

## DECONSTRUCTING INTERSECTIONAL OPPRESSIONS: A STUDY OF RESHAPING POSITIVE IMAGE OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE SELECTED POEMS OF SONIA SANCHEZ

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### ABSTRACT

*Many people and nations are vulnerable to various escalating risks threatening them for multiple reasons. Communities and individuals have been battling against interconnected issues as gender, class, economy, sexuality, language and race. While the specific problems differ from location to place, but all have amplifying effects on color women who are often subject to this oppression and have suffered multitude of injustices in the society. This paper attempts to comprehend the depths of inequalities and the relationships among them in the light of intersectional feminism that voices those facing multiple forms of oppression in the selected poems of Sonia Sanchez. The paper also helps understand the way Sonia Sanchez advances the rights of color women and reshape their positive image in her poems. Textual analysis of the poems reveals that color women are vulnerable to different racial, gender, social and sexual predicaments and found raising voice to end various forms of discriminations against them. The findings also indicate that Sonia Sanchez deconstructs the negative image associated with black females and reconstructs their positive image by uplifting their social and moral standard and cultivating a sense of justice and liberation in them.*

**Keywords.** Intersectionality, Marginalization, Feminism, Reshape, Image, Struggle, Freedom

### INTRODUCTION

It is the fact of a racial society that in discussions on women's independence and growth, black women are often ignored. Black women are usually disregarded in conversations on topics of women freedom and development. The problems that must be acknowledged and resolved continue to be unseen and contribute to their marginalization. Women experience a variety of racial inequalities that social activists and scholars sometimes overlook. Similar to this, feminism tends to focus on white women while ignoring the needs and problems of racialized women, who historically face greater discrimination due to their class, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, and language. The social marginalization of women of color is a result of all these factors. Women of color experience discrimination twice as often as other women since they must also deal with gender, class, and sexuality concerns in addition to racial ones. In this study, these issues are referred to as intersectional oppressions. Because they are associated with injustice and unfairness by white supremacists and certain middle-class black men, they have always been found exposing their clichéd depictions in the media. The capacity of women of color to survive in society is therefore called into question. This research addresses both problems. As demonstrated in Sonia Sanchez's poetry, which is evaluated within the perspective of intersectional feminism that aims at exposing intersectional discrimination

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against women of color and supports their favorable image and position in society.

Sonia Sanchez was an activist, dramatist, and poet born on September 9, 1934, in Birmingham, Alabama. Her mother passed away when she was just six years old, and her father was a schoolteacher. She has a close connection to southern culture and was educated early on about racism, slavery, servile portrayal, and prejudice towards white Americans. She has been resisting racial politics, social inequalities and sexism in her neighborhood ever since. All these terrible propensities have a significant impact on her personality and mind. She supports the congress in terms of its stance on racial equality, but after being exposed to Malcolm X's philosophy, which claimed that white people would never accept black people in America, she decides to concentrate on her own Black background instead.

Sanchez was drawn into the 1960s revolutionary social movements. *Home Coming* (1969) and *We a Bad People* (1970) are her first two books of poetry which exhibit her aggressive anti-white position partly motivated by Malcolm X's example. Through poetry, she begins a massive campaign to raise Black people's moral standards and to help them appreciate the value of cherished African culture. Kalamu ya Salaam (1998) gives remarks about her work in the Dictionary of Literary Biography, "She is [Sonia Sanchez] one of the few creative artists who have significantly influenced the course of Black American literature and culture" (12). She taught at San Francisco area in 1965 which has upgraded to university. She introduces Black courses to be taught in different institutions so that students may know about Black ethnocentric culture and tradition. She is the most read and a visible figure among African American women poets. Her poetry deals in many universal and domestic themes of Black community. Her poetry is a paradigm of pure creative power of Black women poet" (Mari, 2012, p.145).

