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## **Black Feminism, Class, and Racism in Audre Lorde's Poems and Essays**

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**Abstract.** This article intends to analyze the poem "Power", from "The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde" using Lorde's "Sister Outsider" essays and other authors such as bell hooks and Angela Davis as support to reflect and discuss racism, Black feminism, and class. We aim to understand the process of silencing Black women within feminism in the USA in the 1960s, recognizing the importance of poetry as a revolutionary tool, enabling Black women to speak for themselves.

**KEYWORDS:** Audre Lorde. Black Feminism. Racism. Class. Poetry.

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## Introduction

Audrey Geraldine Lorde was born in Harlem, New York in 1934 and became an American poet, essayist, and civil and homosexual rights activist. She died on November 17th, 1992, aged 58, in St Croix, where she was living with her lover, Gloria I. Joseph. She used to describe herself as "a black feminist lesbian mother poet". Lorde is an heir of the "Harlem Renaissance" movement that took place from around 1918 to the mid-1930s, which was also known as the "New Black Movement":

[...] the most influential single movement in African American literary history. Its key figures include W. E. B. Du Bois, Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay, and Langston Hughes. The movement laid the groundwork for all later African American literature, and had an enormous impact on later black literature worldwide. (HUTCHINSON, 2007, p. 1).

The ideas of the Harlem Renaissance or "The New Black Movement" lived on much longer than just 12 years. According to the Artspace Magazine (2018), Its heyday was "the flowering of black literature," between 1924 (the year "Opportunity: A Journal of Black Life" hosted a party for black writers where many white editors were in attendance) and 1929 (year of the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression). Still according to Artspace Magazine.

Harlem became a cultural center partially as a result of the movement of African-Americans from the rural South to northern cities in 1919-26. While the abolition of slavery in 1865 and the end of the civil war had made changes at an official level, racism was still rife throughout the twentieth century. The end of World War I brought the promise of jobs and a better quality of both physical and intellectual life as a result of northern industrialization.<sup>1</sup>

The poem "Power", one of Audre Lorde's earliest works published in New York and included in "The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde" (1978), has been selected for analysis and discussion to provide insights into the impact of racism on American society. This analysis will explore

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <  
[https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art\\_101/book\\_report/what-was-the-harlemrenaissance-55542](https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/book_report/what-was-the-harlemrenaissance-55542)  
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how racism is experienced and perceived from both Black and white perspectives. Additionally, attention will be given to the effects of slavery, segregation, and the era of lynching on the lives of Black women. While the primary focus is on the poem itself, supporting works by Lorde, such as essays from “Sister Outsider” (1984), as well as her biography by De Veaux (2004), and writings by other authors, including bell hooks (2015) and Angela Davis (1983), will also be referenced.

Power

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

I am trapped on a desert of raw gunshot wounds  
and a dead child dragging his shattered black  
face off the edge of my sleep  
blood from his punctured cheeks and shoulders  
is the only liquid for miles  
and my stomach  
churns at the imagined taste while  
my mouth splits into dry lips  
without loyalty or reason  
thirsting for the wetness of his blood  
as it sinks into the whiteness  
of the desert where I am lost  
without imagery or magic  
trying to make power out of hatred and destruction  
trying to heal my dying son with kisses  
only the sun will bleach his bones quicker.  
A policeman who shot down a ten-year-old in Queens  
stood over the boy with his cop shoes in childish blood  
and a voice said “Die you little motherfucker” and  
there are tapes to prove it. At his trial



this policeman said in his own defense  
“I didn't notice the size nor nothing else  
only the color”. And  
there are tapes to prove that, too.  
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.  
I have not been able to touch the destruction  
within me.  
But unless I learn to use  
the difference between poetry and rhetoric  
my power too will run corrupt as poisonous mold  
or lie limp and useless as an unconnected wire  
and one day I will take my teenaged plug  
and connect it to the nearest socket  
raping an 85-year-old white woman  
who is somebody's mother  
and as I beat her senseless and set a torch to her bed  
a Greek chorus will be singing in 3/4 time  
“Poor thing. She never hurt a soul. What beasts they are.”  
(LORDE, 1997, p. 215-216).



