



SVCR GOVT DEGREE COLLEGE, PALAMANER



CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES 2025-2026

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Papers Published in National/International and UGC Listed Journals:

S. NO .	Title of the Article	Journal Name	ISSN/ ISBN NO. with Impact Factor	UGC/UGC CARE Listed Journal	Month and Year
1	Trauma and Its Transcendence in Maya Angelou's Autobiography, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings Page No: 620-625	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND ANALYTICAL REVIEWS (IJRAR.ORG) Published URL : http://www.ijrar.org/viewfull.php?&p_id=IJRAR25D1203 http://ijrar.org/viewfull.php?&p_id=IJRAR25D1203	E-ISSN: 2348-1269 P-ISSN: 2349-5138 Impact No.7.17	Journal No: 43602 Volume 12 Issue 4 October 2025	October 2025
2	Representation of Transgender as a Theme in the Select Works of Indian and English Literature Page No.118 -121	‘Global Academic Journal of Linguistics and Literature’ Available online at https://gajrc.com/journal/gajll/home DOI: https://doi.org/10.36348/gajll.2025.v07i05.003	ISSN 2706-9028 (P) ISSN 2707-2541 (O)	2025 Volume 7 Issues (5) Page No.118-121	2025 October
3	From Trauma to Triumph: A Study of Select Autobiographies of Maya Angelou	International Journal of Research URL: https://ijrpublisher.net/index.php/volume-14-issue-10-october-2025/	ISSN NO: 2236-6124 Page No. 158 – 165 Impact Factor 5.7	Volume 14, Issue 10, October/2025	Oct 2025
4.	Classroom Management in English Language Teaching: An ESL Perspective.	International Journal of English and Studies (IJOES) Impact Factor: 8.337(SJIF)	ISSN: 2581 – 8333 Page No. 237 - 240	Volume: 08 Special Issue: 01; 2026	Jan. 2026
5	Voicing the Unspeakable : Trauma, Psychological Survival and the	Anhad Lok – Sahitya Dhara	ISSN: 2349 – 137X	Special Issue Jan – June 2026	Page No. 36 - 39

	Power of Positivity – A Trauma Studies Analysis of Maya Angelou’s Early Autobiographies				
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II. Webinars Attended:

S. No.	Title of the Webinar	Organisation /Institution	Date	Conducted by	Mode of Participation	Year of Participation
1.	Research and Publication in English Studies: Trends in Language, Literature and Linguistics	ELTAI, Chennai	28 th September 2025	ELTAI, CHENNAI	Online	28 th September 2025

III. PAPERS PRESENTED IN CONFERENCES

S.No	Conference Title	Organized By	Title of the Conference Paper	From	To
1	Two-Day International Conference on Language, Literature and Linguistics (ICLLL – 2025) Theme: “Bridging Tradition and Innovation: Contemporary Trends in Language and Literature”	REVA UNIVERSITY, Bangalore Karnataka	From Caged Bird to World Stage: Identity and Liberation in Maya Angelou’s Early Autobiographies	13.11.2025	14.11.2025

2	Teaching English in Rural India: Issues, Innovations and Interventions	Govt Degree College, Kuppam, Chittoor Dist (AP)	Classroom Management in English Language Teaching: An ESL Perspective	05 th January 2026	6 th January 2026
4	Reframing the Subaltern Narratives: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Insights	MANUU, HYDERABAD	Reclaiming Voice: Maya Angelou's Uncommon Path to Empowerment and Healing Beyond Trauma	11 th February 2026	12 th February 2026
5	Creativity and Innovation in Research	BEST Innovation University, Gorantla, Anantapuramu (AP)	From Lived Experience to Literary Witness: Re-Imagining History, Identity and Pedagogy through Maya Angelou's Autobiographies	25.04.2026 (Online)	26.04.2026 (Online)

IV. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES COMPLETED

S.No.	Organized by	Name of the Faculty Development Course (FDP)	From	To	Mode of Learning- Offline/Online
1	SSL, VIT, Chennai	Research Methodology in Language Studies	06-10-2025	10-10-2025	Virtual FDP
2	IIT, Roorkee	FDP on Soft Skills (12 Weeks)	July 2025	Oct 2025	Virtual
3	AP Commissioner of Higher Education & GDC, Visakhapatnam	FDP Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Humanities/Commerce & Management.	23 rd Feb 2026	13 th March 2026.	Virtual

VI. Professional Competency (for example RC, OC, Training programs, etc)

S. No.	Course Attended	Conducted by	From	To	Grade
1.	Refresher Course in 'Multiculturalism'	UGC-MMTTC MANUU, HYDERABAD	07-07-2025	19-07-2025	A+

VII. Workshops Attended:

S.No.	Title of the Workshop	Organized by	Organized on	Organized at
1.	Bridging Tradition and Innovation: Contemporary Trends in Language and Literature	Department of Liberal Arts	12.11.2025 To 14.11.2025	Reva University Bangalore

VIII. NPTEL Online Certification courses

S.No.	Organized by	Name of the NPTEL Online Certification courses	From	To	Mode of Learning-Offline/Online
1.	Soft Skills	IIT, Roorkee	July 2025	Oct 2025 12 Weeks	Virtual

IX. SWAYAM COURSES

S.No	C Course Title	Organised By	Title of the Swayam Course	From	To
1	Soft Skills	IIT, Roorkee	Soft Skills	July 2025	Oct 2025 12 Weeks

X. Journal Reviewer/Editorial Board Member

S.No.	Name of the Journal	Details of the Journal	Editorial Board Member From - To	National/ Internal	Impact Factor
1.	International Journal for Research Trends in Social Science & Humanities	ISSN: 2584-2455	13.10.2025 to Till Date	International	1.498
2	Global Academic Journal of Linguistics and Literature (GAJLL)	2706 – 9028 (Print) 2707 – 2541 (Online)	2020 – till date	Scholars Middle East Publishers, Gold Souk, Deira, d – 24 D85, Dubai, United Arab Emirates	1.0

XI. Membership in Professional Bodies:

S.No.	Name of the Professional Body	Year of Joining	Validity Period	Member ID
1.	English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI) D-54 Third Floor, Anandham Apartments 156, SIDCO Nagar Main Road, Villivakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India - 600049	22.09.2025	22.09.2025 To 21.09.2028	A010250081



