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THEORY OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION IN THE WRITINGS OF ADRIENNE RICH

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Abstract: The desire to create is a sign of a sensitive mind's need to fulfil its potential. According to humanistic psychology, this is a manifestation of the drive for ego fulfilment. When coming from a writer, the results of this reaction take the form of works of literature, which is where the satisfaction lies. The purpose of this thesis is to show that the desire for self-fulfillment is a primary impetus for imaginative writing. Adrienne Rich (1929-2012) spent much of her early career devoted to upholding these norms. The phallogocentric theory of subject creation impacted her thinking. She adopted this male-dominated language in an effort to gain credibility as a writer, but eventually she came to see that it did nothing to encourage women to speak out and share their unique perspectives.

Index Terms - Manifestation, Male-dominated, Primary, Imaginative, phallogocentric

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and humanistic psychology were the three major paradigm shifts in the field of psychology throughout the twentieth century. Psychoanalysis portrays man as a combative, instinctual creature, whereas behaviorism paints him as a helpless victim of his environment. However, man is portrayed quite differently in Humanistic Psychology, with an emphasis placed on his wholeness as an individual who is both creative and healthy and who strives to discover and develop his own unique potential. This intrinsic motivation finds expression in the work of ambitious people, paving the way for them to achieve Self-actualization. Humanistic psychologists believe that each individual has innate creativity and value each person's individuality. Motivation to stand out from the crowd comes from focusing on values like love, creativity, bravery, and Self-actualization. A person with these traits is aware of his own existence and may connect with others.

Humanistic psychology is like existentialism. Famous American psychologists Larry A. Hjelle and Daniel J. Ziegler, in their book *Personality- Theories: Basic Assumptions, Research, and Applications*, discuss the shared groundwork and divergent tenets of existential and humanistic approaches. For existentialists, the central issue is whether it is possible to lead a life that is really one's own. Existentialism resonates with humanistic psychology because of its emphasis on personal agency. Humanist thinkers share the view that each person primarily controls his or her own actions and outcomes. A human being is an intelligent actor, capable of having their own subjective experiences and making their own decisions. Humanistic psychology, therefore, uses the autonomous agent making intentional decisions from available options as its starting point. The notion of becoming is perhaps the most crucial idea that humanistic psychologists have taken away from existentialism. No one stays the same; rather, they're always evolving into new versions of themselves. As a free person, you are responsible for making the most of your abilities as a human being. Because only by realizing them can one lead a genuine existence. Those who have resisted change are stuck in their current circumstances and will never experience the full breadth of human potential...Self-actualization was what Maslow saw as fundamental to the human experience (253).

Therefore, Maslow is the starting point for studies of self-actualization. Abraham Harold Maslow was raised to value education after being born to Jewish Russian immigrants who spoke little English. But being a Jewish kid in a non-Jewish community meant he had to deal with isolation and pain on his own. His personal motivation to improve his circumstances aided him in inspiring others to do the same. His view on life widened once he married his high school love, Bertha Goodman, and learned about the Watsonian school of Behaviorism. His conviction in Behaviorism was utterly overthrown by his own daughter's complicated conduct shortly after her birth. The horrors of World War II also altered his outlook. He saw war as symbolic of humankind's inherent ugliness, wrath, and brutality. War and other forms of damage, in his opinion, might be avoided if people were just more empathetic toward one another. As a result, he started looking into humanistic schools of psychology that focused on the complete man. This became his life's work, and he poured himself into studying and theorizing about the many facets of the human psyche.

II. ADRIENNE RICH AND HER POETIC CAREER

The environment in which Adrienne Rich (1929-2012) grew up was completely shaped by patriarchal ideology. The literary environment was dominated by powerful men, who 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. She began composing poetry in the way of the age, which was dominated at the time by the work of male authors. Furthermore, Rich was brought up in a home that stressed the value of reading and modeling oneself after literary greats. Her debut collection of poetry, *A Change of World* (1951), was praised by W. H. Auden in the book's introduction. To quote Auden:

Craftsmanship, as noted by T. S. Eliot, is the most encouraging indicator in a young poet since it indicates an ability to distance oneself from one's own emotions, which are necessary for the creation of art. 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. (Rich, 1993, 278)

