A Sarjana Sastra Undergraduate Thesis

THE IDEA OF BLACK FEMINISM IN MAYA ANGELOU’S
“STILL I RISE” AND “PHENOMENAL WOMAN”

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Dr. I. Prapto Baryadi, M.Hum.
“I was a warrior who dreamed he could bring peace. Sooner or later though, you always have to wake up.”

Jake Sully (Avatar, 2009)
for

My Beloved Parents

In the hope of a better future
LEMBAR PERNYATAAN PERSETUJUAN
PUBLIKASI KARYA ILMIAH UNTUK KEPENTINGAN AKADEMIS

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(Gatot Hendy Febiyanto)
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ABSTRACT


Maya Angelou is a writer and poet who cares and wants to raise the degree of black women. It is portrayed in her works, such as in her poems entitled “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. In these two poems, Maya Angelou explains about the idea of black feminism and invites black women to rise and be confident.

In this thesis, the writer will analyze (1) what “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” talk about, and (2) how “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” portray the idea of black feminism.

To do the analysis, the writer did several steps. First, the writer conducted close reading on the poems in getting deeper understanding about it especially concerned with black feminism. Next, the writer examined the references. After getting all the selected data, the writer started to analyze the problems and apply the theories of metaphor, simile, symbol, repetition, tone, and black feminism in the analysis. The writer analyzed the poems by paraphrasing it word per word. Then, after analyzing the poems, the writer analyzed the idea of black feminism based on the review on black feminism in the U.S. Then, the last step was drawing the conclusion from the result of analysis. This study used feminism approach. The approach was applied in analyzing black women who rises because they are oppressed and their condition.

The result of analysis shows that in “Still I Rise”, there is clash among black women versus white people (both male and female) and black men. Black women suffer because of bad treatment of white people who consider them slaves, and because black men derogate them. Because of that, black women would do anything to rise from white people and black men’s oppression. In “Phenomenal Woman”, there is clash between black women and white women (between ugly and beauty). If it is seen from the scope of black feminism and review on black feminism in U.S., “Still I Rise” depicts black women rise struggling against slavery and racism, and “Phenomenal Woman” depicts black women who are confident and they try to break the standard of beauty (which claims that beauty belongs to white women) in the society.
ABSTRAK


Dalam thesis ini, penulis akan menganalisa (1) tentang apa isi “Still I Rise” dan “Phenomenal Woman”, dan (2) bagaimana “Still I Rise” dan “Phenomenal Woman” menggambarkan ide tentang black feminism.


CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The nineteenth century was the time when Black women like Maria Stewart, Anna Julia Cooper, and Sojourner Truth challenged the conventions and mores of their era to speak publicly against slavery and in support of Black women’s right. They did not refer to themselves as feminists, however, their beliefs and activism ignited a tradition of anti-racist and anti-sexist political movement and thought which now defines as Black Feminism.

Black Feminism is a branch of feminism. To know what black feminism is, we should know firstly what feminism is. Feminism, according to Maggie Humm’s The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, is explained as a term used by the feminists to describe the ideology of female quality of being better. Furthermore, it is explained that feminism is a doctrine for women to have the equal right of men, and it also means feminism is an ideology of a social transformation which happens to make social equality between men and women.

The definition incorporates both a doctrine of equal rights for women (the organized movement to attain women’s right) and an ideology of social transformation aiming to create a world for women beyond simple social equality (Humm, 1992: 9).

The term Black Feminism is the wish for a compatible and progressive vision of social justice based on the historical and on going struggles against the race and
gender oppression Black women have experienced at home, work, in their communities and, moreover, the dominant culture as a whole. Black Feminism emphasizes the complexity of Black women’s demand for social, economic and political quality, and being understood.

Anna J. Cooper in her essay, “The Black women Plan to Lead Their Race”, says that:

While the women of white race can with calm assurance enter upon the work they feel by nature appointed to do, while their men give loyal support and appreciative countenance to their efforts, recognizing in most avenues of usefulness the property and the need of women’s distinctive co-operation the colored women too often find themselves hampered and shamed by a less liberal sentiment and a more conservative attitude on the part of those for whose opinion they care the most (Cooper, 1989: 12).

Along the history of women’s movement, especially in the United States, there existed the movement of Black women. Black women were put on the last rank of the social class, on the fourth rank after African American man since the slavery time. The Black women were being discriminated against every aspect of life. Not only struggling feminism, the Black women also struggled for racism (Myrdal, 1944: 60). Black woman suffers double discriminations. It was also experienced by Maya Angelou who was born as a Black woman, as shown through her poems.

Some poems of Maya Angelou portrays the spirit of black feminism, two of them are “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. “Still I Rise” talks about Black women who are willing and trying hard to rise from the oppression of white male, whereas “Phenomenal Woman” talks about a woman, especially Black woman, who is confident of herself. “Phenomenal Woman” is depicted as the struggling of Black
women towards white women. These Black women struggle against the standard of beauty (that beauty is belong to white women who has white feature such as blonde, white, slim etc) which is applied in the U.S. society.

Maya Angelou, who has been called as America's most visible black female autobiographer, is not only a novelist but she is also a great poet. It was evident when she recited her poem "On the Pulse of Morning", that tells about desire for unity between the peoples of the United States, at President Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993. Her poems become inspirations for the feminist and feminism movement. Her volume of poems Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Diiie were nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1971. In 2007, she became the first African-American woman and living poet to be featured in the Poetry for Young People series of books from Sterling Publishing (www.poemhunter.com/best-poems/maya-angelou.html).

Poetry is a form of literary work in spoken or written that emphasizes rhythm, other intricate patterns of sound and imagery, and the many possible ways that words can suggest meaning. The word itself derives from a Greek word poesis that means “making” or “creating.” (Volkman, 2005: 890). According to Griffith, poem is a unique literary work because a poem can tell more than what the reader thinks. A reader needs a high concentration by selecting details in reading a poem, and because of it, a poem is more intense than the other works (Griffith, 2006: 89).

Mamuna Ghani and Bushra Naz in their article entitled “Race, Feminism and Representation: An Inquiry into Maya Angelou’s Poetry” says that in writing poems, a female poet usually makes close relation between the idea of romantic and
feminism but Maya Angelou has her own style in writing her poems. She does not only use the active changing and altered condition of the biology identity but also uses the fact of her own specific being. She emphasizes the importance of individual situation especially to the individuality of a woman.

The romantic notion that a writer writes in response to internal imperatives go hand in hand with the notion of feminism in her poetry. However, Angelou is an exception because she not only points to dynamic moving and fluctuant condition of all conscious held biology identity but also the fact of her own specific being. She always lays great emphasis upon the importance of individual situation especially with reference to the individuality of woman (Ghani and Naz, 2004: 99).

Most themes that Maya Angelou wrote in her novels and poems are about love, lives, and humanity. She said that the duty of human being is to love and she also said that all people are familiar to her. William Shakespeare’s works and some African-American’s poems have influenced her in writing her poems.

She ranged from story to poem to song and back again, and her theme was love and the universality of all lives. "The honorary duty of a human being is to love," Angelou said. She spoke of her early love for William Shakespeare's works, and offered her audience excerpts from the poems of several African-Americans, including James Weldon Johnson and Paul Lawrence Dunbar. But always, she came back to love - and humanity. "I am human," Angelou said, quoting from her own work, "and nothing human can be alien to me" (http://www.nvo.com/hypoism/35maryangelousstillirise/).

Maya Angelou's poetry is often short. Line lengths are often short as well. Lyman B. Hagen states: "Most lines of her three stanza poems are tri-meter; others, particularly those in unstructured poems, are from two to four syllables long". Hagen says Angelou's rhythmical awareness was influenced by the King James Bible, white writers like Edgar Allan Poe and William Shakespeare, black writers such as
Langston Hughes, shouting and singing in African American churches, and childhood songs, chants, and folklore (Hagen, 1997: 119-120).

In Modern American Women Writers, Joanne Braxton states: "Readers of her poetry appreciate its rhythm, lyric imagery, and realism." She wants to say that "the people who read Angelou's work include both critics and lay readers, and she has achieved a measure of true sainthood in their eyes by transcending brutal racism, sexual abuse, and poverty to become one of America's most celebrated contemporary writers" (Braxton, 1991: 7).

The other style of Maya Angelou’s poems, especially in “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”, is that Maya Angelou tried to create a sense of identity and self-acceptance, and the strong female presence within feminism (http://www.enotes.com/feminism-literature/angelou-maya), those are the reason why the writer uses “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” to analyze. The other reason is that “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” have not been studied and analyzed as a thesis in Department of English Letters of Sanata Dharma University.

The writer is interested in analyzing Maya Angelou’s poems because the writer is curious to know about the black feminism she struggled for in the poems “Still I Rise”, and “Phenomenal Woman” and it is hoped that this study may give contribution to enrich the feminism analysis especially about black feminism on the poems.
B. Problem Formulation

Based on the background of study stated above, the writer limits the discussion into problems as formulated as follows:

1. What are Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” about?
2. How do Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” portray the idea of black feminism?

C. Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problem formulation, the study is conducted to find out the idea of black feminism in the Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” through deeper analysis.

D. Definition of Term

According to Feminist Theory and Literary Practice, Black feminism is a branch of feminist thought that highlights the multiple disadvantages of gender, class and race that shape the experiences of black women or African American women. Black feminists reject the idea of a single unified gender oppression that is experienced evenly by all women, and argue that early feminist analysis reflected the specific concerns of white women. Black feminism focuses on the historical relationship between white feminism and racism.
It is noticed that even though white feminist have urged the struggled against slavery, in fact, they can not put themselves equal with black people particularly black women. Furthermore, for white feminist, racial prejudice and gender discrimination is two different things that are not related to one another. They rejected slavery toward black people; otherwise, they can not accept that black men are positioned above them in the American society (Madsen, 2000: 215).
A. Review of Related Studies

It is said in 1978 “Phenomenal Woman” is a simple and short poem which evokes strong emotion in its rhyme. Although it develops to a longer one, it remains simple because of its easy-listened rhyme. “Phenomenal Woman” talks about the pride of the women’s strength in their own condition of being woman.

First published by Maya Angelou in 1978, *Phenomenal Woman* is a poem and not an especially long one. *Phenomenal Woman* is an anthem of women's strength in their own womanhood. The almost childish rhyming cadence is haunting in its simplicity ([http://januarmagazine.com/artcult/phenomenalwoman.html](http://januarmagazine.com/artcult/phenomenalwoman.html)).

Eva Brinch in *Black American Women’s Writing: A Quilt of Many Colours* says that in “Phenomenal Woman”, the appeal of Maya Angelou’s writing for women readers who are neither black nor American is in her creation of a positive female role model. Although Angelou’s experience of sexism was worsened by its intersection with a racism that white women did not suffer, they respond with recognition to her identification with a woman who takes such delight in femaleness. Brinch also states that she does not believe that in “Phenomenal Woman” Maya Angelou intends the description of women to be exclusive of white women.

Angelou’s poem “Still I Rise” is a motivation to Black addicts to rise and recover from drug addicted, because they suffer parallel discrimination between
slavery, racism and the drug war. “Still I Rise” is also said as assertiveness and pride for Blacks.

Her poem, *Still I Rise*, meant to be a call to assertiveness and pride for blacks, is a completely appropriate outcry to the prejudice, humiliation, and demanded submission experienced daily by active and recovering hypoics (addicts) of all sorts at the hands of addictophobes, governments, and physicians across this land. The parallel between slavery, racism and the drug war and addictophobia is uncanny and incites all addicts to rise (http://www.nvo.com/hypoism/35maryangelousstillirise/).

Many people consider that “Still I Rise” is her anthem. She wrote this poem with simple and daily word which she experiences every day. “Still I Rise” depicts her struggles and hardships especially in the time of her childhood. “Still I Rise” has touched and inspired the lives of many people with her talents, abilities, and desires to have better life.

"You may write me down in history with your bitter, twisted lies; you may trod me in the very dirt, But still like dust, I'll rise" (Angelou). Those are just a few words written by Maya Angelou in her famous poem, "Still I Rise." Many people consider that such poem, her anthem, her everyday words in which she experienced. Although she has a very successful adult life as a poet, historian, author, actress, civil-right activist, cook, director, dancer and so much more, her childhood was filled with its share of hardships and struggles. Throughout the years, Angelou has touched the lives of many people with her talents, abilities and desires to better mankind, all because she still rises (http://www.bookrags.com/essay-2006/1/10/22819/9998).

In the same year with “Phenomenal Woman”, 1978, Maya Angelou wrote “Still I Rise”. It is said that “Still I Rise” is both encouraging and well-known poem she ever wrote. “Still I Rise” depicts Angelou’s hard work and strength. She shows that she is determined and willing to conquer her life one-step at a time.

In 1978, Angelou wrote "Still I Rise," one of the most encouraging, yet well-known poems ever written. In "Still I Rise," Angelou "promises not to
surrender in the face of bitter, twisted lies, hatefulness, and history's shame." As "she speaks with all her heart and soul” readers can view Angelou as a hard-working, strong, dominant woman. Through all the hardships and obstacles, Angelou shows she is determined and willing to conquer life one-step at a time (http://www.bookrags.com/essay-2006/1/10/22819/9998).

This thesis will study about black feminism in Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. Black feminism focuses in two things, the struggling against male domination and the struggling against racism. “Still I Rise” depicts Black women struggle against white people (especially white male) domination, whereas “Phenomenal Woman” depicts Black women struggle against standard of beauty (that belongs to white women) in the society.

B. Review of Related Theories

1. Theories on Metaphor and Simile

Theories on metaphor are needed to guide the analysis of metaphorical language that is used by Maya Angelou in “Still Rise” and some in “Phenomenal Woman”, where as the theory on simile is needed to explain further the simile that is used by Maya Angelou in “Still I Rise”.

According to Simms and Myers in The Longman Dictionary of Poetic Terms, the term metaphor, which originates from the Greek ‘to transfer or to carry across’, is a rhetorical figurative expression of similarity or dissimilarity in which a direct, non-literal substitution or identity is made between one thing and another (Simms and Myers, 1989: 734).
In figurative language, metaphor has a very closed meaning with simile. In *The Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*, metaphor is explained as an expression which described one thing or idea using words without applying ‘as’ or ‘like’. On the contrary, it is applied in simile (Summers, 1992: 668).

According to Aristotle in *Rhetoric*, the simile is a full-blown metaphor. Metaphor can easily be turned into simile, and simile into metaphor. It means that a simile can also be a metaphor. Differing from it only in the way it is put, and just because it is longer so that it is less attractive (Cunningham, 1999: 83).

According to Guth, there are four possible functions of metaphor on literary work: as a means of representing variations on a theme, as a means reinforcing the central concern of the author, as means of reflecting polarities that set up the basic tension or challenge in a literary work, and as part of an escalating series of metaphors that lead up to a new way of seeing and feeling (Guth, 1997: 574).

Furthermore, the poet James Dickey analyzes the making of a metaphor into a four-step process. It begins with (1) making picture comparisons in the mind, (2) discovering the threads of continuity that run through these picture comparison which create a ‘narrative of dramatic action’, (3) recombining these elements so that they undergo a ‘fruitful interchange of qualities, a transference of energies, an informing of each other’, and (4) translating this process into the medium language. Although metaphors do not occur in the idiom of images, Dickey’s process of metaphorical conceptualization is probably accurate (Simms and Myers, 1989: 178).
2. Theories on Symbol

Theories on symbol are needed to explain further the symbolic words that appear in “Phenomenal Woman”.

According to Holman and Harmon, symbol is an image that evokes an objective, concrete reality and suggests another level of meaning. It is a trope that combines a literal and sensuous quality with an abstract or suggestive aspect (Holman and Harmon, 1968: 44). While according to Guth, symbols are images that have meaning beyond themselves (Guth, 1997: 189). Symbol is a detail, a character, or an incident that has a meaning beyond its literal role in the narrative. Meanwhile Abrams define symbol as a word or phrase that signifies an object or event, which in turn signifies something, or a range of reference, beyond itself (Abrams, 1975: 195).

In his book, Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense, Perrine states that a symbol may have more than one meaning. He adds that at its most effective a symbol is like many faceted jewels (Perreine, 1974: 20). It flashes different colors when it is turned in the light. According to Rohrberger and Woods, the presence of symbols in literary work is inevitable. Some people think that many great works of art use literary symbols because they suggest complexity, intricacy, and richness. If symbols are present in literary works, whether through emphasis, repetition, implications, or recurring patterns, it means that the author wants to say something in terms of another. Therefore, such a hint should not be neglected in order to get the actual understanding of the literary work itself (Rohrberger and Woods, 1971: 17).
Symbols can be classified into several categories. According to Reaske, there are two types of symbols: public and private symbols. Public symbol is a symbol that through repeated use has the same connotations whenever they occur. These symbols are generally and universally recognizing and the author referring to them rely on the same and common understanding to define the symbols. Usually these symbols are derived from common and universal experience, history and culture. These symbols are more effective than explicit statements; for example: ‘cross’ which suggest Christianity, or ‘weapon’ which suggest military authority, while private symbols are products of particular poet’s imagination and fairly mysterious. If a poet has a private symbol, it often remains private and secret until someone decides that symbol has a particular meaning, and that symbol’s meaning becomes clear when one has observed carefully how that symbol functions in every poem in which it is observed (Reaske, 1974: 109). Reaske’s explanations are supported by Guth, who states that some poets develop a symbolic language of their own that may at first seem private or obscure. However, it gradually becomes meaningful as the readers learn the poet’s symbol language; the readers gradually feel less like strangers in the poet’s symbolic world of meaning (Guth, 1997: 589).

