

FREEDOM REFLECTED IN MAYA ANGELOU'S POEMS (A METAPHOR ANALYSIS)

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Abstract

This study focuses on the analysis of metaphor of six selected poems by Maya Angelou: A Freedom Fighter, Riot: 60's, The Calling of Names, Caged Bird, Harlem Hopscotch, and Equality. The research aims to explore how metaphors in these poems reflect the concept of freedom. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach combined with the method structuralism element of poem, the study analyzes metaphors based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of metaphor. The findings reveal that the metaphors in these poems depict struggles, oppression, and aspirations for freedom, particularly within the African-American community. Symbols such as the caged bird in Caged Bird and social chaos in Riot: 60's highlight profound emotions and collective experiences. This research contributes to the understanding of metaphor in poetry and serves as a reference for future studies on the representation of freedom in literary works.

Keywords: Metaphor, Freedom, Poetry, Maya Angelou, Qualitative Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Poetry is a literary art form that uniquely conveys emotions, thoughts, and experiences through imaginative and figurative language. According to Hyman (1970), poetry employs rhythm, meter, and sound devices like rhyme and alliteration to create aesthetic beauty. Poets use figurative language, such as metaphor and simile, to craft vivid descriptions. Samosir (2013) defines poetry as a sincere expression originating from the human mind, exploring themes such as happiness, melancholy, and social issues. Through poetry, poets freely express their thoughts and experiences, often using metaphors to convey emotions and struggles against injustice.

Metaphor involves comparing two dissimilar things that share a common attribute. William Gray (2000) describes metaphor as figurative language that creates associations between seemingly unrelated entities. A metaphor implicitly compares two things without using terms like "like" or "as." It provides symbolic meaning to literary works, enriching interpretation. Diction plays a crucial role in metaphor, as word choice determines meaning. Abrams (1999) differentiates between denotative meaning, the literal dictionary definition of a word, and connotative meaning, which

arises from social, cultural, or emotional associations. These elements influence the effectiveness of metaphors in poetry.

Metaphor analysis includes examining renowned poets' works, such as William Butler Yeats' "The Tower," which explores spirituality, life, and human growth (Yeats, 1928). Robert Frost's poetry employs metaphor to portray nature, humanity, and emotional struggles (Frost, 1916). Emily Dickinson's poetry, known for its experimental style, delves into life, love, and death through metaphor (Dickinson, 1890). Sylvia Plath's confessional poetry examines identity, alienation, and mental anguish using metaphor (Plath, 1965). These poets illustrate how metaphors enhance the understanding of human emotions and existential themes while deepening literary appreciation.

Akhbar Pradana (2015) analyzed metaphors in Maya Angelou's poems "Caged Bird" and "Still I Rise." In "Caged Bird," the phrase "his wings are clipped, and his feet are tied" represents restricted freedom. The word "clip" literally means "fasten with a clip," but metaphorically signifies "restriction." Wings symbolize both a bird's anatomy and the broader concept of freedom. Similarly, "his feet are tied" metaphorically conveys the prevention of freedom, emphasizing oppression.

Maya Angelou (1928-2014) was an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist. Her autobiographies, including "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" (1969), detail her experiences in the segregated South and her journey toward self-discovery and empowerment (Kirkpatrick, 2014). Angelou addressed themes of identity, racism, and resilience, earning numerous accolades, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011. Her works continue to inspire and advocate for equality.

Jain and Solomon (2014) highlight Angelou's defiance against racism and sexism in her autobiographies. She recounts her struggles with racial discrimination, sexual abuse, and societal expectations. Angelou challenged stereotypes and confronted prejudice through her literary works. Instances of racism, such as being denied service by a white dentist, illustrate the systemic discrimination African Americans faced. Her autobiography sheds light on these injustices, promoting awareness and resistance against oppression.

African Americans have historically endured discrimination and racism from white Americans solely due to their race. In response, Angelou wrote numerous poems centered on themes of freedom. This study explores metaphors of freedom in six of her poems: "A Freedom Fighter," "Riot: 60's," "The Calling of Names," "Caged Bird," "Harlem Hopscotch," and "Equality." Through these works, the study also examines themes of discrimination, resilience, racial prejudice, and hardships experienced by African Americans.

Berlin (1958) defines freedom as an individual's ability to fulfill their potential and exercise control over their lives. Amarta (1999) describes freedom as the capacity to choose one's own path and achieve meaningful goals. Poets express their longing for freedom through metaphors in poetry, and this study investigates how Angelou employs metaphors to depict freedom in her selected poems.

An example of a metaphor of freedom in "Caged Bird" appears in the phrase "A free bird leaps on the back of the wind" (lines 1-2). The bird "leaping on the wind" represents an individual free to explore without restrictions, suggesting that freedom is an intrinsic part of their existence. This metaphor illustrates how free individuals navigate their environment without external constraints.

