# Young Adults' Poetry as Resistance: Bullying and Nurturing mpathy in Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise"

**Abeer Hussain Bakr** **Assist Prof. Shayma Zuhair**
**College of Arts - University of Mosul**

**Keywords**: Young Adult, poetry as therapy/Bibliotherapy, Bullying, Resilience, Empathy, Still I Rise.

**Summary:**

This paper deals with young adult's poetry that has been written by woman poet to resist bullying and nurturing empathy through textual analysis of selected poem. Bullying's impact is so profound, which often lead to long term psychological damages, in several case it led some victims to commit suicide. This paper will examine how young adult poetry functions as a corrective mirror against false reflections of environment, through their interaction with poetry that exposes prejudice and bullying while fostering resilience and empathy. Thereby, poetry can serve as therapeutic tool making inner strength and compassion urgent intervention. The poem of Maya Andelou's "Still I Rise" is going to be analyzed in the light of Carl Jung's perspectives. Angelou's poem embodies collective resistance against racial oppression, it demonstrates how questions, affirmations, and poetic voice transform victimization into fortitude and resistance. Findings suggest that young adult poetry did not only mirror the struggles of marginalized teens but also nurtures empathy in bystanders through encourage them to recognize the struggle of other, this aims to reducing bullying.

**Introduction**

Since its emergence literature has always been playing a vital role in affecting the minds and emotions of readers. Within this field, the newly emerging genre of young adults' literature is essential, as it addresses readers of specific age range of great importance as they are crossing the transition between childhood and adulthood. Young adults often face many critical problems and emotional berries, and literature endeavors to serve and offer a comforting, unique way to help them to face such difficulties and challenges.

In the world where bullying victims suffer dangerous psychological impact on their mental well-being, young adults' literature, in general and poetry in particular, offers

a means of handling stress, build resilience and nurturing empathy in those who have not experienced victimization. Poetry becomes more than art; it functions as therapeutic tool offering a means of handling stress and facing the many challenges the young face.

This study focuses on how young adults react to poetry as corrective mirror against false reflection of environment, through analyzing Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" (1978), the poem embodies psychological endurance and understanding through distinct literary techniques. By applying Carl Jung's concepts of Shadow, Persona, Archetypes and Individuation, to help fulfilling the aim of research that is to provide an understanding of role young adult poetry psychological impacts. Thus, before examining the therapeutic role of literature and poetry as, it is essential to shed the light on young adults' literature and poetry.

**Young Adult Origins, Roots, and Cultural Influence**

Young Adult (YA) as a term was not widely recognized till 1904 when the American psychologist G. Stanley Hall, who earned the first Ph.D. degree in psychology in 1878, used this term to refer to a group of people aged between twelve and nineteen years. Having this age group categorized paves a way to distinct them from being adult or children, it clearly suggests that young adults have their own realm and issues, and define the relation independently with science approaches like anthropology, psychology and sociology...etc. (Cart, 2010). Having this classification highlights young adults' unique developmental stage, sensitivity and their journey to discover and build their distinctive identity and the difficulties and obstacles young adults face. As result it was necessary to identify young adults' struggle, issue, emotional challenge from psychological lensed as separate study domains and distinguish it from other genres such adolescent, teenagers and adults which are usually associated to same development period and serve same purpose of young adult.

As a literary term, Cart (2010) in his *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism,* argues that till late of 1930s that teenagers were seen as children, there had not yet made a specific literary genre for this age group. Gradually, during the fourth decades of 1900 idea emerged acknowledging and identifying teens needs to have specific literary works reflect their experience and declare this new age group. Therefore, Rowe Townsend defined young adults' literature as "all works of imagination which are transmitted primarily by means of the written word or

spoken narrative—that is, in the main, novels, stories, and poetry" (as cited Cart, 2010, pp.12,17). Martyn Denscombe's definition aligns with Townsend who asserts that:

Young adults are not binary opposites of children or adults, they are 'other' because to some extent young adults are on the edge of childhood and the cusp of adulthood, being neither one nor the other. Young adulthood is the bridge between the two. (as cited in Nosworthy, 2020, p.9)

This literary genre deals with YA crucial issues, adversity and daily experiences, it serves to reinforce their abilities to navigate with boarder social relates. Chance (2014), in *Young Adult Literature in Action; librarian guide (*2014), identify young adults' literature as any text that adolescent decide to read including newspaper, magazine, fictional and graphic novels, manga, folklore, short stories, poetry, biographical and informational books and even the books which are intended to be for adults they can be considered for young adult as long as are chosen according to their test. Thus, young adult before they having their own genre or works that had been written specifically for them, they had been reading adventure stories for adults like *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan and Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe (Chance, 2014)

However, the real starting point for young adults' literature could be considered in 1942, with the publication of Maureen Daly's novel, *Seventeenth Summer* appeared this date is considered launching of young adults' genre. *Seventeenth Summer* is the first novel published specifically of this age group and it spots on the experience of teenager protagonist, based on real experience of teens. It was deemed to be bold at that time as it shows teens being in love, smoking, and drinking. Though Daly's novel was supposed to target adults yet had population among young adults. Thus, it builds readership base from them (Cart, 2010).

