ARGUMENTATION

For technique is the means by which the writer’s experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and finally, of evaluating it. And surely it follows that certain techniques are sharper tools than others, and will discover more; that the writer capable of the most exacting technical scrutiny of his matter will produce works with the most satisfying content, works with thickness and resonance; works which reverberate, works with maximum meaning. . . .

[Mark Schorer, “Technique as Discovery”, 20th Century Literary Criticism, 1975, p. 387]

Technique is the conscious and deliberate attempt of Maya Angelou to give form and shape to her feelings, thoughts and experiences, and her germinal ideas. This African American woman genius-artist, with astounding craftsmanship, weaves ingeniously the different strands of their artistic and well-crafted works by resorting to the elements of fiction and a number of literary techniques. In fact, she puts them to the optimum artistic use.

In the absence of the elements of fiction and a number of literary techniques, the feelings, thoughts and experiences, and germinal ideas of Maya Angelou would constitute a stillborn baby without the emergence of the life force in it. When form, technique and theme blend well, a literary masterpiece is born. Form and theme

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dictate the techniques and all the three in turn enhance the central idea lending it
distinct and unique texture and tone. The pithy argument of Mark Schorer is worth
recording here [“Technique as Discovery”, 20th Century Literary Criticism, 1975, p.
391]:

Technique alone objectifies the materials of art . . .

Incidentally, it ought to be stressed that the literary goal of Maya Angelou, the
African American woman genius, has been to turn into astounding creative self. And
it must be mentioned to her credit that she has achieved a great measure of success in
this regard. She could do so because she is able to employ her powers of imagination,
inborn talents, writing capacities, inspiration, and apt modes of expression in a
carefully combined and artistically fused manner for creating aesthetic artefacts.

Maya Angelou, the African American woman genius, and astounding
craftswoman, is justly renowned for her ability to introduce word pictures. To put it
differently, like Walt Whitman, the Father Figure of American literature, she is a great
image-maker.

Maya Angelou happily marries memory with imagination and creates a sense
of a sunlit world, which is the hidden positive in her art products. She employs irony
and paradox to great fictional advantage.

Moreover, Maya Angelou does not ignore the elements of poetry or fiction, or
autobiography. Furthermore, she honours the requirements enunciated by Kenneth
Burke in his Dramatic Pentad - Drama of Thinking. And from the point of view of a
modern rhetorician, if one examines her literary products, one becomes aware of the
fact that exposition, narration, description, and argumentation receive their proportionate and balanced attention in the works of Maya Angelou.

Moreover, in the art products of Maya Angelou, the astounding craftswoman, there is the perfect beginning, the gradual growth and development to the middle, and finally to the perfectly contrived and composed end. Each beginning is an entrance into a time and a place, and a culture and a faith and an eternity. At the beginning of her literary works there is the voice, which comes out of nothing, and through the printed pages Maya Angelou creates the illusion that someone somewhere is speaking to the reader. The narrator is the omniscient “I” or the authentic “I” where the ego of the author and the alter ego of the author coalesce and merge.

The love of Maya Angelou for the specific is one reason why her literary products are endowed with such luminosity. In her hands the subject of the specific receives loving attention. Specificity, not reality, is reality. In fact, the reader is led into a world in which only art and language preserve the reader from the horrifying passage of time.

Maya Angelou leads the reader into a passageway of delight and fascination with not only the possibilities of the imagination and language, but the staggering possibilities of the human dream of art as a vision of immortality. As a result reality assumes for the reader an elusive quality of circular timelessness. She fights, in fact, time and death with love and art.

Maya Angelou asserts that artistic perception and design can transcend human fortunes and misfortunes; and chaos can be ordered by transforming the world into
significant aesthetic form. In fact, design, it is true, is everything for Maya Angelou, the African American woman writer. She is interested in style, beauty and quality. Yet again, the subject of her art is life, and she understands it through imaginative leanings. She adroitly marries the past with the present. In fact, like William Faulkner she hauls the past the past into the present and projects both into the future.