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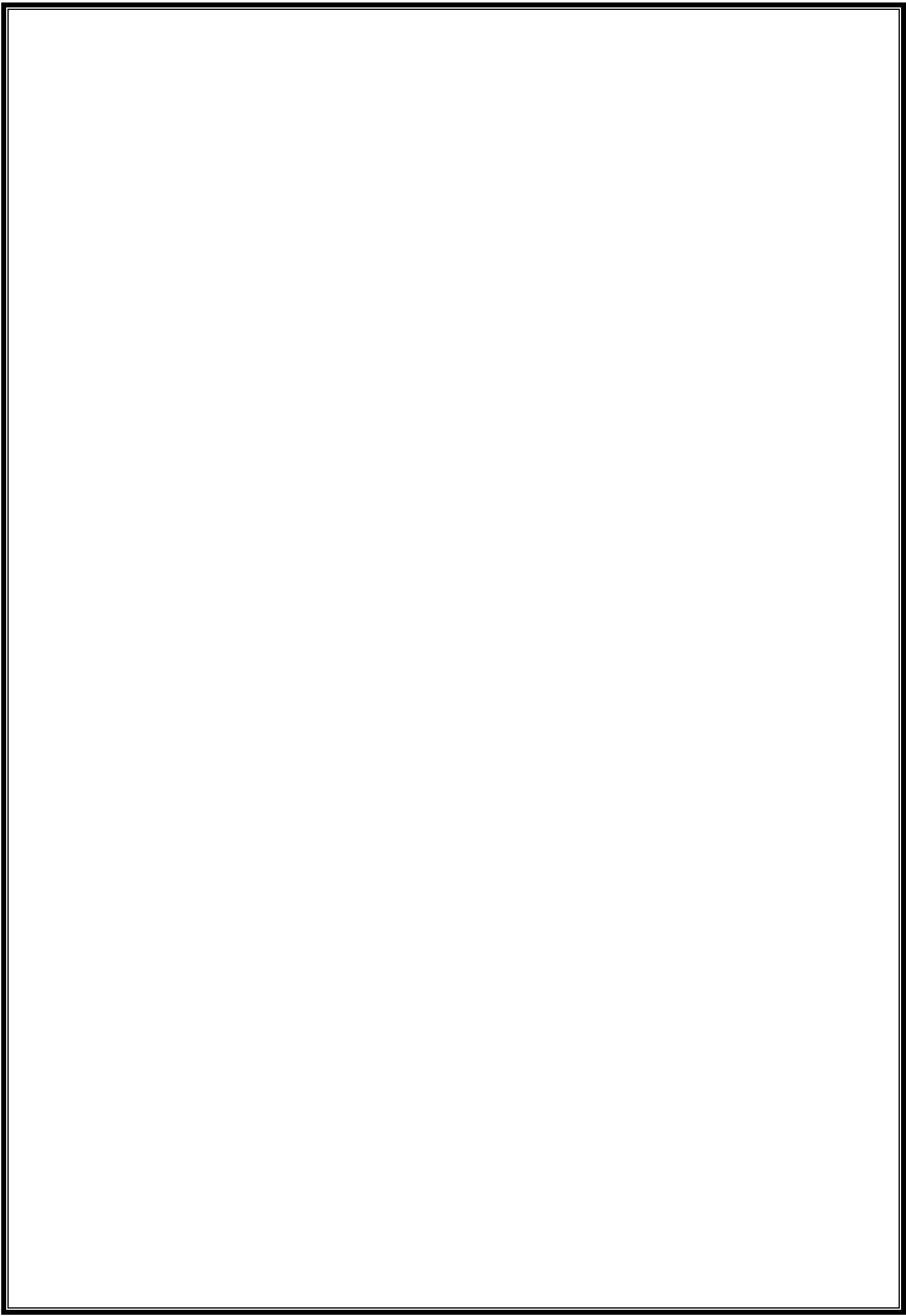
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TRAUMA AND ITS TRANSCENDENCE IN MAYA ANGELOU'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS

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Abstract

The present paper delineates on the autobiographical and traumatic incidents that were connected with the life of Maya Angelou in particular and with the life of Afro-Americans in general in her first autobiography '*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*' (1969). Like a historian, she documents and serialized all the important traumatic incidents and influences that she had in her life. She narrates and pens her life with seven autobiographies in a serial and sequential manner and each autobiography draws the readers' attention to the inhuman racial segregation and exploitation. Her first autobiography '*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*' (1969), sketches out all the incidents, places and people by unveiling the desperate traumatic encounters of her life in 36 chapters. Each of these 36 chapters delineates and discusses the themes of race, gender, sex, rape, segregation etc. from the age of 3 to the age of 16 in an open and detached manner. '*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*', traces out the transformation of a black, timid, shy and voiceless child into an independent and self-reliant black female voice. She was the first Afro-American woman who publicly discusses her private and public life alike and that too in an open and unbiased manner.

Key Words: Race, Gender, Class, Trauma, Segregation, prejudice.

Introduction:

The African – American literary tradition implies the fact that African – American culture is the culture of suppressed people. The history of African – American people is marked with slavery (1619 – 1865), which is characterized by continuous dehumanization, racial segregation and exploitation. Afro – Americans were viewed as people with no history, no cultural heritage, no tradition and no identity in the White American society (DianaMiniataite, 2017:05). For centuries Europeans and Americans advances racial theories of inferiority, which ascribed African-Americans to the lower species and ignored their ownership of cultural, ethical and linguistic values.

Afro-Americans have had personal life stories to tell since 1661, when they were sentenced to slavery in an alien country and thus have produced a long line of narratives recording their fortunes. The practice of telling Black life stories took root in the colonial era of US national development, which recounts how the author freed himself from slavery (Eric D. Lamore, 2017). Works of such nature includes, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860) by Ellen Craft and William Craft, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet Jacobs. Initially, these writers concentrated on the horrors of slavery and the conditions of Blacks prevailing during these slave trading within and outside the African countries. At the end of *American Civil War* in 1865 and the defeat of the slave states, African – American autobiography too moved from the self – narration of the horrors of the slavery to the authors' adjustment to the new found freedom through deft exercise of their ingenuity and hard work. This period in African – American auto-biographical literature is best represented by works such as *Up from Slavery* (1901) by Booker T. Washington and *Black Boy* (1945) by Richard Wright. Few more autobiographies of such nature includes *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965), *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) by Maya Angelou, *Dreams from my Father* (2004) by Barak Obama are the most recent ones to name.

Maya Angelou's seven autobiographies are a real testament of her talent and resilience and as an extra – ordinary writer who loves the world regardless of its cruelty. Speaking about this extraordinary woman, Barak Obama wrote,

'A brilliant writer, a fierce friend and a truly phenomenal woman.'

(Angelou, Maya, 1969:1)

The poems and the stories that she wrote, bear a testimony to her rugged life and the evolution of an Afro-American writer, whose pen demonstrates her inspired life in the form of seven autobiographies. Her first autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was published in the year 1969. In this work she penned her life with utmost detachment to all the traumatic incidents of her life. In this autobiography, she talks about how she and her brother, Bailey Jr. were left alone under the care of her grandmother, due to the divorce of her parents at the tender age of three. She chronicles her growing up at Arkansas with her brother in the formative traumatic life from the age of 3 to 16. These early traumatic years had considerable impact on the mind of the author. During this period of her life, she has shown how difficult it is for Afro-Americans to live and continue one's life in the racist and segregated society of Stamps, Arkansas. Pointing out the differences that exist between the Blacks and Whites, she wrote:

In Stamps the segregation was so complex that most of the Black children didn't really know how white looked like. Other than that they are different to be dreaded and in that dread was included the hostility of the powerless against the rich, the worker against the worked and the ragged against the well-dressed.

(Angelou, Maya. P.27)

The second autobiography she wrote is *Gather Together in My Name* (1974). It chronicles her traumatic life from the age of 17 to 19 years. Her third autobiography, *Singin and Swinging and Getting Merry Like Christmas* (1976) chronicles her life from the age of 20 to 27 years. Her fourth autobiography, *The Heart of a Woman* (1981), deals about her life from the age of 28 to 33. Her fifth autobiography, *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes* (1986) depicts her life from the age of 33 to 36 years. Her sixth autobiography, *A Song*

Flung Up to Heaven (2002), narrates her traumatic life from the age of 36 to 40 years. Her seventh and the last autobiography, *Mom and Me and Mom* (2013) traces her relationship with her mother, Vivian Baxter and her behavior during the abandonment of her and her elder brother, Bailey Jr. when they were kids and left under the care and guidance of her grandmother. Thus, all the seven autobiographies depict the traumatic and emotionally disturbing situations that she had faced and how she had won over her colour consciousness and how by the dint of her hard work and persistent struggle, she turned every trouble into an opportunity and achieves success as a first Afro-American writer to write a series of seven autobiographies of her life. Maya Angelou's seven volume of autobiographies are a testament to the talent and resilience of this extra-ordinary writer.

