



An Analysis of Figurative Languages In Maya Angelou's Poems

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ABSTRAK

This research explores the analysis of figurative language in Maya Angelou's poems. The objectives were to describe and analyze the figurative language employed by Angelou in her poetry. The research method utilized was descriptive research, drawing data from seven of Angelou's poems. The findings revealed the presence of seven types of figurative language, including Alliteration, Hyperbole, Metaphor, Personification, Simile, Symbolism, and Onomatopoeia. These figurative languages imbue Angelou's poems with themes of determination, oppression, racism, discouragement, stereotype, and sacrifice, showcasing the depth and complexity of her poetic expression.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is related to human's life. Literature expresses the situation in real life. It has many aspects, many subjects, and is full of interpretation (Allan & Burrige, 2006). Literary works can be read and enjoyed by all ages of people, such as children, teenager, adult, etc. Literary work enlarges person's experience of the world and of human lives because literary works talk about many things dealing with life in the world and can opens readers mind to see another side of life.

The literary work has various topics, like those dealing with nature such as sea, mountain, earth or about human such as life, war, social (Allan & Burrige, 2006). Readers can enjoy and analyze literary work from the plot, the setting, characterization, etc to know what the literay work is talking about. One kinds of literary works is interested to be analyzed is a poem. In poem, the author can express thier feeling and tought (Ballard, 2022). In telling their feeling and tought, the author can use many kinds of utterances, such as using figurative language in a communication. Figurative language is a language that uses figure of speech (Tursunovich, 2024).

In analyzing poem, sometimes the readers may find some words or sentences that are not understood easily. In creating a poem, many poets use figurative language in their poems (Chaer, 2007). Figurative language emphasizes certain object or idea and it leads to touch the readers feeling. The using of good figurative language in a poem can make a poem more interesting to be read and use comparison to make and idea clearer and simpler. Besides, a poem has a structural variation, such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, alliteration, symbolism, onomatopoeia, and so forth, which strengthen the uniqueness of this kind of literary work. In analyzing poem, sometimes the readers may find some words or sentences that are not understood easily (Harner, n.d.). Figurative language will bring the readers feeling go beyond the poem, seeing

something far from what is poem written literary. A reader is able to get the message in the poem through analyzing the figurative language. With figurative language, poet may say something and mean something else.

There are many things we can find with using figurative language, such as poetry, song lyrics, prose or drama and movies. Because figurative language is the figure of speech which is used to create certain effects in a literary work. Therefore, the writer wants to show the figurative language used in poem.

Related to that, the writer is interested to analyzing figurative languages in Maya Angelou's pomes. Besides, the writer is interested with Maya Angelou's poems because Maya Angelou is one of the African American women who has perseverance and fights for the independence, equality and harmony of black people. She has accredited social and political experience in the 20th century (Lyons, 2006).

In addition, her interesting and full of twisted life experiences make his poetry literature very real and very interesting to read and analyze. and the most improtant is Maya Angelou's poems contain many figurative languages (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). Maya Angelou created many poems to use for research. But the writer only on the kinds them to know the used of figurative language of the poems. In this case, the writer aims to formulate the problems of the research which investigate figurative language in Maya Angelou's poems. There are many kinds of figurative language can be analyzed, such as alliteration, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile, symbolism, and onomatopoeia (Ning et al., 2010). The formulation on this research are:

1. What kinds of figurative languages are used in Maya Angelou's poems.
2. What are the meanings of figurative languages used in Maya Angelou's poems.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature is the art of written works. It is from the Latin letter "littera" which is meant by "Arts and Letters" (Eric, 2004; Partridge, 2006). Literature is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works. It is further subdivided into different genres such as an epic poem. Literature can also mean imaginative or creative writing, which is looked at for its artistic value.

Literature entertains and gives pleasure; it fires the imagination and arouses noble emotions (Lyons, 2006). It enriches man by enabling him to reflect on life and by filling him with new ideas. The most compelling reason is self-expression. The author wants to tell others about his/her emotion, such as happy or sad. Another reason is the author wants to entertain the reader and give pleasure through stories, real, or imagined.

Literary works are made based on the things that existed in the era and continue to the next generation with the reason that humans only need to learn from things that all have happened and the focus element when creating literary works creates pleasure for the creator (Dalzell, 2008). The next reason is for truth, accuracy and evaluation. Because, through this kind of literature people are able to analyze, evaluate, form valid judgement and make wise decisions. Every piece of writing then, is the reaction of an original heart and mind up on life and all that it includes.