There are various ways of identifying symbols. Kennedy, in his book Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama suggests several ways of identifying symbols. In his opinion, in order to look for symbols it is necessary to focus on certain characters and actions because usually the author invents them for on certain purposes. By holding up for inspection certain characters and their actions the
author lends them some special significance in order to support the idea. Kennedy further adds that the readers should be careful with words, phrases, or sentences which are mentioned repeatedly, because they might suggest symbols (Kennedy, 1983: 147). While Rohrberger and Woods state that reader can usually trust the story for the identification and discovery of symbols, because when an author wishes to mark an object or detail with symbolic significance, then he will indicate, either explicitly or simplicity, his intended meaning or meanings. Symbols are not things invented by an author to confuse the reader, not strange object with far-fetched meanings arbitrarily attached to them, but they are, in literature as in life, a vital part of our experience (Rohrberger and Woods, 1971: 136).

3. Theory on Repetition

Theory on repetition is used to analyze the words or phrases that are repeated in “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. In the poem, repetition may appear in sound, syllable, word, phrase, line, stanza, but in this thesis, analyze will be limited in the repetition of phrase, line, and stanza.

Repetition is when you have a word and use it more than once. Repetition is used to emphasize sound, syllable, word, phrase, line, stanza in the poem. Partly it seems to be enjoyed simply as a repeating pattern that is pleasant to hear. It also serves as a powerful mnemonic device, facilitating memorization. The regular use of tail rhyme helps to mark off the ends of lines, thus clarifying the metrical structure for
the listener. As with other poetic techniques, poets use it to suit their own purposes (http://www.poetrypoetry.com/Workshops/00-07/RepWorkshop.html).

4. Theories on Tone

Theories on tone are used as guidance to know Maya Angelou’s attitude and mood in “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”.

According to Longman of Poetic Terms, tone, derived from Greek ‘a stretching’, is an author’s identifiable attitude toward his subject matter and/or audience, or mood of ‘voiceless’ work of literature. In Abrams’ Glossary of Literary Terms, it states that the tone of a poem indicates the speakers’ attitude toward his subject, his audience and sometime toward himself (Abrams, 1971: 215).

According to Perrine, the poem readers usually do not really understand a poem unless they have accurately sensed whether the attitude that manifests in the poem is playful or solemn, mocking or reverent, calm or excited (Perrine, 1959: 702). Tone, in literature, may be defined as “the writer’s or the attitude toward his subject, his audience, or himself”. We can conclude that the emotion meaning of the work is an extremely important part of the full meaning. In spoken language it is indicated by the influence of the voice (Perrine, 1959: 702).

5. Theory on Black Feminism

Theory on black feminism is needed as ground of the analysis, because the analysis mostly talks about black feminism.
The Black Feminist Movement grew out of, and in response to, the Black Liberation Movement and the Women's Movement. In an effort to meet the needs of Black women who felt they were being racially oppressed in the Women's Movement and sexually oppressed in the Black Liberation Movement, the Black Feminist Movement was formed. Black women who participated in the Black Liberation Movement and the Women's Movement were often discriminated against sexually and racially (http://web.mit.edu/activities/thistle/v9/9.01/6blackf.html).

Black feminism argues that sexism, class oppression, and racism are bound together. Forms of feminism that strive to overcome sexism and class oppression but ignore race can discriminate against many people, including women, through racial bias. The Combahee River Collective argued in 1974 that the liberation of Black women entails freedom for all people, since it would require the end of racism, sexism, and class oppression. Patricia Hill-Collins defined Black feminism, in Black Feminist Thought, as including "women who theorize the experiences and ideas shared by ordinary Black women that provide a unique angle of vision on self, community, and society" (Collins, 2000: 56).

According to Deborah L. Madsen, in Feminist Theory and Literary Practice, black feminism focuses on the historical relationship between white feminism and racism. Madsen notices that even though white feminist have urged the struggled against slavery, in fact, they can not put themselves equal with black people particularly Black women. Furthermore, for white feminist, racial prejudice and gender discrimination is two different things that are not related to one another. They
rejected slavery toward black people, otherwise, they can not accept that black men are poisoned above them in the American society

Black Feminist notices that the issues within black community are not only about the historical relationship among white feminist and Black women. They admit that the oppression toward American black people is also embedded through white dominance, racism, and male supremacy (Madsen, 2000: 215).

6. Review on Black Feminism History in U.S.

a. Oppression and Negative Image towards Black women

According to Collins’ *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, work might be better conceptualized by examining the range of work that African-American women actually perform. Work as alienated labor can be economically exploitative, physically demanding, and intellectually deadening. Black women’s status that do those things are called “mule”.

During slavery the breeder woman image portrayed Black women as more suitable for having children than white woman. By claiming those Black women were able to produce children as easily as animals, this image provided justification for interference in enslaved African-American’s lives. Slave’s owner wanted black women to ‘breed’ because every slave child born represented a valuable unit of property.

Efforts to control Black women’s sexuality were tied directly to slave owner’s effort to increase the number of children their female slaves produced. Historian Deborah Gray White writes, “Slave master wanted adolescent girls to have children,
and to this end they practiced a passive, through insidious kind of breeding” (White, 1985: 99). Techniques such as assigning pregnant women lighter workload, giving pregnant women more attention and rations, and rewarding prolific women with bonuses were all used to increase Black women’s reproduction. Infertile women could expect to be treated “like barren sows” and be passed from one unsuspecting buyer to the text (White, 1985: 101).

The sexual harassment of African-American women by white men contributed to image of Black women as fair game for all men. The difficulty of the environment prompted one southern Black woman to remonstrate:

We poor colored women wage-earners in the south are fighting a terrible battle.. on the other hand, we are assailed by black men, who should be our natural protectors; and, whether in the cook kitchen, at the washtub, over the sewing machine, behind the baby carriage, or at the ironing board, we are little, pre than pack horses, beast of burden, slaves! (Lerner 1972, 157).

Intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality could not continue without powerful ideological justifications for their existence. As Cheryl Gilkes contends, “Black women’s assertiveness and their use of every expression of racism to launch multiple assaults against the entire fabric of inequality have been consistent, multifaceted threat to the status quo. As punishment, Black women have been assaulted with a variety of negative images.” (Gilkes, 1983: 294).

Black women do not only suffer because of white oppression but also because of black men. Black women have always been told by black men that they are black, ugly, evil, bitches and whores, in other words, black women are the real niggers in this society, oppressed by whites, male and female, and the black man, too. Due to
the shortage of Black men, most Black women are forced to accept a relationship on male terms. In Black communities there sometimes exists a type of serial polygamy a situation where many women share the same man, one at a time (http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/poor/).

b. Movement of Black Women in U.S.

In 1905, a period of heightened racial oppression, educator Fannie Barrier Williams viewed the African-American woman not as defenseless victim but as strong-willed resister. Williams saw the Black women as “irrepressible.” She is insulted, but she holds her head, she is scorned, but she proudly demands respect... the most interesting girl of this country is the colored girl. (Collins, 2000: 151)

To outsiders, Sara Brooks may appear to be an exploited domestic worker victimized by the racial politics of an unfair labor market and the sexual politics of having too many children. But when she states, “if they are scornful of me, I’m the same way about them”, she taps a powerful yet overlooked part of U.S. Black women’s activism. She does not only survive her experiences with intersecting oppressions, but she clearly rejects their ideological justifications. “If my place you got because I’m black, I don’t want to do it”, she proclaims. Self-definition, self-valuation, and movement toward self-reliance inform her worldview, beliefs that stem from her struggles to survive.

Traditionally, the oppression of Black women’s idea within White-male-controlled social institutions led African-American women to use music, literature,
daily conversations, and everyday behavior as important locations for constructing a Black feminist consciousness (Collins, 1998: 32-43).

c. The Rise of Black women

Maria Stewart’s 1831 speech advises the “daughter of Africa” to “Awake! Arise! No longer sleep nor slumber, but distinguish yourself. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties (Richardson 1987, 30).”

US Black women have long recognized the fundamental injustice of a system that routinely and from one generation to the next relegates US Black women to the bottom of the social hierarchy. When faced with this structural injustice targeted toward the group, many Black women have insisted on our right to define our own reality, establish our own identities, and name our history. Our significant contribution of work on domestic workers is that it documents Black women’s everyday resistance to this attempted objectification.

d. Color, Hair Texture, and Standards of Beauty

Although most Black women typically resist being objectified as the other, these controlling images remain powerful influences on their relationships with Whites, Black men, other racial/ethnic groups, and one another. Dealing with prevailing standards of beauty (particularly skin color, facial features, and hair texture) is one specific example how controlling images derogate African-American women.
Now, if you’re white you’re all right,
If you’re brown, stick around,

Prevailing standards of beauty claim that no matter how intelligent, educated, or “beautiful” a Black woman may be, those Black women whose features and skin color are most African must “git back”. Within the binary thinking that underpins intersecting oppressions; blue-eyed, blond, thin White women could not be considered beautiful without the other (Black women with African features of dark skin, broad noses, full lips, and kinky hair).

