

Repetition: A Mirror Of Trauma In The Select Poems Of Maya Angelou

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Abstract

Language and style represent the poet's usage of words: his/her choice of words, structure of the sentence and its arrangement, and rhetorical devices to develop an atmosphere, images and meaning in a text. Language refers to the unique way of writing of a poet and style describes how an author outpours the ideas, events and objects. This study analyses the language and style in Angelou's select poems and focuses on the literary device "Repetition" in Angelou's poems and reveals how it helps the researcher to bring out Angelou's inner turmoil. In this study, the researcher has chosen ten poems of Maya Angelou. The selected poems are They Went Home, No Loser, No Weeper, When I Think About Myself, The Mothering Blackness, In a Time, Letter to an Aspiring Junkie, Pickin Em Up and Laying Em Down, Poor Girl, Alone, and Elegy. The researcher analyzes the literary devices and narrative styles of the poems to unveil the elements of trauma in the poems of Maya Angelou. The research design of this study is descriptive qualitative method.

Keywords: Literary Devices, Trauma, Stylistics

Introduction

Literary devices are special technique that enables a writer to communicate their ideas and improve their writing and also transmits a profound meaning of the text. These devices assist readers to connect with the characters and themes by highlighting significant concepts in a work and enhance the narrative. In literature, these devices are being used for variety of functions. Some work on a cognitive level, and many have an emotional impact. They can also help to improve the flow and pace of one's writing in an artistic way. Mostly literary devices have close connection with that of poetry than prose. Poet use literary devices to make a poem's language appealing and to create a new atmosphere. But in prose, the author uses

simple rather than flowery languages. Literary devices are also called as poetic devices.

In general, a poem is a compilation of poetic devices that include grammatical, structural, verbal, metrical, rhythmic and visual aspects. They are the fundamental elements for a poet to develop rhythm, enhance the meaning of a poem, and heighten the feelings or emotions. Laurence says, "Poetry as a kind of language that says more intensely than ordinary language" (1992). The word poetry derives from the Greek word 'poesis' which implies making or creating. The word 'poet' refers to the person who creates through his imagination or akin to God. Poets employ language as a tool to record the world around them and produce it in a descriptive way. Poetry is a universal language used to express one's idea with

selective words in an elegant way and has flourished in all ages.

Poetry appears in different forms and styles. Some kinds of poetry are specific to a particular culture or genre, and they respond to the poet's preferred language. Maya Angelou, an American poet, had a broad career as a singer, dancer, actress, civil right activist, composer, director, writer, essayist, editor, playwright and a poet. As a black woman, she represents her whole community and became a spokesperson for them. Angelou was called "the black woman's poet laureate" and her poems have been labeled "African American anthems".

Maya Angelou's poems mostly speak about her culture and community. The researcher has chosen 'repetition' as a literary device to bring out the traumatic elements in the selected poems of Maya Angelou and the study aims at:

- (1) identifying the repeated words or phrases in the poem through which the poet conveys her past experiences
- (2) analyzing the repeated phrase or words to know the depth of her suffering.

Literature Survey

Farsi (2017) examines and interprets sixteen poems of Graham from the collection *Swarm* (2000) that has the main title UNDERNEATH. The study focuses on different types of repetition to bring out the intense meaning of the poem and the linguistic intelligence of the poet. Lakoff and Johnson's Metaphor theories and Brehm & Brehm's Reactance theory, have been used to categorize repetitions. The speaker's submissiveness is transformed into well-established diction form in the poem, which she employs as a reactance strategy (as a resistance). The researcher analyses the repetitions in the psychological angle, as the poet is in the dire need of freedom from the state of oppression. Dita (2010) analyses Dimalanta's poem *Montage* through syntactical and lexical investigation. The study analyses poems' overall structure (sentence, vocabulary) and grammatical elements to bring out the

deeper understanding of the text. The detailed analysis of the style, the language, syntax, structure of the sentences, vocabulary provides a deep rooted understanding of the text. It enhances the effect and meaning of the poem.

