

THE MAIN THEMES AND STYLISTIC FEATURES IN
ADRIENNE RICH'S THREE RECENT BOOKS

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ÖZET

Bu araştırma Adrienne Rich'in *Diving into The Wreck*, *Dream of a Common Language* ve *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far* başlıklı üç şiir kitabında ele aldığı konuları ve şairin stil özelliklerini incelemektedir. İnceleme sonucunda şairin başlıca ilgi odaklarının ataerkil düzen ve kadının bu düzen içerisindeki yeri, kadınların kimlik arayışları ve birbirleriyle olan ilişkileri, tarihte yer alan adı bilinmeyen veya bilinmeyen kadınların gün ışığına çıkarılması ve başarılarının değerlendirilmesi, şu anda yaşayan kadınlarla geçmişteki kadınların bütünleştirilmesi konularının olduğu bulunmuştur. Stil özellikleri arasında, dilin yalın ve doğrudan kullanımı, bilinçli olarak sıfat ve zarf kullanımından kaçınılması, şimdiki zaman ve geçmiş zaman ortaçlarının oldukça sık kullanımı, şiir dilinden yazı diline geçiş, noktalama işaretlerinin kullanılmaması, bunun yerine kelimeler ve dizeler arasındaki boşlukların özel bir şekilde düzenlenmesi dikkati çekmektedir.

SUMMARY

This research analyses the themes and the stylistic features in three of Adrienne Rich's recent books titled *Diving into the Wreck*, *Dream of a Common Language* and *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*. As a result of this research it is found out that the main concerns of the poet are the patriarchal system and the place of women in it, women's search for identity and relationships among women, bringing to light the known and unknown women in history and celebrating their achievements, and relating the women of the past and present. Among her stylistic features, the striking ones are: unornamented and direct use of language, avoidance of adjectives and adverbs, her abundant use of present and past participles, shift from poetic language to prosaic language, abandonment of punctuation marks, and a special arrangement of space between words and lines instead.

The most important achievement of the woman writers in literature is to make us see what women really feel and experience. As a result of the limited roles women have played in the literary history, we can learn only what men have thought of women should be, should think and should feel. For a long period in the literary history the works of woman writers have been criticised according to the standards put by male critics; and the ones which fit into these standards have been labelled as good works of literature and the

others have been discarded as rubbish. Only with the rise of the feminist movement and the feminist criticism it is realized that these differences scorned by male authorities establish the milestones of literature created by woman writers. For this reason the achievement of women as artists should not be evaluated according to set standards, but they should be studied as they are, only to find out the differences they put forth. While studying a woman writer it should always be kept in mind that the acceptance of women artists is relatively new, and that many woman writers are still passing through the process of stripping themselves off the male standards in literature. Therefore, every achievement of woman writers cannot be accepted as a unique characteristic of women writing, as it can normally be the result of the artistry established by men throughout centuries.

The number of woman writers who awaken to the reality of their true identities and their capacities is so few that they find themselves lonely in their achievement. Adrienne Rich, who is one of the important leading poets in the feminist literature explains this loneliness as a result of early awakening:

If I'm lonely
It must be the loneliness
of waking first, of breathing
dawn's first cold breath in the city
of being the one awake
In a house wrapped in sleep. (1)

This loneliness doesn't make her frightened or hopeless because she knows that this loneliness is temporary and about to end. She knows that she has the capacity of melting the ice that causes her loneliness; her loneliness is in the "last red light of the year": However, Rich's awakening isn't achieved quickly. It is the outcome of a long physical and artistic struggle extending nearly 20 years. When she starts writing poetry as a young girl, she is praised by authorities for her great ability in craftsmanship and in imitating the male masters of poetry. As her woman identity is completely hidden, she is, in those years, a conventional poet both in themes and form. Throughout these twenty years she undergoes the awakening process through which she finds her real identity as a woman and her language and craft as a woman artist. Every step of this process is mirrored in her poems. In her poem "Incipience" she explains, "... I write out my life / hour by hour, word by word".