She initially has a lot of issues because white people dominate the channels of communication and information; no other voices from the African or Asian communities are heard. White people are notoriously rigid and harsh when it comes to allow freedom of speech. In those conditions, Sonia Sanchez demonstrates her credibility and bravery while using these difficulties as tools to accomplish her goals. Her poems serve as a wake-up call to the community, helping them to realize where they are in life and presenting success symbols in front of them. She writes poetry about conflict between whites and blacks and between men and women. She attempts to open the doors of respect and self-esteem for women that White and middle-class black people have closed on them. She expresses the issues that color women face by the hands of black men and white people. She enters into an Islamic society to find order, but soon leaves because there is a great conflict between her beliefs and Islamic teachings regarding women's rights and their problems. According to her, Islam promotes the repression of women. She gives remarks in an interview "I had to fight a lot of people in and outside of the nation due to so called sexism... I left the nation" (Claudia, 1975, p. 23). With other female authors, Sonia Sanchez shifts her priorities and seeks to concentrate on the ideals of her own Black culture. This causes a notable shift in their perspectives within the shifting social and political environment. When reading her poems, one can clearly see the vibrant honesty and sincerity hidden underneath her gentle words. One of the most significant figures in the Amiri Baraka-founded Black Art Movement of 1960s and 1970s is Sonia Sanchez. He urged his followers to start their own organizations and presses them to publish their works without restriction. The movement helps Black authors in creating their writings and gives them the rights and freedom to speak, serving as a bridge between art and politics.

She remains the part of one of the sibling movements to the influential political Black Power Movement that is the Black Art Movement. The movement seeks to advance Black people's civic and political rights. The Black Art Movement's authors aim at winning their personal identity in the United States of America by using their own aesthetic expression and literary vision. They are in support of promoting their own culture. The authors of the Black Art Movement worked on Blackness and portray it in their literary works in a very distinctive manner that both chronicled and glorified their own social realities. The slogan "Black is Beautiful" by John Swe is used as the movement's call to the African American community to be proud of their color and end conflicts of their inferiority. They desire an empowered and liberated Black community among African Americans. All the Black Art Movement authors positioned themselves as role models for the next generation in addition to presenting Black culture. She is one of them and this influence is obvious in her poetry. They make their Black clothes fashionable as a representation of unity and pride in their country (Clarke, 1998).

By illustrating their own social injustices and oddities, they emphasize the theme of Black aestheticism. They use all the hardships and violences they have experienced to get where they are going and to find their self-worth and spiritual fulfilment, but nothing could ever weaken their determination to succeed. For African Americans, the Black Art Movement is revolutionary. Writing about their music and art is the main focus of the Black Art Movement throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The movement first alter their pattern of self-perception before inspiring some other individuals to write and promote their culture and history as a sovereignty of Blackness. The relationship between Black women and their society and selves is a topic that Sonia Sanchez and Nikki Giovanni explored in their wonderful poems.

