

THE PORTRAIT OF MAYA ANGELOU'S EXPERIENCE: A
BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF MAYA ANGELOU'S
SELECTED POEMS



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Approved to be examined

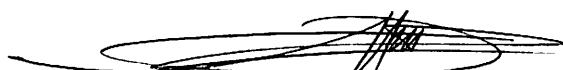
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DECLARATION

Hereby, I declare that this thesis entitled The Portrait of Maya Angelou's Experience: A Biographical Analysis of Maya Angelou's Selected Poems is my own work and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except from the references mentioned.



Surabaya, July 7th 2015

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ABSTRACT

Maulidya, Nur Fitriana. 2015. *The Portrait of Maya Angelou's Experience: A Biographical Analysis of Maya Angelou's Selected Poems*. A Thesis. English Department, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya. Advisor: Itsna Syahadatud Dinurriyah, M.A

Key Words: African American, Experience, Biographical Criticism

This research aims to discover the experiences of Maya Angelou that reflected in her four poems *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel*. Maya Angelou is an African American writer who was known for autobiographies. This research uses descriptive qualitative method. In Analyzing, this research describes Maya Angelou's experiences that reflected in her poems.

This research is divided into four parts, those are analyzing the character and the setting to determine the theme using new criticism as supporting theory and through the theme will analyze Maya Angelou's experiences that reflected in her poems by applying biographical criticism. The result of this research shows that in her each poems has first person point of view and have different themes. Those are discrimination, equality, woman's work and love. All of the themes represent her experiences as African American who lived among Whites.

INTISARI

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Key Words: Orang Afrika-Amerika, Pengalaman, Kritik Biografi

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan pengalaman-pengalaman Maya Angelou yang tergambar dalam empat puisinya *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel*. Maya Angelou adalah seorang penulis Afrika Amerika yang dikenal dengan karya autobiografinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Dalam menganalisisnya, penelitian ini akan mendeskripsikan pengalaman - pengalaman Maya Angelou yang tergambar di empat puisinya.

Penelitian ini dibagi menjadi empat bagian, yaitu menganalisa karakter dan latar untuk menentukan tema dengan menggunakan new criticism dan melalui tema akan digunakan untuk menganalisa pengalaman-pengalaman Maya Angelou yang tergambar di puisinya dengan pendekatan biografi penulis. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa puisi-puisi tersebut mempunyai sudut pandang orang pertama dan memiliki tema yang berbeda yaitu diskriminasi, Persamaan hak, pekerjaan wanita dan cinta. Masing-masing tema tersebut menggambarkan pengalaman - pengalaman Maya Angelou sebagai seorang Afrika Amerika yang hidup di antara orang-orang kulit putih.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Black art movement is a period in which the artistic and literary development among Black Americans in the 1960s and early 1970s. It is the most important influence in the African American literature which there were many African American writings appeared after that. The Black Arts Movement also embraced the artistic articulation of the Black Power Movement, give a means for authors to show their experience in political and social discrimination that African Americans continued to experience (Beaulieu 788). Those experiences are considered as the inspiration of Black to create a work. The Black Arts Movement engaged in cultural nation building by sponsoring poetry readings, founding community theatres, creating literary magazines, and setting up small presses (Wallenfeldt 60).

During the Black Arts Movement period, there is Black women movement or also known as Black Feminist Movement which the community of Black women writers expanded and solidified at that time (Beaulieu 350). It was developed in response to the experience of Black women in Black liberation movements, Black women often found themselves facing sexual oppression within Black liberation movements and racial oppression within the women's movement (66). It means the cause of Black feminist emergence as effort to meet the need of Black women who felt they were being racially and sexually oppressed. One of their efforts is addressing the Black women experiences through their work. Beaulieu was stated in his *Writing African American Women: An Encyclopedia of Literature by and about Women of Color*:

In The 1970s saw an increase in the number of Black women writers whose works were being published. This was a significant step for the Black feminist movement, as it provided a place for their concerns to be addressed. Black women used their poetry, stories, and novels to address the issues that had historically been impacting upon them (69).

One of the well known Black feminist at that time is Maya Angelou. Marguerite Annie Johnson or known as Maya Angelou (1928-2014) is an African American writer, singer, actress and civil rights activist. She is known for her several volumes of autobiography that tell about her life as Black woman including economic, racial and sexual oppression experience. The most famous of her autobiography is *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) about Maya's story life from childhood to adulthood (Cox 10). The book covers her life from childhood in Stamps, Arkansas and describes the way she was raised in segregated rural Arkansas, until the birth of her son at the age of 17 (Bloom 10). According to Beaulieu *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* established a new genre of expression as autobiographical fiction became a medium for women of color to bring attention to how their personal lives have been impacted by larger social and political systems (70). Therefore, this work being the first autobiography was created by an African American woman.

Maya Angelou was a Black woman who lived in America where White people were the majority group. At the time, the Blacks have experienced of discrimination, insulting and oppression because of their race (Rahmawati 2). From her experiences, she expresses her thought and feeling through her works such as in her poems. She started to write when she was at nine years old after she experienced a raping, murder, and a trial. Because of those experiences, she decided to life in silent for several years and starts to write poem (Cox 18).

Most of Maya's poems are about her experiences in life (Bloom 127), including about her experience in discrimination, segregation of her environment as well as about her love. *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel* are some of her famous poems. In *Woman Work*, the poem tells about being a mother and doing all of her chores, while in her *Equality*, it is about her wish to have equality with White people. Then, in her *Still I Rise*, it is about the discrimination and oppression experiences and in her *Touched by An Angel* is Maya's thought about love in her life. Based on the content of those poems, all of the events on those poems also have experienced by Maya Angelou.

As mentioned before about the autobiography of Maya *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) which is about her early years as African American woman, it means that her autobiography explains her experiences life in her childhood until she has a child. Some of her experiences have been written there, such as she has experienced being a mother and has a child in her sixteen years old without any husband, experienced of discrimination in her environment such as when her graduation ceremony in her elementary school, she did not call by her teacher forward as one of the best students but the teacher only called the White students (Cox 19). She also ever experienced about love which she had fallen in love for many times, one of her boyfriends is Curly, 31 years old man (25).

Based on the explanation above can be concluded that there is relationship between Maya's *Woman Work*, *Equality*, *Still I Rise* and *Touched by An Angel* with her life. In order to find the connection of Maya Angelou's poems and her life, this research will use biographical criticism as an approach to find it and how her life was reflected in her poem through understanding in Maya Angelou's biography.

According to Wellek and Warren, the most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author and hence an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study (67). It means this theory is one of the oldest theories to analyze a literary work and it stresses on the creativity of the author in creating his or her work based on the creating history which the work has relationship with the author's life. In this case, biography of the author will sometimes be reflected in his or her work. The biography itself presents the subject's life story (in this case, the subject here means the author of a work), various aspects of his or her life, including intimate details of experience, and may include an analysis of the subject's personality (Kopong !). In short, biographical approach is an approach used to understand and comprehend a literary work by studying deeper about the life of the author. In using this theory, we must understand the biography of the author first and then seek the connection between the contents of the work and the author.

Regarding with those issues above, there is an interesting thing of Maya's creativity in her works; that is how she shows her experiences through her works so that her personal life reflected in her works. In this reason, this study will focus to analyze on the some selected poems of Maya Angelou, they are *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel* using biographical criticism. This study only chooses the four poems of Maya Angelou because those poems including of the most famous of Maya's poem and all of them are about being a Black woman.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the explanation in background of study, the statements of problems are formulated as follow:

1. What are the theme of each poem *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel*?
2. How is Maya Angelou's life experience reflected in poem *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel*?