Thus, Maya Angelou uses her autobiographies to explore the themes of racism, class, gender, family relations, divorce, rape, literacy etc. through her autobiographies. Maya Angelou demonstrates and chronicles her life from the age of 3 to 40 years, and the seven autobiographies correspond to these years of her life.

Influence of Trauma on Child's Psyche and Persona:

The impressions that a child records ever since his/her infancy with the reinforced messages that she/he perceives from the environment in which the child grows up and the messages being stored in the deeper recesses of the psyche and persona. Gardner, Professor of Education and an adjunct Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, points out in his book, *Learning Minds* (2011) that by the age of five, most of the children have formed a basic paradigm based on their early experiences that shapes their view of what life is about, how it works and how to cope with it. He calls this *Unschooling Mind* (5). Maya Angelou started carrying the pain of her personal trauma at the age of three, when she reached Arkansas to live with her grandmother as an abandoned child, owing to her parents' divorce along with her brother Bailey Jr. wearing tags on our wrists which instructed – To Whom It may concern! (Angelou, Maya. 1969:7). This incident had a dent on her self-esteem at a tender age, when love, joy, innocence should have been the predominant emotions.

People who encountered such traumatic events in life, undergo emotional disruptions and pain and this in turn make them emotionally dysfunctional. The surplus of counterproductive emotions would affect one's mental disposition adversely and ultimately turning him or her into a negative personality. The novels like *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) by Maya Angelou, *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison, *The Small Backs of Children* (2015), by Lidia Yuknavitch, *The Untamed State* (2014) by Roxane Gay explores the complex meditation on trauma. Many of these above novels addresses the subject through the structure of a story. Each of these novels explores how survivors process and communicate their pain and how often their stories go unheard or forgotten. But trauma is persistent and embedded in the lives of Blacks' in America.

As with the Afro-Americans in America, Maya Angelou too suffered rejection, insecurity, sorrow, fear and a sense of worthlessness. She had to enroll herself in a segregated Negro School due to colonial discrimination.

Unlike the White high school, Lafayette County Training School distinguished itself by having neither lawn nor hedges, nor tennis court, nor climbing ivy. Its two buildings were set on a dirt hill with no fence to limit either its boundaries or those of bordering farms.

(Angelou, Maya. P.183)

Right from the age of three, she and her brother were subjected to utter poverty and suffering at the hands of white people in Arkansas. The oppression and supremacy of white people created a fear psychosis in her, and she struggled to comprehend the colour consciousness that invited much abhorrence from the whites. Getting proper treatment of any health problem is a big problem for Southern Black people of America. They have to travel 20-30 km in order to find a primary health centre or a proper doctor for their ailment (Angelou, Maya. P.200). When the black people approach nearby white doctors even in emergency, they face racial discrimination and humiliation.

Annie everybody has a policy. In this world you have to have a policy. Now, my policy is I don't treat colour people. Annie, my policy is I'd rather stick my hand in a dog's mouth than in a nigger's.

(Angelou, Maya. P.202-203)

In her essay, *Wouldn't Take Nothing*, Angelou reinforces this perspective when she states, "It is said that persons have few teachable moments in their lives (1969:87) and Maya Angelou recounts such moments with her grandmother between the ages of three and thirteen. Imparting key lessons in moral, ethical and spiritual values in children right from the beginning will shape them as good citizens in society. According to *Helen Taylor* (2001), teaching children the key lessons is fundamental in shaping a just and righteous society. As such, Maya Angelou is in a way lucky to have a benevolent and god fearing grandmother, whose Christian morals gave her a purpose in her life and steer one's life on a good path irrespective of discrimination against blacks. Her mother too had a great influence over Maya Angelou and helped her to navigate over the difficult times of her life. She encouraged her grand-daughter to be bold enough to face the world with boldness and with utmost dignity.

On my way out of the house one morning she said, "Life is going to give you just what you put in it. Put your whole heart in everything you do and pray, then you can wait." Another time she reminded me that God helps those who help themselves."

(Angelou, Maya. P.288)

The traumatic experiences that Maya Angelou encountered might have negatively affected a person of lesser conviction but not Maya Angelou. The unwavering faith witnessed in the members of her community in Arkansas, the sermons, the worship, the church choir that enlivened her spirit and other spiritual practices in the Episcopal Methodist church round the week nurtured the spiritual elements within Maya Angelou to provide meaning to her life. In the absence of backing from her parents, Maya Angelou left lonely to develop herself and improves her individual condition. That's why *Edward Gibbon* rightly pointed out,

Every person has two educations, one which he receives from others and the one, more important, which he gives to himself.

(Smiles, Samuel. P.276)

Maya Angelou too have her life lessons from others and from her traumatic experiences and comes out successfully. Her life is an inspired example for others to follow and fight one's traumatic conditions by realizing one's worthiness.

Conclusion:

The Black female is assaulted in her tender years by all those common forces of nature, at the same time she is caught in the tripartite crossfire of masculine prejudice, white illogical hate and Black lack of power. The fact that the adult American Negro female emerges a formidable character is often met with amazement, distaste and even belligerence. It is seldom accepted as an inevitable outcome of the struggle won by survivors and deserves respect, if not enthusiastic acceptance.

Maya Angelou's description of her life – both private and public with utmost detachment and openness. Thus, she moves away from the traditional autobiographical writings and moves ahead in the description and reflection of her private parts with her mother very often and sometimes in an introspective manner.

The Well of Loneliness, was my introduction to lesbianism and what I thought of as pornography. For months the book was both a treat and a threat. It allowed me to see a little of the mysterious world of the pervert.

(Ibid, P.293)

My hands and my feet were also far from being feminine and dainty. In front of the mirror, I detachedly examined my body. For a sixteen-year old my breasts were sadly underdeveloped. They could only be called skin swellings even by the kindest critic.

(Ibid., P. 294)

Toni Morrison also praises Maya Angelou and her talent as a writer of autobiographies with such an open-mindedness and candid delineation of her life and in this respect, there was none to compare with her. She noted that,

She was important in so many ways. She launched African – American women writings in the United States. She was generous to a fault. She had nineteen talents – used ten. And was a real original. There is no duplicate.

(Ibid., 1969: i)

In all her works, she has effectively voiced the hopes and aspirations, the defeats, desolation and disillusionment and failures and frustrations faced by them in her works. Maya Angelou strongly argues in her oeuvre that life for the Blacks, chiefly the Black women must alter for the better in American society. This vision of a better world is the message of Maya Angelou but her life is her best message.

