

READING FEMINISM VOICES IN SELECTED POETRY BY AUDRE LORDE

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Abstract

This paper deals with the feminism voices as reflected in selected poems of Audre Lorde. In this study, the researcher used the descriptive analysis with a lens of black feminist concept. The main focus of this study is the study of women oppression due to the power patriarchy in society and domestic area. This study will be materilized with the selection of Audre Lorde's poems such as A Woman Speaker (1968), For Each Of You (1968), Now (1968), Love Poem (1973), Coal (1976), The Black Unicorn (1978), Who Said It Was Simple (1978), and Power (1982). The result of analysis showed that Audre Lorde challenged patrirchal oppression and supports his women to define their status and freedom under determination of male.

Keywords: *Audre Lorde's poems, feminism, black feminism, women oppression.*

Introduction

This paper is an exploration feminism in the twenty century to a Audre Lorde's poems. Audre Lorde as black feminist writer of American write the poem based on her experience and stressed the importance of understanding of women struggle in against patriarchy society. The describe of Lorde's women was treated as second class, weak, as wife, and miseducation. Mary Wollstoneccraft in her book *A Vindication of The Right of Women* (1792) that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. Women must not be treated as the second society regarded as human inferior and want to equal from women and men right.

The women oppression as the culture patriarchy act to race and gender and the root of women's oppression in social condition. Women have written their experiences into poems based on the experience toward the oppression by white women and men. Plain and Sellers (2007:154) black feminist criticism is a body of critical and creative work written by women of African descent in the United States. The black women find the oppression by American people which negative relationship toward white women and men such as race, sex, and social. This paper analyzes how the women voices in Audre Lorde's selected poems and also analyzes the perspective Audre Lorde's empower his women in her time.

Conceptual Theory

Feminism

In eighteenth century early of feminism. Feminism the equality of right between women and men. The feminism doing by women to refuse all of thing that was subordinated by male dominated in the politic, social, and economic. Feminism is that men and women are inherently until now appear different and the very different occupy in social roles Michael Levin (1994:3). Basically, the movement of feminism appear cause to equal between women and men. The goal of feminism for establishing the equality and legal protection for women toward dominant patriarchal. The classification histories of feminism have talked about the historical appearance of feminist movements with classification are first-wave feminism, second-wave feminism, and third-wave feminism Tandon (2008). The first-wave feminism is nineteenth century until 1960 in the United States and United Kingdom. Second wave-feminism in the 1960s until 1990s. This focused on experience of women that gives much contribution to literary work such as race, discrimination, political issues, social, black, cultural, and other issue of equality. And third-wave feminism began early 1990s to present.

Black Feminism

In the twenty century black women have increasingly explored by feminist cultural perspective. The generally black feminism creative work written by women of African descent in the United State. The contemporary black feminist came into being in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Plain and Sellers (2007:154) black feminist criticism is a body of critical and creative work written by women of African descent in the United States. The black feminist movement grew out to response the black liberation movement and women's movement. The second wave of American feminism which was dominated by white women, and the black power and black arts movements, which were dominated by black men Plain and Sellers (2007:154). The black women have different experienced and more intense of oppression from white women. The term of womenism to distinguish black feminism from white feminism from Lemons (2008). The black women have negative relationship to the American political system has always been determined by oppression racial and sexual. Black women paid work is organized within intersection oppressions of class, race, and gender Sums (2000). The most important in black feminism the committed to struggle against race, sex, and oppression by culture patriarchal in the society.

Women Oppression

The origins of women oppression as an inherent biological trait of men. Oppression is type of injustice in any aspect such as physical and social. As known the first feminism to refuse all oppression toward women is Mary Wollstonecraft (1792), produced vindication of the right of women she was forced to counter the argument which said women is subordination was inevitable and natural. The oppression of women cause difference of race, sex, and social. Simon (1995) stated that have recognized that situations of oppression may modify freedom itself. The way to liberation of women can be divided two manners, first

step thinking that the changes relationship between men and women from string biology and functional become string human and attitude. Second step practice that the important to economic autonomy as door body women liberation. The liberation of working toward women as part the struggle for the liberation.