At the beginning of her struggle she likens herself to "a naked man fleeing across the roofs". When compared with the other woman and woman writers, her concerns are completely different and strange. Besides, her own former training in the family and her school education help her in no way in her non-conformist struggle, "... even / my tools are the wrong ones / for what I have to do". (2)

In time she comes to such a point in her career that she is ready to destroy the obstacles on her way if she hasn't got the right tools to overcome them. In the following poem, she openly declares that she is ready to use an axe to break open the door if she hasn't got the right key to open it:

Trying every key in the bunch to get the door even ajar
not knowing whether it's locked or simply jammed from long disuse
trying the keys over and over then throwing the bunch away
starring around for an axe
wondering if the world can be changed like this
If a life can be changed like this. (3)

(1) Adrienne Rich, *Diving into the Wreck*, W.W Norton (New York-1973) "Song"

(2) Adrienne Rich, *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-law*, Poems 1954-1962, Harper and Row (New York-1963)

(3) Adrienne Rich, *Poems Selected and New 1950-1974*, W.W. Norton (New York-1975), "Tear Gas"

ripples from my body
 effortlessly released
 perfectly trained
 the true enemy
 raking his body down to the thread
 of existence
 burning away his life
 leaving him in a new
 world; a changed
 man. (11)

In the eighth part of this poem she tells her wish of living in a world of "women and men gaily", but realizing the impossibility of this, she confesses in part nine that she never felt love towards men, "The only love I have ever felt / was for children and other women." (12)

In the tenth and last part of the same poem, she uses a very common metaphor of travelling. There are passengers on a subway to Brooklyn, some of them are sleeping, some are sitting and watching while some are trying hard planning rebellions. Rich herself is among the third group. In her journey of life she stays wide awake, always full of plans to find a way to get out of the prison that limits her.

Adrienne Rich is angry with men because of his violence and blood-shed. In "Waking in the Dark" she accuses men of his obsession with blood:

You worship the blood
 you call it hysterical bleeding
 you want to drink it like milk
 you dig your finger into it and write
 you faint at the smell of it
 you dream of dumping me into the sea. (13)

In the same poem she helplessly admits that the gap between men and women is inevitable and irrecoverable, the two sexes are in a war, "... the axes are sharpened for..." fighting (14). She believes that women will be victorious at the end of this war because it is almost the end of the man's world, men themselves have prepared the end of their own world, "...A man's world. But finished. / They themselves have sold it to the machines." (15). Rich knows she is not alone in her anger towards men. In "Translations" she tells that the other women all over the world share same feelings with her towards men:

You show me the poems of some woman
 my age, or younger
 translated from your language
 Certain words occur: enemy, oven, sorrow
 enough to let me know
 she's woman of my time (16)

The fact that men are not aware of what they are doing increases Rich's anger. They are asleep and they dream of women in their sleep. Their greatest illusion is that they believe women are as they dream of

(11) Ibid. Part 6

(12) Ibid. Part 9

(13) Ibid. "Waking in the Dark", Part 2

(14) Ibid. Part 3

(15) Ibid.

(16) Ibid. "Translations"

them as sex symbols, as a prey to be hunted. But as they are happily sleeping and dreaming, they fail to realize that women, on the other hand, are coming together and trying hard to climb out of this danger:

A man is asleep in the next room
We are his dreams
we have the heads and breasts of women
the bodies of birds of prey
Sometimes we turn into silver serpents
While we sit up smoking and talking of how to live
he turns on the bed and murmurs
.....
Outside the frame of his dream we are stumbling up the hill
hand in hand, stumbling and guiding each other
over the scarred volcanic rock (17)

Among the remarkable metaphors which enrich the meaning of the poem are: a sleeping man, the bodies of bird of prey, silver serpents, the black pool and the scarred volcanic rock.

The anger Rich feels growing in her helps her see things more clearly and make her more determined and active in her war against men. In her poem "The Stranger", after explaining how anger "cleansed" her sight, she calls the language a dead one, and by using the parts of the speech as a metaphor, she tells she is "the verb surviving in the Infinitive" (18) meaning that she exists only to act.

Her anger towards men opens her eyes to reality, and she gives up crying and complaining, she starts using her eyes not for weeping but for seeing the reality. The reality she sees is the fact that she is in a prison-house. In her poem "From the Prison House" her awakening is described:

Underneath my lids another eye has opened
it looks nakedly
at the light
that soaks in from the world of pain
even when I sleep
steadily it regards
everything I'm going through
This eye
is not for weeping
its vision must be unblurred
though tears are on my face
its intent is clarity
it must forget
nothing. (19)

Rich is aware that the anger she feels is a proof of the fact that she still has the capacity to feel, which is one of the main characteristics of being human. She realizes that "in a world masculinity made unfit for women and men" many human beings have lost their ability to feel neither love nor hatred nor guilt. Numbing of the feelings means the end of humanity: Rich observes loneliness as the inevitable fate of

(17) Ibid. "Incipience", Part 2

(18) Ibid. "The Stranger"

(19) Ibid. "From the Prison House"

women, and this fact stirs her anger. In many lines in *Diving into the Wreck* loneliness is a recurring theme. In "After Twenty Years" she discusses the loneliness of women from a different perspective. According to her, women can also be blamed for their loneliness because they have not learned to come together and share their loneliness with other women; they keep themselves apart in their separate rooms:

Two women in the prime of life
their babies are old enough to have babies
Loneliness has been part of their story for twenty years.