On Keats' poem *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, Mishra (2011) explores the concept of deconstructive stylistics. On the ode, the notion of deconstructive stylistics investigates formal stylistic means and linguistic techniques. The use of formal linguistic devices to postpone discussions and arguments in order to make it inconclusive and open-ended is explored through Keats' fluctuating state of mind and use of language. The analysis of syntactical, lexical and phonological features aids in the exploration of the meaning in the text. Raflis and Zai (2018) explore the various types of figurative language as well as figurative language formulas and functions in Shakespeare's poems to bring out their meaning. Shakespeare weaves down his beautiful tales with beautiful figurative languages in the poetic form. Shakespeare's use of direct metaphors, natural elements and general characteristics such as the danger of lust, love, natural vs cliché beauty were revealed in this study.

Hidayah and Tiara (2021) employs Perrine theories to find both the dominant and submissive figurative language which helps in bringing out the underlying meaning of those figures used by Angelou. Hyperbole is the dominant one and, Paradox and Irony are the subordinate ones. The analysis of the figurative language results in delivering a social life message which the poet wants to express through her work. María (2002) uses systematic functional grammar as the linguistic framework to analyze the syntactical process of thematization and postponement. This framework helps to know how the language used in a particular context. The syntactic process controls the sentences and delivers the messages to the readers. The use of certain grammatical construction helps in unveiling the feelings and thoughts of the poet. Extraposition and Existential sentences uncover the

importance of language and language forms in the society.

Raharta and Hamsia (2016) explore the meanings of metaphors in the poems of Maya Angelou and classified them into three different types based on Crystal, Lakoff and Johnson theories. Metaphors are found to know the reason of their usage, their meaning and also to interpret using author's biography. As metaphors are the mirrors of the poet's self, it exposes her personal opinion about racial inequality in the land of America. Yeibo (2011) examines the stylistic significance of indigenous idioms, lexis and thematization, and sense relations in the texts. Lexical patterns help to interpret and understand the poets' idiolect. Michael Halliday's framework which contains three metafunctions of language is used to reflect the interface between form and functions in the text. Analysis of lexical patterns examines how a poet carefully chooses his words to pour out his/her inner self and achieve coherence in the texts.

Ayuni (2019) analyses diction in Maya Angelou's poems using Abrams theory and qualitative method. According to Abrams' theory, the diction is classified into four types: concrete, abstract, connotation, and denotation. Diction is the choice of words used by the author to deliver his/her thoughts to the readers. The research results in finding out that the connotative diction is the most used form of diction in the selected poems. Bari Khan and Yasir Khan (2016) stylistically analyze each and every line to give deeper understanding of the poem. The detailed analysis of both figurative language (stylistics) and lexical patterns assists in bringing out the real state of a working woman. The absence of exaggeration makes the poem more realistic. Nature is the only solution to the problems of this hectic world.

It is observed from the above research that the analysis of the structure and the literary devices in the poems paved way for bringing out the intense meaning in it. In this notion, this research under the title Language and style in the select poems of Maya Angelou analyses the

figurative language "Repetition" and throws light on its significance to prove it as an expression of a poet's self. Every interpretation and analysis serves as guidance for the researcher to unveil the inner self or the personal traumatic experience of the poet. This figurative language analysis helps to bring out the intense meaning of the poems which in turn aids in the revelation of the inner turmoil of the poet.

Methodology

The researcher employs design content analysis to conduct the qualitative analysis. The intellectual process of sorting qualitative textual data into the categories of related concepts in an attempt to discover consistent patterns of relationship between variable and themes is known as content analysis (Given 2008).

Qualitative research is the study of social phenomena from the perspective of participant's in order to get more insight into a specific phenomenon, such as a belief, a process or even an environment (Gay 2006).

The main objective of the present study is to analyze the language and style used by Angelou in the selected poems. To analyze the language and style, the researcher has read the selected poems thoroughly. This has helped the researcher to identify and classify them into several categories. The objects of the study are ten selected poems of Maya Angelou from her collections: "Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Diiie" and "Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well".

Language and Style

Angelou uses different forms and styles in her writing and uses those as 'a code' to express her inner turmoil. Hagen (1997), an author, calls coding as 'signifying'. Here, Angelou signifies her life as an African American in all through her poems. She also uses different narrative styles. Few narrative styles include the speech narrative form, first person narrative, usage of visual images, and third person narrative. Though Angelou expresses her grief and struggles in her poems, she beautifully carves it

with the usage of literary devices. The use of simile, metaphor and all other literary devices directly or indirectly refers to her life experiences. In other way, analyses of literary devices in her poems help to bring out the deeper meaning of the poems.