Research Question

This study examines the following research question: How do the metaphors in Maya Angelou's six selected poems—"A Freedom Fighter," "Riot: 60's," "Caged Bird," "The Calling of Names," "Harlem Hopscotch," and "Equality"—depict freedom?

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to analyze how metaphors in six of Angelou's poems convey themes of freedom. The study specifically focuses on "Equality," "A Freedom Fighter," "Riot: 60's," "Caged Bird," "The Calling of Names," and "Harlem Hopscotch."

Scope and Limitation of the Research

While poetry encompasses various literary elements, this study focuses solely on metaphor. The research examines metaphors in Maya Angelou's selected poems, excluding other poetic devices. The poems analyzed are sourced from "The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou."

The study is based on metaphor theories from scholars such as Siswantoro (2002), Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (1994), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and Max Black (1954). However, the research primarily utilizes Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory, which categorizes metaphors into conventional, symbolic, dead, extended, and cognitive types.

Significance of the Research

The study's findings indicate that Maya Angelou used metaphor in six of her poems to convey an oblique message. It is anticipated that this research will help readers better grasp poetic metaphors and serve as a valuable resource for anyone who wishes to learn more about them.

It is anticipated that the findings of this study will explain how to use metaphorical aspects in poetry to comprehend it. In addition, the researcher expects that this study will serve as a precedent for future academics who are interested in studying the same subject or area.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze metaphors in six selected poems by Maya Angelou, focusing on the theme of freedom. Descriptive qualitative research is particularly suitable for literary studies as it allows for an in-depth exploration of meanings within a work, taking into account its historical, social, and cultural contexts. According to Eagleton (2008), literary research seeks to comprehend the values and meanings embedded in literary works, while Thompson (2002) highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between the work's context and the reader's interpretation. This approach was chosen to effectively analyze how metaphors in Angelou's poems construct and convey the concept of freedom.

The primary data for this study consisted of six poems by Maya Angelou: "A

Freedom Fighter", "Riot: 60's", "The Calling of Names", "Caged Bird", "Harlem Hopscotch", and "Equality". These poems were selected from Angelou's *The Complete Poems* (2015), as they collectively reflect the issue of freedom, which is central to this research. In addition to the primary texts, secondary data were sourced from books, journal articles, and scholarly discussions on metaphor in poetry. These supporting resources provided a theoretical foundation for analyzing the selected metaphors.

The process of collecting data involved several structured steps. First, the researcher thoroughly read the six poems multiple times to understand their meanings, diction, and figurative language. Next, all metaphors within the poems were identified and categorized based on their types, focusing on those that reflect the theme of freedom. These metaphors were further classified and organized into a table to ensure systematic analysis. The aim of these steps was to pinpoint and group the metaphors that illustrate freedom, forming the basis for subsequent interpretation.

Data analysis was conducted using a systematic approach. The researcher examined the diction and language structures in the poems to identify metaphorical expressions. Each identified metaphor was analyzed to determine its type and its role in depicting freedom. A phrase-by-phrase analysis of the poems was performed to uncover the deeper meanings of the metaphors. The metaphors were then categorized, interpreted, and compared to establish their thematic significance. Finally, conclusions were drawn to determine how these metaphors collectively construct and convey the theme of freedom in Angelou's selected works.

Finding and Discussion

FINDING

Analysis of Metaphor in "A Freedom Fighter"

The poem *A Freedom Fighter* by Maya Angelou employs vivid metaphors to express the complex and multifaceted nature of the struggles faced by a freedom fighter. These metaphors highlight the emotional, psychological, and physical toll of fighting for justice, while emphasizing the resilience and strength needed to endure such an arduous journey. Through these metaphors, the poem brings attention to the personal sacrifices, internal battles, and emotional burdens carried by those who seek freedom.

In the opening lines, "You drink a bitter draught," the metaphor evokes the harsh reality of the freedom fighter's existence. The word "bitter" suggests that the struggle is unpleasant and painful, while "draught" represents the inevitable nature of this suffering. The metaphor underscores the idea that the freedom fighter must endure difficult conditions, portraying hardship as something to be swallowed with no escape.

The line "I sip the tears your eyes fight to hold" introduces an emotional layer to the struggle. Here, "sipping" contrasts with the "drinking" in the first metaphor, implying a more delicate, empathetic engagement with the fighter's pain. "Tears"

symbolize deep sorrow, and "your eyes fight to hold" suggests the fighter is trying to suppress their emotions. This metaphor emphasizes the emotional toll of the freedom fighter's journey, highlighting their inner turmoil and the struggle to maintain composure under pressure.

In "A cup of lees, of henbane steeped in chaff," the metaphor of toxic substances represents the desolation and hopelessness faced by the fighter. "Lees," "henbane," and "chaff" all symbolize waste and poison, illustrating that the freedom fighter is left with only harsh and harmful elements in their environment. The metaphor speaks to the draining, unrelenting nature of the struggle, suggesting that the fighter is continually surrounded by negativity and hardship.