While for poetry, it gains wide recognition in mid- 1990s, way after the novel due to prevailing loss of interest in poetry by teens as they tend to link poetry with school's assignments and the imposed required reading of poetry as homework, which causes a decrease of popularity of this field at first phase. Cart observes that poetry regained it is cultural interest in the late 1990s due to several developments. In 1996 the academy of American Poet, along with the American Library Association, succeeded in designating April as national poetry month. Poetry also becomes easier to access through television, the internet and coffeehouse events like open-mic

nights and poetry slams, that made poetry become part of teen programs in libraries. (Cart, 2010).

Furthermore, young adults growing interest in poetry is due to many reasons. Poetry has many distinctive features which catches the eyes and hearts of young adults. Being short and concise less than page, allows the teens to engage quickly without being force to a long reading commitment as with long novels. Adding to that, the universality of poetry and the intensity of emotion it can capture make the young adults feel relevant, identify, and more importantly understood. Young adults' poems tend to address the real experience of teens, their problems and offer understanding and empathy. Though the voice of adult poets, young adults feel that poems reflect their struggles and they are not alone in their path to adulthood (Chance, 2014). This observation underscores poetry's immediacy and it is ability to validate young adult's experience

**The Therapeutic Role of Poetry in Mental Health**

Poetry and its intervention have an undeniably profound and effective role as therapeutic tools for young adult. It asserts how young adults' poetry offers spaces for expressing emotions. Through engaging with poems readers are encouraged to process their feeling in ways that enhance psychological well-being. Thus, reading poetry about bullying helps adolescents to feel that they are not alone in their struggles. At the same time, it nurtures empathy for bystanders who are not direct victims. In that way, poetry can contribute reinforce mental health support and reducing bullying cases within the community.

Poetry therapy (PT) opens a space where language becomes more than words in a page, it becomes a therapeutic tool assist for reflection and emotional growth through rhythm, metaphor and story individual are able to explores their inner lives and express emotions. Mazza (2017) defined PT in *Poetry Therapy: Theory and Practice* as "the use of language, symbol, and story in therapeutic, educational, and community-building capacities" (as cited in Mazza, 2017, p.3). While it began originally as a branch of 'bibliotherapy'. Yet PT developed into an independent field that still includes bibliotherapy practices. Mazza (2017) explains that roots of PT practice reach back to ancient Greek, who recognized the connection between words, emotions and therapeutic. Aristotle in *Poetics* introduced the idea of catharsis as means of emotional release, this concept remains a central in psychotherapy today. Poetry therapy also was used in preliterate societies through chants, incantations, and spoken words were used to influence the self and other. This type

of therapeutic was used in Pennsylvania Hospital in the early nineteen century (first hospital in America), were patient publishing poems. Furthermore, Benjamin Rush is deemed early American physician and among the first to recommend poetry as form of treatment for mentally ill (Mazza, 2017). The historical view indicates that poetry functioned as bridge between artistic expression and psychological fortitude.

Poetry is not merely an artistic form as it suggests by Mazza (2017), that it is used across clinical educational and community setting. Poetry can be adapted to many different practice models and it is built on two main components; the first is the receptive or prescriptive component which involves the use of preexisting poems, and the most common techniques is PT is reading a poem to support emotional reflection, this include bibliotherapy as defined Shrodes "the process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature as a psychological field which may be used for personality assessment, adjustment and growth"(as cited in Mazza, 2017, p.9). The second is the expressive or creative component, which focuses on writing process, in this case the individual creates his/her own poem to express feeling, ideas and experiences to support personal growth. (Mazza, 2017). This dual model illustrates how poetry serve both reflectional and creative outlet.