The historical backdrop of discrimination demonstrates how violence and injustice have cultivated a deeply ingrained system of inequities for the members of minority groups, particularly for women who are always at risk from a variety of secondary agendas that disadvantage them. The fact that women have never given up battling against these systemic injustices in a variety of ways is also heartening. They have been actively participating in a range of powerful and progressive movements and speaking out via a variety of channels and places. The goal of this research is to analyze selected poems of Sonia Sanchez to look at how marginalizing factors interact with her to stop oppression against women of color, repair their damaged image, and instill a sense of justice and liberty in the women in her community.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the culture of the society, black women are portrayed in stereotyped ways. In media dominated by racial Essentialists and black men, they are often seen as irrational, poorly managed, ill-tempered, confrontational in demeanor, and unsuited for growth and development. However, the reality remains that neither women accepted this conventional image, nor did they give up trying to change this aggravating circumstance. The authors of this study examined Sonia Sanchez's poems to identify the numerous causes of her marginalization. They applauded her attempts to challenge racial stereotypes of women of color and include positive representations of these women into her poetry.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are various forms of intersectional oppressions that marginalize black women as portrayed in the selected poems of Sonia Sanchez?
2. How does Sonia Sanchez, in her poems, reshape positive image of black women and inculcate sense of justice and liberation in them?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine various forms of intersectional oppression that marginalize black women as portrayed in the selected poems of Sonia Sanchez.
2. To trace out the positive image of black women and sense of liberation and justice that Sonia Sanchez depicts in the selected poems.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is interesting to read because it offers a lens through which to view the historical context and the interaction of various factors, such as those of gender, class, race, sexual orientation, language, and politics in depriving black women of their rights and equal opportunities. The study also emphasizes how race plays a role in many dangerous issues and how it has a profound impact on women in general and black women in particular. Intersectional feminism also supports women's efforts to end all forms of oppression against them by raising awareness of these systemic inequalities. The study offers a chance to examine black women's real, positive image and to discuss the efforts they made to obtain the rights that were denied to them. Discrimination exists in both its most overt and covert manifestations in our countries. The study aids us in examining the marginalization of women and putting an end to anti-feminist subversive agenda against them.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The researcher includes a discussion on intersectional feminism in this section. It talks about how the concept came to be and changed through time. Intersectional feminism is a concept introduced by professor Kimberlé Crenshaw. It is the "interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating and overlapping an interdependent system of discrimination or disadvantage" (Sharkey and Hawk, 2016, p.4). Black women faced various kind of discrimination in the society based on various identity which

disadvantaged them. Many black activists noticed concerned and rightly pointed out various racial experiences faced by black women. They all were agreed that “The idea that we experience life, sometimes discrimination, sometimes benefits, based on a number of identities.” (Crenshaw, 1989, p.12). The concept has been widely utilized for some years. Without this concept, the intellectual discussion is lacking. In the larger context of the conversation concerning women known as feminism, intersectional feminism has a prominent position. Intersectional feminism engages in a critical discussion of all forms of gender, race, political, and class-based oppression against women. It also covers all concerns relating to women, including those that either empower or devastate them. In this context, the idea is defined as a “way that an ancestry of enslavement both pains and empowers her to draw from the past as she crafts a future both based on her heritages and of her own making” (Shelton, S.A., Flynn, J.E., & Grosland, T.A., 2018, P. 5). It further clarifies that oppression against women is interlocking channel that needs special focus to explore these issues. As Laci says in the video, “On the feminist issues where we hold privilege, it's crucial to listen to women who don't. To listen to their experiences, to see the world through a more complex lens and to raise the voices of those who have less power” (qtd in Sharkey and Hawk, 2016, p. 7). Franchesca adds, “You can't exactly walk the walk if you have no idea where the walk even goes” (10). They want to give black women's struggles some direction. Later, several black activists start fighting for similar rights and uniting to speak out against the persecution of women of color.

Other academics, including Crenshaw, have offered logical connections between intersectionality and feminism and explained how they are carried out in society. They include female activists like Ida B., Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Sojourner Truth. They all have contributed much to the area of women's studies by analyzing the numerous problems that lead to women's marginalization.