A. POETRY OVERVIEW

Poetry has specificity on the density of the rhythm, and typography than other literary works such prose and drama. Rhythm is one of forming the aesthetic effect of poetry (Herniti & others, 2010). Whereas, in typography, the expression in the form of poetry is formed by lines and stanzas. Lines and stanzas are as characteristics of visual poetry. In addition, the language in poetry is also different from other literary works because poetry is influenced by two things,

namely the nature of the density of expression in poetry and corridor aesthetics.

Overtime, poetry has become much more than an easy way to remember ideas and songs (Partridge, 2006). From these humble beginnings, poets from all ages and across all cultures have developed new ways in which to communicate their ideas concisely. A poem is often exactly this, a short, concise expression of complex and sometimes abstract ideas.

There are some simple rules that we can learn to be able to read, understand and enjoy poetry of all shapes and sizes. It means that when analyzing poems the elements of figurative language the writer want to analyze should be considered because the elements give the effect for deliver communication.

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative language is figure of speech that uses words or expression with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation (Leckie & Given, 2005). Figurative language is used to describe an object, person, or situation by comparing it with something else. There are some reasons of using figurative language. The first is figurative language afford the reader imaginative pleasure. Second is figurative language is the way of bringing additional imagery into verse, and multiplying the sense appeal of poetry. Third is the way of adding emotional intensity to otherwise merely informative statements and of conveying attitudes along with information. The last is as the way to saying much in brief compass.

The meaning is a figurative language that used in poetry sometimes does not need to be more interpreted by the readers. Because the author just want to use figurative language to make a poetry look more beautiful and interesting. From experts' opinion above, it can be concluded that figurative languages is the typical way an author or writer in expressing thoughts and feelings in writing or orally. The specificity of figurative languages in the choice of words

an author who is able to touch the minds and feelings of the reader.

Figurative languages often provide a more effective means of saying what people mean than direct statement. In the specific sense, figurative languages may take the form of figures of speech. Style especially figurative languages known in rhetoric is style. Style derived from the Latin word *stylus* that is a kind of tool to write on a slab lily. Skill using this tool will affect the clarity of that. At press time emphasis on skills to write beautifully, then the style and turn into the ability and skill to write or use words beautifully.

Because of these developments, figurative languages or style becomes an issue or part of the diction the question whether the use of the word fits, flavor or specific clause to deal with the situation. Therefore, covers all issues style hierarchy of language: individual choice of words (diction), phrases, clauses, sentences and even embraces the discourse overall. So, reach of figurative language actually is very broad, not only includes the elements of the sentence elements that contain specific motifs, such as those commonly found in classical rhetoric.

C. KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN *MAYA ANGELOU POEMS*

1) Alliteration

Alliteration is derived from Latin's "*Latira*". It means "letters of alphabet". It is a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series. Alliteration is a series of words that begin with the same letter or sound alike. In the other words, alliteration is language style that has repetition of the same consonant sound that follows each other, it is usually used in poem and prose to create beautiful sentence or emphasize word.

2) Hyperbole

Hyperbole, from a Greek word meaning "excess," is a figure of speech that uses extreme exaggeration to make a point or show emphasis. It is the opposite of understatement. You wouldn't want to use it in nonfiction works, like reports or research papers, but it's perfect for creative writing and communication, especially when you want to add color to a character or humor to a story.

Hyperboles are not comparisons, like similes and metaphors, but extravagant and even ridiculous overstatements, not meant to be taken literally. In literature, hyperbole will often be used to show contrast or catch the reader's attention.

3) Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech that makes an implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.

Metaphor characteristics includes: a metaphor states that one thing is another thing, it equates those two things not because they actually are the same, but for the sake of comparison or symbolism, if you take a metaphor literally, it will probably sound very strange, metaphors are used in poetry, literature, and anytime someone wants to add some color to their language. The concept of metaphor is A is B.

4) Personification

As a literary device, personification is the projection of characteristics that normally belong only to humans onto inanimate objects, animals, deities, or forces of nature. These characteristics can include verbs of actions that only humans do or adjectives that describe a human condition. The characteristics can also be emotions, feelings, or motives given to objects incapable of thought. Personification can also mean the

embodiment of an abstract idea or quality. This definition of personification can extend even to humans.

5) Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things. Unlike a metaphor, a simile draws resemblance with the help of the words “like” or “as.” Therefore, it is a direct comparison. Simile introduces vividness into what we say. Authors and poets utilize simile to convey their sentiments and thoughts through vivid word pictures.

