

# GENDER DIFFERENCE IN THE POETRY OF ANDRIENNE RICH

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**Abstract** - American poet, essayist, and feminist Adrienne Cecile Rich is generally regarded as one of the 20th century's most read and influential writers. After her birth on May 16, 1929, Adrienne Rich quickly rose to prominence as a leading figure in the American feminist movement. A lot of the themes in Rich's poetry revolve with women, feminism, and the importance of family. Topics discussed in this article include how Adrienne Rich's poetry indirectly bridges the gap between the Anglo-American and French feminisms on gender and diversity. This analysis of Adrienne Rich's poetic evolution portrays her as having progressed from a more masculine to a more feminine focus, and ultimately to a more gender-neutral and universally decentered vision. Female melancholy as a result of masculine preeminence is examined in this research. Rich uses symbolism to display women depression. She also makes an effort to clarify women's roles in society. Psychoanalysis, societal issues, and the female perspective are all used to highlight women's strengths and weaknesses in this study. Finding out where Rich stands on feminism is another goal of this article. In her works, Adrienne Rich has brought attention to the cold facts.

**Index Terms** - Feminism, Social, feminist, Gender, Woman, male-oriented, dominance

## INTRODUCTION

To put it simply, Adrienne Rich's (1929-2012) upbringing was completely shaped by patriarchal ideas. Men of note dominated the literary world and established their own standards for what could and could not be written. Only by mimicking the canon's poetic norms was Rich able to make his poems readable. When she began to compose poetry, she followed the trends of the day, which were shaped entirely by the ideas of male authors. Furthermore, Rich was brought up in a household that stressed the value of reading and modelling oneself after the literary greats [1]. W. H. Auden praised her work in the introduction to her debut book of poetry, *A Change of World* (1951). Craftsmanship, as noted by T. S. Eliot, is the most encouraging indicator in a young poet since it indicates an ability to separate oneself from one's own emotions, which are necessary for the creation of art, according to Auden. Poems by Miss Rich rarely fail on any of these counts because of her skill as a craftsman, which includes not only a talent for versification but also an ear and an intuitive grasp of much subtler and more difficult matters like proportion, consistency of diction, and tone, and the matching of these with the subject at hand [2]. As said up above, for those authors, the most important things were skill, etiquette, and objectivity. Poetic norms of the period required addressing matters of public importance. What's more, women writers of the time had little choice but to adhere to the standards set forth by the dominant male authors of the day. As a result, her feminine voice was buried in her works as she was forced to discuss impersonal themes. As a result, the early poetry of Adrienne Rich was marked by that environment, which earned her the moniker of "great imitator."

In "Diving into the Wreck," a collection of post-feminist poetry written by Adrienne Rich in 1973, a woman's descent into the depths of the ocean is metaphorized as an exploration of the feminine psyche beyond the confines of gender, with the goal of freeing herself from the constraints of patriarchal society [3]. To illustrate how human and non-human subjectivities are equally suppressed, Rich's poetic vision, which examines the cultural and patriarchal discourse, shifts from a focus on women to focus on nature. In this way, Rich's poetry uses ecological concerns to explore the connections between individual experience, cultural discourse, and the natural world. Because the poet shifts from radical feminism to ecofeminism, ecofeminist critique may be the best lens through which to read Rich's poem [4]. Mary Mellor argues that "most ecofeminists follow radical feminism in identifying patriarchy, and particularly western patriarchy, as the main source of global ecological destruction.... Above all, male/men/the masculine is valued as against female/woman/the feminine." This does not mean that ecofeminism and feminism are mutually exclusive. With this in mind, I will attempt an ecofeminist reading of Adrienne Rich's poem "Diving into the Wreck," on the grounds that Rich's eco-poetry raises important concerns about gender roles, patriarchal violence, and sexism.

This paper takes a feminist point of view to critically examine several of Rich's poetry, including *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers*, *Power*, and *Planetarium*. Women are portrayed poorly as they age. Aristotle claimed that women are female because of a lack of attributes, while Thomas Aquinas described women as "imperfect man and the accidental person," as Beauvoir pointed out. The good principle generated order, light, and man, whereas the negative principle created chaos, darkness, and women, as Pythagoras put it. Women are still relegated to the background in practically every career path [5]. These representations and assumptions about women have been fiercely contested. By Rich in her writings and criticism that exhibited women's superior drive and inventiveness.