In 1826, Sojourner Truth, a protester and women's rights advocate, escaped slavery. She joined an abolitionist group in 1844, and during the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in 1851, she delivered a well-known address. She did a very effective and compelling job of presenting the rights of women. She shared her own experience of being a black lady subjected to racial society's brutality and torment. She speaks up to eradicate all forms of discrimination against black women since she is aware of their suffering. Francis Harper, a well-known Black poet, was the contemporary of Truth. Her experience with racism in the women rights movement was firsthand. At the 1866 National Women's Rights Convention, Harper stood and said, “I do not believe that white women are dewdrops just exhaled from the skies. I think that like men they may be divided into three classes, the good, the bad, and the indifferent...You white women speak here of rights. I speak of wrongs” (Huberty, 2023, p.2). Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, two of the most well-known suffrage activists, opposed the 15th Amendment, which granted males the right to vote. They were concerned that Black males, whom they denigrated in overtly racist terms, would get the right to vote before white women. Harper led the American Woman Suffrage Association due to the group's bigotry. While the “mainstream women's rights movement focused on educated white women at the expense of others, feminists like Harper worked to achieve rights for all women” (p. 3). In 1862, Wells exposed the horrors of lynching in the South. In 1892, she took on the case involving her friend's passing. She looked into the justification for white people's torturing of black women, which was supported by black men raping white women. She used to travel around Europe and America, disregarding her own safety, to raise awareness about lynching and other forms of marginalization that are used to oppress black women. As a result of her campaign, anti-lynching laws were passed in the South, and the number of lynchings decreased from 235 in 1892 to 107 in 1899. Wells was also deeply involved in the women's rights movement and confronted the racism she found there” (4). Black women were cautioned to march away from anything that would limit their freedom during a Washington, D.C., demonstration for women's rights. She herself refused to accept segregation and exhorted others to do the same. His life's philosophy and body of work are in line with the intersectional oppression of black women. These ladies were all activists of the rights of black women. They acclaimed that “feminist work, in working to represent and support all women, is necessarily and unceasingly intersectional” (Shelton, S.A., Flynn, J.E., & Grosland, T.A., 2018, P. 5). They know that black women are object of discrimination in the society and the whole system operate against them. These are the main objectives of the study for investigation.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This essay makes an effort to expose the systematic and intersectional marginalization that underlies the society's rejection of black women who are vulnerable to various forms of discrimination. The essay also explores Sonia Sanchez's poetic representations of ideas and a favorable view of the women of color. The research uses intersectional feminism as a theoretical framework to evaluate the necessary data, illuminating the interaction of marginalizing variables and dismantling the stereotypes about black women held by fundamental racists. Sonia Sanchez's chosen poems are utilized as the main sources of information. The study uses a qualitative research design and a textual analysis approach to examine the collected data. The study's descriptive and analytical design aids in gathering the answers to the research questions.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The paper also includes Dr. Manohar's comments from his discussion of African American women poets. He said that in addition to address issues of blackness, injustice, hardships, and violence, these women writers also gave prominence to some positive themes, showcased the beauty of a distinctive culture, and celebrated its originality. Regarding Sonia Sanchez, he said that in addition to express their societal struggles in verse, her poetry also had characteristics of love, sympathy, gentleness, and fortitude that appealed to romantic readers. She often mixes themes of disappointment and loss into her poetry together with the topic of love for a little melancholy impact. The theme of love gives her lines, the most stunning and dreamlike affect. She knows about the problems of her life and the issues of race and society with her. She presents the amalgam of grieve and love in her poems. For instance, in the poetry she wrote for her deceased father, she describes her longing for the past and utter mental entrapment by his memories in the words that follow:

Remember the nite,  
the nite you said  
I love you  
remember.

I remembered your voice swollen  
in a ritual of words on.

(Sonia Sanchez, Poem for My Father, 23-28)

The love that any daughter may have for her father is conveyed in these phrases, which demonstrate her devotion to him. Her interaction with her neighborhood and African women is another compelling element in her poems. In her poetry, she depicts the struggles that black women go through in society. They depict the laments of black women. She loves the spirituality concept and approaches the issues facing women and their oppression at the hands of white males from several perspectives. One of the main themes of her poems is misogyny. Her poetry often addresses the link between women and the self. She discusses how women interact with their communities before moving from there to the public. She aspires to an ideal self, after which she works to motivate that self to serve the greater good. She also focuses on the issues such as addiction, rape, sexism, racism, and contempt that affect women on a societal level. Due to her creative genius and persistent desire to fix the fractured connections between women and her community, Sonia writes poems that are flawless paradigms of solid art and have global themes, making her one of the most renowned literary figures in American literature.