Race, gender, and sexuality converge on this issue of evaluating beauty. Black men’s blackness penalizes them but because they are not women, valuations of their self-worth do not depend as heavily on their physical attractiveness. In contrast, part of the objectification of all women lies in evaluating how they look. Within the binary thinking, White and Black women as collectives represent two opposing poles, with Latinas, Asian-American women, and Native American women jockeying for positions in between. Judging White women by their physical appearance and the attractiveness to men appraises them but their White skin and straight hair simultaneously privilege them in a system that elevates whiteness over blackness. In contrast, African-American women experience the pain of never being able to live up prevailing standards of beauty (standard uses by White men, White women, Black men, and, most painfully, one another.) Regardless of any individual woman’s subjective reality, this is system of ideas that she encounters. Because controlling
images are hegemonic and taken for granted, they become virtually impossible to escape.

It is important to explore how prevailing standards of beauty affect U.S. Black women’s treatment in everyday life, since U.S. Black women have been most uniformly harmed by the colorism that is a by-product of U.S. racism. The long-standing attention of musicians, writers, and artists to this theme reveals African-American women’s conflicted feelings concerning skin color, hair texture, and standards of beauty. In her autobiography, Maya Angelou records her painful realization that the only way she could become truly beautiful was to become white:

Wouldn’t they be surprised when one day I woke out of my black ugly dream, and my real hair, which was long and blond, would take the place of the kinky mass that Momma wouldn’t let me straighten? … Then they would understand why I had never picked up a Southern accent, or spoke the common slang, and why I had to be forced to eat pigs’ tails and snouts. Because I was really white and because a cruel fairy stepmother … had turned me into a too-big Negro girl, with nappy black hair (Angelou, 1969: 2).

Gwendolyn Brooks also explore the meaning of skin color and hair texture for U.S. Black women. During Brooks’ childhood, having African features was so universally denigrated that she writes, “when I was a child, it did not occur to me even once that the black in which I was encased … would be considered, one day, beautiful!” (Brooks, 1972: 37). Early on, Brooks learned that a clear pecking order existed among African-Americans, one based on one’s closeness to Whiteness. As a member of the “Lesser Blacks”, those furthest from White, Brooks saw first hand the difference in treatment of her group and that of the “Brights”: 
One of the first “world” truths revealed to me when I at last become a member of school was that, to be socially successful, a little girl must be Bright (of skin). It was better if your hair was curly; too—or at least Good Grade (Good Grade implied, usually, no involvement with the Hot Comb)—but Bright you marvelously needed to be (Brooks, 1972: 37).

This division of African-Americans into two categories (the “Brights” and the “Lesser Black”) affects dark-skinned and light-skinned women differently. Darker women face being judged inferior and receiving the treatment afforded “too-big Negro girls with nappy hair”. Institutions controlled by Whites clearly show a preference for lighter-skinned Blacks, discriminating against darker ones or against any African-Americans who disappear to reject White images of beauty. Sonia Sanchez reports, “Sisters tell me … that when they go out for jobs they straighten their hair because if they go in with their natural or braided, they probably won’t get the job” (Tate, 1983: 141).

C. Theoretical Framework

The analysis will take five theories to answer the problems stated in the problem formulation. They are theory on metaphor, theory on simile, theory on repetition, theory on symbols, theory on tone, and theory on black feminism. Since the study tries to find out the black feminism idea in Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” through the intrinsic elements, (in this case, the intrinsic elements analyzed are metaphor, simile, symbol, repetition, and tone) those five theories are needed.
Theories on metaphor, simile, symbol, repetition, and tone are needed to find out those intrinsic elements in the poems and to answer the first problem formulation. Combined with the answer of first problem formulation, the theory on black feminism and review on black feminism history in U.S. are needed to answer the second problem formulation.
A. Object of the Study

The object of the study of this paper is Maya Angelou poems’ “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” which are taken from her book entitled *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou*, published by Random House Publishing Group in 1994.

“Still I Rise”, which consists of 8 stanzas and 43 lines, generally tells about the spirit about to rise up whereas “Phenomenal Woman”, consisting of 5 stanza and 61 lines, generally describes about confident woman. Those poems tell about the spirit to rise up and about the confident woman, but they also talk about the Black women although the poems do not state anything explicitly but their implicit messages can be relatively easy to understand.

B. Approach of the Study

Since the poems are about black women, it is appropriate to approach it through feminist literary criticism. Feminist literary criticism passes the notion that women also have a voice to speak about their life; the unfairness they receive as women. The basic objective is to assure everyone that literary is not a male dominated area; that the works of literature are not an exclusive media for men to share their stories. Through literature, the life of women with all of the aspects can be
analyzed. This is a study of women’s voice, despite of her race, class, and culture, with the aim to diminish the term ‘second sex’ entitled to women. Wilfred L Guerin, in A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature states:

Despite their diversity, the feminist critics generally agree that their goals are to expose patriarchal premises and resulting prejudices, to promote discovery and reevaluation of literature by women, and to examine social, cultural, and psychosexual context of literature and literary criticism. Feminist critics therefore study sexual, social and political issues once thought to be “outside” the study of literature (Guerin, 1999:197).

Thus, the approach is applied in analyzing the condition of black women who are discriminated and oppressed in the poems. White men, black men, white women, and the society oppress them. The oppression causes black women to rise struggling for their voice.

C. Method of the Study

The writer employs the library research as the method of study. The primary source used in this paper is mostly gained from the poems, “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”, as the main data. The secondary sources are mostly taken from Black American Women Writing: A Quilt of Many Colors (1994), and Black Feminism Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and The Politics of Empowerment (2000). Others data are obtained from the internet and encyclopedias which contain related information required to analyze this paper.

The research took some steps to answer the problems. The first step was to read and study some theories on symbol, metaphor, simile, repetition, tone, and black
feminism. Then, the writer read and reread deeper the poems, “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” as the primary data of the research until the writer got what the writer wanted to say the meaning by reading and having the interpretation of word per word.

Next, the writer answered the first problem by analyzing the symbol, metaphor and simile, repetition, tone, and about black feminism in “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. The symbol, metaphor and simile, repetition, tone were analyzed by discussing word per word that indicates those elements and then the writer interprets those words. It was done to answer the first problem. Then, to answer the second problem, the writer related the first problem that had already been answered to black feminism theory and review on black feminism history in the U.S. Finally, the conclusion could be drawn from the analysis.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer gives explanation to answer the problems that are formulated in chapter I. The centre of the discussion in this undergraduate thesis is black feminism.

A. The Analysis of the Poems

There are two of Maya Angelou’s poems that will be analyzed. They are “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. The poems will be analyzed by several intrinsic elements: simile, metaphor, symbol, repetition, tone; and black feminism. Theories on metaphor are needed to guide the analysis of metaphorical language that is used by Maya Angelou in “Still Rise” and some in “Phenomenal Woman”, whereas the theory on simile is needed to describe further the simile that is used by Maya Angelou in “Still I Rise”. Theories on symbol are needed to explain further the symbolic words that appear in “Phenomenal Woman”. Theory on repetition is used to analyze the words or phrases that are repeated in “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. Theories on tone are used as guidance to know Maya Angelou’s attitude and mood in “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. The theories mentioned above are used to make the paraphrase of the poems are easier to understand. Theory on black feminism is needed as ground of the analysis, because the analysis mostly talks about black feminism.
1. “Still I Rise”

In this poem, Maya Angelou wants to tell about her survival, about her struggle, about her bravery against something. It is said against something because in first stanza, it is still blurred. She says that she allows someone to write down a history about her. In line 2, if someone tells something about her, those are big lies because the truths have been twisted to lies. She accepts that someone wants to put her in the past with untrue history.

*You may write me down in history* (1)
*With your bitter, twisted lies,* (2)

Angelou allows someone to crush or step on her in the very dirty place. She wants to say that she allows someone to treat her bad. The idea in lines 1 to 3 is about underestimation and hatred of someone to Maya Angelou. Although she is underestimated and hated, she does not give up and she stays positive. It appears in what she says in line 4 that she will rise and always still. The words ‘like dust’ are used as *simile* to depict the passionate of her rise. She depicts her rise highly like dust; the dust will fly higher and freely and will be rising if it is blown by the wind.

*You may trod me in the very dirt* (3)
*But still, like dust, I'll rise.* (4)

Then in the second stanza, Angelou begins to ask question to someone why she is underestimated and hated. She asks whether her ‘sassiness’ makes someone who hates her upset. The word ‘sassiness’ contains ambiguous meaning. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, ‘sassy’ means rude or showing lack of respect and it also means lively and fashionable. The two meanings are applicable, if
they are connected to the first stanza. The interpretation of first meaning is after what she has suffered in first stanza, Maya Angelou reacts with anger by asking, “Does Angelou’s sassiness upset someone?” It is perhaps Angelou’s lack of respect of someone makes someone upset. Another interpretation is in the second stanza Maya Angelou asks confidently whether someone upset or envies her because she is fashionable and lively.