As said before, for those authors, the most important things were skill, etiquette, and distance. Writing on public topics that mattered to the public at the time was a requirement of the poetic norms of the period. 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, she was relegated to discussing abstract concepts, which ultimately silenced her feminine voice in her work. In fact, it was this atmosphere that led to the moniker of "great imitator" being applied to Adrienne Rich's early poems. Following these formalistic procedures and ways of expression prevented Rich from discovering her voice in her work. As a woman living in a world dominated by male values, she was unable to openly discuss her aspirations and worries. As a result, she led a double life, one in which she served the needs of prominent male pioneers while also pursuing her own gender identity. Rich also understood that the differences between men and women were not the result of inherent differences but rather were imposed on women. For her, "the charisma of Man seems to come purely from his power over her and the control of the world by force, not from anything fertile or life-giving in him" (36), as stated in her essay *When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision* (1971). Despite Rich's insights into the repressive concept of composing poems apart from the poet's daily life, she was still utilizing the same tools and ways of writing as the common male poets at the time, therefore her early poems did not rescue her and did not express her voice. These writing styles only express the rigid meanings of what Lacan dubbed "the symbolic language," which benefits men at the expense of women.

Prolific and well admired American poet Adrienne Rich is still very much among us. She has earned renown as both a poet and a prose writer. She learned the ropes and got her start in the industry by mimicking the greats who had come before her. She is admired for her role as a trailblazer in the feminist movement. Her writings focus on uniting women's personal and professional lives. For a long time, Rich battled with patriarchal assumptions about what it meant to be a woman poet. Rich's writings examine the lives of women who disagree with traditional notions of femininity. In 1951, Rich released her first collection of poems. She continued the fight for women's independence first spoken by Emily Dickinson and then developed by Marianne Moore. Women's poetry finally made its breakthrough in the 1960s. Anger at the male legacy of universal language and gender divided relationships was vented in satirical poetry of the time.

Her deep internal struggles as a daughter, wife, and mother gave rise to her anti-patriarchal perspective. She had come to terms with the fact that she had to reject the patriarchal ideal of the appropriate woman. In addition, she struggled to articulate what it meant to be a "free woman" in her own terms. She contended that sexual promiscuity is deeply embedded in the concept of the liberated woman. Importantly, she aimed to bring about a societal and cultural shift with her lyrical vision. Geography, history, many identities, memory, and process all came together for Rich as he thought about a place. The fundamental theoretical argument centered on questions of situatedness and the subject-object dilemma. Rich's work is littered with references to the value of using the first person singular ("I") and the plural ("We") to describe the subject position. The dilemma of pronouns is one way in which this dual viewpoint is communicated. Feminist thought over the last two decades has been dominated by her personal doubt and the unresolvable disputes on subjectivity and locatedness. Like Virginia Woolf, who thought that female writers should consider the works of their foremothers, Rich took an extended family model to the female literary canon. Mothers and daughters worked together to overcome patriarchy's polarizing views. Rich sees variations in how women authors have responded to, subverted, transmitted, or been silenced by patriarchy in their works.

Rich, like Woolf, is concerned on the resistance of the heart and the emotions to education. Emotions draw the dominant white eye back to the middle, where it belongs. However, the brain itself presents challenges. The heart (passion) labors in vain while the intellect (reason) effortlessly expresses itself. She says, "I no longer believe, my feelings do not allow me to believe that the white eye sees from the center," in her book. But I find that I often entertain the idea that I still have this belief. My mind is blank, or rather, it is frozen. As if my mind, having successfully broken the taboo against women thinking, had risen to the air and said, "I am the woman who asks the question," I find myself in a situation of detention. My mind has been acquiring knowledge in a much more obedient and painstaking fashion, understanding that emotions are meaningless without facts and that privilege is rooted in a system of power. (Native Tongue, 226).

However, like Woolf, "reason" and "emotion," or "brain" and "heart," as Rich puts it, are at odds. For Rich, too, their incompatibility causes a feeling of being in "a state of arrest" as if between lines. A radical shift occurred in Rich's poetry throughout the 1980s. Feminist scholarship over the last decade has kept scholars interested in the contradictions of the United States' past. The Marxist influence was strong in her 1980s work. She established herself as a "geographer of the human condition" (Rich, *Arts* 4) in the same vein as Marx. She put all her brainpower into analyzing how the oppressive economy affected interpersonal interactions. Poems she wrote over the decade reveal an increasing concern with civic duty on her part. Her study of her own experiences as a woman, feminist thinker, Jewish activist, and poet was a common and distinctive method.