Methodology

The method that will be used in this research is the descriptive method with qualitative approach. Creswell (1994) descriptive methods beside that arranging and colleting of data, but also analyzing and interpreting the meaning of the data. This method will be applied to analyze feminism voices in portrayed Audre Lorde selection poems. The main data for this study is taken from the selection of Audre Lorde's poems such as *A Woman Speaker (1968)*, *For Each Of You (1968)*, *Now (1968)*, *Love Poem (1973)*, *Coal (1976)*, *The Black Unicorn (1978)*, *Who Said It Was Simple (1978)*, and *Power (1982)*. In these poems the researcher only focused on the voices feminism from black feminism perspective. And then to explore the analysis in-depth this analysis will be supported with some sources such as library, book, journal article, and internet. Furthermore, there several the techniques to analysis this paper such as close reading by paraphrasing the whole poetry, re-reading the poetry intensively, carefully, and frequency then identify each line of the poems which supports the main problem of feminism voice in Audre Lorde's selected poems, looking the words which have relation to feminism issue and black women, analyzing these words by using black feminism concept, and making conclusion based on the research question.

Feminism Voices in Audre Lorde's Poetry

In accordance with Audre Lorde selected poem, in the women oppression and Audre Lorde's the voices empower women that is used in this analysis is based on the theory of black feminism concept.

Women Oppressed

Audre Lorde as a black writer in America, show her women oppressed by gender and race relationship. Women oppressed in Audre Lorde poems which expressed in her poems, can be seen in the beginners poem with title "*A Woman Speaks (1968)*", women in Lorde's century want to speak their voices through Lorde poems. The expression her poems like in stanza bellow:

Moon marked and touched by sun
my magic is unwritten
but when the sea turns back
it will leave my shape behind

From the stanza above it describe that women having important role in life such as a mother, daughter, and wife, in the fact the experiences of women oppressed by men such as women as second class in the society, miseducation, and find the

many discrimination by men isn't very unforgiveable. But, women just human want occupied existence from the other. According to Mary Wollstonecraft (p2) her book *A Vindication of The Right of Women*, state that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. Women want to justice between women and men, eventhough it very difficult, many discrimination of women like only the complete by men, inferior, duty as wife, household, and keep their children.

I seek no favor
untouched by blood
unrelenting as the curse of love
permanent as my errors
or my pride
I do not mix
love with pity
nor hate with scorn
and if you would know me
look into the entrails of Uranus
where the restless oceans pound

In the second stanza, describe that women as weak human especially black women in the twenty century is African woman. Based on the black feminism concept correlation with Plain and Sellers (p154) stated that, black feminist criticism is a body of critical and creative work written by women of African descent in the United States. The oppression by men toward black women made an end of love in hope between men and black women. Whereas, women having honest in love to men until whenever.

In the else poem with title "*For Each of You (1968)*", the description for each woman can do everything without help other people. Like in stanza below;

Be who you are and will be
learn to cherish
that boisterous Black Angel that drives you
up one day and down another
protecting the ploace where your power rises
running like hot blood
from the same source
as you pain

In the stanza it describe that each women is not should be humiliated eventhough different race and gender which become yourself with correlation with black feminism concept like Sums (p45), said that black women paid work is organized within intersection oppressions of class, race, and gender. Black feminism argues that sexism, class oppression, and racism are inextricably bound together. Women must be become herself and can't depend to other people. Black as women who can help each women especially women which get the oppression. Angel brought the shine to give spirit and hope for black women. Woman as weak human and more susceptible find the oppressed by men. As known the first feminism to

refuse all oppression toward women is Mary Wollstonecraft (p1), produced vindication of the right of women she was forced to counter the argument which said women is subordination was inevitable and natural. As women isn't should be done treatment it but every time compassionated.

