



SESHISKI

SOUTHEAST JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE
AND LITERARY STUDIES

Volume 4 Issue 1 June 2024

E-ISSN 2797-8117

BLACK'S SELF-RESILIENCE IN MAYA ANGELOU'S POEM *STILL I RISE*: A MIMETIC ANALYSIS

Ela Manikam Aulia¹, Rasiah², Ansor Putra³, Halijah Koso⁴

^{1,2,3,4} English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Humanities,
Universitas Halu Oleo, Kendari, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: email: elamanicam1@gmail.com

Abstract

This research is intended to showcase the reflection of Black self-resilience through *Still I Rise* poem written by Maya Angelou. Mimetic approach and the concept of self-resilience were used to analyze the problem of this research. Self-resilience was seen in two points; physical and psychological ones. Black self-resilient performed in the poem is considered as the mimetic rendition of the dynamic process of black struggle that leads to the positive adaptations within the context of significant adversity in their life context of the US. Type of this research is included in library research with using descriptive qualitative-interpretive method in analyzing the data. It suggests that Maya Angelou in the poem *Still I Rise* pictured two kinds of Black self-resilience; physical resilience is showed through some selected words, like; dust, sun, moon, tide, they still arise in their place and time. Black did not and could not be destroyed by the bitter treatment of racism. These words also represented the psychological resilience by adding some other words; having gold mine, walk like I've got oil wells, certainty of tides, and the repeating word, I rise, to show their inner self-motivation, affection, and actualization. This study concluded that Black self-resilience both physically and psychologically reflected by Maya Angelou in her Poem *Still I Rise* is dealing with the racism. Blacks are destroyed not only physically but also mentality, so, they have to endure themselves by leading to a positive adaptation to exist in the United States.

Keywords: *black American, poem, maya angelou, self-resilience, mimetic approach*

INTRODUCTION

Poem is basically the author's expression about life and living. It emphasizes not only the aesthetic aspect of language but also the sociocultural reflection. Therefore, poem, likewise novel and other literary works, can be considered as a window of the world, or more specifically a reflection of a social reality (Rasiah, et al, 2018). Poem, although generally different from the novel form in terms of word count, can express people's lives in a straightforward or symbolic ways. For example, Walt Whitman's

poem *Leaves of Grass* (1855) reflects the diverse composition of American people and how they contribute to the formation of American society, Coventry Patmore, a 19th century British writer, reflected the lives of British women and how they are ideally constructed in the view of 19th century British society in her poem *Angel in the House* (1862), as well as Carl Sanburg who tries to portray the lives of American society in general through the poem *I am The People, the Mob* (1916). The phenomenon showcased that poem also tries to replicate reality though sometimes it is presented in symbolic form. Abrams (1981) citing Plato's view who recognized that literary works are an imitation of the world of reality, whether in the form of ideas or appearing through criticism of reality.

Still I Rise is one of Maya Angelou's poems reflects the way of black people in the US dealing with the hardship of life under the torture of racism. It is the third poem collection, published by Random House in 1978 and considered as an affirmative poem about the power of the self, the physical and inner strength, the ability to overcome prejudices and failures in life. Through the diction she chose, Maya tried to show black self-resilience as the reaction of hard life in the midst of racism in the US. So, the major problem of this study is how *Still I Rise* reflected the self-resilience of black people in the USA?

Resilience is defined as 'the dynamic process that leads to positive adaptations within the context of significant adversity'(Wendy Sims-Schouten & Patricia Gilbert, 2022). Resilience has become a popular term in research and practice across disciplines, with a focus on the benefits of 'positive emotions', 'successful traits' and coping mechanisms in adapting to life, despite great odds. Rollin McCraty (2015) explained that resilience actually has a close relation with individual's emotion, since emotion is considered as the main drive that moves most of the psychological process that involve individual's ability in regulating their resilience. Self-resilience is the the key elements to maintaining good health, optimal organ function and individual strength by the ability to manage the emotions.