1.3 Objective of Study

According to the problem stated above, the main objectives of this study as follows:

1. To find out what themes is used in poem *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel*
2. To describe Maya Angelou's life experience that reflected in her *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel*

1.4 Significance of Study

Theoretically, this study will be useful to the writer and the reader, such as in increasing and enriching the insights of the writer and the reader about poem and literary criticism, especially in biographical criticism, to know further about the personal life of Maya Angelou, about the relationship between Maya Angelou and her work also to understand about the African American experience deeply. Practically, this study will give a contribution to the lectures which it expected can be a reference to teach in literature, especially about analyzing poem and biographical criticism. While for students, it expected can give better understanding to apply biographical criticism in analyzing a literary work. Furthermore, this study expected can be an input and additional reference for the following research about biographical criticism.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In order to make the discussion in this study more focus on the problem, the writer decides the scope and limitation. The scope of this study is to analyze the relationship between Maya Angelou's experience life and her poems. While the limitation of this study is using the four selected poems of Maya Angelou, those are *Still I Rise, Equality, Woman Work and Touched by An Angel*.

1.6 Method of Study

This study is library research which this study gathering the data and information from some books, journal, theses and websites with enclosed the quotation as the evidence to support the analysis. This study uses qualitative analysis which the result of this research will be presented in writing form and give interpretation to the result descriptively. The aim of using this method is to identify and describe how Maya's life reflected in her poem. There are some steps in analyzing the data:

1. Reading Maya Angelou's poems and her biography repeatedly to get more understand about the contents of them.
2. The next step, analyzing the poems and classifying the theme of each poem.
3. After determine the theme, then seeking the connection with the events of the author's life that have relation with the theme using biographical approach.
4. The last step is finding out and interpreting the correlation between the author's life and her poems.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In this research, there are some key terms which significant to the reader to make easy in understanding this research. Those are:

- a. Biography : a relatively full account of a particular person's life,

involving The attempt to set forth character, temperament and milieu (society), as well as the subject's activities and experiences (Abrams 22). In

digilib.uinsa.ac.id digilib.uinsa.ac.id ~~other word, biography presents about human life story~~ which include of the various aspects of their life,

including intimate details of experience, and may include an analysis of the subject's personality.

b. African American : one of the largest of the many ethnic groups in the United States, they are mainly of African ancestry (www.britannica.com). They also known as Afro-American, colored and Black American.

c. Racial Segregation: the practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or to separate institutions (www.britannica.com).

d. Discrimination : unfair treatment of one particular person or group of people because of the person's sex, religion, nationality, race (racism), etc (www.britannica.com).

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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, in order to make easy in analyzing the problems of this research id definitely it needs a literary criticism. Literary criticism is the discipline of interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating works of literature (Gillespie 4). In other word, literary criticism is a natural human response to literature. In literary criticism, there is a specific method or approach to analyze in literary work, it was called literary theory (6).

Through literary theory, we can analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of a literary work. Intrinsic element is the basic element that contained in a work such as imagery, theme, symbol, figure of speech, etc. While extrinsic element is the supporting element of literary work that come from outside of the work such as the biography of author also the social, environment, religion, education of the author. There is extrinsic method which it used to analyze the setting, environment and external causes of a work (Wellek and Warren 65). Throughout extrinsic study, it can interpret literature by a proper knowledge of the conditions under which it has been produced (65). The best known of extrinsic methods in literary study are historical and biographical criticism.

This research will be focus on the extrinsic element of Maya Angelou's selected poems, especially in relationship between Maya's life (biography) and her poems. In order to analyze it, this research will use biographical criticism by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1949). The reason in using this theory because through biography literary work (poetry) can be judged in relation to the light it throws on the actual production of poetry and biography also as affording materials for a systematic study of the psychology of the poet and of the poetic process (67).

2.1.1 Biographical Criticism

Late in the seventeenth century, John Dryden defined biography as the history of particular men's lives (qtd in Abrams 22). While according to Abrams biography was full account of a particular person's life, involving the attempt to set forth character, temperament, and milieu, as well as the subject's activities and experiences (22). In short, biography presents the subject's life story (in this case, the subject here means the author of a work), various aspects of his or her life, including intimate details of experience and activities.

The eighteenth century in England is the age of the emergence of the full-scale biography, and also the theory of biography as a special literary genre (22). It was the century of Samuel Johnson's Lives of the English Poets (1779-81) and of the best known of all biographies, James Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson (22). At least in England, biography has been one of the earliest and certainly one of the most persistent forms of literary study (Wellek and Warren 68).

Biography can be judged in relation to the light it throws on the actual production of poetry and it also as affording materials for a systematic study of the psychology of the poet and of the poetic process (67). That means through biography of an author, we can know how the poem was created and how the condition of the poet when he created his poem.

There are some benefits in analyzing a work with knowing the author's biography. Biography has exegetical value, it may explain a great many allusions or even words in an author's work (73). It means, through biography of the author can gives explanation of the allegory words in a work. It also helps us in studying the most obvious of all strictly developmental problems in the history of literature, the growth,

maturing, and possible decline of an author's art and it accumulates the materials for other questions of literary history such as the reading of the poet, his personal associations with literary men, his travels, the landscape and cities he saw and lived in (73). Biography of author is the important thing to applying biographical criticism in analyzing a literary work.

Biographical criticism starts with the premise that stories, poems and plays are written by human beings and that important facts about the life of an author can shed light on literary texts (Charter 1799). It means this approach begins with the simple but central insight that literature is written by actual people which there is an understanding of an author's life from his work. This critical approach suggests us to maintain that the imaginative world of the text has characteristics that originate from causes or sources in the author's background (1799). Regarding with this statement, there are creative and imaginative things in a work that was created by an author which that work considered has relevance with author's personal life.

According to Wellek and Warren, the most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author and hence an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study (67). It means this theory is one of the oldest theories to analyze a literary work and it stressed on the creativity of the author in creates his or her work based on the creating history which the work has relationship with the author's life. It is appropriate with Guerin et al statement in their *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* that biographical criticism is an approach which consider that literature as a reflection of its author's life and times or the life and times of the characters in the work (35).

In short, biographical criticism assumes that there is a relationship between the writer's life and work (Gillespie 23). This theory focuses on the particular incidents, people and historical occurrences in an author's life (23). It means biographical criticism was focused on links between a work's content and the writer's life such as the writer's intentions, experiences, motives, or beliefs to interpret his/her literary works.

In using biographical criticism, there are three points of view should be noticed carefully. The first is biography explains and illuminates the actual product of poetry, is directly relevant. It means the biography of the author explicates the creating process of the literary work. The second is advocating the intrinsic interest of biography, shifts the center of attention to human personality. It means the author is the main focus in analyzing a literary work. And then, the third is considering biography as material for a science or future science, the psychology of artistic creation. It means biography can be used as a science to analysis the poem through the condition of the poet when create his work (Wellek and Warren 67).

In conclusion, the main aim of biographical criticism is to do some digging into the facts of an author's life and times, then to relate that information back to the author's work (Gillespie 23). Hence, through this theory we will understand and comprehend a literary work by studying deeper about the life of the author. This research will try to understand in Maya Angelou's life and then know how her life was reflected in her *Woman Work, Equality, Still I Rise and Touched by An Angel*. Furthermore, in using this theory, we must know the biography or the personal life of Maya Angelou because the biography of Maya Angelou will be the important thing as the main source to find the correlation of Maya and her poems also her experience life was reflected through her poems.

2.1.2 New Criticism

In making correlation between the author's personal life with the work, this research must find the theme first. To analyze it, New Criticism is needed as supporting theory. It had emerged in the 1920s and especially dominant in the 1940s and 1950s, was equivalent to the establishing of the new professional criticism in the emerging discipline of 'English' in British higher education during the inter-war period (Selden et al 18).

New Criticism is one of the influential approaches in modern criticism. During The decades of the 1930s And 1940s, New criticism was grew greatly in influence. By the 1950s, it had become the dominant school of thought in University English departments and influential literary journals (Gillespie 178). This term, was set current by the publication of John Crowe Ransom's *The New Criticism* in 1941, came to be applied to a theory and practice that was prominent in American literary criticism until late in the 1960s (Abrams 180).

New criticism was also termed as an Aesthetic Criticism, Analytical Criticism, Formalistic Criticism, Ontological Criticism, or Textual Criticism (Chandra 85). Regardless of that statement, all these terms involve the careful analysis of a literary text's craft (Gillespie 175). It was a concentration on the form, style, and technique in literary works (175). According to Chandra in his *T.S. Eliot and The New Criticism* (2012), New Criticism insisted on the intrinsic value of a work of art and focused attention in the individual work alone as an independent unit of meaning (85). Meanwhile, According to Heaver it denotes such criticism which concentrates on semantics, meter, imagery, metaphor and symbol, placing emphasis always on text dissociated from biography and historical tradition and background and applying extra-

linguistic techniques whether from logic, sociology or psychology of literature (qtd in Chandra 86).