Does my sassiness upset you? (5)

In line 6, Maya Angelou asks again to someone why he or she affects her in unpleasant way with sad feeling and without hope.

Why are you beset with gloom? (6)

If Angelou’s question in line 6 is connected to her self-answered question in line 7 and 8, it contains ambiguous interpretation. The first interpretation is no matter how hard someone hates her; it will be useless because she will stay happy and optimistic. Although someone threatens her and the threat may sadden her, she is still happy. In line 7, the simile is used again. She is happy as if she has a lot of money because she finds the oil wells. Because she has plenty oils in the wells, she pumps it and pours it in the living room. She asks “Why do you beset me with gloom?”, and she explains that what someone does is useless because she will still be happy “because I walk happily like I have got oil wells”. Envy is the second interpretation of the reason why someone besets her with gloomy. Someone envies her because Angelou walks happily as if she is rich woman who just get oil wells. She asks “why are you beset
me with the gloom? Is it because I walk happily like I have got oil wells” and because of that you envy me.

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Why are you beset with gloom? (6)} \\
& \text{'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells (7)} \\
& \text{Pumping in my living room. (8)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

In the following, Maya Angelou explains with the simile how high she wants to rise. She explains that she will rise very high like moon and sun. In line 11, she adds that she will rise very high like hopes that people ever wish. A hope in positive way is always followed by high desire, and according to Angelou, it is the desire that springs high.

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Just like moons and like suns, (9)} \\
& \text{With the certainty of tides, (10)} \\
& \text{Just like hopes springing high, (11)} \\
& \text{Still I'll rise. (12)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The next stanza explains what Angelou thinks about what someone expects from her. She thinks that someone really wants her to be broken, to see her desperate and fall with bowed head and eyes. Someone thinks that Angelou does not have guts. Someone wants her to lose and fail to rise like what Maya Angelou does. Someone wants her to be weak because of her cries. Maya Angelou chooses some negative words to describe someone’s hatred towards her, such as ‘broken’, ‘weakened’, ‘teardrop’, ‘cries’ and ‘soulful’, and unhappy body gestures like ‘bowed head’, ‘lowered eyes’, ‘shoulders falling down’ which mean expressing or causing deep or sad feeling.

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Did you want to see me broken? (13)} \\
& \text{Bowed head and lowered eyes? (14)} \\
\end{align*}
\]
She asks someone again whether her superiority offends her. From this statement, we begin to know that according to her someone envies her because she confidently mentions about ‘haughtiness’ which according to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* means showing the belief that one is superior to others and this ‘haughtiness’ makes someone disrespect and envious of Angelou. In line 18, Angelou states cynically that someone does not have to take seriously Angelou’s haughtiness because what someone will do to her will be useless. She is just happy and laughs gladly as if she has found the gold mines in her own back yard. Again, she uses simile.

> Does my haughtiness offend you? (17)  
> Don't you take it awful hard (18)  
> 'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines (19)  
> Diggin' in my own back yard. (20)

Maya Angelou really does not care with what someone does to her. She says in sixth stanza that she allows someone to do everything to make her down. She uses metaphor in lines 21, 22 and 23. In line 21, the phrase “shoot me with your words” is interpreted as defamation, or saying something that is not true or unpleasant about her. Angelou allows someone saying untrue or unpleasant thing about her.

> You may shoot me with your words, (21)

The phrase in line 22 “cut me with your eyes” is interpreted as looking with a strange, unpleasant gaze which shows hatred and envy. Angelou allows someone gazing her in unpleasant way.
You may cut me with your eyes, (22)
The phrase in line 23 “kill me with your hatefulness” is interpreted as doing something terrible with his or her hatefulness. Angelou allows someone doing something terrible to her.

You may kill me with your hatefulness, (23)

Repetition is used here. The phrase in lines 21, 22, and 23 actually have the same construction in its elements, especially in ‘you may’, it is repeated three times in every line. Maya Angelou tries to emphasize on what someone did to her. Anyone can do anything again and again to make her down, but she does not care about that and in the end she will still rise.

You may shoot me with your words, (21)
You may cut me with your eyes, (22)
You may kill me with your hatefulness, (23)

From the first until seventh stanza, Angelou tries to depict and struggle how she rises, no matter how hard someone really wants her broken. The eighth stanza that contains more lines than the others is more about the conclusion of what Angelou thinks. Repetition appears again when Angelou releases her anger and burns her spirit in this stanza by repeatedly mentioning about her rising. In this stanza, she tells about how and why she rises. She repeats phrase ‘I rise’ in order to make the poem full of spirit.

Out of the huts of history's shame (29)
I rise (30)
Up from a past that's rooted in pain (31)
I rise (32)
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide, (33)
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide. (34)
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear (35)
I rise (36)
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear (37)
I rise (38)
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, (39)
I am the dream and the hope of the slave. (40)
I rise (41)
I rise (42)
I rise. (43)

In line 29, Maya Angelou uses metaphor “out of huts of history’s shame” which means she leaves out the shame she had suffered in the past and makes it a history. She does not make it as a burden because she rises and leaves her history.

Line 31 is closely connected with line 29, because they talk about the past. In line 31, metaphor ‘up from a past that’s rooted in pain’ means that she gets up from the painful past. She rises by living in the present and forgetting her past.

Out of the huts of history's shame (29)
I rise (30)
Up from a past that's rooted in pain (31)
I rise (32)

Maya Angelou depicts herself as a black leaping wide ocean which is welling and swelling in the tide. It is metaphor. The words ‘black, ‘leaping’ and ‘wide’ in line 33 are closely related. Angelou tries to say that she is a strong and great woman. The ocean is welling and swelling in the tide. She wants to tell that she will rise and move forward in the bad or good condition like the ocean that its wave is rising and sometimes becomes larger than normal in the rise and fall the ocean.

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide, (33)
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide. (34)
With her greatness and strength, she leaves behind the ‘nights of terror and fear’ given by someone, to a wondrously clear daybreak that is no terror and fear. The word ‘night’ is used to depicts how dark or terrible the terror and fear, in the contrary ‘wondrously clear daybreak’ is used to depict how happy she is after leaving behind the terror and fear.

*Leaving behind nights of terror and fear (35)*
*I rise (36)*
*Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear (37)*
*I rise (38)*

There are two possibilities about who someone or ‘you’ is actually. The first possibility is that someone is a woman or female. In line 25, Angelou asks again whether her sexiness make someone upset. From this statement, there is a big possibility that ‘someone’ that Angelou is talking about is a female because female will envy or upset seeing another female sexiness, in contrast, male will attract with female sexiness. She asks the woman whether the woman is surprised seeing Angelou dances as if she just gets the diamonds on her tight that makes her happy and looks sexier.

*Does my sexiness upset you? (25)*
*Does it come as a surprise (26)*
*That I dance like I've got diamonds (27)*
*At the meeting of my thighs? (28)*

The second is that someone is a man. Man means both white and black man. In line 40, Angelou mentions about slave, that she is the dream and the hope of the slave. Maya Angelou is the hope of the slave, of black women who are enslaved. She struggles to black women awakening of discrimination from white men. Black
women do not only suffer because of white people, but also because of black men. In line 31, she rises from past that rooted in pain because of white and black men. In line 35, she leaves behind the terror and fear that is invoked by the white and black men.

*Up from a past that's rooted in pain* (31)
*I rise* (32)
*Leaving behind nights of terror and fear* (35)
*I rise* (36)
*I am the dream and the hope of the slave.* (40)

In lines 4 and 12, Angelou says that she will rise, but in other lines especially in eighth stanza she says that she rises. It means that she makes the idea of rise to an act of real rise. In this poem, Angelou depicts the process of rise. At first, she wishes to rise like air and hope that springing high, but then she makes it real because she is tired of someone treated her badly. She rises because she is able to get up from the past and forget the bad treatments, she rises because she successfully leaves behind the terror and fear that spur on her spirit and effort to rise, and she rises because she is the dream and the hope of the slave to rise against discrimination.

Cynical, mocking, and full of spirit are the tone of the poem. She is cynical when she asks rhetorical questions about her superiority:

*Does my sassiness upset you?* (5)
*Does my haughtiness offend you?* (17)
*Does my sexiness upset you?* (25)
*‘Cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells* (7)

She is cynical because she already knows she possesses the superiority that she asks to both someone and ‘you’ in the poem and moreover, her superiority envies and
upsets someone. She is mocking when she gives a reason after someone treats her badly, as it appears in this line:

‘Cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells (7)  
Pumping in my living room (8)  
‘Cause I laugh like I’ve got gold mines (19)  
Diggin’ in my own back yard (20)

She is full of spirit every time she repeats phrase ‘I rise’ after her awakening statements, as appear in eighth stanza. She wants to rise because she feels oppressed of someone and because of that, she is willing to rise.