This study assumed that the title '*Still I Rise*', actually signifies both the ability to endure the torture of racism physically and mentality. Dealing with Black physical resilience, Rasiah (2020) asserts that the physical strength of Black people in America is often labeled as inferior against brain power. They are considered physically strong but

powerless in intelligence. However, the physical strength turns to be iconic for Black people. It is strengthened through physical activities, such as sports. Black poets often use physical strength as a mode of expression to display their reliability in fighting racism. Meanwhile, mentally, Starke (via Rasiah, 2016, Rasiah, 2020) stated that the shifts of Black portraiture in the aftermath of civil right movement is soaring. The most dramatic changes were in the attitudes of Blacks toward themselves and the autonomous emergence of Black consciousness, pride, and assertion among twentieth century Blacks”. These fictional symbols of Black Americans has been served as a “literary device available to Black writers to attain their individual literary voices” (Fisher & Steptoe, in Rasiah, 2016). So, in a nutshell, Maya Angelou in the poem *Still I Rise* actually tried to express and portrait Black self attitude against racism by showing the resilience of Black-self in America. She revealed various things including socio-political and historical portraits of a society in a certain era. In other words, literary works provides us mental-facts to be re-learned and reflected in the present decade about historical life, or cultural patterns in a society in a certain era.

Reflection of life in literature is related to the mimetic. Mimetic is a broad viewpoint that believes literary creations to be imitations of the real world (Abrams in Rasiah, et al, 2018). The essences and natures of imitation, reflection, and portrayal of human existence and emotion are the subject of mimetic critique of literary works. Supriyatno, Khasanuddin, Fanani & Burhan (2022) stated that literary works are fictions, yet the fictions mirror human life, and especially human emotion, as they are shown in the drama, poetry, or storyline of the two narratives. The phenomena that occurs in daily community life is visible. However, occasionally this cannot be taken into account in its whole. It is possible to express or describe the phenomenon through literary works. Because these are characteristics of human beings, the life in society cannot do away with what is known as virtue and vice.

Mimetic approach views that fictional writing is a human creation made up of materials generated by the cosmos itself. Mimetic concept may also be defined as an approach in which a literary work is constructed based on the author's imagination and creativity in real life and then evolved into a literary work with the inclusion of scenarios that originate from the author's imagination and creativity in real life. Additionally it is a continuous and strong interaction among literary works and mimetic

theory itself, where the literary work is a source of reality containing the facts that comprise the work that are required in the process of mimetic analysis. Mimetic theory is a fact-based imitation of life's reality that requires data related to reality that exists outside the literary work in order to be used to analyze a literary work. The mimetic is concerned with looking into the existence of reality or actual life in a specific circumstance. Mimetic is sometimes interpreted as imitation, as it considered a literary work as mirror of reality. This approach is aimed at discovering a correlation between the facts in the poem, so that the facts in the poem must be used in relation to what is described, and it additionally emphasizes the analysis with the reality of the representation of the object described.

This study used descriptive qualitative method with interpretive analysis. Qualitative research is a method used to explore meaning. It is an important feature in qualitative research especially when connected with the field of communication research because communication science is almost always related to meaning. (Fiske cited in Rianto, 2020). The meaning is always polysemic and very contextualized. The interaction between text, people, and context will greatly determine the meaning that emerges or is constructed. Then, qualitative research will be much more capable of capturing the "meaning" than quantitative studies.

The data consisted of two; primary and secondary data. The primary data is the text of Maya Angelou's poem *Still I Rise* (1978) published by Random House. The poem consists of 43 lines. While, secondary data will be taken from other monograph, novel, and poem. Data analyzed through descriptive qualitative-interpretative by approaching mimetic theory, that is what is the poem performed is considered as the replication or the mirror of the life of black people in the USA.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There are two main findings due to the reflection of Black self-resilience in the poem *Still I Rise*. First, the reflection of Black's physical resilience, and second, Black's psychological resilience. Both resilience are the elements of positive adaptation to face of severe stress or adversity in racist treatment in the USA. The poem of *Still I Rise* appendices in the following.

Still I Rise

By Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history [1]
With your bitter, twisted lies, [2]
You may trod me in the very dirt [3]
But still, like dust, I'll rise. [4]

Does my sassiness upset you? [5]
Why are you beset with gloom? [6]
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells [7]
Pumping in my living room. [8]

Just like moons and like suns, [9]
With the certainty of tides, [10]
Just like hopes springing high, [11]
Still I'll rise. [12]

Did you want to see me broken? [13]
Bowed head and lowered eyes? [14]
Shoulders falling down like teardrops. [15]
Weakened by my soulful cries. [16]
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]

You may shoot me with your words [21]
You may cut me with your eyes [22]
You may kill me with your hatefulness [23]
But still, like air, I'll rise [24]

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]
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].