The literary products of Maya Angelou are edifices whose every corner deserves the closest attention, and such an examination is invariably a rewarding experience. Her art products yield and present to the aesthetic sense the peculiar hardness of a finished fully meant thing. Her sentences are beautiful out of context and doubly beautiful in it.

Maya Angelou handles poetry, or fiction, or autobiography as the protean form. She tells her tale in numerous ways, and through various points of view. The story unfolds itself chronologically or jumps blithely from present to past and back again.

In the hands of Maya Angelou poetry, or fiction, or autobiography is more than a look into the world as she witnesses it. It is the product of craft and intelligence. After the reader has read such a literary product, he becomes aware of the fact that he knows more about the characters and situations than what has been divulged by Maya Angelou, the woman artist.

Maya Angelou, before and in the process of creating her art products, has ranged much further across the lives of her characters that her tale permits them to cover explicitly. The finished work, which is an instance of a well-crafted work, is
supported by the massive emotional and intellectual involvement on the part of this great writer.

This is the relationship that the reader feels when he reads the works of Maya Angelou, and senses that he knows more about the people and situations and events presented by her directly. It is stressed that there are only two sources that a fiction writer draws upon. The one is that of his personally experienced feelings, thoughts and experiences and the other is that of others. Then the question arises that if all the materials for a literary product are so derived, then what is there, that is creative about writing. And the art of architecture provides the right answer.

A beautiful building is made up of hunks of metal, concrete slush, and other products of earth, air, and water. And yet when the builder has finished with these prosaic things, he has created something splendid. He has arranged reality creatively. A literary product, too, is one of creative arrangement, achieved by the writer through selection of the material of real life and the real world, which he has acquired either directly or vicariously.

In other words, the literary work that is well crafted is both a window into a segment of the human experience and an interpretative record of it by one who has either lived it himself or who has somehow understood and experienced it vicariously. Yet again, a good work of art takes the reader into another area of experience, which is the real world of the imagination. Moreover, a good literary product is perfectly contrived to be multi-dimensional and multi-layered in character. The literary products of Maya Angelou meet all these requirements.
It ought to be noted that in the history of fiction, the term, *plot*, has come to mean a very particular kind of story structure, a structure that has often been charted to show the entanglement, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement or catastrophe - *Freytag’s Pyramid*.

While many literary products do not have a plot in this sense of the word, all fictions have conflict. And the term, *plot*, connotes a formal, relatively inflexible structure, one that originally described the structure of prose narratives. But the term, *conflict*, simply means that a fiction brings together two opposing forces, which are called a protagonist, that is, one who struggles for, and an antagonist, that is, one who struggles against, and then develops and resolves the struggles between these two forces. And conflict is the backbone of a play or fiction. It is conflict that provides with pattern and direction, and a sense that it is moving towards somewhere.

But conflict must be handled in certain ways if it is to be convincing and effective. There are certain basic requirements that must be met by the writer. In the first place the conflict must be significant and it must be of obvious importance to the characters involved. Every individual confronts conflicts in his life and most of them are resolved. But there are certain conflicts, which cannot be resolved in one’s life.

Everyone experiences conflicts that have a permanent effect on one. These conflicts alter or modify one’s character, values, ideals, or concepts in some way. Such conflicts are introduced in dramas or fictions and they are termed crisis conflict. As a result of a given conflict, the characters involved will never again be quite the people they were before the incident occurred.
The second characteristic of effective conflict is that the two opposing forces must be relatively equal in strength. In this respect a well-crafted fiction is like a good prize-fight, where the outcome is withheld till the end. Hence, a skilful writer will balance opposing forces so that the outcome of a poetry, or fiction, or autobiography, remains in suspense till the end. Moreover, in a work of art, there must be unity. This is a comprehensive term. Unity means everything.

