

## The Poetics of Time and Body in Adrienne Rich's Selected Poems

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الملخص

لقد تعرضت ظاهرتي الزمن والجسد في شعر ما بعد الحداثة الى فعل التهميش، حيث لم يسלט النقاد والباحثون الضوء على عملية التشعير في هاتين الظاهرتين في الفضاء الشعري. يتناول هذا البحث شاعرية الزمن والجسد في قصائد أدريان ريتش المختارة: "ورقة النهاية" و"أغسطس" و"البداية" و"التناقضات" و"الاغتصاب" و"الغوص في الحطام". تتبنى مفاهيم البحث ما بعد الحداثة في الزمن والجسد. تناول البحث مسألة الزمن في قصائد "ريتش" من منظور نفسي بوصفها حياة معاشة. أما مسألة الجسد، فتم دراستها من خلال الإشارة إلى الهوية الثقافية النسوية الطوباوية للشاعرة. تخلص الدراسة بشكل عام إلى أن قصائد ريتش تخلو من الصوت النسوي.

### Abstract

Time and the body, as they are poeticised in the poetic domain, have been relegated to the margins of postmodernist poetry since critics and scholars have not provided a full insight into these phenomena. This study examines the poems "Endpaper," "August," "Incipience," "Contradictions," "Rape," and "Diving into the Wreck" from Adrienne Rich's *Selected Poems* towards a comprehension of the temporal and corporeal representations in her works. This paper utilises postmodern concepts regarding time and the body. In Rich's poems, time represents a genuine existence from a psychological aspect. In addition, the poet's utopian feminist cultural identity reveals the body. The overall conclusion of the study is that Rich's poetry lacks an authentic feminist voice.

## Introduction

Time is poeticised in emancipating the body from the distressing feelings of pain and hysteria. Its contemporaneity is radical in that the moment of creation is different from its "work in time" (Kona, 103: 2018). The body has been a marginal concern in philosophical, political, and critical theories, despite being one of the most contentious and divisive themes that always generates intense disputes from many perspectives. It has not been given importance or attention by these theories. From a philosophical perspective, the body has been connected to the mental side of the human self that has its sense of time. The significance of this research lies in the light it sheds on the temporal and corporeal dimensions of Rich's poetry.

Many scholars explicitly view time and body as central issues in Rich's poetry. They are poeticised through the contemporaneity of time and the thematisation of the poems through the body's pain and hysteria.

This study explores Adrienne Rich's poetry through the lenses of temporality and the female beings. It is a postmodernist construing of Rich's poetry. The scope of the study is the poetic devices and images that reflect Rich's feminist orientation. It highlights her poetic trend of expressing gender-difference tendencies.

In Western philosophical theory, the body was marginalised until the emergence of the feminist movement. Liberal thought, for case in point, adopts a model of human beings that focuses on prudence. As such, human intelligence is vital. Indeed, a vulnerability to liberal order may be conceptualised as the unreserved pursuit of somatic impulses. Moreover, liberal ideology tends more or less to presuppose a succession of dual binaries: intellect is antithetical to the physique, mind to body, masculine to female. Talking through her body as a means of expressing a woman's (her) identity, the voice in Rich,

particularly in her late poetry, tries to break the strings which cloak or seam the women's discharge and opens the new world to the exasperated and the oppressed women.

This study aims at investigating two phenomena in Rich's "Endpapers," "August," "Incipience," "Contradictions," "Rape," and "Diving into the Wreck": the poet's sense of time and her sense of the body. She explicates contemporaneity in her poems. It is a psychological sense of instantaneous time as life lived. As for the phenomenon of the body, it uncovers her utopian feminist cultural identity. The two phenomena conform to a spatio-temporal order in her poetry. In Rich's poetic text, time and body are inextricable. Moreover, it is an attempt at throwing light on Adrienne Rich's transition from patriarchal-centred feminism in the past to a utopian free-willed one in the future. It investigates the shortcomings of this ideological feminism. It views Rich's feminism as feminism free from patriarchal power.