The Reflection of Black's Physical Resilience in *Still I Rise* Poem

Black physical resilience in the poem *Still I Rise* is reflected through the diction and other formal elements to show their ability to adapt in the face of tragedy, trauma, adversity, hardship, and ongoing significant life stressors in the USA, particularly in the segregation era where this poem is based on.

It is considered to be a dynamic 'process' that manifests itself in response to life events and individual personality profiles (Balgiu, 2017). In the poem, Maya Angelou as the writer seemed to take care of themselves, after having an acute physical (and psychological) injury by seeking support, alleviating symptom of pain, and taking steps to ensure recovery from the deadly racist ideology. They, as the human body, are finding the way to mend themselves, so they can be incredibly resilient.

The title of the poem, *Still I Rise*, actually the total reflection of Black people who cannot be destroyed and defeated through the inhuman treatment and labeling in the racist country, in the US. In the very first stanza of the poem, it is written that:

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

Very dirt is referred to a characteristic of a place that is not worthy to be stayed for, either for status and treatment. Since their first arrival in America in 1600s, Black have been trod in the very dirty place, plantation, with a torture (Vaughan, 1995). They were dehumanized by labeling their body with something derogatory; ape-like creature. Dehumanization, according to Reginald Oh (2019, is the process by which people are understood to be less than human. It could be done through language or imagery depicting them as animistic or subhuman, particularly attributing demonic or bestial qualities to them (Mellinger in Rasiah, 2021). So, they are considered inferior in physical appearance since then compared to their White people. The consequence of the label is Black attribute stereotyped as the attribute of the ugliness, far from White ideal standard of beauty.

In the line two above, Maya Angelou tried to figure out Black physical endurance by appendices the word “dust”. In general meaning, dust is made of fine particles of solid matter. On Earth, it generally consists of particles in the atmosphere that come from various sources such as soil lifted by wind (an aeolian process), volcanic eruptions, and pollution (van Bronswijk, 1981). So, dust is selected by Maya to figured out, one of them, physical resilience. They are a solid body-posture and strong. Adi (2014) stated that Black people in the USA tried to reconstruct their identity by straightening their physical quality that often denigrated in literature or popular media. It can be seen through their effort to participate in sport. In line with that, Rasiah (2016) also stated that Black people do not try to define their physical appearance into White standard. They rather enhance their physical attribute by empathized on the straightness quality. *The Wind Done Gone* by Alice Randall is one of the novels that try to conceptualization the meaning of Black physical appearance through by associating it with coffee, cinnamon, walnut and chocolate bars, that they are solid and strong. It is to deconstruct the way of racist discourse figure out Black physical strengthen as the opposite of brain strengthen. Melinger (1992) examined the visual representation of Black American in postcard from 1893to world war 1 employed visual metaphor of Black as beast.

Maya Angelou then illustrated the simile of Black physical appearances with something valuable and priceless.

’Cause I walk like I’ve got **oil wells** [7]
Pumping in my living room. [8]

In line 7 and 8, Maya tried to show that Black have a self-proud with their self quality. She illustrated that having that body is like getting oil wells. In common sense, oil well is a drill-hole in Earth that is designed to bring petroleum oil hydrocarbons to the surface. Creating the wells can be an expensive process, costing at least hundreds of thousands of dollars, and costing much more when in hard to reach areas. Oil also the most expensive stuff in the world.

The valuable things attached to Black attribute also illustrated with diamonds and gold mines (line 19 and 27) as can be seen in the following.

Does my sexiness upset you? [25]
That I dance like I’ve got **diamonds** [27]
At the meeting of my thighs? [28]

'Cause I laugh like I've got **gold mines** [19]
Diggin' in my own backyard. [20]

Diamond is a crystal structure known as cubic. It is exhibited by the atoms of diamond, which is a solid form of carbon. The characteristic of diamond is solid, and has the highest hardness and thermal conductivity of any natural material, properties that are used in major industrial applications such as cutting and polishing tools. They are also the reason that diamond anvil cells can subject materials to pressures found deep in the Earth. Maya Angelou, for sure, has a special intention selecting the word diamond and gold mines, they are used to represent Black characteristic of body; solid, strong, and dense. Beside that, diamond and gold also represent their valuable and priceless attributes.

Maya also illustrated Black attributes equated with natural things; moon, sun, as well as tides to show the natural characteristic of Black and it will be it is, resilient and always exist.