6) Symbolism

Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities, by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. Symbolism can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another, to give an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and more significant. Sometimes, however, an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value.

Symbolism can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another to give it an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and more significant. Sometimes, however, an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value. Symbols do shift their meanings depending on the context they are used in. Thus, symbolic meaning of an object or an action is understood by when, where and how it is used. It also depends on who reads them.

7) Onomatopoeia

The definition of onomatopoeia comes from a compound Greek word for “The sound/name I make”. In this way, an onomatopoeic word is the sound that the thing being described makes. Onomatopoeia is defined as a word, which imitates the

natural sounds of a thing. It creates a sound effect that mimics the thing described, making the description more expressive and interesting. In addition to the sound they represent, many onomatopoeic words have developed meanings of their own.

Onomatopoeic words come in combinations as they reflect different sounds of a single object. For example, a group of words reflecting different sounds of water are; plop, splash, gush, sprinkle, drizzle, drip etc. Similarly, words like growl, giggle, grunt, murmur, blurt, chatter etc. denote different kinds of human voice sounds. Moreover, we can identify a group of words related to different sounds of wind, such as; swish, swoosh, whiff, whoosh, whizz, whisper etc. Onomatopoeia is frequently employed in literature.

Use of onomatopoeia gives rhythm to the texts. In addition, it makes the description livelier and interesting, appealing directly to the senses of the reader. Generally, words are used to tell what is happening. Onomatopoeia, on the other hand, helps the readers to hear the sounds the words they reflect. Hence, the reader cannot help but enter the world created by the poet with the aid of these words. The beauty of onomatopoeic words lies in the fact that they are bound to have an effect on the readers’ senses whether they are understood or not. Moreover, a simple plain expression does not have the same emphatic effect that conveys an idea powerfully to the readers. The use of onomatopoeic words helps create emphasis.

D. ASPECTS OF CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION IN POETRY

1) Connotation

Connotation refers to a meaning that is implied by a word apart from the thing which it describes explicitly. Words carry cultural and emotional associations or meanings, in addition to their literal meanings. A connotation is frequently described as either positive or negative, with regard to its pleasing or displeasing emotional connection.

Using connotation in poetry can enrich meanings or concentrate them which means saying less with fewer words. Connotation can also create imagery or the pictures your readers see in their minds and set the tone. Most poets use connotations without giving it a second thought. They use words that create imagery and set the tone simply because that is their job as poets.

Connotation is when you mean something else or when something might be hidden. In some cases, connotation can also be similar to symbolism as it hinges on culturally accepted meanings. The connotation of a word refers to the emotional or cultural association with that word rather than its dictionary definition. The connotation definition is therefore not the explicit meaning of the word, but rather the meaning that the word implies.

2) Denotation

Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word, the "dictionary definition". The denotation of a word is the actual definition of the word rather than the nuances of its meaning or the feelings it implies. The denotation of a word does not carry the associations, emotions, or attitudes that the word might have. The opposite concept is called connotation, which refers to those associations and nuances that a word carries.

In poetry, we make fuller use of words than just every day, normal language does. When we use denotations in poetry, or make literal use of words, we can choose words that have several meanings. With those words, we may use them for one meaning in particular or to imply several different meanings. The denotations we use in poetry will always be in context with the poem.

When you use denotations in your poetry, the exact meaning must be able to be derived from the context. A word or phrase's denotation is what we would find in the dictionary, so it is important for one main reason it provides clear, literal definition. However, in literature and in everyday

language, a word's denotation is often less central than its universal connotation, which allows writers to be more creative and expressive with their thoughts. If we only wrote using denotative meaning, all writing would be dull, colorless, and very straightforward.

Readers are familiar with denotations of words but denotations are generally restricted meanings. Writers, therefore, deviate from the denotative meanings of words to create fresh ideas and images that add deeper levels of meanings to common and ordinary words.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Kind Of Research

In doing this analysis research, the researcher uses library research to support the analysis. Because of its theoretical and philosophical nature, library research often uses a philosophical approach rather than another approach. This research methods include data sources, data collection and data analysis. Library research utilizes library resources to obtain research data.

B. Source Of Data

The data of this research is the poems written by Maya Angelou's poems. The writer is going to analyze seven poems of this poet. The title of each poem are *Still I rise*, *Caged Bird*, *Phenomenal Woman*, *On The Pulse Of The Morning*, *Life Doesn't Frighten Me*, *Woman Work and Million Man March Poem*.

