

Existential feminism in Rintik Sedu's short stories: Female subjectivity, freedom, and the search for authentic selfhood

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Abstract - This study aims to analyse the representation of existentialist feminism Simone de Beauvoir in a collection of digital short stories by Rintik Sedu published through *the Rintiksedu.com website*. This research uses a qualitative paradigm with a hermeneutic approach to interpret the meaning of literary texts. The source of the research data is six digital short stories by Rintik Sedu, namely *No Answer is the Answer*, *Our Parts*, *Dialogue at that time*, *Limits*, *Between Us Pt.1&2*, and *I Write This Because I Am Afraid of Forgetting*. The research data is in the form of words, sentences, and discourses that represent the existence of women and efforts to achieve existential freedom. The results of the study show that the existence of women in these short stories is represented through three categories: existence based on nature that describes the social construction of women's patience and sacrifice; existence based on history that shows the awareness of female figures to break the inheritance of previous generations' habits; and existence based on myths that question romantic and patriarchal stereotypes in interpersonal relationships. Women's efforts to achieve authentic existence are manifested through two strategies: rejecting the position of the "other" by affirming agency and personal freedom, and strategically accepting social expectations to gain space to move within patriarchal structures. This study concludes that digital literary works can serve as an important medium in representing women's struggle to achieve existential freedom and dismantling the social constructs that limit their authentic existence.

Keywords: existentialist feminism, Simone de Beauvoir, digital short stories, women's existence, Rintik Sedu

1. Introduction

Literary works are a form of language expression that is full of reflections of life and the reality of humanity. Asia et al. (2025) stated that literature is a way to apply one's ideas that can improve the circumstances and conditions around them. Pramudyaseta and Azmin (2021) stated that literary works are linguistic arts that display beauty while containing social reality. These two elements can be conveyed directly or implicitly, according to the way the author uses language



in his work. On the other hand, Aryanti and Ramdani, (2023) stated that literature can be defined as art that uses language as its medium, has a creative nature, and contains strong elements of imagination. In addition, Ramdhani (2022) revealed that bringing literature is an individual expression that includes experiences, emotions, thoughts, ideas, passions, and beliefs conveyed in a clear and concrete form, able to trigger attraction using language. From that, Yulianti et al. (2021) stated that literary works are an amazing representation formed by the innovative and productive imagination of a writer.

Through language, the writer not only expresses his personal feelings or views, but also captures various social phenomena that occur around him. Language serves as a means to describe literary works whose ideas are closely related to the context of the author's life (Banjarnahor et al., 2022). In addition, literature functions as a reflection of life, so complex social realities, including human relations issues, are often processed in literary works. One of the realities that has received a lot of attention is gender issues, especially related to the inequality of women's roles compared to men.

In line with that, feminism is one of the approaches to literary criticism that focuses its analysis on human issues and experiences, especially women, in their human dimension (Juanda & Azis., 2018). Hastuti and Maulinda (2021) stated that in terms of etymology, the term feminism comes from Latin, precisely from the word *femina* which means related to femininity. Clarissa (2023) states that feminism is a movement that seeks to oppose various forms of objectification of women. In addition, according to Iskandar et al. (2023) that feminism is understood as an awareness of the exploitation and oppression experienced by women, both in the context of family, work environment, and social environment. In literary works, feminist ideas can appear in various forms, one of which is through short stories that often capture women's experiences in a concise but profound way.

The definition of a short story is a work of imagination written in just a few pages (Chairiah., 2022). Short stories are short stories (less than 10,000 words) giving the impression of a single dominant and self-centred one character in a situation (Ahmad et al., 2020). A short story is a short essay that comes from the writer's imagination. Short stories are literary works that are written briefly and have a storytelling style (Setianingsih & Ikhwan, 2023). Short stories are a type of literary work that is free in the writing process. In short stories, there is a shorter, denser, and direct storyline that focuses on the issue that is at the heart of the conflict, which is the basis that makes short stories different from other forms of prose (Aryanti & Ramdani, 2023). On the other hand, according to Umammy (2021), a short story is a short narrative, which only tells one event, but resolves all themes and problems completely and thoroughly. The opening is written in an interesting way that is easy for readers to remember. In addition, Muyassaroh (2022) revealed that short stories are the result of a work of art combined with the ability to depict a story. Furthermore, at the end of the story (ending) it closes with a surprise. In the context of digital literature, short stories are one of the forms of works that are in great demand because of their concise but meaningful presentation, including *Rintik Sedu's works* that often highlight the feelings and experiences of modern women.