In therapeutic context, creative writing in particular poetry can offer teens a way to escape feelings of deep emotional pain that may otherwise seems unbearable. Since many YAS hesitate to share their emotions with adults, they often relay on personal writing as safe outlet for emotional release. this shows that writing poetry in term of therapeutic tools become powerful means of expressing distressing emotions for unspoken feeling might led to suicidal thoughts. In some cases, poetry helps saving lives (Mazza, 2017). Harrower (1989), a poet and psychologist, argues in *the therapy of Poetry* "once crystallized into words, all-engulfing feelings become manageable, and once challenged into explicitness, the burden of the incommunicable becomes less heavy" (p.3). Overall, this proposes the connection between writing poetry and reading therapy as both relay on emotional expression. Poets tend to write about their own struggle using creative writing as form of therapy. Through this process, they transform personal pain into language that becomes meaningful not only for themselves but also to others who experience similar difficulties. Consequently, the poet's private therapeutic act becomes a public text that function as bibliotherapy for reader. For instance, Harrower engaged with poetry since early childhood and continuing into adulthood. Thus, analysis of Harrower's YA poems explains how

other may identify with Harrower's work when they recognize similar emotional symptoms This process of identification reflects what Mazza describes in reception or prescription poetry therapy, where the therapist carefully selects poems that match the client's emotional states while guiding them toward a more helpful resolution (Maza 2017). Whole process applied to poets who compose poetry aiming to address YA read poems as poetry project, process and understand their emotions. However, main reasons for poets for functioning bibliotherapy are promoting emotion relief, insight and psychological well-being.

For Lin (2024) and from psychological and psychotherapist lens, poetry can be understood as therapeutic potential for both bystanders and victims of bullying through what it called as bibliotherapy. According to Line bibliotherapy, sometimes called reading therapy, book or poetry therapy reflects triangle relation between the patient -text-therapist, which helps them to deal with negative feeling like sadness, guilt, or loneliness. Bibliotherapy represents psychotherapeutic method that draws on concepts common to other therapeutic approaches. It offers advantages like broad accessibility, providing low cost compared to traditional therapy, and the ability to reach individuals and groups who might face long waiting lists or lack access to conventional psychotherapy. Moreover, bibliotherapy reduce feeling of shame that often discourage from seeking traditional psychological treatment. In particular, it is useful for individual with slight symptoms and can serve as a preventive intervention (like guide school-aged individuals by preparing them for future developmental stages and offer means of how other have managed similar conflict. Bibliotherapy is also seen as kind of self-therapy, since it is centered on reading materials to support self-improvement, and this fulfill the purpose of increasing personal awareness and motivating people to change of their lives in a positive way. It also, helps readers to have the initiative to solve their own problems in reality. Furthermore, bibliotherapy is used as guideline for teenagers at schools, it provides advices by showing them what to expect and giving examples of how others handle similar situations (Lin 2024). this perspective suggests that bibliotherapy has dual role as both a preventing and empowering, it provides teens with strategies for compassions and psychological endurance.

Borges et al. (2024) and colleagues emphasize the bibliotherapy and poetry therapy gained significant recognition in 1960s and 1970s, particularly when hospital librarians began recommending books to psychiatric patients. They describe bibliotherapy as therapeutic practice that brings relief, treatment, and healing

through the written words. Poetry as a branch of literature allows readers through interconnects process to engage with text Literature – and more specially poetry- is seen as capture unconscious emotions that are often left unspoken in social interactions, making it a tool for managing feelings, thereby the goal of reading literary works is to change behavior or self-acceptance (Borges et al., 2024). Thus, bibliotherapy helps lowering emotional overload and intensity of frequent negative feeling and low self-steam, so the individual will be able to cope better with daily challenge. Overall, Borges and other proves that bibliotherapy's main aim is to promote the psychological strength and wellbeing via examination of shared experience (Borges et al., 2024). This shows how poetry transforms hidden emotions into constructive insight, turning private struggles into pathways for growth.

It is worth to mention that bibliotherapy has many means to fulfill its purpose. Duffy (2010) states that there are two different ways where bibliotherapy is used, according to him that some therapist used self- help books as type of therapy, this includes advices and instructions which are presented for patient. While other use bibliotherapy based on fictional text such as poems, novels, song lyrics. However, this approach lets readers to express themselves and connects with characters and situations in the story. Fiction-based bibliotherapy works well because people already feel close to fictional stories and characters, and this emotional connection makes the therapy more powerful. Thereby, by comparing fictional one to self- help books, fictional often reaches deeper into emotions, which is why many responses strongly to it (p.3). Duffy (2010) also explains stages of bibliotherapy, the process that readers go through reading which are: identification and projection, and abreaction and catharsis, and insight and integration. In the first step readers begin to similarities between their own feeling and the written literary work. Thus, they will be able to identify the problem, in the following stage, abreaction and catharsis, involves an emotional release, readers express their feeling through words. In final stage insight and integration, encourages readers to reflect on how to managed similar challenges and apply the lessons to their own lives (Duffy, 2010). Duffy's procedure illustrates how poetry guild pains to be released toward constructive self-understanding.