**WOMAN WITH THE NERVES OF A PANTHER**

Among modern American women authors, Adrienne Rich stands out as a radical feminist poet, critic, and thinker. Her poetry stands out because it chronicles the changing role of women in contemporary American culture. On top of that, it charts her development as an individual and poet. Though her early poems were praised only for this characteristic by eminent literary figures like W. H. Auden, her poetry conveys much more than aesthetic pleasure. What has set Rich's poetry apart throughout the years is her unique ability to see beyond the obvious to address the fundamental problems of human society [6]. By channeling one of her female personas, we learn that this poet is "sworn to lucidity," meaning that she sees the issues at hand and, with a "desire to transform" the decadent society, she proposes solutions that might prove to be pivotal.

Since male opinion was the deciding factor in literature's merit, female authors were never given a chance to establish a distinct voice. Women appear to be trying to write like males, which is problematic since it requires them to present a perspective that isn't their own. Therefore, Rich was forced to write in masculine styles since she lacked a female role model [7]. It's worth noting that later in life, when she discovered women writers like Susan B. Anthony and Jane Addams who inspired her, she cited them instead of the males who had affected her. Rich makes a statement on "the indefinable dream-like character of poetry," whereby you put what "you don't know you know," even as she admits her obligation to the masculine poets who influenced her style [8]. To be sure, Rich claims that Yeats imparted much more than technical expertise to her. Although many people warned the North American artist against "mixing politics with art," Yeats' poetry gave her the confidence to stick to her conviction that poetry might have a foundation in politics. It was ironic that his poetry was the cause of her false belief that women were loud and histrionic because of politics, and that politics was a waste of beauty and ability. Rich claims that it was impossible for her to have known the achievements of women poets in her day. "Elizabeth Barrett Browning's anti-slavery and feminist poetry, H.D.'s anti-war and woman-identified poetry, and the radical work of Muriel Rukeyser were still buried by the academic literary canon," thus Yeats' claim that politics may be harmful to women remained uncontested [9]. Whatever the case, it motivated her to go deep into the history of female poets who have since been forgotten in order to better understand why so few women get to positions of power.

Though the outrage and dismay flowing through her head can be detected in the poems, Rich's debut collection of poetry was lauded as the voice of conformity. Despite this, Rich was itching to share many things that were guaranteed to draw condemnation and unfavorable criticism. Her "natural shyness" and "polemicism" prevented her from writing candidly, though [10]. She came up with her own plan to deal with the crisis, and formality had a role in it. That way, she could handle her materials as safely as if she were wearing "asbestos gloves."

**FEMALE, POWER OF LANGUAGE**

For the powerless, language is a final recourse in the struggle against injustice. Ludwig Wittgenstein, a philosopher of language, once said, "The boundaries of my language indicate the limits of my reality." The boundaries of one's identity are established and defined via one's language. For as long as there have been males, the very tool of masculine language has been used to subjugate women [11]. In Jane Austin's "Persuasion," Miss Eliot tells Captain Harville, "Men have had every advantage over us in creating their own tale." Harville had questioned Miss Eliot's consistency on many occasions because of her own inconsistencies. They've had access to education on a far deeper level, and they've held the pen. I refuse to believe anything that is written in books. Women are who they are now because of the language we use. Women have been worshipped and loved for their beauty, elegance, and vulnerability since the start of civilizations, yet they have also been mistreated and condemned for these same traits. The linguistic barrier is the only explanation. In this case, words have real meaning and impact [12]. And Elaine Showalter, in "A Literature of their Own," attempted to show that a female language is necessary for women's liberation (1977).

One of the few tools available to end women's subordination to males is language. The word "gyno-criticism," created by Elaine Showalter, refers to critical reactions that take into consideration the woman author as a maker of texts and meanings. Virginia Woolf said that women authors should look for alternate kinds of language that are uniquely feminine since they are obliged to use masculine language because they have none of their own [13]. The question of whether there might be a form of language free from this bias, or even oriented towards the female, is raised by Peter Barry's claim that "if normative language can be seen in some way male-oriented, the question arises whether there might be a form of language which is free from this bias." To describe writing that "associates with the feminine and facilitates the free play of meanings inside the frame work of loosened grammatical structure," Helene Cixous used the word "écriture feminine" in her essay "The Laugh of Medusa" (Beginning Theory). Cixous thinks it's hard to pin down what constitutes a feminine writing practise since it can never be conceptualized, encapsulated, or codified. Peter Barry elaborates on this point:

Écriture feminine, thus, is by its nature transgression, norm transcending, intoxicating, yet it is evident that the idea as put up by Cixous creates several concerns. For example, the physical world is often seen as a place where the true essence of femininity might emerge, unsullied by societal and gender norms. A feminism that views femininity as a social construction and not as something that is simply 'there' by nature has a hard time reconciling with such essentialism. [14]