The conflict, the characters, the theme, the point of view, and the incidental devices must be unified and functional and must be related to the fiction’s basic purpose or effect. In the narrower sense of the term unity of conflict alone, the fiction must follow logically from a preceding development. A writer may manage all these and still fail to convince, for his conflict may lack the most essential characteristic of fiction, that of plausibility. Like unity, plausibility involves the whole tale. There is, however, one general principle on which the tale rests. The most convincing fiction will be one that most closely approximates life as the reader has experienced it.

Writers also employ other devices that are peculiarly associated with narrative handling. In fictions, the artist has to establish time, place, character, or the historical and social background before plunging the reader into the conflict. The writer arouses the interest of the readers by arousing curiosity or by intensifying conflict by means of dilemmas. But conflict is one of the several elements in a fiction.

All elements in a fiction are closely related and constantly interact with each other. This is particularly true of conflict and character for a fiction has to happen to somebody.
Indeed in the objective fiction the characters in large part determine the nature, development, outcome, and effects of the conflict. And it can therefore, be safely argued that character is at least as essential to the play or fiction as conflict is. Unless the reader is interested in a character in a fiction, he is not going to be interested in what happens to him. It ought to be stressed that the storyteller is trying to communicate experience. For vicarious experiences can be communicated only in a very special way. Most of the elements of a drama or fiction cannot be handled directly, as a generalization is handled. On the other hand, they are handled indirectly. Another way of putting this is to say that a writer shows rather than tells. Much of the story’s action and most of its characterization, its theme, its emotional effects are implied or suggested rather than stated.

A storyteller does not tell the reader that a character is selfish, but shows the person acting selfishly. A storyteller does not write essays, but gives the reader a fiction from which the reader has to deduce the theme. The good writer knows that handling these elements in any other way will fail to communicate at all.

Moreover, plausible characterization, like plausible conflict defies complete analysis. But again one can generalize that the most convincing characters are those whose behaviour is one observed in life. This means, among other things that the characters must be consistent. And one important difference between a fiction and life is that the behaviour of characters in fictions imitates what people usually do, not what they occasionally do.

The plausible character in a fiction must be motivated. One is concerned in a fiction with not only what the character does but why he does so. One can accept the
fact that a character can change if the writer can show a convincing reason for that change. Such a character will still be consistent. Other kinds of characters fail to convince a sophisticated reader. Mature readers find stock characters implausible. As such readers will also reject the oversimplified or flat character, the character, who is reduced to a single one dimensional character trait.

Sophisticated readers find the round or relatively complex character more plausible. The kind of character one comes across in a fiction can help the reader to understand the story’s purpose. In general, characters fall into one of three categories. Probably the majority of the characters are called typical.

The human race is subject to division or subdivision. These groupings are determined by such things as one’s occupation, one’s position on a socioeconomic ladder, one’s ancestry, or one’s age. And because human beings are mimics, one’s personality tends to be stamped by the groups to which one belongs. Thus, a typical character is one who represents a group.

But regardless of whether one is Black or White, old or young, rich or poor, one shares with all members of the human race certain characteristics, instincts, values. All share such abstractions as love, hate, pity and joy. All human beings share many of the desires - - the desire for wealth or power, for status, for love, for life, for comfort. Some characters share traits with their brothers and sisters everywhere. Such characters are termed universal characters.

But then universal characters are pushed one step further into allegorical characters, characters that are not people but symbols of abstract human traits. At the
other extreme there are the individual characters. An individual character is one who is unique rather than representative. Conflict and character are the two most basic and necessary elements of a poem or fiction. But all stories also have a third, which is theme.

Theme is the application that the story has for the reader, the generalization that is derived from the story, the comment that that the story makes on some aspect of the human condition. The idea of theme cannot be equated with that of a moral or a lesson. Although a fiction can deal with ethical or moral problems or values, many stories do not, and those serious and intelligent ones that do are often concerned with challenging, not reaffirming, moral axioms or platitudes.