In this study, the focus of the study is directed at existential feminism. According to Siswadi (2022), existentialist feminism emphasizes that existence precedes the essence of women is not born as a woman, but is formed through patriarchal social constructions. According to Azzahra (2022), one of the most famous pioneers of contemporary feminism in the 20th century in the view of existentialist feminism is Simone De Beauvoir. Existential feminism is an effort to uphold gender equality and provide freedom to women in the realm of social construction (Rahmatunnur et al., 2023). Merisa and Ahmadi (2020) argue that existentialist feminism shows the existence of power relations between men and women that are influenced by the social construction of society. In addition, this school of feminism generally focuses on strengthening women in their lives and encouraging them to show their existence in various areas of life (Iskandar et al., 2023).



Literary works as a sign system have diverse meanings because the language and symbols in it can be interpreted differently by each reader. In contemporary studies, the meaning of literature is also associated with the reality and discourse of today. On that basis, this study examines the novel *Karsa* by Elizabeth Alicia (Hasibuan et al., 2024). As in (Ginting & Yuhdi, n.d.), literary works from a feminist perspective present a view of the role of women, particularly in their efforts to achieve equality with men through an existential feminist approach. This study also shows that the female characters in the novel *Sempurna* by Novanka Raja show their existence with an awareness of personal choice and freedom according to Simone de Beauvoir's theory of existentialist feminism (Nisya & Komalasari, 2020). This research reveals that in fighting for their existence, female protagonists first experience an objectification process influenced by patriarchal culture. And it is also supported by (Irmawati et al., 2024) which shows that women's representation is formed through social construction, including in the image of Javanese women who try to fight against societal stigma. These findings corroborate the analysis that gender injustices do not arise naturally, but are formed through social interactions that are constantly reproduced in culture.

Thus, this theoretical framework is suitable for studying the collection of short stories on the *Rintiksedu* (2022) website as a form of contemporary digital literature. The approach of feminism is a study that focuses on women and how they struggle against injustices in life. Existentialism sees humans as existing beings, and analyses the way humans are in the world with full awareness (Pratiwi & Putriani, 2024). One of them is women. Women should have equal rights and opportunities with men, not only in politics but also in other fields (Azzahra, 2022).

Beauvoir explained that women are not born as women, but rather they are formed as women. Aulia and Efendi's (2025) research in Indonesian short stories shows how female characters can reject the 'other' label and seize the freedom of their identity through existential awareness. Beauvoir also reflects resistance to injustice in the relationship between women and men, which men define as *The One* or the Self. Meanwhile, women are placed as objects and are considered as *The other* (Azzahra, 2022). In addition, Beauvoir According to Rahayu (2019) the existence of women is divided into three categories, namely (1) women's existence through nature, women's existence is illustrated through the physical, character, and function of the body itself; (2) the existence of women based on history, the existence of women and their contributions in various eras of human history; (3) The existence of women is based on myths, the existence of women is shaped by norms and rules created by men, so that women are truly distinguished as other figures. In addition, Beauvoir also described the efforts made by women to achieve existence, divided into two categories, namely (1) women's efforts to achieve existence by accepting themselves as another figure, women's efforts in utilizing acceptance of themselves as true women which means recognizing themselves as another figure to achieve freedom; (2) women's efforts to achieve existence by rejecting themselves as another figure, women's efforts in fighting for emancipation, resisting, being active, being able to take responsibility for something and rejecting the passivity that men usually assert to them in order to achieve freedom.

A number of previous studies have examined the perspective of existentialist feminism in various Indonesian literary works with varied approaches. Aulia and Efendi (2025) analysed the short story "Women Who Marry Their Own Bodies" by M. Rifdhal Ais Annafis through the lens of Simone de Beauvoir's thought, raising the uniqueness of the metaphor of women's marriage with their own bodies as a representation of the determination of freedom, absolute control over women's bodies, and the independence of self-existence. In addition, research conducted by Janah and Septiana (2021) shows that Indonesian short stories also often represent a form of women's resistance to gender injustice, especially through characters who negotiate their identities and freedoms in patriarchal social spaces.