Adrienne Rich has attempted to address the issue of sexism in language by proposing a number of potential solutions. Her poetry serves as a template for how to create a feminine kind of expression. She has fought hard her whole life to get her voice heard in a field traditionally dominated by men. The author of "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" reveals her submission to the patriarchy in this work. She makes it quite clear in the poem that women face discrimination and sexism in every sphere. Because of her domineering personality, she is unable to fully express herself in any artistic medium. She describes how her aunt's "fluttering fingers" through the wool make it difficult to remove even an ivory needle. A wedding ring of Uncle's size and weight weighted down against the palm of Aunt Jennifer's hand. [15]"

The language used by men themselves becomes a tool of oppression. Rich was fortunate to be born into a white, middle-class home, where her father fostered her love of reading and writing. She was always grateful to her father, who played a pivotal part in her upbringing and had a profound impact on her future work, but she had to overcome numerous intolerable limitations he set for her:

Poetry by white Anglo-Saxon males (and a few women, Celts, and Frenchmen) is overwhelmingly the source of influence for my worldview. As a result, no verse from Spain, Africa, China, or the Middle East. Like many other young people, I was under the impression that my perspective on the world was unique. In reality, it was only my unschooled and half-conscious interpretation of the nth truths of blood and bread, the social and political forces of my time and place. [16]

Having read a lot, I thought that every woman was a unique token lady, a fascinating and weird entity admired primarily for her beauty and humility fascinated Rich. However, few people shared women's intelligence, awareness, or other strengths. Her early poems reveal that she struggled with the concept of the "special lady" for a long time. You were once a belle in Shreveport, with henna-colored hair, skin like a peachbud, still have your outfits replicated from that time, and play a Chopin prelude Called by Cortot," it says in her early work "Snapshots of a Daughter-in-law." Culinary memories Float gently across the mind like a perfumed breeze.[17]"

Rich thinks that this is why a young female writer or poet turns to poetry or fiction: to find her own voice and a means of articulating her thoughts and experiences in written form. She writes in her article "When We Dead Awaken" that the most astonishing thing about "A Room of One's Own" by Virginia Woolf was the way in which Woolf narrated the story and the hidden meaning she hid in the spaces between the words. Woolf hoped that by doing so, she might convince women to begin reclaiming the space in literature and literary creation from which they had been historically excluded for a variety of social and economic reasons [18]. Poets should keep in mind that, as Willard Spiegelman writes in his essay "Driving to the Limits of the City of Woods: The Poetry of Adrienne Rich," there is a risk of "entrapment within it because it offers both maze and salvation" when attempting to define one's unique voice through the exploration of one's own language. To quote Rich herself: "Rich seeks to uncover in language a blueprint not just for herself but also for the greater community often a community of women, occasionally one that encompasses both sexes of which she is a member."

By using "dead language," she draws our focus on how the male-dominated world misunderstands the feminine world due to its own biases and misconceptions. In "the missing nouns," Rich personifies the essence of the feminine character, which is overlooked in the realm of males. The concept of "the verb living only in the infinitive" may be interpreted in two ways: either as an extra linguistic unit, or as a symbolic representation of something infinite and unending, which the average human mind has trouble understanding and categorising. It's possible to read this term as a suggestion that women may only thrive in a "infinite" condition, where they are neither whole nor well-defined, but rather vague and unaware [19]. From this vantage point, everything of women's history seems vague and androgynous, as if it were still in its embryonic stages. In addition, it may be symbolic of the idea that a woman's body and her extraordinary regenerative abilities give birth to all life on Earth; that is, that life originates from something boundless and undefined.

In order to break free from the roles of "lost nouns" and "verbs surviving in infinitive only," women needed to take the creative reins, compose their own plays, and take the spotlight. Because of the misogynist's "dead language" and skewed portrayal of women in his plays, women had to forge a new, more genuine, more intrinsic identity for themselves. This is why many women find motivation and strength in ideas like education and self-discovery. In "Snapshots of a daughter-in-law," Rich condemns the sexist criticism and implores, "to have in this world some remain Which cannot be destroyed of the ultimate significance. [20]"