In short, New criticism is not concerned with context of a literary work such as historical, biographical, intellectual and so on, it is not interested in the fallacies of intention or affect, but it is concerned solely at the text itself, with its language and organization, it does not seek a text's meaning, but how it speaks itself (Selden et al 19). That means New criticism ignores any cultural, historical or biographical context, but it focuses on the component of language in text itself which it was called as formal elements, include of the literary devices, figurative language and language structures (Gillespie 178). The main strategy of new criticism was close reading, the detailed analysis of the complex interrelations and ambiguities (multiple meanings) of the verbal and figurative components within a work (Abrams 181).

The statements above appropriates with new criticism according to T.S. Eliot, he stated that we should not confuse the writer's life story or psychology with the poem he or she created. Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry (qtd in Gillespie 176). Thomas Stearns Eliot or known as T.S. Eliot was an American poet and scholar, his collection of essays published in 1920 in a book for entitled *The Sacred Wood* is a landmark in the field of modern criticism (Chandra 86).

Based on the explanation above about the scope of new criticism which the formal elements of a work, the applying of new criticism in this research is deciding the theme. However, this research will analyze the character and setting first to decide the theme of Maya's poems.

2.1.2.1 Character

Character is the player in a narrative (Gillespie 190). It means the person represented in a dramatic or narrative work. Character was developed through description, action, thought, speeches and direct statement of the author (190). In this case, the character of the work can be the writer itself.

Many poems do contain well-delineated characters. However, because poems on average are shorter than stories or novels, the process of character development in poetry tends to be compressed (www.writeanything.com). Sometimes, the character in a poem is not identifiable, unlike in novel, drama or short story which there should be a character.

There are four types of characters can be analyzed in a literary work (Dinnurriyah 115). The first is Physical character, it identifies the peripheral facts of the character include of age, sexual, category, size, race and color (115). It means the character in a literary work may be described as the age, sexual, category, size, race and color or it can be called the character's physical appearance.

The second is Social character, it covers all aspects that can be gleaned from the character's world or environmental such as by the economic status, occupation, creed and familial affiliation of the character (115). This character might be described based on the character's relation with its social life.

The third is Psychological character, it was showed by the inner mechanism of the character's mind as his habitual responses, attitudes, longing, purposes, likes and dislikes (116). It means this character described based on what he think about something.

And the last is Moral character, it discloses the decisions of the character, either socially acceptable or not, exposing their intentions, thus projecting what is upright or not (116). This character described based on his personality and his behavior in deciding something

By knowing those types of the character, we can easy to analyze and find the character reflected in each poem *Woman Work, Equality, Still I Rise* and *Touched by An Angel*. The character on those poems might be described through physical, social, psychological or moral character. After find out the character, it will make easy to know the description of the life experience of the character in the poem and then we will know the setting of poem.

2.1.2.2 Setting

The overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of a single episode or scene within such a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place (Abrams 284). It is the background which a story takes place, include of geographic location, time or period and the milieu (Gillespie 190). In Short, setting is the time and place in which the events occurred.

The setting here is used to identify the background of place, time and events that represented in Maya's poems. After this research find the character and the setting, it will make easier to determine the theme because through the character and setting of the poem it will know the main point of the content in the poem.

2.1.2.3 Theme

Theme refers to main message, main thought and main insight in a literary work (Gillespie 188). The theme is usually an abstract idea that seems to us to summarize what we perceive as the author's purpose or effect in writing. It is the main idea of a literary work which allows the reader to easily understand what the purpose or intention of the author in the work. Through the theme it will make easy the writer to seek the relation between Maya's life experience and her poems.

2.2 Review of Related Study

Most of Maya's poems have been analyzed by some students from university, such as Krisna and Solestiyo are the English Department students in Petra Christian University, they have analyzed three of Maya's poems in their *Black Power in Maya Angelou's Still I Rise, Phenomenal Woman and Weekend Glory*. Their research tried to find out what ways Black power is revealed in Maya Angelou's three poems. The analysis showed there are differences of ideas of Black power in each poem, those are the way to survive in the society, the way to express someone's thought, and the ability to accept one's identity as a Black woman.

The other research that analyzed about Maya's poem is a research from Dian Rahmawati from State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah. She has analyzed Maya's poems in her *The Image of Black Woman in Three Poems of Maya Angelou* (2011). She used Feminist criticism to analyze those poems and the result is she described the image of Black woman reflected on those poems which Black woman are independent, strong, brave, confident, outspoken, explicit, honest and mysterious.

This research has similarity with two researches above which analyzing about Maya's poems, but they also have difference. In Krisna and Sulistiyo's research, they analyzed about Black power reflected in Maya's poem and in Dian's research, she analyzed about the image of Black woman reflected in Maya's poem using Feminist criticism. While, in this research will analyze Maya Angelou's experience reflected of her poems using Biographical criticism.

There also a research analyzed a literary work through biographical criticism. It is the research by Priamity Natalia Sabu Kopong, a student from Udayana University. She has analyzed a novel using biographical criticism in her *Biographical Approach to the Analysis of Virginia Woolf's Novel: To the Lighthouse*. She analyzed the relationship between the events happened surrounded her life with the content of the story in her novels. The result is she describes the position of woman in Virginia Woolf's life time that reflected in her novel. Priamity's research has similarity with this research which both of them use biographical criticism as main theory and the differences are it used a novel as the research object while this research will use the selected poems of Maya Angelou.

CHAPTER III

BIOGRAPHY OF MAYA ANGELOU

3.1 Maya Angelou's Personal Life

Marguerite Ann Johnson or known as Maya Angelou was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 4th, 1928. Her father, Bailey Johnson, worked as a doorman at a hotel in St. Louis and her mother, Vivian Baxter Johnson, was a card dealer in an illegal gambling parlor. She has a brother, he was Bailey Jr., who was a year older than her. He was the one who given her name "Maya". When they were very little, Bailey was difficult to call her "Marguerite." Instead, he called her "My Sister." Eventually, that got shortened to "My" and then became "Maya" (Stewart 11).

She often moved from Stamps to St. Louis and conversely. It happened because her parents were divorced and they lived in different place. The divorce happened when she was three years old. At the time, she lived in Long Beach, California. Her first move was in her grandmother's house in Stamps, Arkansas. She and her brother were sent by her father to her grandmother through a train with a tag "To Whom It May Concern", the note addressed to her grandmother, Anne Henderson. In her autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Angelou said:

When I was three and Bailey four, we had arrived in the musty little town, wearing tags on our wrists which instructed – "To Whom It May Concern" – that we are Marguerite and Bailey Johnson Jr., from Long Beach, California, enroute to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Anne Henderson (5).

After Marguerite and Bailey lived in Stamps for several years, their father appeared one day, he wanted to take them back in California. At the time, she was

seven years old. Bailey felt exciting about his father's desire but it was not for Maya, she was sad because she did not want to leave her grandmother.

Bailey was excited, but seven-year-old Maya was very upset. She was unsure about her father and was frightened to leave Stamps and Momma.

She did not want to be separated from Bailey, however. She loved him dearly—he was often her only ally. So she resigned herself to leaving, and watched as Momma sewed new jumpers and skirts for her new life (Stewart 20).

When Maya had arrived in California, her father took her and her brother to her mother, Vivian in St. Louis. Actually she did not want to meet her mother because she still remembered when she had sent to her grandmother. However, when she met her mother, she was amazed to look her. She thought that her mother was too beautiful to have children, besides her "fresh-butter see-through clean color," straightened hair, and red lipstick, her mother liked to laugh, told jokes, and had fun all the time (Cox 4).

