

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

Introduction:

The 1990s witnessed the call for greener literature and critical approaches that brings more awareness to the environment. Recently known as eco-centric or ecocriticism; the name can be relatively new but the awareness of nature in literary writings and critique is not. In addition to the Romantic concern with nature and creatures, many poets and writers are known for their empathetic tendencies towards the environment and the wellbeing of other creatures, to name a few Wordsworth, Li Po and Basho are probably among the well-known examples. During the late years of the twentieth century literary texts with eco focus had tremendously increased that the 1999 summer issue of *New Literary History* was in full about eco literature and criticism as well as the October forum of PMLA which reflect the growing interest in such themes. However, the traditional Wordsworthian love for nature and pastoral landscape are no longer enough for the more recent wave of what is now known as the eco literature and criticism, for the current pursuit of the ecological lit determines more than the classical admiration of the rural and the pastoral landscape of the Romanticism (Slaymaker, 2001, 130). Buell, (1995). suggested four criteria that distinguish the tradition of nature writing from that of literature inspired by environment and ecological concern in his book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of the American Culture*. The presence of natural history in human history, the interest of nonhumans, the ethical orientation of human beings towards the environment and considering the kinetic force of nature and criticism to the static model of nature are the four criteria presented by Buell (1995, 7-8). In that sense nature is not to be considered as a static background and rather to be included as a dynamic factor in the lives of people and in the literary production as well. Such human and nonhuman interaction with nature is what increasingly characterizing environmental literature and recently becoming at the core of ecocriticism.

Introducing his article documenting the urge of rereading African American literature in the lights of ecocriticism, Scott Hicks identified the task of the eco-critics in the last decade as to engage the cultural production of the people of color in their theorizing and discussions (2006, 202). He suggested employing alternative tools of analysis while reading African American literature eco critically some of which are; integrating a post-colonial viewpoint and avoiding the traditional clichés of nature presentations (Hicks, 212).

According to the editors of *The Ecopoetry Anthology* (2013), three definitional categories are presented to ecopoetry which comprising many different subcategories: nature poetry, environmental and the ecological poetry (Fisher- Wirth and Street, xxviii-xxix). The first considers nature as a subject like the poetry of Romanticism, it always demonstrates the human reaction to an emotional experience while interacting with nature, nature is usually a "backdrop" or an aesthetic object helps the human to "contemplate and repose" (ad. in Lynes, 2015, 50). The second is linked with the environmental movements of the 1960s which is more committed to the question of injustice and also the issues of damage and degradation, while the third includes poems that are often described as more "experimental" and "representational" (2013, p. xxix), they also pointed out that some poems may participate in multiple categories (xxx).

Nature in African American writings was never a place of repose and meditation. It is always associated with fear, anger and danger (Lynes, 2015). The lynching and torture scenes, escaping plans, slave meetings etc. all happen in the woods and were linked with fear and horror

of the masters who are the aggressors of both humans and nonhumans in the environment. Contemporary readings of African American literary productions show opposite tendencies towards nature as an active element in survival equation and struggle. Such writings reclaimed the nature through self-identification with other nonhuman members in the eco systems.

No single African American poet and writer can provide the multiplicity of dimensional literary reading such as Audre Lorde. She can be viewed, as suggested by many critics, as the embodiment of "Otherness" in the American societyⁱⁱ. She is known as a black woman activist, a mother a cancer survival in addition to many other identities that are always attached to her name. Most of all, Lorde is known for her anger and the ability to survive amidst multiple discriminative situations. Images of angry nature elements and re-connectedness with African ancestors especially women clearly mark and distinguish Lorde's poetry which can be viewed as examples of reclamation ecopoeticsⁱⁱⁱ. 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 stimulated the eco postcolonial reading of Audre Lorde's poetry. With reference to Lawrence Buell's ethical concern to the environment together with Lynes' concept of reclamation, AudreLorde's poetics is to be examined here. Three particular approaches to her ecopoetics come at the core of this study to answer the study questions. The first demonstrates the twin ship and duality between human beings and nature as they struggle against discrimination and aggression, the second exemplifies the black race identity and self-definition and connectedness to nature, and the third is the use of mythology as descriptor of the fetishized self. Three poems are to be thematically analyzed here as examples of the three approaches respectively: "Afterimages", "Coal" and "The Black Unicorn" which are among Lorde's frequently anthologized and widely read poems. A dual post- colonial and eco reading of the three poems will be applied here.