Throughout the poem above Lorde expresses anger and sadness reporting an unfair true story: according to The New York Times (2015), Clifford Glover, a ten-year-old black boy, was murdered in 1973 by Thomas Shea, a racist police officer. The boy was with his stepfather when he was shot at 5 AM on April 28<sup>th</sup>. We can see an example of category division in the poem "Power". If Clifford Glover were a white child, this situation probably would never have happened, and if Officer Tomas Shea had been a black man doing this, people would certainly have killed him at the crime scene. Both the Clifford Glover case and George Floyd one, exemplifies that it does not matter how distant the times are, white people oppress and attack Black people, it is considered justice, regardless of whether the Black person has committed a crime or not; on the other hand, when there are cases of Black people committing violence against white people, this is a catastrophe, injustice, and the blame falls on the color of their skins and not on their act itself, and soon they are persecuted to death. The fourth stanza from "Power" reinforces this, the idea of justice in the eyes of white people: "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" (LORDE, 1997, p. 215)

### **The necessity of Black feminism**

In her essay "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism", Lorde says that her reaction to racism is anger, not only for her but for all women of color:

Women of Color in America have grown up within a symphony of anger, at being silenced, at being unchosen, at knowing that when we survive, it is despite a world that takes for granted our lack of humanness, and which hates our very existence outside of its service. (LORDE, 1984, p. 129)

Speaking about Black women being silenced in the fourth stanza of Lorde's poem "Power", she presents a poetic image:

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.  
(LORDE, 1997, p. 215-216)

Lorde refers to the silencing of a Black woman who witnessed the tragedy with Clifford Glover: "she let go the first real power she ever had [her true testimony, her voice] and lined her own womb with cement to make a graveyard for our children." (LORDE, 1997, p. 216). This metaphorical passage argues that by being violently silenced, the witness kept closed all possible doors to a better future for her children and the children of all Black women. All the historical loads on Black women have influenced and still influence feminism, a movement that began to be discussed by women from the middle to the upper class. For black women, there was no possibility of achieving a minimum of dignity. Black women were not even close to having equal rights to black men or white women, even less to conquer equal rights to white men. When it comes to Feminism, white women are the protagonists. According to bell hooks:

White women who dominate feminist discourse, who for the most part make and articulate feminist theory, have little or no understanding of white supremacy as a racial politics, of the psychological impact of class, of their political status within a racist, sexist, capitalist state. (HOOKS, 2015, p. 4)

The fact is that Black women are oppressed by everyone else, everywhere, if not for being Black, then for being a woman and Lorde



comes to express her anger and to fight against all these injustices. Audre Lorde was born after Harlem Renaissance had ended in 1934, but she kept contributing to the continuation and expansion of the movement's achievements, not only in the black movement but also in the LGBTQIA+ movement. It was not for nothing that she used to see herself as an "outsider", out of all possible standards. According to columnist Maggie Chirido for a "NYU Local" publication on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stonewall Riots (LGBT manifestation against police invasion in New York, that happened on June 28th, 1969), Lorde was especially concerned with the ways people in power treated those without any. [...] She was outspoken when it came to hypocrisy within the feminist movement. She criticized white feminists who perpetuated the very systems which restrained women of color. (2019) Audre Lorde and other feminist women were part of "Sojourner: The Women's Forum", an American feminist periodical published in Cambridge, Massachusetts from 1975 until 2002. Founded by a women's group from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – MIT, the newspaper was created to provide a space for women in the MIT to talk about their ideas and their needs as women to other women and whoever else it could reach. With the passage of time and the newspaper's growing popularity, it became one of the most notable feminist newspaper publications in the world, containing articles, news, and many discussions related to the feminist movement.