Living with her mother, she has experienced of rape because her mother's boyfriend, Mr. Freeman. That man threatened her to say nothing to Bailey if she wanted her brother will still life. Her mother found the stained underwear the next day as she changed the sheets on the bed. Maya was forced to say what happened with her, she said to her parents. Mr. Freeman was arrested immediately but he was killed by someone (Stewart 24). After that incident, Maya took to Stamps again. Because of those experiences, she decided to live in silent for several years and starts to write poem (Cox 18).

She started writing around the age of nine, during her silent period. "It was my way of keeping in touch, I guess," Angelou said years later.

“And I loved poetry.... I just loved it. I must have been the most tiresome kind of child—you know, not talking and weeping over poetry, which I half understood at that” (18).

In her silence years, her grandmother introduced her to her friend, Mrs. Bertha Flowers. She was the wealthiest Black woman in Stamps, she was also beautiful and obviously well educated (Stewart 28). Mrs. Flowers introduced her to an assortment of literary classics, including the works of Charles Dickens. She was one of the important women in her life because she was able to get Marguerite to talk, having her read from works that in themselves were demanding recitation. Her way was so effective that it must have carried over into Maya’s poetic career, in the production of such “oral” poems as “*Still I Rise*” and “*Phenomenal Woman*” (Bloom 5).

Graduated from her elementary school in Stamps, she continued her study in San Francisco, lived with her mother family. But, in her fifteen years old, she decided to work instead attending to school, her job was a conductor for the Market Street Railway Company in San Francisco. She was the first Black streetcar conductor in San Francisco (Cox 21). One day, Maya worried about her sexuality, she has no a boyfriend, she suspected that she was a lesbian. To find out if she was, she asked a popular neighborhood boy to have sex with her. Three weeks later, Maya discovered she was pregnant. She hid her condition for more than eight months until her graduation from high school (22). She gave birth to her son, Clyde Bailey Johnson in her seventeen years old. Being a mother, Maya thought that getting a job was more important than ever, she did not want to burden her mother (Stewart 40).

Maya has married three times in her life. In 1950, she married with Tosh Angelos, a Greek sailor. Being married to Angelos made her must still in the home, he

did not allow Maya to work. She became a good housekeeping advertisement, cooking well-balanced, gourmet meals and molding fabulous jello desserts. My floors were dangerous with daily applications of wax and our furniture slick with polish (Cox 34). After two and a half years, they decided to divorce (34). Then, she looked for a job and changed her name became Maya Angelou (a variation of her married name, Angelos) (35). Besides married with Tosh Angelos, she also ever married with Vasumzi Make, a South African Activist and Paul Du Feu, a White Briton. However, none of her relationships survived.

She began a career as a professional entertainer in the 1950's as a singer-dancer at the Purple Onion, a cabaret in California. She was invited to audition for a production of *Porgy and Bess* (1935). In 1957, she appeared in the Off-Broadway play *Calypso Heatwave* and recorded "Miss Calypso" for Liberty Records (Cox 36).

The 1950s ended, Maya shifted her interest from entertaining to writing. She had always written poetry, but never felt sure of herself. She met John Killens, a talented Black author, when he came to California. He told her she had promise, but if she really wanted to grow as a writer, she should consider moving to New York. There was a talented group of Black writers there who had formed the Harlem Writers' Guild to help one another with their writing, and then she became member of the Harlem Writers' Guild (Stewart 61).

In 1960, Angelou got a job offer she could not refuse. She became Northern coordinator for the SCLC (the Southern Christian Leadership Conference) at the invitation of Martin Luther King, Jr., with whom she worked (Cox 48). Maya and her son spent a number of years living in Cairo, Egypt and Ghana. During that time she worked as a newspaper editor and teacher of dance and drama (Kirkpatrick 4). In 1970,

she began a series of autobiographies with her book *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which was followed by subsequent autobiographies and several volumes of poetry.

By 1989, Maya had been named to *USA Today's* list of 50 Black role models. Reviewers, despite their occasional criticisms of her writing, greatly respect her. One reviewer said that she was becoming a "self-created Everywoman". Another compared her to the legendary Frederick Douglass, saying that "as people who have lived varied and vigorous lives, they embody the quintessential experiences of their race and culture" (Cox 82-83).

In 1993, Maya Angelou was asked by then President-elect Bill Clinton to write a poem for his inauguration. She read a poem she wrote for the occasion, "On the Pulse of Morning", at the inauguration ceremony. She was the first African American and first woman to be given such an honor (5). Maya Angelou has received many other academic and national honors. She was granted her first honorary doctorate degree in 1975, Presidential Medal of the Arts in 2000, The Lincoln Medal from the Ford's Theatre in 2008. In February, 2011 she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor, by President Barack Obama (5).

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3.2 Maya in Discrimination and Segregation

Discrimination is unfair treatment of one particular person or group of people because of the person's sex, religion, nationality, race (racism), etc (www.britannica.com). While segregation is the practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or to separate institutions (www.britannica.com). Those actions had experienced by Maya Angelou, mostly in her childhood in Stamps.

These early years in Stamps were largely happy ones. But as loved as Maya felt by Momma and Uncle Willie, she was learning that there was

ugliness about the town, too. Like the rest of the South in the 1930s, racial inequality was normal. Although slavery had been abolished since President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, little had changed for African Americans in the following seventy years (Stewart 14).

Based on what Maya had experienced above, at the time the society in the South was controlled by Whites. Laws forbade Blacks from being seated at restaurants. They could not use the same drinking fountains or bathrooms as Whites. This condition made Maya aware that the town of Stamps was divided. The Quarters (location of African American residents, around Maya's grandmother store) was Black and separated from the White part of town by railroad tracks and the Red River. Most Black residents in Stamps worked for White plantation owners. They picked cotton or worked as maids in White homes (14-15).

In Stamps, there was also a racist organization of White people. They was called Ku Klux Khan, the gang of Whites hooded their heads with only their "eyes of hate" showing as they beat, maimed, or killed Blacks (Cox 2). They did that because there was ever a Black man alleged to speak rudely to White woman (Stewart 16).

Maya ever seen directly, in the front of her grandmother's store there were White girls who she called them "poWhitetrash" girls insulted and mocked her grandmother, just because their skin was White and hers was Black. Seeing the girls' act, Maya wept and thought of getting her uncle's rifle also wanted to throw lye and pepper on them and scream at them "they were dirty, scummy peckerwoods" (Bloom 21).

Maya also had experienced of discrimination and segregation to herself. When she went to movie theatre with Bailey, the ticket seller did not allow her to watch the theater in same place with White children but she took their money. While, there was a White girl who bought a ticket, she gave her and asked politely to her to watch the theatre (Stewart 17).

The discrimination also happened when her eighth-grade graduation ceremony in 1940, she had experienced of graduation disappointment. The graduation speaker, a White politician said in his speech about White schools in Arkansas and how graduates from those places would have many opportunities in life. Some might go on to be artists, inventors, or scientists. He emphasized that Blacks and Whites were not equal and Black opportunities were different. According to him, the opportunities of Black in careers as maids, handymen, and if they were very lucky, they could be athletes. However, they really had no future anywhere else (Stewart 31). His words were terribly depressing to her whereas she was excited in her graduation before. She became more sorrowful when she did not hear her name called or her honors listed since she was one of the top students in her class (Cox 19).

There was also hurt experience besides her experiences above. She had a toothache, and her grandmother tried to took her to a dentist, White dentist. He refused to treat her toothache, even though he had once borrowed money from her grandmother to save his business. He told to her that he would “rather stick my hand in a dog’s mouth” than in a Black person’s (20).

When Maya was an adult, she and her son, Clyde, went to her grandmother in Stamps again. She did not realize that Stamps had not changed. It was still divided by hate, and Blacks were expected to know their place. Maya, however, had changed. She

had experienced racial equality in San Francisco (27). Someday, after her eight days in Stamps, she walked to White general store to buy a sewing pattern. In the store, she and the White saleswoman were both in the same narrow aisle. The saleswoman ordered her to move to the side in a narrow aisle and demanded, “How do you pronounce your name, gal? Speak up” (27). Maya did not like to call “gal” because there was no one who called her like that include of White people. Maya objected to treat like that, the saleswoman was startled and the she was rude and insulted Maya (27).