.....

It is strange to be so many women
eating and drinking at the same table,
those who bathed their children in the same basin
who kept their secrets from each other walked the floors of their lives in separate rooms. (20)

Not only are women lonely, they are also "lost" and "dazed". The reason of Rich's being lost and dazed is the war she is in but she is not used to. She feels and she walks in "the unconscious forest" being dressed in "old army fatigue" (21). Rich feels obliged to know the consequences of her struggle towards men, to know what this will mean to them. Yet she knows she won't be able to cease her struggle even if it means complete destruction to men, for she can no longer accept to share the same nightmares with men who have very simple minds:

If I am death to men
I have to know it
His mind is too simple, I cannot go on sharing his nightmares
My own are becoming clearer, they open
prehistory (22)

Rich has no hope of a positive relationship between men and women. With this preoccupation in mind she evaluates her own marriage in "From a Survivor" long after her husband's death. She admits that both she and her husband were mistaken in thinking that they could overcome the long-established obstacles between sexes. They couldn't realize that it was beyond their power to "resist the failures of the race" and they "thought of themselves [ourselves] as special" (23).

Rich's anger towards men also helps her in another important matter. It forces her to search her true identity. This search constitutes the central theme of the title-poem of *Diving into the Wreck*. In fact, Rich has been involved in the theme of "search for identity" for a long time; it is one of the recurring themes of her earlier books. "Diving into the Wreck" is an allegory in which a diver dives into the sea to find a wreck, to see how badly it is damaged and what remained of it. Before she starts diving she is obsessed with the old myths, but when she arrives at the wreck, she decides to get rid of the old myths to be able to see the reality, "... the thing I came for / the wreck and not the story of the wreck / the thing itself and not the myth" (24).

Freeing herself of the myths, she watches the wreck carefully and is able to make a discovery about its essence. As the purpose of this dive is to find her true identity she must find out what she really is. And she does it. As a result of this diving, she comes to the conclusion that she is the androgyne, "...And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair / streams black, the merman in his armored body" (25)

(20) Ibid. "After Twenty Years"

(21) Ibid. "Waking in the Dark", Part 3

(22) Ibid. "August"

(23) Ibid. "From a Survivor"

(24) Ibid. "Diving into the Wreck"

(25) Ibid

This is the last poem she discusses what she really is as an individual woman. After this stage she is satisfied with the fulfilment of her personality, and she turns her focus on creating a new collective myth for women by " mining the earth deposits" in other words by studying the lives of women in history.

While studying the poems about famous women in *Dream of a Common Language*, it should be remembered that Rich's concern with famous women portraits doesn't start with this book. Since her first volume, *A Change of World* (1951) and throughout the fifties and sixties she has given us images of individual women - Emily Dickinson, Russian poet Natalya Gorbanevskaya, astronomer Caroline Herschel. These are strong women in history who made great achievements, but often in isolation and at the cost of misinterpretation and actual physical threat. In some cases Rich gratefully identifies with those women, finding in them the sisters and models who have lifted her from estrangement as a woman and as a poet. She celebrates their achievements against great difficulties. With *The Dream of a Common Language*, although she continues to write poems about individual women achievements, she often shows these women in relationship with other woman who helps make possible their achievement. In an interview Rich expresses this tendency in her saying, "It's not as interesting to me to explore the condition of alienation as a woman as it is to explore the condition of connectedness as a woman"

The very first line of the first poem in *The Dream of a Common Language* reveals Rich's main concern in this book, that is searching the earth deposits of our history to create a myth for women, and "Living in the earth deposits of our history." The title of this poem which is about Madame Curie is "Power", and it also implies how Rich sees women as a symbol of power not weakness. The power Curie has causes her death. As she doesn't know the exact nature of the power she has, she doesn't know how to use and control it. This is an indirect warning to women to be masters of their power not to be destroyed by it.

