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### Phenomenal Woman Analysis

Through the poem *Phenomenal Woman*, by Maya Angelou, she expresses her beliefs of women being strong individuals and amazing representations of society. This poem was originally published in 1995, and year after year, it becomes more and more recognized for its sophistication. Angelou portrays her goals for what she wanted her readers to get out of her poem through every line in which is presented. She explains significant times in her life, where she had to push through, or else those tough times could have easily overtaken her. When reading *Phenomenal Woman*, it is clear to see the confidence she brings through her words, and the sense of empowerment that comes along with it.

Within Angelou's writing style, she uses a great amount of emotion in order to allow her readers to truly feel what she is trying to say. Since she speaks of such highly regarded topics, such as racial injustice, black awareness, and especially women empowerment, she finds a method in which can change one's feelings into the feeling of being in her position. "They go from excitement of love to outrage over racial injustice, from the pride of blackness and African heritage to suffered slurs" (Hagen, 2001). Her use of words and tone make the biggest difference within her poem writing, as well as alter perspectives of others. When it also comes down to Angelou's writing style, she uses a technique of having a constant rhythm throughout her entire poem. "If the emotional content can be considered the bricks of the poem, the rhythm would be

the mortar that binds. Angelou is a natural builder of poetry for she not only has a keen sensitivity to feeling, but also a marvelous sense of rhythm” (Hagen, 2001) During *Phenomenal Woman*, she uses the repetition of the lines “I’m a woman phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that’s me.” (Townes, 2014) in order to keep her rhythm flowing all the way to the end of each stanza. She also remains aware to make each line be about the same in length, and allow many of the last words of each line to rhyme with the next. By doing these techniques, it lets the poem come together as a whole, line after line, and keeping the same tempo throughout the entirety of the poem. From what has been noticed, Angelou had felt compelled to create the best poems she could possibly write, and in doing so, she found her way of following through with that idea. “I study my craft. I don’t simply write what I feel, let it all hang out...Learning the craft, understanding what language can do, gaining control of the language, enables one to make people weep, make them go to war” (Angelou and Tate, 2001). Throughout the poem *Phenomenal Woman*, it is very clear to know that Angelou put in the thought in order to figure out a method to precisely word her knowledge in a way in which would best allow her readers to get the most out of it. This is one of many reasons as to what separates her from other poets, her thought process.

The amount of emotion that comes out of *Phenomenal Woman*, is due to the motivation/influence she had within her when writing the poem initially. For instance, in Angelou’s past, she had survived rape at the young age of seven or eight, in which inevitably took a tremendous toll on her. Due to this incident, she shut herself down, and decided not to speak of her rapist because she thought that it would make things worse for him (Townes, 2014). It took her some time to realize that literature was her way of finding her voice again and

expressing her true feelings, while also inspiring others to not be afraid to do the same. Through this sense of inspiration, Angelou had made it a point to allow people to get important morals out of her writing. “The gift that Maya Angelou gave us was the power of testimony... She taught that we must use our voices to speak truth with as much clarity and passion as possible... There are times when circumstances are unfair and even violent. However, Angelou also taught us that we cannot ignore or avoid these harsh realities. Rather, it is important to never give up on hope, and it is a tragedy to live our lives in despair” (Townes, 2014). This is an example of what the author of this article, Emilie M. Townes, comprehended from the poem *Phenomenal Woman*. She understood that through Angelou’s words of wisdom, was a meaning to how each and every person, especially women, should portray themselves to the world today and everyday. Lines such as, “It’s the fire in my eyes, and the flash of my teeth, the swing in my waist, and the joy in my feet” (Townes, 2014), represents the sense of determination and drive to want to be successful in everything that she does, and to show the world that she is not giving up, or getting angry about the way certain people may be treating her. She inspires women to show their doubters what they are really made of in the end, once they have accomplished their dreams and goals in life.

Angelou never fails to make her point in every poem she writes, however, especially in *Phenomenal Woman*. When she is acknowledging someone, she makes sure to give them the proper praise they deserve. However, when she is addressing situations, instead of being mean, and rude to/about specific people and instances in which she may be talking about, she makes direct points, and does not cut around any corners. “Angelou’s poems celebrate black people, men and women; at the same time, they bear witness to the trials of black people in this country.

Implicitly or directly, whites are called to account, yet Angelou's poetry, steeped though it is in the languages and cultures of black America, does not exclude whites...the poems are generous in their directness, in the humor Angelou finds alongside her outrage and pain, in their robust embrace of life" (Cookson, 2001). This representation of Angelou's writing is very important to understand because of the fact that it is due to people like her, who write poems like *Phenomenal Woman*, to make effective change in today's society.

In conclusion, Angelou had become one of the most famous women poets of all time, due to her strong determination and influence presented through her writings. Her poems, one of them being *Phenomenal Woman*, has impacted and changed many lives that needed to hear her inspirational words in order to overcome their situations. Angelou has left behind a grand legacy, with her poems affecting people positively each and every day.

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