### **Segregation bad days**

"Power" is a poem that expresses Black people's outrage over the real-life murder case of 10-year-old Clifford Glover just because of the color of his skin. A case that has relevance to these days, unfortunately because this type of atrocity still occurs such as George Floyd's murder in 2020. Lorde developed in her work two elements of the black Americans' lives in the XX century: first, the achievements of the Harlem Renaissance, a movement that solidified and celebrated black culture, whether represented in poetry, music, or art after World War I; second, the hurtful experience of the slavery years. Slavery in the USA left strong negative marks on Black people's lives and history, which even nowadays constantly persecute them. When it comes to Black women, in addition to racism, they also had and have been dealing with sexism. "Despite our



recent economic gains, Black women are still the lowest paid group in the nation by sex and race.” (LORDE, 1984, p. 60) According to Angela Davis, women used to work just like men did during the age of slavery. However, as well as everything enslaved women had to go through, in the

[...] nineteenth-century, [...] [the] ideology of femininity [...] emphasized women’s roles as nurturing mothers and gentle companions and housekeepers for their husbands, Black women were practically anomalies. [They] suffered in different ways as well, for they were victims of sexual abuse and other barbarous mistreatment that could only be inflicted on women. (1983, p. 2)

John Hope Franklin, an American historian and former president of the “American Historical Association”, wrote an article about several forms of racial segregation in the USA that had been happening from an earlier time until the 20<sup>th</sup> century: “Of course there had been numerous segregation practices and some segregation statutes for many years, even before the nineteenth century”. (1956, p. 1) There was a process of many ways of segregation,

[...] but it was not until the final quarter of the nineteenth century that states began to evolve a systematic program of legally separating whites and Negroes in every possible area of activity. And it was not until the twentieth century that these laws became a major apparatus for keeping the Negro “in his place.” (FRANKLIN, 1956, p. 1)

Economic and political interests led to the legalization of slavery, and from that many ways of trying to prove and affirm the Black as inferior, using even religion to support their arguments, were established:

Slavery was, therefore, the natural lot of the Negro; and any efforts to elevate him to the status of freedom and equality were manifestly in opposition to the laws of nature and of God. (FRANKLIN, 1956, p. 1).

There were many movements and rebellions to end slavery and free black people, and after gradually getting that freedom, those who were freed had to live segregated from white people, not being able to





attend the same spaces at the same time, drink from the same drinking fountains, use the same toilets, going to the same schools, parks, supermarkets and all sorts of public spaces.

[...] numerous acts of violence in urban communities underscored Northern hostility to free Negroes. Between 1830 and 1840 anti-Negro riots occurred in Utica, Palmyra, New York City, and Philadelphia. (FRANKLIN, 1956, p. 2)

After the Civil War, the “Jim Crow” laws, enacted between the 19th and 20th centuries by democrats in the southern states of the USA, were created to accomplish the segregation of Black people from the white community.

The Tennessee law of 1881, sometimes referred to as the first Jim Crow law, directed railroad companies to provide separate cars or portions of cars for first-class Negro passengers, instead of relegating them to second-class accommodations as had been the custom. There were only two votes against the measure in the House and one in the Senate. (FRANKLIN, 1956, p.6)

In Audre Lorde’s biography, Veaux mentions an encounter with segregation that Lorde and her family went through, in September 1947, the same year she entered Hunter High School:

[...] her family took a sightseeing trip to Washington, D.C., for the Fourth of July, stopping during their tour of historical landmarks for ice cream at a nearby parlor. At the time, D.C.’s restaurants were segregated, and the white waitress refused to serve them. The Lorde family left, stoically silent. Audre was never to forget the anger and fury of that rejection and humiliation. (2006, p. 27)

One of the most frightening threats that the Black population had to face in the 19th and 20th centuries was the lynching. According to the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), which fought hard against these violent acts of execution, lynchings are defined as

The public killing of an individual who has not received any due process. These executions were often carried out by lawless mobs, though police



officers did participate, under the pretext of justice. Lynchings were violent public acts that white people used to terrorize and control Black people in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the South. Lynchings typically evoke images of Black men and women hanging from trees, but they involved other extreme brutality, such as torture, mutilation, decapitation, and desecration. Some victims were burned alive. A typical lynching involved a criminal accusation, an arrest, and the assembly of a mob, followed by seizure, physical torment, and murder of the victim. Lynchings were often public spectacles attended by the white community in celebration of white supremacy. Photos of lynchings were often sold as souvenir postcards. (NAACP, 2022)