Good stories do not teach, they reveal; they do not preach, they interpret. In the truly intelligent and honest story, the theme cannot be reduced to any pat maxim. Human experience is complex, and the thoughtful story illustrates a complexity that will be manifested in a number of ways. For one thing, no intelligent story will suggest that a given generalization is always true. It will be true only under certain circumstances.

For another thing, the subjects and predicates of a story’s theme will be constantly modified, or ambiguous, or ambivalent; good will never be totally good, or evil completely evil. Finally, a story’s theme will never apply to all human beings at all times. They are the most independent, most elastic, and most prodigious of literary forms. They are native to a few cultures.
Maya Angelou imagines new circumstances of life as normally experienced by readers, and invents characters whose feelings and actions readers find interesting, and entertaining, and even enthralling. One method for thus developing the fascination of commonplace actuality is to contrast what seems to what is.

Moreover, Maya Angelou admirably and adequately explores the complexities in point of view, the angle from which a story is told in her Oeuvres. And she fully develops the ambiguities intrinsic to telling a story, ambiguities that are elided in other narrative forms.

The style is invariably mannered, unique and distinctive and individualistic as far as Maya Angelou is concerned. Moreover, her style is based on the concept that actuality is, by and large, something objective that all the readers can perceive in the same way. However accurate the storyteller is, his or her representation must be limited, showing how things appear from one perspective, thus implying other ways in which the same material might be represented.

Because the work of art is concerned with the normal and everyday life, its implications force readers to notice that what they take for granted as normal might be seen as odd. The work of art makes readers evaluate their social norms. It is with such a background study one examines the Oeuvres of Maya Angelou to appreciate and evaluate and interpret her high level of craftsmanship. Incidentally, the pointed observation is worth recording here [Patricia Waugh, Metafiction, 1972, p. 201]
The logic of everyday world is replaced by forms of contradiction and discontinuity, radical shifts of context which suggest that “reality as well as “fiction” is merely one more game with words. . .

Maya Angelou gains maturation as the artist of excellence, significance, and relevance and consequence. This genius-artist has struck maturation only through hard labour, commitment to writing well, and cerebration. It is through hard labour and sweat that Maya Angelou has attained the higher level of sophistication in writing. Understandably, only elitist readers could delve deep into their mature art products. Only then one could glean at the purpose sense underlying the works of Maya Angelou. Her works are governed by the best traditions of *Gestalt*.

Maya Angelou maintains in her fictions, under discussion, that strong aggressive impulses must be sublimated to group life. The reason is that society would not accept and tolerate the strong impulsive behaviour of any individual. And for putting this into effect, Maya Angelou admirably and adequately employs the medium of fiction. In this context, the pointed observation of Paul Cobley is worth quoting here [*Narrative*, 2001, p. 42]:

. . . the novel form has had a formidable influence within the field of narrative in the West. Among many theorists there has been a broadly held view that the many complexities of the novel form, its devices and recurrent characteristics, have had a profound impact on the way that literate humans seek to represent the world. . .
And in literary works there is the tradition, valorised in extant epics, which intersperses imitative mimesis with the voice of the author. Maya Angelou’s works employs this device at length, although it is palpable in relatively minor details such as the peopling of narratives with characters whose names would reveal their attributes. But to a large extent Maya Angelou endeavours to distance herself from the constructedness of her mimetic works.

Once again, in this context, the pointed observation of Paul Copley is worth quoting here [Narrative, 2001, p. 82]:

The voice of the narrator or even the voice of the author was obviously important to novelists: this was the means to tell the public about moral imperatives or issues of the day. But imitative mimesis was indispensable: the novel audience increasingly wanted narratives, which were neither parables nor allegories whose outlandish nature was to be decoded into everyday terms. Instead, the novel was to be realistic in a general sense, wit characters broadly imitating the speech of people with situations broadly resembling real situations in the world and with events tending to follow the logic that they would in life. A depiction can never be that which it depicts, of course; it follows, then, that the realism, which readers might demand of narrative is always an approximation or a compromise [Italics as in the Original]. . . .