**Build Resilience and Empathy in bullied Young Adult**

Following the discussion of poetry as a therapeutic tool, it is essential to identify one important issue this paper is going to tackle that is bullying. According to Hughes and Laffier (2016) in their article *Portrayals of Bullying in Young Adult Literature:*

*considerations for schools,* bullying is no single act it is repeated act of aggressions behavior; it aims of causing harm, it involves imbalanced of power between the bullies and the victims, it may occur because of the difference in physical strength, popularity, social skills, economic statues, cultural or intelligence. Nevertheless, over past few decades, bullying has been recognized as serious issue within educational sector specially in schools, and usually victims suffer of short- and long-term consequences such as anxiety, depression, which directly affect the students' academic performance as well as their mental wellbeing. In fact, some bullies have strong emotional intelligence, which helps them to understand how others feel and use that knowledge to serve their purpose to harm others (Hughes & Laffier, 2016). The effects of bulling are not minor nor temporary; they can affect mental wellbeing and create serious damage in the victim's self-trust and the beginning-to-form personality. According to R.A. Sansone and L.A. Sansone (2008) in *Bully Victims Psychological and Somatic Aftermaths*, repeated bullying has permanent psychological consequences. Studies show that victims often struggle with social problems, finding difficult to connect with peers, they may also have symptoms of anxiety, depression, eating disorder along with constant feeling of worry, sadness, and nervousness. Conducted researches emphasize that the effect of bullying can be ongoing both in child and adulthood. Frequent bullying can be more dangerous as it increases the probability of suicidal thought and suicide attempts (R.A. Sansone & L.A. Sansone, 2008). This proves that dealing with bullying, it is not a minor issue, but it is an urgent subject and must to be addressed serious to highlight the needs to immediate attention to protect the victims and promote the psychological well-being.

It is worth mentioning that fostering empathy is influential responding mechanism against bullying. Empathy in this term is best described as the ability to feel for another person's suffering and understands the way he/she feels and thinks; it is the ability to see the world from different perspectives for sake of understanding and respecting different emotions and experiences. Poetry proves to be able to provide a powerful means of nurturing empathy by making readers dive to inner life of another person, allowing them to imagine, feel, engage and experience emotions, this makes easier for teens to feel compassion for victims of bullying and to response with care rather than indifference (Boeckman 2023). However, bystanders have important role as well in such situations, they can have both positive and negative influence, as their silence and passivity can reinforce bully's continuous harmful

behavior. On the contrary, bystanders can put an end to aggressions by reporting the incident, refusing to participants, and offering support to the victims. Therefore, fostering empathy encourage teens develop a sense of responsibility and serve as preventions of bullying (Hughes & Jennifer, 2016). According to Grandeau et al. (2016) the adolescents who bully tends to show low level of empathy, and lack of ability to feel and share another person's emotions. Thus, when the empathy is weak the bullying increase over times. For this reason, anti-bullying method works to raise and develop greater empathy, as empathy can make teens understand the harm they cause by bullying, which reduces the aggressive behaviors and elevation compassionate process. Poetry has been considered as therapeutic tools due to its vigorous role of enhancing the empathy Pacheco and Mansur (2023) assert in *Poetry and Brain: Interfaces for Empathy Development.* The search shows that there are certain areas in brain known mirror neurons which are responsible for stimulate the in the brain, as sequence, reading poetry can increase the empathy as long it touches the part in brain as long as the reader is motivated to engage with text. poetry in particular helps readers to increase empathy as they create imaginary realms which feel closer to real life. In addition, reading poetry touches the readers hearts and minds and it links thinking and feeling. Thus, readers connect with emotions and thoughts while reading poem, they practice understanding how the other feels. (Pacheco & Mansur, 2023) Moreover, Poetry helps to interprets words in different ways and placing them in situations similar to real life, this stimulates cognitive which can lead empathy to transmitted from poet to reader, adding to that the nurturing of resilience.

Resilience is defined by Moore and Woodcock (2016) in *Resilience to bullying: towards and alternative to the anti-bullying approach* as a means of being able to cope well and still grow even when life is hard or stressful. It is adapting to challenges instead of being defeated by them. It is also seen in two different ways; as protective process and a good balance between risk and strength. However, resilience includes: optimism, self-esteem, confidence, social skills or simply being able to stay healthy when facing problem. The protective factors come from the person him/herself and from the person's family and social environment. Personal protective factor refers to individual's sense of capability and control along with ability to regulate emptions. In this way, resilience becomes obtainable and less complex. In the context of bullying, resilience increases when victims develop social

skills and learn how to manage their emotions and following certain strategies for staying calm and handling stress. (Moore & Woodcock, 2016)

Young adult poetry endeavors to help to build resilience for victims of bullying especially when the poem they read mirror a similar experience and share the pain, fear, or humiliation felt by the victims. Realizing that they are not alone, the victims of bullying enhance a sense of shared experience and the resistance of this which brings feeling of comfort and reduce the suffering. Reading poetry assists to ease negative and harmful experiences indirectly making it easier for the young adults to manage strong feeling in a healthy way. Thereby, poetry encourage the reflections pushing toward accepting the painful experience, and such acceptance is part of resilience, it helps building positive inner, resistance, survival and have strength for moving toward well-being.