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Representation of Transgender as a Theme in the Select Works of Indian and English Literature

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Abstract: The third gender, particularly transgender individuals, remains largely misunderstood by mainstream society due to deep-rooted taboos and a lack of open discourse. Often marginalized, they are viewed with contempt and prejudice by cisgender individuals, who perceive them as deviating from prevailing gender norms. Rather than acknowledging their lived realities, society frequently dismisses them as a masquerade—people in disguise or cross-dressing—rather than recognizing their authentic identities. A key factor behind the violence and discrimination faced by hijras is society's inability to accept non-binary identities that challenge rigid gender divisions. Rooted in patriarchal structures, societal expectations dictate strict gender roles, making it difficult for those who do not conform to traditional masculinity or femininity to find acceptance. This aligns with Judith Butler's concept of 'gender performativity,' which suggests that gender is not an inherent identity but a set of repeated behaviours imposed by society. By failing to acknowledge gender as fluid and socially constructed, conservative norms continue to marginalize and oppress transgender individuals. The representation of transgender identities in literature varies significantly between Indian English writing and Western authors, reflecting cultural, historical, and political contexts. Western literature is often shaped by medicalized transition narratives and queer theory. While both traditions highlight themes of marginalization, gender identity, and self-discovery, their approaches reflect the cultural, historical, and political realities of their respective societies.

Keywords: Transgender, Prejudice, Masquerade, Patriarchy, Queer Theory, Binary-Identities, Cisgender, Marginalization.

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INTRODUCTION

[1]. Transgender representation in literature has long served as a mirror of society's engagement with gender variance and identity. While Western critical theory often frames transgender narratives as

resistance to binaries, Indian traditions show a much older cultural engagement with gender fluidity. From mythological epics to contemporary fiction and autobiographies, both Indian and English literary works have explored transgender identities—

¹ A transgender (often shortened to trans) person has a gender identity different from that typically

associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

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sometimes symbolically, sometimes directly—reflecting not only the struggles of marginalization but also the assertion of dignity and agency. This article examines the portrayal of transgender characters in select works of Indian and English literature, showing how they destabilize gender binaries, reclaim social space, and enrich literary discourse.

'When you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is, 'male or female?' and you are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty.' - (Sigmund Freud: *Femininity*)

Legal Framework of Transgender Rights in India

The legal framework governing transgender rights in India is primarily shaped by the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in *National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India (NALSA)*, 2014. In this historic decision, the Court affirmed the right of transgender individuals to self-identify their gender as male, female, or transgender, independent of medical procedures or certification. The *NALSA* judgment significantly expanded the interpretation of fundamental rights under the Constitution, particularly by recognizing the right to equality and non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity. It laid the foundation for the inclusion of gender identity and sexual orientation within the ambit of constitutionally protected rights. Subsequent rulings by the Supreme Court have further reinforced and broadened these protections, affirming the rights and dignity of individuals across the *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual*. To give complete statutory effect to the principles laid down in *NALSA*, the Parliament brought the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, accompanied by the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020. This legislation aims to safeguard transgender persons from discrimination, ensure access to welfare schemes, and recognize their right to self-perceived gender identity, while also outlining procedures for legal recognition and access to various rights and entitlements.

Legislation under Constitution of India, 1950

The Constitution of India is the founding document in which all the rights and protections for each individual are provided and Part III of the Constitution contains the fundamental rights. Article 14 guarantees equality and equal protection of the law and Article 15 (1) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. The Supreme Court for the first time in 2014 in its decision in the case of *National Legal Services*

Authority Vs. Union of India ("NALSA") interpreted the ground of 'sex' under Article 15 (1) to include the terms gender and gender identity. The court held that Article 15(1) would include prohibition of non-discrimination on the ground of gender identity and sexual orientation as well. This was a watershed moment for transgender rights, as the Supreme Court held that all persons have the right under the constitution to self-determine their own gender identity and this right is protected under the right to equality guaranteed under Articles 14 and 15 (1). The right to freedom of expression under Article 19 (1) (a) and Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right to life and autonomy were also expanded to include the right to express one's gender identity and gender expression. Thereafter in *Navtej Johar and Others v. Union of India* in its landmark decision decriminalising consensual same-sex relationships in India. The Supreme Court upheld the right to decisional autonomy and the freedom to decide one's sexual orientation and choice of partner. The constitutional jurisprudence that has emerged from these landmark decisions has laid the foundation for the protection of transgender rights and have been significant in shaping the judicial discourse on the constitutional rights of the transgender persons.

The representation of transgender identities in literature varies significantly between Indian English writing and Western authors, reflecting cultural, historical, and political contexts. In Indian English literature, transgender representation has been shaped by the country's socio-religious history, particularly the presence of [2], *hijras*, a traditional third-gender community recognized in Hindu mythology and colonial history. Since antiquity, hijras have a recorded history in the Indian subcontinent as per the Kama Sutra. When Britishers took control of the country in the nineteenth century, cross-dressing was criminalized, eunuchs were persecuted and criminalised under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code in 1860 and in 1871 labelled them criminal tribe. *The Sexual Offences Act 1967*, an act of Parliament in United Kingdom legalised homosexuality, and it took India exactly 51 years to do so. In 2018 on 6th September, the Supreme Court of India in a remarkable judgement ruled that Section 377 was unconstitutional and revoked Section 377 which criminalized homosexuality. India maintained this conservative attitude even after the British rule and is largely intolerant if not openly hostile toward homosexual and transgender citizens.

² is a culture-specific identity found in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal. It is often cited

as a separate identity from man and woman, and also separate from the concept of transgender.

"Women are not born, they are made", are the famous words of [3]. Simone de Beauvoir. The same logic applies to men also. We often witness how parents respond to a baby boy crying, saying not to cry like a girl, be a man, etc. These types of examples are a general practice in any household so it can be said that it's a conscious as well as an unconscious choice of the parents. The idea that a girl child should play with dolls and boys should play with toys like a car or machines are ingrained in the child's mind by the parents themselves. In India, transgenders' are known as the 'third gender.' They are known as neither men nor women. Serena Nanda, Professor of Anthropology in New York, based her ethnography on the context and lives of hijras in India, and in her work *Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India* establishes them as the 'third gender'. *The Invisibles: A Tale of the Eunuchs of India* written by Zia Jaffrey is an eccentric record of an odyssey through India in search of a marginalized community of transsexuals and eunuchs. Through this book, Jaffrey takes us on a journey to India to investigate why the hijras are considered taboo, and who they are. Her insightful analysis of the lives, rituals and cultural history of hijras raises many questions and sheds light on a subject never before considered a 'subject'.

Transgender Representation in Indian Literature

In the *Mahabharata*, the character of Shikhandi represents one of the earliest literary depictions of transgender identity. Born as Amba and reborn as Shikhandi, this figure transitions from female to male through divine intervention. The epic states: "*I was born a woman, but became a man through divine grace. Today, I shall fight as a warrior.*" This narrative not only recognizes gender fluidity but also situates a transgender figure at the center of a pivotal battle. Shikhandi's role in Bhishma's death demonstrates that Indian epics acknowledged non-binary identities within sacred and heroic frameworks.

In Arundhati Roy's novel, *Anjum*, a hijra living in Delhi, becomes a central character whose life narrative foregrounds transgender experience. Roy writes: "*She wasn't a man; she wasn't a woman. She was a union of the two, a living, breathing argument against the binary.*" (Roy 2017, p. 28). By making a hijra the narrative's anchor, Roy decenters heteronormative voices and foregrounds marginalized perspectives. Anjum's struggles and resilience symbolize both the vulnerabilities and strengths of the transgender community in contemporary India.

Autobiographical writing has also been crucial in authentic representation. In *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi*, the activist-author declares: "*I am not ashamed of what I am. The world may see me as incomplete, but I know I am whole.*" (Tripathi 2015, p. 64). By reclaiming wholeness, Laxmi resists societal stigma, offering a narrative of empowerment rather than victimhood. Her autobiography provides an insider's perspective into hijra identity, tradition, and activism, thereby enriching Indian transgender literature with lived experience.