In such a context, the importance of the omniscient narrator is felt. In fact, an omniscient narrator can use narrator’s voice to say what he or she likes without fear of
it being out of character. The cutting from person to person, from utterance to utterance, and finally to another scene is one example of omniscient narration in that the choices about what is presented are made for the audience by a narrating agency who can, potentially, take the perceptive reader to any scene.

Moreover, the pointed observation of Paul Coble is worth quoting here for its reveals another interesting perspective [Narrative, 2001, p. 107]:

Indeed, if it is the case that narrative is bound up with the establishment of identities associated with nationality, class, gender, occupation, or even a sense of opinions, or one’s place in the world in relation to others, then the novel, as a dialogic form, cannot escape an orientation to be historical. It cannot avoid recoding the relations of signs top other signs or voices to other voices, rather than simply depicting individuals [Italics as in the Original]. . . .

From the point of view of structural analyses it ought to be stressed that structural analyses aim at systematically describing the conditions governing the production of meaning in a fiction, which is to articulate a particular interpretation of that fiction. In this context the pointed argument of Roland Barthes is worth quoting here [Quoted in Narrative, 2001, p. 117]:

A literary work is a very special semantic system, whose goal is to put meaning in the world but not a meaning. . . .

In this kind of analysis structuralism focuses on the fixity of relations within synchronic systems at the expense of the temporal diachronic dimension of literature
that involves history. Moreover, since one never transcends culture one can never examine it from outside. There is no standing free of structures of meaning, no natural state free of the structural interplay that constitutes meaning.

After discussing the characteristic features of Gestalt it becomes necessary to concentrate on narration, story, plot line, characterization, description, and argumentation, which are the main elements or the principal components of fiction.

Generally, the term, narrator, is meant to stand for a person who tells a story in the first person “I”. This kind of a narrator is an authentic “I” or an imaginative “I” or a combination of both in of Herman Melville’s magnum opus, Moby Dick [1963, p. 1], which runs thus:

I am Ishmael [My Emphasis]. . .

But by and large, in particular connotation, the word, narrator stands for the recording consciousness that an author creates who may or may not be a participant in the events of a story.

When the narrator is cast as a participant in the events of the story, he or she is a dramatized character, who says “I”. Such a narrator is either the protagonist or the mere observer standing a little to one side, watching a story unfold that mainly involves someone else. A narrator who remains a non-participant of not appear in the story as a character. Viewing the characters, perhaps seeing into the minds of one or more of them, such a character refers to them as “he”, “she”, or “they”. When all knowing - - omniscient - - the narrator sees into the minds of the characters, moving when necessary from one to another.
The narrator turns into an editorial conscience and begins to comment on the nature, character, and activities of characters, approvingly or disapprovingly. The narrator as the impartial omniscience presents the feelings, thoughts, and actions of the characters, but does not judge them or comment on them.

When a non-participant narrator sees events through the eyes of a single character, whether a major character or a minor character, the resulting point of view is sometimes called limited omniscience or selective omniscience. The author, of course, selects which character to see though; the omniscience is his and not the narrator’s.

Narration is always at a higher level than the story it narrates. Thus, an extradiegetic narrator, and the hypodiegetic level by a digetoic intradiegetic narrator narrate the diegetic level. These functions are sometimes present separately or sometimes in combination. At this juncture it becomes necessary to examine the relations between narration and the story.

Since narration is like an event like any other, it can maintain and entertain various temporal relations with the events of the story. In the first place *ulterior narration* concerns itself with the events that are narrated after they have happened.

Secondly, there is the distance maintained between the narration and the events that have taken place. But a narration after the event (normally in the past tense) is not the only possibility.

When telling and acting are not simultaneous but follow each other in alternation, narration is of the fourth type, namely, *intercalated*. As central as plot to
the meaning of a piece of fiction is point of view; indeed plot and points of view are inextricably related.

