

**BREAKING THROUGH THE 'LOGIC OF LIMITS':  
ADRIENNE RICH AND RADICAL COMPLEXITY**

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*ABSTRACT*

Focusing on questions of identity, particularly lesbian identity, during the late seventies and early eighties, this essay explores the sequence "Twenty-One Love Poems" and notes the tension articulated within the poetry between a dying identity politics, and the urgencies of an incoming politics of diversity. I seek to track, within these poems and others of the period, the movement from consensus, in which Rich pursues a politics of commonality, towards a much more inclusive politics of radical complexity, in which she undertakes a wide-ranging enquiry into the political construction and regulation of identity itself. Rich is, at this period, concerned to counter the erasures of lesbian existence, and to combat homophobic depictions of lesbian existence. She is also concerned to celebrate transgressive erotic and sexual desires that work to unfix the economies and conventions of heterosexual logic. Rich's notion of a lesbian continuum gives way under pressure, to a longing to embrace difference and diversity. She creates an inclusive politics capable of forging alliances between diverse groups of women, but, as the poetry testifies, the contradictory other within the self must also be acknowledged and explored. This is the task of poem "XX", in which Rich seems to ask: how can the category "lesbian" ever be representative of any sort of unity. How can the lesbian "I" be predictable, stable, totalisable if there is always already substantial internal division?

The developing politics of radical complexity must recognise also that "we come from many pasts: out of the left, out of the Ghetto, out of the Holocaust, out of the churches, out of marriages, out of the "gay" movement, out of the closet, out of the darker closet of long-term suf-

focation of our love of women". A poem that explores this radical complexity in detail is "Yom Kippur, 1984". In this poem Rich begins to reconceptualise what constitutes "identity". In a sense, "Yom Kippur, 1984" points to a kind of necessary vigilance for the producer of art, to be aware of what Diana Fuss has identified as "the difficult but urgent textual work" of calling into question "the philosophical opposition between 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' (which) like so many other conventional binaries has always been constructed on the foundations of another related opposition: the couple 'inside' and 'outside'". In this poem, Rich creates a dialogue that explores this exclusive "logic of limits", and seeks to break down the related oppositions: margin/ centre; self/ other; inside/ outside; centre/ margin; solitude multitude; Arab/ Jew; Jew/ gentile; Black or white; male or female; straight or queer; like oneself or stranger to the self. All these and more, need to be recognised as simplistic modes of dichotomising of what is in reality complex and irreducible to any mere binary form.

I have tried here to track one thread which runs through the whole span of Adrienne Rich's thought, a thread which explores the limits placed on the way we think and tries to break through the limits of dualistic thought towards a new logic of expansion and inclusiveness. Gradually developing her poetry through half a century of writing, Rich in her later work, creates an inclusive, globally aware poetics capable of a visionary complexity, which conveys both the rational analysis and the sensitive intelligence that, characteristically, marks the impassioned politics of this most Blakean of American poets.

I want to begin by thinking about Susan Griffin's thesis in *Woman and Nature* which throws much light on Rich's thinking during the mid-seventies. In *Woman and Nature*, Griffin set herself the task of examining patriarchal "thought" —which she argues "does represent itself as emotionless (objective, detached and bodiless)" and characteristically conveys the sense "that it has found absolute truth, or at least has the authority to do so".<sup>1</sup> She says of this "paternal voice": "It sprang out at me in the form of recognized opinion and told me that the reactions I experienced in my female body to its declarations were ridiculous (unfounded, hysterical, biased)." Only by refusing the authority and truth of the limiting "paternal voice" and "going underneath logic", tuning in to "feeling" and "enlisting my intuition, or uncivilised self", did Susan Griffin find her way towards a way of thinking as she puts it that is both "embodied" and "impassioned" —that is "not so much utopian as a description of a different way of seeing". Griffin's intuitive searchings for whatever lay 'underneath logic' led her to elevate feeling, intuition, embodied passion at the expense of rationality. Rich was also searching for a different way of thinking. The project lay close to the core of Rich's thinking in the seventies: however, she refuses to abandon the rational or the intellectual dimensions of thought preferring to see the task as integration —as the creation of a holistic mode in which duality is 'annihilated'