This study makes a new contribution to the study of existentialist feminism which previously explored women's struggles in various domains such as culture, education, social, and other sectors. (Cecaria & Meliasanti, 2023) examines the literary criticism of feminism in the digital short story "Fragment of Sadness on the Eve of Eid" by Dimas Indiana Senja published



through the Basabasi.com platform, showing the development of digital literature as a means of conveying current feminism issues. Putri and Qomariyah (2024) analyse the symbolism of Javanese women in the novel "Gadis Kretek" by Ratih Kumala using the perspective of Simone de Beauvoir's existential feminism, examining how women struggle for freedom and independence in patriarchal cultural structures. Ginting and Yuhdi (2023) raises the theme of women's lives in Indonesian novels, by applying the feminist existentialism theory of Simone de Beauvoir to explain the narrative and transcendence aspects of female characters.

These three works apply literary criticism and cultural analysis to canonical and popular texts: Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, the Indonesian novel *Laskar Pelangi*, and the K-drama *Reply 1988* (Wajdi et al., 2024; Muñoz, 2024). Overall, they foreground character, theme, and social context, but share some recurring methodological and theoretical limitations. All three papers rely on established critical approaches (Reader-Response for self-confidence in Santiago; social class analysis in *Laskar Pelangi*; thematic analysis of nostalgia, friendship, and family in *Reply 1988*) (Wajdi et al., 2024).

Each study appears to use qualitative textual analysis, but the methods are loosely specified: sampling of scenes, coding strategies, and procedures for validating interpretations are not systematically described (Wajdi et al., 2024). This makes the analyses more essayistic than empirically rigorous. The reliance on plot summary is high, with limited close reading of language, narrative structure, or form, and relatively sparse engagement with existing specialized criticism on each primary text.

The studies succeed in showing continuing relevance of canonical and popular narratives to contemporary issues (resilience, inequality, intergenerational bonds) (Wajdi et al., 2024), making connections to education and values formation, which is promising for EFL/literature pedagogy. However, comparative perspectives (e.g., other Hemingway heroes, broader Indonesian class narratives, other family K-dramas) and intercultural/media studies contexts are underused, limiting their contribution to wider literary and cultural debates.

Across the three works (Wajdi et al. (20025; 2024) provide clear, accessible thematic readings with pedagogical potential, but theoretical engagement, methodological transparency, and depth of close textual and comparative analysis could be strengthened to reach a more robust, publishable level of critical scholarship.

Although many studies have applied Beauvoir's theory of existential feminism to short stories in Indonesia, analysis of digital short stories disseminated through *online platforms* such as *Rintik Sedu* is still rare. Different from previous research that focused more on traditional physical novels or short stories, this study specifically examined how existential feminism is represented in modern digital short stories that depict the experiences of millennial women in the context of current romantic relationships. The uniqueness of *Rintik Sedu* which raises women's personal and existential themes with a close storytelling style and uses colloquial language makes it a relevant object to understand how digital literature functions as a space to express the voices of modern women. The selection of short stories from *Rintik Sedu* as the focus of the research is based on its unique characteristics in presenting women's existential conflicts, especially in terms of love, and ease of access for the younger generation. This makes these works an authentic representation of the current struggle for women's identities who seek to find their own existence in the midst of a social structure that is still patriarchal.

Thus, in this study, the formulation of the problem is arranged, namely How is the form of women's existence (nature, history, and myth) represented in the collection of short stories by *Rintik Sedu* according to the perspective of Simone de Beauvoir's feminism? What are the efforts of female characters in achieving an authentic existence in a collection of short stories by *Rintik Sedu*? This research seeks to reveal and analyze the representation of existential feminism in a collection of short stories by *Rintik Sedu*. This is in line with Sagita et al. (2023) who have successfully applied Beauvoir's existentialist theory to modern novels and series as a medium for gender criticism in literature. Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide an



understanding of literature and existential feminism contained in the collection of short stories by *Rintik Sedu* as part of contemporary Indonesian digital literature.

2. Method

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method. Setianingsih & Ikhwan (2023) stated that qualitative research is a research method that produces data in the form of explanations about individual behaviour that can be seen through text or speech. Then the approach used is Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics according to Fitrih (2014) states that a theory that discusses the workings of understanding related to the interpretation of texts. The data in this study are sentences or quotes contained in a collection of short stories on *the rintiksedu.com* website. The source of data in the study is [rintiksedu.com website](http://rintiksedu.com) which contains 10 short stories.

