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Embracing True Self, Alienation, and Freedom: An Existential Analysis of Adrienne Rich's "Diving into the Wreck"

Abstract

Adrienne Rich's poem "Diving into the Wreck" displays a symbolic journey towards self-discovery, identity, and history. The poem is usually interpreted through the feminist or poststructuralist approaches, nevertheless, this study claims that the poem's existential aspects have not been taken into consideration. By the application of Sartrean concepts of freedom, alienation, and the search for meaning to the text, the critical gap will be filled by this research. A qualitative methodology based on the textual analysis of language, form, and imagery is used, and the analysis sees the dive as an intense journey of self-discovery. The narrator's striving to investigate the wreck corresponds with Sartre's dictum that "existence precedes essence" and manifests the need to create one's own meaning in a neutral universe. This research further supports the scholarly readings of Rich's works by bringing to the fore its existential aspect.

Keywords: Existentialism, Wreck, Diving, Text Analysis, Freedom, Sense of Isolation, Finding Purpose, Life and Self-Discovery

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Abstract

Adrienne Rich's poem "Diving into the Wreck" displays a symbolic journey towards self-discovery, identity, and history. The poem is usually interpreted through the feminist or poststructuralist approaches, nevertheless, this study claims that the poem's existential aspects have not been taken into consideration. By the application of Sartrean concepts of freedom, alienation, and the search for meaning to the text, the critical gap will be filled by this research. A qualitative methodology based on the textual analysis of language, form, and imagery is used, and the analysis sees the dive as an intense journey of self-discovery. The narrator's striving to investigate the wreck corresponds with Sartre's dictum that "existence precedes essence" and manifests the need to create one's own meaning in a neutral universe. This research further supports the scholarly readings of Rich's works by bringing to the fore its existential aspect.

Keywords:

Existentialism, Wreck, Diving, Text Analysis, Freedom, Sense of Isolation, Finding Purpose, Life, and Self-Discovery

Introduction

Diving into the Wreck is a famous work of contemporary poetry; it mostly explores issues of history and identity. The poem was composed in 1973 amidst a tumultuous political and social environment, and, therefore, it captures her own struggles as well as other wider issues of society. Rich employs the simile of jumping into a crashed ship to explain the struggle of finding and recovering one's self-identity. Wreckage not just

symbolizes personal memories and memory traumas but also the shared history of women and minority voices, who have been ignored in the pages of history. The poem opens with the speaker about to plunge into the wreckage, which, for the purposes of the poem, signifies the past and the depths of the self; the speaker is trying to reclaim lost aspects of herself.

Plunging in is an entry into the uncharted world of new concepts of self to be discovered. This



new self is generally profound, deep down beneath the sea with the throngs of waders. This is the reason why Rich's poem is so lovely, her words so captivating that they are able to connect to the scale of the case. Diving into the Wreck is generally approached from a feminist or a post-structuralist perspective, but it also has existential aspects of the poem that are quite untouched.

Knowledge of existentialism - a philosophical position that asserts the relevance of the human in a meaningless world, his or her freedom, and his or her questioning - greatly improves the analysis of Rich's work. Significantly, existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre has pointed out that individuals live in a monstrous universe without design, and it is against this that individuals must make their existence and meaning themselves. (Sartre, 1946). Such use of such a focus on existentialism, the current research hopes to improve on the understanding of Diving into the Wreck's consideration of broader themes of identity, freedom, and responsibility as well. For instance, the descent of the speaker into the wreck can be said to be a metaphor for the existential journey that every other person must embark upon, or the beginning of a war that everyone fights in their life.

It requires self-discovery and readiness to face one's own painful truth.

Thus, it validates one of Sartre's most famous sayings: 'existence precedes essence', i.e., society's assumptions cannot decide one's identity; rather, one must redefine and shape one's own self each time (Sartre 1992). The problem statement Adrienne Rich's poem Diving into the Wreck is usually read through feminist and poststructuralist lenses, taking away from its own existential preoccupations with identity, freedom, and searching for meaning; this research intends to highlight these to better understanding of the poem's exploration of the human condition.