According to Sevilla-Vallejo (2023) in *the interplay of identity and resilience* the identity is the sources of the resilience and both are connected ideas that shape human life. Sevilla-Vallejo defines identity as mix of person's beliefs and values that makes one's own character as individual, it is the source of strength and motivation. Usually, marginalized people who faces discrimination try to protect or build the identity to stay resilient. Building strong identity needs self-acceptance and embracing unique personality. However, the way to self-accepting under hard circumstances is known as survival. Patil (2018) defines survival as ability to keep living and existing even when one face hardship. Merely, it means continuing through the struggles or difficult situation without giving up. Also, it is the choice to carry on the pain and hope to overcome the complexities (Patil, 2018), thereby survival is resistance against difficulties to protect the one's identity. Consequently, it leads to gain sense of resilience which support the process of well-being.

**Jungian Psychology in Young Adult literature**

In this research, poems are analyzed based on theoretical framework that applies psychological theory grounded in Carl Jung concepts. Jung's approach emphasizes the role of unconscious as central to human psychology. Although, Freud's approaches were groundbreaking, yet they did not remain unchallenged, many of his students expanded his theories and built upon them, among them Carl Jung stands out, who began as Freud's follower, he later disagreed with him because Jung believed Freud's approach do not encourage personal growth and was too focused

on sexuality. However, building on these differences, both agreed that the unconscious mind was central to human psychology, but they described its structure in very different ways. Freud psych model divided into id, ego and superego, whereas, Jung proposed another model consist of three layers which are: conscious, the personal unconscious and collective unconscious. The conscious refers to what human being are aware in the present moment includes our thoughts and perceptions. While personal unconscious is deep inside the mind, contain forgotten memories, feelings and experience that are not immediately reachable but still shape and drive our behavior. This layer holds both positive and negative aspects of the self (in contrast to Freud who focused on negative part of unconscious). (Tarzian et al., 2023) Jung's broader view of unconscious as dynamic source of both growth and conflict.

Jung came up with distinctive idea, it was the collective unconscious, which he described as universal level of human mind. It unlike the personal unconscious, which is unique to each individual. The collective one is inherited and innate, it contains patterns and images commons across cultures and generations. Jung believed that these shared elements were passed down much like genetic process and imprinted on human mind through ancestral experience. Within the collective unconscious excite archetypes (which is universal symbols and themes that appear across myth, folklore, dream and religious traditions. Archetypes include: mother, the hero, the child, the wise old man and the trickster. These archetypes represent human experience and connect people at pathological level. According to Jung that the collective unconscious communicates through symbol, giving us insight into shared human thought and feelings. (Mcleod, 2025). To say it in simple terms, the archetypes are presented as characters or symbols which are repeated in various societies and are familiar to everyone. For example, the hero who face hardships, the mother who cares, the wise old man who offers guidance, or other characters who present the darker side of nature. These Archetypal figures are found everywhere like in myth, religious stories, literature, and art. Also, these figures appear consistently because they come from shared human psychology, and are carried through generations. Jung explained that archetypes act like hidden patterns shaping our thought, emotions, and actions by giving us unconscious framework for understanding the world. Because of this, certain stories and symbols carry strong meaning across different cultures since they connect to something universal in human experience. (Mcleod, 2025). Archetype provides a useful way to analyze

poem. The poet arouses the hero architype, to face oppression and to rise above hardship. At the same time, it nurtures voice of poem reflects the mother architype, offering comfort and empowerment to marginalized YA readers. By drawing on architype patterns, the analysis of Angelou's poetry resonates with young adults at universal psychological level, and fostering perseverance and collective empowerment