In the process of analyzing the ten selected poems of Maya Angelou, the researcher has taken 'repetition' as one of the main elements for the analysis. Repetition is a rhetorical device that demonstrates the logical emphasis required to draw a reader's attention to a key word or a key phrase in a text. It entails repeating words, sounds, clauses and expressions in a specific order or without regard for word arrangement in order to highlight a subject. There are no limitations in using repetitions but too many will ruin the artistic effect (Nino & Tamar, 2013).

Repetition is one of the syntactic stylistic devices which is used to show the state of the mind of the speaker when he is under the stress of strong emotions. According to Leech and Short (1981) "Stylistics" is "the linguistic study of style". Stylistic devices play a significant role in the study of any sort of literary text. The term 'figure of speech' is widely used to describe stylistic devices that use figurative language features to create a vivid image. In general, a style is defined as a person's use of language in a specific situation for a certain purpose (Leech and Short 1981). The objective of the writer will determine the text's style, which is generally examined through the area of stylistics.

'Refrain' is purely a poetic device and it is defined as a word, phrase or a sentence which is repeated throughout the poem's lines or stanzas. Poets might use refrain to enhance their thoughts remarkable and to focus readers' attention to focus on a specific idea. Refrain is also a type of repetition but slightly differs from repetition. Refrain is repetition of a line, a phrase, two or three lines or even words in a poem. While repetition involves repetition of words, phrases, syllables or even sounds. By continuously reinforcing a point, repetition aids in the indirect expression of thoughts and

emotions, validates an idea, and describes a notion. 'Repetition', among other figures of speech is frequently used syntactic stylistic element. A writer reminds readers of the significance of specific words, phrases or sentences by repeating them, thereby designating them as keywords, phrases or sentences in the text. This is done by using a single line recurrently throughout the poem, allowing readers to take a pause each time they come upon such repetition. Thus, repetition helps in finding out the deeper meaning of the poems. It also helps the researcher to bring out the inner turmoil of the poet.

'Anaphora' is a poetic technique in which two or more phrases or lines start with the same words. It might be as simple as repeating a single word or as complex as repeating an entire statement. There is also epiphora, anadiplosis, and framing. Epiphora is the repeat of words in the middle of a clause or a line. Anadiplosis repeats the word in last line. Framing repeats the beginning and the last. Anaphora remains as a favorite one for Angelou as she uses it in most of her poems.

The poems of Angelou are packed with literary devices, exclusively with more of repetitions which in turn favors for the analysis of trauma. Repetition is a common response to trauma and easily detectable in a text, trauma in literature focuses mainly on repetitions that appear within the literary work. Trauma has three significant elements namely: Repetition, Avoidance of Reminders, and Increased Arousal or Hyper-vigilance. Repetition refers to the act of repeating, doing, saying or writing something again. Avoidance of Reminders is the inability to experience pleasure and with a general withdrawal from engagement with life. Hyper-vigilance is the state of increased alertness. It is the brain's way of protecting the body from danger. As repetition is one of the prominent components of trauma, the repeated phrases in Angelou's poems strongly outpours her inner feelings and desires. She uses repetition to create an attention to the readers' minds about her struggles and sufferings as an African-American woman.

'Repetition' is a technique for emphasizing a mood or idea, producing a rhythm and instilling a sense of urgency. Many poets employ repetition as a tool to express their ideas and also their inner feelings. Theodore Roethke (1960), an American poet in one of his works says, "Repetition in word or phrase and in idea is the very essence of poetry". Repetition is one of the most common ways to create a pattern through rhythm. The provocative title of Daniel Hoffman's book "Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe", which derives its signal rhythm from Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Bells" (1849), exemplifies how repetition can become compulsive.

Edgar Allan Poe employs various types of repetition (internal, end rhyme, meter, words, and lines) to produce a hypnotic effect. Poe uses repetition in another poem "The Raven". This poem is about an encounter of a bird (Raven) with an unnamed speaker on a dreary December night. 'Nevermore' is the only response to everything that the bird gives for the speaker's questions. Throughout the poem, Poe repeats the phrase "Never more" to stress the mystery pounding at the speaker's door. With his meter and rhyme scheme, he also maintains a very repeating rhythm throughout the poem.