Speak proudly to your children
where ever you may find them
tell them
you are offspring of slaves
and your mother was
a princess
in darkness

In the stanza above, describe that woman was made the not humanity by men. The justice for women is ignored, because the origin women from African which they regard only white women having can do everything. It's correlation with concept black feminism by Lemons (p12) said that, the term of womenism to distinguish black feminism from white feminism. The black women have different experienced and more intense of oppression from white women.

The next poem "*Now (1968)*", is time of women found that oppression in the second wave feminist correlation 1960s.

Woman power
is
Black power
is
Human power
is
always feeling
my heart beats
as my eyes open
as my hands move
as my mouth speaks
I am
are you
Ready

In the stanza above, it describe of women having oppression and as black women have negative relationship to the American people has always been determined by oppression racial and sexual castes. Women have soul lover more than men and powerful feeling if found that oppressed by men even will apologize them.

The other poem with title "*Love Poem (1973)*", love become as symbol great affection for each human without mutual differences. The portray taken by Lorde's to expression of each woman that in the world we have to together without difference s skin color like black and white.

Speak earth and bless me with what is richest
make sky flow honey out of my hips
rigid mountains
spread over a valley
carved out by the mouth of rain

In the first stanza above, describe that women because only differences of color skin with other woman where black more intense get the oppression by other people and as creation by God should be loved despite only difference skin color. It's correlation with black feminism concept by Lemons (p12), the term of womenism to distinguish black feminism from white feminism. The black women have different experienced and more intense of oppression from white women.

Like in the other poem with title "*Coal (1976)*", coal as black color have the oppression such as race and sex. Coal as the darkness which given the sorrow in the world.

Is the total black, being spoken
From the earth's inside.

In the first stanza above, it describe that expressed black women as black feminist, leader, and poet which have relation with her individual and community in the society. women as black got the oppression by white women and black men cause difference color. Plain and Sellers (p154) stated that, black feminist criticism is a body of critical and creative work written by women of African descent in the United States.

There are many kinds of open
How a diamond comes into a knot of flame
How a sound comes into a word, coloured
By who pays what for speaking

In the stanza above, describe that black women always open for each human without the difference any aspect. The relationship between black, black women was born in the world are like diamond that be protect by god.

Some words are open
Like a diamond on glass windows
Singing out within the crash of passing sun
Then there are words like stapled wagers
In a perforated book buy and sign and tear apart
And come whatever wills all chances
The stub remains
An ill-pulled tooth with a ragged edge

In the stanza above, describe that found that negative effect between coal and diamond. Coal as fuel which be used by human for the transportation while the

diamond is luxury and special. Diamond, everyone want it cause making someone high class without difference color white and black. In the society find that the women do act unjust and sometime brutal so all the women interaction for together in any aspect and plait together relationship in every women.

The other poem with title “*The Black Unicorn (1978)*”, as describe that black women and feminist poem. The expression by black women which get the oppression in any aspect such as race and gender.

The black unicorn is greedy
The black unicorn is impatient
'The black unicorn was mistaken

In the stanza above, describe that the expression of every women, black women, mother, and daughter. The woman have been strong for resistance each problem eventhough only on a woman. Women get the oppression such as race, sex, gender, and social.

The black unicorn is restless
the black unicorn is unrelenting
the black unicorn is not free

In the stanza above, describe that black women always be patient look out the dominate. Black women have experience through dominated by race and gender.

In the poem with title “*Who Said it Simple (1978)*”, the describe of women oppression toward men in everywhere can be seen below

There are so many roots to the tree of anger
that sometimes the branches shatter
before they bear. Sitting in Nedicks
the women rally before they march
discussing the problematic girls
they hire to make them free

In the stanza above, describe that the women always get the oppression by dominated. Simon (p90) stated that have recognized that situations of oppression may modify freedom itself. The black women often talk about their feeling of the concept of sexual politic, patriarchal rule, and practice women use to struggle against oppression.