As regards the method, the research adopts postmodernist theories. It adopts Antonio Gramsci's conception of history due to its relation to poetry. It applies Roland Barthes' conception of the body to its analysis of Rich's poems. The research utilises Jan Montifiore's post-Lacanian conception of self-split and Judith Butler's feminist theory in analysing time in Rich's poetry. As for the philosophical background, the study departs from Seyla Benhabib's philosophical perspective of the feminist movement.

The issue of time has been tackled by philosophers, linguists, scholars and critics. It has been the subject of philosophical doctrines, intellectual and critical theories and postulates. It is one of the main phenomena of existence and a primary aspect of historical events. Besides, it has an elementary function in any literary discourse.

Michel Foucault adopts a genealogical method in his study of the nature of history. His method contests the singular origin of narrative. He discards the utilisation of historiography of idyllic implications and inestimable “teleologies” (Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 71). He emphasises studying the signification of experience and the multiplicity of narratives lurking in the margins. For Foucault, periphery experiences are essential in forming a coherent narrative. He insists on focusing on the diversity of perspectives in which the history is narrated exists within the narrative text is understood. Genealogy, from his own standpoint:

Must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places [...] Finally, genealogy must define even these instances when they are absent, the moment they remain unrealised.

(Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, 76: 1984)

On the other hand, Gramsci tends to see history as a chance for achieving "betterment" against natural force and human injustice. He states that history's aesthetic value is not principally different from poetry and has a poetic aspect. He adds that there exists a historical dimension to the poetry. For him, poetry is the subtext to history owed to its language of struggles in the past (Quoted in Prakash Kona, 'The Unslept Unslept Elsewhere': 115-16: 2018). He comments on the function of poetry:

Poetry, in its own special way, can force us to remember things we're not supposed to think about. A location that has not yet renovated [...] this infinite future continues to remain apparent, but it has been buried. Its routes are being rediscovered and rebuilt on a global scale through artistic expression.

(Gramsci, *A Human Eye*, 125)

Poetry is the instrument of writing history. Gramsci views it as an opportunity of discovering the human condition. He expresses his attachment to account history. For him, history is written backwards to recognise that emancipation can be delayed but cannot be stopped (Kona:123:2018).

Between the present and the future, pencilling acts as a bridge. Inscription in space and time mediates this interaction. The written inscription is a temporal trace in space and a spatial trace in time. The purpose of writing is to preserve the caption for the future. It allows repetition and keeps it away from extinction and forgetting. On such a trend, Martin Hagglund notes:

The essential function of writing is to serve as a link between the inscriptions of the past and the inscriptions yet to come, which are shaped by the becoming-space of time [...] which constitutes both the possibility of repetition[...] the threat of extinction, of forgetting. (72:2008)

The body was not an exemption from historians' writings. It was one of the central issues of most philosophical, intellectual, scientific and critical movements and trends. It has even been preoccupied with the media theories and propaganda, especially the body language, i.e. the signification of this language and its effect on the public.

Historians wrote the history of the body in the past, viewing it in "historical demography (pathology)" as the seat of psychological and physiological states and an object for epidemic diseases. They historically showed the "biological base" of existence as well as the place of "biological events" and the "extension of lifespan" (Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned", 71-2, 2021).

Roland Barthes studied the signification of the body in his *Roland Barthes*. In “The Bodily Enigma,” Barthes discusses the plural body, which is a problematic term for him, i.e. enigmatic. He presents various definitions of the ‘plural body’; It shows him a diversity of types:

Which body? We have several.” “I have a digestive body, I have a nauseated body, a third body which is migrainous, so on: sensual, muscular, humoural, and especially: emotive: which is moved, stirred, depressed, or exhalted or intimidated, without anything of the sort being apparent.”

(Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, 60-1: 2010)

Jane Gallop draws attention to the body’s call for interpretation. She makes explicit that she means by the body as “the perceivable givens” that the humans are acquainted with the body, as far as belonging is concerned, without knowing their significance to it. She argues that these givens call for interpretations (13: 1988).