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only

That one word, as if his soul in that one word he outpour.

Nothing farther than he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—

Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before—

On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."

Then the bird said "Nevermore". (Poe)

Only one word came out of the Raven's mouth: 'Nevermore'. His anguish and loss serve as a constant reminder of his deepest suffering – nevermore. The raven clearly communicates to him, informing him that his deepest desire in life is now simply 'nevermore'.

Stephen Crane in his poem, "War is kind", repeats the phrase "Do not weep, war is

kind". It is an anti-war poem that professes to celebrate war's merits while depicting war's tragedies such as a soldier's death, his loved ones' grief, and the terrible battlefield where he perished.

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.

Because your lover threw wild hands towards the sky

And the affrighted steed ran on alone,

Do not weep.

War is kind. (Crane)

On the surface, the repetition of "Do not weep" and "war is kind" may appear soothing, but it is actually distressing. It is clear from the above lines that the speaker is certainly attempting to persuade or mock the maiden into assuming something that cannot be real.

T.S. Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men" is rich with symbols and profound pictures. The males are shown as having lives that are dry, desolate and broken. This poem depicts a barren landscape inhabited by empty, defeated individuals. This poem is a reflection on the dismal state of European culture following the World War I, as well as a description of life beyond death. The tragedies of war have plunged Europe into deep state of despair, to the point where European culture is fading away into nothingness.

We are the hollow men

We are the stuffed men

Leaning together

...

We whisper together

Are quiet and meaningless

As

wind in dry grass . . . (Eliot)

This poem has no specific rhyme scheme or meter in it. Eliot employs a variety of literary devices that help to interconnect the lines. Three of ten lines in the first verse begin with "We".

The words “Between” and “And” are repeated several times throughout the poem because of its structural arrangement.

Between the idea And the reality
Between the motion And the act
Falls the Shadow (Eliot)

Robert Frost’s poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”, is about a writer who travels through the woods in the dark and pauses with his horse near by a neighbor’s house to observe the snow falling around him. The poet enjoys the scene and wants to cherish the beauty of nature for a longer time. At the end of the poem, the poet repeats the last phrase, ‘And miles to go before I sleep’ twice to draw the readers’ attention. Here, ‘sleep’ metaphorically refers to ‘death’.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep. (Frost)

These American writers/poets use repetition to bring attention to the main idea which they focus and make it more memorable. Some of the poets use repetition for their rhythmic experiences. Mostly repetitions are used by poets to unveil their fears, struggles and longings.

Maya Angelou, in most of her poems uses repetition to create an emotion rather than a meaning. It also gives the readers a sense of how strongly the poet dreams about the freedom of the blacks in the whites’ land and how strongly Angelou feels about rising up in the face of persecution and negativity. In some poems, she uses repetition to create a particular rhythmic effect and to set a poem’s mood. Angelou’s work continues to inspire individuals who desire to live in a world where everyone is treated equally, fairly, and transparently, regardless of race, creed or sexual orientation.

Analysis of Angelou’s Poems

1.1 They Went Home

The use of literary devices that is apparent in many poems which discuss or display elements of trauma by the usage of repetition, simile, metaphor, personification etc., In the poem, “They Went Home”, Angelou repeats the phrase ‘They went home’ thrice to express her loneliness and rejection. This poem is written from the perspective of a woman who has had multiple affairs with married men. All of the men state that she is more attractive than their spouses, in fact that she is better in every way, but they all go back to their families at the end. When she uses the phrase ‘They Went Home’ for the first time, it looks normal. Then as the poem goes on, the tone of the phrase becomes depressed. The poem suggests that illegitimate relationships do not end well and the woman is seeking for something that cannot seem to uncover.

They went home and told their wives,
that never once in all their lives, had
they known a girl like me, But
... They went home. (Angelou 7)

Here, ‘They’ denotes the white men who use Angelou for their sexual pleasure and treat her only as an object. This stanza tells how the white men praise Angelou to their wives directly. In the second stanza, the poem is a bit ambiguous as the readers are not aware of the second person (wives/mistresses). This poem reflects her inner struggle and suffering as a black woman in the white society.

