[Name of the Writer]

[Name of Instructor]

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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 have 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 thick. 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, *Heart of a Woman, Mind of a Writer, and Soul of a Poet*). Kathryn, who is among the noted critics of Maya’s work quotes “let her broaden the vision of her life(Hagen, *Heart of a Woman, Mind of a Writer, and Soul of a Poet*)” 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, which 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)." The complete collected poem incorporates the dark aspects of life as well, the dark not in its literal sense, but dark in a sense when everyman finds opposition in everything he confronts. This is what is contrary to the primary thoughts of her in the Completed collected poems. Maya lefts to everyone, to find for themselves the real purpose of their lives. This is when she confronts her thesis of not mentioning everything supportive. Some poems of her, however, give an impression that from the darkness rises a new ray, which is hope and which is what will lead anyone into the light. Maya maintains that happiness and dismay, white and the black, and light and the dark are all the perspectives of life, which are left to anyone to manage in order to create balance in the life.

“*This bed Yawns beneath the weight of our absent selves…”* Maya has always been supportive of finding ourselves in peace. For her, peace of mind comes next to the physical rest. Since she was a poet and a writer. She needed her mind to be open every time, and to be in a continuous struggle to find new aspects of life. She has discovered many things in her life, she has mentioned too about them. But what appears exciting to her readers is when she called them to make a space for themselves. The readers and the followers of Maya believe that Maya doesn't appear to be a resting human. Some also interpret this in a literary way. They opine that according to Maya yawning beneath the selves of ours… is imagine your thought processes. Look inside your selves. For her the peace of mind is discovering their own self and yawning is a struggle in that. She appears to believe that if one is unable to discover his self, what else is the purpose of his life on earth. For discovering one need to add something into the self of him or her. It will bring you nothing in the discoveries if you don’t have invested anything into your existence. What the investment in a self could be…? This is what has been interpreted in much time. The investment that has been widely agreed upon is the self-calm, is the peace, and redefinitions of the limits of yourself. For Maya, the self-calm is to be in apposition, where one is in direct relation with nature. According to her, the peace is the continuation of the ideas in one’s mind and for her, the redefinitions of the limes are the expansion in one's scholarly ideas. This is what Maya has different from other poets.

“*I am the dream… and the hope of the slaves*”. Since Maya has been struggling throughout her life for the oppressed ones, she, therefore, is much aware of the hardships of life. In her literary work, she has many times put herself in the place of the oppressed class (to whom she is referring to as slaves". Although she could not feel that what the hardships in life are, but she has searched on them through the literary prism. She believes that the life of the hard workers is nothing else and just the continuation of the struggles to achieve something more soothing. For her, their struggle is beautiful, they make a romantic relationship with their jobs. This romance becomes strong with every passing day. This is how they discover, rediscover and redefine themselves. Why she has mentioned her as the hope of the slaves. As has been described above that the slaves are actually the oppressed classes, therefore she mentions that I am their hope. Hagen mentions in her book *Heart of a Woman,* that since Maya was a woman, it was natural for her to be compassionate towards everyone, just not the slaves(Hagen, *Heart of a Woman, Mind of a Writer, and Soul of a Poet*). The dream is not what she has seen in a nightlife of her. The dream was what she actually envisioned for the slaves. They wanted them to be free thinkers, and also not the slave of their minds as well. According to her, this could be a formula how they can get themselves free completely. Once if the slaves anywhere in the world take on the decision of getting themselves free, they first of all need to break the inner barriers of themselves. She opines that this is how they can go to the glory of freedom. Maya has addressed in her poetry everyone and every class.

“Fall gently, snowflakes cover me with Cold icy kisses and Let me rest tonight…” Maya has always been someone who remained near to nature. for her, every aspect of nature was an act of love and kindness for humans. She has viewed nature as an image of a mother. Though her personal life was not that much soothing for her, she has various time compared the nature, with that of a mother. Like a mother kisses her children’s, similarly, nature kisses the beings with the snowflakes. Maya has mentioned about Mother Nature in this way. Like a mother feels comfortable when she witnesses her offspring’s sleeping in rest. In the same way, Maya has talked about Mother Nature, for her- nature is what any mother is towards her children’s. Sometimes loving, and sometimes cruel. Resting is what she has described an act of love and pleasure for everyone. Maya’s ideas have no limits. She can attribute any feeling to everyone. She has worked on romance, on love for nature and for slaves. The attracting thing in her this piece is that she has once again sketched a new image of nature for her readers. She believes that nature will treat us, the way we treat it. One who thinks good about nature in the most beautiful way, he will enjoy every aspect of it. Maya mentions that the soft kisses of nature to us are actually the signs that it still is there and we are in a connection with it. Dugout writes that Maya has been a thorough observer of nature(DeGout), this is the reason why she has incorporated in herself every aspect of nature. For those, who love nature, Maya has remained for them in the limelight.

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 collection is about the hurdles she talks about, that are not supported in life. According to her easiness is not complimentary for everyone. Neither it comes into anyone’s life like a package, nor will it keep on make one soothing for the entire life. This is the reason she has urged her followers to just not find the ease in every aspect of life, rather work to create ease in life, which will everlasting. The analysis of her collection “*The Complete Collected Poems*” will help in sorting out the most relevant literature regarding this thesis.

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