Theoretical Framework:

Post-colonialism

Post-colonial theory grew out of discontent over the ways the indigenous is treated. It expresses rejection to the ways of reading the indigenous and to the aggression and marginality "he" is treated with. Resistance to the practices of the colonizer generally marks post-colonial writings as asserted by Barbra Harlow in her *Resistance Literature* (1987) and S. Slemon in his *Resistance in Caribbean Literature* (1995) for instance. Harlow defines resistance as "an act to rid people from the oppressors, and it so thoroughly infuses the experience of living under oppression that it becomes an almost autonomous aesthetic principle"(2). In post-colonial studies, the relation between the colonizer and the colonized is marked by oppression and resistance, it is a relation between two humans where nature is usually marginal or a backdrop. Resistance to the fixities and the ideological construction of otherness is defined by (Said, 1978), (Derrida, 1983), and (Bahaba, 1983). However, with the increased attention to ecological concerns, nature is no longer in the background of the colonized/colonizer relationshipasthe investigation of the construction of otherness in the colonial discourse currently includes non-humans and natural elements as well.

Post- colonial Ecocriticism

The theoretical backbone of both post-colonialism and ecocriticism simply lies in the ethical concept of justice, for justice provides a space for theoretical bridging between the two, whether it is justice towards human beings or towards the environment (Ross, & Hunt, 2010). Since humans are the most valuable entity in nature, Julie Sze groups writings that address environmental concern alongside with those with social justice concerns. She emphasized that race and labor as part of what constitutes "nature" and thus people especially the racialized communities are "at the center of what constitutes environment and nature" (Sze, 2002, 163). Therefore poems that address human concerns as part of the concern of aggression against environment are clearly linked to the ecopoetics. In that sense, resistance links between the two as both lines of literary writings challenge different forms of exploitations against environment and humans. Connectedness between human and nature is suggested by Hamoud (2012) and Glotfelty & Fromm (1996) among others. Glotfelty & Fromm define ecocriticism as a subject that takes into consideration the "interconnections between nature and culture" (97). Thus finding parallel lines of resistance among the two is not farfetched as both were subjects of aggression from the colonizer/aggressor and both use resistance in different forms as means of reversing the aggression and back fighting. The dual ecopostcolonial reading is suggested by others as well such as; Christine Gerhardt (2002), Anthony Vital (2008) to name a few.

Ecoresistance

The term "ecoresistance" is coined by Ahmed, & Hashim (2014) in their analysis of Mahmoud Darwish's poems of resistance; it provides a dual framework from both post- colonial and ecocriticism as parallel lines of analysis to literature of resistance. Ecoresistance is to be used in this study as a tool of analysis combined with the post-colonial tool to read Audre Lorde's selected poems as examples of her reclamation poetry.

Reclamation Ecopoetics

Reclamation as defined in Oxford English Dictionary "rescue from error" or "return from the right course", the *Reclamation ecopoetics* is used here based on Lynes', (2015). Analysis of the African American history of reclamation of ecopoetics which she suggests extends the definitional categories of *The Ecopoetry Anthology* mentioned above. Lynes emphasizes that along with the dangers brought to nature, the history of endangering the black humans should also be considered and thus the reclamation ecopoetics by African American poets is to be suggested as an additional category of the ecopoetics (2015, 51). In contrast to the Romantic Wordsworthian fascination with nature as a source of inspiration and meditation to man in general and to poets in particular, nature may bring to the African American poet images of exploitation and aggression, thus it is a source of fear and anticipation of danger, the African American history does not fail short to bring memories of lynching and torture that took place on the trees and in natural scenes.

Anger & Survival

Audre Lorde represents a clear example of resisting the exploitation of the black race in particular and all forms of exploitations and discrimination in general. An ecopostcolonial reading to her poems provides an explanation to her understanding of the eco system as an

undivided whole. Aggression against nature in any form like racial discrimination against any group of people results in the anger of other forces of nature.

Born to Caribbean immigrants from Grenada in New York (1934), Lorde learnt the hard way to survive different types of discrimination. Being a poor black woman growing up in one of the toughest cities and toughest times as well taught her to develop several surviving techniques some of which were inspired by nature and by her ancestral connections. Being in a very disadvantageous position as a black child to hardworking parents and experiencing very severe health conditions at an early age as she was born at the verge of blindness and remained as such for few years taught her to live with multiple frustrations, it also taught her survival techniques that became real handy in her race struggle as a grown up woman and black academician. She also survived another health trauma as she was later fought and survived cancer. "I learned to define myself in order to survive. Survival was programmed into me as essential", "Whatever my mom thought would mean survival" Lorde emphasized in an interview, (Hammond, 1980, 18).