Transgender Representation in English Literature

Although not directly transgender, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* destabilizes gender roles through Viola's disguise as Cesario. Viola remarks: "*Disguise, I see, thou art a wickedness / Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.*" (Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, II.ii). The play demonstrates how identity, attraction, and gender are socially performed rather than biologically fixed. Shakespeare's work anticipates later explorations of gender performance that resonate with transgender studies.

Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* is often cited as one of the first modernist explorations of gender fluidity. After Orlando's transformation, Woolf writes: "*Orlando had become a woman—there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been.*" (Woolf 1928, p. 138). This statement dismantles essentialist views of gender, suggesting that identity transcends physical embodiment. The novel offers a fluid understanding of selfhood, resonating with contemporary transgender theory. Jeffrey Eugenides' Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Middlesex* narrates the journey of Cal, an intersex person who transitions into a male identity. Cal reflects: "*I was born twice: first, as a baby girl, then again, as a teenage boy.*" (Eugenides 2002, p. 3). This dual birth metaphor captures the complexity of intersex and transgender experience. By blending family history with individual struggle, *Middlesex* places transgender narratives at the center of cultural and generational dialogues in English literature.

Comparative Perspective

Indian literature has historically intertwined transgender identity with myth, spirituality, and community. As anthropologist Serena Nanda observes, "*Hijras occupy a unique space that is both marginalized and yet culturally acknowledged within*

³ was a French writer and feminist, a member of the intellectual fellowship of philosopher-writers who have

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³ was a French writer and feminist, a member of the intellectual fellowship of philosopher-writers who have

Indian society," highlighting how figures like [4]. Shikhandi from the Mahabharata and Anjum from contemporary narratives embody a gender identity deeply embedded in religious and social traditions. Shikhandi's story, for instance, reflects the spiritual and mythological sanctioning of gender variance, where transformation is connected to divine will and cosmic balance. Anjum's experiences similarly reveal the complex social recognition and marginalization faced by hijras, showing how community and cultural context shape transgender identity in India.

In contrast, English literature often frames transgender identity as an individual challenge to rigid social norms and an existential exploration of selfhood. Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* famously asserts, "Gender is a fluid, performative act rather than a fixed biological fact," as the protagonist transitions from male to female across centuries, embodying a personal journey of gender self-discovery beyond societal constraints. Similarly, Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex* explores the genetic and psychological complexity of gender variance, depicting Cal's navigation of identity as an intensely personal and solitary experience, emphasizing individuality over community. Together, these works reveal that transgender narratives are both culturally specific and universally human. They show how gender variance transcends boundaries of geography and tradition, linking myth and spirituality with modern existential quests. As scholar Susan Stryker points out, "Transgender experience challenges us to rethink the nature of identity itself," reminding us that while the cultural expressions of transgender lives differ, the fundamental questions about selfhood and belonging resonate across time and place.

CONCLUSION

The representation of transgender identity in Indian and English literature underscores the resilience of marginalized voices and the power of literature to challenge binaries. From [5]. Shikhandi's epic presence to Anjum's contemporary struggles, from Orlando's gender metamorphosis to Cal's intersex journey, these works demonstrate that gender is not fixed but fluid, dynamic, and central to human existence. By destabilizing societal norms, they not only broaden the scope of literary discourse but also reaffirm the dignity of transgender lives in cultural imagination. However, legal reforms alone are insufficient unless accompanied by deeper social acceptance, access to education, healthcare, and

meaningful employment opportunities. True inclusivity requires dismantling stereotypes, acknowledging transgender identities beyond tokenism, and integrating their voices in decision-making processes. The transgender experience in India, when seen through the lens of Indian Writing in English, becomes both a narrative of pain and of resilience. Indian English writers have increasingly given voice to those who were once silenced, placing transgender lives at the centre of stories that interrogate society's moral, cultural, and political frameworks. The Indian context, with its ancient recognition of the Hijra community in mythology and ritual, stands in stark contrast to the neglect and exclusion they have faced in modern times.

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⁴ Shikhandi is a pivotal transgender character in the Hindu epic, the Mahabharata, born a female to King Drupada of Panchala but later transformed into a man through a sex exchange with a Yaksha.

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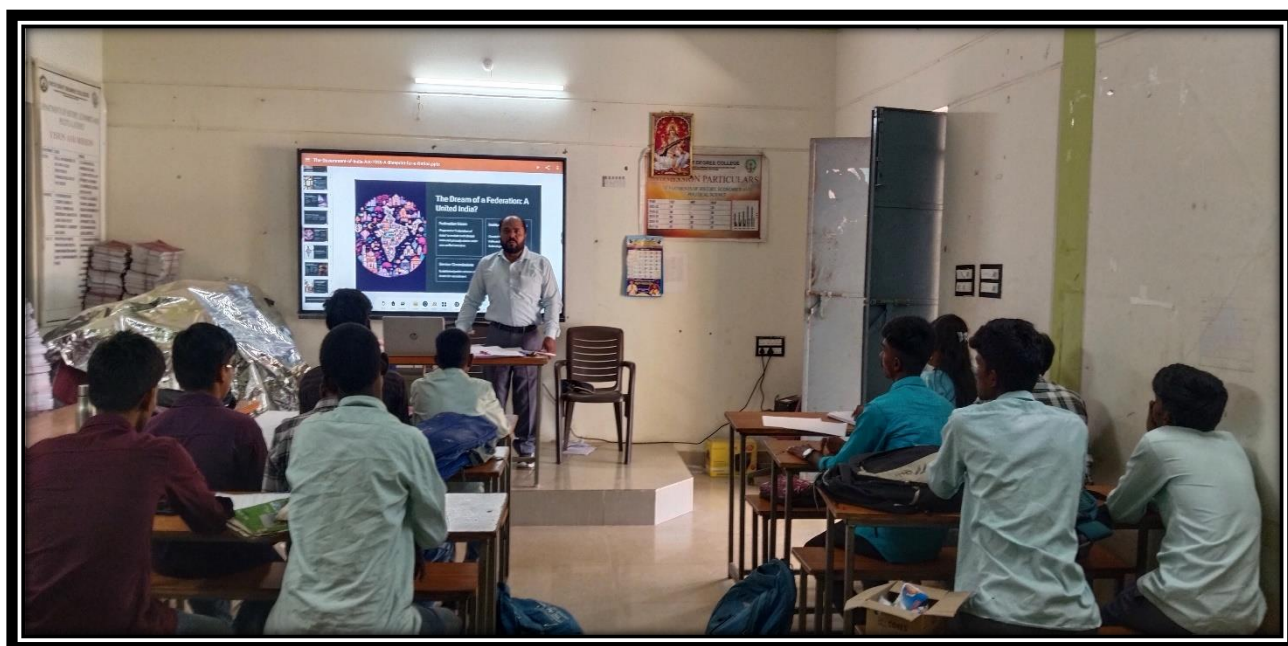




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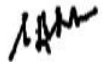
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Classroom Management in English Language Teaching: An ESL Perspective

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Abstract

This paper presents a review-based study on classroom management in English Language Teaching (ELT), with special reference to the Indian classroom context. Classroom management is a crucial component of effective English language teaching, as it is closely connected to the professional role and responsibility of the English teacher. The success of an English teacher largely depends on the ability to organize, control, and motivate learners within the classroom environment. In contemporary Indian ESL classrooms, classroom management is both an art and a science, requiring teachers to balance subject knowledge with pedagogical skills and psychological understanding of learners. Effective classroom management creates a positive learning atmosphere where students feel confident and motivated to use English. Through appropriate classroom activities, interactive methods, and learner-centred approaches, teachers can address students' diverse needs and encourage active participation. Classroom management in ELT cannot be studied in isolation, as it is closely related to psychological factors, learner-related problems, and linguistic difficulties faced by students, particularly in multilingual Indian classrooms. This paper highlights classroom management as one of the major challenges faced by English language teachers in India, especially in large and heterogeneous classrooms, and emphasizes that sound knowledge of classroom management strategies is essential for successful teaching and learning of English.