The body carries a significant implication in Barthes’ theory. It belongs to the individual, produces and receives meaning, and represents the locus of the individual’s subjectivity. Subjectivity is not an end but an inherited run-through in or within the body. Relentlessly, it is part and parcel of the body. Hence, the reciprocity of subjectivity and body, such as a silhouette of visual artwork, are intimately related. This is true as meaning in specific in any text is structured through the play of the body in a communicative process. Then, it is a ceaselessly dynamic, fluctuating and renewing signifier, composed of a multivariate tangle of symbolising relationships at both the individual and institutional levels. According to this viewpoint, the body is crucial to creating literary consciousness. Barthes then affirms the role of the

body in producing signs. He writes, "the body is an irreducible difference, and at the same time, the principle of every structuration" (177: 2010).

The utopian tendency in feminist philosophy is best held by the feminist thinker Seyla Benhabib. She postulates that utopianism is an essential tendency to feminist theory owed to its futuristic sense and unrestrained aspiration. Feminism, she argues, is the theoretical pronouncement of women's emancipatory demands. Benhabib sets hope as a condition of "morality" and "radical transformation." Her stress on anticipation should not be considered a credulous admittance of any formula of utopia. She disapproves grand master's narrative. For Benhabib, any chronicle like this eventually "a justification for current undemocratic and dictatorial activities (the end justifies the means) or an excuse for current unprincipled instrumentalism (the destination justifies the means)." (Benhabib, "Feminism and Postmodernism" 30: 1995).

**2. The Poetics of Time and Body in Rich's "Endpapers," "August," "Incipience", "Contradictions," "Rape," and "Diving into the Wreck."** Rich alternates things, memories, and events in the present over time. Rich's poetry politicised the present by depriving readers of the pleasures of "empathy" and by reinventing oneself concerning one's own position in the world (Kona, 104: 2018).

Rich states in her essay "Blood, Bread, and Poetry":

I know that for the rest of my life, the next half century or so, every aspect of my identity will have to be engaged. The middle-class white girl was taught to trade obedience for the privilege[...] The woman trying as part of her resistance to clean up her act. ("Blood, Bread and Poetry": 102)

For Rich, the engagement of her identity, or better to say, self, with the surroundings is not an act of adaption but an action of self-expurgation. If one reads this entire context as a real-time engagement of the poet's unpredictable ambiences or settings fashioned, if not performed, and based on the female's experience and body, it can be fathomed that Rich is not the speaker here but as this embryonic subjectivity itself. In conjunction with the surrounding environment, every phase of a time-based segment in the evolution of the guise's identity is a historisised recollection of such an endeavour. Rich has become an exceptional brand of the poet whose life and work have constantly transformed to shape the world around her.

Rich unequivocally relates both body (physical and stature) and time through the contemporaneity of her experience that locates both concerning her depressed identity. She found refuge in poetry as it gives voice to the dispossessed female and indignation to the oppressed by speaking for those deprived of a voice. Rich comments, "For poetry makes nothing happen...it survives, a way of happening, a mouth" (cited in Kona, 106: 2018).

Time in Rich's poetry has a politicised perspective as it envisions a transformation of conditions for just social order. It is not typical or unvarying. Time for her does not seek the "afterlife" in the present through the notion of "true love." Similarly, time follows what Guy Debord once pronounced as "a necessary alienation" (cited in Bill Brown, 322: 2011). Considering what he has stated, time for Debord is not only a platform on which one could show his or her identity, but it turns into a channel where one subject is subjugated to lose his identity and becomes another to be himself. In the light of Debord, Rich refutes the notion of "true love" in her poetry as it is fantasy and recalls passivity, and one has to perform and be another person. Therefore, it eliminates the agency's role in changing the individual's life.

The notion of this love, the love that waits forever, is false because it lacks the changing nature of human relations for a person affected by people at different points in the individual's life. The idea of one's endless waiting for the sake of the happening of true love is a fantasy that takes away the role of agency in changing one's life (Kona, 106: 2018). Rich's poems' politicised present is perceived in recognition of the present. The power of imagination and transformation is rooted in the current time. This present time is irrelevant to the afterlife.