The writer uses random sampling in selecting data because 7 from 53 Maya Angelou's poems taken and used by the writer for the purpose of analysis in this thesis. The percentage is 40%. In this simple random sampling technique, differences in character that may exist in each element or element of the population are not important for the analysis plan. As long as differences in these differences are not important and have a significant influence on the results of the

research, the researcher can take a random sample.

The writer chooses these poems because the writer is interested to analyze the figurative languages (alliteration, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile, symbolism, onomatopoeia and idiom) in those poems and the writer thinks those poems are suitable to be the objects of this research.

C. Data Analyzing Techniques

In analyzing this data, the writer uses descriptive research to describe seven poems in which every part of the poems will be explained clearly. Descriptive research is one type of research method that attempts to describe and interpret objects as they are. Descriptive research is also often called non-experiment, because in this study researchers did not control and manipulate the research variables. With descriptive method research, it allows researchers to connect between variables, test hypotheses, develop generalizations, and develop theories that have universal validity.

In addition, descriptive research is also a research in which data collection is used to test research questions or hypotheses relating to current events and events. The descriptive research covers the collecting of data to test hypothesis or response of some research question which is related to the subject research condition when the research is doing. The descriptive research is also to identify and report something found when it is done. This research analyzed the poems in which it focuses on the figurative language used in the poems based on the phenomenal at context at the text.

D. Working Procedures

Based on the literary review in the previous chapter that this thesis will use descriptive analysis approach. This principal is in the line with the characteristic of figurative language that are used in the poetry. Because of that, a literary work can be studied through the text itself. But the understanding of the text must be followed by the

understanding about the kind of figurative language that the poetry use.

In writing this thesis, the writer uses the following procedure:

1. Identifying figurative language in Maya Angelou's poems.
2. Classifying and categorizing figurative language in Maya Angelou's poems.
3. Analyzing figurative language in Maya Angelou's poems.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

STILL I RISE

*You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

*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.*

*Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.*

*Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.*

*You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.*

*Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?*

*Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise*

*Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise*

*I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise*

*Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise, I rise, I rise*

Still I Rise poem by Maya Angelou tells about self-esteem and self-confidence. In this poem, Angelou revealed how she overcame everything that happened to her pride. The point is, she explained and revealed in this poem that no one could degrade her dignity even though she was oppressed. *Still I Rise* poem is one of Maya Angelou's very famous works and is included in her third book. The one metaphor in line 3 "You may trod me in the very dirt" means Angelou will compare herself to the oppressive person who considers her and other black people like dirt and deserves to be trampled and oppressed by the authorities. Here it is explained that the oppressor not only physically tortures but also they suppress her pride to the lowest point like living creatures on the ground. However, after everything the oppressor had done, Angelou still rise.

Furthermore, Maya Angelou uses metaphors as can be seen in line 33 "I'm a black ocean". Angelou compared herself to a strong and powerful ocean. And 'black' here to shows her skin and race. Her wanted to show that she was a strong black woman who would lead and protect her race. In line 40, "I am the dream and the hope of the slave" Angelou uses metaphor. Angelou wants to achieve and realize the hopes of his ancestors to make her race free from the hands of the rulers. And she wants to achieve all that with the hope that African-Americans can live on equal with the white people.

In line 21 and 22 Angelou also uses a metaphor, comparisons of two unlike things where the poet says that one thing is another. "You may shoot me with your words". Here, her compare 'your word' with the guns and knife who can kill her because their rude treatments. Angelou uses sharp objects such as gun or knives to refers the oppressors' hatred and cruelty towards to black people. But she also assured through her poetry that she would not be weak or defeated by the oppressor.

The author is trying to describe the metaphors because in here, Angelou speaking not only speaking of herself, but of her people, who "bear in the tide" despite centuries of oppression. The whole of the poem has been building towards this point, founded as it is on the repeated metaphor "I rise" as noted in the title. Angelou is not literally rising above the earth, but metaphorically and figuratively, her confidence and internal value mean that her will continue to rise above all detractors. The one simile in line 4 "...like dust...". In this poem, Angelou creates herself useless, not important, and weak like a dust. Angelou compared herself with flying dust, useless. "But still, like dust, I'll rise" or "I rise" she stressed that although African-Americans have been oppressed, they will continue to survive for independence and freedom.