The short stories analysed in this study amounted to six short stories entitled “Tidak Ada Jawaban Adalah Jawaban” (*No Answer is the Answer*), “Bagian Kita” (*Our Parts*), “Dialog Kala itu” (*Dialogue at that time*), “Batas” (*Limit*), “ Aku Menulis Ini Karena Aku takut lupa” (*I Wrote This Because I Am Afraid of Forgetting*), and “Antara Kita, Pt 1 & 2” (*Between Us Pt. 1 & 2*). Data collection in this study uses reading and recording techniques. This research examines the view of existential feminism of Simone De Beauvoir.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Based on the results of research in a collection of short stories on the website, it was found that existential feminism was described in the discussion. Then, through the process of reading and analysing the data, four short stories were identified that were relevant to the research theme, namely *No Answer is the Answer*, *Our Parts*, *Dialogue at that time*, *Limits*, *Between Us Pt. 1&2*, and *I Write This Because I Am Afraid of Forgetting*. The following is a discussion and also data from the researcher obtained:

3.1.1 Women's Existence

Existential feminism explores the position of women in living life, including in matters of love. Existentialist feminism studies how women live their lives, often women are influenced by male figures (Nisya & Komalasari, 2020). In the context of today's digital literature, Amalia (2023) states that the digital short story *Rintik Sedu* reflects women's feelings through deep inner experiences and reflection. In line with this. Erwin & Murtafi'ah (2024) explain that gender representation in modern Indonesian literature has undergone a significant transformation in the portrayal of female characters as independent and empowered individuals. Setiawan et al (2024) added that women in contemporary novels in Indonesia are shown with a stronger bargaining position in emotional and social relationships.

Yulia (2024) also emphasizes that women in contemporary short stories in Indonesia seek to define themselves through personal choices that reflect freedom and identity. A woman makes the man she loves the main focus of her life. This dependence results in a woman losing independence, so she no longer strives to achieve her personal dreams. Instead, he is trapped in an existence that only serves as a shadow or complement to the existence of his partner. This situation makes the woman an "object" and not a "subject" in the relationship, so her happiness and self-recognition are highly dependent on her partner. Ridwan *et al.*, (2024) stated that according to Beauvoir, existentialism shows that women are no longer just objects, but have become independent subjects.

Furthermore, this phenomenon, according to Beauvoir, arises because women are often taught to be "*the Other*" rather than men. As a result, they internalize the notion that their self-worth depends on how well they can meet their partner's needs and expectations. Rather than pursue their own freedom and existential projects, women are trapped in the myth of romantic love that puts their self-esteem in the hands of their partners. Meanwhile, the essence of existentialist feminism is to encourage women to take back their freedom, to define themselves



through personal actions and choices, rather than from the reflections or acknowledgments of others. Simone de Beauvoir explained that women who have realized their freedom must be able to freely choose the direction of their lives and most importantly refuse to be used as objects.

Then, Rahayu (2019) stated that Beauvoir classified the existence of women into three categories, namely (1) Existential women by nature is the existence of women described through the body, as well as the attributes and functions of the body itself, (2) Existential women based on history according to the existence of women and their roles throughout various eras in human history, (3) Existential According to the myth, women are the existence of women who are shaped by norms and policies determined by men, so that women are really considered as different figures.

In this case, the data found by the researcher, namely about the existence of women based on nature, history and myths, is presented in each table:

(1) Women's Existence through Nature

Women's existence is often constructed through the interpretation of the nature placed on them, such as patience, gentleness, and the ability to resist. In sastra's works, representations of women's nature are often present through symbolic actions that show women's awareness of boundaries, responsibilities, and their role in social and emotional relationships. Then, short stories that capture the dynamics of the characters' feelings provide an overview of how women express their existence through choices of attitude that seem simple, such as being silent, waiting, or withdrawing but are actually full of meaning. This can be found in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Women's Existence by Nature

No	Quotes	Short stories
1	"Some people choose to be silent, wait or even seem to do nothing, not because they don't choose other opportunities. But because they understand the limits"	<i>Limits (Batas)</i>
2	"I always feel like something is missing when I'm around. Not because he's not perfect, but because I feel like I have to be the best version of myself when I'm with him."	<i>Our Parts (Bagian-bagian kita)</i>
3	"Women have always been taught to wait. Waiting to be chosen, waiting to be loved, waiting to be understood. And I'm tired of waiting."	<i>Between Us Pt. 1&2 (Di antara kita)</i>