Mcleod (2025), in his article titled Carl *Young's Theory of Personality* points out other important aspects of Jung's psychology, particularly the ideas of the persona and shadow. The persona is described as mask; it is external face that human being shows to the world. It represents adopted social roles to meet the expectations of parents, teachers, peers, and society, in this way, persona reflects the conscious part of mind, it is considered the acceptable and desirable side. While the shadow represents the parts of ourselves that human beings reject, deny or fail to recognize. It is rooted in personal and collective unconscious. Shadow holds opposed or uncomfortable feelings. Anyway, overemphasize on persona part and ignore shadow can lead to a shallow personality that is overly based on how other perceive one's personality. However, personal growth required to integrate these aspects of self. This process of bringing together the persona and shadow is part of what Jung called 'individuation ', which is life journey to recognize the conscious and unconscious mind. it is not about challenging or rejecting dark aspects, but it is to become more authentic and accept depth of personalities with its flaws and moving toward self-awareness, self- discovery and to be more balanced and have sense of identity. Achieving consciousness of the shadow requires acknowledging the darker side and aspects of one's personality as real and present. This recognition is not optional; it is essential toward self-knowledge. Be Facing moves the individual beyond fragmentation and gaining the wholeness and understanding the self. Process of facing shadow becomes the pathway to identity, since true identity can only be reached when both dark and light dominations of personality are accepted as part of whole self (Shah & Rahat, 2024). in context of relating individuation to analyzing, it helps to present the ability of poet to acknowledge shadow as part of the self. The act of admitting the darker aspects and voice shadow publicly and openly asserts acceptance and transforms shadow into strength.

Jung's psychoanalytical theory provides framework to analyze young adult poetry on bullying, nurturing empathy and resilience through bibliotherapy. Victims of bullying carry powerful shadow, which it contains suppressed emotions such as

shames, fear, anger, and feeing of worthlessness that are pushed into unconscious because of social rejection and psychological struggles. Bolea (2016) asserts that shadow is "is the inner devil we have committed in the basement of our being, afraid of his aggressiveness and force. We are afraid of our own interiority, this is why we flee from ourselves into the persona" (Bolea, 2016, p.90). Bolea continues by explaining that if persona represents the interface between the ego and the external world, whereas shadow is seen as interface between the ego and deeper self. As Jung's theory describes the shadow as the inferior side of personality, it is the contrast to the ego's idealized image. While persona is displayed publicly, the shadow remains concealed. Jung draws on Freud's idea of repressions and resistance, because Jung in his theory highlights how the shadow is often pushed away through strong defensive mechanism. The ego resists acknowledging the shadow since it embodies traits the individual refuses to accept as part of the self. As consequences, the shadow represents the unwanted and repressed aspects of the ego, it is kind of inner darkness. Draws in Jung's theory, the recognizing and accepting the shadow is the first step toward individual, since no development can occur without coming face to face with hidden dimension of the self. (Bolea, 2016). Therefore, when teens read or engage with poetry that express similar experience of those who have been victimized, the poem reaches into personal unconscious and touch and activate the emotions that have been repressed. Accordingly, poetic voice extends beyond personal unconscious reaching collective one, where archetypes function as symbolic characters represents certain human experience, each archetype embodies specific psychological meaning, for instance, the hero archetype represents the figure who overcomes the difficulties and suffering in order to achieve growth and self-transformation. When adolescent read poems cantered on survival, and resistance to bullying, these texts evoke the hero archetype within the collective unconscious. Briefly, bibliotherapy activates and bring up of heroic qualities such as courage, perseverance and insistence. So, this enhances psychological strength through engaging archetype characters that guide reader into individuation which is reaching to accept the shadow in conscious as part achieving wellbeing process.

**Resistance and Resilience in Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise"**

Maya Angelou's most celebrated poem "*Still I Rise"* (1978) is a powerful declaration of resistance which shows clearly how resistance is part of resilience in response to bullying in form of racism and unfair treatment. The poem gives voice to pine and

encourage individual not to remain silent or accept defeat. Instead, Angelou calls to speak with confidence and hope. Though suffering she resists against surrounding idea that aim to reduce person's sense of worth.

Maya Angelou was born in Missouri, U.S, she was well known for her poems that reflects the history of slavery of Afro-American people. By her simple language which is closed to everyday English as it called 'Black Secular' she shows her fight to survive and hope for better future during facing bulling against her race (Aslam, 2021). Although, Angelou works indented to address the struggles of black people, which clearly address adult, yet it has been used within educational sector in students classroom , according to Stolz (2003) in *Maya Angelou's Poems as a Windo into Her Character*, which is a curriculum unit, that is made to analyze Angelou's poem in primary and secondary schools in purpose of nurturing the empathy, confront rough discrimination, build self-assertation and promote social justice. In similar, book *Poetry for Young People* (2013) recommends collection of Angelou's 25 poems, including "*Still I Rise"* within young adults' literature category.

By interpreting Maya Angelou's *"Still I Rise"* though Jungian framework within psychoanalytic dimension, the research shows that the poem reflects two perceptions together. First, it portrays poet's experience of going through racist situation, this falls within bullying concept. Being a victim, it is barely expressed in lines such *"You may shoot me with your words", "You may tread me in the very dirt" and "Did you want to see me broken? Bowed head and lowered eyes?"* (Angelou, 1994, p.163).

