

Analysis of Strong Female Characters in The Film *I Am Rage* (2023) Using Existentialist Feminism

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Article History:

Received: 08 Juli 2025

Revised: 31 Juli 2025

Accepted: 08 Agustus 2025

Keywords: *I Am Rage*, Strong Female Character, Feminist Studies, Existentialist Feminism, Simone de Beauvoir.

Abstract: *Existentialist feminism put forward by Simone de Beauvoir has become an important foundation in understanding the position of women in society and their representation in the media. In the context of the film I am rage (2023), this research aims to analyze strong female characters in the narrative, by applying key concepts from de beauvoir, such as 'the other' and the individual's search for freedom. The film offers a complex depiction of women's struggles and search for identity. amidst patriarchal norms. Through an analysis of the main characters, this research highlights how women are not only positioned as objects but also as active agents who confront and challenge restrictive social structures. By integrating de Beauvoir's theory, this finding suggests that despite progress in gender representation in film, the challenge of changing societal standards about women still needs to be faced. This study not only contributes to the understanding of feminism in the context of film, but also provides insight into the importance of representing women more authentically and diversely in the film industry.*

INTRODUCTION

Feminism fights for gender equality and women's rights. Feminism is a movement that aims to challenge and redress the inequalities faced by women in various aspects of life, including social, political, and economic. These ongoing challenges reflect the changing dynamics of gender relations in society. Feminism fights for women's rights and seeks to dismantle patriarchal structures that contribute to discrimination and oppression. As society evolves, the representation of women in the media, especially in film, plays an important role in shaping public perceptions of gender equality. Strong female characters in films can challenge stereotypes and inspire new narratives that can empower women. (Rahman, 2025). Existentialist feminism is that women must rise to realize their existence, reject all forms of restrictive social restrictions, and be free to choose to live according to their wishes, not others or imposed norms. They believe that this freedom carries a great responsibility to create an authentic self-identity and life (Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1949).

One influential figure in feminist thought is Simone de Beauvoir, whose influential book, *The Second Sex*, examines how a society defines womanhood. De Beauvoir argued that women are usually seen as *the Other*, defined by men, rather than as free individuals. She emphasized the importance of women asserting their identity and agency, striving for a life lived in reality and on

their terms. De Beauvoir's concept of “becoming” highlights that women must be actively involved in defining themselves, breaking away from social constraints. Her ideas provide a valuable framework for analyzing female characters in films, especially in the way they find their identities and resist oppression (Smith, 2022).

The influence of the feminist movement has been significant, leading to important changes in social attitudes and policies regarding gender equality. Feminism has raised awareness of women's rights, resulting in policy advancements such as equal pay, reproductive rights and anti-discrimination laws. In addition, feminist discourse has supported the re-evaluation of traditional gender roles, promoting the idea that men and women can share responsibilities in individual and professional life. However, challenges remain, as backlash against feminist progress often comes in many forms, including misogyny and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes. The ongoing struggle for gender equality highlights the need for continued feminist advocacy and the need for representation in the media (Thompson, 2003).

The movie *I Am Rage* (2023) is an important work that fits into feminist theory, especially in portraying strong female characters. The story focuses on women who confront and resist the patriarchal structures that seek to define and restrain them. Through their journey, the film illustrates themes of empowerment, freedom, and solidarity among women, which aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's ideas of self-definition and autonomy. The characters' struggles and successes reflect the broader feminist movement, emphasizing the importance of women's voices and experiences in contemporary storytelling. By exploring the complexities of female identity, “*I Am Rage*” contributes to the ongoing conversation about gender representation in film (Gill, 2007).

This research aims to fulfill a need in the existing literature by providing an in-depth analysis of strong female characters in the film “*I Am Rage*” through the lens of Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory. Although previous research has examined various aspects of feminist representation in film, there is a lack of focused analysis on how de Beauvoir's concept can be applied to women who are free to determine their own lives and who display strong female characters. By investigating the film's characters and their relationships, this research seeks to uncover new insights into the portrayal of women in film and its implications for feminist discourse. Ultimately, this research aims to strengthen our understanding of the relationship between feminist theory and film, particularly in the context of empowering women's narratives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Film

Film is a literary work that can be used as an entertainment medium. Movies can be something interesting to watch for everyone. Apart from being full of feelings that can be imbued and feelings that can be enjoyed, films can also have a variety of languages and cultures. A film is a record of history, knowledge, and human attitudes and behavior that is appreciated through a projector and has been shown in cinemas or on television (Ghaisani, 2020).