Truly to liberate women, then, means to change thinking itself: to reintegrate what has been named the unconscious, the subjective, the emotional with the

structural, the rational, the intellectual; to “connect the prose and the passion” in E.M. Forster’s phrase; and finally to annihilate those dichotomies.<sup>2</sup>

Rich was clearly not alone in struggling to transform the binary systems of western philosophic thought. Logocentrism with its dual, hierarchical oppositions organises what is thinkable within a binary system, in which relations of authority, order, categorise, and guarantee meaning, was at the root of the problem for such diverse writers as Daly, Reuther, Griffin, Cixous, Irigaray. It was a prime target for critique in “The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry”, part of Irigaray’s famous treatise, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), which provoked her expulsion from the Freudian School at Vincennes.<sup>3</sup> In her critique of the Freudian representation of the sexual economy, wherein women are consigned to the passive pole of the binary, she identifies

a fault, a flaw, a lack, an absence, outside the system of representations and autorepresentations. Which are man’s. By a *hole* in men’s signifying economy. A nothing that might cause the ultimate of destruction, the splintering, the break in their systems of “presence,” of “re-presentation” and “representation”. A nothing threatening the process of production, reproduction, mastery and profitability, of meaning, dominated by the phallus —that *master signifier* whose law of functioning erases, rejects, denies the surging up, the resurgence, the recall of a *heterogeneity* capable of reworking the principle of its authority.<sup>4</sup>

Language as a system of representation organised within a dualistic logic, is here experienced as failing women, placing limits on thought, erasing, rejecting that which would ‘surge up’. or be recalled. Women’s realities, their heterogeneities (their desiring body, their diversity, their difference from men) are effectively erased, rejected, denied within discourse. Perhaps I can turn to “Cartographies of Silence”, a poem collected in *The Dream of a Common Language* to understand this further. In this poem, we find Rich engaging directly with this struggle to release language from its dualistic, precoded, conventional, universalising presumptions in her attempt to “change thinking.”<sup>5</sup> The poem holds up before its readers the “lie” of the “so-called common language.” Each speaker of this language “feels/ the ice-flow split, the drift apart// as if powerless, as if up against/ a force of nature”.<sup>6</sup> This fragmenting, isolating, disempowering struggle is with a colonising, male-centred language that utters “the old script over and over”, that is incapable of entering “intuitively into the souls of the powerless, or to hear what they are saying in their many languages, including the language of silence,”<sup>7</sup> It is a denying language that drowns-out the “terror/ beneath the unsaid word”, a language that defensively tames and disembodies the subjective, intuitive, poetic passions and can make even feminist grief and anger appear calm and inoffensive: “Can I break through this film of the abstract// without wounding myself or you” Rich asks.<sup>8</sup> But it is not she who suffers most: those deprived of a legitimate voice are the ones who suffer the most profound loss of their identity:

The scream  
of an illegitimate voice

It has ceased to hear itself, therefore  
it asks itself

How do I exist?

This poem spells out the violation perpetrated by an inadequate language which fails to authorise, recognise, understand or articulate the meanings of its underprivileged speakers—a violation that consists of delegitimising an individual, or a collective (or cultural) existence, and thereby functions to disintegrate the coherence either of the self, of a group or of a culture. “Silence. Denial. Secrets. Taboo. False-naming. Erasure. Encoding. Omission. Veiling. Non-naming. Fragmentation. Lying.”<sup>9</sup> The desire for “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action” is a theme that returns and returns, becoming more and more compelling during this decade: it gives voice to a deep, hungry longing for “moving” words:

...Let me have this dust,  
these pale clouds dourly lingering, these words

moving with ferocious accuracy  
like the blind child’s fingers

or the new-born infant’s mouth  
violent with hunger<sup>10</sup>

Only the “uncivilised” embodied word which speaks from these depths of primal desire, can enable the ground of our knowing to shift. Only in this way can the logic, the script that has dominated our thought and limited what we can imagine, be transformed. What we actively apprehend through our senses—a relative, context-bound ever-changing “truth”—can come to the fore, rather than the patriarchally ordained, overarching transcendent “Truth”, as the product of detached, emotionally-desensitised objectivity—and will each time be freshly called into being. Through the “wildness” of the unblocked, impassioned, embodied word, a new perspective may be created, different emphases may be given value, new “truths”, new figures may spring into focus and so the ground shifts—an unending process—a continual sifting and shifting and moving and growing. In this poem Rich may long for stability, simplicity, fixity, concreteness, transcendent truth, or attachment to a comforting, universalising theology—but she knows only that she can trust this uncertain process, and uses this painstaking, self-searching method to help her find her own integrity:

If from time to time I long to turn

like the Eleusinian hierophant  
holding up a simple ear of grain

for return to the concrete and everlasting world  
what in fact I keep choosing.

are these words, these whispers, conversations  
from which time after time the truth breaks moist and green.<sup>11</sup>

Embodied “truth” is something that we live, that “breaks” through, that cannot be contained, that has a kind of autonomy, and a specificity to its moment —as the world of therapy can attest, it emerges disruptively, despite denial, erasure, negation, devaluation, suppression, minimisation, trivialisation, racial or sexual abuse, coercive exploitation, colonisation. Such a bodily knowing is attuned to both “inner” and “outer” space —“because for us the two are continuous, not polar”— and an embodied language refuses dualistic splitting.<sup>12</sup>

If a dualistic language can limit, direct, and control responses, structure reality, structure consciousness, define and thus confine the self, then it may also be used to forge or formulate holistic ways of thinking, it can be used to bear witness for oneself and one’s people, we can disidentify with a dominant discourse and set ourselves free from its imposed dictates, we need not accept a predetermined version of what is. The desire is for a language in which a woman can identify herself —not as the ‘other’— that is as the recipient of and subject to the projections, predictions, presumptions of a phallogentric denial of female presence, but rather, to articulate her own, bodily based, experiential understandings. This breaking through of silence, the transformation of habitual ways of thinking and interacting, requires that women refuse amnesia —amnesia as repression, denial, forgetting. It means recognising the losses suffered in complying with, or being complacent towards oppressing forces, and accepting into consciousness uncomfortable truths despite denial, erasure, negation, trivialisation and other forms of internal and external suppression —in this way the “quantum leap of imagination” can begin. As women we can learn to trust our own integrity, and to believe in ourselves— and I am sure this is just as true for men: as Rich had put it on *Of Woman Born*: “remember that it is your own sense of urgency, your own memories, needs, questions, and hopes, your own painfully gathered knowledges... which you must above all trust.”

In this clip from “Integrity” —a significant title!— from *A Wild Patience* I would like to illustrate something of the complexity of this vision for language to be found in the poetry.

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.<sup>13</sup>

Rich’s strategy of refusing or disrupting dualistic thinking confuses many of her critics. In fact a both/and, body mind holism informs her poetry overall at a very deep level. And so here anger and tenderness, despite being contradictory emotions, need not be mutually exclusive terms. A tension-filled conflict may live and breathe in a woman’s body as different aspects of her experiencing, yet are still integral to the

processes and struggles of being female. Just as the image of the spider spinning and weaving simultaneously suggests the indivisibility of these polar opposites, so too culture and nature, subjectivity and objectivity, social and psychological, body and mind, are inter-implicated with each other—in Rich’s non-dichotomous understanding of the mind/ body.

“Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (1980) was written on request for a special “Sexuality” issue of the scholarly feminist journal *Signs*, with the aim of combating the erasure of lesbian existence “from scholarly feminist literature” and to “encourage heterosexual feminists to examine heterosexuality as a political institution.”<sup>14</sup> It was clearly an impulse towards creating bridges between women—but it is rarely praised for its major contribution in providing lesbian and gay theory with a powerful critique of heterosexuality as an institution, as that which “sets itself up as the original, the true, the authentic; the norm that determines the real...”<sup>15</sup> Here in poem XIII: of the “Twenty-One Love Poems”. we can sense the exhilaration of the escape from the constraints of those heterosexual norms, the release from the pre-ordained script, the limitations on thought, word and act:

The rules break like a thermometer,  
quicksilver spills across the charted systems,  
we’re out in a country that has no language  
no laws, we’re chasing the raven and the wren  
through gorges unexplored since dawn  
whatever we do together is pure invention  
the maps they gave us were out of date by years...

The freedom of the outlaw is to be beyond rules—even lesbian rules—to be beyond the coercive manoeuvres of compulsory heterosexuality, beyond the binary structures, and the institutions of heterosexism—in a place apart. To find a way through an inconceivable, uncharted, open territory of same-sex, (or bisexual relating) is both frightening and exhilarating. The poem celebrates having the freedom to invent “whatever we do together” in the absence of conventional heterosexual regulation, and affirms the possibility of finding “somewhere” where it is possible to bond in solidarity and to hear the “songs” of other, in this instance, women similarly placed, “outside the law”:

...a woman’s voice singing old songs  
with new words, with a quiet bass, a flute  
plucked and fingered by women outside the law

Yet, the joyful, innocent, conflict-free satisfaction in the constitution of a community of outsider identities, formed on the basis of the conglomerate political affinity, “women”, and the shared exploration of new possibilities for unity without the erasure of differences, Rich regretfully recognises, rare and unsustainable in the real. A politically impracticable dream, but at least a location at the margins from which to speak.. For even within this sequence of poems, destabilisation, separation, loss, non-contact, isolation, disintegration return—in poem XVII, there is no haven free from

the compulsions of the heterosexual matrix of power which regulates both “inner” and “outer” worlds— yet the potential for mobilising bodies’ subversive desires does remain.

Rich’s self-searching, holistic critical method develops through the eighties by which time she seeks to transform thinking in a larger global sense. Not just sexual difference but differences of all kinds begin to be addressed —we find her affirming the existence not only of women but of all subordinated humanity:

The rejection of the dualism, of the positive-negative polarities between which most of our intellectual training has taken place, has been an undercurrent of feminist thought. And rejecting them, we affirm the existence of all those who have through the centuries been negatively defined: not only women, but the ‘untouchable’, the ‘unmanly’, the ‘non-white’, the ‘illiterate’, the ‘invisible’.  
(*Of Woman Born* 64)

Rich was to distance herself the lesbian separatist position that would withdraw ‘from the immense burgeoning diversity of the global women’s movement.’ She also was to condemn the disturbing tendency to police other women which she sees as “a temptation into sterile correctness, into powerlessness and an escape from radical complexity.”

In her later work, Rich begins to grapple very subtly with the profound complexity of a contradictory and unfixed self-positioning, multiply located in time and space in exploring her own otherness —her disabilities, her Jewishness, her lesbianism. I would suggest that in this struggle for clarity, Rich is clearly influenced by Anzaldúa’s troubled question: “Who are my people?” in making this attempt to locate her self politically and spiritually:

I am a wind-swayed bridge, a crossroads inhabited by whirlwinds. Gloria, the facilitator. Gloria the mediator, straddling the walls between abysses. “Your allegiance is to La Raza, the Chicano movement,” say the members of my race. “Your allegiance is to the Third World,” say my Black and Asian friends. “Your allegiance is to your gender, to women,” say the feminists. Then there’s my allegiance to the Gay movement, to the socialist revolution, to the New Age, to magic and the occult. And there’s my affinity to literature, to the world of the artist. What am I? *A third world lesbian feminist with Marxist and mystic leanings*. They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label.<sup>16</sup>

So too, Rich examines her own allegiances to Jewish, Black, Gay and feminist cultures during the mid-to late eighties, and early nineties. She refuses identification with any form of unitary identity and, now abandoning single-issue politics, expansively includes a multiplicity of differences, bringing them into tension and play in the urgently politicised fields of her writings.