Like plot the concept of point of view is very simple and yet capable of very complex variations and development in practice, all of which affect the meaning of a story. James Hunt argues to the point thus [Literature: A Contemporary Introduction, 1994, pp. 26-27]:

First Person (“I”)

1. The main character tells his or her story

2. A minor character tells the main character’s story

Second Person (“You”)

(Second-person narratives are quite rare, because of the ambiguity of trying to involve the reader [“you”] in an imaginary action.)

Third Person (“he,” “she”)

1. Omniscient. An “all-knowing” narrator can be everywhere in the story at once and has unlimited access to the thoughts and feelings of the characters.

2. Limited Omniscient. The narrator has access to the thoughts and feelings of only some of the characters.
Objective.

The narrator has no access to the character’s thoughts and feelings and reports only what could be observed externally. . . .

The scheme of analyzing point of view does not take into account a number of possible variations. The distinction between “major” and “minor” characters in first person narratives does not distinguish between minor characters who are personally involved in the action and ones who are only observers, although this might be important. And the category of limited-omniscient third-person point of view does not distinguish between various kinds of limitations.

Henry James, whose theory and practice of fiction have been influential, held that an excellent way to tell a story was through the fine but bewildered mind of an observer. Henry James observes thus [“Modern Fiction,” in Collected Essays, 1967, p. 97]:

It seems probable that if we were never bewildered, there never would be a story to tell about us; we should partake of the superior nature of the all-knowing immortals whose annals are dreadfully dull so long as flurried humans are not, for the positive relief of bored Olympians, mixed up with them. . . .

Once again, James Hunt argues to the point thus [Literature: A Contemporary Introduction, 1994, p. 27]:
Accordingly, some critics of fiction have created many more categories. No matter how many categories are used, however, the reader still has to be attentive to the variations in point of view in any particular story. So it is probably best to keep the categories few in number and keep in mind the possibility of variations.

As such, an author must choose a point of view (or sometimes, several points of view) from which he or she will narrate the story. The choice will contribute to the total effect that the story will have.

In a narrative fiction there is the succession of fictional events, by which it is meant that narrative fiction usually consists of more than one event, although single-event narratives are theoretically (and perhaps also empirically) possible. And an event is defined without great rigor as something that happens, something that can be summed up by a verb or a name of action as for example, “He rode on a tiger.” And narrative fiction differs from other literary genres, such as lyrical poetry or expository prose. Shlomith Rimmon-Kennan elaborates on the point further thus [Narrative Fiction, 1996, p. 2]:

To begin with, the term narration suggests (1) a communication process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addresser to addressee and (2) the verbal nature of the medium used to transmit the message. It is this that distinguishes narrative fiction from narratives in other media, such as film, dance, or pantomime.

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Events can be classified into two main kinds: those that advance the action by opening an alternative ("kernels") and those that expand, amplify, maintain or delay the former (catalysts). And the two main principles of combination are temporal succession and causality.

Incidentally, story is concerned with “How does it turn out? What happens?” But theme is concerned with “What is it about? What does it add up to? What motif holds up the happenings together? What does it make of life, and, perhaps, what wisdom does it offer?” In a good work of fiction the details add up to, and are controlled by some overall purpose.

At this point it ought to be stressed, that language in a fiction signifies without imitating. It is because language can only imitate language, which is why the representation of speech comes closest to pure mimesis. The crucial distinction, therefore, is not between telling and showing, but between different degrees and kinds of telling.