It was believed that throughout the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Art Movement, poetry was influenced more by political and social issues than by aesthetics and art, and as a result, lost its uniqueness and real meaning. However, poetry from the 1960s and 1970s was equally political, didactic, and artistic. Because feminist propaganda was being widely spread in the world's theatres and other fields at the same time, Sonia Sanchez creates her poetry in a unique pattern and style that is enriched with a universal theme of love and women's issues. As a result, there was always a fertile ground for poetry with these capabilities. The poetry written on these issues seems fresh and full of meaning, energetic and convincing. She writes that "I am keeping the love of life, the love of language alive.... I am keeping this great tradition of American poetry alive (Kelly, 2017, p. 35). She

writes in her own language, which is the primary form of communication in America. She further says that "it is the love of language that has propelled me, the love of language that come from listening to my grandmother speak black English [southern dialects]" (p. 49). The melody and genuineness of the poetry written by Sonia Sanchez are without dispute. Her poetry serves as a reflection of her own history and bond with black women. She recognizes the stereotype of African American women in herself, and when she describes the violence and misery she has experienced. She is reflecting the suffering, torment, and many aspirations of the women in her community. She emphasizes the circumstances around her experience, recognizing the hardships of capturing the rhythm of women, their psychology, and their idea of femininity since they had to deal with enslavement and Whites' discrimination for a long time. Sonia Sanchez also writes on the racial and sexual dynamics of her neighborhood. She discusses her thoughts and feelings about her neighborhood and displays a deep love for its folklore. She educates them to realize themselves, to be self-reliant and heroic, and dreams of her people being free from every restriction and connection in her poem "right on: white America".

The most well-known subjects in her poems are the relationship between Black men and women, love and hatred, loss and disappointment, and the love of children. She works hard to improve women's moral standards, encourages them spiritually, and helps them go where they want to go in terms of their self-identity. She admires them for their bravery and spirituality as well. She offers some endearing words about ladies in her love poem "Blues Book for Blue Black Magical Women" and praises their steadfast persistence. Her poetry often deals with loss, including loss of love and familial spiritual proclivities. She conveys a vivid feeling of life in her autobiographical poetry. In the poem "Does your House have lions," which she wrote in royal meter, she laments the loss of family members and tells the tale of her brother, who joined a homosexual organization, had AIDS, and finally passed away. She also recounts rape, racial, and gender difficulties in the poem "Wounded at the home of friend," and she expresses her own suffering and anguish with readers while also expressing her optimism for spiritual progress in the face of these problems (qtd. Garden Thrives, 1989). She writes didactic poetry that is undoubtedly inspired by politics, yet her poems also pass muster as respectable examples of good art and timeless literature. The study of Sonia Sanchez's poetry is added to the paper in the paragraphs that follow.

#### **To Anita by Sonia Sanchez**

high/yellow/black/girl  
walken like the sun u be.  
move on even higher.  
those who  
laugh at yo/color  
have not moved  
to the blackness we be about  
cuz as Curtis Mayfield be sayen  
we people be darker than blue  
and quite a few  
of us be yellow  
all soul/shades of  
blackness.  
yeah. high/yellow/black/girl  
walk yo/black/song  
cuz some of us  
be hearen yo/sweet/music. (Sonia Sanchez)