The second poem in this book is about Elvira Shatayev, the leader of a women's climbing team, all of whom died in a storm, on Lenin Peak, August 1974. One expects the tone of this poem to be pessimistic but it is surprisingly optimistic. This optimism stems from the fact that Rich has finally found a cure to the loneliness women suffer. As it is impossible to establish a happy and healthy relationship between men and women, women should have close relationship among themselves. The possibility of strong and intimate ties among women and their sharing each other's world lessens the tension of anger which she feels:

... I have never loved
like this I have never seen
my own forces so taken up and shared
and given back
After the long training the early sieges
are moving almost effortlessly in our love (26)

Unlike the self-sacrificing love traditionally expected of women as wives and mothers, this love is united with power. With the self-affirmation and achievement those women experience, it is the end of the walls among women. As their separateness is over, the danger that threatens them is over, the danger that threatens them is over, too, "We know we have always been in danger / down in our separateness / and now up here together but till now" (27)

Once tasting the pleasure of coming together and being a single body, they can't turn back to their previous misery. Their pulling down the barriers among them, their learning to love each other is much more valuable than the question of survival. By depicting the women's coming together Rich creates an optimistic poem out of the pathetic death of Elvira Shatayev and her eight friends. Despite the team's

(26) Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language: Poems 1974-1977* New York: W.W. Norton, 1978, "Phantasia for Elvira Shatayev"

(27) Ibid.

..... Sometimes I feel,
 it is myself that kicks inside me,
 myself I must give suck to, love...
 I wish we could have done this for each other
 all our lives, but we can't... (32)

"Paula Becker to Clara Westhoff" has many similarities with "Phantasia for Elvira Shatayev". Both poems present women supporting each other in ways they are not supported in traditional heterosexual relationships. Exploring their history, Rich shows the potential for transformation of women's lives through connections made among women. Both poems are examples of "revolutionary poetry. As opposed to merely political poetry, these poems move beyond exploration, criticism and analysis to suggest alternatives to currently existing social structures and personal relationships" (33).

The revolutionary themes of these poems are supported by the revolutionary forms of them. Rich abandons the use of punctuation marks; she uses space between sentences and lines instead. She also uses space between the words within the same line or within the same sentence. This gives a fragmentary quality to her poetry. Rich is a poet of brilliant fragmentary particularities; these discontinuities give her poems an intensity. Reading her poems involves deciphering and interpreting their gaps.

Within *The Dream of A Common Language* Rich's exploration of women's history from poems focussing on the individual, named women shifts to those focussing on unnamed ordinary women or groups of women. "Natural Resources" and "To a Poet" are two poems that include vivid images of the ordinary women whose daily work has kept in the past and continues today to keep life going. In "To a Poet" Rich describes how women are locked into non-creativity by the domestic work at home, how they are exploited by love, and how the artist in her is wasted by the daily routine. The juxtaposition of the image of ice forming in winter and of the image of women's daily struggle with devouring housework suggests that the creative energy in women is frozen due to daily domestic routine. At the end of "Natural Resources" she feels for those women many of whom have been destroyed. Yet, those women, although they are forgotten and worn-out, go on reconstituting the world:

My heart is moved by all I cannot save:
 so much has been destroyed
 I have to cast my lot with those
 who age after age, perversely,
 with no extraordinary power
 reconstitute the world. (34)

"Sibling Mysteries" is essentially a working-out in poetry of the analysis of mother-daughter relationship. Rich gives glimpses of ordinary women during pre-patriarchal history, a time when she imagines women were strong, and experienced positive bonds with just each other. She juxtaposes images of strength and connectedness with images of separation under patriarchy. "Sibling Mysteries" is a fairly long poem broken into six Chronological sections. The first section is a string of demands that reach all the way back into history. She demands her sister to remind her of the prehistoric times when they carried their "children on our [their] backs", and when "they [we] traced their [our] signs by torchlight" (35). She asks her sister to help her remember herself as a part of a women's tradition that stretches back to the primordial. She asks the sister to help her recall the deeds of their foremothers, as bearers of life, as thieves of fire, as makers of utensils and art.

(32) Ibid.

(33) Marianna Whelchel, "Mining the Earth-Deposits". "The Evolution of Adrienne Rich as Feminist Poet", Diss., University of Connecticut, 1977. p.157

(34) Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language*, "Natural Resources"

(35) Ibid. "Sibling Mysteries", Part I

failure to actually reach their goal, and despite their goal, and despite their consequent deaths, Rich celebrates their attempt as representative of the achievement possible for women in community.

