

Critical Appreciation of *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise" tones up a resistance discourse in the history of the writing women's literature, more particularly assertive to the history of women writings from African American Literature. The world view of Maya Angelou creates affirmation, resilience, confidence, celebration and resistance against all systematic oppressions against women particularly Black women. The present poem situates history, memory, racism, sexism and painful legacy of slavery system with strong expressions, literary figures of speeches and poetic spaces turning the rhythm in its perfect musicality of defiance. The fundamental pursuit drives the thematic strand of the poem to torchlight the marginalised section especially women to stand with their full existence and transform their suffering into strength; the emphasis is marked for the representation of self identity rather the formation of expectation that may come in a tone of sympathy from a phallogocentric society.

The titular line "I Rise" is associated with the subject of identity that is subject and referential to the concept of sisterhood or the solidarity of women by providing a message "you don't have to remain silent, spectator, compromised with patriarchy and submissive to the adverse situation, never to think you are destined" but you need to wake up with your representation in order to find joy, triumph and a life head. The word is concerned to those who are marginalised in the name of being a woman. It also indicates, "you need to transform with a new identity where you can occupy a respectable space at home and in the world."

Angelou employs **bold imagery and metaphor** to expose the cruelty of oppression while celebrating self-worth. Lines such as "*You may write me down in history / With your bitter, twisted lies*" directly confront the distortion of Black history by dominant narratives. The metaphors of wealth—"like dust," "like gold mines," and "like oil wells"—redefine Black identity as something precious and abundant rather than degraded. These images reverse traditional power structures and assert economic, cultural, and emotional richness.

The tone of the poem varies from accusation to celebration. The early stanzas address the oppressor in a rhetorical manner with questions that convey irony and suppressed anger. However, as the poem evolves, the tone appears more triumphant and jubilant, leading to the ultimate proclamation of freedom as a whole. The final stanza relates the poet's individual growth with the historical struggles of enslaved ancestors as the basis for present struggle.

From a stylistic point of view, "Still I Rise" is characterised by simplicity but power, which makes it universally understandable while remaining emotionally charged. The simplicity of the poem is employed for a clearer message, whereby emotions are more important than complexity. The use of first-person narrative by Angelou

personalises the experience of oppression, making the poem both personal and universal.

In conclusion, "Still I Rise" emerges as a classic empowerment piece. The poem resists systems of domination, yet at the same time honors dignity, identity, and hope. The self-assured voice and message by Maya Angelou transcend the pain to self-pride and thereby transcend cultures, eras, and movements. The final message is quite clear: the pain and wounds inflicted by history on marginalised groups notwithstanding, the human spirit will continue to "rise."