3.3 Maya and Love

In Maya's life, she had experienced of falling in love for many times. Her first love was Curley, a navy man fourteen years older than she. She met him when she worked in restaurant as cook of Creole. He was one of customers in that restaurant. When he learned that Maya was a single mother, he was sympathetic. His kindness touched her heart, and she quickly fell in love with this 31-year-old man (Cox 25). They had dated for two months. Someday, he said that actually he was engaged, his fiancée lived in another state and they would be getting married soon. This fact did not matter for Maya, she chosen to ignore Curley's admission. She saw how good he was with her baby and enjoyed every minute she spent with him. digilib.uinsa.ac.id digilib.uinsa.ac.id

It did not matter that he told her, he would marry his real girlfriend in New Orleans when her job in San Diego ended. She pushed that fact out of her mind when they played with Clyde at the park or rode the Ferris wheel (25).

She was fallen in love again with her partner in dancing when she worked as a nightclub dancer. Her partner was R.L. Poole, a nightclub tap dancer. Because she and Poole often performed together in the front, she had special feeling to him, she was

fallen in love to Poole. Not long she felt that feeling, his early former dance partner and her girlfriend was back to Poole and she thought that the time of her work was over, as well as her feeling to Poole. Frustrated and discouraged, she felt as if she were going nowhere fast (Stewart 46). She was loneliness, she often imagined that she wanted to have a husband and a good father to her son. In order to forgetting her loneliness, she was using marijuana, to deal with the loneliness and frustration she felt (46).

After she resigned from her job as a dancer, she decided to work as a cook in a restaurant, while her son taken care by her neighborhood baby sitter, Big Mary. One day when she was worked, she noticed by a man, L.D. Tolbrook, who as old as her father. He looked like a rich man, driving a silver blue-lincoln, have much many in his pocket and a diamond ring in his finger. His job was a gambler. Though he was married, he promised to leave his wife for Maya. His politeness and kindness impressed her. Once again, she fell in love.

One night at the restaurant, she met a forty-five-year-old gambler named L.D. Tolbrook. He was married, but he told Angelou that he planned to leave his wife. Although Tolbrook was more than twice her age, they began a relationship. In Angelou's mind, he would eventually marry her and be a loving father to Clyde (47).

Her love to Tolbrook is too much, she helped him when he had \$5,000 gambling debt, and he did not have money to pay it, he asked Maya to help him, Maya answered that she will do anything to help him. The word "anything" turned out to be prostitution. She volunteered to be a prostitute and give him the money. Although she was not proud of what she was doing, she felt there was nothing wrong with her situation. "I reassured myself," she later wrote, "I was helping my man" (47). She

believed that after paid off his man's debt, she will out from prostitution and will have a good life with Tolbrook and Her son.

Her love to Tolbrook is not long resisted as Clyde was lost because he was taken by her baby sitter. She just realized how naive she had been. Everyday she did not have many times with her son, she spent many her time in prostitution to help her man. "I had been stupid, again", she writes in *Gather Together in My Name*. "And stupidity had led me into a trap where I had lost my baby (48). Finally, she found her son in Big Mary original home and she decided to break up with Tolbrook at that time.

Back to San Francisco, Maya began job hunting again and she got a job in a restaurant. Soon after that, once again, she met a man, Troubadour Martin. As her love experience before which she always do anything for her love if she believed that the man would be a good husband for her. Martin was an addict. Though she knew about him, Maya fell in love again. She decided she would shoot up heroin if it would attract Troubadour to her (Cox 30). However, their relationship also not long resisted, because she was realized that it was not good thing for Clyde if she become an addict. She was done with the dark, dangerous underbelly of life (31).

Maya's love experience was not ended yet. She met again with a man who was one of her costumer in a store where she worked. He was Tosh Angelos, a Greek sailor who turned into an electrician. She felt that he was a type of man who she wanted. He was handsome and quiet. He liked Charlie Parker and other Black jazz and blues musicians. He and Clyde liked each other very much. She accepted when he proposed (34). However, Maya's mother disagreed with her decision to accept his because of his job and he was a White man.

“Think ahead,” her mother ordered. “What the hell is he bringing you? The contempt of his people and the distrust of your own. That’s a hell of a wedding gift.”(qtd. Stewart 55).

Even so, Maya did not care with her mother saying. She believed that he was the best for her and for Clyde. After she married with him in 1950, she quited from her job and became a fulltime homemaker and mother (55). Her marriage was not as perfect as she hoped. She more knew about the personality of her husband, he was a man who did not believe with the God existence and he disliked if there were Maya’s friends came to their house. After two and a half years, Maya and Angelos realized they were not happy together and divorced (Cox 34). Then, she looked for a job and changed her name became Maya Angelou (a variation of her married name, Angelos) to got a job (35).

In 1961, Maya met with a South African South African activist when she was in Africa , named Vasumzi (Vus) Make and she instantly fell in love because she amazed with his struggling against injustice in his country. Whereas, at the time, she had a fiancé, Thomas Allen, but she did not love to him. She more choosen Make to be her husband.

It was love at first sight. It did not matter to Angelou that the South African freedom fighter was fat and three inches shorter than she was. When he spoke of his struggle against injustice in his country, she promptly threw away Thomas Allen and their impending marriage (50).

Although she was proud of the work of Make for freeing African people, she was less happy about the restrictions he put on her own life. He wanted Angelou to be an African wife, which she should be subservient to her husband. He did not want her

to work, but rather spend her time keeping their apartment clean. Actually, Maya had a job but when Make knew that she worked, he asked her to quit from her job. In 1962, Maya and Make decided to divorce (Stewart 69).

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Finally, in 1971, she met a good man for her and married with him, he was Paul Du Feu, a White Briton she met at a London dinner party. He was the one who accepted and liked by her mother and her brother.

“My mother says I have married a few times, but this is the first time I’ve given her a son-in-law,” Angelou said shortly after her marriage.

“At the ceremony my brother took his glasses off and tears were on his face and said, ‘I want to go on record and look Paul Du Feu in the eyes and call him brother (Cox 71).

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CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

The previous chapter explained about Maya's personal life such as her experience in discrimination, segregation and her love's experience. While in this chapter, this study will try to answer the problems to find the theme and the relationship of Maya's selected poems and her personal life. The selected poems are *Still I Rise*, *Equality*, *Woman Work* and *Touched by An Angel*.

The first, this chapter will describe the character and setting of each poems to determine the theme of each poems. After, finding the themes, this chapter will describe the correlation of Maya Angelou's poems with her life experiences like discrimination, segregation and love through biographical criticism.

4.1 Still I Rise

4.1.1 Explication of Still I Rise

Still I Rise is one of the best known of Maya's poems, that was published in 1978. This poem is about a Black person who lives among Whites. In this poem, the speaker shows that she will never give up to rise and will move forward for a better life for her and other Black African-American women. This poem offers strong tones inside such as defiant, angry and self-assured. This poem also has powerful in the words and meaning. For example in the line "*Just like moons and like suns*", this line shows the confidence of the speaker who rises herself up emotionally to stay strong and she use words "*moons*" and "*suns*" as comparison that they also stay rises everyday no matter what happens.

Although this poem was written in 1978, the message that presented inside is very powerful and can be related to anyone even in this time. *Still I Rise* is a poem

which is a sort of encouragement for everyone, this poem conveys whatever or however the society discriminates us, we must still rise and be courage.

4.1.2 Character

In the previous chapter explained that character was developed through description, action, thought, speeches and direct statement of the author (Gillespie 190). In this case, the character of the work can be the writer itself. Like in this poem, the speaker or the character is Maya Angelou herself since the poem is about a Black American who lives among Whites and she is a Black American woman who also lived in America where White people is the majority group. At the time, Black people have experienced of discrimination, insulting and oppression because of their race (Rahmawati 2).

The character here uses first person point of view “*I*”. It can be analyzed by psychological character which the character showed by the inner mechanism of the character’s mind as his habitual responses, attitudes, longing, purposes, likes and dislikes (Dinurriyah 116). In this study the character explained through the character’s thought and the response about what have White people done to her. It also can be analyzed physically because Maya explained in line “*I’m a Black ocean, leaping and wide,*” this line shows the character identity or race is a Black woman.