Sonia Sanchez's composition is very profound. Sonia Sanchez reconstructs the fractured perception of the African community through the eyes of a Black girl in a very subjective way. The poem makes a distinction between those who believe that black people are beautiful and those who still believe that their own culture is something to be proud of and respected for. The poem reads more like a lecture given to the Black community to emphasize its significance. She comforts the little black girl, raises her moral character, and spiritually elevates her so that she may feel proud of her race and her community. The poem demonstrates Sonia Sanchez's nationalist views. She respects blacks for their traditionalism and tolerance. She compares the harshness of white people to the heat

of the sun. Don't be embarrassed or stupid about being Black, she advises Anita, and be proud of your ethnicity and color. Never give up on your goals; no one can stop you from achieving them. When Sonia sees the walls of contempt around the Black girl, she supports her and tells her that if others laugh at her skin tone, they are not measuring her value or the value of a revered culture. In this passage, she embraces the idea of female love and shows compassion for females. She also talks about the issues that women confront in society. White and male oppression of women prevented them from continuing their fight for self-identity and preventing them from living as they chose. Even though they were unable to exercise their freedom to select the direction of their destiny, doors to advancement and expression were blocked to them. Sonia in her poem counsels them not to pay any regard to them and their prejudice simply keep up the race for the better place since people used to mock at them if they battle for their excellent future.

She encourages the Black girl to use her imagination and realize that the rest of the community is with her and that she is not alone in this world. She claims that we are all black and that we are proud of our country because "Black is Beautiful". She teaches self-reliance and rejects degrading stereotypes. She then engages in her interests and declares that there aren't many of us who are yellow or, more likely, that there aren't many of us who have embraced the superiority of white people, so you should join them. Those who have crossed the border are tormented by remorse and lack the strength to fight back against the violence, but you must continue singing the blues song, which is a representation of respect and national pride. She advises that you sing for the black community so that they may hear and enjoy your music. Your community will respect you in return if you respect them. This poem vividly expresses the themes of blackness and love for women. Furthermore, we may infer that the poem was written to allay the dread of a Black girl and demonstrate her place in a strong Black family and community:

**right on: white America 1970**

This country might have  
been a pio  
neer land  
once.  
but. There ain't  
no mo  
Indians blowing  
Custer's mind  
with a different  
image of America.  
his country  
might have  
needed shoot/  
outs/daily/  
once.  
but. there ain't  
no mo real/ white allamerican  
bad/guys.  
just  
u & me  
blk/ and un/ armed.  
this country might have  
been a pio  
neer land, once.  
and it still is.  
check out  
the falling  
guns/ shells on our blk/tomorrows.

(Sonia Sanchez, 1970)

The poem exemplifies Sonia Sanchez's avant-garde writing style. The style differs in the shape, language, and organization. The poem has a new style since it has a fresh topic that indicates

the author intends to utilize it as a wakeup call for Africans. The poem is more akin to a lecture meant to awaken the audience and make them aware of their history. She demonstrates historical awareness and understanding, and the nationalistic motif is once again present in her poem. Sonia Sanchez declares her affection for the black community, identifies with a wonderful culture, and indicates that she is prepared to fulfil her obligations to her nation. In this poetry, the themes of blackness and love of country are quite prominent.

She claims that while our nation was still a frontier for other countries, there were Native Americans, Americans, and other people who used to jeer at Black people. They were being tortured, but now everything has changed entirely because of intolerance, which has rendered the nation utterly empty. In this passage, the author discusses their tribulations and difficulties, noting that at first, when many countries dominated the world, Black people were subject to their control and oppression, but that their efforts eventually won them independence. However, the time of war and torture has not yet ended. The Black community has to be alerted and cautioned. They should be aware that bombs and shells are still dropping on Black people. The poem paints a picture of the strife that exists between Whites and Blacks. She claims that if Black people don't take care of their culture and traditions, they would once again be subjugated. Black people, according to her, are the owners of rich heritage and fashionable clothing, but they must be vigilant against outside threat. The poem demonstrates her deep love and compassion for the Black people. The conduct of white people also demonstrates in a repulsive way that they would never embrace black people, hence the black community must maintain and advance its own traditions and morals:

**I have been a woman.**

i've been a woman  
with my legs stretched by the wind  
rushing the day  
thinking i heard your voice  
while it was only the nite  
moving over  
making room for the dawn.