Lorde's survival techniques included self- identification on the multiple levels of her being and rechanneling the power of anger. Anger is one of Lorde's reactions to racism, anger against the belief of inherit superiority of some people over others or over other being is evidently clear in her poetic and other literary works. Her poem "Who Said it Was Simple", opens with "There are so many roots to the tree of anger" (Lorde, 1995, 32), color, gender and poverty are among those roots. The poem describes the roots as being tangled and deeply imbedded in the ground yet it ends with the poet's questioning her ability to channel the anger and survive. In that sense she sees anger as a liberator if used wisely as she channels anger into words instead of the silence choice she was taught earlier in her life and was taken by many others in the same disadvantageous situations she explains in her " The Use of Anger":

My response to racism is anger. I have lived with that anger, ignoring it, feeding upon it, learning to use it before it laid my visions to waste, for most of my life. Once I did it in silence, afraid of the weight. My fear of anger taught me nothing (Lorde, 2007, 124).

Anger becomes the fuel needed to survival of African women against the negative forces of destruction and marginalization; however anger should not be destructive as it has to be channeled to be a useful energy and power for change:

Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a powerful source of energy serving progress change. And when I speak of change, I do not mean a simple switch of positions or temporary lessening of tensions, nor the ability to smile or feel good. I am speaking of a basic and radical alteration in those assumptions underlining our lives (Lorde, 127).

Therefore anger is to be utilized as a survival technique and used for change and improvement not as a destructive power (Lorde, 2007, "Anger"131). The child who was almost voiceless for few years at her early age learnt to regain and reclaim voice through poetry. Poetry

allowed her to regain voice, reclaim her identity and to channel and diverted her anger; she explains how she becomes a poet saying: *I am a reflection of my mother's secret poetry as well as her hidden angers* (Lorde, *Zami*1982, 32).

Poetry as taught by the mothers of Africa and the ancestors is what give African American women the energy to survive and to impose change in their communities. "Poetry was something I learnt from my mother's strangeness and from my father's silence". A "warrior" she was raised to be, and learnt how to create connections with nature, people and ancestors to "survive"(Hammond, 1980, 18). Poetry, to Lorde opens places of possibilities and becomes an indispensable tool of survival as she expresses in her "Poetry is not a Luxury": same as above For women, then poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change (Lorde, 2007, 37).

Poetry of Survival and the Reclamation of Nature:

Lorde's poetry is not a luxury as she repeatedly emphasized (Lorde, 2007), it is instrumental in her struggle of survival and equity. In Lorde's poetry nature is not a backdrop; it is an interactive element in the lives of people. The different objects in nature revolt against the exploitation of humans and against the stereotypical fixities. The support of nature to the revolution of the human against subjugation is supported and signified by a parallel revolt of the elements of nature as trees, wind, fish, rocks etc. Lorde's poetry in terms of her reclamation of nature can be viewed within John Frow's framework of intertextuality and the integration of intertextual and pre-textual materials(1982, 231). Many critics pointed out the fact that Lorde's works are to be read in connectivity to each other as there is certain intertextual dialogue between her works both prose and poetry. The points of origin of her texts are discourses of race which occur before the texts and are "retroactively summoned" for the purpose of this particular text (Dhairyam, 1992, 253). For example Sagri Dhairyam suggested that Lorde uses to name her autobiography *Zami a New Spelling of my Name 1982*, a biomythography instead of a biography "recognizes the tactical uses of fictional identity but refuses to grant the author primacy over the textuality of her life". She uses such strategy in her poems as well denying themselves the surety of any simple reality outside the text, they engage in dialogue across an array of texts and discourses (Dhairyam, 1992, 231).