Key Words: Classroom Management, English Language Teaching (ELT), English as a Second Language (ESL), Indian Classroom Context, Affective Variables.

Introduction

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Classroom management is a critical component of effective English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in ESL contexts such as India, where classrooms are linguistically diverse and learner populations are heterogeneous. Effective classroom management allows teachers to establish an environment conducive to learning, interaction, and discipline. As Bose emphasizes, “efficient teaching is impossible without proper classroom management” (38). Thus, classroom management is not supplementary to teaching but integral to it. Language learning may be broadly defined as the process through which learners acquire knowledge, skills, and communicative competence through experience and instruction. In ELT classrooms, learning occurs through exposure to oral and written language, guided practice, and interaction. Birjandi et al. describe learning as “the acquisition of knowledge and skills through experience”

(15). Teachers’ instructional techniques and classroom strategies therefore play a decisive role in shaping learners’ language development.

Classroom management is widely acknowledged as a prerequisite for effective teaching. Bose clearly states that “however efficient a teacher may be, success in teaching is unlikely without proper classroom management” (38). Similarly, Richards explains that classroom management refers to “the ways in which learner behaviour, movement, and interaction are organized during a lesson” (*Language Teaching Matrix* 4). Learning strategies further support this process by enabling learners to process and internalize language input effectively. According to Leaver et al., learning strategies consist of “behaviours and techniques employed to facilitate learning” (23). These strategies contribute to learner autonomy, reduce anxiety, and enhance participation, all of which are closely connected to effective classroom management.

English Language Teaching and Classroom Management

The development of English language teaching as a profession is closely linked to advances in linguistics, applied linguistics, and educational psychology. During the twentieth century, language teaching evolved from structural approaches to communicative methodologies that emphasized meaning and interaction. Chomsky’s critique of behaviorist models led to a cognitive view of language learning, paving the way for communicative language teaching, which focuses on meaningful language use rather than mechanical practice. Language learning involves more than memorization of linguistic forms. Birjandi et al. define learning as “the process of gaining knowledge and acquiring skills through experience” (15). In the ELT classroom, this experience is shaped by teacher guidance, peer interaction, and meaningful use of language. Khansir observes that language represents “one of the most important forms of human behaviour” (167), indicating that language learning is deeply connected to cognitive and social development.

In ESL contexts, classroom management remains a major challenge due to large class sizes, limited exposure to English outside school, and mixed-ability learners. Teachers must integrate language skills rather than teaching them in isolation, as “language is an integrative activity” (Bose 41). Lesson planning is therefore essential, as well-structured lessons provide clarity, confidence, and control for both teachers and learners. Ziahosseiny notes that lesson planning involves “organizing materials and activities systematically to achieve learning goals”

(62). A well-designed syllabus further supports classroom management by providing direction and coherence to instruction.

Affective Variables and Classroom Management

Affective factors play a crucial role in language learning and classroom management. Teachers must be sensitive to learners’ emotional needs, as affective variables directly influence participation and motivation. Burns asserts that “no successful learning can occur without confidence and belief in one’s abilities” (112), underscoring the importance of self-esteem in classroom participation.

Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to learners’ perceptions of their own abilities. A positive self-concept enhances confidence and willingness to participate. Mosallanejad argues that teachers should “protect learners’ self-image and promote confidence” (54). Classroom environments that value effort over error help learners develop a healthy self-concept.

Attitude

Learners enter the classroom with varied attitudes toward English and its cultural associations. These attitudes significantly affect learning outcomes. Teachers must employ strategies that foster positive attitudes and reduce resistance toward the language.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a common barrier in language classrooms, particularly during oral activities. Johnson and Johnson observe that anxiety may arise from fear of correction or peer judgment (89). Teachers can reduce anxiety by creating supportive environments and encouraging cooperative learning.

Motivation

Motivation is a key determinant of language learning success. Motivated learners demonstrate persistence and engagement. Teachers can enhance motivation through constructive feedback, meaningful tasks, and achievable goals. As Ziahosseiny notes, learners are more motivated when language learning satisfies their psychological and social needs (71).

Learner-Related Problems in Classroom Management

Social Problems

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Learners' social backgrounds significantly influence classroom behaviour and learning. Factors such as poverty, family responsibilities, and employment pressures affect learners' engagement. In the Indian context, English proficiency is often linked to employment opportunities, increasing pressure on both learners and teachers.

Psychological Problems

Psychological factors such as self-esteem, personality differences, and maturity levels influence language learning. Burns argues that "successful learning requires confidence and belief in one's abilities" (112). Teachers must identify individual learner needs and provide appropriate support.

Linguistic Problems

Linguistic challenges arise from differences in age, proficiency, and learning styles. Grant notes that while children may achieve higher levels of acquisition, adults often progress more quickly initially (44). Teachers must adapt methods and materials to accommodate these differences and maintain effective classroom management.

Classroom Activities for Effective Management

Learning strategies play a significant role in facilitating language acquisition. Leaver et al. describe learning strategies as "behaviors and techniques that learners and teachers use to enhance learning" (23). Naiman et al. further argue that successful learners "actively select and apply appropriate strategies" (8).

Choral Practice

Choral practice enables learners to participate without fear of individual exposure. Richards et al. describe choral repetition as collective learner response to teacher models (65). This activity builds confidence and supports pronunciation practice.

Pair and Group Work

Pair and group work increase learner interaction and engagement. Doff identifies several advantages, including increased language practice and reduced anxiety (137). Bose adds that well-planned group work "helps students develop confidence when monitored effectively" (41).

News Time, Question Time, and Debates

Interactive activities such as news discussions, question sessions, and debates promote critical thinking and communicative competence. Bose highlights that such activities "channel students' energy positively and build confidence" (52).

Conclusion

Classroom management is both an art and a skill that develops through experience and reflective practice. Effective management begins with clear expectations, structured

planning, and sensitivity to learners' needs. Teachers must address social, psychological, and linguistic challenges as part of their professional responsibility. Ultimately, effective classroom management creates a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment that enables learners to achieve communicative competence in English.

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FROM TRAUMA TO TRIUMPH: A STUDY OF SELECT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF MAYA ANGELOU

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Abstract

Maya Angelou's Autobiographies serve as the first hand records that portray the alienating impact of the multiple 'trauma' and the consequential distortion of 'Self' on being assaulted by harrowing experiences due to moral and spiritual degradation of American society with its politics of power, intimidation and brutal slave trade. Her autobiographies do not just recount the incidents that had taken place in her life chronologically, but envision the whole African-American community as a 'caged bird' that yearns for emancipation from racial subjugation and subordination. Her life and works remain an inspiration not only to African Americans but also to individuals trapped in the labyrinth of wretchedness. The fact that Maya Angelou an African American woman, caged by the traumatic experiences from childhood, emerges as a phenomenal woman harbouring no vengeance and detestation towards those who oppressed and inflicted pain on her but rather forgive the persons who were responsible for her painful experiences unconditionally and to love everyone irrespective of colour, caste and race as members of humanity.

