

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the three poems of Maya Angelou in the previous chapter, I would like to draw some conclusion. I have discovered that the meanings of all three poems are to encourage black women. It is clearly stated in the three poems that each of the personas has problems in her life. However, they do not give up. The personas in the three poems are determined to fight for their life because each one of them has something to fight for.

In the first poem, “Momma Welfare Roll,” Maya Angelou encouraged black women to be courageous to fight for what they deserved even though some of them probably were in unfavorable situations, as seen from some of the diction in the poems, like “fatback” and “lima beans,” which are told to be her diets, also by the line “her children strangers to childhood’s toys,” which tells that she cannot afford any toys for her children. Another unfavorable situation of the persona is that she is accused with a cliched accusation of crime simply because she is black. The last unfavorable situation is that the woman cannot go to work. She is told to

be too “fat” to “whore” and to be too “mad” to work, therefore she has no income which also explains why she is poor. The proofs that she knows what she deserves can be seen from the words “her portion,” when she claims that the portion is hers and that she should have been given the portion. The fight of the persona is shown from her anger through her body language described in “pudgy hands bunched on layered hips” and from her action that she goes to the government office and takes what belongs to her, as can be seen in the line “I take it.” Angelou’s encouragement can be seen in the way the persona at the end of the poem aggressively says that she will “take” her welfare herself. The persona struggles with her poor situation and accusation of the crimes she does not commit. However, she knows well what she deserves, therefore she fights for it. Thus, the theme of this poem is **“Even in an unfavorable situation, black women who know what they deserve could fight for their right.”**

In the second poem, “Still, I Rise,” Maya Angelou encouraged black women to be aware of what they had, to respect and be proud of their possessions. She also encouraged black women who suffered from any unfair treatment from other people to rise. She ensured them to confidently rise above the treatment, which is shown in the diction “you may write me down in history/with your bitter, twisted lies,/You may trod me in the very dirt.” Angelou considered the unfair people to have manipulated the history. Another proof is that the people are not happy when they see the persona confident, which is shown in “does my sassiness upset you?/why are you beset with gloom?/cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells/pumping in my living room.” The proof that the persona respects and is proud of what she has is shown in the words “my sassiness,” “my haughtiness,”

and “my sexiness,” which indicate that the persona is aware that she has those qualities in her. This awareness is also shown in “cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells/pumping in my living room,” which tells that she is proud and feels confident of what she has. The proof showing that the persona stays strong is evident when she keeps talking about how the treatments could not take her down. The words “I Rise” are mentioned all over the poem to indicate that she is determined to rise no matter what. The persona fights against the society that seems to be unhappy if she becomes successful. She overcomes this problem because she is proud of what she has and she holds on to her belief that she could stay strong no matter what. I conclude that the theme of the poem is **“Even in unfair treatment, black women who respect and are proud of what they have, could rise in life.”**

Through the third poem, “Weekend Glory,” which has the theme **“Even in an fallacious situation, black women who are grateful and proud of their ethics would not be oppressed by that and could still try to support themselves,”** Maya Angelou tried to encourage black women not to be affected by their surroundings which were not supportive to them and to survive on their own despite the unfavorable surroundings. The persona struggles with the situation in which other people are enslaved by their own pride and living a luxurious and glamorous life with the loan from the bank while she is working hard to make her living. This thing can be seen in the diction used in the poem such as in stanza 1 and stanza 2. Moreover, they also accuse the persona of living from day to day when she knows that they also live in the same way which is shown from “they accuse me of livin’/from day to day,” and “who they are

kiddin’?so are they.” The proof that the persona knows and is proud of her value is in the fact that she is proud of the way she lives, which is good enough to be learned by others, as can be seen in “if they want to learn how to live right/they ought to study me on Saturday night.” The persona knows that her life is good enough for her and she says though it is not heaven she is sure it is not hell either, which is shown in “my life ain’t heaven/but it sure ain’t hell.” Her survival can be seen when she keeps talking about her work and how she works hard on her job. The proof can be seen from “they just can’t see/how I work all week/at the factory.” She also shows gratitude for her life, which is shown in “if I’m able to work/and get paid right/and have the luck to be Black.” Thus, no matter what other people think of her, she is not affected by that extravagant lifestyle, she survives, she is proud of what she does and she is still able to have fun in spite of the hard work.

Angelou managed to reveal the meaning of the poems through the diction she used. She used many kinds of words which helped in showing the theme such as the use of strong words that are rarely used yet the words have meanings we all know, such as “semaphore,” “rise,” “pawn.” She also used a word that was probably created by herself such as “clifty,” which makes us question what that is, and she explained it after she presented the word. She also used the words that are probably only familiar to African-Americans, such as “momma,” which clearly stated that she was telling about a life of an African-American, also the use of the words “black,” and “slave.” These word choice techniques become the highlight of the poems and at the same time reveal the meanings right away. I

think poets are very clever that they could reveal their intention through words alone. The power of words is a thing that a poem should possess.

Last but not least, I would like to state that it is a pleasure to read and analyze the three poems by Maya Angelou. They have greatly provided me with knowledge about the lives of African-American women in United States in the 20th century. For me, all the three poems are equally great and powerful. Through the poems, the author has taught me something I will always remember, which is to never give up on anything despite everything that prevents us from getting our goal, whether it is unfavorable or unsupportive situations or unfair treatments, as long as we believe on what we have and deserve.