Data 01 tells about the love experience of the main character who expresses how complex his feelings were in the past. This information falls into the existentialist category because in romantic relationships, women often choose not to talk or wait for their partner as a form of acceptance and caution towards the situation that their lover is facing. Beauvoir according to Rahayu (2019) argues that "the existence of women through nature is the way in which women's existence is shown through the physical, character, and functional aspects of the aspect itself." In addition, women are often placed in positions of expectation of gentleness and calmness, where the attitude of not speaking also serves as an expression of understanding of their boundaries and responsibilities. Women wait and stay silent not because of helplessness, but because they realize when it's the right time to act and when to hold back. Thus, this data reflects the existence of women who are aware of their self-worth and the limits of their nature in a relationship, even though this construction is actually the result of social formations that make these qualities an element of a predetermined "femininity".

Data 02 illustrates how women's nature is formed as an entity that must always strive to be better for the sake of others, especially for their partners. The phrase "must be the best version of me when I am with her" reflects the absorption of society's expectations that women have a duty to please and serve. Beauvoir asserts that nature is not an immutable biological destiny, but rather a social construct that influences the way women see and define themselves. In this case, the female figure feels "shortcomings" not because she is imperfect, but because society has instilled the view that the basic nature of women is to always meet the expectations set by men.



This shows how traits that are considered "natural" are actually the result of socialization that places women as "the other" who must always prove to be like them.

Data 03 clearly shows an understanding of the constraints that come from the construction of nature. The phrase "Women have always been taught to wait" indicates that waiting is not an innate trait, but is the result of education and social formation. Beauvoir explains that the so-called "nature of women" is actually the product of a structured process of education and socialization. The "I'm tired of waiting" statement in this data signals a critical awareness that what has been accepted as truth is a construct that hinders women's existential freedom. This fatigue is not only physical, but also existential awareness that by continuing to wait, women lose the ability to define their identity and become active subjects in their lives.

(2) Women's Extension Based on History

The existence of women cannot be separated from the course of history that places them in an often subordinate position. In various cultural contexts, women are often limited by patriarchal norms that determine the limits of their movement, including in determining their life choices and future. Representations of women's struggle to obtain the right to self-determination also appear in many literary works. Through dialogue, actions, and the inner conflicts of the characters, the short stories present the voices of women who are trying to get out of the shackles of a long history of inequality. This can be seen in the following table 2 data.

Table 2: Women's Existence Based on History

No	Quotes	Short Stories
1	"It shouldn't be you who have the right to decide what's best for me."	<i>Between Us Pt. 1 & 2</i>
2	"I'm not the first woman to feel this, and I won't be the last. But I can choose not to be silent like those before."	<i>Dialogue At That Time</i>
3	"My mother's generation is silent, my grandmother's generation is silent. But I won't be silent anymore."	<i>Limits</i>

Data 01 The short story depicts the figure of "I" who unexpectedly meets his ex-lover in a shop. Next, she recorded her love experience when she was still in a relationship with her ex. From the information above, it shows how women strive to achieve the right to choose and manage their own destiny. Historically, women have generally been in a lower position, where important decisions regarding their lives are determined by men or patriarchal social norms. Beauvoir according to Rahayu (2019) affirms that "the existence of women in history is the existence and contribution of women in various eras of human civilization." This statement becomes a form of rejection of the existing system, showing the "I" character's awareness of his right to control his own life. In the historical context in Indonesia, women have long felt subordinate positions in various aspects of life ranging from the male-dominated family system, customary laws that place men as family leaders, to policies that limit women's participation and movement space.

This data refutes the historical legacy that puts women in a dependent position, and confirms that women also have thoughts and feelings that are able to evaluate what is best for themselves. The rejection of this figure is part of women's historical struggle to reclaim power that has been snatched away by patriarchal structures that have existed for a long time. This data also hints that women have the right to have a voice and control their life choices, continuing the struggles of previous women who also struggled to break out of the shackles of subordination.