Rich writes "Hunger" for Audre Lord, a close friend of her, and a famous contemporary poet. In this poem she argues that one of the greatest faults in women's relationship with each other is their fear of being closely in touch with them. This fear causes their eternal loneliness. There is only one stopping this loneliness, and it is to break the barriers between women both physically and psychologically:

..... We shrink from touching
our power, We shrink away, we starve ourselves
and each other, we're scared shitless
of what it could be to take and use our love,
hose it on a city, on a world
to wield and guide its spray, destroying
poisons, parasites, rats, viruses-
like terrible mothers we long and dread to be
.....
The passion to be inscribes her body.
Until we find each other we are alone. (28)

The metaphor of washing the city with their love is a very rich comparison. They could well destroy all the ills in the city with the power of their love which exists in abundance.

"Paula Becker to Clara Westhoff" is based on the relationship between the too-little known painter Modersohn-Becker and her even lesser-known sculpture friend. The poem begins with an epigraph that identifies them, gives the dates of their lives, and explains that before their marriages the two women had lived and worked together in Paris and Bremen; the epigraph ends pitying Paula who married the painter in Otto Modersohn who died in a hemorrhage after childbirth-murmuring "...what a pity!" (29). The poem itself is cast as a letter written by Becker after her marriage in which she tells her friend about her pregnancy, her wish not to have a child at that time, and her fears of what a child's birth may mean to her work as an artist:

I want a child maybe, someday, but not now.
.....
And yes. I will; this child will be mine
not his, the failures, if I fall
will be all mine. We're not good Clara,
at learning to prevent these things, (30)

Writing the poem as a letter enables Rich to use Paula Becker as a mouth piece for some of her central themes, such as the particular difficulties of the female artist and the way patriarchy defines marriage and motherhood, and the way it gives love and nurturance to woman, power and creativity to men. The wife nurtures not only the children, but her husband as well. In reference to Clara's marriage, Paula points out how a male artist profits through marriage while the female artist is exploited, "... But he feeds on us, / like all of them. His whole life, his art / is protected by women. Which of us would say that?" (31)

She admits to Clara her own need for the support that women traditionally provide for others, and suggests that in a continued relationship between them they might have provided it for each other:

(28) Ibid. "Hunger"

(29) Ibid. "Paula Becker to Clara Westhoff"

(30) Ibid.

(31) Ibid.

The second section of the poem compares all female relationships across the ages. The reminder here is not only of a collective past but of a simultaneous present. This second section like the first section is written in unrhymed triplets, which perhaps mirror the triune of relationship of the mother to her daughters:

Remind me how we loved our mother's body
our mouths drawing the first
thin sweetness from her nipples
our faces dreaming hour on hour
In the salt smell of her lap Remind me
how her touch melted childgrief
how she floated great and tender in our dark
or stood guard over us
against our willing (36)

Rich asks her sister to recall their original relationship with their mother. She needs to be reminded of this early close relationship because it is explained in the rest of this section, it was quickly made taboo as the daughters were required to accept their mother's primary allegiance to their father. In this part, the mother's relationship to the father provides the essential conflict. Rich recalls her own memories of that painful moment when her mother's love was diverted by the "law" when:

and how we thought she loved
the strange male body first
that took, that took, whose taking seemed a law
and how she sent us weeping
into that law (37)

The daughter is taught by the mother to forget her connection with the female in herself and her mother, because it is the law, and in learning to live within the law, the daughter is trained not only to forget but also deny that a female connection existed at all. At the end of the second section Rich asks her sister to confirm this; "I know, I remember, but / hold me, remind me / of how her women's flesh was made taboo to us" (38).

Sections three and four place their personal estrangement from their mother in the context of women's history in various cultures under patriarchy. Rich suggests through vivid images and direct statements how this estrangement occurs, how it is built into patriarchal law and ceremonies. These sections emphasize male domination and devaluation of women:

... and how beneath
the strange male bodies
we sank in terror or in resignation
and how we taught them tenderness-
...
and how we ate and drank
their leavings, how we served them
in silence, how we told
among ourselves our secrets, wept and laughed
passes bark and root and berry
from hand to hand, whispering each one's power

(36) Ibid. Part 2

(37) Ibid.