Breaking down the opposition between margin and centre and moving towards a more holistic, both/ and understanding of her Jewish inheritance meant that Rich had to break down even further the dualistic logic which had structured her strategy of

resistance. As a white feminist arguing against patriarchy, she found herself yet again calling into question her own presuppositions:

With the new politics, activism, literature of a tumultuous feminist movement around me, a movement which claimed universality though it had not yet acknowledged its own racial, class and ethnic perspectives, or its fears of the differences among women —I pushed aside for one last time thinking further about myself as a Jewish woman. I saw Judaism, simply, as yet another strand of patriarchy; if asked to choose I might have said (as my father had said in another language): I am a woman, not a Jew.<sup>17</sup>

Just what is involved in not pushing away, not denying either the southern gentile social Christian or the Jew within? Radical complexity demanded that she examine all aspects to each question, the dual inheritance of her gentile mother, Jewish father and husband. If the “centres” of patriarchy —religious, secular, social— were no longer thinkable in monochrome as the overarching oppressor, if radical complexity rather than radical feminism meant anything, it meant that Rich must engage once again with the Otherness of maleness, as of Judaism. She must self-critically explore the gaps, silences, absences, erasures —the unaddressed places of her own position.

“Coming out” of silence or invisibility or assimilation in whatever way is always fraught with danger, is inevitably filled with fear and shame —and yet this so perilous, vulnerable act is also necessary for survival in a world in which the Holocaust could and did happen. Hard on herself as ever, Rich criticises herself for “passing” rather than “claiming” the complexities of her Jewish identity, and becomes very aware that “At different times in my life I have wanted to push away one or the other burden of inheritance and say merely *I am a woman; I am a lesbian.*”<sup>18</sup> But now it is ethically, politically and spiritually not acceptable to fail to register the South’s history of segregation, its sexual codes and deeply contradictory Christian culture; it is no longer possible to stay in ignorance and / or denial of the appalling outcomes of racial imperialism and Hitler’s fanatic plan to destroy the Jews, however distressing it is to face:

The Jews I’ve felt rooted among  
are those who were turned to smoke

Reading of the chimneys against the blear air  
I think I have seen them myself

the fog of northern Europe licking its way  
along the railroad tracks

to the place where all tracks end

In a strange way, this intra-psychoic and political work of undoing denial and opening her imagination to these large scale atrocities brings a largeness of vision and a strength of purpose as a lesbian, a feminist and poet. Somehow, in finding her



way back to these roots—in imaginatively re-visioning what historically it has meant to be Jewish, to be male and powerless, to belong to a culture and a people under threat of extermination— she makes another major shift.

This expansiveness of spirit gradually includes more and more of the vastness of its geography and the diversity of the peoples of America, yet remains grounded in an outsider identity as lesbian and Jew. Rich turns ever more expansively toward the whole, looking from the outside in to criticise “the main body” —refusing segregation and seeking to build community with other “outsiders”.