In the last poem is ” *Power (1982)*”, the description about the victim of people and women life from Africa which decent to America. The black women life in the big city that many treatment, thief and abuse sex.

The difference between poetry and rhetoric
is being ready to kill
yourself
instead of your children

In the stanza above, describe that black is from Africa and white is from America. Black women and white women very difference level in the soeity. Black women more get the oppression than white women.

Today that 37 year old white man
with 13 years of police forcing
was set free
by eleven white men who said they were satisfied
justice had been done
and one Black Woman who said
“They convinced me” meaning
they had dragged her 4'10" black Woman's frame
over the hot coals
of four centuries of white male approval
until she let go
the first real power she ever had
and lined her own womb with cement
to make a graveyard for our children.

In the stanza above, describe that the white man or the policeman in the New York which the shoot the boy until died, but in the judgment the police get the free in the fact committed errors of police. The descrimination not only for the black women but also all the Afro-American like childreen. Consequently, as black women refuse all the action by American people toward all the Afro-American. The oppression black women cause difference of race.

Audre Lorde Challenged Women Oppression

Audre Lorde write the poems based on ther experience. She is described herself as a black feminist in the twenty century from America. In the poems by Lorde as expression empower women to raise their status in the society it can be seen in the beginners poems as follows, In the first poem with title “*A Woman Speaks (1968)*”, the voices of women for raise their status in the society. The expression of woman to resist all the oppression.

I do not dwell
within my birth nor my divinities
who am ageless and half-grown
and still seeking
my sisters
witches in Dahomey
wear me inside their coiled cloths
as our mother did
mourning

In the stanza, describe of women resist oppression with speaks in the public such as around the world as the movement to find their right like in 1960 in the second

wave feminist. Moreover, women especially black women do something to resistance all the discrimination of men. Like in Lorde said,

“When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak”.

Every woman found the equality of suffrage and should be ending discrimination from American people. Women must not be created as second class in the society and family. Otherwise, women should be found the affection by men.

I have been woman
for a long time
beware my smile
I am treacherous with old magic
and the noon's new fury
with all your wide futures
promised

In the stanza above, describe that softness woman which having stronger in any aspect and will resist each oppression. Women want to get the free from domination of men. But, to resist of oppression by men, power of women as tool refuse it. The liberation of oppressed by men at time come in the future even though isn't easy to find it.

I am
woman
and not white

In the stanza above, describe that the expression to describe each woman and woman from America as black woman who can't regard weak woman. In line “and not white”, Lorde said that,

“We are African women and we know, in our blood's telling, the tenderness with which our foremothers held each other”.

The describe as black woman and black feminist Afro-America. According to Plain and Sellers (p154) stated that, black feminist criticism is a body of critical and creative work written by women of African descent in the United States. The black feminist from Africa which decent in the United Stated. Every woman want to raise their status with refuse of the oppression.

The other poem with title “*For Each of You (1968)*”, the expression by Lorde's for the each women to appraise women without difference color and source of life.

Be who you are and will be
learn to cherish

that boisterous Black Angel that drives you
up one day and down another
protecting the ploace where your power rises
running like hot blood
from the same sourse
as you pain

In the stanza above describe that black women have different experienced and more intense of oppression from white women. The word “black angel”, angel as women which given shine every black women. The word “angel” can be described the roles of angel such as protecting, guiding human beings, and carrying out God’s tasks. The describe that Lorde, s for women as angel can be protection her children are Jonathon and Elizabeth when divorce with her husband Edward Rollins in 1970. The power of women as the movement among the people black African.

Speak proudly to your children
where ever you may find them
tell them
you are offspring of slaves
and your mother was
a princess
in darkness

In the stanza above, describe that women having experience to talk new generation as proud as black women in the future isn’t discrimination. S. Mills (p2) stated that most feminism hold a belief that women as a group are treated oppressively and differently from men and that subject to personal and institutional discrimination.