Rich's "Endpapers" (2011) is a real-time announcement of how the past time is connected to the future:

The signature to a life requires  
 the search for a method  
 rejection of posturing  
     trust in the witnesses  
 a vial of invisible ink  
 a sheet of paper held steady  
 after the end-stroke  
 above a deciphering flame (*Later Poems*, 512)

She correlates the passivity of deciphering words and decoding them to an espionage-like contrivance of naming or identity creation. Signature is accomplished creatively, unlike the name given, not written. Identity is like a name; a signature is a creative act. It will be remembered in future. As for the name, it is pertinent to the past. The individual is unconscious of the process of naming. The exquisiteness of the use of vocabularies in this poem helps to exceed the process of creating world-like imagery or one's life story that brings into being a given name into a realisation of the present when he or she recognises the backdrops of such name-nomination. Only at that time of giving a

name, it implies that you will write what you cannot read and write something that will only be legible in future.

The exchanging of tenses in this poem generates a suave back-and-forth headway and vice versa. In other words, the present exists as life progresses from the past to the future. Contemporaneity at this juncture is synchronised with nostalgia and antedated to the future. The present's contemporaneity is the speaker's lifespan that is measured in the light of a sensitive paper decoded of fire. In the same vein, Kona argues that this poem determines the "meaning of the present" through poetry refusing to serve (109).

In "August," the speaker introduces a "primaeval patriarchal moment" from her perspective. It is concerned with the deprivation of a woman of her right as a mother because her husband claims his right as a father for the son after snatching him away from her:

His mind is too simple. I cannot go on  
sharing his nightmares

My own are becoming clearer, they open  
into prehistory

Which looks like a village lit with blood

where all the fathers are crying: *My son is mine!* (Rich, 2013: 51)

Rich is aware of not building her own world within the limits of her husband's nightmares as she removes herself not only from the reminisces of "prehistory" but entirely from the patriarchal society as she is irresistible; she is typically the woman in question. She implicitly reveals her refusal of the patriarchal regulations of its earthly and spiritual fathers as she indorses her public criticism in a society denying women a voice. To be "invisible" (as in "Endpapers") or devoiced is Rich's nightmare in this poem. The nightmare could be the speaker herself in the eyes of "his." Since her fame and success become "clearer," men try not to cope with such advancement and still look at

women in a traditional prehistorical aesthetic. So, she refuses such a perception of being unlocked in "his" dreams or to be quarantined. Her existence cannot be ignored for a long time and is encapsulated within a "nightmare," but she has to be accredited and valued.

Rich's use of tenses transition is vividly exposed when she writes:

Two horses in yellow light

Eating windfall apples under a tree

As summer tears apart, milkweeds stagger

And grasses grow more ragged. (Rich, 2013: 51)

Rich's poem poeticises the meaning of "August" in the title. It implies a pre-patriarchal era. The designation denotes the last month of summer through which the climatic connotation "windfall" is coined to Fall. It signifies the terminal moments of energy and vitality (Brooksher, 25: 2016). The poem depicts a primordial patriarchal moment, indicating a time before this moment. However, the contest between the multiple beginnings and the single dedicated storylines of history focusing on a limited genises is absent from "August," which is based on a single beginning and assumes a historical narrative. Butler conceives that "In feminist theory, the "before" constrains the future to materialise an idealised conception of the past" (Butler, 2006: 49).

Rich's "Incipience" makes a clear link between a pre-patriarchal lineage and a post-patriarchal idyllic matriarchy. Wendy Martin notes that "the title of the poem thematises the 'primordial origin of patriarchy and the image of prehistoric ice-age supports this analysis" (Martin, 188: 1984). The poem highlights the connection between the past ice age and the dominating patriarchal power. This age keeps women inactive and paralysed-like. It deprives them of personal power.