### FEMALE DEPRESSION THROUGH SYMBOLISM

Rich understood that what set men apart from women was not a quality unique to men, but rather a quality that was forced on women against their will. "The allure of Man appears to arise simply from his power over her and the rule of the universe by force," she wrote in her essay *When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision* (1971), "not from anything fruitful or life-giving in him" [21]. Despite Rich's awareness of the stifling ideology of creating poetry apart from the poet's daily life, she was unable to rescue herself and represent her voice in her early poems since she continued to employ the same tools and forms of writing as the typical male poets of the time. These writing styles only communicate the predetermined meanings of what Lacan termed "the symbolic language," which prioritizes the demands of men while ignoring those of women. There is no solution to the issue of women's subordination in our culture. Since Rich is also a female, she is sensitive to the plight of depressed females. She tries to express it through poetry, and that's what she does [22]. If the kid really wants to explore his own feelings and thoughts, we can tell. In order to adapt to the patriarchal paradigm, which values the masculine above the feminine, the infant must relinquish his first sense of self and his love to his mother. Consequently, a child's mother's identity is irrelevant in today's culture. A woman has no legal claim to her offspring. Most women's mental health issues may be traced back to patriarchal society's refusal to accept any woman.

As a protest against this injustice, Adrienne Rich uses symbolism in her works. Therefore, Rich's compositions represent the psyche (sad) and symbolism of women. Women in the second part of the twentieth century are reflected in Adrienne Rich's poetry. Many scholars have spent time trying to disentangle the many sources that inform Adrienne Rich's works. They are also attempting to decipher her writings for clues. Because of this, several studies were undertaken by the researchers. The researcher has been busy on this front up until the present day. They learn a great deal. The prejudice against women in Adrienne Rich's poetry is shown by Aparsh P. For his thesis, titled "Gender Discrimination in Selected Poems of Adrienne Rich," he analysed the poet's work. Another scientist that studies the same topics is Lena Petrovic [23]. Gender and Difference in Adrienne Rich's Poetry is the topic of his research paper. P Jayasadhu investigates Adrienne Rich's poetry from a feminist standpoint. A Feminist Analysis of Adrienne Rich is the title of his study. We know that some of Rich's poems reject patriarchal society and language outright, especially those included in his books *Necessities of Life* (1966), *Leaflets* (1969), and *The Will to Change* (1971). Women rely heavily on men. Adrienne Rich pushed for the recognition of women's uniqueness. There is ongoing study on this front as well. [24]

The symbolist movement greatly impacted Adrienne Rich, and her poetry displays many of the characteristics of symbolism. Her poetry is full with meaning. The research article "A Symbolic Reading of Adrienne Rich's An Unsaid Word" is an excellent example of a study of symbolic allusion in Adrienne Rich's poetry. This study was conducted by Mohamad Fleih Hassan, Hardev Kaur, and Manimangai Mani. The Unslept Unsleeping Elsewhere: Radical Contemporary in the Last Poems of Adrienne Rich" by Prokash Kona is only one of numerous scholarly works on Rich. Poems by Adrienne Rich include many more topics than only those mentioned here. Women's depression is an important topic the researcher ignores. Many of Adrienne Rich's poetry focus on depressed women [25]. Poem titles include "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," "Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law," "Living in Sin," "I Dream I'm the Death of Orpheus," "My Mouth Hovers Across Your Breasts," and "etc." Symbols of women's depression are shown here. While studies on symbolism are common, no studies have yet been undertaken on Adrienne Rich's work using the lens of symbols to examine the experience of depression among women. Accordingly, it is a pressing but unresolved issue in the field of study. Its solution is necessary for the advancement of knowledge in the area. Closing the knowledge gap is also crucial. As a result, an effort is made to address a gap in the literature and correct a literary issue.

Language is the way through which man's power is spread, since it is via symbols that we make sense of the world (Hassan 58). The "process of symbolic action does more than establish the ideal model of dominance," in the view of poststructuralists. It's an active participant in the making of ideas, trying to put order into experience (Kirsch 42). Poems by Adrienne Rich often include symbolic imagery. It's one of the things that sets her writing apart. The poem "Aunt Jennifer's Tiger" is one of her works [26]. The poetry conveys its meaning via allegory. In spite of her oppressive marriage to a dreadful guy, the narrator of this poem finds solace in the realm of needlework and embroidery. A formal rhyming poetry, this is an early piece by Adrienne Rich. Much of what we learn about Aunt Jennifer comes from symbolic representations provided by the speaker. There are a lot of words that are striving to be something else but can't quite get there. The tiger in the poem is not a genuine animal. In the ground, where Aunt's dead, trembling hands will rest Still scarred by the trials that taught her to triumph, she prevailed. The panel of tigers she forced him to draw continue to prance about in their confidence and fearlessness. [27]