Intrinsic Element

Amidst the rapid development of technology and media, film as one of the oldest art forms remains a mirror of society and culture, presenting narratives that not only entertain but also trigger critical thinking. Intrinsic elements of film are the basic components that make up and influence how a film is communicated to the audience (Santoso, 2020).

Existentialist Feminism

In the context of existentialist feminist theory, especially in the thinking of Simone de Beauvoir, "I am rage" can be analyzed through a lens that can highlight women's experiences of anger that arises from a sense of injustice, and at the same time as a call to self-awareness. Women must rise from uncertainty and helplessness due to social and cultural influences, and dare to organize their lives according to their own will. existentialist principles that give freedom and full responsibility to individuals. In the book "the second sex", de Beauvoir has emphasized the importance of understanding women as subjects, not objects (Beauvoir, S. de, 1949).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

In this research, the researcher takes a formal object in analyzing the character of Erinn in the film *I Am Rage* in 2023. This method is related to the research procedure, namely the descriptive qualitative method. According to McCombes (2023), Descriptive research to describe. Qualitative research describes the collection of data and non-numerical, such as video or audio. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze strong female characters in the film "I Am Rage" (2023) through a feminist perspective simone de beauvoir. The main focus of this study is to explore how the main character, along with other female characters, are constructed in the film's narrative and how they reflect or challenge existing gender norms. Data collection methods include film text analysis, where the researcher will pay attention to dialogue, character development, and the contrast between male and female characters. In addition, the researcher will also conduct interviews with audiences to understand their reactions and interpretations of the representation of female characters in the film, thus providing a broader perspective on the resulting social impact.

In data analysis, the researcher uses open coding to identify key themes related to the representation of women, strength, and resilience. This analysis technique will help in revealing certain patterns in character depictions while linking them to modern feminist issues. The results of the study are expected to provide important contributions to film and gender studies, as well as strengthen discussions on the importance of diverse and nuanced representations of women in contemporary cinema.

Source of Data

In this chapter, the researcher explains the source of data and how the data can be collected and then analyzed by processing it. This data analysis is to change research data into very useful information to attract research. In this study, the source of data is the female characters featured in the film *I am Rage* (2023). The study focuses special attention on the main and supporting female characters, as well as their interactions with the male characters in the narrative. Aspects that will be analyzed include character development, motives, and how they face various challenges in the plot. The researcher will examine the dynamics of strength, courage, and resilience shown by the female characters, and how these elements contribute to the overall theme of feminism in the film. In addition, exploring the social and cultural context behind the characters will also be the focus of the analysis to provide a deeper understanding. In addition to the female characters, the unit of analysis also includes the narrative and visual contexts that surround these characters. The study looks at how directing, cinematography, and other visual elements shape the audience's perception of the female characters. By considering these elements, the study aims to understand how the representation of female characters can create emotional

and social impacts, as well as to explore the role of film in shaping gender norms. Thus, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of female characters in relation to the broader theme of feminism.

Data

The researcher uses the main data, such as the scenes and dialogues in the film *I am Rage* presents actors who play important roles. One of the main actors in this film is (Hannaj Bang Bendz) who plays the main female character. The duration of 1.28.10 which is too long can make the storyline feel slow. Which is in the form of quotation data in the film. Researchers also use supporting data such as the internet, dictionaries, and other literature research methodology books.



Figure 1. Poster Film

Technique of Collecting Data

Data collection techniques through the following methods:

Observation: watching the film and recording the characters of the characters in the film. The first step in data collection is to conduct a text analysis of the film "I Am Rage" (2023). The researcher watches the film in its entirety and notes key elements related to female characters, such as dialogue, interactions between characters, plot development, and the use of visual symbolism. Aspects of particular interest include the strength, empowerment, and resilience of female characters and how these elements contribute to the storytelling. This analysis will help the researcher identify emerging feminist themes and provide context for deeper interpretation of the characters.

Literature study: collecting data or information from the internet, journals and other sources related to character analysis and feminist theory in films. After conducting the film analysis, the second step is to conduct in-depth interviews with a number of viewers who have watched the film "I Am Rage." Participants will be selected using a purposive sampling technique, focusing on individuals who have insight into issues of feminism and the representation of women in film. Interview questions will be designed to explore their views on female characters, how they perceive the strength and resilience highlighted, and the emotional impact caused by the film's narrative. The data obtained from these interviews will provide additional perspectives and enrich the results of the previous analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

In this research, several main findings were discovered that directly demonstrate how Erin's character represents the concept of feminism according to Simone de Beauvoir's theory. Some

analyzed parts of the film show that Erin is not just a woman who fights physically against violence and injustice, but also displays courage and resilience that reflect women's freedom and empowerment, as explained in *The Second Sex*.