In the line "Your breast is hot," the metaphor of heat represents the freedom fighter's inner passion and determination. The "hot" breast conveys the intensity of the fighter's resolve, symbolizing a burning desire for justice and liberation. This metaphor captures the fervor and urgency driving the fighter's actions, suggesting that their fight is fueled by an uncontrollable force within them.

The metaphor "Your anger black and cold" reflects the depth of the fighter's rage, which has turned dark and consuming due to years of oppression. "Black" signifies the profound nature of this anger, while "cold" suggests a numbing, detached response to the injustices faced. This metaphor emphasizes how prolonged suffering can transform emotion into something more dangerous and unyielding.

The line "Through evening's rest, you dream" uses "dreams" as a metaphor for the mental and emotional preoccupation with the struggle. Even during moments of rest, the fighter is unable to escape the conflict, as their mind remains consumed by their cause. This metaphor suggests that the fight is not just physical but also deeply mental and emotional, highlighting the constant internal struggle faced by the freedom fighter.

"I hear the moans, you die a thousand deaths" symbolizes the ongoing suffering of the freedom fighter, suggesting that each moment of pain feels like a form of death. The "moans" represent the sounds of agony, while "dying a thousand deaths" illustrates the immense toll the fight takes on the fighter's psyche. This metaphor underscores the relentless nature of the struggle and the profound sacrifices made in the pursuit of justice.

In the lines "When cane straps flog the body" and "dark and lean, you feel the blow," the metaphors depict the physical and emotional pain inflicted on the freedom fighter. "Cane straps" evoke images of punishment and brutality, while "dark and lean" describes the physical toll of oppression. The phrase "you feel the blow" suggests that the pain is internalized, affecting the fighter on multiple levels. The metaphors here convey the profound physical and emotional exhaustion experienced by the fighter.

Finally, "I hear it in your breath" uses "breath" as a metaphor for the fighter's life force, emphasizing how deeply the suffering is felt. The speaker can hear the pain in the fighter's breath, indicating a deep empathy and understanding of the freedom fighter's condition. This metaphor captures the intimate connection between the speaker and the fighter, reinforcing the emotional weight of the struggle.

Through these metaphors, Angelou vividly portrays the internal and external

battles faced by the freedom fighter. The poem explores the complex layers of suffering, resilience, and determination that define the fight for justice, illustrating how such struggles shape both the individual and their identity. Ultimately, the metaphors in *A Freedom Fighter* emphasize the unwavering strength needed to confront oppression and the profound toll that fighting for freedom takes on the soul.

Analysis of Metaphor in "Riot: 60's"

Maya Angelou's *Riot: 60's* masterfully employs metaphorical language to capture the tension, destruction, and societal transformation during the civil unrest of the 1960s, highlighting themes of rebellion, systemic oppression, and resilience amidst chaos.

The poem opens with a critique of exploitation through metaphors like "OUR YOURFRIEND CHARLIE pawnshop", where the capitalization emphasizes the false friendliness of businesses that prey on marginalized communities. This is juxtaposed with the imagery of "a glorious blaze", which ironically portrays fire as both an act of destruction and an act of defiance against systemic oppression. Personification in "I heard the flames lick then eat the trays" vividly depicts the consuming and relentless nature of rebellion, while "radios and teevees plugged in only to a racial outlet" critiques the biased narratives perpetuated by media, reflecting how racial tensions are amplified and distorted.

The metaphor "FRIENDLY FINANCE burned higher" underscores the collapse of exploitative economic structures that profit from systemic inequalities. In the same vein, "a leopard-print sofa with gold legs" serves as a symbol of superficial wealth and the fragility of material status, obliterated in the upheaval. Furthermore, Angelou critiques performative social niceties through "corn pone grits and you-all smile", which contrasts the apparent warmth of Southern culture with its deeply ingrained racial injustices.

Fire emerges as a central metaphor throughout the poem, representing both destruction and transformation. Phrases such as "whole blocks novae" and "brand-new stars" liken the burning city to a cosmic phenomenon, suggesting the potential for rebirth amidst devastation. However, the violent undertones remain prominent, as seen in metaphors like "shoot him while he run", which expose the persistent brutality of systemic oppression. This tension is amplified by images of fear and volatility, such as "National guard nervous with his shiny gun", capturing the fragility of authority during moments of social unrest. Additionally, "Supermarket roasting like the noonday sun" evokes the pervasiveness of destruction, with fire consuming both communal and economic spaces.

Through these evocative metaphors, Angelou explores the emotional, social, and cultural dimensions of the 1960s riots. Fire, as both a literal and symbolic force, encapsulates the duality of destruction and renewal. While the imagery critiques the systemic forces that perpetuate oppression, it also highlights the resilience and transformative potential of rebellion. Angelou's vivid language portrays the riots as both a tragic consequence of systemic failure and a powerful act of resistance, emphasizing the complexity and humanity within moments of societal upheaval.