(38) Ibid.

washing the bodies of the dead
making celebrations of doing laundry
piecing our lore in quilted galaxies
how we dwelt in two worlds
the daughters and mothers
in the kingdom of the sons (39)

Women are taught to deny the source of their knowledge with men and to refuse the benefits of their knowledge to each other. After sketching the difficulties a woman faces, and the injustices she undergoes, she outlines what must be done in the last two sections. She describes the attempt to connect with the female as analogous to her own attempt to connect with her sister. No longer needing to be reminded, she chooses to remind her sister of their original connection. She evokes first the memory of the night of their father's death when they began to break down the barriers that divided them. That night she and her sister burned their childhood, that period of their lives when they were governed by the law. There are minor differences between them such as one's hair being longer or shorter than the other's, but these differences are nothing when compared with the essential experiences they have in common. The most important one of them is the fact that they were born of the same woman, "driven down the same dark canal" (40).

In the last section of the poem, there are images suggesting that women's intuitive knowledge and potential power could be subversive if brought into the open. Rich concludes the poem by stating what she herself has learned through the course of the poem and she celebrates her current unity with both her mother and sister:

The daughters never were
true brides of the father
the daughters were to begin with
brides of the mother
then brides of each other
under a different law
Let me hold and tell you (41)

Having broken through the laws and language of the fathers to a more fundamental and different law of the mother, Rich proposes a code of primary bonding between women. This is a law that designates them first "brides of the mother" then "brides of each other". Thus Rich puts forth a prototype of sisterhood. Sisterly relationships between women-as friends, lovers, siblings, and daughters of the She- are dominant features of Rich's female country.

By bringing to light the lives and struggles of those named and unnamed women, and by analysing the matriarchal societies Rich makes a giant stride in realizing her aim for writing the poems in this book, which is creating a common language for women as it is stated in "Origins and History of Consciousness"

No one lives in this room
without confronting the whiteness of the walls
behind the poems, planks of books,
photographs of dead heroines
without contemplating past and late
the true nature of poetry. The drive
to connect. The dream of a common language. (42)

(39) Ibid. Part 3

(40) Ibid. Part 5

(41) Ibid. Part 6

(42) Ibid. "Origins of History and Consciousness"

Rich's next book *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far* (1981) is an extension of her themes in her previous book, *Dream of Common Language*. In this new book her achievement in the previous one to bring to light all women heroes is accompanied by her attempt to combine all women all over the world and past and present. She is aware that she has undergone great changes and that she accomplished great achievements since the beginning of her concern in woman affairs. She is happy and satisfied with the complete integrity within herself, between herself and the other women, among women all over the world, and between the women in history and the women of the present time. In her poem "Integrity" she first gives the dictionary meaning of integrity, "the quality or state of being complete; unbroken condition; entirety-Webster". (43) and then gives the story of her adventure by using the metaphor of an oarboat which moves forward with great difficulty, necessitating great effort. She also adds that her achievement is not appreciated.

In this poem Rich achieves psychic wholeness, not through repression, but by confronting the widest possible range of her feelings. As she accepts diversity in nature, she is able to accept the complexity of her emotions and experience:

Anger and tenderness: my selves
and now I can believe they breathe in me
as angels, not polarities.
Anger and tenderness: the spider's genius
to spin and weave in the same action
from her own body, anywhere-
even from a broken web. (44)

In "Culture and Anarchy" she uses excerpts from the diaries, letters and speeches of Susan B. Anthony, Ida Husted Harper, Jane Addams, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Her aim is to draw portraits of these women whose struggles for the equality of women have been so far overlooked. Susan B. Anthony's lines taken from *Diaries of Susan B. Anthony* portray a woman who tries not to lose contact with her intellectual and literary concerns although she is confined to the private sphere of domesticity. Rich's skill in adjusting juxtapositions is clearly seen in this poem. The struggle of Tubman for the emancipation of slaves is juxtaposed with the women's struggle for freedom. And also the juxtaposition of Mrs. Browning's poem titled "Casa Guidi Windows" with Susan Anthony's memories of washing every window in the house is delicately fitted.

The second quotation taken from Ida Husted Harper's *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* is about the Bronte sisters, and it depicts the limitations imposed on their literary achievements, "A most sad day it was to me / ...How much the world of literature has lost / because of their short and ill-enviored lives." (45). The next quotation is taken from Jane Addams, and expresses her will to live fully by refusing to "be content with a shadowy intellectual or aesthetic reflection" (46). The next one is a letter from Elizabeth Barrett to Anna Jameson. These lines encourage women to take active part in social and political matters such as slavery. Otherwise, they themselves will be yoked by it. If they avoid participation in such questions, they have not right in having place among thinkers and speakers.