Just like moons and like suns [10]
With the certainty of tides [11]
.....
I'm a Black ocean, leaping and wide [33]
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide [34]

Sun and moon are the two prominent celestial objects in the sky or solar system. Sun is a huge, spinning hot ball of glowing gases whose influence extends far beyond the orbits of planets. All planets of the solar system including the Earth orbit or revolve around the Sun. Meanwhile, Moon, which is a celestial body, is the only natural satellite of the Earth. It does not produce its own light, but It shines as it reflects the light of the Sun. Moon and Sun as well as earth effected the tides. It is the rise and fall of sea levels. So, Maya selected these words to reflect that Black people existence is a part of natural happenings. Their existence is huge and reflected the existence of others. They are drowned raising like a tide. A tide is an illustration their endurance, they will always raise whatever happened in their life.

The parable of the Black body with moon, sun, tides, **the oil wells that pumping** in my living room, **diamond** at the meeting of my thighs, and **gold mines** in backyard is the way of Black people appreciated and motivated themselves that having the Black attribute is something outstanding, valuable, and significant. These words are not only

refusing the negative stigma labeled to Black physical attribute by racists, but also celebrated their differences as individual and particular. Starke (1971) stated that the most dramatic changes occurred in Black people's attitudes toward themselves and the emergence of a sense of self-worth, Black pride and world confidence in the 20th century. Fisher & Steppo(via Rasiah, Adi, & Chamamah, 2016) pointed out in the present time, fictional depictions of Black Americans served as a literary tool for Black writers to achieve their individual literary voices. Identity constructions that placed White people in a superior position began to be dismantled as they began to celebrate their differences from White attributes.

Black's Psychological Resilience Reflection in *Still I Rise*

The poem of *Still I Rise* is also actually the expression of Black psychological resilience under pressure in their lives in the USA. *Still I Rise* can be also looked as the identification of an Black's psychology strengths' since it is dealing with psychological problems (Richardson, 2002).

Black in the USA, as stated, experienced not only physical torture, but also mental. The experience of racism has been left trauma in their self. Hammond, Pamela V & Davis, Bertha L. (2007) stated the experience of slavery in the United States and the continued discrimination and oppression endured by Black Americans creates intergenerational psychological trauma, leading to a psychological and behavioral syndrome common among present-day African Americans, manifesting as a lack of self-esteem, persistent feelings of anger, and internalized racist beliefs. Moreover, Eyerman (2019) pointed out that cultural trauma involves “a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a breakdown of social order, affecting a group of people who have reached a certain degree of cohesion”. Maya Angelou then tried to voicing a motivation for Black people by showing their psychological resilience. The title of *Still I Rise* is not merely showing the physical resiliency but more advance is for showing Black psychology or mental endurance.

In the very first line of the poem, Maya insulted about the history that has written the saga of Black people in the USA. The history for sure written by Whites with full of bias to ensure that Black people are inferior, backward, to the difference and a gab from White. It is also practically used to rationalize Black enslavement.

You may write me down in history [1];
With your bitter, twisted lies [2]

History here is referred to knowledge to documenting the human past history then considered as an umbrella term comprising past events as well as the memory, discovery, collection, organization, presentation, and interpretation of these events. Historians seek knowledge of the past using historical sources such as written documents, oral accounts, art and material artifacts, and ecological markers (Arnold, 2000). Maya here intended to explain that Black have been written in history by Whites. The history is containing a racist discourse in order to lower their self-esteem and rationalize their status as slaves. Bitter and twisted lies are words that selected by Maya to reflect the propaganda of racist-White to ensure their superiority and Black inferiority.

Did you want to see me broken? [13]
Bowed head and lowered eyes? [14]
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,[15]
Weakened by my soulful cries? [16]

The representation of Black by White is shaped by racism and White supremacy which makes the domination of social construction very detrimental to the Black people. This is consistent with Bhabha's (1994: 82) concept of fixity, which states that "colonizers reinforce colonial discourse by continually emphasizing and asserting the superior features of their own identity and culture".