Out of the huts of history's shame (29)  
I rise (30)  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain (31)  
I rise (32)  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide, (33)  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide. (34)  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear (35)  
I rise (36)  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear (37)  
I rise (38)  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, (39)  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave. (40)  
I rise (41)  
I rise (42)  
I rise. (43)

2. “Phenomenal Woman”

“Phenomenal Woman” is the second poem of Maya Angelou that the writer analyzes. In general, the poem expresses Maya Angelou’s pride and confidence as a woman.
It begins in the first stanza when pretty women ask her where her secret lies. Then Angelou explains where her secret lies. She says that her secret is not in her face or with her body. In line 2, she says that neither she is cute nor her body is ideal for a size of fashion model clothes or size that suits to a fashion model (proportional or slim). In short, she states that she is physically unattractive for the pretty women. From explanation above, it is known that what pretty women wonder is where Angelou’s beauty lies.

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. (1)
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size (2)

They think Angelou tells lies about where her beauty lies when she starts to tell them. They think that she tells lies because their perceptions of beauty are different with what Maya Angelou thinks. The pretty women think that the beauties are about cute face and have ideal and proportional body, but Angelou says differently. She says that the beauties are ‘in the reach of her arms’ or in everything she is able to do with her arms. They are ‘in the span of her hips’ or her hips’ size that makes her confident. They are ‘the stride of her steps’ in her steps that full of stride or in confident way. They are ‘in the curl of her lips’ or in her curl lips that makes her confident. Those are the perceptions of beauty of Maya Angelou. Her beauty is not in her face or in her body’s size, her beauty lies in the reach of her arms, the span of her hips, the stride of her steps, in the curl of her lips. They think that she tells them lies because when she tells them that her beauty lies in her body, they do not agree with her. It is because the different perception of beauty that Maya Angelou and they have.
They think that beauty is having a good-looking face and an ideal body whereas in Maya perception, beauty is how someone acts confidently without considering face, and body’s size.

But when I start to tell them, (3) They think I’m telling lies. (4)

Her confidence appears in lines 6 to 9, lines 22 to 25, lines 38 to 41, and lines 53 to 56. Her confidence is depicted by describing movements, gestures, and shapes of every part of her body. Line 6 to 9 indicates that Angelou is such a confident woman when she says that her beauty is ‘in her reach of her arms’ or in her arms’ size. It does not matter whether the reach is short, long, or average but she is confident that her beauty lies in her arms. She is also confident with hips’ size, her long step when she walks, and her curl lips. Those movements depict how confident she really is.

It's in the reach of my arms (6) The span of my hips, (7) The stride of my step, (8) The curl of my lips. (9)

In lines 22 to 25, she says that her beauty lies in every single part of the movement she makes. Her beauty lies in the fire in her eyes. Fire symbolizes passion and power. Fire in her eyes depicts that she is a passionate and powerful woman. She says that her beauty lies ‘in the flash of her teeth’; she wants to say that her beauty lies in her smile because we can see someone’s white teeth as if it is flash when someone is smiling. She says that her beauty lies ‘in the swing in her waist’, she want to say that she is confident and looks pretty whenever she swings her waist. The joy
in her feet means that Angelou is an optimistic woman; wherever she walks, she will always be happy.

It's the fire in my eyes, (22)
And the flash of my teeth, (23)
The swing in my waist, (24)
And the joy in my feet. (25)

In lines 38 to 41, she says her beauty lies ‘in the arch of her back’ or in her curve shape back. We do not know yet whether she has sexy back or not but it reflects that she is such a confident woman. Her confidence also appears in line 40; ‘the ride of her breasts’ or in her breast’s huge size that makes her confident and looks sexier. She says her beauty lies in ‘the sun of her smile’. Sun symbolizes happiness, optimism, or positive manner. It is stated in line 39; ‘the sun of her smile’, it means that she is a happy and optimism woman. The grace of her style states that Angelou looks elegant with her style. It portrays her confidence.

It's in the arch of my back, (38)
The sun of my smile, (39)
The ride of my breasts, (40)
The grace of my style. (41)

Her self-description lastly appears in lines 53 to 56, where she says that the short and sharp sound of her heels makes her prettier and confident. She is also confident with the shape of her curved hair. Lines 55 and 56 depict that Maya Angelou is a motherly woman. The affection comes from ‘the palm of her hand’

It's in the click of my heels, (53)
The bend of my hair, (54)
the palm of my hand, (55)
The need of my care, (56)
She portrays herself when she walks into a room. She walks coolly into a room, and then men in that room, who are interested and not interested to her gather around her. Angelou depicts those men using metaphor. Men are considered as honeybees when they gather around her. They swarm or crowd around her like a large colony of honeybees that gathers in the nest.

I walk into a room (14)  
Just as cool as you please, (15)  
And to a man, (16)  
The fellows stand or (17)  
Fall down on their knees. (18)  
Then they swarm around me, (19)  
A hive of honey bees. (20)

It is not only pretty women who wonder where Angelou’s beauty lies, but men also wonder. She says that men try so much what they see in her but they do not find. They can not find and touch her inner mystery. Inner mystery represents Maya Angelou’s confidence. What men and pretty women wonder is where the beauty of Angelou lies, they wonder about Angelou’s inner mystery. From the beginning until end of the poem, Angelou implicitly states that her beauty lies in her inner mystery and the inner mystery is confident. She says inner because it does not appear in her face or body but the confidence is in her mind, because of that, they can not see her inner beauty with bare eyes. She is beautiful because she is confident of herself. She is confident with the movements she makes. She is confident and thinks that she is pretty although she does not have cute face and proportional body. Confidence is the key of her beauty.

Men themselves have wondered (30)
What they see in me. (31)
They try so much (32)
But they can't touch (33)
My inner mystery. (34)
When I try to show them (35)
They say they still can't see. (36)

After she explains about her beauty and confidence, she now lets men and pretty women know why she does not bow her head, feel sad or inferior although she is not beautiful according to pretty women and men (because of the difference of Angelou and pretty women’s perception). She does not shout or jump about or have to talk very loud. It means that she does not have to be overrated and overreacted to show to everyone that she is beautiful in her way. Angelou wants to say that she does not have to attract or ask the attention of public, so public look at her and recognize that she is beautiful. Angelou states that without attracting the attention or with usual way, pretty women will be proud when they see her passing by.

Now you understand (46)
Just why my head's not bowed. (47)
I don't shout or jump about (48)
Or have to talk real loud. (49)
When you see me passing (50)
It ought to make you proud. (51)

It is according to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary that phenomenal means outstanding or extremely special or especially in surprising way. With the confident tone, she claims that she is a phenomenal woman. Confident is the main tone in the poem.

I'm a woman (10)
Phenomenally. (11)
Phenomenal woman, (12)
That's me. (13)

The tone of “Phenomenal Woman” is also can be seen through the repetition Maya Angelou makes. In closing every stanza, Angelou always repeats the statements that she is a phenomenal woman. Through the repetition, Angelou wants to emphasize that she is such a confident woman.
B. Black Feminism in the Poems

It is mentioned in chapter II that Black feminism is a branch of feminist thought which highlights the multiple disadvantages of gender, class and race that shape the experiences of black or African-American women. Black feminists reject the idea of a single unified gender oppression that is experienced evenly by all women, and argue that early feminist analysis reflected the specific concerns of white, middle-class women. In “Still I Rise”, the writer will explain about multiple disadvantages of gender and race that is suffered by black woman because of white (both male and female) and black men, whereas in “Phenomenal Woman” the writer will explain about disadvantages of class and race that is caused by the standard of beauty in society that makes gap between black and white women.

1. Black Feminism in “Still I Rise”

It is stated in analysis above that ‘I’ in the poem is Maya Angelou herself. It is according to the writer that ‘I’ in “Still I Rise” represents Black women. In this poem, Maya Angelou tells how Black women rise and do not give up with white community (both male and female, but male especially), and black men bad treatments. It begins when British people brought Black people to the new world, America, to trade as slaves because White people needed many workers to build infrastructures and to work in the plantations.

White people found that Black people was the right resolution to fulfill the lack of workers they need. Therefore, the white imported Black people from African
to trade as slave. In the process, they prefer Black women rather than Black men to be slaves because Black women are able to produce children as easily as animals, and their children are the valuable unit of property of the slave owner, as Collins states in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*:

> During slavery the breeder woman image portrayed Black women as more suitable for having children than white woman. By claiming that Black woman were able to produce children as easily as animals, this image provided justification for interference in enslaved African-American’s lives. Slave’s owner wanted enslaved American to ‘breed’ because every slave child born represented a valuable unit of property (Collins, 2000: 78).