Objective of the Research

1. To read Diving into the Wreck existentially, bearing in mind selfhood, identity, and the consequences of Sartrean philosophy.

Research Question

1. How does Diving into the Wreck intersect with existential concepts, utilizing the wreck

as a metaphor for self and identity, and referring to Sartre's philosophy?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that is used in this paper is that of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy of existentialism, and thus Adrienne Rich's Diving into the Wreck is discussed in terms of identity, self-awareness, and finding meaning in a universe that is indifferent to human existence.

Sartre's existentialism can be summed up in the famous dictum that "existence precedes essence," which means that human beings are not endowed with a predetermined essence at birth but rather are to a great extent the product of their own actions and choices (Sartre, 1946). This very first concept is the root of Rich's definition of the speaker's experience as a self-aware confrontation with the imposed aspects of herself, thereby revealing the through one's work and choices. In Diving into the Wreck, the speaker's descent into the ocean signifies a metaphorical journey of self-discovery and unraveling of the traditional narratives. The trip mirrors Sartre's belief that existence comes before essence, affirming that the speaker has to take control to recover and reclaim herself by actively engaging in her world (Sartre, 1992).

The poem, therefore, portrays the physical and spiritual movement of self-formation, the speaker going along by way of the different parts of individual and collective history to get rid of the identities that had been forced on her and to reach a more real self. Alienation, the feeling of being cut off from the self, the others, and society, is one of the main points of Sartrean existentialism. Sartre sees alienation as resulting from a sort of isolation that goes with the realization that one's existence is too big for the societal systems to comprehend. In Diving the Wreck, the wreck picture represents such alienation, showing the speaker's confrontation with the malformed and shattered parts of her past. That "wounded unity" of the poem is memories that have developed her but still left her uncompleted, thus the topic of existentiality of different inputs coming from outside and the true self getting integrated is being pointed out. The speaker's trip in the wreck reflects the Sartrean view that individuality is mostly a product of the environment, thus alienation comes

in. The encounter, nonetheless, is also a power retrieval act, and it mirrors Sartre's theory that freedom entails responsibility for one's own redefinition of self. The odyssey signifies a confrontation with isolation made possible by the fusion of the thrust self with the self-image. Subsequently, Sartre's recognition of the absurdity of a meaningless universe prefigures the fragmented and chaotic imagery in Rich's poem. The wreck of the ship symbolizes the hopelessness of trying to derive a simple narrative from a disorderly and riotous reality. The descent of the speaker into this abyss is not just a swim but a search for comprehension in the chaos. The speaker chooses not to surrender to despair but to proclaim the Sartrean truth that man must create his own meaning in an otherwise empty world. By going, the speaker claims that through a profoundly different and tumultuous battle with existence that may seem like nothing, meaning is extracted. The major points of Sartre's philosophy are the existential ones of being before essence, alienation from the world, the absurdity, and the quest for meaning, and these points are the ones that provide a solid basis for a comprehension of Rich's *Diving into the Wreck*. The poem connotes a transition where the speaker unveils the imposture of identity and retracts from isolation and absurdity to meaning. The presence of the existential root not only brings about a deeper interpretation of the poem but also uncovers the speaker's determination to exercise power in an always-unresponsive world.

Research Methodology

The present study is qualitative descriptive research based on an analysis of the text of the poem *Diving into the Wreck* by Adrienne Rich. The poem is exposed to Textual Analysis by Alan McKee. He defines text as "something that we make meaning from" and, through the skill of textual analysis, "most likely meanings" can be decided (McKee, 2003). The paper will unravel the image, symbolism, and language in the poem and reveal how they articulate existential themes of personality, alienation, and the search for meaning in a disintegrated reality through the application of Sartre's system to the critique of the chosen texts.

The essential lines of the poem are critically examined to reveal the poet's sinking into the

wreck as a duel between the individual's and the society's demands, as well as a struggle for finding the truth of existence.

This methodology gives depth and precision to studying how Rich's poem diverges from Sartre's ideas, while allowing subtle probing of identity and meaning.