Metaphor Analysis in "The Calling of Names"

Maya Angelou's *The Calling of Names* intricately explores the theme of racial identity, using a series of striking metaphors to reflect the shifting nature of racial labels and their deep impact on personal and societal perceptions. Through these metaphors, Angelou invites readers to consider the powerful influence of language on identity and the ways in which societal terms and attitudes shape how individuals view themselves and are viewed by others.

In the opening lines, "He went to being called a colored man", Angelou sets the stage for a discussion of the racial labeling process. The term "colored man" reflects a historical era when race was a primary method of categorizing individuals, often tied to systems of segregation and racial discrimination. Though the term is less explicitly degrading than others, it still embodies a sense of "otherness" and inequality. The line "after answering to 'hey, nigger'" highlights the stark contrast between the more overtly derogatory term "nigger" and the somewhat less offensive "colored man", illustrating the way in which language evolves in response to societal changes. Angelou frames the shift as a "big jump", emphasizing how language reflects broader cultural attitudes and the social status of Black individuals, suggesting that the transition is not just about the words themselves but about a deeper shift in the way race is perceived.

The transition from the term "nigger" to "colored man" marks an important moment in the poem, but the speaker implies that the issues surrounding racial identity and oppression remain unchanged, despite the evolving language. This shift is further complicated by the metaphor "Anyway you figger", which invites readers to consider the complexities of racial terminology and the ongoing persistence of racial inequality. The phrase suggests that no matter how one interprets the shift in terms, racism and societal injustice are still at the heart of the problem.

In the next lines, "From colored man to Negro, With the N in caps, was like saying Japanese instead of saying Japs", the poem continues to explore the nuanced evolution of racial labels. The capitalization of "Negro" reflects a formal shift in racial identity that, while seemingly more respectful, still carries with it connotations of separation and marginalization. The comparison to the term "Japanese" being more acceptable than "Japs" during wartime serves to highlight that despite these changes in terminology, the underlying societal attitudes often remain unchanged. This metaphor suggests that language can evolve in form but still carry undertones of disrespect, power, and exclusion, emphasizing that progress in language does not always equate to progress in racial relations.

In the lines "The next big step was a change for true, From Negro in caps to being a Jew", Angelou highlights a significant shift from racial to cultural and religious identity. The transition from being labeled a "Negro" to being compared to a "Jew" symbolizes a profound transformation in societal categorization. This metaphor serves as a reflection on the fluidity of identity, suggesting that societal perceptions can shift dramatically based on cultural and historical contexts. The phrase "Sing, Yiddish Mama" further reinforces the idea of identity as something that can change or adapt over time, drawing attention to the multifaceted nature of the speaker's identity as they move between different marginalized categories.

The subsequent lines, "Light, Yellow, Brown and Dark-brown skin, were okay colors to describe him then", continue to explore the complexity of racial identity. Angelou emphasizes that racial identity cannot be easily confined to a single label or category, as skin color alone does not fully capture the nuances of an individual's experience. The varying shades of skin color reflect the diversity within the Black community, suggesting that identity is fluid and multi-dimensional, resisting rigid classifications.

The metaphors "He was a Bouquet of Roses" and "He changed his seasons like an almanac" offer vivid imagery to describe the fluidity and diversity of identity. The "Bouquet of Roses" metaphor symbolizes the individual as a beautiful and multifaceted entity, encompassing a range of experiences and attributes. Similarly, the comparison to an "almanac", which tracks the changing seasons, highlights how identity can transform over time in response to both personal experiences and societal changes. The almanac metaphor suggests the cyclical nature of identity, underscoring the ongoing and evolving journey of self-discovery and societal recognition.

In the later lines, "Now you'll get hurt if you don't call him 'Black'", the poem shifts to a more contemporary moment in the ongoing evolution of racial identity. The capitalized "Black" symbolizes a powerful assertion of identity and pride within the Black community, emphasizing the significance of being recognized by this term. The warning that failure to call the individual "Black" may result in harm speaks to the weight of this label and the societal recognition it demands. This metaphor suggests that one's racial identity is not merely a matter of preference but a matter of survival, respect, and emotional well-being. The phrase "Nigguh, I ain't playin' this time" further underscores the seriousness with which the speaker demands respect for their identity. This line calls attention to the complexities of reclaiming and asserting identity, reflecting both the pain and strength in resisting misidentification or marginalization.

Through these metaphors, Angelou explores the fluid, evolving nature of racial and cultural identity, illustrating how language and societal attitudes shape how individuals are viewed and how they view themselves. The poem ultimately suggests that identity is not a fixed or static concept but one that is shaped by external factors such as language, culture, and history. Through this complex web of metaphors, Angelou captures the ongoing journey of self-assertion, societal recognition, and the demand for respect and equality.