In line 7 until 12 here are some more similes. "Cause I walk like I've got oil wells / Pumping in my living room". "Just like moons and like suns / With the certain of tides / Just like hopes springing high / Still I'll rise". First, on lines 7 and 8, Angelou compared herself to the rulers who could act according to their wishes because they had positions and powers. Then she compared herself to the moon and the sun rising high above the sky with a hope of rising from the oppressors to freedom. Here is another excerpt containing simile in line 15 "Shoulders falling down like teardrops". Angelou refers to sadness. She implies that someone can fall, collapse and

No	Line	Texts	Figurative Language
1	3	You may <u>trod</u> me in the very <u>dirt</u>	Metaphor
2	21 & 22	You may <u>shoot me with your words</u> / You may <u>cut me with your eyes</u>	Metaphor
3	33	I'm a <u>black ocean</u> ...	Metaphor
4	40	I am the <u>dream</u> and the <u>hope of the slave</u> ...	Metaphor
5	4	... <u>like dust</u> ...	Simile
6	7 until 12	Cause I <u>walk like I've got oil wells</u> / Pumping in my living room / Just <u>like moons and like suns</u> / With the certainty of tides / Just <u>likes hopes springing high</u> / Still I'll rise	Simile
7	15	<u>Shoulders falling down like teardrops</u>	Simile
8	19 & 20	Cause I <u>laugh like I've got gold mines</u> / Diggin' in my own back yard	Simile
9	24	But still, <u>like air, I'll rise</u>	Simile
10	27 & 28	That I <u>dance like I've got diamonds</u> / At the meeting of my thighs ?	Simile
11	7	Cause I walk like I've got <u>oil wells</u>	Symbolism

droop like tears dripping. In line 19 and 20 "Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines /

Diggin 'in my own back yard". She compared her laughter to the laughter of the rulers who had everything. In line 24, "But still, like water, I'll rise" Angelou uses a simile. However, she and other blacks were treated, insulted and oppressed, they would never be afraid and give up.

In line 27 and 28, Angelou also uses another similes. "I dance like I've got diamonds / At the meeting of my thighs". Her implies happiness and enthusiasm as when getting something valuable like diamonds. The author is trying to describe the similes in *Still I Rise* poems because this is all connects to its central theme: that, no matter what is happen to her and Afro-America people is such that "still, like dust, I'll rise." This simile suggests that Angelou is lighter than air, floating upward, above the "lies" of oppressors. The poem is replete with similes. Angelou compares herself to "moons" and "suns" and describes herself as having "the certainty of tides," all images which suggest constancy and a capacity to stay the course and outlast naysayers.

Angelou also uses figurative language to suggest that her behaves as if wealthier than her is, knowing that there is an internal, natural wealth inside her. "Like I've got gold mines" and "like I've got oil wells," indicating that Angelou carries herself with the confidence of someone who has valuable natural resources, and knows it. One of the poem's most striking images also builds on this point: Angelou says her dances "like I've got diamonds / At the meeting of my thighs." The image is vivid and the language rather provocative with its sexual implications: her confidence is conveyed boldly.

The one symbol in line 7 “Cause I walk like I've got oil wells” means to show that Oil wells are very valuable rich. The meaning of oil wells is rich people who have a strength, wealth and high self-confidence. It is also represents confidence the poet has in herself. The author trying to describe the symbols in this poem because Angelou wants to show to the rulers who oppressed that her has high self-confidence and no matter how much sadness feels, her will always stand up, and rise again.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the writer concludes that there are four types of slang expressions used in *The Fate of the Furious* movie. There are 7 Public house slangs, 27 Society slangs, 5 Slangs in Publicity and 3 Soldier's slangs. The writer determines which slangs are included into public house slang or society slang or slang in publicity or soldier's slang by searching its meaning in Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English, Urban Dictionary and the content of the dialogue.

The writer also analyzed the functions of using slang expressions in *The Fate of the Furious* movie. Based on the data presented and analyzed in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the functions of slang expressions uttered by the casts in the movie are 9 slang expressions to address, 4 slang expressions to initiate relax conversation, 8 slang expressions to express impression, 10 slang expressions to reveal anger and 11 slang expressions to humiliate. By understanding the functions of slang expressions, the writer concludes that the functions to humiliate is the biggest factor why the speakers use slang expressions in their utterance, because this movie has the background of an action movie that cast by an adult actors where they are communicate among themselves using slang in which they can understand the meaning and function of the slang expressions, and also the situation in this movie is non-formal situation.

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