By drawing these lines, Rich is implying that the end of women's subjugation would come only after their deaths, but that this fact will be obvious to everyone. Other women will be subjugated and oppressed by society, and no one will remember the plight of women. In light of this fact, the speaker feels anger and frustration. When a woman is oppressed, she feels the suffering of the tiger as a representation of her own anger and sadness. In another poem, Rich also used symbols to portray women's melancholy. My Mouth Hovers Across Your Breast is the name of the poem. Hope, power, and despair are all there for everyone to see. All women want to provide a pleasant home for their families. Upon marrying, every lady abandons her family. She has devoted herself entirely to her family. The majority of her efforts to care for them go unrewarded. The vast majority of men in our culture see their women strictly as possessions [28]. They act like dictators, enforcing strict regulations and showing little affection for their spouses. Women make many sacrifices with little apparent benefit. Their loved ones fail to recognize their adoration. Women's responsibilities in the home are endless. Because males dominate the home and society, women have no rights or expectations. They aren't permitted to demand their rights. Society silences women if they attempt to speak up. The ladies are understandably annoyed by this. They are able to go through that. They keep trying because they care about others and the community. They have faith that they will get fair treatment and be able to use their rights now or tomorrow [29].

Even Adrienne Rich acknowledges that she has suffered from melancholy. One interview quote: "I find the quality of life in this nation frequently quite depressing." That's why I've made the decision to devote myself to this line of work: to keep from feeling completely disoriented and helpless. The activity I engage in and the kind of writing I do are both directly related to reaching that stage, when I finally feel like I have some energy to devote. And there's a lot of vigour in the United States, but it's dispersed, fragmented, and confined to certain regions [30]. Adrienne Rich remains optimistic despite the many challenges she has faced. Depression hits her more as a woman, yet she wants to see the nation reform. That's why she's protesting in writing. She insists on continuing. It's time for her to make some progress. She has a mountain range of a mind, much like the Himalayas. Her poetry is replete with feminist themes; therefore, she's probably done rather well in this area. She writes mostly on female characters in her poetry. Her poetry is akin to a portrayal of the mental health of women.

This poem is called "Living in Sin" for a reason. In this poem, the woman's mental state is explored via a psychoanalytic lens. Poem's female protagonist "daydreams and hopes her love will never experience trouble and suffering while expecting a wonderful ending." Down the road, however, her fancy played tricks on her and reality took control [31]. The typical female existence is not one she would anticipate. For them, the dream stays just that. The mouse represents their sadness, which stems from their upbringing and social environment. This cat represents the disrespectful attitudes of the household and the wider culture regarding women. The title of the poem, "Living in Sin," gives us a hint that these people are cohabitating outside of marriage. In the poem, the poet highlights the stark contrast between the woman's idealized vision of her studio and the reality of the space. During this time, the male acts bored and leaves on an uninteresting errand. Towards the end of the day, the lady begins to feel better, but she cannot sleep because of her anxiety about the next day. [32]

Adrienne Rich uses her poetry as a way to celebrate and empower women. Up to the year 1970, she works to identify herself as a feminist. As of right now, she doesn't identify as a feminist. In an interview, she explains, "I guess it was the first time that I utilized the word about myself." It's peculiar because there's so much debate right now about whether or not modern young women want the feminist moniker. Plus, I didn't want the feminist label since I didn't believe it really described me. These zany characters, like Susan B. Anthony, were fierce feminists. While I was growing up, she was the source of endless amusement. A.K.A. Carrie Nation. To put it bluntly, they were satirized. Regardless of what she claims, her poetry is feminist. [33]

Snapshots of a Daughter-in-law, written by Adrienne Rich, is a powerful feminist poetry that delves deeply into the many elements of a woman's existence that are plagued by pain and male exploitation. The word "daughter-in-law" appears in the title, suggesting disjointed, disorganised snaps of a lady who is in a relationship with the protagonist's son. Because she has never really been an autonomous daughter but a dependent daughter-in-law, Rich has chosen the term "daughter-in-law" rather than "sister" or "daughter"

to describe her. The major theme is a contemporary woman's worry [34]. The poem begins with the narrator's observations of a housewife who spends her days toiling away at chores and her nights servicing her husband with her body. She endures this repetitive, dull existence by giving up her dreams, hopes, and joys. The last lines of the poem become a lethal weapon for the strength and rights of women. [35]