Analysis of Metaphors in Caged Bird

Maya Angelou's *Caged Bird* employs a range of powerful metaphors to portray the theme of oppression and the yearning for freedom. Through vivid imagery, the poem explores the contrast between the caged bird, which symbolizes those trapped by social, political, or personal constraints, and the free bird, representing those who are free to live without restriction. The metaphors highlight the emotional pain, internal struggle, and the longing for liberation that defines the experience of being oppressed.

The opening metaphor, "The free bird leaps on the back of the wind,"

represents the freedom and joy of those who are unburdened by the constraints of oppression. The image of the bird "leaping" conveys a sense of uncontained movement and freedom, highlighting the limitless possibilities available to the free bird. The metaphor of the "wind" as a force that carries the bird further emphasizes the ease with which the free bird can navigate the world, suggesting that freedom offers effortless progression.

In contrast, the line "But a bird that stalks down his narrow cage" introduces the metaphor of confinement. The "narrow cage" symbolizes the limitations imposed on those who are oppressed, suggesting that the caged bird's existence is restricted and controlled. The use of the verb "stalks" conveys the sense of frustration and the inability to break free, underscoring the emotional toll of living in such conditions.

The metaphor "his wings are clipped and his feet are tied" deepens the image of physical and psychological constraint. "Clipped wings" suggest that the bird is unable to fly, symbolizing the loss of personal freedom, while "feet are tied" represents the inability to move or take action. These metaphors emphasize the sense of helplessness and powerlessness that comes with being oppressed, suggesting that even basic movement is restricted.

The line "The caged bird sings with a fearful trill" introduces the metaphor of the bird's song, symbolizing a voice of protest and resilience despite the constraints. The "fearful trill" conveys a mixture of fear and defiance, showing that even in a state of oppression, the bird's spirit cannot be completely silenced. This metaphor emphasizes the idea that, while the caged bird is confined, it still finds a way to express itself, even if the expression is tinged with fear.

The line "His tune is heard on the distant hill" illustrates the reach and impact of the caged bird's song. The "distant hill" symbolizes a place far removed from the cage, suggesting that the message of resistance or longing for freedom can transcend boundaries, even if the bird itself remains physically trapped. The metaphor conveys the power of the oppressed to be heard, even in the most isolated or confined situations.

Finally, "The free bird thinks of another breeze" introduces the idea that freedom brings about a constant search for new possibilities, as the free bird is not constrained by one place or direction. This metaphor suggests that the free bird's existence is characterized by endless opportunity, unlike the caged bird, which is limited in every sense.

Through these metaphors, Angelou vividly contrasts the experiences of the caged bird and the free bird, illustrating the psychological and emotional toll of oppression, as well as the resilience and hope for freedom that persist despite overwhelming adversity. Ultimately, *Caged Bird* emphasizes the enduring power of the human spirit to seek liberation, even when trapped by external forces.

Analysis of Metaphors in Harlem Hopscotch

In Harlem Hopscotch, Maya Angelou employs vivid metaphors to portray the struggles faced by individuals in Harlem, using the familiar game of hopscotch as a symbol for life's challenges. The poem captures the harsh realities of poverty, racial discrimination, and economic instability, while also highlighting themes of resilience

and personal triumph.

In the opening lines, “One foot down, then hop! It's hot,” the metaphor compares the act of playing hopscotch to navigating life's difficulties. The action of placing one foot down and hopping represents the effort and agility required to move forward in life, while "hot" evokes the intensity and urgency of these struggles. The metaphor suggests that progress in life comes with both physical and emotional effort, while also highlighting the pressures individuals face in trying to advance.

Line 2, “Good things for the ones that's got,” uses a metaphor to highlight social and economic inequality. This suggests that those with resources or advantages are more likely to succeed, while others are excluded or left behind. The metaphor conveys frustration and injustice, emphasizing the disparity between different social classes.

In Line 3, “Another jump, now to the left,” the metaphor represents the need for flexibility and adaptability. Life's challenges require constant adjustments, and this metaphor illustrates the unpredictable nature of life's obstacles, where individuals must navigate them through quick thinking and resilience.

Line 4, “Everybody for hisself,” illustrates the competitive nature of life in a difficult environment. This metaphor underscores the individualistic and self-reliant attitudes necessary to survive in the face of hardship, emphasizing isolation and the absence of communal support.

The lines from 5 to 14 continue this use of metaphors to delve into the complexities of Harlem life, with each line reflecting a specific aspect of the struggles faced by individuals. In “In the air, now both feet down,” the metaphor of jumping and landing conveys fleeting hope and the harsh reality of returning to struggle. Similarly, “Since you black, don't stick around,” speaks to racial discrimination, suggesting that individuals are often marginalized based on their racial identity.

Lines like “Food is gone, the rent is due” directly address the harsh economic conditions of poverty, while “Curse and cry and then jump two” reflects the emotional toll of these hardships and the necessity to keep moving despite adversity. The metaphor of twisting and jerking in “Hold for three, then twist and jerk” speaks to the instability and unpredictability individuals face as they attempt to navigate their challenges.