Efforts to control Black women’s sexuality were tied directly to slave owner’s effort to increase the number of children their female slaves produced. Historian Deborah Gray White writes, “Slave master wanted adolescent girls to have children, and to this end they practiced a passive, through insidious kind of breeding” (White, 1985: 98). With more slaves, a slave owner can gain more profit. Those are the techniques such as assigning pregnant women lighter workload, giving pregnant women more attention and rations, and rewarding prolific women with bonuses were all used to increase Black women’s reproduction.

Another reason why White people choose Black women rather than Black men is because Black women are mules that economically exploitative, physically demanding, and stupid. It is stated in Collins’ *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*:

> Work might be better conceptualized by examining the range of work that African-American women actually perform. Work as alienated labor can be
economically exploitative, physically demanding, and intellectually deadening. Black women’s status that do those things are called “mule” (Collins, 2000: 48).

Mule, according to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, means an animal that is the young of a donkey. Black women are associated as donkeys that are fool and can be exploited.

White men do not only give bad treatment, but they also give bad image to Black women. The sexual harassment of African-American women by White men contributed to image of Black women as fair game for all men. Black women also suffered because of Black men who should be their protector.

We poor colored women wage-earners in the south are fighting a terrible battle.. on the other hand, we are assailed by black men, who should be our natural protectors; and, whether in the cook kitchen, at the washtub, over the sewing machine, behind the baby carriage, or at the ironing board, we are little, pre than pack horses, beast of burden, slaves! (Lerner 1972, 157).

The explanations above are the reason why Maya Angelou states in first stanza that she allows White people write in the history everything about Black women’s bitterness and fact that is untrue about them in the past. She allows White people trod them, to treat bad and underestimate the Black women. In last line of first stanza, Maya Angelou states that black women will rise in the White people oppress.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{You may write me down in history} & \quad (1) \\
\text{With your bitter, twisted lies,} & \quad (2) \\
\text{You may trod me in the very dirt} & \quad (3) \\
\text{But still, like dust, I'll rise.} & \quad (4)
\end{align*}
\]

Considering Black women as mule, doing sexual harassment to Black women, creating bad images, and enslaving Black women are the facts that White people want
see Black women broken. Maya Angelou states in fourth stanza. She asks White people whether they want Black women broken with bowed head and lowered eyes so that White people can take advantages of them.

*Did you want to see me broken?* (13)  
*Bowed head and lowered eyes?* (14)

In second stanza, Maya Angelou asks whether Black women’s sassiness upset White people. It has been explained above that ‘sassy’ has two meaning. The first meaning is showing lack of respect and the second meaning is lively and fashionable. In this analysis, the first meaning will be taken in analyze Black feminism. Cheryl Gilkes in *‘Holding Back the Ocean with a Broom’: Black women and Community Work* states that Black women express clearly their opinions of racism and protest about the inequality in the system which threat White people existence in the community, and the effect of Black women’s expression and assertiveness, Black women are attacked with negative images.

Black women’s assertiveness and their use of every expression of racism to launch multiple assault against the entire fabric of inequality have been consistent, multifaceted threat to the status quo. As punishment, Black women have been assaulted with a variety of negative images (Gilkes, 1983: 296).

Black women’s expression and assertiveness of racism make White people disturbed. White people consider that Black women are disrespected to them because Black women are supposed to be their slaves who do not have the right to talk about racism.

In 1905, a period of heightened racial oppression, educator Fannie Barrier Williams views the African-American woman not as defenseless victim but as strong-willed resister. Williams see the Black women as “irrepressible. She is insulted, but
she holds her head, she is scorned, but she proudly demands respect... the most interesting girl of this country is the colored girl (Williams, 1991: 151). Maya Angelou also has similar idea with Williams. In lines 3 and 4, and in sixth stanza, Angelou shows that Black women as strong-willed resister. In lines 3 and 4, she shows that White people treat them bad, but Black women still want to rise, because they know they are not defenseless victims.

\[ \text{You may trod me in the very dirt (3)} \]
\[ \text{But still, like dust, I'll rise. (4)} \]

In sixth stanza, Angelou shows that White people say untrue or unpleasant thing about Black women, White people gaze at Black women in unpleasant way, and White people do something terrible to Black women, but in the end Black women do against White oppression. Black women show that they are strong-willed resister of oppression and racism; they demand respect and want to rise so that White stop doing the oppression and discrimination.

\[ \text{You may shoot me with your words, (21)} \]
\[ \text{You may cut me with your eyes, (22)} \]
\[ \text{You may kill me with your hatefulness, (23)} \]
\[ \text{But still, like air, I'll rise. (24)} \]

In Thordis Simonsen’s *You May Plow Here: The Narrative of Sara Brooks*, it is stated that Sara Brooks is a black woman who is also exploited worker. She suffers several discriminations as a worker, racial discriminations because she is black, and sexual discrimination because she is a woman and have many children. She survives through those discriminations and she rejects the idea of the discriminations in her work. She says that if White people mock her, she will oppose them.
To outsider Sara Brooks may appear to be an exploited domestic worker victimized by the racial politics of an unfair labor market and the sexual politics of having too many children. But when she states, “if they was scornful of me, I’m the same way about them”, she taps a powerful yet overlooked part of U.S. Black women’s activism. She has not only survived her experiences with intersecting oppressions, but she clearly rejects their ideological justifications (Simonsen, 1986: 201).

Sara Brooks’s the way of thinking which oppose and survive in the discriminations of White’s oppression is the representation of Black women’s way of thinking. They struggle and create chances to oppose White’s oppression and determination. The oppression of Black women’s idea within White-controlled social institutions led Black women to use music, literature, daily conversations, and everyday behavior as important locations for constructing a Black feminist consciousness. Black women writers use literature to provide a view of Black women’s struggle to form positive self-definitions (Collins, 1998: 32-43).

Maya Angelou uses her poem “Still I Rise” to portray Black women’s struggle and against White’s oppression and Black women’s willingness to rise from White’s oppression. She portrays Black women’s rise after bad experience they suffered. In the first stanza, she portrays that Black women will rise although white people say something untrue about them. In the third stanza, she depicts that Black women will rise very high. In sixth stanza, she portrays that Black women will rise although they are treated badly or even worst. Black women do not only suffer because of white people bad treatment, but also because of black men. Black women have always been told by black men that they are black, ugly, evil, bitches and
whores, in other words, black women are the real niggers in this society, oppressed
by whites, male and female, and the black man, too.

Indirectly, she orders Black women to rise in this poem. In last stanza, she
repeats ‘I rise’ several times. She challenges and orders Black women to rise from
White oppression. In lines 39 and 40, Maya Angelou says to Black women that they
should be proud of their origin because they bring the gift that their ancestors gave to
them. They are also the hope and dream of the slaves who are oppressed. Because of
that, they should rise

*Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,* (39)
*I am the dream and the hope of the slave.* (40)

Maya Angelou’s idea in this poem is similar to what Maria Stewart says in
front of Black women that they should awake and rise. They should oppose White
oppression and they should not be defenseless victims. They should show to the
world that Black women are impressive, powerful and should not be underestimated.

Such consciousness as present in Maria Stewart’s 1831 speech advising the
“daughter of Africa” to “Awake! Arise! No longer sleep nor slumber, but
distinguish yourself. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble
and exalted faculties (Richardson, 1987: 30).

Maya Angelou and Maria Stewart have known that Black women suffered injustice in
the system for long time ago. If Black women lose their passion to awake, they will
be dumped in the lowest class in the social hierarchy, as Collins states in *Black
Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment:*

US Black women have long recognized the fundamental injustice of a system
that routinely and from one generation to the next relegates US Black women
to the bottom of the social hierarchy (Collins, 2000: 72).
2. Black Feminism in “Phenomenal Woman”

“Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” are two poems of Maya Angelou which reflect about Black feminism. “Still I Rise” deals with Black women’s slavery or discrimination towards Black woman by White people, whereas “Phenomenal Woman” deals with Black women, White women, and their different point of view in seeing beauty.

In the second poem “Phenomenal Woman”, Maya Angelou tells that she is such a confident woman who proudly claims that she is beautiful although the others do not feel the same. If “Phenomenal Woman” is seen from Black Feminism’s view, it is invitation or we can say that it is order to Black women to be confident. She asks Black women to be confident because of standard of beauty system in the daily life.

The application of standard of beauty in the society makes Black women suffer and derogate. It is stated in Collins’ *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* that Black women actually reject the idea of standard of beauty because controlling images must have powerful influence in the society. It is said that dealing with skin color, facial feature, and hair texture are how controlling image derogate Black women.

Although most Black women typically resist being objectified as the other, these controlling images remain powerful influences on our relationships with Whites, Black men, other racial/ethnic groups, and one another. Dealing with prevailing standards of beauty (particularly skin color, facial features, and hair texture) is one specific example how controlling images derogate African-American women (Collins, 2000: 89).
Standard of beauty considers that beauty is having white skin, blond-straight hair, slim, blue-eyed, pointed noses, and thin lips. The standard of beauty claims that no matter how intelligent, educated, or “beautiful” a Black woman may be, Black women whose feature and skin color are most African and do not fulfill standard of beauty are ignored from the society. Black women who are so African must “git back”.