Secondly, it reflects Angelou's resistance against racism and the verbal bullying "*...shoot me with your words"* (Angelou, 1994, p.163). The poet resistance reflects Angelou own build strength and empowerment to defeat racism and bullying and reach indomitable strength and her distinctive identity. Her resistance is expressed in lines such *"But still, like dust, I'll rise", "Just like hopes springing high, Still I'll rise."* (Angelou, 1994, p.163).

Interestingly enough, the poem consists of questions and affirmations, the questions show aims and perception of the bully against the victim. Confrontation takes shape in form of sharp question "*Does my sassiness upset you? Why are you beset with gloom? . . .. Did you want to see me broken? Bowed head and lowered eyes? Shoulders falling down like teardrops, Weakened by my soulful cries? Does my haughtiness offend you?" (Angelou, 1994, p.163)* The lines are a direct confrontation of the oppressors with their real intentions, hatred and bulling and racism. They

reflect the hidden desires of bullies and represent the 'shadow', worries and fears, stuck deep in personal unconscious part. This will lead consequently to the breaking of the victims' confidence and let them feel low self-steam, causing a sense of unworthiness.

According to Ullah (2025) and colleagues Angelou uses these questions not to get answers, as these are rhetorical questions meant to provoke the oppressor to face their own prejudice. At the same time, being aware of the oppressions give Angelou the strength to defeat them. consequently, opposing the shadow by bring it into consciousness, and admitting it openly enables the individuals to integrates painful experiences into their identity. This process allows them to move beyond suffering, transforming it into a source of self-preservation and psychological growth.

Hakim (2022) asserts poet's confidence when Angelou's declare "*Cause I walk like I've got oil wells Pumping in my living room…Don't you take it awful hard' Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines" (Angelou, 1994, p.163)* that in given lines the speaker ignores the perception of the bully, she feels indifferent of what's taken precipitation, as long as she feels conformable and self – reconciliation, she walks like she has 'Oil' and 'golden mines'.( Hakim, 2022). Angelou follows these rhetorical questions with affirmations of her fortitude and self-worth, bring up the defense mechanism, fight for overcome distressing experience, cope with negative feeling, challenging the bully's target in order to fulfill endurance.

Angelou conveys defiance through natural imagery *"Just like moons and like suns, With the certainty of tides, just like hopes springing high, Still I'll rise." (Angelou, 1994, p.163)* the poem reflects the inner struggles of the poet. Angelou comes clear with fights; she bares her emotion in public for what she has been through. Though, she sets down like moon yet defiantly rise like sun, going down and up, Angelou manages to survive. For readers, these lines offer a source of hope amid chaotic and suggest pathways toward overcoming the hardship.

The lines *"You may shoot me with your words, you may cut me with your eyes, you may kill me with your hatefulness, but still, like air, I'll rise."* (Angelou, 1994, p.163) reflect the central component of resilience. Though, the insults are not restricted to words alone, they are conveyed thought the sight of bully. Yet poet keeps resist the hearten, unpleasant feeling by raising above them, and empowering herself. Angelo refuses to be downtrodden or erased from existence. Equally important, as viewed through the therapeutic lens of poetry. These lines become a release of emotion, and

express the suppressed anger; Angelou's voice brings it out. The catharsis is expressed in frustrated language accompanied with sense of victory, releasing uncomfortable feelings that may kept hidden for long time.

However, the rhetorical questions and affirmations together serve the purpose of bibliotherapy concept, enabling the young adults read the lines, in particularly the ones belong to rhetorical questions parts, these questions nurture the empathy towards the victims, thereby they aim to reduce bullying cases by raising the reader's awareness and encouraging them to imagine the feeling of those who are bullied. At the same time, reading the poets responses, in particular for readers who have same experience, enhances the readers' sense of empowerment, and helps to handle similar situation, also it teaches victims how to be proud of themselves and their distinctive identity.

Maya Angelou contests the idea of black inferiority and white superiority that is rooted in American culture. In the poem "Still I Rise", the poets speak against the stereotypes that creates social inequality. Angelou lift up the status of black people as valuable not useless to supports their right of the poet survive by rejecting the false identity imposed on her by society (Aslam, 2021). She embraces and asserts the true identity it promotes self-acceptance, which is the essence of resilience. Merely, existence emphasizes identity, and identity is considered the source the resilience.

