

Tracing the Androgyny Image as a Self-Distancing Strategy in Adrienne Rich's Diving into the Wreck

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: August 02 ,2025 Accepted: November 03 ,2025	<i>The phallogentric structure of language privileges the male's discourse throughout history which allows no place for feminine discourse. In order to oppose the Lacanian concept of phallogentric discourse, feminist writers including Adrienne Rich resort to Cixous' term of "écriture féminine" to inscribe female difference in language. Rich as a powerful feminist voice in the last decades of the twentieth century, and in order to empower woman's status, abandons the male discourse and calls female writers to create their own discourse through re-writing female myths and stories. Therefore, Rich rejects the patriarchal heterosexual world which helps to create the binary opposition between sexes. The core objective of Cixous' theory "écriture féminine" is to deconstruct the man/ woman binary opposition through bisexuality. Hence, the present study aims to analyze the use of androgyny image in Rich's poem Diving into the Wreck as a distancing strategy to challenge the heterosexual male's institution, and to deconstruct the male's phallogentric language in light of Helene Cixous's theory of "écriture féminine". The study concludes that Rich creates the androgyny image as a self-distancing strategy in Diving into the Wreck as a way of returning to the place where there is no sexual difference between man and woman, to the maternal world, and to the source of the feminine power where there is no exclusion for the Other.</i>
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Introduction

Since the beginning of the feminist liberation movements, many feminist writers and poets have the desire to change their status quo. They want to deconstruct the language that holds the patriarchal vision in a dominant place, while appropriates and silences the 'Other' (women). Women writers in the revolutionary phase of the twentieth century start to achieve independence and look towards autonomy and self-assertion through their writings. They want to break the old-age tyrannical chains to release women's souls and body. Therefore, they start to shift the themes that portrayed women as only the perfect wife and the perfect housekeeper, to change the image of the women of the nineteenth century which was either an angel of the house (A Doll's House) or a monster (Madwoman in the Attic). The patriarchal definition frames women with these two images. So, Gubar believes that, "a woman writer must examine, assimilate and transcend the extreme images of "angel" and "monster" which male authors have generated for her" (Gubar, 1981, p.591).

Adrienne Rich is one of the most powerful feminist voices who dares to challenge the patriarchal assumptions in her poetry during the second stage of women's liberation movements. Rich's poetry was influenced by the radical feminist movement of 1970s which used feminine sexuality as the main factor to oppress patriarchal world. Her poetry intends to strengthen women's position and to weaken the oppressive male. She rejects the traditional idea of heterosexual and the traditional family role. Her political and sexual orientation are very obvious and she tries to create a powerful image for women beyond the family institution.

Claire Hurley in her article, *Writing as Re-Vision: Female Creative Agency in the Poetry of Adrienne Rich* (2016) examines Rich's poetry at the crucial moment of the second wave feminism which is considered as testament to the feminist idea of 'the personal is political'. Hurley explores Rich's influential poetry which emerges through her life experience and interweaves with her questions regarding the mythology, sexuality and female's identity in a system which is governed by patriarchy. The article investigates Rich's evolving in her feminist consciousness through her poetry to regain the lost woman's voice and identity. Rich was considered a pioneer in fusing literature with personal and political mediation, and through these two oppositional modes, Rich's poems emerged. Rich's movement of claiming a space for women to write in a political sphere was considered a radical move. In her poetry, Rich resists the injustice social pressures against femininity and opens a wide door for women to claim back their stolen identities. Many dissent voices challenge her ideas of reconstruction the foundations of female experience which urges Rich to participate in more extreme and public actions of opposition. In 1974, she accepts to receive the National Book Award for her collection poems *Diving*

into the Wreck alongside with other feminist poets Alice Walker and Audre Lorde on behalf of all women whom their voices silenced in patriarchal world.

The article examines Rich's poem *Diving into the Wreck* and the way Rich inverted the female traditional bad image into a powerful image. It explores Rich's way to deconstruct the patriarchal language like many post-structuralist theorists did as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous and others. Rich asserts that the history of words is a political issue and hence encourages the oppressor's language which represented by patriarchal language. Rich uses her poetry to disrupt the logic of the traditional modes and such disruption enhances the positive and active reconstruction of the feminist thoughts to place her in a central position. Hurley speaks about Rich's celebration of other females' writers and poets like Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson and Sappho whom they frequently appear in her oeuvre. Finally, the article asserts that the aim of Rich's poetry is to make her personal experience inspires political actions and she dedicates her literary career to generate a space for women in poetry, to enable the imaginative to face the gender and identity on the papers, and through its language can encounter the public arena.