According to David V. Baker and Gilbert Garcia,

A contextual history of black female lynchings supports the notion that vigilante violence against black women and girls was a means of gendered racial oppression in American society; black female lynchings were symbolic and cautioned marginalized black women and girls to maintain their inferior place in society to white male supremacy. (2019)

Many Black women who were lynched were not registered by their names, only by titles such as “mother”, “wife”, “sister” or “daughter”, which hampers researchers’ works to identify them. However, using their methodology, they could find some names and “recreate the events in academic and literary narratives to bring greater insight into the contextual realities of Black female oppression in the lynching era (Simien apud Baker, Garcia, 2019).

After a long time of struggle, rebellions, and countless deaths, Black people conquered some rights, but this was still not enough to protect them:

The Civil Rights Act that became law on April 9, 1866, defined citizenship so as to include Negroes. Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois said that the purpose of the bill was to destroy the discrimination against the Negro in the laws of Southern states and to make effective the Thirteenth Amendment. [...] Representative John Bingham of Ohio declared that the amendment would protect “by national law the privileges and immunities of all the citizens of the Republic and the inborn rights of every person within its jurisdiction whenever the same shall be abridged or denied by the unconstitutional acts of any



state". Neither the Fourteenth Amendment nor the radical legislation embodied in congressional Reconstruction was sufficient to protect the Negro in his political and civil rights. Southern resistance was stiff and effective, while efforts at enforcement left much to be desired. (FRANKLIN, 1956, p.4)

Franklin shows how enslavement of black people left strong tainted marks that are painful to get rid of since they have been strongly built-in people's culture, minds, and history. This has extended to Black women in the 20th century and even nowadays.

### **Poetry is not a luxury**

In "Poetry is not a luxury", Audre Lorde talks about how long women have felt silenced, hidden, left out, being taught to be submissive, following their fathers and husbands, and how poetry is not a luxury to them, it is a necessity of their existence. (LORDE, 1984, p.87)

Of all the art forms, poetry is the most economical. It is the one which is the most secret, which requires the least physical labor, the least material, and the one which can be done between shifts, in the hospital pantry, on the subway, and on scraps of surplus paper. (LORDE, 1984, p. 116)

Poetry is an artistic expression, just like other kinds of writings, music, theater, and cinema. These forms of artistic expressions have always been dominated by white men, who used and still use poetry just as another way to express what they can say and do without hiding themselves or being afraid of anything. Otherwise, Lorde says that for women, poetry

is a vital necessity of [their] existence. It forms the quality of the light within which [they] predicate [their] hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way [they] help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. Their farthest horizons of [women] hopes and fears are cobbled by [women] poems, carved from the rock experiences of [their] daily lives. (1984, p. 37)



The difficulty of changing historically rooted cultural elements makes women believe they are always wrong, that they cannot speak for themselves, feeling guilty just for being women. Thinking about that, Lorde says that they

[...] can train [themselves] to respect [their] feelings and to transpose them into language so they can be shared. And where that language does not exist yet, it is [their] poetry which helps to fashion it. (1984; p.38)

To Lorde, poetry makes women survive, giving them hope and will to live, making them dream and feel in a certain way a sensation of freedom while expressing anger, sadness, indignation and as a complement an “[...] explicit intention of praising, cursing, consoling, inspiring, blessing, commemorating, denouncing, offering moral counsel and so on.” (EAGLETON, 2007, p. 89).

Poetry allowed women to survive, without it

[...] [Women] have hidden that fact in the same place where [they] have hidden [their] power. They surface in [their] dreams, and it is [their] dreams that point the way to freedom. Those dreams are made realizable through [their] poems that give [them] the strength and courage to see, to feel, to speak, and to dare. (LORDE, 1984, p. 39)

Taking as an example, in “Power” Lorde starts by saying: “The difference between poetry and rhetoric is being ready to kill yourself instead of your children” (1997, p. 215). This stanza represents who she is, and the position she occupies in the world as a Black mother of two interracial children, since she can imagine her kids in the position of Clifford Glover and her as the mother who lost her child. The title of the poem brings to our minds many related themes, such as class struggle, racial struggle, gender roles, and so on. Lorde chooses such a small title, but full of meaning considering the context of the poem. In the second stanza, we can see that the author talks poetically and beautifully about a tragic situation.