(Sonia Sanchez, *Homegirls and Handgrenades*, 2015)

Sonia Sanchez writes some of her most melodic poetry in this collection, and she has really loved connections with women. She speaks about the delicate nature of women, which the sexes frequently overlook. This poetry touches about sexism. The poem may be read in a variety of ways and has numerous meanings. On the one hand, she writes of Black women and declares that she was a woman too, and through all the years she was weak. She claims that she is not celebrating African women specifically since they are often weak and incapable of overcoming several challenges. The term 'wind' represents thunder and White, masculine brutality towards women. She claims that a woman deserves compassion and that she is patiently waiting for the right moment. She also discusses a woman's pain, namely how she spends her days. Sonia Sanchez combines the idea of the most intense love. Tanks, another poem demonstrates that her poetry is not only educational but also a well-crafted work of art with themes that apply to everyone:

**Tanka**

I kneel down like a  
Collector of jewels before  
You, I am singing  
One long necklace of love my  
Mouth a sapphire of grapes.

(Sonia Sanchez)

This is a wonderful example of a love poetry where Sonia opens out to the audience and expresses her innermost thoughts and suffering. The poem has love for womanhood as its central focus. One of Sonia Sanchez's finest poetry is this one. She calls her partner a treasure and compliments him. She claims that I need you, yet I feel completely dejected and hopeless. There is no doubt in your mind about my love and sincerity, yet you will ignore me because I am Black. Despite my sincere desire to acquire your business, I am a little disappointed that I was unable to get it. The



poem captures her sorrow and paints a picture of pure love. The poem's music enhances its impact. In this poem, Sonia Sanchez aims to demonstrate that women have their own emotions, that they are the morally upright creatures of the world, that they are sensitive, and that their emotions should be respected. They experience intense love just like men, yet they are rarely treated with the respect they need. In this poem, she also discusses the blue-Black music, which represents pride for African Americans. She claims that I sing to win over my boyfriend, but I'm a little bummed that he won't like me. The poem exemplifies Sonia Sanchez's distinctive style since it juxtaposes the themes of sadness and joy:

**BALLAD**

forgive me if I laugh  
you are so sure of love.  
you are so young.  
and i too old to learn of love.

the rain exploding.  
in the air is love  
the grass excreting her.  
green wax is love.  
and stones remembering  
past steps are love,  
but you. you are too young.  
for love  
and I too old.  
once. what does it matter?  
when or who, I knew.  
of love.  
i fixed my body.  
under his and went  
to sleep in love  
all trace of me  
was wiped away.  
forgive me if I smile.  
young heiress of a naked dream  
you are so young.  
and i too old to learn of love.

(Sonia Sanchez, 1934)

The poem is a transcript of conversations between an elderly lady and a little girl. It compares the experiences of young and elderly love. The poem addresses the subject of love, which is everyone's first preference and a popular subject for discussion. The poem demonstrates how African American women poets convey their sentiments on a variety of topics with worldwide significance in addition to slavery and race. She provides a lovely discussion about love in this place. The elderly woman claims that since I am old, I cannot comprehend the intricacies of your love and that you are too young to compare to my experience. She contrasts the distinctiveness of an ancient love with a brand-new, intense love. The elderly woman apologizes if I didn't comprehend your emotions, but the experience I've gained is likewise unmatched.

The speaker goes on to say that since there was no freedom of love, I had to fight very hard to get it. Sonia Sanchez includes a little amount of personal material and wants to make it apparent to a young woman that all the elderly women were engaged in a war against male repression; they put their love to the test in trying situations and gained prestige and freedom for your love as well. You are too young, she claims, to go through our suffering. Wherever we went and everyone we met, our love was full of anguish and toleration. It was a horrible narrative that is beyond comprehension. The elderly woman discusses how women struggled during the era of slavery when they were oppressed by White and males. Sonia Sanchez honors and commends these elderly Black women for their love and bravery in her poem because she feels compassion for them. The elderly woman in the poem is a representation of the older African race, which has endured centuries of male subjugation and the

practice of slavery. Sonia Sanchez wants the small child to understand the hardships and suffering that the elderly ladies have endured for a long time. The poem embraces a variety of themes, including those of love, enslavement, struggle, and unity. The poem demonstrates Sonia Sanchez's skill.