Men use tons of false words and praises
for the time being and change it accordingly.
They exaggerate things for their own desires
and fulfillment. This gets cleared from the lines,

They said my house was licking clean,

no word I spoke was ever mean,

I had an air of mystery,

But . . . They went home.
(Angelou 7)

In the third stanza, Angelou directly tells how white men use her as an object of sexual pleasure in the lines,

My praises were on all men's lips,

they liked my smile, my wit,
my hips, they'd
spend one night, or two or three.

But . . .
(Angelou 7)

This poem delivers the tone of disappointment, loneliness and rejection and shows how dejection makes life sorrowful.

"Freud points out, these repetitions are particularly striking because they seem not to be initiated by the individual's own acts but rather appear as the possession of some people by a sort of fate, a series of painful events to which they are subjected, and which seem to be entirely outside their wish or control" (Caruth 2).

Maya Angelou has been through a lot in her life, including the Great Depression, the loss of her parents, rape, racism, concentration camps, being an unwed mother at the age of sixteen and bad marriages. All these incidents and experiences made her life a traumatic one. Angelou has strong intention not only to free herself but the whole black women community from the dominant white society. She uses the style of repetition to bring reader's attention to the main idea of her poem and thus the repetition of words or phrases in the poems reflects the sufferings of black women in America.

1.2 No Loser No Weeper

In the poem, "No Loser, No Weeper", the phrase 'I hate to lose something' gets repeated five times, which clearly depicts the life of blacks especially of a black woman to whom losing even a small thing such as a coin or a doll or a watch means a lot. In this poem, Angelou tells that she hates to lose something, whether it is a small watch or a toy.

"I lost a doll once and cried for week.

She
could open her eyes, and do all but speak . . ."

"A
watch of mine once, got up and walked away.

It had
twelve numbers on it and for the time of the
day." (Angelou 12)

In the final stanza, Angelou directly questions the readers if she worries so much for a toy, then how much will she suffer for a man whom she lost or who leaves her. This poem is extremely personal to her because after her mother died, she secluded herself in her room for a week and cried. The phrase 'evening's joy' symbolizes black woman's life as it indirectly tells how white men use black women just for their sexual pleasure. Evening's joy refers to the time when people relax and have pleasure. In this poem, Angelou refers to this phrase to denote the pleasure loving time with her loved one.

"I hate to lose something,"

then she bent her head

"even
a dime, I wish I was dead.

I can't
explain it. No more to be said.

Cept I
hate to lose something" (Angelou 12).

The phrase, "I wish I was dead" in the poem adds a strong note to the poem and reflects how even a small loss of things makes her sorrowful. Cathy Caruth (1996) says, "The repetition, moving and sorrowful voice that cries out, a voice that is paradoxically released through the wound". (2)

From the above lines, it is clear that the repetition is from the poet's unconscious mind and the idea of the poem emanates out from her inner wound which describes her life as a black American woman. Words, lines, phrases are repeated to make the main idea of the poem clear and visible to the readers.

1.3 When I Think About Myself

In the poem, “When I Think About Myself”, Angelou uses the phrase ‘When I think about myself’ thrice and at the end of the poem as she rewrites the phrase as ‘When I think about my folks’, it clearly depicts that Angelou not only talks of her but also of her society. In this poem, she tells how black’s lives get choked in the whites’ hands. She tells that the life of blacks in the whites’ land is a kind of mockery. Blacks are always degraded in their lands, as if their dance is considered as walk, their song is compared to speech form, and they feel lost in their lands. They feel awkward about their lives in America.

. . . My life has been one great
big joke,

A dance that’s walked

A song that’s spoke,

I laugh so hard I almost choke

When I think about myself.
(Angelou 29)

Blacks are always degraded and their talents are being hidden by the whites’ in their land of supremacy. They do not have freedom to express their feelings and do not have any proper guidance and platform to expose their talents. Though she uses ‘I’ in first person singular, it denotes all her people (blacks). Also, she writes in third person narrative, as an observer, pouring out the sufferings of blacks in America (whites’ land). As an observer Angelou notes the sufferings of her community people’s lives. She observes how blacks are treated as slaves (workers) though the white men get profit out of the Black’s hard work.