These women would be unable to define themselves in their own words. They are no more than myths, fantasies, monsters, and dreams:

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. ("Incipience," 165)

Women, as the speaker states, are decomposed into parts: "heads" and "breasts" and fall as "prey." The foisted merchandised woman is petrified — or diced into a head and breasts, the bodily part that, as a "euphemism," most reflects the absence of traditional feminine roles — dining, nursing, and consoling. Their bodies are a commodity and fetishised as the normality of marriage is not shown here since they are not set in harmony with each other to "sit up smoking and talking of how to love." To survive such life, women are linked to "serpents" and identified positively with female goddesses; nevertheless, the man who always slumbers "in the next room" in androcentric nightmares does not share this attitude. The new radical gestures come up to the surface, refusing the deep-seated conventions of dissecting or dismembering her body as she is "a wild version of patience." So, Rich, the speaker here, recalls Lefebvre's aridity by linking time and body when she connects wilderness and home. The façade has conventionally been an indicator of social standing and distinction and a reflection of what goes inside the domestic zone so as not to be imprisoned in the "feel [of] the fiery future" as she recounts that "nothing could be done". The apex and modular form of bourgeois space was a jail with a façade, which was also a family prison to her.

Rich's poetry is as dogmatic as it is peculiar—it reflects on how history is refracted in its anecdotal life, yet its political approach reifies and strengthens its social isolation. The painful, public dread of the poet, like in “Endpapers” and “August,” the domestic uncomfotability is an esthetic and thus pleasant gesture, which can also be deduced in her later writings. In these poems, Rich begins seeking the scheme of endeavouring to construe “the body's” place in most of her latest poems; it gives a voice to her silence which is most relevant to my argument.

On the other hand, the poeticisation of the body in Rich's poems is mainly implicated in the two physical (bodily) acts of pain and hysteria. Rich's poems do not unavoidably embody the female physique purely. Still, she is pertinently talented in delivering sincere nesting emotions by taking the burden of mapping and exploring the body's geography under supervision where a woman's body is turned into a site to reconnoitre. She writes most of her poetry through the body. In her book, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Elaine Scarry writes that “writing about pain can help to achieve an embodied effect in poetry” (Scarry, 4:1985). Pain cannot be grasped through language; it lacks expression. It is the state of absence of expression and the silenced body.

Scarry posits pain in the person who cannot fully capture language. She adds that physical language is systematically dismantled by pain, resulting in an immediately reversed state frontal to language, to the sounds and cries articulated by a human being before learning the language. Scarry places pain as “pre-oedipal” and “problematic” (Scarry, 6:1985).

Pain is also explicated in torture. In the first chapter of her book, “The Structure of Torture,” Scarry gives a glimpse of a correct

setting of face-to-face investigation where ‘torture’ is the leading way of the interrogator practising his power over the interrogated. The one characteristic that distinguishes the interrogator (victimiser) apart from the questioned (victim) is that the latter is pain-free. (Scarry, 36:1985).

Rich’s signification of pain is recurrent in most of her poems but in different attires. In “Contradictions,” for example, her contempt and refusal to be contained within the "barricades" of domesticity reveals, later in the poem, her disgust towards the pain of being a prisoner of bed. The body in this poem, and so many others, is not a place “to make a career of pain” or to reify her physical pain. Another instance shows the correlation of physical and mental pain embodied in the identification of "bodies." The failure to find a medium of communication with the other "body" discloses both kinds of pain and, at the same time, reveals the unabridged gaps since both of them: “have different voices,” their bodies “so alike are yet so different,” and even their “blood streams\ is freighted with different language.” Such distancing is exacerbated in household settings, where there should be tenderness or intimacy is thwarted by melancholy and despair.