In *"Still I Rise"*, Maya Angelou celebrates herself, with triumphant tone that shows her confidence, she objects those who tries to hold her down. By repeating the phrase "*Still I Rise"* for ten times throughout the poem, she makes it clear that no matter what obstacles she faces, she always raises again. Also, the repetition emphasizes on sense of hope and self-confidence. The phrase gives empowering message to readers with touch of protest and resist, showing the poet's refusal to be defeated (Aslam, 2021). through a Jungian approach, the poem can be read as psychological journey toward self- realization and emotional strength. Repeating the line *"Still I Rise"* refers to the activation of the 'Hero archetype', universal figure in collective unconsciousness who overcome obstacle in orders grow strong. Angelou confidently integrates the conscious with 'Shadow', which is suppressed feeling, shame, inferiority and negative experience that are caused by racism, all are existence in personal unconsciousness. By speaking up and confronting these feelings, she allows for transforming into strong person. At the same time, she rejects the imposed 'Persona', which is the superficial identity shaped by society. Angelou attempts move toward journey of 'Individuation' it is Jungian process of becoming

whole reaching to complete self-archetype. By that way, the poem helps psychological well-being and offering reader resilience process and encourage empowerment for bullied and empathy for none-victims

The legacy of racism is portrayed in *"You may write me down in history. With your bitter, twisted lies, …Out of the huts of history's shame, I rise. Up from a past that's rooted in pain, I rise. I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide"* (Angelou, 1994, p.164). In these Lines, Angelou shows that racism, that based on bulling, it is not recent problem, it has long history of silence. She tackled this topic directly, showing how it passes across generation to control and humiliate others. Yet her message addresses young adults today, these lines raise awareness by showing that bullying is part of historical harmful cycle. She calls the teens to stand against cruelty behavior; they teens have to put an end to old based discrimination. it is

The readers are invited to apply the lesson of self-assertation, the poem offers a means of survives, this calls integration and insight phase, which echoes in such lines:" *Just like moons and like suns," and" Out of the huts of history's shame I rise*" (Angelou, 1994, p. 163-164). Young adult readers gain insight into transforming collective pain into strength. In this way resilience becomes a path to reclaiming identity and well-being

**Conclusion**

This search demonstrates that poetry as therapy has significant psychological impact on young adult readers. The study set out to explore how young adults react to poetry as corrective mirror against false reflection of environment, analyzing Maya Agelou's "Still I Rise", the findings assert that the false image constructed by bully cannot endure when poetry collapses this distortion, instead promoting resilience as means of resistance without giving or surrendering to imposed identities.

The research shows that YA poetry functions not merely as art but therapeutic tools facing bully and prejudice. Based on Jung's theoretical framework, Angelo's turns historical oppression into resilience, while, structure exposes direct words of bully, enabling the reader to engage with authentic. The poem promotes to encounter shadow and integrate into persona, guiding self-balance toward individuation, the journey of self-worth and identity development. The poem provides catharsis and psychological survival for victims, while cultivate awareness for bystanders, they transforming the silence into solidarity and open the pathway toward psychological growth and social justice.

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# شعر اليافعين كأداة مقاومة: التنمر و تنمية التعاطف في قصيدة مايا انجيلو "سأظل انهض"

الباحثة: عبير حسين أ.م. شيماء زهير
كلية الاداب –جامعة الموصل
Gmail abeer.24arp15@student.uomosul.edu.iq

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** اليافعين، العلاج بالشعر/بالقراءة، التنمر، القدرة على الصمود، التعاطف، مازلت انهض

**الملخص:**

تتناول هذه الدراسة البحثية شعر اليافعين الذي كتبته شاعرة بهدف مقاومة التنمر وتعزيز التعاطف. وذلك عبر التحليل النصي لقصيدة مختارة. ان للتنمر اثر الغ العمق، اذ غالبا ما يؤدي الى اضرار نفسية طويلة الامد، بل قد تدفع الضحايا في حالات عدة الى الانتحار. تستعرض هذه الدراسة البحثية كيف يعمل شعر اليافعين كمرأة تصحيحة في مواجهة الانعكاسات الزائفة للبيئة المحيطة. وذلك من خلال تفاعل القراء مع نصوص شعرية تكشف التحيز و التنمر و تنمي في الوقت ذاته القدرة على الصمود و التعاطف .من ثم، يمكن للشعر ان يكون اداة علاجية تجعل من القوة الداخلية و التعاطف تدخلا ملحا. كما سيتم تحليل قصيدة مايا انجلو "ساظل انهض" في ضوء منظور عالم النفس كارل يونغ: حيث تجسد قصيدة انجيلو مقاومة جماعية ضد الاضطهاد العنصري، و توضح كيف تتحول حالة الاتضعاف الى قوة مقاومة من خلال التساؤلات، ة التوكيدات، و الصوت الشعري. تشير النتائد الى ان الشعر اليافعين لا يعكس فقط نضالات المراهقين المهمشين، بل ينمي ايضا التعاطف لدى " المراقبين" (المحيطين بالوقعة) عبر تشجعهم على ادراك معاناة الاخرين و هو مايهدف بالنتيجة الى الحد من حالات التنمر.