. . .When I think about myself

Sixty years in these folks’ world

The child I works for calls me girl

I say “Yes ma’am” for working’s sake

. . .They grow the fruit,

But eat the rind,

I

laugh until I start to crying,

When I think about my folks.

(Angelou 29)

Ramsey (1984), a writer calls the first person narrative as “self-defining function” (145). Through this one can understand that the usage of first person narratives clearly depicts the poets’ own lives. By the usage of this style, Angelou pours out her life’s experiences and struggles in her works to make a clear picture of her life to the readers.

She uses the words ‘I laugh’ in a paradoxical tone of how deeply she is hurt and she uses laughter to overcome it. Though they suffer inside, they never expose it outside. As a final touch, she uses the phrase, ‘When I think about my folks’, clearly showcases that Angelou not only expresses her grief but also the struggles of the entire black community in America. Even the children of blacks are treated as just workers for the whites.

1.4 The Mothering Blackness

In the next poem, “The Mothering Blackness”, Angelou uses the phrase ‘She came home’ with a change in the ending word as running, creeping and blameless. These phrases strongly pour out the unconditional love of the mother and the daughter. This poem is written in unstructured free verse, and does not follow any form or meter. This poem is about motherhood and love. The poet uses imagery which describes the complexities of relationships. This poem is in the black mother’s point of view as she was afraid of her daughter’s life in the whites’ land.

She came home running

back to the

mothering blackness

deep in the

smothering blackness

white tears

icicle gold plains of her face

She came home running (Angelou 22)
As a victim, the black mother fears about her daughter's future and her life. The repetitions in the poem clearly picturizes the mother's inner struggle and fear about her daughter's life in the upcoming years. Anaphora (repetition at the beginning) and epiphora (repetition at the end) are the repetition types employed in this poem.

She came home blameless

black yet as Hagar's daughter

tall as was Sheba's daughter

threats of northern winds die on the
desert's face

She came home blameless
(Angelou 22)

Caruth says,

“The trauma is a kind of double
telling, the oscillation between a crisis of
death and the
correlative crisis of life.” (7)

Through the above lines, it is understood that life as a black is a cursed one. As a black woman, Angelou knows (experiences) hard times in America. As a result of it, she strives hard to come out of it and live a peaceful life. As she lives in the dominant land, her mind and life is in the state of oscillation between life and death.

1.5 In a Time

In the poem, “In a Time”, Angelou's tone remains depressed. The phrase ‘In a time’, gets repeated thrice and tension prevails throughout the first two stanzas, whereas it calms down in the third stanza. Angelou uses ‘Anaphora’ (repetition at the beginning of the clause) style of repetition in this poem. Men do anything to gain a woman's love from caressing the hair to rubbing the feet; he will do anything to please a woman's love for his timely pleasure. As such, Angelou expresses that her present day's happiness will surely be ruined by the next day's morning. As a black woman, she suffers

physically, emotionally, and mentally. Her heart remains broken after her evening's joy.

In a time of secret wooing

Today prepares tomorrow's ruin

Left knows not what right is doing

My heart is torn
asunder. (Angelou 15)

In the second stanza she tells how men avoid women after the evening's joy. This makes women shattered and they suffer for their lifetime.

In a time of furtive sighs

Sweet hellos and sad goodbyes

Half-truths told and entire lies

My conscience echoes thunder.
(Angelou 15)

The phrase, ‘sweet hellos and sad goodbyes’ represents how disappointed and depressed the blacks are in their lives. Through this, one can understand how depression destroys the soul. With the phrase, ‘In a time’ for the third time, she uses the phrase, ‘Joy is brief as summer's fun’ represents a short span of happiness in black's lives. With the usage of unique words (e.g. Phenomenal Woman, Solitary Fantasy, Diie) and selective phrases, Angelou pictures her life in her poems.

1.6 Letter to an Aspiring Junkie

In the poem “Letter to an Aspiring Junkie”, Angelou creates social awareness by telling a young and aspiring junkie how his addiction may take him into disasters. She uses the term ‘junkie’ to denote a boy who wastes his life just by roaming around the town in the name of addiction. Angelou warns the young man that there is nothing glorious in the life of addiction. ‘Nothing’ is repeated throughout this poem and she throws her views against addiction. Whether it is music, slavery, thief, sex worker, business, or any other works, she strongly says addiction is not fun and there is nothing good in

addiction. Also she uses their (blacks') slang 'haps' for a better understanding to her community.