I am trapped on a desert of raw gunshot wounds and a dead child dragging his shattered black face off the edge of my sleep blood from his punctured cheeks and shoulders is the only liquid for miles and my stomach churns at the



imagined taste while my mouth splits into dry lips without loyalty or reason thirsting for the wetness of his blood as it sinks into the whiteness of the desert where I am lost without imagery or magic trying to make power out of hatred and destruction trying to heal my dying son with kisses only the sun will bleach his bones quicker (LORDE, 1997, p. 215).

Lorde uses colors as a means of expressing her point of view. For example, in the eleventh to the thirteenth verses, “as it sinks into the whiteness of the desert where I am lost without imagery or magic”, the white color is used to represent how the author feels, trapped in an environment (desert), in which her surroundings are full of white people oppressing people like her, including that poor 10-year-old boy. As a result, the form in this second stanza establishes a contrast with its content, that is, Lorde is talking about a tragic and cruel subject but beautifully, as said before, she used colors to talk about the tragedy, and also figures of speech, such as metaphor in “I am trapped on a desert of raw gunshot wounds” – she didn't mean to be literally in a desert full of bullet holes, but rather that this is the reality that surrounds her daily when it comes to Black people. In addition, she says she finds herself lost in the “whiteness” of a desert, that is, she lives surrounded by white people that cause those “raw gunshot wounds”.

A policeman who shot down a ten-year-old in Queens stood over the boy with his cop shoes in childish blood and a voice said “Die you little motherfucker” and there are tapes to prove it. At his trial this policeman said in his own defense “I didn't notice the size nor nothing else only the color”. And there are tapes to prove that, too. (LORDE, 1997, p. 215) In the third stanza of the poem, Lorde approaches the same theme, but more crudely: there is a break in the way she was writing earlier, a break between “poetry and rhetoric”, as mentioned in the first stanza. The discourse is almost journalistic as if she was attempting to report the fact as objectively as possible. She is direct with her words, for example, when using inverted commas to refer to a voice saying “Die you little motherfucker”, which was probably coming from white people seeing that child being tortured and killed.

### **A discussion about class**

Later in the 4th stanza of “Power”, Lorde says that a Black woman was convinced that what was done to the child was fair, but she was led to say



and position herself that way, as a witness to the tragedy, probably having been tortured to contribute with the situation: “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” (LORDE, 1997, p. 215, 216). Everything contributes to violence and death against black people, while everything also contributes to the acquittal of white people for committing crimes, as was the case of police officer Thomas Shea, who killed Clifford Glover, an innocent child.

Difference has always been a reason for segregation between people, whether by their color, class, or gender. But after all, what does class mean to the Black feminist movement? According to Lorde, in American society, everything that is considered good is based on money and profit, and this reality contemplates some groups of white people, high social class, and mostly men; on the other hand,

[...] there must always be some group of people who, through systematized oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the place of the dehumanized inferior. Within this society, that group is made up of Black and Third World people, working class people, older people, and women. (LORDE, 1984, p. 114)

Lorde also says that beyond taking profit from the oppressed people, the oppressors still hope that the oppressed themselves teach them how not to be racist, sexist, homophobic, and so on:

Black and Third World people are expected to educate white people as to our humanity. Women are expected to educate men. Lesbians and gay men are expected to educate the heterosexual world. The oppressors maintain their position and evade responsibility for their own actions. (LORDE, 1984, p. 115)