Data 02 reflects a shared and historical awareness of women's experiences. The statement "I'm not the first woman to feel this" suggests that the suffering and limitations she faced were not personal experiences, but part of a long history of oppression of women. Beauvoir emphasized that understanding the history of oppression is the first step toward freedom. However, this historical awareness goes beyond mere understanding. The sentence "I can choose not to be silent as those who once were" hints that this figure is taking lessons from History he recognizes the struggles of previous women who may not have had the opportunity or courage



to speak out, but he chooses to step down a different path. The decision to "remain silent" is both a form of respect and a continuation of women's historical struggle, with the full understanding that she bears the responsibility not to repeat the pattern of silence that has prolonged oppression.

Data 03 explicitly links individual experiences with women's historical heritage that is intergenerational in the family. The statement "My mother's generation is silent, my grandmother's generation is silent" reflects an acknowledgment of a historical reality in which women in the past had no opportunity or power to speak. In the context of Indonesian culture, especially in traditional families, women are often taught to "nrimo" (accept) and not go against the grain. However, the phrase "But I will not be silent any longer" becomes an indicator of a historical change a deliberate decision to end the cycle of silence that has been going on for decades. Beauvoir states that social transformation emerges when women collectively realize their historical position and decide to act in a different way. These data show that female figures not only recognize the history of oppression, but also actively position themselves as agents of change that will revise a new history of history in which women are no longer silent objects, but vocal subjects.

(3) Women's Existence Based on Myths

In various cultures, women are often attached to various myths that shape society's perception of their roles and behaviour. These myths often affect how women are positioned, both in social relationships, romance, and daily life. The representation of women in literary works cannot be separated from this mythological construction, such as the assumption that women must always take care of the feelings of others, be gentle, loyal, or even always obey the will of their partner. The construction of the myth then appears in the dialogue and actions of female characters who seem to have to act according to social expectations that are inherited from generation to generation. Ramadhini et al. (2025) explore women's resilience to social norms with a feminist and sociological literary criticism approach, how the main character fights for her rights against gender constructions that hinder women's freedom. Through the quotes in the following short story data, it can be seen how female characters deal with myths, such as those who reject them, question them, and even unconsciously still get caught up in the demands of roles that also shape their existence. This can be seen in the following Table 3.

Table 3: The Existence of Women Based on Myths

No	Quotes	Short Stories
1	"It's all too comfortable for you, but it's not safe for me."	<i>No Answer Is The Answer</i>
2	"Be careful later, you know, Sal," Jodi said to me, in a frightening tone. "No way, Sal!" said Dira at that time. ... "There's no way you don't have more than a friend. You may not realize it, but the feeling is always there."	<i>Our Parts</i>
3	"I took the ring from his hand, then I wore it on my ring finger." "Yes. Shall we?"	<i>Our Parts</i>
4	"It's hard to talk to a potential novelist, there's nothing wrong with that."	<i>Dialogue at that time.</i>
5	"I also can't forever keep these feelings alone, because isn't that unfair? Don't you also need to know that there is a connection between the two of us? I don't want to be heartbroken without you knowing how I feel. It sounds evil, but you also have to put up with it."	<i>Limits</i>

Data 01 reflects the existence of women based on myths in existentialist feminism because it shows that women's experiences (insecurity) are set aside for the sake of men's comfort. Mythically, women are often considered to be overly emotional or dramatic, whose feelings are not as important as men's needs or logic. In the context of romance, this myth creates a narrative in which women are expected to accept situations that are not ideal in order to maintain the "comfort of their partner." By treating women's insecurities as a personal problem, not a



relationship issue that needs to be resolved together, the quote reinforces the idea that men are subjects whose feelings should take precedence, while women are "*the Other*" whose feelings are considered rational or secondary. As a result, the woman cannot be a free and equal subject, as she is constantly forced to put herself in an insecure position in order to maintain a narrative that benefits her partner. In addition to myths about women's sacrifice and insecurity that must be tolerated for men's comfort, there are also myths that govern how women should interact with men in a social context.

Data 02 is included in the category of women's existence based on myths because this quote reduces women's identity and existence to a complement or 'content' of men's lives. In the context of romance, women are placed as objects that fill the void or free time of men, rather than as subjects who have an independent existence. This myth assumes that women's main role is to provide validation, entertainment, and presence for their partners, especially outside of public spaces (working hours). Thus, women are no longer seen as individuals who have goals, ambitions, and lives outside of relationships, but only as a forum to meet men's emotional and social needs. This view perpetuates the patriarchal notion that a woman's worth is determined by how well she can serve her partner, which ultimately deprives women of autonomy and freedom to define themselves. Another powerful myth in social construction is about initiative and decision-making in romantic relationships, where an active role is traditionally attached to men.