Alice Templeton remarked on the gender-neutral tone of "An Atlas of the Difficult World" by Adrienne Rich in her book *The Dream and the Dialogue*. Templeton claims it celebrates "[T]he disenfranchised, the dispossessed, the internal "emigrant," and difficult truths, not the mock-innocent, the colonizer, the madness of solitude, or the deception of simplistic alliances and oppositions" (164-65).

Rich male and female identities in "An Atlas of the Difficult World." One interpretation of this poem is that it is a lament for the promise never fully realized by the women's liberation movement. There are a few female characters in the poem. Rich's portrayal of their persecution at the hands of misogynist and homophobic forces is indicative of her unwavering dedication to radical feminism.

Her own poetry has been criticized by Rich. She writes both beautifully lyrical poetry and prose. Poetry, in her *What Is Discovered* Their conception, is:

Language is the medium through which these electrical currents flow; it is the tool of deception and revelation, the knife, the rage, the boat spoon, the reed that becomes the pipe, the tree trunk that becomes the drum, the mud that becomes the clay flute, the conch shell that becomes the iconography in appliqué, the rubber bands that stretch a box into a lyre. (83-84)

For Rich, the issue is not whether poetry is still created, but rather whether or not it can unite individuals of diverse cultures and socioeconomic statuses. If there is a need for communication across different cultures, can poetry provide that? If there is agreement among Rich's detractors, it is that she has the capacity for introspection and growth. Rich's poetry has always been an unpredictably evolving work in progress. Something she has repeatedly highlighted. Poems XV describes her work as "a process still going on," whereas *Blood XIII* calls it "a continuing exploration" and a "struggling to keep moving" endeavor.

The focus on Rich's transformative abilities has mostly been limited to her recent identity shift. From the reserved, self-censoring aesthete of the 1950s to the outspoken lesbian poet of the 1970s and 1980s, Rich's persona is always shifting. In contrast, the latter stages of her career are reflected in her poem "Delta" (1987). More importantly, how recent political events in Rich's representation of her parents. Rich's politics throughout the 1970s and 1980s are characterized by a feeling of urgency. There is a sense of completely novel possibilities. She writes, "there come times-perhaps this is one of them-when we have to take ourselves more seriously or die" (*The Dream*, 74) in her poetry from this era. In 1970, Rich became active in the Women's Liberation Movement. She stayed for a long time to promote female empowerment and unity. She stayed for a long time to promote female empowerment and unity. She laboriously sought for ways to distinguish herself as a feminist, a radical feminist, and, finally, a lesbian. Here's what she thinks about that:

The term "feminist" has been used in peroration and ridicule throughout most of my existence. Feminism and the concept of women's emancipation were opening new and exciting dimensions for me. Soon after, I came out as a lesbian, not as a political statement or a calculated move, but because of the strength of my sentiments in that regard. (*Blood*, VII)

As a feminist, she embarks on her mission to help women. Later, she grows into a fierce feminist activist. Her subsequent declaration of being "a lesbian" is more outspoken. Rich's writing has a subtle but palpable sense of power and intensity. Even yet, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, her poetry did not come off as particularly measured or patient because of this. She became known as a poet who took herself very seriously and was not afraid to be blunt and critical at times. By the late '80s, Rich had begun to persuasively convey a willingness to work with rather than against existing conditions. In her collection of poems titled *Time's Power*, she reveals that she was pleased to simply arrive at a meeting place between reality and imagination. She had faith in incremental shifts. In an interview with Moolly McQuade, she gave the following advice to Rich:

It's helpful to have both a short-term pessimism and a long-term pessimism and long-term optimism perspective, so that you don't put all your eggs in one 'campaign' basket but do have faith that change will occur over time. (44)

Rich had developed a new, more stable kind of patience that allowed him to put off short-term gain in favor of long-term change. Rich's reluctance and anger at her father are spelled out much more explicitly in her essay. She accuses him in *Of Woman Born* of expecting his wife to give up her job. She blames her father for the severing of the strong connection that she had with her mother. Her "right to an emotional life and a selfhood beyond his needs and theories" was taken away because "authority and control ran through [my father's] body like electric filaments," she says (*Of Woman* 219, 222). She never lived up to her Victorian paternalistic, seductive, dominating father's expectations.

