gain the recognition they deserve (The Second Sex, 1949:251). Through the creation of alternative narratives, this poem challenges the power structures that have long limited women and strives to create a more just and inclusive world.

Classification of "Diving into the Wreck" in the Context of Essentialism

Adrienne Rich's "Diving into the Wreck" is a poem rich in language that resonates with feminist themes, particularly those concerning essentialism. This section will discuss this context in detail.

The Poem's Contribution to Understanding Essentialism

The poem utilizes words with rich and profound, often latent, meanings. This analysis will explicate the poem's vocabulary and analyze its deployment as illustrated in the following sections.

[Data 3-9] (1-3)

“First having read the book of myths, and loaded the camera, and checked the edge of the knife-blade”

These opening lines depict the female protagonist's physical and mental preparation for her dive. The phrase "read the book of myths" suggests the absorption of dominant narratives about women, while "loaded the camera" illustrates preparation for recording, and "checked the edge of the knife-blade" signifies confronting the dangers in the protagonist's search for an autonomous identity. These actions mark the protagonist's rejection of predetermined narratives and acceptance of the challenges in forming a self-identity outside social constructs, aligning with de Beauvoir's (1949) views on essentialism.

The phrase "read the book of myths" depicts the protagonist's awareness of the cultural and historical narratives that have shaped understandings of women. The "book of myths"

represents the essentialist views critiqued by de Beauvoir (1949), who argues that women's identities are shaped by social constructs, not by inherent essence or nature. By "reading" the book of myths, the protagonist acknowledges the influence of these narratives but does not passively accept them. The protagonist is prepared to challenge and overcome the limitations imposed by these narratives. The phrase "loaded the camera" illustrates the protagonist's intention to record and document her experience. The camera is used as a tool to control and represent experience, or a way to challenge dominant narratives by creating their own alternative narratives, demonstrating the protagonist's agency and awareness of the process of self-identity creation. Through this action, the protagonist asserts her autonomy and ability to shape her own identity, rejecting the societal essentialist view of women as passive objects. The phrase "checked the edge of the knife-blade" signifies awareness of the dangers and challenges the poet will face in the search for an autonomous identity. The knife symbolizes the potential dangers and risks involved in challenging social and cultural norms. By checking the knife, the protagonist prepares herself to confront the difficulties and consequences of her actions, demonstrating her determination to challenge essentialist views and create an authentic identity, regardless of the risks and challenges involved.

[Data 3-10] (44-47)

"And now: it is easy to forget what I came for among so many who have always lived here"

These lines depict how the female protagonist's experience in a new world, inhabited by sea creatures, causes a loss of focus on her initial purpose. The presence of sea creatures who have long inhabited this world challenges the protagonist's individual goals and demonstrates how easily initial objectives can be forgotten amidst a new and complex environment. This highlights the dynamic nature of identity and how the environment can shape and alter it, challenging societal concepts of a static essence, consistent with de Beauvoir's (1949) definition of essentialism.

These lines illustrate how the female protagonist, in her search for identity, is influenced by the new environment she encounters. The initial goal of investigating the wreck becomes less significant amidst the surrounding diversity of sea life, demonstrating that identity is not a social essence but something dynamic and ever-changing as it interacts with new environments and experiences. The presence of "so many who have always lived here" highlights the community of sea creatures who have long inhabited the underwater world, creating a contrast with the protagonist's individual purpose as a newcomer. Interaction with this community challenges the poet to consider different perspectives and to understand self-identity within a broader context. The fixed and essential identity considered true by society is challenged by the experiences the protagonist faces. By forgetting her initial purpose, the protagonist demonstrates her ability to adapt and change, considered an important process in the search for autonomous identity. As the protagonist detaches from predetermined goals and expectations, they embrace the fluidity of identity. This is a rejection of societal views of identity as something static and an affirmation of the dynamic and ever-changing nature of human identity. This is consistent with de Beauvoir's response in *The Second Sex* (1949), mentioning the idea of essentialism, that women do not have an essence or do not possess inherent traits that define their identity.

[Data 3-11] (53-54)

"I came to explore the wreck. The words are purposes. The words are maps."

These lines illustrate the female protagonist's purpose in "Diving Into The Wreck" is to explore and understand her identity. Words are used as "purposes" and "maps," becoming crucial tools in this journey, as experience guides the protagonist in her identity search,

challenging social constructs and essentialism, a self-discovery supported by de Beauvoir's (1949) views on essentialism.

The line "I came to explore the wreck" establishes the protagonist's primary goal of understanding and interpreting the wreck as a metaphor for the complex and suppressed female identity imposed by societal demands. The wreck, in this context, represents the dominant narratives about women that have historically shaped their identities. The line "The words are purposes" emphasizes the role of language in shaping and directing the protagonist's identity search. Words are not merely tools of communication but also tools for shaping purpose and meaning, becoming guides in the process of exploration and self-discovery. This poem shows how language can be used to shape and reshape identity, an active and dynamic process. In other words, the protagonist does not merely discover her identity but also creates it through words. The line "The words are maps" also illustrates the idea that language functions as a guide in the search for identity. Words are used as maps that guide the protagonist through the complexities of her experience. Words provide structure and direction to the complex and challenging exploration process, indicating that the search for identity is not a random or accidental process but a deliberate and directed one. The use of maps as a metaphor shows that identity is not something passively discovered but something actively constructed, interpreting and challenging oneself. Therefore, this stanza challenges societal views of identity as something fixed and unchanging, affirming the importance of language and experience in shaping a dynamic and evolving identity, consistent with de Beauvoir's (1949) essentialist view that women are not defined by social roles and societal expectations.

