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Textual Analysis 1st Draft

And Still I Rise

“A successful woman is one who can build a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at her” by Unknown. Which means a woman can have many accomplishments and strive for success even when constantly put down by others. This quote is not just directed towards women but people in general. The idea especially ties in very well with the poem entitled And Still I Rise by Maya Angelou which is about facing any obstacle, rising above it, and smiling in the face of your oppressor.

The poem speaks of facing any obstacle placed before you when it says “You may write me down in history with your bitter, twisted lies, you may trod me in the very dirt but still, like dust, ill rise”. Maya Angelou is welcoming her adversary in this line to do whatever he or she want to keep her down but she’ll still faces them head on. In situations such as this a person may fall into despair, but not Maya Angelou. She will face this obstacle and rise like the dust from the very dirt her oppressor tries to drag her threw. Maya Angelou compares her rising to dust because no matter how insignificant it seems, it still rises above, continuing to go higher. Maya Angelou was known to be very strong will which ties in with the quote “Just like moons and like suns with the certainty of tides, just like hopes springing high, still I’ll rise” this idea means she will face any obstacle with such certainty as certain as the sun will rise the next day. “I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide, welling and swelling I bear in the tide “depicts how vast her existence is and that any obstacle place before her cannot stop her from moving forward.

Another point that is shown in the poem is that a person should Rise above any challenge that is place before them. Maya Angelou says “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”. The lines show that no dirty looks or hurtful words can bring her down from how far she has risen. A person can be at the point of hating your very existence but that shouldn’t in no way shape or form stop you from rising above him or her. The poem emphasizes the point of rising above your challenges whether it be a person, disability or traumatic event by continuously repeating “still I rise” after every stanza. “Brining the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave, I rise I rise I rise” connects to the line “Out of the huts of history shame I rise” which Maya Angelou uses to show the tragic part of black history as an epic challenge she had to rise above and be that light at the end of the tunnel for her people. In life all people will face adversity and must overcome it to rise and prosper.

The Poem brings everything together with always smiling in the face of your oppressors. In the poem Maya Angelou says “Did you want to see me broken? Bowed head and lowered eye? Shoulders failing down like teardrops, weakened by my soulful cries” as if she is asking her oppressors if that’s what they’re expecting from her because they will not get that reaction. In the poem it even goes on to seem like she was asking if her joy causes her oppressor pain. “Does my haughtiness offend you? Don’t you take it awful hard cause I laugh like I’ve got gold mines Diggin’ in my own back yard,” depicting that she’s throwing her joy in the face of the same people trying to bring her down. Maya Angelou repeatedly made statement in the poem about her joy that cannot be taken away from her and she does not care how it makes her oppressors feel “Does my sexiness upset you? Does it come as a surprise that I dance like I’ve got diamonds at the meeting of my thighs?”

The poem entitled And Still I Rise by Maya Angelou shows how you can face any obstacles rise above it and face your oppressor with a smile. Like the quote Maya Angelou built a foundation with the bricks thrown at her in the poem.