

Anger, Resistance and the Reclamation of Nature in Audre Lorde's Eco-poeticsⁱ

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Abstract:

After decades of literary criticism that is solely focused on one dimensional reading of literary texts, some of the relatively recent studies are turning towards a more comprehensive analysis that lies at the intersection of numerous literary theories. Eco criticism and post-colonial analysis for example can form a dual prospective that open the doors for a deeper understanding and appreciation of literary texts that can never be reached via the traditional one dimensional reading. Post-colonial theory, for instance, provides very specific critical tools that help to explore the ways in which black literature as an example, addresses the intersection between racial oppression and the exploitation of nature. Nature is usually pictured in literature as a place of pose and meditation, yet due to the long history of discrimination and abuse it is represented differently in African American Literature. However, recent analysis of African American poetry like Katherine Lynes' (2015) for instance, refers to the eco-poetics of nature reclamation. Selected examples from African American poetess Audre Lord are to be examined here via this particular scope. Black dragon fish, angry trees, shattered branches, black unicorns and buried diamonds are only few examples of Lorde's ecological angry "others" and eco-poetics of reclamation. What is the role played by nature in the African American struggle of self- definition and liberation? How does ecocriticism as a form of literary critique respond to the post-colonial interrogation of equity and sustainability? How can literature and poetry in particular enable African American poets to reclaim their voice and textual authority over nature? These are the questions that come at the core of the ecopostcolonial dual critical reading employed in this study.

Keywords: African American poetry, Audre Lord, ecocriticism, Eco-poetics, post-colonial poetry, reclamation of nature