In the lyrics of the poem in the fourth stanza, Maya implicitly reflects White's attempt to lower-rate Black's feelings as they inferior and powerless. The use of the phrase "do you want to see me broken" shows White's attempt to destroy Black people. Bowed head and lowered eye, these two phrases emphasize the impact of the existence of White superiority shown directly to Black. The use of the phrase shoulders falling like a teardrops illustrates White's efforts which aim at Black's downfall, submissive, and helplessness. The phrase weaken by soulful cries is specifically chosen to represent the weeping and suffering of Black's soul. The lyrics of the poem above show the tendency of White superiority to force the destruction of Black as the colonized enslaved people. Said (1978: 10 via Rasiyah, 2016) stated that there was an attempt to build "legitimacy" for the superiority of the colonizer (White skin) over the inferiority of the colonized culture (Black skin). In addition, Said reminds people that cultural

hegemony as an endless practice continues in colonial discourse. As part of colonial concerns; race, ethnicity or social class in communities that have been colonized by the institution of Black slavery have a tendency to always be marginalized, isolated, read and controlled by imperialist colonizers and colonial descendants, even though slavery and segregation have ended in their time.

Based on the history and affect towards Black mentality, Maya tried to reflect the real of Black feeling facing the torture of racism. However, what is expected by the White racist is not able to destroy the mentality of Black psychology, instead it is laughed at by Maya. In the lyrics of this poem, Maya also directly represents the Black voice to dismiss and fight against White oppression. This is supported by the choice of the phrase my sassiness. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2024), sassy means confident or showing confidence. The real evidence of Black's Sassiness itself is Black's courage and confidence in reconstructing an identity that glorifies White. If previously White was in a superior position then on the contrary, White's superiority began to be torn down and now Black began to glorify its own racial and cultural identity. In racial hegemony, Daniels (2002) states that hegemony centers on the belief that White people are superior to non-White people. The criteria for superiority are based on certain traits and attributes of other racial backgrounds; skin color and lifestyle (Vaughan, 1995; Frederickson, 1971; Mellinger, 1992). However, in its development, Blacks now have the awareness to glorify and appreciate their racial identity and overall cultural identity since the introduction of the slogan 'Black is beautiful' (Eyerman, 2003; Mercer, 1990; citing via Rasiah, Adi, & Chamamah, 2016). In addition, this slogan serves to realize the vision and mission to achieve equality in American society.

Does my haughtiness offend you? [17]
Don't you take it awful hard [18]

In the lyrics of this poem, Maya directly tries to emphasize returning all of White's insults and ridicule through the attribute of haughtiness. According to Vocabulary (2024), Haughtiness originally comes from the Old French adjective haught meaning "high" and later developed to mean having a high estimation of yourself. The use of the word reflects that all the insults and ridicule were rejected outright by Black. In addition, Black is steadfast in maintaining their self-worth. Haughtiness represents Black's self-assessment. Self-valuation in the sense that Blacks are worthy, entitled, and

free to express themselves regardless of the confines of White narrow-minded stereotypes. Today, Black attributes are not seen as weaknesses or shortcomings but instead as strengths and advantages. Quoting Beauvoir's argument (Tong, 1998: 9 via Rasiah, Adi, & Chamamah, 2016) that otherness, although associated with everything that is sidelined, avoided, rejected, unwanted, abandoned, and marginalized, actually provides its own advantages. Being other is a way to exist that allows for change and difference. Another function of being the other is that although it is attached to something that is considered foreign and marginalized, it can be transformed into something unique and prominent, as a marker of identity that is different from the dominant one. Black determination in celebrating their own self-worth has fueled White resentment for being deviant in the persistence of Black stereotypes from the perspective of White superiority.

With the certainty of tides, [10]
Just like hopes springing high, [11]
Still I'll rise. [12]

The use of the word tides in this poem certainly has a special meaning. Tides symbolize the eternity of the dynamic movement of the universe naturally without any encouragement or restraint. Tides reflect the incredible power of nature. Maya's use of the word tides in her poetry is meant to reflect Black's own character. The image of the tides in the poem shows up Black's movement life and their inevitability in the face of various oppression. It also shows Black character's denial of the stereotypical White superiority myth that Black is weak. On the contrary, through the image of the tides, the way and attitude of Blacks is clearly reflected, namely that they always rise even in the midst of the ups and downs due to White oppression. Supported by the next lyric, Just like hopes springing high which is used to represent Black psychology, spirit, and hope that never goes out and even gets higher despite various oppression.