Literature Review A number of scholarly works have been directed to Adrienne Rich's *Diving into the Wreck*, amongst them, but not limited to, feminist, ecofeminist, and existentialist critiques, and ideological resistance and phenomenology readings.

Rich's *Diving into the Wreck* is one of her poems where she is objecting to dominant ideologies.

Pokharel, for example, in his book, finds that Rich's aggression is directed at most of society's structures that include femininity's history, that is, patriarchal.

Rich's antifemininity also outlines Pokahal's hypothesis about the poem in which he says that the exploration of the wreckage reflects Rich's resistance to feminist stereotypes.

According to Pokharel (2023), what has been disabled since the time besieged is how in the poem. Diving into the submerged history of heritage becomes a symbolic act of resistance to the expedition to remember how life and society had created identities, the identities of different genders. The interpretive context of Adrienne Rich's *"Diving into the Wreck"* has been broadened with new scholarship moving away from feminist and poststructuralist paradigms towards psychoanalytic, linguistic, and existential readings. Saeed and Ahmad (2022) utilize a feminist existential critique to study how Rich's speaker navigates patriarchal myth and recovers individual subjectivity in an encounter with the historical oppression inscribed on the female body. Likewise, Hassan, Talif, and Kaur (2015) highlight the linguistic building of oppression, averring that Rich's poetry acts both as a subversive instrument and voice-reclaiming within the masculine symbolic order. Pokharel (2023) reads the poem as a performance of ideological resistance, metaphorically tracing the plunge into the wreck as a resistance to patriarchal structures that have historically inscribed gendered identity.

By means of these interpretations, the poem's more profound existential issues, solitude, being true to oneself, and liberty of decision, are uncovered, while concurrently, the interpretation discloses that Rich's poem is engaged in a discussion with Sartre's ideas of personality through irony and disorder. Furthermore, other modern readings have given precedence to Diving into the Wreck as a venue for encounters among nature, mind, and spirit.

Erkan (2012) takes the ecofeminist point of view, in that Rich's conflation of the natural world and the feminine self heightens the interconnectedness of ecological and gender liberation. The University of North Georgia (2022) research paper, Duality in Adrienne Rich's Diving into the Wreck (2022), examines the porous boundary between opposites such as masculine/feminine and self/other, illustrating how Rich subverts dualities to construct an integrative human being. Ruhlen (2004) invokes Lacanian psychoanalysis in contending that the descent in the poem into the ocean floor is a face-off with the "Real," a level of truth which exceeds the domain of language. Similarly, Manzi (2013) invokes Sartre's concept of radical freedom in explaining the existential face-off of the speaker with meaninglessness and chaos. Other analysts like Obed (2020) phenomenologically interpret the poem to illustrate how experience and gender construct the reality of the speaker, and Marshall University's (n.d.) Beyond the Pages: An Introduction to Literature contextualizes the poem both as individual and collective historical experience. Working together, these analyses bring out the existential and philosophical depth of Rich's poem and demonstrate how the act of diving as a process is a metaphor for humanity's quest to find meaning, genuineness, and freedom from a world not religious. Nana Shirai (2023) contributes to the inner otherness theme in the poem and explains that for Rich, diving is utilized as a force of hostility toward the self.

As the poem reminds Yukari Shirai, its voice challenges not just society's structures out there but divisions and otherness within themselves. Huma Ahmad (2021) engages Diving into the Wreck from a feminist existential approach while documenting the transformation of self as identity and the body. The writers claim that the poem, at

one level, identifies with the female body as a place of oppression, discrimination, and violence, but at the same time borrows some of the themes of freedom, right, and responsibility from existentialism (Saeed & Ahmad, 2021). Diving into the Wreck is best interpreted by considering the attitude, mind, and focus of the speaker, according to Lacey Okonski (2015). To this effect, Okonski is of the view that due to allegory and imagery in the poem, the reader can potentially understand the symbolism as well as materiality of the poem.