This poem begins energetically, speaking to unknown person (or maybe persons):

You may write me down in history
 With your bitter, twisted lies,
 You may trod me in the very dirt
 But still, like dust, I’ll rise.

Because of the character or the speaker in this poem is a Black American, “you” here can identify as White people. The reason is we can see in that stanza which shows the form of discrimination such as from lines “*You may write me down in history*” and “*You may trod me in the very dirt*”. “*You*” here wants to make the speaker looks bad and worthless as a human, they look her as dust that has no value and means nothing in society.

Despite the White people do that to her, the character “*I*” in this poem looks confident, brave and pride as Black people. It is showed by the third and fourth lines in the second stanza “*'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells*” and “*Pumping in my living room*”, those lines presented about her pride as Black people. She considered that she walks like she got oil wells, “*oil wells*” here means something valuable. Hence, she is pride and confident if she has something different and valuable so that she is not afraid with White people.

4.1.3 Setting

Based on the character of the poem *Still I Rise* that the character “*I*” is Maya Angelou and “*you*” refers to White people who live around her. Although the setting of *Still I Rise* is not mentioned specifically in this poem, it seems that the setting is where Maya lived. The setting in this poem was showed by the tone of this poem. The tone of this poem is angry, because Maya feel different treatment from White. It can see in some lines of discrimination acts that experienced by Maya from her environment.

You may write me down in history
 With your bitter, twisted lies,
 You may trod me in the very dirt
 But still, like dust, I'll rise.

She was lived in America, exactly in Stamps Arkansas since she was three years old. Arkansas was a racist area divided between Black and White. At the time, the society was controlled by White people. The discrimination and segregation appeared, such as laws there forbade Blacks from being seated at restaurants (Stewart 14)

4.1.4 Theme

After knowing the character “I” is a Black American and the setting is a place where White people are the majority group and at the time Black people was controlled by White people, automatically we concluded that the main theme that suitable for the poem *Still I Rise* is discrimination because the content of this poem shows the kinds of discrimination acts by White people and Maya also had experienced it when she lived among White people.

Some acts can be identified as kinds of discrimination in this poem seen in some lines of this poem.

You may write me down in history
 With your bitter, twisted lies,
 You may trod me in the very dirt
 But still, like dust, I'll rise.

In the line “*You may write me down in history*” and “*You may trod me in the very dirt*” shows racial prejudice of White people around her, they look Black people as dust that has no value and means nothing in society based on the painful history of African American people which came to America as a slave to be sold. Their history makes bad stereotype about Black people.

You may shoot me with your words,
 You may cut me with your eyes,

You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

The stanza shows clearly about the discrimination acts of White people who dislike even hate her and they like to insult to Black people. Those lines above explain the painful condition of discrimination was faced by Maya Angelou since she lived in White environment.

4.1.5 Relation between Still I Rise with Maya's Life

Based on the theme of *Still I Rise* above, it is discrimination. It seems clearly the relation between Maya Angelou's life experiences with this poem that she had experienced of discrimination since she was a child and lived with her grandmother in Arkansas exactly Stamps. Stamps was a hot, dusty town, held together by a lumberyard and cotton fields and split down the middle by racial prejudice.

"In Stamps, the segregation was so complete that most Black children didn't really, absolutely know what Whites looked like," (Cox 12)

Her early years lived with her grandmother in Stamps was happy, but it was not longer. Eventually she had learned and realized there were still segregation and practice of discrimination in Stamps.

The first discrimination was experienced by her is act of disrespect by some girls to her grandmother. Those girls which Maya called "poWhitettrash" had insulted and mocked her grandmother in her grandmother's store. They posed the physical appearance of her grandmother as an ape. Their act appropriate with Maya's *Still I Rise* in sixth stanza which explained about what White people around her did to Black people, those are insulting and mocking because they dislike even hate to Black people.

You may shoot me with your words,
 You may cut me with your eyes,
 You may kill me with your hatefulness,
 But still, like air, I'll rise.

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In response to what the girls did, Maya was anger and resentment. When the girls aped her grandmother's posture, Maya wept and thought of getting her uncle's rifle, and wanted to throw lye and pepper on them and to scream at them. It was contrasting with what her grandmother did, she did not feel angry or resentment even when the girls left her store, she still called them "Miss" politely. Her grandmother's action made her realized that there is a more effective strategy for reacting to racism and segregation than rage.

The act of discrimination also had experienced by her. It happened when she was in seriousness in the pain of toothache. Her grandmother took her to a White dentist who he has debt to Maya's grandmother. He refused to treat her because she was Black. Moreover, he said painful thing that he would "rather sick my hand in a dog's mouth" than in a Black person (20).

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 "Annie, you know I don't treat nigra, colored people." "I know, Dentist

Lincoln. But this here is just my little grandbaby, and she ain't gone be no trouble to you ..." "Annie, everybody has a policy. In this world you have to have a policy. Now, my policy is I don't treat colored people... My policy ..." He let go of the door and stepped nearer Momma. The three of us were crowded on the small landing. "Annie, my policy is I'd rather stick my hand in a dog's mouth than in a nigger's." (qtd in Assefie)

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Our name is an important part of our identity, if someone deliberately changes our name; it is a lack of respect for our identity (Assefie 40). It include of violation's act of Marguerite's identity since she is Black. She had experienced it when she worked as a domestic in-training for Mrs. Cullinan. She was a White woman. She changed Maya's name from 'Marguerite' to 'Mary' without her consent because she thought that 'Mary' is easier in pronouncing than 'Marguerite'. It shows the lack of respect White mistresses have for their servants, who are considered as inferior just because they are Black. This act reminds her of the slavery times when Blacks were named on the will of their masters (40).

"I want Mary to go down to Mrs. Randall's and take her some soup.

She's not been feeling well for a few days ." Miss Glory's face was a wonder to see. "You mean Margaret, ma'am. Her name's Margaret."

"That's too long. She's Mary from now on" (41)

Based on Maya's experiences was described above, those show the kinds of discrimination acts to Black people of White people. Maya skillfully presents her experiences of discrimination in her poem. Those experiences of discrimination make her easier to express, reveal her feeling and thought of discrimination in creating poem

Still I Rise because she had experienced it by herself in her life. By this poem she wanted to convey that she had experienced of discrimination from White people.

4.2 Equality

4.2.1 Explication of Equality

Equality is Maya's poem was published in 2001. This poem is almost same with the poem before, *Still I Rise*. This poem also conveys about discrimination acts. However, this poem seems clearly shows the wish of the speaker in equality. With the

repetition of sentences '*Equality and I will be free*', this sentences shows that the speaker really wants to be equal with others. The tones in this poem seem powerful and brave in describing the speaker's desire and feeling. In *Equality*, Maya Angelou wants to address the importance of equality and freedom without segregation, discrimination and racism.

4.2.2 Character

Similar with poem *Still I Rise*, the speaker or the character here is Maya Angelou herself since the poem is also about Black American who lives among Whites in America where White people is the majority group. However in this poem more explain about the speaker's desire to be equal with White from all kinds of equality such as gender, race, age, etc.

The character here uses first person point of view "I". It can be analyzed by psychological character because Maya Angelou explained the character in this poem through the character's thought and the response about what White people did to her and what she wanted.

Because the character "I" here is a Black woman, the "you" here definitely White people. We can see from the first stanza that shows how White people seen to the speaker. They did not consider of the existence of the speaker.

"You declare you see me dimly
through a glass which will not shine,
though I stand before you baldly,
trim in rank and making time"

The following line "*while my drums beat out the message and the rhythms never change*" shows the speaker's desire to be equal with other. The word "drums"

presented the speaker's heart to ask for her right to be equal because “drums” is a thing sounds strong and loud. Her desire also showed in the repetition of line “*Equality, and I will be free*”.

4.2.3 Setting

Similar with poem *Still I Rise*, the character of the poem *Equality* which the character “I” is Maya Angelou and “you” refers to White people who live around her. The setting in the poem also in a place where Maya lived, it is in America which the majority people are White people and the minority is Black people at the time. She lived in Arkansas, the place where races were divided between Black and White and discrimination and segregation still appeared. The setting was showed by the tone in this poem. The tone is powerful which Maya wants to get equality like everyone else because she got different treatment and bad stereotype from White people.