In the same context, Susan Sheridan deals about Adrienne Rich's poetry in her essay *Adrienne Rich and the Women's Liberation Movement: A Politics of Reception* (2006). She speaks about the legacy of Adrienne Rich as a leading poet who fights to liberate women from all the bad conditions they have been afforded throughout the past decades and to overcome her own split between being a mother and wife from one hand, and of being woman poet and writer on the other. She also refers to Adrienne's dramatic changes she experienced throughout her life and her changing in her consciousness to reach to self-recognition and to be one of the best feminist icons for many women poets and writers. Susan adds that the political impact is very obvious on Adrienne's poetry especially on the collection of her seventies, *Diving Into the Wreck* (1973) and *Dream of a Common Language* (1978), the period which witnessed her radical views as a radical feminist. There was revolution in her writings that Adrienne herself describes her poetry as, "A coming home to the darkest and richest source of my poetry: sex, sexuality, sexual wounds, sexual identity, sexual politics: many names for pieces of one whole" (Keyes, 1986, p.133).

Moreover, Susan mentioned Rich in her talks revealing more about her opinions and her views. Rich in one of these speeches talks about being woman in the present time. For her this means to be exposed to different forms of emotions like anger, love, impatience, and joy. Thereby, Rich encourages women through poetry to release their sexual myths and to share it with others as an existence human being. Susan ends her essay by referring to the creative space that Adrienne created for herself and for her writing, and the courage she had, to turn her back to her previous literary status and to take another direction totally different, to distance her poetry from the current mainstream. This makes Rich to become one of the feminist ideal for many female audience, poets, writers, especially in poetry the highest form of literature, and to be the myth for their lives.

Thus, Rich in her *Diving into the Wreck* articulates her political vision by using feminist terms. It did much than any other single volume by the twentieth century American poet to transform her desire to confront the public sphere with the women's issues she raised. Hence, this "book attracted an extraordinarily heated critical response and established Rich as a major voice in the women's movement" (Werner, 1988, p.9). This volume received many critical views as in Pancho Savery who stated that the Women's Liberation Movement could shake the wall that the men have been built long ago to separate themselves from women, to separate the women from the world and from themselves. She added that the first stage of rebuilding the self and destroying the man's house has passed and the stage now is the stage of exploration. Rich's book *Diving into the Wreck* managed to point the way towards a new world. (Savery, 1973).

Rich's *Diving into the Wreck* is considered a departure and rejection to the law of the father on behalf the woman's self as a sustaining power. Rich invites other women in her community to develop a sense of power as she did, a power that can resolute from the wreck of the patriarchal civilization. This power is personal that can be developed from the individual strength of woman. A power that can transform woman's passivity and submission. A power which can be generated by bonding with other women to make political power in order to create changes in a larger scale which ultimately lead to transform the power structure of the patriarchy. (Keyes, 1986).

Discussion

Rich's *Diving into the Wreck* (1972) is considered one of the most remarkable poems from her collection which carries the same title name. It narrates an exploration journey by a female persona in the depth of the ocean to search the wreck of a drowned ship. Rich in this poem dares to challenge the patriarchal norms and to stand against the Lacanian "phallogocentrism" in order to give voice to the female experience through using Helene Cixous' theory of *écriture féminine*. In her early stage of writing poetry, Rich imitated the style of great male writers in order to be accepted in the main stream. Thus, she hid her female identity in her previous works. Later, Rich reaches the point to say farewell to the male writers' tradition which confines her voice among its

symbolic language. Rich in *Diving into the Wreck* turns her back to the previous woman who was passive and forced to subjugate her voice to the phallogocentric structures to be accepted in the literary canon. Rich finally finds the courage to free herself from the old constraints of the patriarchal traditions. It is a time of new vision as Rich creates poetry filled with experiences of the real life, she moves "beyond the traditional forms of writing traced in her earlier collections" (Riley, 2004, p. 210).