Narrative structure of the main character

This section specifically discusses the narrative structure in the main character of the film *I Am Rage*. This film shows that Erin's gentle nature turns out to be very emotional and unwilling to lose. This film not only depicts Erin's very strong nature, but also applies the composition of a film story, each character has a unique role and journey, including Erin. In the film *I Am Rage*, Erin is depicted as a figure full of courage and a big heart during an environment full of violence and uncertainty. Erin's presence brings a sense of hope and emotional strength that can give a different color to the dynamics of the story.

1. Theme

The main theme of the film *I Am Rage* is about the strength of the heart and the courage to face violence and inner trauma. This film carries the message that true strength does not only come from physical violence or the ability to hurt others, but from mental courage and determination to fight wounds, fears, and difficult circumstances that threaten one's life and mental survival. In the course of the story, the main character and Erin show that even though the world is full of violence and wounds, there is always strength in the human heart to rise and improve oneself. In addition, this film also conveys that hope and positive change are possible, as long as we have the courage to fight and uphold moral values, even in the midst of dark conditions. With this message, *I Am Rage* invites its audience not to give up on circumstances, but to be brave and continue to believe that the greatest strength lies in a brave and hopeful heart.

2. Plot

The storyline in the film *I Am Rage* has a narrative structure that shows Erin's character as she faces her opponent. Some are described as follows:

- 1) Exposition: Erin is described as a woman who has a family background and life experiences that make her a figure full of courage and empathy. Although her family background is not explained directly, from her attitude and behavior, it is clear that Erin grew up in an environment that taught her family values and courage. She plays a role as someone who is able to protect herself and those around her in difficult and violent situations.



Figure 2. Scene Exposition

- 2) Rising action: at this time erin realizes that erin used to have a very deep trauma, when erin was at her male friend's house, erin was suspicious of his very scary family, erin was afraid of experiencing something unwanted. Erin realized that her existence was part of this big conflict. There was a moment where Erin had to choose between continuing to support Adam or withdrawing for the safety of herself and others. Erin showed courage by facing danger, even when the situation endangered her life.



Figure 3. Scene Rising Action

- 3) Climax: the war had arrived, finally Erin knew Adam's true nature. Adam had intended to kill Erin and her friends, Erin immediately fought back, and Erin looked for a trick to destroy all the criminals. The conflict reached its peak when Erin had to face the bitter reality that her violence and inner wounds could not be resolved with physical strength alone. She realized that in order to rise and truly heal, she had to overcome her trauma and emotional wounds internally. Erin plays an important role as a motivator and source of strength, reminding that the power of the heart is stronger than violence.



Figure 4. Scene Climax

- 4) Resolution: in the closing scene (1:26:16 – 1:30:00), Erin has tried to help her friend when Erin and her friend Sarah are going far and want to curse first somewhere, Erin sees Sarah being shot from behind and Sarah finally dies. Erin chases this one criminal who is very dangerous, the end of this war will end, and Erin can kill the antagonist herself. Erin is very sad why Erin is the only one who survives. The main character faces the consequences of her actions, both emotionally and physically. There is a moment of introspection where Erin realizes that the violence and anger she has been holding in does not bring peace.

Meanwhile, there are also several moments where courage and strength try to be embraced as a way to overcome trauma and rise from the past.



Figure 5. Scene Resolution

3. Character

Erin's character is depicted as a very strong, brave, and determined woman. Erin is present as the main character who is able to attract attention because of her nature that does not give up easily and dares to face great risks in order to achieve her goals. Erin shows extraordinary courage and determination when facing various conflicts and threats, both from other people and difficult situations that befall her. Erin's courage is not only seen in her physical actions, but also in her mental attitude that remains focused and unwavering even when faced with pressure and injustice. Her empathy and caring nature towards the people around her makes this character feel human and relatable to the audience. Through Erin's character, this film conveys the message that women do not always have to appear weak and passive. On the contrary, women can be independent, brave, and strong in facing life's challenges. Erin's character analysis in this film shows that she is a representation of an empowered woman who is able to stand firm in a society that often places negative stereotypes on women. Thus, Erin's presence not only enriches the storyline, but also strengthens the social message about the importance of women's empowerment and that true strength does not depend on gender, but on the courage and determination of the individual.