[Data 3-12] (83-84)

"We are the half-destroyed instruments that once held to a course"

These lines depict women who once followed a predetermined life path based on essence. It is also a metaphor for how social constructs and essence have damaged and limited women's potential, yet the description "half-destroyed" implies the potential for repair and rediscovery a rejection of determinism and an acceptance of the dynamic nature of identity.

The metaphor of "half-destroyed instruments" effectively illustrates how women in society are often forced to follow predetermined life paths. Women are made into "instruments" used to fulfill pre-established social roles and expectations. The portrayal of women as "instruments" in this poem shows how women are often treated as objects used for specific purposes. The phrase "half-destroyed" illustrates that women are not entirely broken or powerless but still possess the potential for repair and rediscovery. The description "half-destroyed" in this poem suggests that women have broken free from previously predetermined life paths. This process is challenging and complex but also allows women to rediscover themselves and reach their full potential. This stanza becomes a powerful statement about women's strength, resilience, and their ability to overcome limitations imposed by society. The phrase "that once held to a course" indicates that women were once bound to a predetermined "life path," interpreted as gender roles and social expectations that have limited women. The female figures have experienced damage, but this damage can also be used to rediscover their identity and shape their own life path, as depicted by de Beauvoir (1949:343).

[Data 3-13] (87-90)

"We are, I am, you are by cowardice or courage the one who find our way back to this scene"

This stanza emphasizes the shared experience in the search for identity, shaped by both courage and cowardice. "We," "I," and "you" indicate the collective experience of

women in facing challenges and forming their own identities. This search, through courage or cowardice, leads to a deeper understanding of self and shared experience, following essentialist views (1949).

The use of the phrases "we," "I," and "you" effectively shifts the focus from individuality to the collective experience of women. This stanza challenges societal essentialist views that often emphasize differences and the individuality of women, ignoring the shared experience in confronting social and cultural constructs. The contrast between "cowardice" and "courage" demonstrates the complexity of women's experiences in shaping their identities, involving a range of emotions and challenges. "Courage" is interpreted as the act of challenging social and cultural norms, while "cowardice" is interpreted as a tendency to follow paths predetermined by society. However, both "courage" and "cowardice" can lead to a deeper understanding of oneself and one's experience. This poem shows that there is no single right way to form an identity, and that all experiences, both positive and negative, contribute to a more complete understanding of oneself. The line "find our way back to this scene" depicts that the search for identity is an ongoing and iterative process. This depiction is not a one-way process but involves continuous reflection and reinterpretation of experiences. By returning to this "scene," the female figures can gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their shared experiences. This is consistent with de Beauvoir's (1949:343) essentialist view, which affirms the dynamic and evolving nature of human identity.

[Data 3-14] (91-94)

"carrying a knife, a camera, a book of myths in which our names do not appear"

This stanza describes the equipment carried by the female protagonist during her dive as a representation of her approach to the search for identity. The knife symbolizes the ability to confront danger and destroy limiting social constructs. The camera represents the attempt to document and create alternative narratives. The "book of myths" that does not include women's names shows awareness of the dominant narratives that have ignored women's experiences, challenging social essentialism and emphasizing the need to create new narratives.

The "knife," "camera," and "book of myths" represent three different approaches in the search for female identity in this poem. The knife carried symbolizes the courage to confront danger and destroy limiting social constructs. The camera represents the attempt to document and create alternative narratives. This action is a creation that challenges the dominant narratives that have ignored women's experiences. By carrying the camera, the protagonist controls the representation of herself and creates a more accurate narrative. The "book of myths" that does not include women's names shows the protagonist's awareness of the dominant narratives that have ignored and excluded women from history and culture. This is a critique of societal essentialism, which considers female identity as something inherent. de Beauvoir (1949:419) argues that identity is formed through actions and experiences, not inherent essences imposed by society. The phrase "knife, camera," and "book of myths" are used to represent the tools used by the protagonist to construct her understanding of herself, showing how existence precedes essence. Carrying these tools signifies the protagonist's freedom from pre-determined essences as she creates her own identity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study examines Adrienne Rich's poem, "Diving into the Wreck," to explore the concept of essentialist feminism as articulated in de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). In-depth analysis reveals how Rich employs poetic symbolism to challenge

traditional views of female identity. Symbols such as the diving suit, the crawling movement, and the transformation into a mermaid represent women's struggle against restrictive social norms and their pursuit of autonomous selfhood. The poem demonstrates that female identity is not static and inherently determined, but rather dynamic and complex, aligning with de Beauvoir's (1949) perspective. In short, Rich's poem offers a rich and relevant interpretation of essentialist feminist theory, illustrating women's struggles and transformations in defining their identities and achieving emancipation.

Suggestions

This research fills a gap in the field by examining feminist essentialism through the lens of poetry. Future research could explore feminist essentialism in different contexts, such as in university settings, rural/urban environments, or in specific inspiring figures in the modern era.

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