Rich in *Diving into the Wreck* identifies her voice as a strong feminist voice. She challenges the mythical assumptions of patriarchal thoughts which keep all the power for the males and leave no roles and no space for woman in his world. Thus, Rich's career can be seen as a passage through "phases of self-reconstruction, political engagement, and feminism" (Ostriker, 1982, p. 89). Rich's active feminist voice starts from the title of her collection as it is the first time to use verb in the title of her poems like 'Diving' as well as in other poems like 'Trying', 'Walking' and all these verbs suggest that she is strong and she is ready for an adventure. Gale Flynn indicates that *Diving into the Wreck* is the first of Rich's titles with an active verb (Flynn, 1974). Rich's female persona wants to break out from the symbolic world to explore the unknown world, the unconscious world, the wreck, to seek salvation and to find new direction for women's lives. Margaret Atwood, in her review of *Diving into the Wreck* gives the following explanation of Rich's concept of the 'wreck', the dominant symbol of the poem's title:

The wreck she [Adrienne Rich] is diving into, in the very strong title poem, is the wreck of obsolete myths, particularly myths about men and women. She is journeying to something that is already in the past, in order to discover for her the reality behind the myth, "the wreck and not the story of the wreck / the thing itself and not the myth. (Atwood, 1993, p. 280)

Diving into the Wreck is an attempt to immerse into the past in a quest to find the truth about man and woman. The diver dives to the primal origins to find the source of the oppressive state for women and at the same time the source of her power. Rich attempts to re-write the history and to turn, as Cixous mentions, 'his-story' into 'her-story'. Rich's exploration journey is like what Cixous writes in her essay *Castration or Decapitation* to:

step forward, an adventure, an exploration of woman's powers: offer power, her potency, her ever dreaded strength, of the regions of femininity. Things are starting to be written, things that will constitute a feminine Imaginary, the site, that is, of identifications of an ego no longer given over to an image defined by the masculine. (Cixous, 1981, p. 52)

Rich interweaves the myth with the unconscious to re-write the myths by reaching to the source of them, and with exploring the wreck of these myths a new story can be birth. Rich as "A woman with a certain mission" (I Dream) *The Will To Change* (1971) clarifies that her mission is to "reactivate the old wounds, inflame all the scar tissue, [and] awaken all the suppressed anger" (Vendler, 1993, p. 310). Thus, Rich intends to explore the old wounds that effect woman and undermine her status.

Diving down into the depth of the ocean is a psychic journey to the unconscious of Rich's female persona and to the past of the Western Culture. Rich uses the metaphor of the wreck for the women's buried voices and identities, and to the destructive patriarchal culture which creates it. It is an exploration journey to find the reason behind the biased that women exposed to in the patriarchal world and the gender role which contributed to this discrimination. Rich described the poems of *Diving into the Wreck* like "coming -home to the darkest and richest sources of my poetry: sex, sexuality, sexual wounds, sexual identity, sexual politics: many names for pieces of one whole" (Keyes, 1986, p. 133). Sexual politics, a term which was coined by Kate Millett in her influential book *Sexual politics* in 1970 is considered one of the texts of the second wave of the feminist movement. For Rich, like many other feminists, she considers the sex and gender as political issues because their connection to the institutions which have a deep effect in human lives. Rich as a powerful feminist voice challenges the political institutions because for her the women's issues are political issues. Rich believes that the origin of the women's oppression is in the structure of the patriarchal system. In her essay *Of Woman Born* (1986), Rich clarifies that patriarchy system is a political system in which men have controlled women in all aspects of life, whether to be in law, language or any other means.

The female persona in *Diving into the Wreck* prepares herself for the journey to the depth of the ocean, the origin of life, to explore the ruins of a sunken ship which is considered "a multivalent metaphor for the remnants of western culture, the poet's past, and her subconscious life" (Martin, 1984, p. 189). Thus, the wreckage has multiple meanings, it symbolizes the ruin of the history which erased the female experience, the unconscious of the female body which has been neglected in the male conscious world, and the hidden of the female identity and her power. However, the explorer has one essential mission is to discover the undiscovered areas in order to transform and change the female condition.