III. SELF-ACTUALIZATION IN ADRIENNE RICH

It speaks of our want; it reminds us of what we lack, our need, and our hungers," said Rich in an interview with Mathew Rothschild.

Adrienne Rich is widely regarded as one of the finest living American poets, with a body of work that includes over nineteen collections of poetry and five exemplary works of prose. She has become well-known for her work as a poet because to her reputation as a militant lesbian feminist. Her poetry displays her development into a distinguished poet. Adrienne Rich is the oldest of her parents, Arnold Rich, and Helen Jones Rich's, three children. Rich and her younger sister, Cynthia, were home schooled until they were nine years old, and they were both raised by their father's harsh discipline. Her father, an avid reader and educator, gave her her first library card. He tutored her in poetic form and demanded that she compose a poem every day. At first, she penned poetry mostly for his approval. Later, though, she developed a personal affinity for poetry and began penning her own compositions.

While her peers were busy courting, she was busy penning poetry. She learned about the Holocaust when she was eighteen and felt free to talk about it and look for her Jewish ancestors after she had left Baltimore. Rich's parents' lack of interest in the Jewish faith meant that she was raised without a firm foundation in the faith. In 1947, when she attended Radcliffe College, she tried to educate herself about Judaism. She could only express herself via poems as she sought her Jewish heritage. Rich completed high school in 1951 and spent the following year traveling across Europe and England. Against her parents' wishes, she wed Harvard economist Alfred H. Conrad, who was Jewish. Her wedding marked a decisive departure with her father's authoritarian upbringing. Her husband's family quickly became her second family. She found a feeling of family and community among them that she had been missing at home because of their strong Jewish customs. There were two collections of her poems out by 1955: *A Change of World* and *The Diamond Cutters*. Rich's time for poetry-writing diminished drastically with the arrival of sons David, Paul, and Jacob. She was irritated because she had no time to write or relax.

Rich studied writings by Mary Wollstonecraft (18th century) and Simone de Beauvoir (French, 20th century) around this period. She was also profoundly impacted by the African-American novelist James Baldwin, whose writings on the Civil Rights Movement were the first she had ever read. If African Americans could stand up for their rights, she reasoned, then surely, she, a woman, could do the same. The limitations of parenthood and the stresses of marriage prompted her to reevaluate her life goals and consider other paths. She picked up writing again, penning whenever she could squeeze it in among all her other commitments at home. The poetry that resulted from this event was autobiographical and free-verse in nature, deliberately eschewing convention. In 1963, after an eight-year hiatus from writing, Rich released *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law: Poems 1954-1962*. From then on, she dated each poem she wrote. Her demanding roles as a wife, mother, and poet all come through in these poems. Her poetry display a strong feminism that she is aware of. She vents her frustrations at her predicament in the poem's title. She recognizes the need for growth

within herself and speaks for women authors everywhere. In these poems, she writes from the heart about her frustration at being denied privacy and alone time. She takes a stand against masculine dominance and mulls over the concept of boundary-setting.

Necessities of Life: Poems 1962–1965 is discussed in Adrienne Rich by biographer Amy Sickles, who writes as follows:

However, the tone and manner of *Necessities* seems to have just been a respite at a tumultuous moment in her life and the globe throughout Rich's lengthy career. Issues of parenthood, sexuality, and creativity that Rich had previously dealt with in isolation were suddenly set against the backdrop of the civil rights and antiwar movements. Rich's devotion to fighting for civil rights and her intense antiwar feelings clearly influenced the topic and themes of her poetry as both movements gained momentum in the 1960s (44).

Rich was politically active in the sixties, primarily as an opponent of the Vietnam War and a supporter of the Civil Rights Movement. She worked as a teacher in the SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge) program, where she taught English to pupils that needed it the most. She gained new insights into the lives of the poor and disadvantaged as a result of this extraordinary encounter. She understood the significance of the language she was teaching to her pupils' everyday lives. Because of this, she worked even harder on the political and social issues she cared about. Meanwhile, Rich uprooted her family and headed for the Big Apple. She communicated with her parents again. In 1969, she published a collection of poetry titled *Leaflets 1965-1968*, which was a political response to the Vietnam War and the American Civil Rights Movement.

