

## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### Basic Consideration

The American black woman, now commonly referred to African American women, has traveled a long and tortuous, bitter and painful journey to arrive at her present state of affairs. The position of African American women in the literature of American society is still very tragic. It may be rather difficult to accept the fact that the position of black woman in lower stratum has to face both racial and gender discrimination. More than a century African American women are not regarded as intact human beings, who have human rights. They are regarded as slaves, as a black side and the channel of the lust of a white man, not as a senseless and intelligent individual. New since the 1960s, with the existence of civil rights movement, black women seen and recognized its existence as a human being.

Maya Angelou (1928-2014), hailed as one of the best known black writers in the United States, has to her credit several volumes of poetry. These volumes address social and political issues relevant to African-Americans and challenge the validity of traditional American values and myths. Her poems are both social and confessional, in nature. She was born on April 4, 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri to Bailey Johnson and Vivian Baxter Johnson. She died on 28th May, 2014 (Wednesday) at the age of 86. Maya Angelou is one of poets who use a poem as a media to express her feeling about her social. She is a black woman living in America where Whites are the majority of society. Angelou's poetry fashioned almost entirely of short lyrics and jazzy rhythms. Angelou's dependence on alliteration, her heavy use of short lines, and her conventional vocabulary have led several critics to declare her poetry superficial and devoid of her celebrated humor. Other reviewers, however, praise her poetic style as refreshing and graceful. ( Kathryn Kirkpatrick, 2010, p. 2)

Angelou has written six autobiographical volumes. They have alternated with books of poetry and essays. She has also written several children's books. All of the autobiographical works have been produced as adult looking through the eyes of the child and young woman who was evolving. The work is a glimpse into the experiences of a black, female individual who has had to find an identity through the experiences lived. ( Kathryn Kirkpatrick, 2010, p. 3)

Maya Angelou has been married several times but none of the relationships survived. As she grew older she continued to write autobiographical material, poems, songs, screen plays, television series, and directed a motion picture. In 1981 Angelou was offered a lifetime chair as the Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. She has had an active lecture schedule as well. 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 1993 inauguration ceremony. She was the first African American and first woman to be given such an honor. ( Kathryn Kirkpatrick, 2010, p. 5)

Ms. Angelou has received many other academic and national honors. She was granted her first honorary doctorate degree in 1975. She was granted the Presidential Medal of the Arts in 2000. She received 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 Barak Obama.( Kathryn Kirkpatrick, 2010, p. 6)

Her poems "Woman Work" ( 1978), the poem consists of five stanza and thirteen lines, this poem related to also the struggle woman, Maya Angelou wanted to show how a woman struggles and should do all of her responsibilities as a mother and housewife. "Phenomenal Woman" (1978) consists five stanza and sixty lines, this poem related to her proud of herself as a phenomenal woman, because she wants to show that as a woman also has superiority.

“Men” (1978) poem comprise with three stanza and thirty seven lines, this poems tells to bad treatment over a woman, she write the poem beside her and also other woman’s real experiences.

In this research, the reseracher wants to analyze three poems of Maya Angelou’s which tells about the black woman. The three poems that the researcher wants to analyze are “Woman Work”, “Phenomenal Woman”, and “Man”. In three of Maya Angelou’s poem, she tells about woman criticizing what the whites think about her, a woman’s bravery, behavior, and the way a woman sees her self. The reason why the researcher chooses these Maya Angelou’s poems is that these poems are about a woman and the feeling of woman about her existence.

Besides the explanation above, the researcher as a woman is proud of Maya Angelou, she shows her brave, and confident personality. She is a struggling woman, she did all work as a house keeper, she was ever in rape by her mom boyfriend. Many bad thing came in her life, but she holds out and battles in her life. From all her bad experiences she can make famous works until she became a phenomenal woman.

The researcher as a woman is interested in knowing how a poet describes a woman through a poem. Feminism is a kind of social changing which derives from women’s suffrage movements in the nineteenth century in Europe and America. It is closely related to the social changing of gender issues. The reason of why black feminism exists is because the better way to study the image of woman in literary is by making a black feminsit approach.

So in this research, the researcher wants to analyze them from a woman viewpoint and focuses this research on black feminist literary criticism. Besides that, the researcher also wants to know what the figurative language in the three poems in Maya Angelou.

### **Research Question**

Based on the background of study, this research focuses on answering, “How does the black woman’s images reflected in “Woman Work”, “Phenomenal Woman”, “Men” poem ?”

### **The Objective of the Research**

The aim of the research is to find out the description of black woman’s images in the three poems of Maya Angelou. They are “Woman Work”, “Phenomenal Woman”, “Men”

### **Scope of the Study**

In doing this research, researcher focuses on the analysis of the intrinsic elements of poetry; they are imagery and figurative language as tools for analyzing the reflects the image of the black woman (Simile, Metaphor, Symbol, and Personification), the research will be analyzed based on black feminism criticism. The poem is “Woman Work (1978)”, “Phenomenal Woman (1978)”, and “Men” to find out how Maya Angelou describing black woman’s images in her poems. This research will analyze three poems of Maya Angelou among it all of her poems because the poems tell about a condition of the black woman in America and also describe the figure of the woman, the power of the woman.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research expects to inform the readers about woman’s images which are presented by Maya Angelou in her three poems. Moreover, this research will look at black woman images, from the view of especially the black feminism literary criticism theory. Eventually, this research also gives the benefit for another researcher who will conduct the literary research, especially in poetry.