From all that have been discussed analytically thus far, what clearly surfaces is the commitment to writing splendidly and the exquisite mastery over the English language of Maya Angelou. And through the deft handling of image, and symbol, Maya Angelou has created crafted art, and it is to her artistic credit. At this juncture it is interesting to make a note of the observation of Ralph Waldo Emerson [Emerson’s Essays, 1971, p. 205]

The breadth of the problem is great, for the poet is representative. He stands among partial men for the complete man, and apprises us not of
his wealth, but of the commonwealth. The young man reveres men of genius, because to speak truly, they are more himself than he is. They receive of the soul as he also receives, but they more. Nature enhances her beauty, to the eye of the loving men, from their belief that the poet is beholding her shows at the same time. He is isolated among his contemporaries, by truth and by his art, but with this consolation in his pursuits, that they will draw all men sooner or later. For all men live by truth, and stand in need of expression. In love, in art, in avarice, in politics, in labour, in games, we study to utter our painful secret. The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression. . . .

This Doctoral Dissertation identifies Maya Angelou as the creative artist. Her commitment to writing as a career is remarkable. Incidentally, Maya Angelou is identified as the outstanding American intellectual America has ever witnessed.

Maya Angelou employs all the elements of fiction, autobiography, and poetry as enunciated by Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks in their renowned book, *Appreciation of Literature*, and as explicated by Henry James in his *Art of Fiction*, and Robert DiYani in his well-considered critical work, entitled, *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*.

In fact, Maya Angelou introduces the elements of fiction, autobiography, and poetry scrupulously, and carefully, and incidentally, measures herself up to the definitions of an artist as laid down by Emerson and Walt Whitman.
Thus, through language skills, verbal brilliance, word power, and writing capacities and controlled imagination, and writing skills concerning fiction, autobiography, and poetry of Maya Angelou helps her to emerge as the distinguished creative African American woman artist.

Maya Angelou contends that all writing is a fusion of technique and theme. However, she stresses the uniqueness of each poem, each fiction, each autobiography a uniqueness, which results from the fact that in each work there is, or should be, a perfect blend between the subject matter and the manner of expression.

All writing must have meaning and purpose. As a creative artist, Maya Angelou achieves this objective admirably and adequately through her Oeuvres. Maya Angelou maintains that there is no other way to write a specific fiction, poetry, or autobiography than the way in which it has been written. This is because the wisdom it contains is eternally true, and thus it is inevitable it should be stated in such a way. Nevertheless, Maya Angelou does not present the wisdom in a rigid abstract form, which makes her fictions appear as if they were thought out in advance like an abstract philosophical problem. On the other hand, she emphasizes the natural, spontaneous quality of the writing.

Maya Angelou strongly believes that the African American woman artist and her readers must share the excitement and surprise of discovering a truth, which, if it is faithful to life, they have a sense of having known all along. It is the discovery and awareness of recognition, which is most important.
Furthermore, Maya Angelou believes that the African American woman artist must have absolute freedom of her material. She cannot be forced to write for specific occasions. Rather, it must be somewhat passive, allowing experience to come to the African American woman artist, never requiring it to yield hidden meanings, but always allowing it to make its own connections in due time.

By exercising a wise passiveness, the African American woman artist will, in due time, come to discover interrelationships between the fragmentary pieces of knowledge picked up like burrs.

In a sense, the art product for Maya Angelou writes itself, and in putting words down, she is merely discovering the significance of the events or characters he is recording. Because her work records genuine discovery, it always remains fresh and never seems artificial. But then, there is a bursting unity of humanistic concerns and universals.

Moreover, the work of Maya Angelou are replete with passages of cadences, tonal variations, rhetorical flourishes, descriptive beauties, narrative excellence, complexities, ambiguities, technical finesse, in which the thought felt experiences surface to life.

Maya Angelou is universally acknowledged as the imaginative and resourceful fictionist. In fact, through her works she has consolidated her hard won recognition. Maya Angelou goes inside her own self introspectively quite often. But she is more interested in studying the empirical realities and interpreting and evaluating them to life situations.
Maya Angelou is the encouraging preceptor and she is the source of brighter and lighter intelligence. She is for a sense of independence, and she is an individualist first and an artist next. Writing as a career has never been a matter of forced choice for Maya Angelou. But artistic alienation has been self-imposed.