Poetic imagery, such as drowning in the ocean and venturing into the wreckage of the sea, verifies an eco-feminism that is antipatriarchy in character (Erkan, 2012). Rana Jabir Obed (2020) uses the feminist phenomenological method to exert her focused analysis of the wreck the speaker encounters in Diving into the Wreck. Obed's phenomenological reading of the poem is based on the gender and other structural contexts that have shaped how the speaker experiences himself. Jean Paul Sartre's work enriches insight into the existential aspects of Diving into the Wreck as more perceptive and comprehensible. Indeed, Sartre's interpretation of existentialism is consistent with the speaker's action in the poem since it encapsulates the definitions of self-definition and self-activity. Yvonne Manzi (2013) also elaborates Sartre's concept of radical freedom, where the person should be alone even when life is meaningless and chaotic.

Data Analysis

Adrienne Rich's poem Diving into the Wreck is a complex poem that is interpreted with an existentialist perspective, especially of Jean-Paul Sartre's ideas of freedom, alienation, meaning, and identity.

Existentialism postulates the individual as a free being who has the potential to forge his or her own essence and identity with the power of choice and action.

They feel dislocation as both absurdity and meaninglessness are equally constant attributes of life, and finding meaning becomes a solitary and individualistic endeavor. From this vantage point, Rich's poem can be said to be a complete study of the human condition, like identity, the weight of the structures of society, and how one's own past, self-presses upon them. The act of descending into

the wreck as a pervasive imagery of the poem can then be understood as descending down into oneself and confronting the very existential questions of life.

The speaker's preparations before descending into the abyss represent his/her conscious choice and courage. First, after reading the book of myths, / loading the camera, / and trying the edge of the knife-blade. Sartre's philosophy of "existence precedes essence" (Sartre, 1946) asserts that human beings are shaped by their actions. Equipped with the instruments ("Book of Myths", "Camera", "Blades") signifies the existential decision to confront the unknown. "Book of Myths" alludes to the inherited and collective stories that always happen to distort the truth. By carrying it, the speaker acknowledges the mainstream societal forms but struggles to break through them in the quest for his/her truth. The "blade" is very sharp and straight and symbolizes the existential commandment of vision and the power to break illusions (Manzi, 2013). This acknowledgment is close to the idea of Sartre, that is, genuine liberty is a situation of seriousness and deliberate self-application. The mermaid showed off very impressive black, long, and flowing black hair, whereas the merman came to the photo in his armor. Alienation, a fundamental concept in Sartre's philosophy, is expressed here; this is the state when one has completely lost touch with one's true self. The speaker's self-classification as "mermaid" and "merman" points to a certain duality that fuses feminine and masculine characteristics, which are in contrast to the existing social standards. Sartre (1992) claims that one's social roles result in the creation of a false self that eventually results in a core conflict within the individual. The androgyny in Rich's poem is the self-awareness that nurtures the confrontation between one's real self and the external labels imposed by others. The armor-like body implies a protective unity, while the flowing hair represents the genuine but hidden side of character that lies underneath the surface (Saeed & Ahmad, 2021; Shirai, 2023). Such a communicative interplay prompts the existential battle of resisting alienation in the slow method of acquiring one's self-knowledge. "The thing I came for: / the wreck and not the story of the wreck / the thing itself and not the myth." In these lines, with the speaker's reference to the "wreck" instead of "the story",

there is a strong and clear indication of Sartre's existential choice for genuineness coming through. "Story" is a narrative that simplifies complicated reality, while "Shipwreck" is an allegory for basic facts that one has to face in order to gain insight into one's being. By opting for "the thing itself," the speaker invokes an existential discount to have a second-hand understanding. Sartre (1946) maintained that people had to impose meaning on things through first-hand experience and confrontation with reality. The expression underlines the valor of going after truth, no matter how bad reality is broken and messed up (Pokharel, 2023).

Going down into the wreck is a journey back to gaining control and restructuring one's existence by pursuing the raw and thought-provoking reality (Okonski, 2015).