The line “Cross the line, they count you out” uses the metaphor of stepping out of bounds to illustrate the societal penalties faced by those who do not conform to expectations, while “That's what hopping's all about” emphasizes the continuous effort required to survive and persevere. Finally, “They think I lost. I think I won” presents a contrast between external judgment and personal triumph, symbolizing resilience and defiance.

Through these metaphors, Angelou effectively portrays the cyclical nature of life's struggles, particularly those shaped by socio-economic inequality, racial discrimination, and poverty. The game of hopscotch serves as a relatable and powerful symbol for navigating these hardships, capturing the resilience, adaptability, and determination required to overcome them. Ultimately, Harlem Hopscotch emphasizes the endurance and personal victory of individuals who refuse to be defeated by their circumstances.

Analysis of Metaphors in Harlem Hopscotch

In Harlem Hopscotch, Maya Angelou uses the metaphor of the hopscotch game to symbolize the struggles and resilience of individuals navigating life's hardships. Through this metaphor, Angelou explores themes of racial inequality, economic hardship, and personal perseverance, while also conveying the joy and survival instincts that keep people moving forward despite adversity.

In the first line, "Ain't you heard of my hopscotch?" the speaker introduces the game of hopscotch as a central metaphor for life's journey. The act of playing hopscotch suggests that life's challenges are a game to be played, but one that requires both skill and persistence. The rhetorical question implies that the speaker's experience of survival and resilience in Harlem is well-known, as if they have mastered the game of life in a harsh environment.

In the following line, "It's the soul of the streets, a patch of ground," the metaphor of "the soul of the streets" conveys the idea that Harlem itself is alive, pulsing with the energy and experiences of its residents. The "patch of ground" symbolizes the physical space of the neighborhood, suggesting that even within limited circumstances, individuals find ways to survive and express themselves.

The phrase "You might not know but I'm hopscotchin' the world" in Line 5 expands the metaphor to include the world beyond Harlem. Here, hopscotching represents navigating the broader societal challenges of oppression and inequality. The speaker is not just playing the game in a local sense but is participating in the global struggle, moving from one challenge to the next.

In Line 6, "I'm hopscotchin' to be free," freedom becomes a central goal in the metaphorical game. The idea of hopscotching to reach freedom suggests a journey that is full of obstacles, yet the speaker is determined to navigate these challenges with perseverance, moving toward personal liberation, even if it requires continuous effort.

Similarly, "Hopscotchin' to be loved" in Line 7 uses the metaphor to express the struggle for affection and recognition. The act of hopping represents the effort involved in securing love, which, like freedom, requires both struggle and resilience. This metaphor implies that love is not easily given, but rather something to be worked toward.

In Line 8, "One jump forward and two jumps back," the metaphor conveys the cyclical nature of progress in a difficult environment. The forward jump suggests a moment of advancement, while the two steps back illustrate setbacks, portraying how progress can be non-linear and filled with challenges. This line reflects the persistent struggle of overcoming obstacles while making minimal progress.

The line "Jumpin' back to the start" further emphasizes this cyclical struggle, illustrating how individuals are often forced to begin again after facing setbacks. It underscores the idea that progress is not always linear, and the journey toward success and survival requires constant restarting and resilience.

Finally, in "That's how I play the game," the speaker asserts control over their circumstances, embracing the unpredictable nature of life. This line acknowledges the challenges of navigating such a harsh environment, but also reveals a defiant attitude,

where the speaker chooses to continue playing the game despite its difficulties.

Through these metaphors, Angelou masterfully uses the game of hopscotch to depict the ongoing struggles of those living in Harlem, facing systemic oppression, racial discrimination, and economic hardship. The poem portrays how, despite setbacks and challenges, the act of continuing to move forward—like hopping through the squares of a game—is an act of resilience, survival, and self-determination. Harlem Hopscotch ultimately celebrates the strength and perseverance of individuals who refuse to be defeated by their circumstances, emphasizing the importance of adaptability, resilience, and personal triumph.

DISCUSSION

The discussion explores the rich metaphorical landscape of Maya Angelou's six poems, focusing on the different facets of Black experiences in America. Through metaphors, Angelou powerfully captures the profound struggles and enduring resilience of Black individuals as they navigate systemic oppression, racial discrimination, and societal indifference. Each poem is a potent reflection of the emotional, physical, and psychological toll of living under the shadow of racism, while also illustrating the unbreakable will to survive, resist, and ultimately demand justice and equality.