Nature is reclaimed in Lorde's poetry through different possibilities of resistance to the colonial discourse as will be detailed in the analysis below. Three alternative possibilities are recurrently observed in her poems, these possibilities are never distinctive from each other, and they are rather over lapping forming an intertextual connectivity. The first is the connectedness between the lives of people and those of that of the other elements of nature which unite them as comrade in the struggle of liberation and equity. The second is the reclamation of one's voice through the self- identification and connectedness with one's roots and origins. The third can be observed through the reclamation of the black aesthetics and beauty as distinctive, genuine and different from the colonial constructs of fixities, and the use of mythology as a descriptor of the fetichized self. "Afterimages", "Coal" and "The Black Unicorn" are three from Lorde's milestone poems, the following discussion will address Lorde's reclamation of ecopoetics in the three poems as they represent her alternative possibilities of reclamation respectively.

"Afterimages" and the Survival of the Dragon fish

"Afterimages" is one of clear the examples of Lorde's nature reclamation poems if not the clearest. The lynching of a young African American boy and the destruction of a white woman's home by the flooding in Jackson Mississippi are the two events around which the poem is centered. The poem links between the two in a cause and effect relation despite the twenty four years that separate them. The terror, aggression and injustice caused by the first one resulted in the destruction in the second. The memories of pain caused by the lynching of Emmitt Till in the woods in the first story are linked to the pain caused by the destruction of the White woman's home. Like most of Lorde's poems the meanings are not easy to grasp at the first reading and it has to be read in full to put the pieces of the puzzle together. The four parts of the lengthy narrative poem presents a lively collage of Lorde's recollection of visions and images created by the two horrible events and her reactions to both. The poem presents a mixture of narrative tools, dialogues and what Gail Lewis describes as mental conversations to link the two events with poet's personal experience and emotions (2005, 140). Images of the revolting nature and the angry river summons many other painful images in the poet's mind. The first part of the poem acts as an introduction to the two stories and the poet's statement of how she learns survival techniques from other creatures in nature like the dragon fish:

However the image enters
 its force remains within
 my eyes
 rockstrewn caves where dragonfish evolve
 wild for life, relentless and acquisitive
 learning to survive
 where there is no food
 my eyes are always hungry
 and remembering
 however the image enters
 its force remains.
 A white woman stands bereft and empty
 a black boy hacked into a murderous lesson
 recalled in me forever
 like a lurch of earth on the edge of sleep
 etched into my visions
 food for dragonfish that learn
 to live upon whatever they must eat
 fused images beneath my pain. (Lorde, 1997,36)

The interlocking relation between the two events happened in the poet's mind is her approach to reclaim nature. Like the poet herself, nature never forgets the aggression happened twenty four years back and was continuously happening against young black men and the black race in general. Emotions of terror stirred anger in the poet's memory as well as the nature's, "the force" of the memory remains alive in the poet's mind forever as the painful images are "etched" into the poet's vision. The memory of pain transcends the poet until she sees another person in pain and was able to link between the two. The flooding and the revolution of the river is the

nature's way of getting back against the aggressors and avenging the victims. Though happened only in the poet's mind, the link between the two stories is not coincidental; for both happened in Jackson Mississippi, both happened in nature the first in the woods and the second in the flooding river. People are horrified and agonized in both of them. The poem presents a collage of overlapping images from both stories along with the images created in the poet's dreams or nightmares as a result of being horrified by the first story. What helped in making these images alive in the poet's memory for a long time is the media. The poem exemplifies how the story of the boy accused of rape was the center of the media attention for a long time which lobbied the public opinion of the white community against the blacks and pictures of the tortured boy's body was used to satisfy the whites and avenge for the boy's alleged crime.

The white woman kept repeating: "hard but not that hard" as she tries to climb over anything high to escape the flood, the same sentence uttered by the boy. Only this time it is the judgment passed by the river not by people that is being effective " now the Pearl River speaks its muddy judgment /and I withhold my pity and my bread" (stanza IV line 8). The river is the judge and the avenger at the same time; it remained angry for so long, and now it is time to revolt and get back to the aggressors. The river is the ethical judge who turned to be on the side of the victim to enforce justice.