"The wreck and not the story of the wreck"

The repeated invocation of the "wreck" highlights an existential acceptance of the absurd. The world, according to Sartre, is devoid of essential meaning that forces individuals to project meaning onto an unorganized and indifferent universe (Sartre, 1946). The wreckage represents a broken identity and collective trauma. The speaker's rejection of this wreckage is the existence consciousness, i.e., the continuity and meaning must be constructed out of the disconnection and the fractured pieces.

This is in accordance with Sartre's contention that there must be acceptance and facing of absurdity in order for real existence to happen (Erkan, 2012).

The speaker's decision is a decision against the wreckage, not the comforting myth, and is indicative of the existential necessity to choose reality over illusions.

The poem addresses radical freedom whereby the speaker knowingly decides to pursue an adventurous journey, with emphasis on Sartre's existential theory of existence prior to essence (Sartre, 1946).

The poem further depicts the alienation of the speaker as he reflects on interior dualities and social expectations conditioning them.

The absurd is visited when the speaker is unable to glean meaning from trash and disordered settings. The preference of myth over reality is a very a

demand for authenticity and self-reflection. The term "Wreck", in this case, is a representation of hard reality that should be encountered and comprehended without imposing any conditions.

"The drowned face always looks / towards the sun" is a spectral reminder of those on the fringes of traditional narratives.

The drowned face refers to the victims who have suffered and been overlooked, whereas "gazing towards the sun" suggests the desire for recognition and redemption. The photograph records the struggle of existence to be heard and seen, and the conflict between optimism and despair. Shipwrecks refer to individual and collective pasts that have sunk and been overlooked. It expresses cumulative trauma and conflated truths that create identity. By choosing to dive, the speaker is self-consciously engaging in confronting such excesses, living Sartre's notions of existential freedom and the compulsory creation of meaning out of existent experience (Pokharel, 2023; Shirai, 2023). Sartre's existentialism is a manifestation of an identity and meaning poem. The action of the speaker fits the existentialist theory that humans must meet reality squarely and make their own being through active action. The diving metaphor employed in this poem is a reflection of Sartre's insistence on the need to cope with the absurd and make skirmishes during the uproar (Sartre, 1946; Erkan, 2012). The poet likens his lonely dive to that of Jacques Cousteau, "With his assiduous team, / board the sun-flooded schooler." By this comparison, the picture of the speaker's enterprise as being totally dependent on him alone is presented. Opposite to Cousteau, whose oceanic explorations are carried out in the company of others, the speaker has to go through it by himself/herself. Such a solitude reinforces Sartre's position that a person has no other option but to find his/her own existence, and answer for himself/herself, regardless of the help one may receive from society's moral and emotional support groups. "The sun-flooded schooler" suggests the concepts of light and knowledge, while the speaker's trail of darkness and uncertainty becomes more and more pronounced with every step. "There's a ladder. /The ladder is always there." The ladder is ever-present, always ready to take one to a higher comprehension, a way of passing through the realms of reality. However, the phrase "always

there" implies that this opportunity has been available forever; it just needed to be captured. The existential moment of falling to confront the depth of one's own psyche and past is a manifestation of choice and self-determination. "Hanging innocently, / near the side of the schooler." The ladder symbolically highlights the heaviness of the path it leads us through, portraying the existential conflict between the surface and the deeper realities. The speaker's fall "rung after rung" into the bottom of the ocean, the journey of life. With its depth, the "Oxygen engulfs me, /the blue light /the clear atoms, /of our human air." The speaker dives "rung after rung" into the depths of the sea, just like the flow of life. With its depth, the point in an underwater environment points to the irony of existing in a place that is inaccessible to man. This tension reflects the existential struggle of man and his encounter with things that are beyond the bounds of society and man's own comfort zone.

With what has been achieved with the speaker, the sea has come to symbolize a wide foreign region, something that is an enormous space in relation to man.