First having read the book of myths,
and loaded the camera,

and checked the edge of the knife-blade,
 I put on
 the body-armor of black rubber
 the absurd flippers
 the grave and awkward mask.
 I am having to do this
 not like Cousteau with his
 assiduous team
 aboard the sun-flooded schooner
 but here alone (1-12)

Before diving, the female persona, "we could assume that Rich's persona is female since most of her speakers are women" (Keyes, 1986, p. 152), has read the 'book of myths' which represents the patriarchal myths, the history that deprived the woman from her subjectivity and considered her as a second sex or even not exist at all because women's 'names do not appear', which means do not exist in the realm of males' symbolic language. Cixous posits a question to history "Where is she? Is there any such thing as woman?" (Cixous, 1981, p. 43) to inquire the woman's position and if she exists at all in the male's world. As the book of myths has been written by the males, the persona needs to read it carefully and to find the gaps she can find in the book if she wants to re-write the feminine myths. The diver equips herself with 'the camera'. Rich paraphrases Dickinson's phrase 'loaded gun' and she replaces it by 'loaded the camera' to show that she is ready to shoot a significant moments when she reaches the wreck and discovers the ultimate reality, the truth about man and woman, and the source of woman's power. Rich also uses the word 'camera' for two reasons. First to record the dangerous journey she has to experience in order to explore the damage which has been done to woman by patriarchal thoughts and language to keep it as an evidence for other women and for the world and to give the women legitimacy cover for their challenge against it. Second to keep in mind for the feminist new generation the dangerous path the former feminists have been taken to get them their rights. The other tool the diver needs is the 'knife'. The significance of the knife is that it is used for cutting. The diver is diving to the unknown. She intends to use the knife as a weapon in the face of the past, to cut the patriarchal lies and illusion in order to find truth, to cut the bad images 'permanent' 'weed' imposed on women throughout history. The journey which the diver intends to take is a risky one, it needs a male hero, an epic hero like the myths heroes, so the diver needs to put 'the body-armor of black rubber'. Thus, the female persona needs to gather the males' courage, her animus side to go in such quest. As Alicia Ostriker observes, "this watery submersion is an inversion of heroic male ascents and conquests" (1982, p. 72). She needs the armor for protection and it must be black which symbolizes strength and made of rubber because the diver intends to bounce back to the earth at the end of the journey to reveal the discovering truth.

Moreover, the other equipment the diver takes are 'the absurd flippers' and 'the grave and awkward mask'. Those artificial tools are related to the earthy world, the paternal world. The female persona may need such tools to hide her feminine identity in a world considers her as vulnerable. But in the journey, the female persona will discover that this equipment hinders her progress because the 'flippers cripple [her]' under water and instead of giving her power to dive freely they make her 'crawl like an insect' to go down. On the other hand, the mask which she thinks that it will provide her with 'power', during the journey she discovers that 'the sea is not a question of power' and she has 'to learn alone' 'without force'. As the female explorer needs to take the journey 'alone', she does not need a team like Jacques 'Cousteau', a French ocean explorer, who used to explore the ocean with a 'team'. She feels that this is a heroic journey and she needs to take the quest 'alone' on behalf of all women.

I go down.
 Rung after rung and still
 the oxygen immerses me
 the blue light
 the clear atoms
 of our human air.
 I go down.
 My flippers cripple me,
 I crawl like an insect down the ladder
 and there is no one
 to tell me when the ocean
 will begin. (22-33)

The journey starts with the phrase 'I go down' and the poet uses repetition for the same phrase in the middle of the section to draw the reader's attention to the action of diving and that the diver dives down to the depth of the ocean leaving the conscious world, the patriarchal world, diving to the past, to the unconscious world searching for truth, seeking change. During the journey in the underwater, the persona feels that 'the oxygen

immerses' her ,she feels that she belongs to this world and she breathes clearly because 'you breathe differently down here'. It is the world that she can find her true identity. It's the woman's heaven. The poet mentions that the female persona goes down 'Rung after rung' 'down the ladder'. She uses the image of the ladder metaphorically as a symbolic connection between earth and heaven. The female heaven is there laying down in the depth of the ocean where she can find the truth. 'The ladder is always there /hanging innocently', waiting patiently for the real heroes who dare to challenge and take the first step. Thus, Rich confirms that 'We know what it is for,/ we who have used it.' Rich uses the pronoun 'we' to refer to all the powerful women including herself who dare to challenge the patriarchal conventions to raise the feminist voices. Thus, the ladder represents the poet's progress from a world she could not find herself within into a world she can unify her split self . There she can discover woman's power, and to build a commonality with other women by developing a common language, a feminine language which they can use to share their experiences with each other . Cixous in her essay *The Laugh of the Medusa* asserts to find commonality between all women by sharing their experiences of exclusion from the regulation of language according to the social norms. Cixous emphasizes that when she encourages women to break with old conventions , she "write this as a woman, toward women. When I say 'woman,' I'm speaking of woman in her inevitable struggle against conventional man; and of a universal woman subject who must bring women to their senses and to their meaning in history" (Cixous,1976,pp. 875-76).