As stated earlier, Maya Angelou has earned her fame and recognition through relentless toil, sweat and hard labour, and through commitment to her writing profession. She has the rare skill for marrying intuition with intellect. She has acute mental agility.

The Weltanschauung of Maya Angelou is broad based, and their Zeitgeist is accurate and authentic. Similarly, her sense of place is authentic and perfect.

In her Oeuvres Maya Angelou subjects gender to literary treatment. But then she maintains a sharp focus on the human condition and the ageless human situations concerning the central women characters.

Maya Angelou is concerned with the lives of the women from the emotional, physical, psychological sexual and social levels. In fact, there is a thorough treatment of all these aspects in her works. She examines carefully and painstakingly how women live in the male dominated world and how women weather all he adverse conditions posed to them by their anatomy, biological determinism and sexuality.

The life of the women is restricted, constricted and checked and full of puzzles. But they are constantly driven by contrary impulses towards freedom and conformity. The movement in all works is towards discovery and re-discovery,
frequently returning to the past. It is precisely because Maya Angelou strongly believes that no one can ever escape one’s past and one’s heritage.

As an honest woman Maya Angelou catches up her own posturing and rationalization. It is because she is intelligent and honest. Therefore, she achieves major recognition and appreciable growth.

In her Oeuvres, Maya Angelou explores the contrasting definitions of women and dramatizes the ways in which a woman’s voice becomes a means for self-realization. As such, it is a perspective on the present that is developed through an understanding of women’s realities in the past and a vision of the future. The focus and concern of humanism has always been on the knowledge of man; in this knowledge man is the measure of humanity and woman is the other.

Humanism has shown the thoughts and images of men where women are shadowy figures in the background, supplying the nurturance for all people and occasionally, the inspiration for a few. Feminism does not seek to reverse these, for it allows one to see the realities of women’s lives that have been invisible to everyone thus far.

The works of Maya Angelou brings into sharp focus the male and the female, the one dominating the other, and the other relegated to the dark background. Regaining consciousness of women’ interests is central to feminism, and it is a major theme in Maya Angelou’s writing. The struggle at the heart of women’s liberation is not a struggle for privilege, but for equality and self-determination. It is not that women can achieve equality and self-determination by using the language of
humanism. Yet, humanism is widely regarded as egalitarian, while feminism is held to be ideological with all the implications of narrow polemic.

Maya Angelou herself separates her feminist sympathies from her sense of writing. Yet art is part of women’s movement and Maya Angelou’s writing is part of that art. Thus, it is established that Maya Angelou is an accommodative, assimilative, and non-aggressive feminist, with the sense of appreciation of the limitations and weaknesses of women. She knows the phenomenal strengths of women and at the same time the biological trap in which she is caught.

Maya Angelou knows that the female anatomy is her destiny. But then the women has to be assertive and never turn weak kneed and cow down under male domination. She has to be watchful and be mindful of the advice song of Gertrude Rainey’s “Trust No Man” [Angela Y. Davis, Blues Legacies an Black Feminism, 1998, p. 57]:

I want all you women to listen to me
Don’t trust your man no further than you eyes can see
I trusted mine with my best friend
But that was the bad part in the end
Trust no man, trust no man, no further than your eyes can see
I said trust no man, no further than your eyes can see
He’ll tell you that he loves you and swear it is true. The very next minute he’ll turn his back on you

Ah, trust no man, no further than your eyes can see [My Emphasis] . . .
This Dissertation is contributory in nature. It is because it offers keen insights into such concepts as Negritude, Black Consciousness, Black Feminism. It projects Maya Angelou as the finest spokesperson of the African American women. There is further scope to examine Maya Angelou in detail against the concept of Negritude and Black identity.

Moreover future Scholars can study autobiography as the main genre against which to study the Oeuvres of Maya Angelou, and for Black women their mothers and grandmothers can serve as their best role models in life and art.