"My flippers cripple me, / I crawl like an insect down the ladder." The crawling, like an insect, of the figure evokes vulnerability, confusion, and misplaced. The dissolution of form and movement really provides a picture of a man fighting against his own limitations and weaknesses. The absence of a specific direction or indication of "when the sea begins" indicates that self-discovery is accompanied by doubt and storm. "First the air is blue and then / It is bluer and then green and then / black." The changing of colors is a very deep and risky experience of venturing into the unknown; it is an 'in-between' shift from being clear to being obscure. To 'black out' means that the umr of the speaker's identity and perceptions have been erased and buried in the darkness. Still, the line "My mask is strong / it fills my blood with strength" indicates a contradictory situation of being strong because of being weak. The "mask" itself is a sign of both covering and changing, a reminder that the means used for covering are also the same ones that may change us. Rich's assertion "The sea is another story / the sea is not a question of power" shows that the speaker's worldview has changed. Opposed to the human dominion of power and control, the sea seems to behave according to its

own rules. This demonstrates a shift in the speaker's viewpoint as well as an observation of an ontology that asserts part of life will be contested and not overthrown, thus having to be walked through with meekness and flexibility. The speaker's clarification of "Learn alone / to turn my body with ease / in the vast water" was the strongest indicator that he was yielding to the contest with the power issue and accepting the fact that he is "in the world but not of it." It is, above all, the opposite existing in strength and weakness. The creatures of the ocean, the speaker is merely recalling the questioning "so many who have always / lived here"—are the signs of both the eternal and alien aspect of underwater life. The trespasser has to adjust to them and "breathe differently down here." That means a complete transformation of character, a move to the other side of the world where a different way of living is required. The speaker is no longer a mere voyager in the past but a fighter who has come to claim the past as his/her own. "I have come to explore the wreck." The speaker could hardly have been more explicit in stating his/her position, which places him/her in the past and in conflict with it. Wreckage serves both as a literal and a metaphorical framework that embodies the ruin of one's trauma, injustice, or a failing system. Ritchie's "exploration" is to be understood as an invitation to an active and intentional discovery rather than to a passive acceptance of the encountered reality. "Words are purposes. / Words are maps." Yet the speaker even recognizes the limitations of language, admitting that they can only take you halfway in the search for understanding. "I came to see the damage that was done / and the treasures that prevail." This line illustrates the irony of the journey: it is at once a trial by destruction and a trial by endurance. The "damage" symbolizes all the pain, loss, and injustice that have occurred, while the "treasures" denote the strength and beauty that remain despite the hardships. The speaker's readiness to bring together the two opposing forces is a major step towards our accepting the world as it is, with all its dark and light sides. In "Stroking the beam of my lamp / slowly along the flank / of something more permanent / than fish or weed," the poet suggests that the shipwreck is being scrutinized exceedingly and reflectively. The notion of "the beam of my lamp" points to the concentration and the Light's purity that is

illuminating what is obscured from the surface. The selection of "something more lasting" emphasizes the fleeting nature of the wreck, suggesting that it contains truths that are even greater than the ephemeral life of the sea's inhabitants. The speaker's inquiry touches upon the barely visible realities but, on the other hand, reveals the truths that are not so readily discerned. "The evidence of damage / worn by salt and sway into this threadbare beauty." This implies that time has passed, and the suffering has been slowly converted into beauty that is so soft and airy that it can hardly be noticed. The "ribs of disaster" stake their claims / Among temporary ghosts," the figures that haunt the ruins, perhaps unwilling or unable to completely vacate the place of ruin. These "ghosts" can be seen as memories, traumas, or people who are otherwise silenced and marginalized. The speaker's acknowledgment of these issues has shown the common oppression that all the oppressed share, the alienation or invisibility of experiencing. As Sartre would say, the confrontation with these "ghosts" is a confrontation with the past reality and the pieces of a fragmented identity, a first step towards regaining agency and self-definition.

The original character of such heroes (inertia, lack of action) cannot find a delicate balance between the monument and the forward progress, and the past and the establishment of a new path. "We circle silently / about the wreck / we dive into the hold." This collective pronoun "we" indicates that the trip is not individual but is rather common for all truth seekers and transformation. To dive "into the hold" is to go down into the center of the wreck, to face the main realities, and to discover the hidden truths. As for space, that is the innermost part of the ship, it signifies the past repository - with its pain, loss, and hidden history. The action of Ritchie's "diving into trouble" illustrates the need to pass through these buried truths to get an understanding of oneself and the world. "I am she: I am he / whose drowned face sleeps with open eyes." It is a powerful assertion emphasizing the recognition of the individuals drowned by history and dried or forgotten.