The poem also presents a personal experience for the poet's own survival techniques. Reclamation of nature occurs in this poem in the poet's mind in a form of dialogic imagines, as she identifies herself with one of the nature's smallest yet toughest creatures; the dragonfish. A line of similarity is drawn here between the two "Othered" creatures or as Lawrence Buell puts it "doubly otherized" as nonhumans and nonwhites are othered by the white race and are seen as aliens (1995, 20-21). The dragonfish is not considered a beautiful creature and lives on very little food. Likewise the poet herself is not considered beautiful by the white social standards, marginalized by the mainstream Americans and learns how to survive on very little means. Additionally, Lorde resembles the dragonfish in her relentlessness and acquisitive power. The weight of agonies remembered by the poet made her "wade through summer ghosts" and transformed her into a dragonfish, the poet's anger is working within herself to help her to survive her awkward social situation exactly like the dragonfish. Nature is reclaimed here as it avenges the injustice happen to the black boy and also through the identification with other creatures who are likewise othered. Though the term " other" is an "overworked term in current academic discourse", as described by Derick Attridge, nevertheless, he made use of the "Derridean and Levinasian" concepts of "creating the other", as a practice of empowering and lending agency to existants who have little voice or power (1999, 21). In the lights of Attridge's lending agency and power, Lorde's boy victimized and butchered by the whites is given voice through nature, and the river that witnessed his suffering is the same agent that avenged him. Similarly the dragonfish is given voice through the reversal of the othering process; it is given voice from nature and learnt how to revolt and voice her anger. By the same token the poet as an exploited black woman is given voice through the agents of nature and was able to reclaim her power through nature; the poet was given power through poetry and her ability to speak out her anger. The river is given power by flooding. The support in the struggle of survival here comes from the river which is lifelong companion of the African Americans in their freedom struggle. It is a recurrent image and symbol that is frequently used by African American poets to refer to the

origin of life in Africa and the subjugation the black race suffered as they sold by the sides of the Mississippi river in America^{iv}.

Reclamation through self-identification

"Coal" is one of Lorde's most anthologized poem is another example of her reclamation ecopoetics. It is one of the most widely read poems representing the black aesthetics as it celebrates the beauty and singularity of the black race (Dhairyam, 1992, 231). The poem forms a significant part of Stephen Henderson's *Understanding The New Black Poetry and Black Music as Poetic References* (1973) which is considered the literary manifesto of the Black Power movement of the sixties (qtd. in Dhairyam, 1992, 231). "Coal" also symbolizes the connection between the black race and nature as it creates the linkage between the black people and earth referring to the authenticity and originality of the black race. By creating and highlighting these connections with nature, Lorde is stating a clear example of self-identification and self-definition that resents all other forms of labeling and categorization. The idea is clearly set at her prologue to the biomythography *Zami* as it opens with her self-definition as being part of nature that defies all other man-made definitions and compartmentalization: "*Woman forever, My body, a living representation of other life older longer wiser. The mountains and valleys, trees, rocks. Sand and flower and water and stone. Made in Earth*" (Lorde, 1982, 7).

"Coal" sends a clear message of nature reclamation as the poet identifies with earth as the origin and root of her being. She gain voice through reconnecting with earth. The black beauty can resemble the diamonds which come from the same source form the earth's inside:

I

Is the total black, being spoken
From the earth's inside.
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 (Lorde, 1997,78).

Nature is reclaimed here through the act of speaking which gives voice to those who are neglected and overlooked like the "total blacks". Anger becomes word formations in this poem; some may see the light and explode on the poet's tongue while others remain as a disease irritating her throat:

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.
Some words live in my throat
Breeding like adders. Others know sun
Seeking like gypsies over my tongue
To explode through my lips
Like young sparrows bursting from shell.

Some words
Bedevil me(Lorde,1997,78).

Poetry as it is composed of words is thus the poets' venue to express her anger after being enabled by connection with earth to speak up. Coal is chosen here for its color as a representation of blackness and also for its value as a source of energy; it can also be considered as an example of the exploitation of earth. Yet another type of the earth's treasures is revealed here which is the diamond because of her ability to speak and express anger the poet resembles the diamond of the earth as she is able to "open", and express her emotion of anger against the exploitation of her race and of the violence of forcible extraction of earth's riches.

The importance of "Coal" lies not only in its clear self-identification and reclamation of nature but also in its clear emphasis of black art and black athletics as being a source of black power and empowerment through biologism (Dhairyam, 1992, 232). It highlights the authenticity of black poetics and its role in creating the precise identity as the visionary ending lines of the poem suggest:

I am black because I come from the earth's inside
now take my word for jewel in the open light(Lorde 1997,78).

The Fetishized Others and the Poetics of Reclamation

"The Black Unicorn" is the title poem of Lorde's collection of poems (1978) and undoubtedly a unique example of Lorde's reclamation ecopoetics. The poem can be seen as one of Lorde's poems celebrating the notion of human difference as she respects other beings no matter how different they are from the "norm" (Lewis, 2005, 141). It is also another example of Lorde's plea for the defense of alterity and its acceptance as Slaymaker puts it (2001, 132) based on Attridge's ethical response to nature (1991).