IV. SELF-ACTUALIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETS

A person who has reached his or her full potential is an inspiration to everyone around them. He satisfies his own desires and advances on the path to being fully realized. One method to do this is to give him more time to work on his creative projects. Thus, the quest for self-realization may be seen as a driving theme in many works of fiction. When a person is driven by the want to fulfill his or her potential, they will go to great lengths to express their gifts and skills. The ultimate objective of a self-actualizer is to realize his own potential. "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be at peace with himself," Maslow is quoted as saying by Hjelle. A guy has the obligation to achieve his full potential. He must act in accordance with his genuine character (261, Personality).

Self-actualizers are those that are always up for trying new things, making errors, and moving ahead in life in order to make the most of their abilities. It takes a lot of guts to do this. Self-actualization is invigorating and inspiring because it compels one to focus on one's potential and ambitions for the future, which in turn gives one a sense of purpose in life. One must be willing to take chances in life and open to new experiences and unique ideas in order to reach his or her full potential. For a person to reach their full potential, society must also be prepared to support them. Individualists who seek satisfaction via their own efforts may easily find the support and resources they need in American culture and society. The self-actualizer may flourish in the supportive environment of modern America. Having supportive friends along the path to being your best self may be a tremendous morale boost.

People who strive to realize their full potential see themselves as agents of change in their chosen fields and take ownership of the role they must play in this world. They may be taken on their own, but they also rely on one another. They like being among other people but need their own space sometimes. Their enthusiasm for life inspires them to create art, gain fresh perspectives, and make surprising discoveries. They find joy in their creative bursts, which is essential to their health. Each person has their own unique set of skills and experiences that contribute uniquely to their own sense of self-actualization. Poetry, prose, theatre, and fiction writing will fill the void in the literary arts.

The two poets under examination are examined considering the many facets of their lives as women, poets, lesbians, and African Americans in the modern world. It is particularly important for women to establish their own identities at home and in their communities. They will have to stand up for themselves eventually. Their desire for self-respect is great, and only the fulfillment it provides may improve their quality of life. They need to gain people's respect by first earning it from themselves. They need to stand up for themselves. The urgency of women's desires for respect sparked the women's liberation movement. Collectively, women resist all types of tyranny. They can confront and overcome challenges because of the love and dedication they have among themselves. They blossom into fully realized individuals, realizing their full potential, and becoming the best versions of themselves. Their potential to be fully realized human beings is shown in their inventiveness and wide range of interests and activities. As a group, women have made great strides in the 21st century, and many of them are now fully realized individuals.

The process of coming into one's own as a poet is an interesting research topic. Everyone has an innate drive for self-fulfillment that serves as the primary impetus for all they do in life. A person's innate creativeness is what ultimately allows him to become a writer and produce original work. He is completely aware of his own worth and potential. His drive comes from this realization. When he finally writes something he's proud of, he accepts his identity as a writer. He gains confidence in himself and his abilities, and he begins to utilize them more effectively and confidently. He becomes a fully realized writer. He makes good use of his unique talents as a writer, which helps set him apart from other authors.

V. CONCLUSION

"Self-Actualization in the Poetry of Adrienne Rich" is an examination of Rich's own life and work. Here, Rich demonstrates his development from a child poet to a contemporary poet. The focus of her poetry is the transformation from individualism to dogma. She rejects the roles of daughter, wife, and mother in favor of standing on her own two feet. She enjoys her identity as a lesbian and writes openly about her experiences. Her writings focus on subjects that are important to women and are written from a female perspective. Her paintings are distinct and risky because of her positions as a political and social activist. Those who have developed their full potential see things for what they really are. This opens their eyes to the racial and socioeconomic problems plaguing their community. Rich is an advocate for equality and the empowerment of women. Her unique identity as a lesbian, radical feminist, and theorist of parenting sets her distinct. Her poetry and prose take a departure from the conventional in both form and style. She has achieved great literary success by pursuing a path of her own choosing. Thoughts on her quest for self-discovery and acceptance of her female identity are intriguing. She is a fully actualized human being because she uses her skills to their fullest extent. She finds her own unique way to be a woman, a poet, a feminist, and a social activist. Her self-actualization is tracked and her growth as a poet is discussed. Her collections of poetry chart her growth from a young adult to an accomplished, self-assured writer.

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