Rich exposes herself and her privacy to promote awareness about how to cope with “pain” and how this suffering is exacerbated by a marginalisation that may be paralleled to racialised isolation. Rich’s “Rape,” written in 1972 (published in *Diving into the Wreck*), is an example of questioning a victim and a power struggle between the distressed and influential individuals. Although the poem's premise is not profoundly tortured by the powerful interrogator in the poem, the reader can imagine her in a torture chamber where a struggle for practising power happens: “There is a cop who is both prowler and father [...]touching his gun” (Rich, ll.1-6,105). The sexual, masculine and phallic representation of the “gun” links the policeman to a rapist. The epithet “prowler” conjured a vision of a fearsome predator who

instigates to hunt a “victim” at night. A “prowler” is erotic. The policeman sits comfortably “on [the] horseback” (Rich, l. 5) pageants the cop as sitting over the rapist. The officer watches over her. It seems as if he is a transformer who pretends to be a "father" during the day and changes into a "prowler" at night. Rich consciously employs and uses such vocabularies to characterise and let her readers visualise the scene panoramically. The victims’ helplessness stages in the decisive authority. Therefore, the characterisation of the “cop” armed him with viciousness, while the female speaker was left unprotected.

The physical connotation here lurks in the fact that everything is dangerous to speak and act. The title predicts sexuality while the lines of the poem divulge into the realm of virtual violence: “he has access to machinery that could kill you”(Rich, l. 7). Although denouncing its pain, the speaker’s body is no longer resistant, but subtle and silenced as the officer's "pre-judgment” of the case. No surprise then to crystallise the idea that the victim herself is treated as if she is “guilty of the crime / of having been forced” (Rich, ll. 14-5).

“Rape” then is an example of the silenced body. The body cannot express itself; it can express pain and hysteria through inner thoughts that are not dialogues or monologues. Rich transmits her inner thoughts through the language of pain and hysteria. She has spent a lot of time trying to disconnect from her emotions and her physical self. That makes it hard for her to determine whether she exists or not, which causes her a lot of internal turmoil.

Helene Cixous points out that emotions lack speech and are decapitated; they also lack expressions, and their talks are not heard as the body talks without expressions, and it is not heard by man. Rich agrees with Cixous in her view of hysteria "as the inability to speak." In this sense, the humanoid body is problematic, and hysteria is its way of

attempting to attempt at expressing itself despite man's inability to hear the body (Cixous, 49: 1981).

Rich's poetic text is masculinely-controlled. It is structured by a patriarchal world. Therefore, the figurative description of the "cop" here bargains authority. The female speaker finally serves his drive, the drive of the patriarchal consciously/unconsciously. On this issue, she augurs that the patriarchal-centred world will never be changed since the authority, here as a cop: "Had certain ideals", and those ideals underpin her claims as "he thinks he knows" everything (Rich, l. 11).

In "Rape," she feeds up her justifications for the injustice of patriarchy in every dialogue. The poem's speaker lacks her way of knowing or even representing her ideal feminist identity as the speaker no longer has any idea of who she is or how she fits into the world (Linda Wagner-Martin, 93-4: 2003). In the same thread, Luce Irigaray repudiates women's ability to approach expressing themselves. She acknowledges that "women can never truly reach a speaking position" (quoted in Brooksher, 31: 2016). In her discussion of Irigaray, Ann Rosalind Jones notes, "as a result of living in a society predicated on masculine ideas, women lack the tools to accurately reflect who they are" (Jones, 359: 1991).

Montefiore conceives that Rich's "Diving into the Wreck" aspires to recombine internal gaps that reject the schism between the speaking I and the spoken I. Irigaray and the poetic strategy in Rich's poem work within different frameworks despite their emphasis on a shared connection among women. On the other hand, Irigaray emphasises women's reversion to the pre-Oedipal bond with their mothers, allowing them to exhibit their feelings through language. The expressive scheme of Rich's poem is centred on a shared envelopment rather than the pre-Oedipal femininity of psychoanalysis (Brooksher, 32: 2016).

Rich's "Diving into the Wreck" recounts the story of a moment of male violent actions. It concerns the transition from violent patriarchy to a feminist utopia free of patriarchal domination. Yet, this free feminist utopia lacks gendered subjectivity and subtle identity. It presumes a pre-cultural intrinsic ontological feminity shared by all females (Brooksher, 45: 2016).

