[Name of the Writer]

[Name of Instructor]

[Subject]

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**The Complete Collected Poem by Maya Angelou's: A Literary Analysis**

# Introduction

I know why the caged birds sing (Angelou), this sums her perception of things. She expresses nothing, but she disclosed everything. Maya Angelou tops the list of poets, who wrote to bring reality to words. In her phenomenal collection of autobiographies, plays, essays, and poems, she focused on changing the perception of things in the minds of people. Born in 1928, in Missouri, she saw things moving rapidly around her. From being a waitress to an applauded writer and activist, she stood won. Maya Angelou beside being a great poet; she worked for the great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and brought him the support of his admirers (Kirkpatrick). Besides her contributions to the literature in the US, she served as a Professor at Wake Forest University(Corrêa) and received National Medal of Arts and the Medal of Freedom.

The complete collected poems of Maya Angelou is a summary of all her literary contributions. This collection takes the reader on a journey which starts from relishing humor, to experience tragedy, from reading short proses, to interpreting the long proses and finally from thinking in a narrow perspective to looking towards the worldly phenomenon in a broader perspective(Angelou). Throughout this collection, the poet takes her readers from sharing much smaller things, to make them read more complexes and widest colossal issues. Much appealing aspect of this collection of Maya Angelou is that every reader gets the attention of her words. In short, she is attentive toward every of her reader. Many of the poems compiled in this collection has a quality of ‘*everyman*,' which shows that every reader experiences a feeling of the narrator. This technique serves the purpose of personalizing the readers. *John J.* is the next character; his poem is also titled with the same name. This man seeks the vices of every other man in the poem. *Junkie* is also a character of one of the poems in this collection — the drunk character, who speaks against the thoughts of his listeners. *Harlem*, though not a human character, but depicts the worst times of the writer. *Africa* characterized as a bad place. The writer attaches bad memories with this place. *America*, for her this place has a bad past, but the hope is driving it on and on. The *Inner City*, it depicts the minorities of the United States. The complete collected poem of Maya Angelou brings the readers close to her life. By using all such characters which depict the ups and downs of Mays's life, she proves that **everything in life does not always turn supportive**. She presents a balanced image of life when she talks about Africa and America. For her, every support in life is not to build anyone- but to show the ways ahead.

“*We are here at the portal of the world we had wished for… At the lintel of the World, we most need*(Angelou)*”.* These verses from her ‘Olympic Poem’ sums up her imagination about life. When she places herself at two extremes. One is when she supported many black feminists to make them a part of a community that is striving and the second when these women’s, don't bring her problems (the problems of the black women’s) to the limelight. By referring to her problems, she means the problems of every woman of the Black community in America. From here, her quest for an individual struggle starts. She then writes in her poems do not wait for external supports, when the inner self of yours is empty. She emphasizes that this is how things don’t work. Maya’s life had been through many thin and thicked. For her, every aspect of life needed a daring approach. From when she gets rapped- to when she received the national award- her life brought for her many swirls. That is, however, an aspect of her literary work moves around the struggles of any individual. Throughout her poetry (except a small part), she has managed to grab the attention of her readers. The other two extremes in Maya's work are when she talks about the portal of the World(Angelou), and when she talks of the world one need. For her, this is the entire journey of life, that makes people swing to extremes(Hagen). Kathryn, who is among the noted critics of Maya’s work quotes “let her broaden the vision of her life(Hagen)” For her, this world of Maya is too little to even think about the plans in life.

“*I fear I let you go…You would leave me eternally*(Angelou)". Angelou brings her readers close to things, which are even difficult to imagine for some. But some among the strong humans passes these phases of life easily. That is not her way of writing… the daring one, but she does convey her thoughts, just to manage the dark cycle of life in her writing. She writes not just to inspire, not just to scare, and not just to amuse readers, but just to reflect upon their minds, the things that could not get the attention. According to her, let everyone be open to life. Nothing will be sorted if life is seen in a much optimistic manner. William Sylvester mentions that her literary work is characteristically dynamic, but pessimism never serves the purpose of any writer every time (Williams).

“We prove that we can not only make peace… We can bring it with us(Angelou)”. Her illustrations of things are much different from many writers. Once she makes her reader to look toward what exactly the life wants from them, in the next tone, she wants to believe them to believe in themselves, then she makes them all turn around, and there is a huge reality, in front of them all. She mentions it as life. For her, life is not just, patching with the things, not always to find a middle way out. But she wants every admirer to look toward things in a broad manner, that will enable them to have a more thorough view of things. This is where anyone can get over with the things. This according to her is when anyone can avoid being the walk over any guided path. Many of her poems, in this collection, have the same lesson that not just rely upon peace by sacrificing your wills, or by sacrificing your rights. For her, this is not peace, this is rejection, and this is bad, which leads nowhere. George Plimpton maintains a very dubious image of Maya Angelou’s work. He opines that “She could be more simple in her illustrations of things(Sarton and Siegel)."

Throughout the literature produced by Maya Angelou, she takes her readers from the paths of despair and joys. It is, therefore, the difficult and easy task at the same time, as it is based on the perceptions of the readers. This study will, however, be a substantial addition to the existing literature, written in response to Maya Angelou’s work. The theme of this study will remain to craft out the limits of her extremes. This research will be about what hurdles she talks about, that are not supportive in life. The analysis of her collection “*The Complete Collected Poems*” will help in sorting out the most relevant literature regarding this thesis.

# Works Cited

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