In addition, the female persona needs to take the journey 'alone' . She needs to find her own path with no aids , ' there is no one/ to tell me when the ocean/ will begin'. The female persona distances herself from the patriarchal conventions which confined her freedom within its strict law, within its symbolic world and she moves freely and slowly from the male principles to figure out the female principles where she can find her real identity. In order to gain knowledge and to discover the truth, the individual needs to pass many difficulties and the persona needs to pass these difficulties alone. Rich wants her readers to get benefit from her poems . Roger Gilbert describes the poem *Diving into the Wreck* in language suggestive of the path Rich's future work will take, "Rich's poem is essentially didactic, meant to instruct and embolden us in our own quests for difficult knowledge" (1997, p.149).

First	the	air	is	blue	and	then
it	is	bluer	and	then	green	and
black	I	am	blackening	out	and	yet
my		mask		is		powerful
it	pumps	my	blood	with		power
the	sea		is	another		story
the	sea	is	not	a	question	of
I	have		to	learn		alone
to	turn	my	body	without		force
in the deep element. (34-43)						

The influence of the patriarchal land is started to vanish gradually . 'First the air is blue' , the color blue which is one of the primary colors, is the color of the sky and the ocean. It symbolizes the wisdom ,the word of God , the word of the father, the father's realm. Then the color turns to 'green' , the diver starts to enter the realm of the mother as the color green represents the nature, the mother nature , the mother's realm. Cixous asserts the myth of the mother as a symbol of rebirth which can undo the patriarchal myths. Then the color turns to 'black' which represents the deepest side of the human psyche , the unconscious point, the female consciousness. The poet again uses repetition for the word 'then' to emphasize the transformation case and to attract the readers' attention to share her this experience and to see if the 'black territory' (Cixous ,1976, p.877) represents death as patriarchy used to label woman with, or represents 'power'. Yet her 'mask', her animus side is still 'powerful'. Rich's "psychological journey centered on her developing understanding of her animus" (Gelpi, 1975, pp.138-39), but 'the sea is another story' . However, the female explorer does not need her strength in the realm of the sea, the realm of nature, the realm of the mother as the mother embraces all her children without exclusion, no matter their vulnerability because no castration in her realm and all her children are equal .The persona has to 'learn alone' 'to turn' her back to all what she once experienced in the realm of patriarchy , to all the false stories she had read or heard, to all the prejudice she had experienced once as woman, to all the 'force' that was exercised on her by the patriarchy system. She must leave behind her all the myths which are responsible for the woman's wreck. She recognizes her path and no way to return to her previous state. Rich again uses repetition for the word 'power' to emphasize that the woman's power is not by hiding the female identity behind the virile mask but to learn to discover her power within her body, within her feminine realm 'in the deep element' of her psyche.

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

I came to see the damage that was done
 and the treasures that prevail.
 I stroke the beam of my lamp
 slowly along the flank
 of something more permanent
 than fish or weed (52- 60)

The persona indicates that she has to take this risky journey in order 'to explore the wreck' and as any explorer she needs 'maps' to show her the right direction. The explorer 'maps' are the masculine 'words' , the masculine language . The persona uses their 'words' for 'purposes' in order to 'see the damage that was done on women throughout history by the male's thoughts and language. The explorer intends to discover the hidden 'treasures' ,the women's truth , the truth of woman's power .She wants to change the woman's status forever , to be 'something more permanent' not to bring a temporary change . Rich intends to challenge and to deconstruct the patriarchal texts with feminine texts , and she is ready to face them on their lands , by using their language , by deconstructing their myths. She does not want to be like the 'fish' , like any aquatic creature which can find its freedom only in his/her world, the underwater world and dies in the other world.

the thing I came for:
 the wreck and not the story of the wreck
 the thing itself and not the myth
 the drowned face always staring
 toward the sun
 the evidence of damage
 worn by salt and sway into this threadbare beauty
 the ribs of the disaster
 curving their assertion
 among the tentative haunters.(61-70)

The persona comes to explore 'the wreck and not the story of the wreck'. She wants to discover the wreck itself, the damage itself and not the myth because the myth is masculine. Rich intends to create feminine texts , so she needs to work from the beginnings, on 'the thing itself' , the damage that occurred on women by the masculine myths and not the myths themselves. Cixous states in this regard that:

These are texts [the feminine texts] that work on the beginning but not on the origin. The origin is a masculine myth. [...] The quest for origins, illustrated by Oedipus, doesn't haunt a feminine unconscious. Rather it's the beginning, or beginnings, the manner of beginning, not promptly with the phallus in order to close with the phallus, but starting on all sides at once, that makes a feminine writing.(Cixous,1981,p.53)

The poet recognizes the damage which represents by the 'drowned face' laying there underwater among the wreck as 'the evidence of [patriarchal]damage'. Helen Vendler in her article *Ghostlier Demarcations, Keener Sounds* explains that the power of *Diving into the Wreck* poem is not to gather wounded rather than to explore the caverns, the scars, the depths of the wreckage (Vendler, 1993). Yet, the 'drowned face' has the hope to be saved as it 'always staring toward the sun' . Cixous asserts that the hope of the change comes from the dark image of the woman in the past which can anticipate a better future. Thus, From 'the ribs of the disaster' there is still an 'assertion' of surviving as the haunters are just 'tentative haunters'.

Rich asserts that in order to survive and to bring change to the woman's status , in order to save the remains of the woman's damage, she needs to find an alternative , to deconstruct the myths that caused this damage. The solution is to find a feminine language ,which stems from the female body, from her unconscious. To return to the pre-linguistic period , to the mother's womb where she can identify herself with because " woman is never far from mother" (Cixous,1976,p.881). Thus, in order to fix the damage occurred by patriarchal order, woman needs to find a language of imagination , of the unconscious, to sing the mother's song instead of the patriarchal death song in his symbolic world. Helene Cixous asserts this notion through her *feminine writing* and the need to replace the paternal symbolic order with the maternal order. Women can find their feminine language in the pre-oedipal imagination where they can distinguish their power. Thus Cixous assures that, "A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written, it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments (1976, p.888).

This is the place.
 And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair
 streams black, the merman in his armored body.
 We circle the wreck
 about the
 we dive into the hold.
 I am she: I am he (71-77)

At the center of the action, the persona reaches 'the place' to recognize herself with androgyny picture 'I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair /streams black, the merman in his armored body', the beauty of the 'the mermaid' with her 'dark hair', and the strength of 'the merman' with his 'armored body' have been unified as a one whole. There is no difference between the two, they are the same. The tension between the subject and object, the mind and body, male and female vanished, both of them represent the subject 'I' 'I am she: I am he'. Rich's evocation of androgyny image is to liberate the humankind from the specific gender division. "At the primordial center, there are no divisions between subconscious and conscious, subject and object, sacred and profane, inside and outside, good and evil, or feminine and masculine" (Martin, 1984, p.190). Rich deconstructed the binary opposition, the hierarchal system by creating androgyny creature. Rich's persona returns to the place where there is no sexual differences between man and woman, to the maternal world, the pre-Oedipal stage, to the source of the feminine power where there is no exclusion for the Other.

Cixous in her theory of *feminine writing* encourages women to break the male/female binary by introducing bisexuality where there is non-exclusion for both sexes. In this strategy, man and woman come together, the power of their libidinal will help to deconstruct the binary opposition. The female persona reaches to the place where she can free herself from all the constraints of the patriarchal thoughts which represent the oppressive structure of the mono-sexual. She moves beyond the binary where there is a place for all individuals. Rich uses repetition for the pronoun 'we' twice in 'we circle' and 'we dive' to emphasize the action of accepting the Other and going beyond the sexual differences. Cixous asserts this notion when she states that, when a woman writes with no repression, she passes on her others, to her abundance of non-ego/s in a way that destroys the binary opposition and "what takes place is an endless circulation of desire from one body to another, above and across sexual difference" (Cixous, 1981, p.53)

whose	drowned	face	sleeps	with	open	eyes
whose	breasts	still	bear	the	stress	
whose	silver,	copper,	vermeil	cargo	lies	
obscurly		inside			barrels	
half-wedged	and	left	to	rot	(78-82)	