Capitalism results in class divisions, which means that capital controls the system and submits some people to others. Whoever has more money, like private companies lead by white and heterosexual men, subordinates the population to their service and this causes the division of social classes, the desire for profit on those who are not considered people, but commodities. Inside feminism it is not different, “white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore





differences of race, sexual preference [orientation], class and gender” (LORDE, 1984, p. 116), which weakens the feminist movement. According to Lorde’s approach, every feminist should discuss the differences between women, not just expect each woman to speak for herself, for example, just like not only black women should talk about racism and not only LGBTQIA+ women should talk about homophobia, but everyone should embrace differences within the feminist movement: “Refusing to recognize difference makes it impossible to see the different problems and pitfalls facing [them] as women.” (LORDE, 1984, p. 118) Regarding the white feminist movement and its advantages over Black women, due to their race and class privileges, hooks states that, Although the impulse towards unity and empathy that informed the notion of common oppression was directed at building solidarity, slogans like "organize around your own oppression" provided the excuse many privileged women needed to ignore the differences between their social status and the status of masses of women. It was a mark of race and class privilege, as well as the expression of freedom from the many constraints sexism places on working class women, that middle-class white women were able to make their interests the primary focus of feminist movement and employ a rhetoric of commonality that made their condition synonymous with "oppression." (HOOKS, 2015, p. 6) Women must be seen as equals when it comes to citizenship rights, and at the same time have their particularities, but

[...] gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts... [and] gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities” (Butler, 1999, p. 6).

That’s why it is not possible “to separate out ‘gender’ from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained.” (Butler; 1999; p. 6)

Butler writes the word “women” between quotation marks since she thinks being a woman is a social construction and to become one is necessary to be under the cultural and social idea to be a woman or a man. Thinking that way, she asks



[...] is there some commonality among "women" that preexists their oppression, or does "women" have a bond by virtue of their oppression alone? Is there a specificity to women's cultures that is independent of their subordination by hegemonic, masculinist cultures? integrity of women's cultural or linguistic practices always specified against and, hence, within the terms of some more dominant cultural formation? (1999; p. 7)

Would it be necessary to emphasize gender binarity and the feminist movement, which theoretically encompasses all women without considering their particularities, if it were not for the oppression suffered by the category of people socially called "women"? In the following poem quotation, it is shown that a specific black woman was silenced towards Clifford Glover murder:

[...] 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. (LORDE, 1997, p. 215-216)

Using metaphors, the speaker describes how the white policeman silenced a Black woman, and the consequences of such act. The categorization and the discrimination it leads to prevent people from simply being themselves without worrying to fit into social boxes. This Black woman from the poem would not be silenced if she was white and male. But since the world works in categories (some oppressive to others), then there must be unity considering the social and cultural differences of each one.

## **Final considerations**

From this research work it could be noted that, unfortunately, while there were changes and the achievements of rights, inconceivable situations that happened centuries ago, such as the unfair killing or imprisonment of Black people just for the color of their skin or women dying just because of their gender or sexuality, are still seen in the news nowadays. It is essential to observe and analyze the history of racism and its impact on black people's lives, using the poem "Power" by Audre





Lorde as the starting point, in addition to the impact of racism on black women's lives along with sexism to understand that all this has been culturally constructed for a long time, mainly after slavery, which makes it difficult to deconstruct these ideas that are adopted by the oppressed themselves. Audre Lorde's legacy is important to discuss black feminism, class, and racism. Unfortunately, she is not widely known as she should be in Brazil. This paper aims to provide visibility to Lorde's work so that and her life be an inspiration to keep the fight against any discrimination when it comes to Black people, mostly women whether they are LGBTQ+ or not. During her life, Lorde could live as many experiences as she wanted to and what was possible for her to live in her context. Her works contribute and will keep contributing to overcome race, class, sexism, and obstacles regarding sexuality.

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Resumo: Este artigo pretende utilizar o poema "Power", de Audre Lorde, contido em "The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde", os ensaios de Lorde publicados em "Sister Outsider", e obras de bell hooks e Angela Davis como pontos de partida para refletir e discutir o racismo, o feminismo negro e questões de classe. Nosso objetivo é compreender o processo de silenciamento das mulheres negras dentro do movimento feminista nos Estados Unidos na década de 1960, reconhecendo a importância da poesia como ferramenta revolucionária, permitindo que as mulheres negras se expressem por si mesmas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: AUDRE LORDE. FEMINISMO NEGRO. RACISMO. CLASSE. POESIA

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