"A Freedom Fighter" is a poignant reflection of the immense suffering endured by Black people throughout history, particularly those who fought for freedom in the face of oppressive forces. The poem uses both conventional and symbolic metaphors to convey the harsh realities faced by these individuals. For instance, the metaphor of "bitter draught" in the opening line symbolizes the overwhelming pain, sorrow, and hardship experienced by Black people under systemic oppression. The phrase "I sip the tears your eyes fight to hold" underscores the emotional burden carried by the oppressed, while "a cup of lees, of henbane steeped in chaff" invokes an image of toxic waste, representing the destructive legacy of slavery, racism, and colonialism. The recurring metaphor of physical violence, such as "When cane straps flog the body" and "dark and lean, you feel the blow," highlights the brutality of oppression during slavery and the lasting effects of such violence on Black bodies. Moreover, metaphors like "you die a thousand times" and "I hear in your breath" provide a deep emotional and psychological perspective on the cyclical nature of trauma, both physical and spiritual. These lines emphasize the toll of oppression not only on the body but also on the soul, where every wound, both seen and unseen, leaves a permanent mark on Black individuals' psyches.

"Riot 60's" captures the social unrest and violent protests of the 1960s, illustrating the anger and frustration of Black communities in response to their mistreatment. Angelou uses metaphors that speak to the exploitation, violence, and racial injustice that fueled the riots. The metaphor of the "Pawnshop" symbolizes the economic exploitation of marginalized communities, revealing how institutions profit from the suffering of Black people. The phrase "a glorious blaze" contrasts the destructive

nature of fire with the potential for liberation, showing how acts of destruction can sometimes be viewed as a form of resistance against oppressive systems. Additionally, the lines “Easter clothes and stolen furs burned in the attic” symbolize the loss of material possessions that represent both personal identity and the societal values placed on wealth and materialism. This destruction, however, also signifies a rejection of those values in favor of a higher cause—liberation and justice. The metaphor of radios and televisions crackling with static speaks to the silencing of Black voices and the distortion of their experiences in mainstream media. Other metaphors like “FRIENDLY FINANCE FURNITURE CO.” critique the predatory nature of financial institutions that exploit Black communities. The poem starkly captures the dehumanizing violence Black people experienced during the riots, using metaphors like “Shoot him while he run” to emphasize the brutal racism that led to loss of life. Ultimately, this poem shows how the violent resistance of the 1960s was not only a reaction to the brutality of the moment but also an expression of deep-seated anger and a demand for justice.

"The Calling of Names" offers a reflection on the evolving nature of racial discrimination, emphasizing how the shift in terminology does not signify true progress toward equality. The line, “He went to being called a colored man,” illustrates the transition from more overtly offensive terms to seemingly more polite ones, such as “colored man.” Despite this shift, the poem highlights that the term “colored” still reflects segregation and the continued marginalization of Black individuals. The line “Previously, Black people were referred to as ‘hey, nigger’” brings attention to the deeply dehumanizing language that Black people endured, reinforcing the notion that racism is not merely a matter of language but a deeply ingrained social reality. The metaphor in “Now that’s a big jump” serves to show that, despite the language change, real equality has not been achieved. This serves as a powerful critique of token changes that fail to address the underlying issues of systemic racism and discrimination. The line “anyway you figger” conveys the frustration that even though language might change, true respect and recognition of Black identity remain elusive. The final lines, such as “Shoot him while he run,” highlight the violence that continues to be a part of Black existence, especially in their encounters with authority figures. In essence, this poem critiques the shallow shifts in language that obscure the ongoing, persistent nature of racism in America.

"The Caged Bird" uses the metaphor of a bird trapped in a cage to depict the physical, emotional, and psychological limitations placed on Black individuals. The “narrow cage” symbolizes the societal constraints that confine Black people, limiting their freedom and opportunities. The metaphor of “his wings are clipped and his feet are tied” represents how Black people are deliberately restricted in their ability to act or move freely, not only by physical barriers but also by systemic and institutional constraints. “His bars of rage” illustrates the internalized frustration and anger that come from being trapped in an oppressive system. The bird's act of singing, “he opens his throat to sing,” becomes a powerful symbol of passive resistance and hope, representing the enduring spirit of Black individuals in their quest for freedom.

Despite the limitations imposed on them, the metaphor of singing reflects an unbreakable will to strive for liberation, as Black people continue to resist and maintain their dignity in the face of adversity. The closing line, "for the caged bird sings of freedom," encapsulates the ultimate message of the poem: that despite the systemic oppression and physical limitations, the longing for freedom and equality remains unyielding.

"Harlem Hopscotch" portrays the resilience and determination of Black individuals in navigating the hardships of life. The poem uses the metaphor of a child playing hopscotch, where each jump represents the agility and perseverance required to survive and overcome the challenges of poverty, systemic racism, and social injustice. The opening line, "One foot down, then hop!" captures the necessity of flexibility and adaptability in the face of adversity. The continuous "jumps" symbolize the ongoing struggles faced by Black people, while the instruction to "hold for three, then twist and jerk" illustrates the difficulty of finding stability in an unstable world. The line "Curse, cry, and then jump two" conveys the emotional toll of these struggles, where pain and frustration must be acknowledged, but the necessity of moving forward remains paramount. The phrase "That's what hopping's all about" distills the essence of resilience within the Black experience, showing that survival is not about avoiding hardship but about constantly adapting and moving forward despite the obstacles. The closing line, "They believe I lost. I believe I prevailed," contrasts external perceptions of failure with the inner strength and perseverance that characterize true success in the face of oppression.