Data 03 because it symbolically shatters the myth that the initiative and decisions in a romantic relationship should come from men. Traditionally, the proposal or the giving of a ring is a ritual performed by men, who are considered the main subject and determinant of the destiny of the relationship. In the myth of romantic love, women are positioned as passive objects waiting for action from men, as "*the Other*" who can only accept. However, in this quote, a female character takes over the role. Instead of waiting to be proposed or put on a ring; Instead, he takes an active action by taking a ring and putting it on himself. It was a rejection of conventional narratives and a firm statement of self-autonomy. By saying "*Yes. Come on,*" she points out that she is an equal subject, who has full rights to make decisions and participate in determining the direction of the relationship. Therefore, his actions prove that his existence is no longer determined by myths and limiting norms, but by his personal freedom and choice. In the professional and intellectual realms, myths about women also take the form of limiting stereotypes.

Data 04 creates negative stereotypes that demean women, associating ambition and intelligence (such as being a writer) with irrational or "always wrong" traits. This view places women as the incomprehensible "*Other*," where men position themselves as normative standards. This myth limits women's autonomy by depriving them of their freedom to pursue their existential projects, because their ambitions are perceived as wrong. Therefore, this social view inhibits women from being authentic and equal subjects, and justifies unfair treatment. The culmination of these myths is the construction of women's passivity in expressing feelings, which is explicitly rejected in the following data.

Data 05 quoted above is included in the existence of women based on myths because it explicitly rejects the myth about women in the realm of romance. The myth in question is the view that women must be passive, always yield, and keep their feelings in order to maintain harmony in relationships. Instead of submitting to this norm, the female character in the quote consciously and actively challenges the myth by taking control of her own narrative. LA not only demands justice, but also rejects the role of the "other" who can only wait and accept fate without a voice. This action shows that he is in the process of becoming his authentic and free self. So that by rejecting the myth of passivity, she no longer considers herself an object of male feelings, but as a subject who has the right and obligation to express her feelings. This shows that he is defining his existence through his personal actions and choices, not from shackled norms.

3.1.1 Women's Efforts to Achieve Existence by Accepting Themselves as Another Figure



In addition to direct rejection, Beauvoir, according to Rahayu, (2019) underlines another method taken by women to gain existence, namely "women's efforts to achieve existence by accepting their identity as different individuals, as well as women's actions in utilizing the recognition of themselves as true women which means recognizing themselves as others to achieve freedom." In this context, women realize that direct resistance is not always a possible or effective option in some circumstances, so it is possible to choose within the limits of social expectations to keep it safe. This choice shows an awareness of existing structural limitations, while still trying to find the space of freedom that existing social circumstances allow. Beauvoir explains that women who recognize themselves as "distinct individuals" are not always meaningful in accepting a lower position, but understand a structured reality and are determined to adapt within the system in pursuit of their respective existential projects. The following stories reflect how female characters reduce social expectations with a more flexible approach by using the roles embedded in them as a strategy to achieve existential goals without completely losing their identity. This can be seen in the following Table 4 data.

Table 4: Efforts to Achieve Existence by Accepting Yourself as Another Person

No	Quotes	Short Stories
1	<i>"I learned that not everything needs to be fought. Sometimes, by accepting what they expect of me, I actually have space to pursue more important things."</i>	<i>Dialogue At That Time</i>
2	<i>"I know how to play in their world. Not because I'm weak, but because it's my way of surviving while still being who I am."</i>	<i>Our Parts</i>
3	<i>"Maybe I can't change everyone. But I can choose which ones are worth fighting for, and which ones I'm better off letting pass."</i>	<i>Between Us Pt. 1&2</i>

Data 01 shows strategic awareness in responding to social expectations. The statement "not all things have to be fought" does not mean giving up completely, but a practical understanding that not all conflicts need to be resolved in a direct way. Beauvoir according to Rahayu (2019) posits that women can "use acceptance of themselves as a true woman" as a way to "achieve freedom." In this context, female characters realize that by "accepting what is expected of them." The term "getting the opportunity to pursue something more meaningful" is at the heart of this admissions strategy. More meaningful things could include academic development, career, or other personal goals that may be difficult to achieve if constantly engaged in social expectations. This approach reflects what Beauvoir reveals that women do not necessarily need to directly refuse to maintain their existence. In a context where patriarchal structures are very dominant and confront head-on, it can defend without losing the opportunity to achieve more significant goals. Thus, this character does not lose its existence autentiknya, but rather find an alternative path to freedom within existing Limitations.