Key Words: Trauma, Autobiography, Emotional Intelligence, Black Aesthetics.

Introduction

Black women whose ancestors were brought to the United States beginning in 1619 have lived through conditions of cruelties so horrible, so bizarre, the women had to reinvent themselves. They had to find safety and sanctity inside themselves or they would not have been able to tolerate such torture. They had to learn quickly to be self-forgiving, for often their exterior actions were at odds with their interior beliefs. Among such traumatic and inspiring lives is the life of Maya Angelou and her Autobiographies which stood as the real testament of her talent and resilience. She

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loves the world as none has done so, inspite of its cruelty. Speaking about this extra-ordinary woman, *Barak Obama* wrote:

“A brilliant writer, a fierce friend and a truly phenomenal woman.” (1969: i)

The poems and the stories that she wrote, bore a testament of her struggled life and the growing up of an Afro-American writer, whose pen demonstrates the dignity with which she has given a voice to her inspired life in the form of seven autobiographies. All the seven autobiographies were the bold expressions of her courage and determination to honestly delineate her struggle, her character, her aspirations, and the image of her Black African – American woman in all its adversaries. Through these autobiographies, she had proved what a woman she was and strongly and openly discusses her life – both private and public without any inhibitions. The confidence with which she faced the world is something extra-ordinary and exceptional and praise worthy.

There is no one quite like Maya Angelou. Poet to the President, champion of the people, best-selling auto-biographer, her experiences as dancer, singer, waitress, activist, director, teacher, wife, mother and above all a great humanitarian have made her one of the few people, truly qualified to share her lessons of a life time. Born on 4 April, 1928, she chronicled an extra-ordinary life; rising from poverty, violence and racism. Her childhood name was Marguerite Annie Johnson. She and brother Bailey Johnson Jr. came to Arkansas at the age of 3 to live with her grandmother, Annie Henderson. Her growing up at Arkansas with her brother chronicles her formative traumatic life and the way she faced the world with unshakeable calm, confidence and a fierce grace. Speaking about this phenomenal woman, *Oprah Winfrey* states:

“She moved through the world with unshakeable calm, confidence and a fierce grace.

.... She will always be the rainbow in my clouds.” (1969:1)

Her parents divorced, when she was still a kid and don't know about this cruel and racist society. Maya Angelou lived most of her childhood with her grandmother, whom she called 'Momma.' Angelou's mother Vivian Baxter was an inadvertent player in having a formative trauma in Angelou's life. When Angelou was 8, her mother's boyfriend raped Angelou. This traumatic experience had left Angelou shattered and refused to speak for several years. During these traumatic years, she only had a conversation with her brother, Bailey Jr., whom she says, her 'monument in the world.' Maya Angelou's seven volume of autobiographies are a testament to the talented and resilience of this extra-ordinary writer and ³*James Baldwin* was right when he says:

³. James Arthur Baldwin was an American novelist, playwright, essayist, poet, and activist.

“I know that, not since the days of my childhood, when people in books were more real than the people one saw every day, have I found myself so moved.” (1969: i)

Influence of⁴Trauma on Child’s Psyche and Persona:

The impressions that a child records ever since his or her infancy with the reinforced messages she perceives from the environment in which the child grows up, and the messages being stored in the deeper recesses of the psyche, have significant influence on the child’s psyche and persona. Gardner, Professor of ‘*Cognition and Education*’ at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and an adjunct Professor of Psychology at Harvard University points out in his book ‘*Learning Minds*’ (2011) that by the age of five, most children have formed a basic paradigm based on their early experiences that shapes their view of what life is about, how it works, and how to cope with it. He calls this “Unschooling mind” (5). In her essay, ‘*Wouldn’t Take Nothing*,’ Angelou reinforces this perspective when she states, “It is said that persons have few teachable moments in their lives” (1969:87) and Maya Angelou recounts such moments with her grandmother between the ages of three and thirteen. Imparting key lessons in moral, ethical and spiritual values in children right from the beginning will shape good citizens in society. According to *Helen Taylor* (2001), teaching children the key lessons is fundamental in shaping a just and righteous society. In Maya Angelou’s life the influence of her grandmother is very much great and beyond praiseworthy.

The mind of a child can strongly be impacted by his or her growth and development through books, institution and environment, which contribute in unfolding one’s latent potential to result in the resurgence of one’s self, besides enabling one to attain a greater domain of creative expression and resourcefulness by withstanding oneself to unfavourable and harrowing experiences one may encounter. *Harold Blood* (2009), a well-known critic of Maya Angelou notes in his introduction to *Critical Interpretations of Caged Bird* as:

“.... trauma ensues and yet the extra-ordinary strong soul of Marguerite Johnson eventually goes beyond the trauma... Hundreds of thousands of readers have found in ‘Caged Bird’ an implicit image of the resurrection of their own innermost self, a fragment of divinity that transcended natural birth and so never die.”

Maya Angelou through her seven autobiographies and poems, substantiates how the trials and tribulations of her life have in fact act as a catalyst in blossoming her personality into a strikingly talented, gifted, sagacious and dauntless being. Every poet is moulded by his or her age and by the great events that take place during his/her impressionable years. It is very much true in the case of

⁴. Trauma is the response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness, diminishes their sense of self and their ability to feel the full range of emotions and experiences.

Maya Angelou. In the thirties it was the Great Depression and the Spanish Civil War that sparked the emergence of ⁵*Black Aesthetic* concerns in her which is clearly seen in her earlier poems. These events matured her thoughts on black aesthetics and it is revealed through the poems of her middle period. Her matured thoughts reach its pinnacle in her later poems wherein she becomes the walking epitome of Black Aesthetics. The traumatic experiences that Maya Angelou encountered might have affected a person of lesser conviction, but not Maya Angelou. The king of practical spiritual wisdom that she got from her grandmother that made her strong to encounter any traumatic situation right from her childhood.

Throughout the ages, human existence has proved beyond doubt about the survival in traumatic situations that one undergoes. People who encounter traumatic events in life, undergoes emotional disruptions and pain and this in turn make them emotionally dysfunctional. The surplus of counterproductive emotions would affect one's mental disposition adversely and ultimately turning him or her a negative personality. As the true self is clouded by the outgrowth of negative emotions such as sorrow, loneliness, despair, rejection and so on, one's self is concealed beyond recognition. Unless and until these unhealthy emotions are weeded out meticulously, the person who is mired in emotional chaos cannot get a clear picture of her true identity.

Maya Angelou started carrying pain of personal trauma at the age of three when she reached Arkansas to live with her grandmother, Mrs. Henderson as an abandoned child by her divorced parents. She along with her brother, Bailey Jr., saddened by the abandonment of their parents at the very young age had dent her self-esteem at a tender age. In her age, where love, joy, innocence should have been the predominant emotions, the emotions that took preponderance were rejection, insecurity, sorrow fear and a sense of worthlessness. She has to enrol herself in a segregated ⁶*Negro* school due to colour discrimination. Right from the age of three, she and her brother were subjected to utter poverty and suffering at the hands of while people in Arkansas. The oppression and supremacy of while people created a fear of psychosis in her and she struggled to comprehend the colour consciousness that invited much abhorrence from the white. Not only this, Maya Angelou was abused and raped brutally by her mother's boyfriend, Mr. Freeman, adding to her physical, emotional and psychological wounds that created emotional disturbances in her life. But Maya Angelou received an unwavering faith and spirituality on account of her childhood traumatic experiences of displacement and separation from her parents. She broke out of her troubled dark past to ascend to the heights of her spiritual intelligence. *James Fowler* in his classic work, *Stages of Faith*, put forth the view that

⁵ . The black aesthetic is a cultural ideology that developed in America alongside the civil rights movement in the 1960s and promoted black separatism in the arts.