Nothing happening,

Nothing shaki', Jim.

slough of young cats riding that

cold, white horse,

. . . No haps, man.

No haps.

(Angelou 31)

Angelou writes of scary realities that scare an aspiring junkie like a young boy or a middle class boy who roams around the town without any goal in his life and wastes it in the name of addiction. With the use of repetition of the phrase, 'Nothing happening', Angelou looks like a mother figure who cares her child so much by showing him the scary realities of addiction. Through this poem, Angelou takes not only the boy but also the readers to the streets to warn and discipline them to be away from addiction.

1.7 Pickin' Em Up and Layin' Em Down

In the poem "Pickin' Em Up and Layin' Em Down", the speaker remains anonymous. This poem has a strong refrain as the phrases 'Pickin' em up and layin' em down' which are repeated twelve times all through the poem. Angelou uses her wittiness with her choice of words to depict the life of a worthless man, who leaves every relationship and shifts to another place in search of a new relationship. By reading through the lines, readers can understand that the speaker has to be a man who lacks commitment in his life and shifts from one place to another in the lack of satisfaction. This increases the restlessness of Angelou as she is also a victim to that kind of a man who remains detached from his life and lacks commitment. These kind of unhealthy relationships make women to suffer physically, mentally, and emotionally.

I started to

Pickin em up

and layin em

down,

Pickin em up

and

layin em down,

Pickin em up

and

layin em down,

getting to the next town

Baby.

(Angelou 59)

This long seeded abandonment with a string of lovers who all picked her up and laid her down make her a strong woman who stood strongly for her and also for her community. Angelou warns every woman to be wary of man's love because she says that man's love is out of their personal gain not of true feelings. These men are more concerned with 'getting to the next town' than caring for their lovers.

1.8 Poor Girl

In the poem "Poor Girl", Angelou pours out the feelings of true love. In this poem, she repeats the phrases 'Poor Girl Just like me' thrice in a mocking tone. It also conveys the speaker's sense of hopelessness. The poetess laments for herself through the girl. The speaker of the poem, "Poor Girl", sympathizes with a girl who her ex-lover is currently dating. Despite the fact that she refers to her as 'poor girl', it is clear that she is expressing sympathy as well as empathy. The speaker is speaking about her own position, having been deceived by the same person in the past. This poem articulates the helplessness of a girl who initially cries and wonders of what went wrong. Then she realizes the fact that it is the deceptive nature of the beloved one that leads to the rejection. This realization prompts her to sing a song. Her tone in a way indicates

how much she got hurt and how truly she loved her man. This poem is written in the form of speech narrative. This poem comes out as a note of disbelief on man's love and tells how unreliable a man is in case of true love.

You've got another love

and I know it

Someone who adores you

just like me

heart . . . You're breaking another

and I know it

. . . Poor Girl

Just like me.

(Angelou 70)

Angelou talks of the man whom she loved once is now breaking another heart and also fears that the girl will misunderstand her if she tells her about him. In the final stanza, Angelou strongly tells that the man will leave the girl anyway and make her cry like the poet. She ends every stanza with a strong refrained phrase, 'Poor Girl Just like me' to denote the woman (who is in present) in her man's life and the repetition helps to make the idea clearer and more memorable. Here, repetition helps the readers to understand the deep feelings of the poet.

1.9 Alone

In the poem "Alone", Angelou talks of dreadful loneliness. This poem addresses togetherness by emphasizing the need of being alone. Loneliness not always meant for a physical state of a person but also denotes the mental and emotional state of a person. In this poem, Angelou talks about her and also the whole black community in America. Blacks are isolated and cornered in the whites' land. Throughout the poem, she repeats the lines,

That nobody,

But nobody

Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone

Nobody, but nobody

Can make it out here alone. (Angelou 73)

Overall it is a solemn poetry that sounds like a voice in the wilderness. This refrain emphasizes the idea that no one is an island and that no one can survive by themselves. 'Anaphora' (repetition at the beginning), 'Anadiplosis' (repetition at the last line), and 'Framing' (repetition in the beginning and in the last) are the kind of repetition employed throughout this poem. This repetition has a strong note of isolation, racism, and discrimination among people in America. Angelou always dreamt of a place (land) where people are treated as one without any differences in their caste, creed, color, religion, and get satisfaction in their life.