Data 02 shows a deep awareness of gender expectations applied to women, but with a broader understanding of how to harness them. The "I know how to operate in their world" shows that these characters are not stupid or gender-conscious. On the contrary, he understands very well and makes this awareness a strategic tool. The term "play" here is very important for him to realize that the patriarchal system functions like a game with certain rules. The statement "It's not because I'm weak, but because it's my way of surviving while remaining who I am" is an important acknowledgment that distinguishes between acceptance and defeat strategies. Beauvoir explained that a woman who thinks of herself as "someone else" doesn't necessarily mean she accepts a lower position. In this context, acceptance is a survival strategy way to "survive" in a restrictive system while still taking care of oneself.

Data 03 shows a deeper understanding of women's existential struggles. The question "Maybe I can't change everyone" is an acknowledgment of the individual's limitations in the face of large and profound social structures. This is not a form of despair, but a basis for strategic wisdom. Beauvoir emphasizes that existential freedom does not necessarily mean fighting every



form of oppression at once, but rather a matter of making conscious choices about where energy and effort should be directed. The most important aspect of this information is the ability to determine which is worth fighting for and which is better left alone, which reflects maturity in distinguishing between fundamental issues and trivial issues. Not all forms of injustice should be responded to in the same way, sometimes, letting the little things pass is wiser than getting caught up in energy-consuming conflicts with no meaningful results. Beauvoir explained that not giving answers or avoiding engaging in certain patterns can be a way of rejecting the game that has been defined by the patriarchal system. By choosing the right "battle", this female figure shows control over her life she is not passive, but active in deciding when to speak and when to be silent, when to fight and when to defend. This selective strategy helps women to focus their energy on the things that are truly important to their existence, not on conflicts that do not lead to change. Therefore, "giving way" is not a symbol of defeat, but rather a clever way to maintain a focus on a more meaningful existential goal.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of the collection of short stories by Rintik Sedu through the perspective of existentialist feminism Simone de Beauvoir, this study reveals that the representation of women's existence in these short stories is manifested in three main forms: existence through nature, history, and myth. The existence of women through nature is reflected in a social construct that places the traits of patience, gentleness, and the ability to wait as attributes inherent in women, even though they are actually the result of patriarchal social formation. Existence based on history shows the awareness of female figures towards the long legacy of subordination experienced by women across generations, accompanied by a determination to break the cycle of silence and passivity that has lasted for generations.

Meanwhile, existence based on myth reveals how female characters deal with various mythological constructions that limit their freedom, such as the expectation to always prioritize the comfort of their partner, to be complementary to men, and to be passive in expressing their feelings. In an effort to achieve an authentic existence, the female characters in the short story Rintik Sedu take two different but equally meaningful paths. First, the attempt to reject oneself as another person, which is shown through actions such as demanding clarity in relationships, ending unhealthy relationships, daring to express feelings actively, setting personal boundaries, and realizing the separation of identity from one's partner.

These actions reflect the existential awareness that women are independent subjects, not merely objects or complements to male existence. Second, the effort to accept oneself as another figure, which is not a form of defeat, but a pragmatic strategy in dealing with a strong patriarchal structure. Through this approach, female characters choose to adapt selectively to social expectations while maintaining autonomy and pursuing more meaningful existential goals. This research shows that contemporary digital literature, especially Rintik Sedu's short stories, serves as an expressive space for modern women in voicing their existential experiences and struggles. Through a personal storytelling style and using everyday language, these works succeed in representing the complexity of women's struggles in finding and maintaining authentic identities in the midst of a patriarchal social structure. Thus, this research contributes to the study of existentialist feminism in Indonesian digital literature, as well as strengthens the relevance of Simone de Beauvoir's thinking in understanding the dynamics of contemporary women's existence. This research also opens up opportunities for further studies on women's representation in other digital literary platforms, as well as an in-depth exploration of how digital media expands women's access to voice their existential narratives.

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