While Rich is going on with her excavating in the earth deposits of the past to search "the shadows", she comes across:

Matilda Joselyn Gage; Harriet Tubman;
Ida B. Wells-Barnett; Maria Mitchell;

(43) Adrienne Rich, *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far: Poems 1978-1981*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1981, "Integrity"

(44) Ibid.

(45) Ibid. "Culture and anarchy"

(46) Ibid.

Anna Howard Shaw; Sojourner Truth;
Elizabeth Cady Stanton; Harriet Hosmer;
Clara Barton; Harriet Beecher Stowe;
Ida Husted Harper; Ernestine Rose

and all those without names
because of their short and ill envired lives (47)

These names constitute a part of "THE HISTORY OF HUMAN SUFFERING", "THE HISTORY OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE". Ida Husted Harper in the introduction to Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper in *The History of Woman Suffrage* states that this movement was unnoticed and greatly misinterpreted:

of a movement
for many years unnoticed
of greatly misinterpreted in the public press
its records usually not considered
of sufficient value to be
officially preserved (48)

This is the history of human suffering "borne, tended, soothed, cauterized, stanchd, cleansed, absorbed, endured by women"; Rich then changes the preposition "its" and uses "our" to show her complete identification with the movement and says, "Our records usually not considered / of sufficient value to be / officially preserved." (49) The next quotation is taken from Elizabeth Cady Stanton's speech "On Solitude of Self". She expresses the necessity of giving women a higher education to ensure the full development of her forces of the mind and the body. Only by means of education they can achieve complete freedom of thought and action; only by means of higher education women can get rid of disabling influences of fear. Therefore, women should struggle to get higher education. The last quotation is from a letter written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony. This letter asserts Stanton's celebration of their unity. Elizabeth admits that she longs for Susan. Their unity is complete as they are one in work, in aim and in sympathy. All these quotations are scattered in the long poem "Culture and Anarchy" in which past and present are interwoven. Rich also provides a feminist alternative to the puritan alternative to tame and control nature in the name of God's elect. A tribute to generativity, and to the life cycle which includes death as well as birth and growth; this poem sustains the lyrical celebration of nature.

In "For Julia in Nebraska" Willa Cather and the characters and the scenery in her novels are described. At the beginning of the poem, there is an entry in prose about Willa Cather and her works:

Here on the divide between the Republican and Little Blue Lived some of the most courageous people of the frontier. Their fortunes and their loves live again in the writings of Willa Cather, the daughter of the plains and interpreter of man's growth in these fields and in the valleys beyond.(50)

On this beautiful, ever-changing land, man fought to establish a home. In her vision of the plow against the sun, symbol of the beauty and importance of work, Willa Cather caught the eternal blending of earth and sky. Rich is greatly affected by Willa Cather. She also realizes that she can, in a way, communicate with her. By means of this wonderful communication between herself and Willa Cather, Rich establishes a unity among all the women in the past and present.

As it is not easy to be a thinking woman now, it wasn't easy for Willa Cather either. She also suffered

(47) Ibid.

(48) Ibid.

(49) Ibid.

(50) Ibid. "Julia in Nebraska"

from the conflict between the domestic duties of a woman and her intellectual necessities. Willa Cather is one of these women who suffer from this conflict, but she is determined not to give in:

I call you in Nebraska
hear you're planting your garden
sending and oiling a burl of wood
hear in your voice the intention to
survive the long war between mind and body
and we make a promise to talk
this year, about growing older. (51)

The image of a grandmother's plaiting her grand-daughter's hair is repeated both at the beginning and at the end of the poem. A braid of hair is made by weaving together separate parts of hair. Likewise all women in history are united. It is like an unbroken line from grandmothers to granddaughters:

In the Midwest of Willa Cather
the railroad looks like braid of hair
a grandmother's strong hands platted
straight down a grand-daughter's back.
... ..
to outlast the iron road
laid out in blood across the land they called virgin-
nets, strands, a braid of hair
a grandmother's strong hands platted
straight down a grand-daughter's back. (52)