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

Through the lyrics of this poem, Maya tries to reflect White's various oppression against Blacks both physically and psychologically. The choice of the words: your words, your eyes, your hatefulness reflects various oppression. Verbal oppression is represented through the use of the word words, physical oppression is represented by the choice of the word eyes, and psychologically represented through the word hatefulness. Many pro-slavery meta-narratives, histories, and fictions use the color Black to represent stereotypes; it can also be demonic - the visual metaphor "other than animals" (Mellinger, 1992: 413) is often used as a discursive feature of racist ideology to depict African Americans as physically, intellectually, and temperamentally different and inferior or innocent, wild, and "wise old men". In the case of Black, the basis of stereotype formation is that, which has implications for labeling the overall characteristics of the Black race. African Americans are a group of African immigrants to the United States. Africa is a continent that is frequently associated with the Black (Black earth) and the Black man (Thomas, 2002: 145). 'Black' later became a physical identity marker for African Americans, whose significance was still being constructed. The identity of "Black" became the foundation for the formation of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination in the United States. The contrast between Black and White has created an association that refers to unequal racial segregation, in which the White is idealized as the standard of human superiority, while Black is the polar opposite. This uniquely White doctrine was instilled to dominate American thinking for hundreds of years.

In addition to the physical stereotypes above, there are also several other stereotypes. Intellectual stereotypes are one of them. In most accounts, pre-war African Americans are described as "beasts". The Beast is an animal symbol that represents two things in the African-American character: social class and personal qualities. One of the qualities refers to the intellectual aspect; that is, African-Americans were portrayed as an illiterate and uneducated race. Animal imagery was later reinforced by scientific persuasion in the 19th century in Darwin's theory of the Origin of Species (1859) (Mellinger, 1992, p. 416; Frederickson, 1987, p.159). In the sub-chapter Preservation of the Favored Races in the Struggle for Life, Darwin portrays the human intellect of the time. The Aryan Whites asserted themselves as the superior intellectual factor among mankind. Then, in contrast, the Blacks were regarded as a different species and only a

degraded version of the human species with low intellectual capabilities. Mellinger (1992) observed that this view was maintained in popular consciousness until the early 20th century. He traced the stereotyping of African Americans through a discussion of the fact that African descendants continued to be illustrated as a degraded human species through popular postcards in the 20th century. Another racist notion was that Black people were considered heathens, so White people felt obliged to convert to Christianity (Jordan, 1972: 81-94). From these various labeling, Black people were not only considered traditional and primitive, wild and difficult to control, but also required to be 'mastered', 'educated', and 'redeemed' from their primitivism and backwardness. Slavery has been implicitly defined as an institution 'to civilize' Black people.

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]

Through this stanza, it illustrates how Black life stories are written and treated with contempt and low status as slaves. Maya helps to visibly represent how the historical construction of Black bias has succeeded in creating "marginalization" in various dimensions of their lives, which is very detrimental to them. Ironically, with this status, Blacks often received injustices, such as being equated with the devil, having a savage nature, an uncivilized figure, lack of recognition as an American citizen and even early executions without any prior investigation process, the action is known as 'lynching'. Nonetheless, this did not deter Black, instead these unjust events further proved Black's resilience in various dimensions, especially psychological resilience.

Furthermore, continuously through the strands of each line, Maya reflects how Black's extraordinary transformation is depicted as an ocean. The inclusion of the simile I'm a Black ocean, leaping and wide represents how great Black's strength, spirit, and enthusiasm are equated with the ocean. Ocean, which means a great power that cannot be stopped even when the waves are raging, it can eliminate what is in its way. Supported by the next lyric, welling and swelling I bear in the tide, which represents the dynamic and vibrant Black movement that will always rise in the face of the cruel reality of life filled with White racists.

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]

In this last stanza, Maya also strongly shows the fact of affirmation of spirit, resilience, strength and Black existence through the attributes 'Leaving behind nights of terror and fear and Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear' which represent that Blacks who have experienced slavery have a spirit base, resilience, and strength, thus providing an important point in the denial of the racial myth that 'Black people are backward and primitive' (Mellinger, 1992) which becomes a White imperative to be 'mastered' and 'educated', which is a label commonly echoed in the institution of slavery. to rationalize Black slavery. Maya, on the other hand, directly represents Black concerns that demonstrate and emphasize resistance to the tradition of White evil. In addition, Blacks with their own pure consciousness deeply believe that they are the gift and the foundation of their ancestors' hopes. They, along with their own distinctive cultural identity, are an integral social group and equal to the rest of society. This was reaffirmed by William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was an American sociologist, historian, and Pan-African civil rights in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* said: "In this amalgamation he wants none of his other selves lost. He will not make America African, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He will not bleach his Negro soul in the flood of White Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world" (Du Bois, Washington and Johnson 1965: 215).