The diver notices that the 'drowned face' which resides under water is not dead, it 'sleeps' but with 'open eyes'. Rich uses juxtaposition in this line to draw the readers' attention that although the suffering and the damage occurred to both men and women in the shade of patriarchal history and myths which distance the women from the men by creating the story of the binary opposition, still there is hope and the androgyny face is representing the change. The ultimate truth, the treasure, the precious 'silver, copper, vermeil cargo' is still hidden 'inside barrels' and need to be discovered. The secret resides in the androgyne image, and in order to fix the damage, it is important to reunite the self –fragmentation. This 'cargo' is the truth which 'left to rot' beneath the surface.

we	are	the	half-destroyed	instruments
that	once	held	to	a
the		water-eaten		course
the fouled compass				log

Rich realizes the truth, and the truth indicates that both man and woman are 'half-destroyed instruments/ once held to a course' this is because they use the wrong tools, the patriarchy 'fouled compass' which made them take the wrong direction in their lives. Keyes mentions that although both the man and woman are 'half-destroyed' by the myths and the false stories, the man denied the woman in him, while the woman is the opposite (Keyes, 1986, p.155). This notion has been mentioned by Cixous in her essay *The Laugh of the Medusa* when she states that the woman is opening up to get benefit from the bisexuality which does not cancel differences but stirs them up while the man is the opposite. She adds, "woman is bisexual; man-it's a secret to no one-being poised to keep glorious phallic mono- sexuality in view" (Cixous, 1976, p.884).

We	are,	I	am,	you	are
by	cowardice	or	courage		
the	one	who	find	our	way
back	to	this	scene		
carrying	a	knife,	a	camera	
a	book	of	myths		
in			which		

our names do not appear.(87-94)

The exploration journey is about to end and the diver discovers the secrets of the damage and the source of her power. The secret is to accept the Other, no matter the differentiations because we are all the same, all of us are human beings, either to be 'We are, I am, you are' carrying multifaceted identities, or to hold features of femininity or masculinity, in all our cases powerful or powerless, 'by cowardice or courage', we are all as one whole, "many names for pieces of one whole" (Keyes, 1986, p. 133). The persona in the poem endures a risky

journey to discover the truth, carrying with her 'a knife' to cut the illusion from reality, 'a camera' to record her findings and to fetch it as an evidence of the damage, and 'a book of myths' which she discovered in it their 'names do not appear'. Rich's persona in this journey distances herself from the surface, from the patriarchal symbolic language that neglects the woman's existence in his world. She endures a risky journey to the past, to her unconscious, to the maternal land in order to touch the powerful elements of life, 'a lone' in her endeavor to find the truth about man and woman, truth beyond myths. She discovers that the truth resides in androgyny image, is to accept the other and to break the binary oppositions that created this damage. The diver did not bounce back to the surface. She alienated herself from the world that confined her voice. She found her source of power in another alternative, in her feminine body, through use a feminine language which emanates from her unconscious. She intends to re-write the patriarchal old myths and to inscribe women's names in it, a subversive power that will shake the patriarchal symbolic walls, and she will surface as an equivalent power.

Conclusion

Rich in her poem *Diving into the Wreck* breaks from all the old constraints, seeking truth in the depth of the ocean in order to re-write the patriarchal myths, to find new directions for women's lives. Therefore, approaching Rich's feminine discourse in light of Cixous's theory of *Feminine Writings* shows that her use of the androgyny image is intended as a self-distancing strategy in order to liberate the female discourse from the hegemony of the phallogocentric discourse which is based on the binary opposition. The study explains that Rich no longer trusts the patriarchal language, so she announces her sharp break from the masculine world by using metaphor to describe their language as "dead language". The study concludes that *Diving into the Wreck* is an attempt to immerse into the past in a quest to find the truth about man and woman. It is an attempt to re-write the old myths, to find an alternative that can break the binary opposition. Rich, in her endeavor to distance her feminine discourse from the phallogocentric discourse, declared that 'I am the androgyne' in her poem *The Stranger* from the collection *Diving into the Wreck*. Thus, the study concludes that Rich deconstructed the binary opposition thought by creating an androgyny creature. She returned to the place where there is no sexual difference between man and woman, to the maternal world, the pre-Oedipal stage, to the source of the feminine power where there is no exclusion for the Other. Rich discovered the truth resides in an androgyny entity where there are no barriers between the sexes. Thus, the androgyny picture is repeated as a solution for better life. Rich with the image of androgyny distanced her discourse from the biased patriarchal discourses and created a new myth, and new language that deconstructed the patriarchal world in order to re-write the old myths; new feminine myths where women's 'names' appear.

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