You announce my ways are wanton,
that I fly from man to man,
but if I'm just a shadow to you,
could you ever understand ?

4.2.4 Theme

The most suitable theme for this poem is equality same with the title because the content of this poem is about the way of White people see and treat her, and how she wants to be treated.

“You declare you see me dimly
through a glass which will not shine,
though I stand before you baldly,
trim in rank and making time”

In this poem, Maya wants White people to treat her equally as everyone else. “you” or White people in this poem reflected as a blind and deaf people because they pretends or even did not know about the sadness of Black people who did not have same treat as other people. It showed in the lines as below.

“Take the blinders from your vision,
take the padding from your ears
and confess you’ve heard me crying
and admit you’ve seen my tears”

4.2.5 Relation between Equality with Maya’s Life

Equality is something never felt by Maya but on the contrary she often treat inequality from people in her environment because she is a Black woman who lived in White people environment. She had been treated like that when she lived in Stamps, Arkansas with grandmother which at the time the discrimination and segregation still appeared.

These early years in Stamps were largely happy ones. But as loved as Maya felt by Momma and Uncle Willie, she was learning that there was ugliness about the town, too. Like the rest of the South in the 1930s, racial inequality was normal. Although slavery had been abolished since President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, little had changed for African Americans in the following seventy-some years (Stewart 14).

In her environment, the practice of segregation still found. For example in the Stamps most Black residents worked for White plantation owners, they picked cotton or worked as maids in White homes (15).

She had experienced of segregation since she was a child. Oneday she and her brother wanted to go to movie. There, the ticket seller did not allow them to watch the movie in same place with White children but the seller took their money. At the time, there was a White girl bought a ticket, the seller gave her and politely asked her to watch the movie (17).

The different treatment of White people to Maya also had experienced when her eight-grade graduation ceremony in 1940. The graduation speaker, a White politician said in his speech about White schools in Arkansas and how graduates from those places would have many opportunities in life. Some might go on to be artists, inventors, or scientists. He emphasized that Blacks and Whites were not equal and Black opportunities were different. According to him, the opportunities of Black in careers as maids, handymen, and if they were very lucky, they could be athletes. However, they really had no future anywhere else (Stewart 31). His words were terribly depressing to her whereas she was excited in her graduation before. She became more sorrowful when she did not hear her name called or her honors listed since she was one of the top students in her class (Cox 19). Unequal act also she experienced from White dentist when she was toothache. This act has explained before in analysis of poem *Still I Rise*.

Those are some examples of unequal act or segregation that had experienced by Maya Angelou since she was a child. She often got different treatment when she lived in Stamps. Because of those experiences, she wants to get same treatment as other people. She wants to get equality, freedom and same right with White people. By her desire of get equality, she can reveal and express it into her poem *Equality* because she ever experienced of treated differently and segregation. She wants Black people have same right with other people and did not get racial prejudice again.

4.3 Woman Work

4.3.1 Explication of Woman Work

Woman work is one of *Maya*'s poems about motherhood. It is a domestic poem was published in 1978 same with *Still I Rise*. This poem depicts the routine life of a housewife or a mother who performs her daily chores and her desire to take a rest from her chores.

I've got the children to tend
 The clothes to mend
 The floor to mop
 The food to shop

Those lines are the example of the kinds of a housewife chore. Those lines show that a housewife is tending her children, mending some clothes, mopping the floor and cooking. However, this poem also shows her exhausted and depressing in doing all chores everyday.

Storm blow me from here
 with your Fiercest wind
 Let me float across the sky
 Till I can rest again

4.3.2 Character

The character in this poem can be identified by psychological character which *Maya* explained it through the character's thought and response about being a housewife with all the chores. Similar with poem *Still I Rise*, The character in this poem also uses first person point of view which it showed by word "I". Based on the content of this poem, the character "I" seems a woman, a housewife or might be a mother because this poem explained some chores of a housewife.

I've got the children to tend

The clothes to mend

The floor to mop

The food to shop

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The character in this poem also can be identified as Maya Angelou herself since she had experience being a wife with some chores everyday because her husband did not permit her to do some works outside the house (Cox 50).

4.3.3 Setting

The setting of event in this poem is the routine life of Maya Angelou when she becomes a housewife with all her chores everyday. In the first stanza shows some woman's works as housewife, it explains the numerous of works that must do everyday by a housewife.

I've got the children to tend

The clothes to mend

The floor to mop

The food to shop

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4.3.4 Theme

Regarding with the character "I" is Maya Angelou herself and the setting of event is her routine life when she was a housewife. The theme that suitable with this poem is woman's works or chores because this poem shows the long list of woman's chores must do in the home. The character "I" in this poem wants to show what she should do everyday as a housewife.

I've got the children to tend

The clothes to mend

The floor to mop

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The food to shop
 Then chicken to fry
 The baby to dry
 I got company to feed
 The garden to weed
 I've got the shirts to press
 The tots to dress
 The cane to be cut
 I got to clean up this hut.

4.3.5 Relation between Woman Work with Maya's Life

Based on the theme of this poem is woman's work. The experiences about woman must do her chores as housewife had experienced by Maya Angelou when her husband are Tosh Angelos and Vasumzi Make.

Maya had married three times in her life. In 1950, she married with Tosh Angelos, a Greek sailor. Marrying with Angelos made her must still in the home, he did not allow Maya to work. She became a good housekeeping advertisement, cooking well-balanced, gourmet meals and molding fabulous jello desserts. My floors were dangerous with daily applications of wax and our furniture slick with polish (Cox 34). It is one of her experiences of being housewife who did not permitted by her husband to do other job outside from her house. After two and a half years, Maya felt that her marriage was not happy and they decided to divorce (34).

Besides married with Tosh Angelos, she also ever married with Vasumzi Make, a South African activist in 1960. She was proud being his wife, an activist man which she was fell in love with him because her spirit to struggle against injustice in his country. Although she was proud with her husband do, she was less happy about the

restrictions that he put on her life. He wanted Maya to be an African wife, which meant she should be obedient to her husband. He did not want her to work, but rather spend her time keeping their apartment clean (Stewart 65). Once again, she became a meek housewife.

“It seemed to me that I washed, scrubbed, mopped, dusted, and waxed thoroughly every other day. Make was particular. He checked on my progress. Sometimes he would pull the sofa away from the wall to see if possibly I had missed a layer of dust.” (qtd in Cox)

Actually, at the time she has a job and she must resigned from her job because her husband’s desire. He gave her a household and food allowance, a little cash, but would not tell her where he got his money. For months, she faced to difficulty of finances in her family and she decided to work without permission of her husband. When she told to her husband, he was furious with her for not being a good African wife and he shouted, “You took a job without consulting with me? Are you a man?” (Stewart 69).

Based on Maya’s experiences was described above, her life as a housewife with Tosh Angelos and Vasumzi Make made her should be an obedient wife and do all chores as a housewife. Those men did not permit her to do other job except in the home. Through her experiences being an obedient wife as her husband wants, it was made her easier when she create poem *Woman Work* because she experienced about it. In this poem, she wants to convey what she done when she became those men’s wife.

4.4 Touched by An Angel

4.4.1 Explication of Touched by An Angel

Touched by An Angel was published in 1985. This poem talks about the power of love and the meaning of love from the time before love comes to us until it gives us the effect from its coming. Unlike three poems before, this poem only consists of three stanzas. Although this poem consists of three stanzas but this poem is difficult to understand than the previous three poems before because Maya Angelou uses some literary devices here, such as personification, hyperbole and metaphor. For example for using personification is the line "*Love strikes away the chains of fear*", the meaning of "*strike away*" here is love can omit us from feeling of fear. Maya Angelou through this poem wants to tell for everyone about her thought about love for her life.

