ABSTRACT

In “Aesthetics and Politics of Language in Adrienne Rich” I have centred my discussion on Rich’s aesthetics, which she developed through the conscious imitation of the style and stance of the male writers of her time, and which owes to her enterprise of examining and critiquing language for the liberation of women. Thus, this work explores the interconnectedness of language and related cultural issues and women’s subjectivity. Rich writes, “A poet cannot refuse language, choose another medium. But the poet can re-fuse the language given to him or her, bend and torque it into an instrument for connection instead of dominance and apartheid” (FD: Selected Poems 1950-2001, xvi). Rich speculates that language, along with ideologically biased texts of the culture, constructs identity, language, and the cultural texts. These also serve as grounds of resistance for the revision and re-conception of individual and collective subjectivities. For Rich the language of poetry serves as the vehicle for the re-visioning of language, texts, and subjectivity. Hence, a study of the way language relates to power, identity and social change can find fertile ground in her writings. I have interrogated and explored Rich’s writings by recursively visiting key stories, myths, allusions, and themes to demonstrate how Rich’s language and aesthetic technique reflect the process by which women can be both victimized and at the same time liberated by a renovation of the defining parameters of language. Language and the cultural texts themselves are the means with which women can challenge the ways in order to conceive and re-vision their lives.