In addition, there is also a direct depiction by Maya of the affirmation of Black's existence. The affirmation of this existence is illustrated in the repetition of the phrase I rise three times in the last three lines of the poem *Still I Rise* which implicitly states the recognition and affirmation of the spirit of life and Black existence that cannot be extinguished.

CONCLUSION

Black self-resilience in *Still I Rise* poem reflected through the word choices and energy reflected in it as a positive adaptive of black. It is considered as a part of their

struggle to facing the torture of racism that has been existed since hundred of years ago. Black physical resilience is depicting selected words, like; dust, oil wells, diamonds, gold mines, moon, sun, and tides. These diction purposed to show that Black is strong and solid.

Black psychological resilience is reflected through the sentences that showcasing the dominant treatment and their response; the words; dust, oil wells, diamonds, gold mines, moon, sun, and tides are not only representing black-physical resilience but also psychological rendition. First, Maya showcases the way of racists torturing black through narration of history and the unexpected respond upon Black. They have been written in a stereotypical images to ensure black that they are inferior and backward. They also expected to accept it as a universal truth and conquered as colonized ones. However, black taken it as easy-and wake up to confront it. It reflected through the words and respond: you may shoot me with your words, cut me with your eyes, kill me with your hatefulness, like air, leaping and wide, welling and swelling I bear in the tide. It is actually a set of effort to showcase Black mental struggle and adaptation against to the discrimination, violence and fear. It may justify that Maya Angelou's poem *Still I Rise* is the reflection of Black people in The USA in Facing racism. They tried not to accept the label as inferiority either in physical and psychological appearances, but rather resist it by showing their self resilience.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M.H. (1953). *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Adi, I. R. (2014). Synthezising Ideology: Representation of African-Americans'Identity in the 1960s. *Celt: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching & Literature*, 14(2), 216-236.
- Alonso, A. F., & Del Río, M. A. B. (2019). Resilience as a form of contestation in Langston Hughes' early poetry. *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies*, (60), 91-106.
- Armendariz, A. (2022). Maya Angelou's *And Still I Rise* | Overview, Summary & Analysis-Video&LessonTranscript|. (Online). (<https://study.com/academy/lesson/maya-angelous-and-still-i-rise-summary-analysis.html> accessed on 1 August 2023).

- Arnold, John H. (2000). *History: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 019285352X.
- Baldwin, E. (2021). What is a Poem? (Online). (<https://poemanalysis.com/genre/poem> accessed on 4 August 2023).
- Beatrice Adriana Balgiu. (2017). Self-esteem, personality and resilience. Study of a students emerging adults group. /*Journal of Educational Sciences and Psychology*, 7(1): 93-99.
- Bi, J. (2019). The Souls of Black Folk oleh WEB Du Bois. (Online). (https://johnathanbi-com.translate.googleusercontent.com/translate/g?_sl=en&_tl=id&_hl=id&_ptoc=tc accessed on 25 Desember 2023).
- Bronswijk, van, J. E. M. H. (1981). *House dust biology : for allergists, acarologists and mycologists*. NIB Publishers.
- Cambridge Dictionary. (2024). Haughtiness. (Online). (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/haughtiness> accessed on 3 January 2024).
- Cambridge Dictionary. (2024). Sassy. (Online). (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sassy> accessed on 3 January 2024).
- Chris. (2015). I Am the People, the Mob. (Online). (<https://modernmarlowe.wordpress.com/2015/12/12/i-am-the-people-the-mob/> accessed on 4 August 2023).
- Cleary, Rose. (2018). The Angel in the House: A Victorian Ideal of Domesticity. (Online). (<https://thecultural.me/the-angel-in-the-house-a-victorian-ideal-of-domesticity-945805> accessed on 3 August 2023).
- Dasri, Dwi Fatmawati. (2022). Analisis Novel Cantik Itu Luka Karya Eka Kurniawan Dengan Menggunakan Pendekatan Mimetik. (Skripsi Sarjana, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar). https://digilibadmin.unismuh.ac.id/upload/34341-Full_Text.pdf
- Eyerman, R. (2019). Introduction: Identity, Memory, and Trauma. In: *Memory, Trauma, and Identity*. Cultural Sociology. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-13507-2_1
- Hammond, Pamela V & Davis, Bertha L. (2007). "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome". *ABNF Journal*. 18 (4): 112. OCLC 1132167120. S2CID 141797089
- Jackson, D., Firtko, A., & Edenborough, M. A . (2007). Personal resilience as a strategy for surviving and thriving in the face of workplace adversity: A literature review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 60 (1), 1–99. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6015397_Personal_resilience_as_a_strategy_for_surviving_and_thriving_in_the_face_of_workplace_adversity_A_lite

rature_review accessed on 20 September 2023). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04412.x>

