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GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY IN THE SELECTED POEMS OF AUDRE LORDE

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Audre Lorde was an American writer. As a poet she is best known for technical mastery and emotional expression, as well as her poem expresses her anger and outrage at civil and social injustices she absorbed throughout her life. Her works largely deals with issues related to civil rights, feminism and the exploration of black female identity. AudreLorde often described herself as “Black,lesbian,mother,warrior,poet” she is a famous feminist poet who continued to write poetry and essays for over three decades that helped to shape the landscape of poetry from a queer black perspective. She dedicated both her life and her creative talent in confronting and addressing the injustices of racism, sexism and homophobia. Lorde’s work is rich with symbolism and history from the African Diaspora.She was recognized by many universities obtaining her MLS from Columbia University, an honorary degree from Harvard.

Blackfeminism became popular in the 1960’s as the consequence of the civil rights movement that excluded women from leadership position and the perceived racism of the feminist movement. Audre says, “I write for those women who do not speak,for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We’ve been taught that silence will save us, but it won’t”.Audre focuses on the inconsistencies in how black woman are viewed. She tellsabout her own battle to define her identity outside of society’s norms.

In the first poem “Who said it was simple” the poet talks about Racism, Sexism and how it has affected their society. She wanted to show sexism is just as bad as racism. The poet is looking at a group of well to do white women about to go on a march regarding human rights. They are discussing about their maids,mostly cheap immigrant laborgirls. Meanwhile a half caste waiter serves them ahead of another customer because they are white and the other customer is not. From which they knew that they are victim of racial discrimination. “There are so many roots to the tree of anger/That sometimes the branches shatter before they bear” (1-2)

The first stanza starts with a general note and moves to the poets struggles. She symbolizes the tree as life and tells about its hardship. There are so many angry individuals fighting for their own goals .If roots were fighting which one will give nutrients to the rest of the plant she says instead of working together it makes the branches shatter before they grow. So she asks her people to stand up and join hands for the struggle together.

But I who am bound by my mirror

As well as my bed

See cause in color

As well as sex (11-14)

In these lines she tells the struggle of a woman. She tells that she faces many limitations being a woman. She is bound to her strength .That is the only way she will survive what she is going through. She is judged by what she looks like .They were seen inferior to all men in society, they were confined to mirror and beds all for men’s benefit.

Wondering

Which me will survive
All these liberations (15-17)

She says that no matter which way injustice is portrayed it still has the compelling power to the person. It will be hard to end these prejudices. These lines evoke optimism. She tells she will survive through all of these deprivation. Audre Lorde wants the reader to really think about and hurts everyone and how difficult it is to overcome those who are very judgmental. It has a very good message about the negativity of prejudice. This poem begins with her anger what she has been and the oppression of others around her. In the next poem "A woman speaks", the poet tells about her lived experience of black women in the United States and across the Diaspora. There is no accusation but only declarations of Lorde's own truth. It doesn't place blame but opens up a perspective of the world to others.

My magic is unwritten
But when the sea turns back
It will leave my shape behind (2-4)

Lorde was also battling with breast cancer and eventually lost her life due to it. She knows the severity of her condition but she hopes that even after her death her words or work will have a lasting effect. She was not outrightly negative but she set the perception of women being "treacherous" as wrong one.

I do not mix
Love with pity
Nor hate with scorn (10-12)

She tells attention should be there for understanding and action rather than feelings of remorse. One should not mix love and pity nor hate with scorn. She expresses a sense of being unknown by others. She tells about the voiceless feelings and political representation of a queer woman.

And still seeking
My sisters
Witches in Dahomey
Wear me inside their coiled cloths
As our mother did
Mourning. (19-24)

This calls upon a recurring theme throughout her many pieces that draw attention to the strange position of color as both too strong and also underestimated. She tells about Dahomey. It is a name for the 14th century African infamous for their fierce women warriors, calling them witches is meant to tell how their strength is seen as evil.

This stanza tells about the memory of generations of strong women who searched for a balance between strength and vulnerability. She connects herself to this history of warrior women. She thinks of herself as in being the world of the Dahomey and moves on to her mother and her own experience.

Beware my smile
I am treacherous with old magic (27-29)

These lines are a declaration of mysterious power, with a hint of sarcasm to dismantle the idea of the black woman who is also a lesbian.

I am
woman
and not white (31-33)

She in these lines boldly presents herself as different from white woman and this line tells a strong message that she is proud of it.

Women must not stand subjugated to men in human society. They need equality. The first poem tells women always get oppression by being dominated and making them unite for the look out of all the oppression such as NBFO. The second poem describes moon and sun like love and hope possessed and shown by them. Women want the justice between women and men though they are considered a complement of men responsible only of domestic and menial chores. But still Audre's poem shows equality gained by women through our mental stability. "There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish" –Michelle Obama, The Former first lady of

the United States. "Without courage we can't practice any other virtue with consistency we can't be kind ,true, merciful, generous, or honest"-Maya Angelou,Civil Right activist.

As these women say we do have all virtues in us, we just have to bring it out. So let's make our inner voice to be heard out loud.Thus Gender discrimination and in equality is seen in both the poems of AudreLorde.

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