Rich's teleological conception of history in her poem fails to attract scholars' attention to the periphery. Her stress on the post-patriarchal era overlooks figures who do not comply with the "hegemonic standards" of true feminity required by the utopia. For the sake of constructing a single narrative, it pushes these figures into obscurity and erases their presence from history.

In poem eighteen from *Contradictions*, the speaker confronts patriarchal dominance by controlling the external effects on the body like the anguish on the streets and the harshness of winter:

The problem, unstated till now, is how  
to live in a damaged body  
in a world where pain is meant to be gagged  
uncured un-grieved-over. The problem is  
to connect, without hysteria, the pain  
of any one's body with the pain of the body's world  
filled with creatures filled with dread  
misshapen so yet the best we have  
our raft among the abstract worlds  
and how I longed to live on this earth  
walking her boundaries, never counting the cost

(Rich, *Your Native*: 100)

The struggle to live in an excruciating body without “hysteria” is recognised vividly in this poem as it turns out to be part and parcel of her poetry. Rich's pursuit seems irresolvable when she considers hysterically finding the agony of her body or distancing herself from this hysteria: pain and body are inseparable. Anne Stevenson perceives the poem as “an encounter between the female body and a culturally imposed feminine role” (Stevenson, *Bitter Fame*, 1989: 212). Hence, “the world of the body” conveys the fear connected with the world of this body and what surrounds it. Notwithstanding the emotive and bodily, despite the distance that now divides them, they share more than just suffering but the psychic “abstract” world. She is full of obscurity and oddity but wants to navigate its “precincts.” She considers language to be a method of interconnecting with the body and not moving away from its “boundaries.” But she recognises that connecting the body and the world of the body is unattainable, and this reveals the duality between the body and the world. The image of her body in pain acts as a social and cultural metaphor for an unstated problem. Such rendering furnishes the ground to the reader to visualise a woman as a mindless vessel which lacks awareness or purpose (Setha Low, *Spatializing Culture*, 2016: 98). Yet, such interpretations go shoulder to shoulder with Lefebvre's conception of body on which it serves as a focal point for separation where detachment becomes a proxy for time, and time becomes a surrogate for pain (Cited in Miodrag Mitrasinovic, *Total Landscape, Theme Parks, Public Space*, 2006: 24).

Rich's dilemma lies in the bodily (somatic) and time-based juxtaposition. Her attitude is reminiscent of Yi-Fu Tuan's contention that anytime someone, age-related or not, believes the world is changing too quickly, his typical reaction is to call back to a more idealised and stable time (Tuan, *Space and Place*, 1977: 187). Speaking

widely, Rich's adult poetry tends to represent bodies among many kinds, not just the human body as dissected parts, but in profound dynamic confrontation with the poet's psychological processes at the moment the poem is addressed. Conceivably, the unpretentious method of averring this is that events in Rich's poetry, whether peripheral, intrapersonal or mutually, always happen somewhere. And as a canon, they also ensue somewhen, in a moment defined by temporality as much as by memoirs. Body for Rich, though not on the same track as famous scientists, is always body-time.

Through language and pain, history has neglected recounting the reality of the body. Rich perceives language as a connection with the body without moving away from it. They are cemented together. Yet she admits the difficulty of connecting the female body and its world (Collins, 26: 2009).

To bring this discussion to a close, time and body in Rich's poetry truly configure prominent phenomena. They are poeticised through contemporaneity and thematisation of the speaker's feelings of pain and hysteria. These poeticised concepts are employed to achieve a utopian feminist identity free of patriarchal power. Yet, her attempt at accomplishing this identity is deficient and has a shortcoming. The two main shortcomings are the male domination of poetic text and the lack of gendered subjectivity, expressions, stable identity and periphery experiences of historical narrative. She efficaciously recalls for the revision of the idea of the female body that promotes broadening women's exposure to and appreciation of their bodies. In short, Rich's poems lack an authentic feminist speaking position.

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