Jarvis, A. (2022). *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou. (Online).(<https://allpoem.com/poem/8511437-Still-I-Rise-by-Maya-Angelou> accessed on 1 August 2023).

Kelzkitchen. (2023). Difference Between Poem and Poetry. (Online). (<https://kelzkitchen.com/difference-between-poem-and-poetry> accessed on 15 September 2023).

Mahani, F. (2016). Definition Of Literature Based On Expert. (Online). (<http://febtimahanibatubara.blogspot.com/2016/10/definition-of-literature-based-on-expert.html> accessed on 15 August 2023).

Mellinger, W. M. (1992). Postcards from the Edge of the Color Line: Images of African Americans in Popular Culture, 1893–1917. *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 413-433.

Nicolau, C. (2019). MH. Abrams'Critical Mechanisms. *InterCulturalia* 2019, 129.

Nurnazilia, A. F., & Nasution, H. Z. (2022). Analisis Makna Pada Puisi “Percakapan Malam Hujan” Karya Sapardi Djoko Damono Dengan Menggunakan Pendekatan Mimetik. *Protasis: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Budaya, Dan Pengajarannya*, 1(1), 86-91.

Nyadzi, R. (2019). What Are the Functions of Literature? (Online). (https://www.cegastacademy.com/2019/04/21/what-are-the-functions-of-literature/#google_vignette accessed on 15 August 2023).

Putri, E. M., & Gulo, E. S. (2023). Pendekatan Mimetik Dalam Puisi “Senja di Pelabuhan Kecil” Karya Chairil Anwar. *Cakrawala: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Global*, 2(1), 21-26.

Ramadyani, R. A. (2019). Chapter III Research Method. (Online). (<https://eprints.uny.ac.id/67852/4/Bab%20III.pdf> accessed on 26 August 2023).

Rasiah, I., Adi, I., & Soeratno, S. (2016). Reconstructing African Americans' Ethnic Identity: A Story on Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* and Edward P. Jones' *The Known World*. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 4(1), 112-121.

Rasiah, R. (2016). Stereotyping African Americans'racial Identity On Valerie Martin's Property. *Rubikon: Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 3(1), 69-77.

Rasiah, R. (2020) *Poskolonialisme dalam Sastra Amerika: Komodifikasi Sejarah, Politik Identitas, dan Rasisme Kontemporer*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press..

- Rasiah, R. & La Bilu. (2021). Black Images in Contemporary Slavery-Themed Novel Written by Whites American: Reflecting the Persistence of White Supremacy. *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-ilmu Humaniora*, 20(2), 233-248.
- Rasiah, M. T., Budiarti, A., Oerbaningrum, R., & Kristianti, D. (2018). Mengenal Puisi Esai. *Jakarta: CERAH Budaya Indonesia*.
- Reginald, Oh. (2019). Dehumanization, Immigrants, and Equal Protection, 56 *California Western Law Review*. 103.
- Sims-Schouten, W., & Gilbert, P. (2022). Revisiting ‘resilience’ in light of racism, ‘othering’ and resistance. *Race & Class*, 64(1), 84-94.
- Spring, K. (2023). Biography: Maya Angelou. (Online). (<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/maya-angelou> accessed on 1 August 2023).
- Starke, C. J. (1971). *Black Portraiture In American Fiction*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers.
- Vaughan, A. T. (1995). *Roots of American Racism: Essay on The Colonial Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Vista Higher Learning. (2019). Five Main Genres of Literature. (Online). (<https://vhlblog.vistahigherlearning.com/the-five-main-genres-of-literature.html> accessed on 2 August 2023).
- Wikipedia. (2019). *And Still I Rise*. (Online). ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/And Still I Rise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/And_Still_I_Rise) accessed on 3 August 2023).