"Drowning of face" is the silent voice and identity of the silent story.

By stating "I am she: I am he," the poet becomes one with all of them who have been repressed,

embracing their misfortune and strength. "We are the half-ruined tools / that once held to a direction." "Half-ruined tools" are individuals, communities, or groups of individuals whose purpose has been pulled apart by institutional powers, yet some remnant of the former purpose remains. "Staying the course" entails trying to proceed despite difficulties and difficulties in the face of adversity. The image of "half-prepared tools" accentuates persistence and determination on the part of individuals who continue seeking meaning and self-definition in spite of the midst-of-destruction conditions. "We are, I am, you are / by cowardice or courage / the one who finds our way / back to this scene." This stanza contains the existential strand of choice and responsibility. Whether "cowardice or courage," everyone must confront their past and self, making sense out of what they do. The poem is centered around the "finding our way/returning to this scene" process, which cannot avoid the never-ending cycle of self-discovery, death, and resurrection with all its sides. Rich's speaker turns the continuous confrontation with the wreck into an act of defining and healing oneself. It can be said that the poem, with its romanticized intertwined relationship of identity, history, and meaning, is a parallel to Sartre's philosophies. For Sartre, it is always a must to go down into the past, sever all the imposed tales, and generate meaning through one's personal struggle. The spot of the wreck, in both senses, takes on the character of a site where the speaker - and all the truth seekers - get to witness the whole of existence and take back their power in it. Hence, once more, *Into the Wreck* is a magnificent representation of identity, history, and the meaning of life as the principal themes. Along with powerful visual images, Rich employs symbolic language and a deep understanding of the relationship between individual and social traumas to not only point out self-exploration as the main concern of the readers but also to ask them to scrutinize the truths and stories that constitute their worldview. The poem presents various facets of the human condition, like isolation, change, and resilience, which are pointed out as the most striking, and therefore it bears the associated existential issues of freedom, alienation, and self-definition with it. In effect, the speaker, along with those who are attracted to follow, gets not only one self-discovery journey but also the

reclamation of their power and the challenging of the tags and restrictions that society imposes on them. In this manner, Rich's poem serves both as a warning and a reminder that meaning is not simply granted but is instead created through the courageous engagement of the individual and his/her appropriation.

Conclusion

Adrienne Rich's "Diving into the Wreck" is a poem that surpasses the limitations set by feminist critique and post-structuralist interpretations. It connects the lines of the existential problems and views them through the corresponding lens of Jean-Paul Sartre as represented in his book *Being and Nothingness*. The drowning act reflects Sartre's opinion that "existence precedes essence" and promotes, through the speaking focus on self-discovery as the first step in the fight for freedom from the roles imposed by society and one's own past, both of which are shattered. The poem aligns with Sartre's concepts of freedom, isolation, and the absurdity of life. The first person's decision to come to the ruins with tools and endanger herself reveals the might of a choice as well as the weight of responsibility, which corresponds to Sartre's claim that a person is defined by what he or she does. The differences between living beings, which are at the same time reflected in the social role-play of "the mermaid" and "the merman," disclose the price of the self and the outside control. By dispossessing the narratives that have been imposed on characters and staying only with the wreck of the ship, the poem advocates for the power of the individual and the search for order in the natural disorder of life. While the speaker attempts to reconstruct the symbolic form of the wreck, he realizes that he is embroiled in a very human, eternal struggle for meaning in a world of absurdity. Rich's writing, viewed from the perspective of existence, turns into a parable of the strength and tenacity necessary to create and keep oneself during disorder. Ultimately, *Diving into the Wreck* is a poem that not only puts the audience's interpretations into question but also encourages them to scrutinize their own past, dismantle false narratives, and uncover truth even in life's absurdity.

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