It is males who are the oppressors of women. Husbands exert the greatest control over wives. This means that the women's sadness is a metaphor for the men's monstrosity. In general, it's difficult for anybody to become sexually involved with their dominant partner. Women face this obligation for the rest of their lives, and the resulting despair is boundless. A lesbian is someone who is known to us by a certain phrase. Lesbians are female homosexuals. They have Adrienne Rich contributing as well. In an article titled "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," she discusses this topic [36]. It was written as a response to the widespread elimination of lesbians in academic feminist writing. It wasn't designed to stir up more strife, but rather to get straight feminists thinking about how heterosexuality functions as a political institution that undermines women's agency. It's a present for all the downtrodden lesbians who feel too vulnerable to articulate their needs and wants. The idea that women need males for everything from social and economic stability to sexual and emotional fulfilment as mature adults is being challenged. [37]

## GENDER DISCRIMINATION

From the beginning of time, females have been expected to perform certain responsibilities. They have no choice but to spend their lives in kitchens and their only purpose in life is to have children. One of the dolls in the dollhouse. Realizing this, women began to question the patriarchal system, which led to the development of feminism. In her article "We should all be Feminists," Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie argued for women's equality and defined feminism in the twenty-first century. She argues that the term "feminism" refers to a movement rather than an ideology, and that its goal is to achieve gender parity rather than enslave women [38]. As a woman living in a patriarchal culture, Adrienne Rich's poetry vividly portrays the struggles that you face every day. In this male-dominated culture, women are seldom allowed to show their feelings. The two poems by her that are the focus of this research work were chosen at random.

Aunt Jennifer's Tigers, a poem in three stanzas, will be examined first. This poem explores the mind of a woman who is subject to male tyranny. Instead, then using straightforward language, Adrienne Rich relies on symbols to convey her ideas to the reader. An aunt named Jennifer knits a tiger. Like the tiger, Aunt Jennifer lacks the gallantry and bravery that the lion represents. An impression of Aunt Jennifer's existence has been fabricated by her. It's clear from the poem that Aunt Jennifer's marriage is strained and that her husband abuses her. Rich describes how his aunt Jennifer's hand is burdened by the presence of his uncle's wedding band:

It's clear from what she's said that having to wear a wedding band is a source of stress and misery in her life. Women have little autonomy and independence in this male-dominated culture. She describes the ring she's wearing as her "Uncle's wedding band" to give the impression that it belonged to him. As Rich says at the start of the third verse, "When Aunt is dead, her frightened hands shall lie/ Still ringed with ordeals she was dominated by" [39]. Women are bound and gagged by their wedding rings. That marriage is only one of many ways in which males subjugate women is shown by the author. The ring on her finger and her husband's control over her will last long after Aunt Jennifer has passed away.

The second poem chosen for analysis is "The Trees," a symbolic poem about trees that begin their journey inside a house before making their way to the wild. The trees are symbolic of a woman's inherent qualities. For years, women had been used as chattel, and trees represented these women. The home is a microcosm of the patriarchal society that held women in captivity. When daylight comes, the trees will have filled in the woodland that has been bare all night. By sunrise, the woodland will be completely full with trees that have arrived overnight [40]. The 'trees' in this context represent the women who are stifled by domestic confinement and yearn for freedom. The poet spent hours at her desk, penning heartfelt messages to her readers. However, she keeps quiet about the trees getting ready to leave the home since she is willing to release them. The window is shattering. Into the darkness, the trees stagger. All the winds are racing to meet them. The moon has shattered like a mirror, and its shards now reflect off the top of the biggest oak tree. [41]

The speaker succeeds in captivating the audience in the penultimate stanza. The sound of shattering glass indicates that this change is permanent. The moon, a representation of femininity and emotion, shattering like a mirror and illuminating an oak tree, the sturdiest of trees, in its fractured image. The Inequality Theory describes the unavoidable biological inequality between men and women beyond all racial, socioeconomic, cultural, and traditional boundaries. Gender is a social construction of sex that takes into account factors such as ethnicity, politics, socioeconomic status, cultural norms, and conventional gender roles, as described by Linsey (2007). As time passes, both within and across cultures, the ways in which people do things change. Both of Adrienne Rich's poems include examples of sexism [42]. Aunt Jennifer and the lady (represented by the forest) in the poems want for freedom from their responsibilities. Aunt Jennifer utilises the tiger to symbolise her subjugation in "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," while in "The Trees," the lady expresses her desire for independence via the metaphor of a tree. The female characters in the poetry are symbolic representations of actual women. They must free themselves from constraint if they are to succeed in life.