Next poem with title “*Now (1968)*”, is time to each woman for resistance every oppression by dominant. The description of Lorde’s to express of woman which have the strong as black women to against all of the oppression. “Now” is time to women find the equality between women and men.

Woman power
is
Black power
is
Human power
is
always feeling
my heart beats

In the stanza above, describe that women must not be treated as second class in the society. Therefore, women the expression as give protection, spirit, and love. The strong of black women for all the resistance and oppression by white women and men. The word “black power”, is slogan for people of Africa decent to America. According to Joseps (p3) the black power first in Mississippi Delta and

the famous person is Martin Luther King, Jr in 1966. Moreover Joseph said that, black power activist a militant a new race consciousness the identity of black as the soul of a new radicalism. The black power activists such as racial justice, job, black studied program university, and community control of school. Plain and Sellers (p154) contemporary black feminist criticism came into being in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The origins of the feminist movement are found in the nineteenth century in Europe and America. The word “human power”, every human in the world having a strong that as part of their life. Power is always fundamental for each women to do something, without power it is impossible can do action. The power that having by women, black women, and each human as sign that women can’t to ignore in this life, even the women can be resistant all thing which can smash the women. Women can do action if their find the oppression by men and white women. The sense of women can response all of thing their feeling.

In the poem *“Love Poem (1973)”*, it can be expressed by women as love to god, children, and women. Love can give spirit. The describe when she write first the poems at age twelve to thirteen years old as expressed her felling. Lorde’s study at Hunter College High School and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 1959.

Speak earth and bless me with what is richest
 make sky flow honey out of my hips
 rigis mountains
 spread over a valley
 carved out by the mouth of rain

In the stanza above, describe Lorde expression that woman come from earth Africa decent to America which get the protection from God and as woman many literary work such as poem, essay, and novel.

The other poem is *“Coal (1976)”*, coal which have black color, the expression women from Africa who get the oppression by white women from American people.

I
Is the total black, being spoken
 From the earth's inside

In the stanza above, describe the word “I” as the expression of woman self as black women from America. Total black, being spoken, the expression that woman as black women which decent to America. Lorde expression that black women want to raise status in the society and resistance all the oppression.

Love is a word another kind of open
 As a diamond comes into a knot of flame
I am black because I come from the earth's inside
 Take my word for jewel in your open light

In the stanza above, describe that expression to describe that women as black feminist and leader in the black American. Women as the black feminist which get the oppression by men but their overcome to in her life. As the women African which decent in the United States, black woman susceptible oppression by American people.

The else poem is "*The Black Unicorn (1978)*", the expression each women as black women, mother, feminist, and daughter which have many challenges in the life. She refused the description that limited her and other women only one category.

The black unicorn is greedy
The black unicorn is impatient
'The black unicorn was mistaken

In the stanza above, the describe for each woman who powerful for resistance every oppression. Women complaint against white American thrusting its unnatural culture on black. Lemons (p12) The term of womenism to distinguish black feminism from white feminism. The black women have different experienced from white women.

The next poem is "*Who Said it Was Simple (1978)*", the expression by Lorde's refuse if black women only as the human inferior which only as weak women. Lorde which as black woman from America want to resist for the liberation of dominated.

But I who am bound by my mirror
as well as my bed
see causes in color
as well as sex and sit here wondering
which me will survive
all these liberations

In the stanza above, describe the expression by Lorde for woman cause as black color and woman get the oppression by men but always effort to raise their status in social life. Lorde said,

"My Black woman's anger is a molten pond at the core of me, my most fiercely guarded secret".

As women that always get the oppression not only cause color and also cause sex flatterer by men. The word "survive", "liberations", the describe that women making unite for the look out all the oppression such as NBFO (The National Black Feminist Organization). Simon (p90) have recognized that situation of oppression may modify freedom itself.