The unicorn is a rare creature that belongs to the ancient mythology it is also prominent in Western culture as a fabulous beast and is symbolically used as a black creature by Lorde in the poem to refer to the race and gender of the poet (though the gender reference of the unicorn and other mythological reference in this study are of no less importance than their race and ecological references, due to the specific interest of this current study, my analysis will be focused on the post- colonial and eco critical reading of the myth.

The black unicorn is greedy.
The black unicorn is impatient.
The black unicorn was mistaken
for a shadow or symbol
and taken
through a cold country
where mist painted mockeries
of my fury(Lorde, 1997,93).

The unicorn as a recurrent myth symbolizing beauty and one of the very few harmless wild beasts is used by Lorde here as reference to her connection with African mythology. It connects the poems in the collection that includes a long list of other mythical images and symbols to nature and to African ancestry. (Though not the core interest of this particular study

but Lorde's usage of ancient African mythology is the topic of many scholarly writings and still deserves more academic attention)

The image of the unicorn resonates on Edward Said's (1978, 72) and Homi Bahaba's (1983, 24) fetishized imageries of the "Orient" as it speculates the inferiority of the "Other" that is described with strangeness and difference. The poet clearly identifies with the unicorn in its blackness and expresses the restlessness and agitation of the unicorn as he is mistaken for a shadow and was taken to a cold country which clearly does not suit him and does not acknowledge his/her history and identity.

It is not on her lap where the horn rests
but deep in her moonpit
growing.
The black unicorn is restless
the black unicorn is unrelenting
the black unicorn is not
free (Lorde 1997,93).

There is an overlap between the voice of the poet and the personal experience of the unicorn itself. The poet is not an objective observer, she is one of the alienated creatures in unsuitable surroundings. The misery of the unicorn as an alien and fetishized being that was evicted from his natural environment and kept in captivity in the cold country does not end by the end of the poem. The poem presents no solution or end to his agonies as his difference and strangeness is "irremovable" as Homi Bahaba puts it (1998), he thus stayed "not free" as suggested by the abrupt ending of the poem, and the subject can not actually exist without being free so now freedom is a condition to his existence (Rudnitsky, 2003, 480).

Conclusion:

The relation between nature and nature is neither surprising nor new, writings with environmental inspirations and concerns are produces for centuries. However writing with ecological concerns and highlighting the human aggression towards nature is what became crucial in the late twentieth century. Multiple analysis to literary works is becoming more appropriate to literary readings as it brings more depth and appreciation to the literary texts. In that sense many critics and researchers are employing joint literary tools to their examinations of literary writings. Poetry is no exception, increasing number of studies are focusing on reading poetry from a multiple prospective. Justice and equity as a common backbone to both the Ecocriticism and post-colonial theories allowed critics to investigate African American poetry in particular through wider prospective. Ecopoetics as it became more commonly used recently brings a fresh outlook to the relation between nature and liberation in African American poetry. Due to the aggression against humans and nonhumans alike, eventually nature became an active agent in the struggle for liberation. Anger against the aggressor, silence and deprivation of authority over self and other elements of nature is gradually being reversed via creating connectedness with ancestry and nature. The outlook to nature in African American writings has changed; instead of nature being a place where humans relax and repose it became an active component of ecopoetics.

Anger as a motivational power was used by Audre Lorde to produce creative word formations and poems. It taught her survival and was a step forward to her reclamation of voice and of nature. Like many other African American poets, Lorde's prospective to nature has changed as she gradually gains control over her voice and power over her words.

Notes:

¹The term "reclamation of eco-poetics" is used here from Kathrine R. Lynes recent article "a responsibility to something besides people" African American Reclamation Eco-poetics, African American Review 48. 1-2, 2015: 49-66.

¹See Adrian Rich "Interview with Audre Lorde" in Sister Outsider Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde 1984, 2007. For instance

¹Lorde is one of the prominent African American feminist activist however due to the specific purpose of this study, the examination of the poems presented here is to be focused on the ecopostcolonial reading only. It is not the intention of this study in any way to disregard Lorde's activism in that stance.

¹ See Langston Hughes "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" in the Weary Blues 1926 and others.

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