Her occupation of mind with the idea of an unbroken line is given by means of railroad metaphor. The same occupation to unite the grandmothers and the grand-daughters leads to poems like "Grandmothers" and "Mother-in-Law". "Grandmothers" consists of three parts: "Mary Gravely Jones", Rich's maternal grandmother; "Hattie Rice Rich", her paternal grandmother; and "Granddaughter" which must be Rich herself. The first lines of the part about the maternal grandmother reveal that she is not warmly welcomed in the house of Mr. Rich; and a few lines later it is told that Mr. Rich doesn't appreciate her, he even doesn't listen to her. Although Mary Jones is not given much importance in Mr. Rich's house, she is a brilliant person, she is quite good at poetry. If she hadn't married early and devoted to domestic domain, she could have ended a good writer:

You could quote every poet I have ever heard of,
had read the Oplum Eater, Amlel and Bernard Shaw,
your green eyes looked clenched against opposition.
You married straight out of the convent school,
your background was country, you left an unperformed
typescript of a play about Burr and Hamilton,
you were impotent and brilliant, no one cared
about your mind, you might have ended
elsewhere than in that glider
reciting your unwritten novels to the children. (53)

The heroine of the second part of the poem is Hattie Rice Rich, who is a sweet soul living half of the year with her son, and the other half with her daughter. The fact that she is homeless after her husband's

(51) Ibid.

(52) Ibid.

(53) Ibid. "Grandmothers", Part 1

death and she has to travel between her daughter and her son saddens her. It is implied that neither of them is willing to live with their mother throughout the year. She is lowered to that situation although she has her own income. This quiet, sweet soul, like an unwanted parcel, is dispersed among her children and grandchildren.

In the last part of the poem Rich includes herself to formulate the triangle of herself and her grandmothers. She admits that she suffers from estrangement as "a white woman, Jewish or of curious mind" (54), that she is broken into two by one strange idea. Rich's commitment to excavate the experience of a young black woman who is arrested, jailed and beaten in Boston. Her only guilt is to wait for a bus during a snow-storm in the lobby of a newly constructed building. Rich relates the event as if she were present there. It is impossible for her to be physically present there at the scene, but she claims she bears witness to the event:

... I don't know her. I am
standing though somewhere just outside the frame
of all this, trying to see...

...
... what I am telling you
is told by a white woman who they will say
was never there. I say I am there. (55)

In "For Ethel Rosenberg" she tells the tragedy of a woman "convicted, with her husband, of conspiracy to commit espionage" (56); killed in the electric chair June 19, 1953. The end of Ethel Rosenberg is tragic, but to Rich what makes this event unbearably tragic is the fact that women close to Ethel did not help her in any way. On the contrary, they give testimony against her.

Rich includes also the Hopi and Navaho women into her great effort of uniting all women all over the world, past and present:

I try to imagine a desert shamaness
bringing water to fields of squash, maize and cotton
but where the desert herself in half-eroded
half-flooded by a million jets of spray
to conjure a rich white man's paradise
the shamaness could well have withdrawn her ghost (57)

All these poems show that bearing witness to the lost lives of women past and present in a world that has been used by patriarchal exploitation has been one of the major themes of Adrienne Rich's recent poetry. She believes that she must remember all the facts from the lost collections and put them together to achieve complete freedom for women:

Freedom. It isn't once, to walk out
under the Milky Way, feeling the rivers
of light, the fields of dark-
freedom is daily, prose bound routine remembering. Putting together, inch by inch
the starry worlds. From all the lost collections.(58)

As it is analysed in this research Adrienne Rich, in these three books, *Diving into the Wreck*, *Dream*

(54) Ibid: Part 3

(55) Ibid. "Frame"

(56) Ibid. "For Ethel Rosenberg"

(57) Ibid. "Turning the Wheel", Part III

(58) Ibid. "For Memory"

of a Common Language, and A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far, is concerned with feminist issues among which are anger towards men, patriarchal order, exploitation of women in this system, possibilities of uniting the strength of women for changing the present system, the possibility of women communities search for identity, a new myth for women by excavating the earth deposits and bringing to light the lives of known and unknown women in history, uniting all the women in the world past and present in an unbroken line.

These revolutionary themes are accompanied with the unique style of Rich in which the main characteristics are her direct and unornamented language, her conscious avoidance of adjectives and adverbs, her abundant use of present and past participles, her shift to prosaic form, her abandonment of punctuation marks and her using space instead, the compatibility between the arrangement of the lines and the themes.

These three books written in Rich's maturity both in life and literature show her as a woman and an artist who has fully achieved her feminine identity and whose main purpose of writing is to contribute to the feminist movement. To put an end to the victimization of women she uses her creative power and her pen as an effective weapon.

KAYNAKLAR

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