The elderly woman describes a difficult circumstance from her youth and shares her feelings and admiration for her country. The environment for a young lady's love has been created using images of natural landscapes. According to the speaker, males used women as a source of luxury in their later years while also compromising their chastity and integrity. The ladies didn't get the respect they deserved. She tells a young girl, *You are very blessed to experience your love freely in this era*. She tells the little girl about the merits of the elderly women. She claims that because of this, women lost their identities and became mere puppets in men's hands. But now that things have changed, women may feel free to use their rights. American aspirations are a key subject in the poem as well. The young girl is a symbol of the realization of aspirations since she is content and successful. The fulfilment of their identity ideal has liberated women from all ties. However, she also claims that I am too old to grasp your feelings and love obsession and that you are too young to understand our troubles.

Sonia Sanchez stands out for her ability to write poetry that simultaneously explore a variety of issues. The ballad is a fantastic illustration of its originality. She draws a parallel line connecting these two women, one of whom symbolizes youth and the other, old age. She conveys the traits of old age via the old lady character, while the themes of new age are represented by the young girl figure. Sonia is regarded as a passionate hedonist in the field of writing since she neither ignores nor forgets the old age.

The discussion shows that among African American women poets, Sonia Sanchez is the most well-known and widely read. Her storytelling strategies and phrase construction are distinctive. She speaks for African Americans, particularly women, and she is affected by politics as well as the other social and political factors unique to her generation. In an effort to alter the customs of her community, she rebels against the dominant pattern. Her poetry also represents a resistance against the popularity of writing about racism and Blackness. She writes a few poems that are the ideal representation of pure and authentic art, appeal to human senses, provide aesthetic pleasure, and make her a worldwide poet. She rebels against masculine dominance and battles the patriarchal culture to claim female individuality via her poems. She serves as the ideal example for the other female poets.

Through her poems, she works to raise the moral bar in her community and to act as a wake-up call for Black Americans. She aims at offering them spirituality by adding the idea of women's relationships with one another and their battles for identity. Her poetry is very readable due to the topic of love and sorrow. She opens out about her own agony and suffering in several of her autobiographical poetry. She records the life and age-related experience. In her poems, she expresses her own love, tenacity, and disillusionment. Although her poetry is didactic and political, there is no denying its literary merits, artistic beauty, and creation as art for art's sake. She honors these issues by using them as the subjects of her poems. Her poetry is enjoyable due to its lyrical language, complexity of thinking, and variety of subjects.

## CONCLUSION

In her poems, Sonia Sanchez shows compassion for the plight of women of color. She represents the voiceless women and makes a big contribution to the criticism of many ideologies that persistently devalue black women. She shows a system of marginalization that causes white males to reject black women. She claims that because of racism, sexism, poverty, and discrimination in a variety of services, poor women of color are denied the same opportunities for education, work, income, and health care that are accessible to other groups in our country. She continues by saying that because of these financial difficulties, black women also lose their spirituality and connection to the divine, which makes it challenging for them to remain determined to fight for their rights. She also makes a point to stand out for women of color considering their experiences and mentions how the challenges that black women endure help them hone their skills and make them tough in the face of adversity. She recognizes their struggle for moral and spiritual development as well. She contends that black women act as role models for other women from other cultures who struggle for their rights since they deal with so many challenges at once. She recognizes the importance of their black image to the women of color and commends them on their efforts. She respects the wit and cunning of black

women's relationships. She recounts their struggle for freedom and justice in a way that is highly commended. She pledges in her poem to stand by them and work with other women of her community to secure their liberty and freedom.

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