As a lesbian and a feminist she had been drawn to edges, now she is pulled towards Jewish community life, seeks connection to her spiritual roots, Black politics, queer politics. Seeming to pursue her sense that only through finding “likeness”, as well as “otherness”—only through creating a dialogue or bridge of commonality to reach across the divides of difference—is survival possible. And the poem that speaks most hauntingly of this work of re-claiming as well as re-creation is “Yom Kippur”.<sup>19</sup> Yom Kippur is “the most solemn day of the Jewish year: a time for fasting, a time for reckoning with one’s obligation to God and to one’s people, one’s community”.<sup>20</sup> And so yet another new site of radical possibility is to be created out of Rich’s need to understand the centre anew, to feel part of the whole, to belong to “the main body”—to have “dialogue with community” despite her distance from it. As a queer woman, as a queer Jew, she is beginning to move away from conceiving of herself and speaking as a marginalised identity, a lesbian, a woman silenced, dispossessed of culture and history, deprived of a language, living in a wilderness beyond the laws of patriarchy, just as she has moved away from the universalising “we” of exclusive white feminist thought, the category “woman” with its expedient occlusion of the worlds of difference between “women”. She seeks now, rather, to reorganise the conceptual grounds of identity. She works to break down the structures of alienation implicit in that political model, those divisions between a self and an excluded other of earlier feminist theorisings. In a sense, “Yom Kippur” points to a kind of necessary vigilance for the producer of art, to be aware of what Diana Fuss has identified as “the difficult but urgent textual work” of calling into question “the philosophical opposition between ‘heterosexual’ and ‘homosexual’ (which) like so many other conventional binaries has always been constructed on the foundations of another related opposition: the couple ‘inside’ and ‘outside’.”<sup>21</sup> In this poem, Rich creates a kind of dialogue, one that explores this exclusive “logic of limits”, and seeks to break down the related oppositions: margin/ centre; self/ other; inside/ outside; centre/ margin; solitude/ multitude; Arab/ Jew; Jew/ gentile; Black or white; male or female; straight or queer; like oneself or stranger to the self. All these and more, need to be recognised as simplistic modes of dichotomising of what is in reality complex and irreducible to any mere binary form. In this poem, the conceptual grounding of political commitment in a firmly boundaried and particular identity—one bound up in a binary relation to that which is other to the self—is subtly confounded:

To love the Stranger, to love solitude —am I writing merely about  
privilege  
about drifting from the centre, drawn to edges,  
a privilege we can’t afford in the world that is,

who are hated as being of our kind: faggot kicked into the icy  
     river, woman dragged from her stalled car  
 into the mist-struck mountains, used and hacked to death  
 young scholar shot at the university gates on a summer evening  
     walk, his prizes and studies nothing, nothing  
     availing his Blackness  
 Jew deluded that she's escaped the tribe, the laws of her exclusion,  
 the men too holy to touch her hand; Jew who has  
     turned her back  
 on midrash and mitzvah (yet wears the chai on a thong between her  
     breasts) hiking alone  
 found with a swastika carved in her back at the foot of the cliffs  
     (did she die as queer or as Jew?)

Where does one identity leave off and others begin? Confounding familiar, long-held polarities, this inclusive language transgresses the borders between the self and the other—rendering identity not as unitary but as unstable, shifting, relationally constituted and open to difference—whilst also retaining an acutely political awareness of physical danger and risk. In this world as it is, defence and protection are still needed and may not be abandoned. A seismic shift is necessary, which seems to take the form of global catastrophe within the poem:

when center and edges are crushed together, the extremities  
     crushed together on which the world was founded  
 when our souls crash together, Arab and Jew, howling our  
     loneliness within the tribes  
 when the refugee child and the exile's child re-open the blasted and  
     forbidden city  
 when we who refuse to be women and men as women and men are  
     chartered, tell our stories of solitude spent in  
     multitude  
 in that world as it may be, newborn and haunted, what will  
     solitude mean?

And so a refusal to be categorised characterises this poetry that, in its contrary and paradoxical interplay, charts a further break with binary thinking. Beyond that, it allows a reader to circulate among identifications in a critical but not demonising way. Rather than privileging any kind of sameness over difference, it takes us towards—to borrow Ed Cohen's words—“*a politics that would take as both its process and its goal the interruption of those practices of differentiation that (re)produce historically specific, asymmetrical patterns of privilege and oppression.*”<sup>22</sup> Rich now perceives her “self” as being both insider and outsider at the same time. The strategic outsiderhood of radical feminism, almost by definition, which had embraced a position of invisibility, inarticulateness, powerlessness, and virtual homelessness in relation to mainstream culture cannot, finally, be sustained. Implicitly, I see Rich here as also asking the charged political question: is the marginal existence of separatism a

privilege lesbians cannot afford?<sup>23</sup> Clearly for Rich, this is not a viable political stance. As Diana Fuss has pointed out, "for so many gay and lesbian subjects, it is less a question of political tactics than everyday lived experience" to live on such margins.<sup>24</sup>