4.4.2 Character

As the three poems before, the character in this poem can be analyzed by psychological character. The character can be identified in this poem because Maya shows it through her thought about love. In this poem, Maya Angelou used first person plural point of view "we" which means herself and everyone. Maya used "we" here because according to Maya, everyone also think about love as what she thinks. The character "we" here shown the importance and the power of love for human life. One of the roles of love for human life that conveys in this poem is love can bring us from loneliness into happiness. It is shown in the first stanza in this poem.

We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight

to liberate us into life

The character here also consider love like an “*Angel*” as the title in this poem which she thinks that love is an angel that can change our life. Nevertheless, she thinks that to be touched by an angel (when love comes to our life) would be the greatest delight we could get.

4.4.3 Setting

Based on the character in this poem which wants to convey her thought about love. The setting in this poem seems when the character fall in love or feeling of love. It is appropriate with Maya’s love experience which she had fallen in love for many times to some men who come in her life. She fall in love easily to some men because she considers that love can bring us from loneliness to happiness in life.

We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight

to liberate us into life.

4.4.4 Theme

After finding the character and the setting above, it is clear that the suitable theme for this poem is love because all the stanzas in this poem speak about love and the character of this poem also explains about the power and the importance of love. This poem shows clearly the power of love in each stanza.

live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple

to liberate us into life.

and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life

This stanza conveys that when we live in loneliness then love comes into our lives and it will free us from the loneliness. While in the second stanza in line “*Love arrives*”, “*and in its train come ecstasies*”, it conveys that when love comes to us and it will take us from our sadness to bring us into joy and happiness as ecstasies can make people forget their problem and get happiness. And the last stanza conveyed that love can take away our fear, remove all our timidity and makes us be brave. The main idea of love that showed in this poem is love can change everything from us and only love can set us free from loneliness and timidity.

We are weaned from our timidity
In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave
And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.

Yet it is only love

which sets us free.

4.4.5 Relation between Touched by An Angel with Maya's Life

Regarding with the theme of *Touched by An Angel* is love, this thing had been experienced by Maya for many times. In Maya's life, she had experienced of falling in love for many times. Her first love was Curley, a navy man fourteen years older than she was. She met him when she worked in restaurant as cook of Creole. He was one of customers in that restaurant. His kindness touched her heart, and she quickly fell in love with this 31-year-old man (Cox 25). They had dated for two months. Someday, he

said that actually he was engaged, his fiancée lived in another state and they would be getting married soon. This fact did not matter for Maya, she choose to ignore Curley's admission. She saw how good he was with her baby and enjoyed every minute she spent with him.

It did not matter that he told her, he would marry his real girlfriend in New Orleans when her job in San Diego ended. She pushed that fact out of her mind when they played with Clyde at the park or rode the Ferris wheel (25).

Her dating was ended when her boyfriend's job was ended too. She was crushed and feeling of broken heart. Her behavior changed, she moped around, rarely ate, lose weight, whined, and cried. Her behavior made her brother disliked.

"Now, My, if you're happy being miserable, enjoy it, but don't ask me to feel sorry for you. If you want to stay around here looking like death eating a soda cracker, that's your business". (qtd in Cox)

In order to forget her broken heart from Curly, she decided to seek other job and she found a job as dancer. In this job she has a dancing partner R.L Poole, a night club tap dancer. They often performed together in the front, it made Maya has special feeling for him. When she had a way to forget her ex boyfriend, Poole's girlfriend back to him and she was the dancer partner of Poole before. She was loneliness, she often imagined that she wanted to have a husband and a good father to her son. In order to forget her loneliness, she was using marijuana, to deal with the loneliness and frustration she felt (Stewart 46).

After she resigned from her job as dancer, she found other job as a cook in a restaurant. There, she was noticed by a man named L.D. Tolbrook, who as old as her father. In her loneliness after breaking heart from Poole she was fallen in love with him easily because his politeness and kindness was impressed her although he was a digilib.uinsa.ac.id married. He promised to leave his wife. Her love to Tolbrook was too much, when he has financial problem Maya said to help him. She volunteered to be a prostitute for him. Although she knew that what she did was wrong thing but she was proud that she can help her man (47). She believed that after her boyfriend's problem was solved, she will out from prostitution and has good life with them and Clyde.

Her love story with Tolbrook was not long resisted when her son was taken by her baby sitter. She just realized that she often spent her times in prostitution made her ignore her son. At the time, she decided to break up. Then she found her son in her baby sitter's home. She tried to do other job and got a job in a restaurant again. There, she met again with a man named Troubadour Martin, an addict. Once again, she had fallen in love. Because of love, she always did anything for her man. For Martin, she wanted to become an addict too so that he will more attract with her (Cox 30).

digilib.uinsa.ac.id digilib.uinsa.ac.id digilib.uinsa.ac.id digilib.uinsa.ac.id digilib.uinsa.ac.id All of those man who ever become her boyfriends, there are nothing become her husband. In 1950, she met Tosh Angelos and married with him. He and Clyde liked each other. However, Maya's mother disagreed with her marriage because Angelos was a White people and poor man. Maya did not care about her mother, she believed that Angelos was a good man and a good father for her son. Their marriage did not long resist because they realized that they were not happy together (34).

In 1960, she met again with a man and married with him. He was an African, Vasumzi Make. Before Maya met with him, actually she had had a fiancé Thomas

Allen. She decided to leave her fiancé because she impressed with Make which a South African activist who struggle against injustice in Africa. Her marriage also did not long resist because the restrictions he put on her own life. He wanted Maya in the home, did her duties as housewife.

Finally, in 1971, she met a good man for her and married with him, he was Paul Du Feu, a White Briton she met at a London dinner party. He was the one who accepted and liked by her mother and her brother.

Maya is a woman who believes of power of love and respect of love. It showed when she falling in love, she will do anything for her boyfriend because of love. She believes that love can give her happiness and bring her from loneliness. It showed when she was broken heart and met a man who she think a good man, she will falling in love easily. All of those love experiences of Maya Angelou might be make her easier when she create her poem *Touched by An Angel* because she had experienced it for many times.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the four poems of Maya Angelou's *Still I Rise*, *Equality*,

Woman Work and *Touched by An Angel*, it can be concluded that each poems reflect

Maya Angelou's experiences that showed by theme of each poems. Those poems have same character and setting, those are Maya Angelou itself and her environment among Whites. The theme of each poems are different which it shows the experience of Maya Angelou in each poems. In the first poem *Still I Rise*, the theme is discrimination because the content of the poem is the kinds of discrimination acts by White people. The theme shows that Maya ever experienced of discrimination. She experienced it since she was a child and lives in a town which practice of discrimination still much appeared because in her town the majority group is White people and at the time the society was controlled by Whites.

In the second poem *Equality*, the content is almost same with poem *Still I Rise*.

The content in *Equality* also mention some kinds of discrimination acts of White people

to Black woman but it more explains about the desire of the speaker to being equal or

get same treatment from White people without any racial prejudice. The theme in this

poem is equality or freedom because there is the strong wish of Black people to be same and have same right as White people have. This theme shows that Maya had experienced this experience, being inequality which she had experienced of segregation and different treatment by White people around her so that make her wants to get same treatment as White people got.

The third poem, *Woman Work* is about motherhood which conveys the long list of a housewife's chores everyday. It can see in the first stanza of this poem that

describes some duties of a housewife. The theme in this poem is woman's work because it depicts the routine life of a housewife or a mother who performs her daily chores and her desire to take a rest from her chores. This experience also had experienced by Maya Angelou when she became a wife of two men, Tosh Angelos and Vusumzi Make. Both of them did not allow Maya to work outside home but only do what should a housewife do.

And the last poem *Touched by An Angel* is about Maya's thought in the importance and the power of love. The theme in this poem is love because this poem explains the role of love in human life. Love is an experience that everyone in the world ever experienced it includes Maya. She had fallen in love for many times with some men so that she understands about the meaning and the importance of love in her life. She thinks that love can bring us from loneliness to happiness in life.

In short, these four poems of Maya Angelou explain different experience of Maya Angelou based on the theme in each poem, those are discrimination, equality, woman's work and love. Those poems have similarity that represents the experience of woman. By this research, it proves that through understanding deeper about the biography of the author we can find the relation between the author and her works.

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