In the last poem with title "*Power (1982)*", power the describe each black women as women for find the identity to resist oppression.

The difference between poetry and rhetoric
is being ready to kill
yourself
instead of your children

In the first stanza above, describe the resistance of black women toward dominated men. Black women from Africa have issue such as class, sex, and race. The development of black women in the second wave 1960s. one of the goal of black women is liberation and women movement.

Based on the findings, it could be analyzed that black feminism appear to find the same of equality between women and men. The women oppressed and Audre Lorde empower women as part of black feminism in the second wave feminist in twenty century. According to Plain and Sellers (p154) explained that, contemporary black feminist criticism came into being in the late 1960s and early 1970s connection in the second wave feminist. All of poems by Lorde talk about black feminism which found that women oppression and empower women to resistance from men dominated.

The black women find the discrimination in every aspect in life such as gender, race, and sex. Women create as second class in the society, as wife, and as keep the children. Black women more intent find of oppression than white women. Moreover, oppression of women from Africa cause of race and gender. The origin of the women oppression is social condition. The act of women to refuse of all oppression toward women is known Mary Wollstonecraft in the eight century. Oppression is one of the type injustice in any aspect such as social, race, and gender.

Furthermore, women want to overcome find their identity in the society such as refuse of the oppression both white women and men from American people. The black feminist movement grew out to response the black liberation movement and women movement. Moreover, the black women making organization specially black women is NBFO (The National Black Feminist Organization). Sums (p45), said that black women paid work is organized within intersection oppressions of class, race, and gender. black feminism is a process of struggle that empowers women and men to actualize a humanist vision of community. The way to liberation of women toward men dominated are change relationship of women and men from string human and attitude and liberation of working toward women. Black women who participated in the black liberation movement often discrimination against sexually and racially. Women overcome to raise their status in the society and get the same right between men and women.

Moreover, Audre Lorde is balck women also one of the famous poet from American. She describe as black feminism in the twenty century in America. Plain and Sellers (p154) stated that, black feminist criticism is a body of critical and creative work written by women of African descent in the United States. The generally black feminism creative work written by women of America descent in America. One of the famous poem by Audre Lorde is the black unicorn as a black women and feminist poet. In addition, Lorde said that,

“I am a Black Feminist”. “I mean I recognize that my power as well as my primary oppressions come as a result of my blackness as well as my womaness, and therefore my struggles on both of these fronts are inseparable”.

From the quotation above, it's clear that Lorde as black feminism. Lorde write the poem based on the experience which deal issue of class, race, and gender. The poem from Audre Lorde find that women experience under men control and dominated. She want struggle for their right and make a better life because get the oppression from men dominated.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher can be concluded that black feminism came in the second wave feminism related in the 1960s and early 1970s. Contemporary black feminist in the Second Wave of American feminism which was dominated by white women, and the black power and black arts movements, which were dominated by black men Plain and Sellers (154). The oppression of women because difference of race and gender. The most important in black feminism is the committed to struggle against oppression from men dominated and resistance all of the oppression.

Conclusion

Audre Lorde's as black feminism in the twenty century has clearly portrayed the women oppression and find the identity in the society in her poems. The selected poems by Audre Lorde's such as *A Woman Speaker (1968)*, *For Each Of You (1968)*, *Now (1968)*, *Love Poem (1973)*, *Coal (1976)*, *The Black Unicorn (1978)*, *Who Said It Was Simple (1978)*, and *Power (1982)*. The patriarchal culture in the society that superiority of men has oppressed of women. Addition, men dominated social and cultural systems, men have the power, and men have the superiority over women and children. Black women find of oppression by culture of men and always weak, as second class and more get the oppression than men. Furthermore, Lorde's empower herself by refuse the image that she only one category, raise the positive image, refuse negative mind of human in life. Add, Lorde's get the oppression cause of her race and gender. Lorde's overcome from her oppression, gives the energy for other women to resist of the discrimination culture.

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