4. Setting

The film *I Am Rage* is set in a place and time that greatly supports the tense and tense atmosphere that it wants to convey. The story in this film takes place in a dark and dangerous urban environment, with the main locations being narrow alleys, poorly lit streets, and old and run-down buildings. The use of locations like this aims to create a harsh urban atmosphere, showing a world full of violence and insecurity. In addition, shooting at night is more dominantly used to emphasize the mysterious and tense atmosphere, where dark shadows and minimal lighting strengthen the nuances of tension in each scene. The more shooting time at night also strengthens the atmosphere of the story which is full of danger and the inner conflict of the main character. This setting as a whole builds a realistic and symbolic atmosphere that the main character's world is filled with conflict and violence that is not always visible to the naked eye but greatly affects his life. With the use of strategic locations and dramatic lighting, this film is able to present a strong and consistent atmosphere that supports the story's theme of violence, courage, and struggle in an urban atmosphere full of stains and uncertainty.

Female Character Resistance is Represented in the Film *I am rage*

In the film *'I Am Rage* (2023), the courage and spirit of resistance shown by the female characters is the center of strength of this story. Erin is not just a victim, but a figure who dares to stand up and fight against all forms of violence and injustice. This resistance is not just a physical action, but also a symbol of the strength of women to stand firm and assert their rights in the midst of a world that often looks down on them."

1. Fighting physical and mental violence

Erin shows great resilience to violence both physically and mentally. Physically, Erin does not hesitate to fight the perpetrator of violence when she feels threatened. In several scenes, Erin tries to protect herself by counterattacking or trying to escape from a dangerous situation. Erin shows that women are not just victims who must remain silent, but are able to fight and fight to save themselves. In addition, Erin also shows mental strength when she remains steadfast despite experiencing a very difficult and stressful situation. Erin does not give up easily even though many things make her feel afraid and hopeless. When Erin is faced with the psychological conditions that hit her and constant threats, Erin gets up and tries to maintain her self-confidence. This courage and resilience show that Erin not only fights physically, but also psychologically, as a form of rejection of the violence that befell her. Thus, Erin becomes a symbol of a strong woman who is able to defend herself, both physically and mentally, in the face of all forms of violence and injustice.



Figure 6. Scene Of Erin Fainting When Poisoned By Adam

When Erin faints, Erin realizes when her body is tied up at **38:51 - 40:56**, when Erin realizes she sees her friend named Sarah being tied up too then Adam injures Sarah's body, Erin is really confused about how to get out of her bonds, but the criminal says,

Erin, you're awake I'm so glad

After Erin came to, Erin was very surprised to see him, then Erin said,

I told you I was in the import export business Why?

In this case, Erin is really very confused and devastated, having to think about how to get out of that place. Adam and his friend named Michael already have a plan: if they want to take Sarah and Erin's blood, they have to kill them. Adam will also immediately leave that place to find his big boss.

When he arrived at his boss's house, this scene was seen at 41:05 - 41:48, when Adam had told

his big boss that there was a new product. The so-called new product was the blood that would flow from the bodies of the two women. Then Adam met Erin and Sarah again, worried that they would run away. Adam continued to threaten Erin if she ran away, a knife was already in Adam's hand. Adam couldn't wait to get fresh blood.



Figure 7. Scene Erin will eliminate Adam

Erin removed all of her ties on Erin's body, when Adam approached Erin, Erin immediately stabbed Adam and hit Adam until he bled. Erin and Sarah managed to escape from the captivity.

2. Against the System and Social Reality

According to Beauvoir, women's struggle is not only about rights, but also about exposing norms that restrict them structurally. So, Erin who fights the system is a real picture of the feminist struggle who wants to free themselves from the shackles of patriarchy and social norms that bind them. There is a part in the film that shows Erin not only fighting enemies directly but also opposing the social structure that marginalizes certain individuals who are weaker, marginalized, or sidelined through the actions and bravery she possesses.



Figure 8. Scene Sosial Reality

In scene 1:21:16 - 1:26:05, Erin meets her final enemy, Billy. Billy hopes to completely annihilate Erin. Suddenly, on the road, Erin is driving a car and encounters Billy walking towards her. Erin thinks Billy is dead, but when she gets out of the car, she is shocked to find that Billy is still alive.

Erin said to Billy, *'Don't move.'*



Figure 9. The Scene Of Erin Killing Billy

Before long, Erin quickly eliminated Billy. After Erin was satisfied with eliminating Billy, she hurried away and reflected on herself, describing that her struggle was similar to a systemic struggle to assert rights and justice for all people, including groups that are often marginalized.