## DECONSTRUCTING DIFFERENCE...

Anzaldúa's questions have urged Rich towards a whole new politics, one which deconstructs difference so that new allegiances may be forged between disparate oppressed groups. The non-dualist modes of thinking and writing she has developed over a lifetime of commitment, continually and disruptively challenge habitual patterns of thought, unsettling fixed categories of meaning. This strategy constitutes a significant resistance to the post-Enlightenment knowledge and Christianised Western society. Rich develops what Anzaldúa has described as *mestiza consciousness*, that is, one that moves between thresholds, breaking down those barriers and boundaries between hidebound, conventional classifications that restrict our ability to imagine—and therefore to empathise—with those different from ourselves.

The political tactic adopted by Rich challengingly invites her readers to rethink their political allegiance, to question the labels they are either been given or have chosen within the system of differences operating not only within the dominant culture but also circulating within feminist and other radical groups. At the same time, though she herself has not been seduced by the dense and sophisticated language of the academic philosophies and theories, these clearly inform her writings at a very deep level. In emerging from her experiences of displacement, dislocation, discontinuity, internal difference and geographical migration with all the complexity that entails, in analysing the hybrid nature of her own transcultural identity, Rich has again utterly transformed her awareness and, of course, her politics.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Susan Griffin, preface, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (London: The Women's Press, 1984) xv-xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1986) 81.

<sup>3</sup> Luce Irigaray, "The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry," *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1985) 13-129.

<sup>4</sup> Irigaray 50.

<sup>5</sup> Adrienne Rich, "Cartographies of Silence", *Fact of a Doorframe: Poems Selected and New 1950-84* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1984) 232-236.

<sup>6</sup> Rich, "Cartographies" 232.

<sup>7</sup> Rich, *Of Woman Born* 65.

<sup>8</sup> Rich, *Fact* 233-34.

<sup>9</sup> "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," *Sinister Wisdom* 6 (Summer 1978): 4-25, 22. This set of papers was produced by members of the Lesbians and Litera-

ture Panel at the 1977 annual conference of the *Modern Language Association*, Chicago, which was attended by 700 women.

<sup>10</sup> Rich, *Fact* 235.

<sup>11</sup> Rich, *Fact* 236.

<sup>12</sup> Rich, *Of Woman Born* 64.

<sup>13</sup> Adrienne Rich, "Integrity," *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far: Poems 1978-81* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1981) 8-10, 9.

<sup>14</sup> "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence (1980)," *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1981* (London: Virago, 1987) 23-84, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," *Inside / Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York and London: Routledge, 1991) 20.

<sup>16</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Prieta," *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, eds. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983) 205.

<sup>17</sup> Rich, "Split at the Root," *Blood* 103.

<sup>18</sup> "Split at the Root" 103.

<sup>19</sup> Adrienne Rich, "Yom Kippur 1984," *Your Native Land, Your Life: Poems* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1986) 75-8.

<sup>20</sup> Barbara Gelpi and Albert Gelpi, eds., *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1993) 254.

<sup>21</sup> Diana Fuss, "Inside/ Out" 1-10, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Ed Cohen, "Who Are 'We'? Gay 'Identity' as Political (E)motion (A Theoretical Rumination)," ed. Fuss, 71-92, 75.

<sup>23</sup> See Liz Yorke's chapter "Mother, Daughter, Sister, Lover: Adrienne Rich's Dream of a Whole New Poetry," *Impertinent Voices: Subversive Strategies in Contemporary Women's Poetry* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991) where I draw attention to Rich's emphatic rejection of separatism.

<sup>24</sup> Fuss, "Inside/Out" 5.