## GENDER AND DIFFERENCE

Misunderstandings on both sides are inevitable if critics and authors don't take the time to explain their own terms and ensure their readers have a solid grasp of the vocabulary others employ. One cannot hope to comprehend the controversy between Anglo-American and French feminisms, for instance, without first learning how each side defines "woman" and "feminine." Feminists in the Anglo-American tradition, such as Elaine Showalter, place emphasis on 'women' as distinct individuals with unique experiences and needs who are now shaping a politics based on their commonality [43]. In contrast, the French are interested in the concept of "woman," rather than individual women; woman is not a person but "that which has been the master storytellers' own non-knowledge, what has escaped them, what has consumed them," as Alice Jardine puts it. Usually, this something-other-than-themselves is a space, and this space has been assigned the gendered identity of woman. Therefore, as Julia Kristeva emphasises, the French do not mean the heritage of women's literature that Anglo-American feminists have laboured to find when they speak of *l'écriture féminine*; rather, they mean a specific

manner of writing that unsettles established interpretations. The French and Anglo-American ways of thinking are quite different from one another, yet the distance between them is not insurmountable. Mary Eagleton reports this description of the opposition provided by Jardine:

Anglo-Americans stress "oppression," while the French stress "repression;" Anglo-Americans seek to increase awareness, while the French investigate the subconscious; Anglo-Americans talk about power, while the French focus on pleasure; Anglo-Americans are governed by humanism and empiricism, while the French have created an intricate debate on textual theory. But Jardine concludes with a wish that the "prescription for action" of the Anglo-Americans and the "human subject's inscription in culture via language" of the French may come together. She seems to be headed toward a balanced, critical, and careful fusion of the two perspectives. [44]

Although the paragraph does not deal directly with the topic of gender or diversity, I chose to quote it because the last sentence is pertinent to my point. To be specific, I argue that viewing Rich's poems as a step toward the marriage that Jardine desires for is appropriate. I think it's important to spend a little more time on the specifics of Elaine Showalter's and Julia Kristeva's ideas that highlight their divergence in order to show how, in Rich's poetry, they are reconciled. [45]

According to Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own*, female authors have gone through three distinct periods that she labels "feminine," "feminist," and "female" between 1840 and the current day. During the Feminine period, women writers internalised the stereotypes of the time and sought to reach intellectual parity with men. At this time, feminism was sometimes presented in a roundabout, dislocated, sardonic, or subversive manner, and the male pseudonym was a distinctive formal symbol of this. Feminists, who lived from around 1880 to 1920, used writing to dramatise the tribulations of being a woman in society and rejected the accommodating postures of femininity. Since 1920, women have been through a transition known as the Female phase, in which they have rejected both imitation and protest in favour of drawing from their own experiences to create work that stands on its own, thereby extending the feminist study of culture to literary forms and methods [46]. Showalter differentiates feminist critique from gyno-criticism within feminist criticism, with the two camps roughly correlating to these varying degrees of freedom for women in literature. Feminist criticism focuses on male-constructed literary theory, such as the flaws in such theory and how it perpetuates sexist stereotypes of women in literature and criticism. However, gyno-criticism focuses not on female readers but on female authors, analysing the background, topics, structures, and genres of female-authored writings. Gyno-criticism seeks to understand women's experiences by looking to the authority of women's writing rather than analysing gendered stereotypes, the sexism of male reviewers, or the restricted roles women have played throughout history [47].

Kristeva argues that the ultimate goal of feminist critique is a decentred vision, one that goes beyond difference and gender, in contrast to gynocriticism, which views women-centred and difference-centred literary studies as the last step of feminist literary liberation. Jardine argues in her summary that if the historical oppression of women is not connected to the psychological repression of what Jacques Lacan calls the Imaginary, then we will never have a complete understanding of either the oppression or the liberation of women. Jardine refuses to deal exclusively with female texts, implying that this is her stance [48]. From the very beginning, Adrienne Rich's poetry has been preoccupied with the agony brought on by the deep inner divide between the 'animus' and 'anima' component of her own soul. However, her treatment of this topic has evolved through time. She has evolved toward a vision that transcends gender and difference by reconciling the opposing views of Showalter and Kristeva as natural and unavoidable steps on the path to greater poetic and sexual self-awareness. To be sure, her most recent poetry is a reawakening of forbidden desire, the force of which pierces the "frozen web" of most binary oppositions that regulate the construction of patriarchal thinking and language, disconnecting them from and ensuring their power over the actuality of being. She argues that genuine poetry, in contrast to Lacan's repressive psycholinguistic theory, has the ability to reintegrate being and thinking via the expression and renaming of suppressed desire [49]. Similarly, Rich's own poetic work, whose movement involved "the uncovering of appetites buried under the fabricated wants and needs we have had urged upon us, have accepted as our own," is described by the words of American poet Diane Glancy, which are quoted by Rich in her most recent book, *What Is Found There*.