This is also a personal epiphany—the speaker has decided that she cannot remain alone for the sake of her good soul. On the other side, it is a call to society as a whole to reunite. In the final note, Angelou reminds that isolation and discrimination is not an easy thing to live and to deal with. Angelou always dreamt of equality and development of human race. The repetition of lines clearly depicts the isolated state of blacks and tells how deeply it affects them physically and mentally.

1.10 Elegy

Finally in the poem "Elegy", Angelou brings out the identity crisis and racism into light. This poem is written in a black mother's view, who is long dead and watches her children grow from her grave. It is about the hope of a black woman towards the better future of the upcoming generations. The starting lines, "I lay

down in my grave / and watch my children / grow” (Angelou 111).

is repeated at the end of the poem to gain a clear picture of the artistic work. ‘Framing’ is the kind of repetition employed in this poem.

“In Freud’s text, the term “trauma” is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind.” (Caruth 3)

In this poem, Angelou expresses the mother’s love and care towards her children. This poem clearly states that the mothers’ love remains unconditional and unbreakable even after her death. The poem talks of how a proud bloom (an individual) grows well with a strong hope in better future. Proud bloom refers to the black children who grow up and hope for the better future in the land of supremacy. This poem is in the view of a black mother who has suffered and died of racism and discrimination and she is proud in seeing her children grow in the challenging whites’ land.

This poem passes down the motherly feel to the readers through its beautiful lines. The black mother, out of her unconditional love continues to nurture her children even from the grave. The proud blooms (African-American) living out the dream of ex-slaves, fighting for equality but stretches above all the weeds and bloom out of struggles to lead a happy life with full of freedom. “Proud blooms / above the weeds of death” (Angelou 111).

The mother waits for them to grow and find the wings of freedom. And the lines,

“Their seeds must fall

and press beneath

this

earth,

and find me where I

wait. My only need to

fertilize their

birth.” (Angelou 111)

shows how deep a mother’s love and how strong and unbreakable even after her death. The repeated lines at the end of the poem pour out the unconditional love of the black mother.

Conclusion

Angelou faced racial prejudices and persecution personally as an African American in Arkansas. Even from her childhood, Angelou faces traumatic incidents and experiences. At the age of three, Angelou’s parents’ “cataclysmic marriage” separated her from her parents at the very early age. Angelou and her brother were sent alone to live with her paternal grandmother in Stamps, Arkansas. This made her emotionally disturbed and detached from relationships. During her mother’s visit, Angelou was raped by the boyfriend of her mother when she was eight years old. Angelou’s uncles killed the lover in retaliation for the sexual assault. This incident had a profound effect on Angelou; as a result of it, she stopped talking and became a virtual mute for almost five years. On her 40th birthday in early 1968, her friend Dr. Martin Luther King was murdered, which further sent her into deep depression. All these traumatic happenings and experiences inadvertently found its way in all her works.

Based on the analysis, the researcher understands how Angelou unveils the trauma by the usage of one of the literary (stylistic) devices (repetition) in the ten selected poems of Maya Angelou from her collections: “Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water ‘Fore I Diiie” and “Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well”. The researcher has analyzed repetition as a main literary device and few narrative styles employed in the poems of Angelou. Maya Angelou often uses syntactical repetition in most of her poems. It creates a beautiful tone when one reads it. There is also stress and deep feeling inside the poems. Anaphora is the most found repetition in Angelou’s poems and remains as a favorite one for Angelou as she uses it in most of her poems.

The researcher makes ‘Repetition’ as a main element of analysis which in turn brings out the inner turmoil of the poet. Most of the

selected poems speak about racism, discrimination, sadness, suffering, isolation, struggles and survival. Mostly, Angelou's poems are about her early experiences that are rooted in the history of African-American discrimination.

The Guardian writer, Younge (2009) says about Maya Angelou, "To know her life story is to simultaneously wonder what on earth you have been doing with your own life and feel glad that you didn't have to go through half the things she has."

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