Discussion

The discussion section is to discuss the findings that have been analyzed previously by linking them to Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist theory and the formulation of the problem that has been presented in Chapter I. The main focus of this discussion is to discuss and explain how the female characters in the film *I am rage* experience various forms of patriarchal domination and how they reject or transcend this domination to achieve agency and existential freedom.

Relevance of Findings to Simone de Beauvoir's Theory and Narrative Structure

Simone de Beauvoir asserts that women in patriarchal societies are often positioned as objects of the "Other" defined relative to men, rather than as full subjects. In *I Am Rage*, Erin initially experiences marginalization through violence and intimidation directed at her, reflecting the subordinate and powerless structures experienced by many women in families and social relationships. Beauvoir's theory distinguishes two existential conditions of women, namely passive limitations and mechanisms for demanding freedom. Erin is not only passive, she uses anger as a force to assert dominance, defend herself, and redefine her position. This narrative conveys that women's emotions are not just reactions but tools of empowerment for strong female characters in other films. According to Beauvoir, women are often trapped in bad faith, giving in to patriarchal narratives to avoid anxiety about freedom. However, Erin's character defies it. Even though she has to face trauma and risk, she still chooses to act authentically and responsibly that is critical of herself, not a form of existential delivery. Beauvoir's theory emphasizes that true freedom is freedom with free will for oneself means wanting others to be free. In *I Am Rage*, Erin not only frees herself personally but also saves others from the power structure in the narrative context that women's struggles have a collective dimension, not just individual. The narrative structure of Erin's character also follows an existentialist framework, namely Erin reveals the emotional power of women as a narrative substance. Erin not only wins against lies, but builds solidarity, saves others, and changes the structure illustrating the theological narrative that women become collective subjects.

Female Character Resistance

This film is a real representation of how to fight against violence. Erin, the main character in the film *I Am Rage*, is able to fight everything without fear. This finding supports Simone de Beauvoir's view that the structure of women is able to fight for their rights and the success of the figure reflects the broader feminist movement. Erin in *I Am Rage* is not only depicted as a wounded or oppressed woman, but also as a figure who empowers herself and others through courage, determination, and anger. This is completely in line with Simone de Beauvoir's theory.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

From the analysis conducted on the main female characters in the film *I Am Rage* (2023), it is clear that this film presents women who are strong, independent, and brave enough to fight against traditional norms that usually limit their roles in society. This character reflects the image of women who are not only supporters, but also as main characters who are able to control their fate and determine their own path in life. The results of this research show that the representation of empowered women challenges gender stereotypes that are often depicted in conventional media and films. The media has tended to plot women as objects or weak figures, thus cornering women's position in the social structure. The strong female performances in this film also influence societal standards and open up discussions about the importance of gender equality. Feminist ideas are important in this context, because they fight for women's rights and freedoms to be equal to men, and reject stereotypes that limit women's roles. This film is a real example of how media works can change perceptions and fight for gender equality through more inclusive and empowering representations.

Suggestions

Based on the results of the study showing how female characters like Erin in *I Am Rage* successfully resist violence and alienation without fear, a number of recommendations need to be implemented to strengthen the representation of women in media and film. First, the film industry must actively expand the representation of strong and authentic women by presenting independent female main characters who have psychological depth, careers, and transformation narratives. One practical way is to adopt benchmarks such as the Bechdel Test: ensuring the presence of at least two named female characters who have a dialogue with each other about something other than men, although this is only an initial threshold but is important to avoid gender stereotypes and increase the substance of women's narratives.

Second, feminist education and media literacy must be strengthened from an early age. Formal curricula should include critical modules on gender representation through a transformative pedagogical approach that encourages students to critique media stereotypes and understand the social construction of gender. In addition, training for teachers and educators is essential to facilitate gender-responsive discussions in the classroom.

Third, the role of media as agents of social change must be optimized. Media and film have the power to shape gender norms and global cultural values. Therefore, narrative campaigns and educational content are needed, such as activities initiated through the documentary *Miss Representation*, to change public perceptions of women and raise awareness of equality issues. In addition, media institutions should implement gender mainstreaming policies, such as quotas for women in editorial leadership and content standards that support gender equality.

By implementing these steps, namely presenting transformative representations of women,

providing feminist education and media literacy, and applying the role of media as a social catalyst, a cultural structure can be created that facilitates women to become full agents in public narratives. In this way, Simone de Beauvoir's theory of women who actively transcend subordinate conditions and fight for personal and collective freedom can be realized in real terms, not only on screen but also in social practices and everyday policies.

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