The poem heralds a time in which imitating conventional forms gives way to a lengthier and looser manner than Rich had trusted herself with previously, even while her feminine identity is still concealed by a masculine persona. This transformation in style is paralleled by an equally profound shift in her emotional relationship to her own femaleness, which has become possible since she can now write, for the first time, openly about feeling herself as a woman. Instead of documenting her acceptance of a culture in which women are expected to "learn not to call her man/From that faraway intensity/Where his mind forages alone" ("*An Unsaid Word*," 1955), she now takes this mental vigour for herself [50]. But conventional marriage has a numbing impact on a woman's imagination and sentiments, and the 1963 book *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law* documents the inevitable frustration and rage at this loss of self. She describes herself severely in "*Peeling Onions*" as being "dry-hearted as Peer-Gynt/...no hero, only a chef," and she laments the fact that only peeling onions can bring forth her unshed tears. In "*A Marriage in the Sixties*," the narrator expresses a desire for connection with someone she knows would never happen. Two strangers, cast for life upon a rock, may finally have the ideal hour of discourse that language yearn for; still two brains, two messages. This is what she and her husband need [51].

A woman's breakdown in conventional marriage begins with her desperate desire for what Wallace Stevens termed "the Necessary Angel of imagination" to alter her experience of life. "For a poem to coalesce, for a character or event to take shape, there needs to be a creative alteration of reality that is in no way passive," Rich writes, attempting to analyse the true nature of the fight at the moment [52]. And mental liberty is required, the liberty to "push on, to join the currents of one's own thinking like a glider pilot, knowing that one's motion can be continued, that the buoyancy of one's attention will not be abruptly snatched away. [53]"

As a mother and wife, she is dedicated to a certain reality, so it seems to reason that she would interpret the rebellious act of using her imagination as a sign of a lack of love on her part. In the early 1960s, she had hoped for a synthesis that would bring together "the energy of production and the energy of connection. [54]" At the same time, in the poem of the same name from 1966's *The Necessities of Life*, we meet a lady who reflects on her past with ambivalent feelings of defiance and acceptance. From the days of youthful ardour and ambition, when the self, Jonah-like, was blissfully dissolved in dreams of its own fulfilment, to the Egyptian bondage of marriage

and childbearing, when the self was devoured by others until, 'wolfed almost to shreds,' she learned to make herself unappealing, preserving the minimal vitality to be able, "with economical joy / now and again to name / over the bare ne'er- It's a fake resurrection, however, for after the fog of childbearing clears, a woman is thrust into the company of elderly wives, and her victory, such as it is, lies in her falsely mature acceptance of the undesirable [55].

## CONCLUSION

Given that we still live in a mostly male culture, Adrienne Rich's essays on women's oppression are quite bold. She used all the symbolism at her disposal to hide her disapproval. She employs iconography to convey feminine melancholy. This article will help us recognise how Adrienne Rich symbolises feminine despair in her works. Readers of Rich's works will have a solid understanding of the issue of depression in women. They would be more mindful of the safety of the women in their families, treat them with respect, and ensure that they had the resources they needed. As a result, individuals and communities will improve. A language that is sensitive to both men's and women's wants and needs may be reborn via the resurgence of semiotic aspects within symbolic masculine language. In order to bring her feminine and maternal voice and yearning, which are silenced by the scene's symbolic masculine language, to the surface, the character in *Diving* descends to the semiotic depths of her mind. The character revives the tired narrative of women's servitude under patriarchy. This time around, the narrative is recounted from a female perspective by a female narrator, revealing the unvarnished reality of the female experience and arming women with a vocabulary that reframes and strengthens their sense of self. At the poem's conclusion, the narrator had an epiphany about herself and her possibilities. Rich, who received female education in a male-dominated system, begins her literary quest in *A Change of World* as a traditional formalist in accordance with masculine aesthetics. At this point in her literary career, Rich is too timid to go against the grain of what men find aesthetically appealing. Over the course of *Diving into the Wreck*, however, she musters the nerve to abandon safe, conventional forms of expression in order to challenge male-dominated power systems via the themes of some of her poetry. In this collection of poems, Rich openly and radically protests the patriarchal systems that have, throughout history, undermined women's agency. In this collection of poems, Rich transforms into a cynical questioner who reflects on the need to reimagine societal norms from a feminist perspective. In her last collection of work, *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*, Adrienne Rich abandons the male, turning instead to a fully female aesthetic and a strictly feminine writing style, pushing for a purely woman-centered vision and a truly female art form in her poems.

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