Prevailing standards of beauty claim that no matter how intelligent, educated, or “beautiful” a Black woman may be, those Black women whose features and skin color are most African must “git back”. Within the binary thinking that underpins intersecting oppressions; blue-eyed, blond, thin White women could not be considered beautiful without the other (Collins, 2000: 89).

Judging white women by their physical appearance and the attractiveness to men appraises them. But their White skin and straight hair simultaneously privilege them in a system that elevates whiteness over blackness. In contrast, Black women experience the pain of never being able to live up prevailing standards of beauty. The standard of beauty is used by White men, White women, Black men, and ironically it is also used by Black women.

Because of the system of standard of beauty in the society, Black people are divided into two categories. The “Brights” are the black people whose features look like White people with brighter skin, and the “Lesser Black” are the black people whose features “so African” with dark skin, broad nose, and nappy hair. This division of Black people affects dark-skinned and light-skinned women differently. Darker women face being judged inferior and receiving the treatment afforded “too-big Negro girls with nappy hair”. The institutions that are controlled by Whites clearly
show a preference for lighter-skinned Blacks, discriminating against darker ones or against any Black people who disappear to reject White images of beauty. Sonia Sanchez reports, “Sisters tell me … that when they go out for jobs they straighten their hair because if they go in with their natural or braided, they probably won’t get the job” (Tate, 1983: 141).

The application the standard of beauty in the society also creates negative images for Black women. Black women are often portrayed as the mammy. A mammy is a Black woman who works for White family to take care of the children. The mammy one or two somewhat is positive figures. Being a mammy is a desexed individual. The mammy is typically portrayed as overweight, dark, and with characteristically African features-in brief, as an unsuitable sexual partner for white men (Collins, 2000: 145). Those facts really derogate Black women. Maya Angelou concerns about the wider gap between the worlds of Black women and White women because of this standard of beauty and negative image of Black people.

Based on the facts above, it is obvious that standard of beauty in the society has created negative image for Black women, it brings great suffer to Black women and it takes them to the lowest degree in the society. Because of that, Maya Angelou invites Black women to be confident as she stated in “Phenomenal Woman”. Maya Angelou wants Black women to be confident with their nature beauty, ignores the Standard of beauty in society, and ignores the societies who do not appreciate her confidence.
In “Phenomenal Women”, Maya Angelou emphasizes that to be beauty, a Black woman does not have to have lighter skin, slim, blond-straight hair, or another White woman features, and in lines 1 n 2 she states that she does not match with the standard of beauty at all. A Black woman has just to be herself with her confident. With confidence, Maya Angelou believes that beauty will glow from every part of her body:

*It's in the reach of my arms* (6)  
*The span of my hips,* (7)  
*The stride of my step,* (8)  
*The curl of my lips.* (9)

*It's the fire in my eyes,* (22)  
*And the flash of my teeth,* (23)  
*The swing in my waist,* (24)  
*And the joy in my feet.* (25)

*It's in the arch of my back,* (38)  
*The sun of my smile,* (39)  
*The ride of my breasts,* (40)  
*The grace of my style.* (41)

*It's in the click of my heels,* (53)  
*The bend of my hair,* (54)  
*the palm of my hand,* (55)  
*The need of my care,* (56)

In “Phenomenal Woman”, Maya Angelou expects Black women to be themselves with their confident way rather than following the standard of beauty that has followed by White men, White women, and Black men. New understanding of beauty that has stated by Maya Angelou would necessarily change the type of mirrors help up to Black women to judge Black women’s beauty.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

In order to have vivid conclusion, it is better for the writer to mention again the problem formulations that have been analyzed. The first problem asks what Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” talk about. First problem is analyzed by paraphrasing word per word. Words that contain metaphor, simile, repetition, and symbol appear in these poems. The writer also analyzes the tone of these poems in order to know the mood of Maya Angelou in every poem. Second problem asks about the portrayal of Black feminism in Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. In answering the second problem, the writer gives the readers proves that Black feminism really exists in these two poems by using review of black feminism history in the U.S. to support the analysis of first problem.

Maya Angelou uses many phrases that contains simile in “Still I Rise”. Maya Angelou uses the simile before she says that she will be rise to depict the passionate of her rise, and she uses the simile after she does something to express how happy she is. She uses metaphor in “Still I Rise” to explain white men’s hate to black women, and with the hatefulness white men can do anything to harm black women who can only accept and can not resist. In the other lines, metaphor exists to tell that she has risen and leaving her bad history (slavery and discrimination black woman has suffered), living in the present and forgetting her past. Metaphor is also used to depict that black woman is strong and great. Repetition in “Still I Rise” shows that
Maya Angelou wants to emphasize the spirit of black women to rise. Tone in “Still I Rise” shows that Maya Angelou’s mood is full of spirit to ask black women to rise. Symbolic word is absent in “Still I Rise”. The analysis word per word in “Still I Rise” leads the reader to the information that there is a clash among black women versus white people (both male and female) and black men. Black women suffer because of bad treatment of white people who consider them as slave, and because of that, black women would do anything to rise from white men’s oppression. Black men really derogate them and they do not appreciate black women as wives and women.

In “Phenomenal Woman”, metaphor and simile do not appear. “Phenomenal Woman” portrays the confidence of a black woman. Maya Angelou tells her confidence by telling the reader how beauty she is. She tells the details of her beauty that her beauty lies in every part of her body and her movement, and the most important is she tells it in confident way. She also uses symbolic words to depict her beauty. She uses ‘fire’ to symbolize the power; she says that her beauty lies in the power of her eyes. She uses ‘sun’ to symbolize the happiness, optimism, or positive manner; she says that her beauty lies in the happy smile. “Phenomenal Woman” asks woman (in general) to be confident of herself to think and act that she is beautiful. A woman should not be shame if she does not include in the criteria of beauty (slim, white, blonde, straight hair etc) because the real beauty lies in self-confidence. The tone in “Phenomenal Woman” shows that Maya Angelou is really confidence to claim that she is beauty although men and the pretty woman do not think the same.
The appearance of pretty woman in the poem leads the reader to white woman because the all of criteria of beauty lie in white woman. There is clash between white woman and black woman who is ugly because she does not have the criteria of beauty.

From the explanation of the answer of first problem, it is obvious that black feminism appears in “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman”. Second problem formulation explains about oppressed black woman based on the review of black feminism history in the U.S.

The second problem will see these poems from the scope of black feminism. “Still I Rise” is a poem about black women who want to rise from white people and black men’s oppression. In slavery era, white people who are the masters want to own black women as slave as many as possible because they are cheap, fool, able to reproduce, and can be treated as animals. Black men also make black women suffered; they do sexism and derogate black women although black men should be natural protectors of black women. With these facts, Maya Angelou wants herself and the other black women to rise. Black women rise struggling against slavery, racism, and sexism. Black women show to the world that they are impressive, powerful and should not be underestimated.

“Phenomenal Woman”, if it is seen from the scope of black feminism, is a poem about black women who confident of them-self, and they try to break standard of beauty rule in the society. Standard beauty weakens and derogates the position of black women in the society. The standard of beauty claims that the beauty is owned
by them who have white feature, such as white skin, blonde straight hair, slim, blue eyes, pointed nose, thin lips, etc. Black women can not be called beauty because they are in African feature. Maya Angelou tries to change this idea. She wants black women to ignore the standard of beauty and be confident to call themselves beauty because beauty does not lay in the standard of beauty but it is in her confidence. No matter how she is, she is a beauty woman as long as she is confidence. Maya Angelou expects Black women to be themselves with their confident way rather than following the standard of beauty that has followed by White men, White women, and Black men. New understanding of beauty that has stated by Maya Angelou would necessarily alter the type of mirrors help up to Black women to judge Black women’s beauty.

Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and “Phenomenal Woman” give the idea to the black women to do better to act something, to have new understanding of thinking, and to be confident so they are not underestimated, and oppressed, and they have better life to live with the equality in the society.
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APPENDIX

"Phenomenal Woman"

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.  
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size  
But when I start to tell them,  
They think I'm telling lies.  
I say,  
It's in the reach of my arms  
The span of my hips,  
The stride of my step,  
The curl of my lips.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

I walk into a room  
Just as cool as you please,  
And to a man,  
The fellows stand or  
Fall down on their knees.  
Then they swarm around me,  
A hive of honey bees.  
I say,  
It's the fire in my eyes,  
And the flash of my teeth,  
The swing in my waist,  
And the joy in my feet.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered  
What they see in me.  
They try so much  
But they can't touch  
My inner mystery.  
When I try to show them  
They say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman

Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

"Still I Rise"

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

2 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.

3 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.