"Equality" examines the ongoing struggle for racial justice and the fight for recognition in a society that remains largely indifferent to the plight of Black individuals. The opening line, "You declare you see me dimly," critiques the superficial recognition of marginalized groups, showing how Black people are often seen through a distorted lens. The metaphor of "through a glass which will not shine" further highlights the barriers to true understanding, where the experiences of Black people are obscured by societal indifference. The phrase "We have lived a painful history" acknowledges the deep, collective trauma caused by centuries of oppression and violence. However, the poem also speaks to the unwavering determination of Black people to keep pushing forward, as illustrated in the line "but I keep on marching forward." The recurring refrain, "Equality, and I will be free," reinforces the idea that true liberation can only be achieved through equality, while the metaphor of "shadow" underscores how Black people have been marginalized and reduced to mere flickers of presence in society. The poem culminates in a powerful call to action with the line, "Take the blinders from your vision," urging society to remove the barriers that prevent understanding and empathy. "Admit you've seen my tears" is a plea for acknowledgment of the pain and suffering Black individuals have endured, emphasizing that the fight for equality is not only a personal one but a shared responsibility that requires collective acknowledgment and action.

Through these metaphors, Maya Angelou eloquently conveys the complex emotional, physical, and psychological experiences of Black individuals living under systemic

oppression, highlighting both their suffering and their strength. Each poem contributes to a broader narrative that underscores the interconnection between personal and collective struggles, resilience, and the unyielding pursuit of justice and equality.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Maya Angelou's poetry highlights the powerful use of metaphors to address themes of freedom, resilience, and societal struggle. Each poem explores the challenges faced by Black people, using metaphors to evoke complex emotions and social commentary. In "A Freedom Fighter," metaphors like "bitter draught" and "you die a thousand times" illustrate the painful effects of systemic oppression, while "Riot 60's" uses metaphors to depict violence and resistance, such as the financial exploitation represented by "Pawnshop" and the suppression of Black voices symbolized by "radios crackled with static."

In "The Calling of Names," Angelou critiques linguistic changes that still uphold racial divisions, using metaphors like "colored man" and "big jump" to show that true equality remains out of reach. "The Caged Bird" uses the bird in a cage as a metaphor for Black people's restricted liberties, contrasting internal rage with resilience, as seen in the lines "his wings are clipped" and "he opens his throat to sing."

"Harlem Hopscotch" emphasizes Black people's resilience in the face of adversity, with metaphors like "One foot down, then hop!" symbolizing the perseverance needed to overcome challenges. Finally, "Equality" explores the ongoing fight for equality, with metaphors like "through a glass which will not shine" and "just a shadow to you" depicting how society often dismisses Black people's struggles.

Through these metaphors, Angelou critiques social norms, urges empathy, and highlights the ongoing fight for justice. Her poetic use of metaphor invites readers to reflect on oppression and resilience, making her work a powerful call for social change and equality.

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TRANSLITERATION GUIDELINES

Arabic-Latin transliteration was used in the Jurnal Pendidikan Islam based on the *Library of Congress model*;

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| b | = | ب | dh | = | ذ | ṭ | = | ط | l | = | ل |
| t | = | ت | r | = | ر | ẓ | = | ظ | m | = | م |
| th | = | ث | z | = | ز | ‘ | = | ع | n | = | ن |
| j | = | ج | s | = | س | gh | = | غ | w | = | و |
| ḥ | = | ح | sh | = | ش | f | = | ف | h | = | ه |
| kh | = | خ | ṣ | = | ص | q | = | ق | ‘ | = | ء |
| d | = | د | ḍ | = | ض | k | = | ك | y | = | ي |

Short vowel a = ; l = u =

Long vowel ā = ; Ā = ū =

Diphthong ay = ; Aw =

Note:

1. A word that ends with a *ta marbūthah* (ة) is transliterated with or without “h”; if the word is the first part of a construct phrase, the *ta marbūthah* is transliterated into “t”.
2. An article *alif-lām* (ال) is transliterated into *al-*; if it takes place after a preposition, the article *alif-lām* is transliterated into *l-*.
3. A Qur’anic verse is transliterated according to its pronunciation.

Example:

- a. Arabic word in general:

أهلية = *Ahliyyah* atau *ahliyya*

سورة البقرة = *Sūrat al-Baqarah*

أهل السنة والجماعة = *Ahl as-sunnah wa l-jamā’ah*

- b. Qur’anic verses:

يا أيها الناس = *Yā ayyuha n-nās*

ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه = *Dhālika l-kitābu lāraiba fih*