⁶ . Negro is a word that was used in the past to refer to someone with dark skin who comes from Africa or whose ancestors came from Africa.

faith offers coherence and direction to the life of a person and strengthens one to challenge the inevitable complications of the existential condition.

Daniel Goleman, the proponent of the theory of ⁷*Emotional Intelligence* upholds the view that emotions play considerable role in thought process and decision making. *Robert Frost* at the end of his poem, 'Mending Wall' says, "Good fences makes good neighbours." If boundaries are created for one's emotions and defended properly, it will help people keep themselves from being overwhelmed by their own and others emotions. Maya Angelou ravaged by the turbulent emotions, became anxious, fearful, depressed and socially inhibited person. At some point she became quite conscious of the power that the negative emotions can wield on individual, if one allows it to go unbridled. Angelou expresses her views in an interview published by O, The Oprah Magazine:

"I'm convinced that the negative has power. It lives. And if you allow it to perch in your house, in your mind, in your life, it can take you over. So when the rude or cruel thing is said—the lambasting, the gay bashing, the hate—I say, take it all out of my house! Those negative words climb into the woodwork and into the furniture and the next thing you know they'll be on my skin" (5).

It is explicit from the autobiographies and poems of Maya Angelou that spirituality developed on an ongoing basis through scriptures, reflection and prayers and similar practices nurtures one's spiritual Intelligence releasing intuition as well as resourcefulness to experience a profound sense of meaning and purpose eventually transforming one's personality. Such a person then discovers the treasure hidden within—the myriad virtues, capabilities, talents and the intrinsic worth, and explores it with a clear sense of direction to add value to their own and others' lives resulting in self-actualization. The spiritual atmosphere presents in the family which was created mainly by Maya's devout grandmother who had an uncompromising faith in God started sowing the seeds of staunch faith in her at a tender age of three. The unwavering faith witnessed in the members of her community in Arkansas and the sermons, the praise and worship, church choir that enlivened her spirit and other spiritual practices in the Episcopal Methodist church round the week nurtured the spiritual elements within Maya to provide meaning to her life. She wrote a poem, '*On the Pulse of Morning*' and read out for President Clinton on his inauguration

Reading of Maya Angelou's Caged Bird reveals clearly the strong spiritual presence of her grandmother. *Elizabeth Fox-Genovese* (1988) impresses upon the strong presence of African American grandmothers:

⁷. Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict.

For the most part these female elders are represented as rural in identification and origin, if not always in current location; immersed in folk communities; deeply religious; and the privileged custodians of the values and, especially of the highest standards of their people. They are not necessarily literate, and those who are literate are unlikely to spend money on any books except the Bible (71).

It is rightly said, 'Heaven helps those who help themselves' is a well-tried maxim, embodying in a small compass the results of vast human experience. The spirit of the self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual. Whatever is done for men or classes to a certain extent takes away the stimulus and necessity of doing for themselves and where men are subjected to over-guidance, the inevitable tendency is to render them comparatively helpless. This tendency of over-guidance and backing from her parents is lacking in the life of Maya Angelou. In the absence of such guidance in her traumatic life, she was left lonely to develop herself and improves her individual condition. That's why *Edward Gibbon* rightly pointed out that:

"Every person has two educations, one which he receives from others, and one, more important, which he gives to himself." (Samuel Smiles:19)

Conclusion

The Autobiographies of Maya Angelou graphically describe the painful pages of the history of African American community with all certainty. The saga of the individual is undoubtedly interwoven with the history of the community. All the seven volumes of Maya Angelou's autobiographies earnestly record how the ideological, institutional, interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of racism have disrupted their existence and derailed their progress. The racism based on colour line belittled the black Americans as objects and others and unnatural. *Selwyn R. Cudjoe* sums up the pith of Angelou's writing as "Angelou's Autobiographies . . . not only her personal history but also that collective history of all the black women" (33).

Thus Maya Angelou too internalize some of the life lessons from her traumatic childhood and can be able to withstand and assuage the traumatic experiences. In her struggle, her grandmother was a source of her spiritual nourishment and was the driving force in developing Maya Angelou's spiritual intelligence. Maya Angelou believed that every individual is worthy of respect and desires attention and everyone is full of latent talents. Those who look within, will discover this treasure and those who make of this potential by venturing into the storms of life courageously will march towards victory and experience the joy of attainment.

Toni Morrison, Afro-American writer too praised Maya Angelou and her talent as a writer of autobiographies with such an open-mindedness and candid delineation of her life and in this respect, there was none to compete with her. She noted that:

“She was important in so many ways. She launched African-American women writing in the United States. She was generous to a fault. She had nineteen talents – used ten. And was a real original. There is no duplicate.” (1969: i)

The Black women had to bear the stigma of racism, sexism, violence and slavery. Maya Angelou recommends to the Blacks to assert themselves and feel proud of their racial superiority and their Black skin. Maya Angelou recommends to the Blacks to cultivate faith in God, experience the joy of God, and to court patience and endurance to prevail over the circumstances. Empowered through education to ascend in the social hierarchy, and strike upward mobility to achieve real recognition. Maya Angelou has established herself as the fitting and fully competent and authentic spokeswoman of the Black Women. She has effectively voiced the hopes and aspirations, the defeats, desolation, disillusionment, failures and frustrations faced by them in her works. Maya Angelou strongly argues in her oeuvre that life for the Blacks, chiefly the Black women must alter for the better in American society. This vision of a better world is the message of Maya Angelou but her life is her best message. From a teenager who had so much of a disdain for her own body to a ‘Phenomenal woman’ who flaunts her body enviously stands as a testimony to her total resurgence. Like *Alice Walker*, Maya Angelou advocates the women to take pride in the female sex and shed their inhibitions, inferiority complexes and fear psychosis.

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Voicing the Unspeakable : Trauma, Psychological Survival and the Power of Positivity - A Trauma Studies Analysis of Maya Angelou's Early Autobiographies

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Introduction :

Maya Angelou was one of the world's most important autobiographical writer of extraordinary talent, who chronicled her life to the fullest extent rising from poverty, violence and racism. Many talents combined into one and made her a renowned author, poet, playwright, civil right activist – working with important personalities of her time namely Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. She wrote a series of autobiographies, chronicling from the age of three. Her first autobiography *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) was followed by six further volumes of autobiographies. Besides these seven volumes of autobiographies, she wrote three collections of essays, many volumes of poetry. Due to her extraordinary life and civil rights activist, she has been nominated as Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University of North Carolina. When Maya Angelou died at the age of 86, her readers and fans mourned but they remembered the many gifts this phenomenal

black woman gave us through her voice, her courage, her wit and inspiration. She led such a fruitful and satisfying life by being a preacher and chronicling the entire African – American society to the minute details.

Maya Angelou wrote a series of autobiographies that chronicled a struggled and traumatic life which stood as a testament to the candid exploration of the history, the real people who stand behind her and thus the life she leads, become a testament to the human endurance in times of hardships and troubled childhood. Reclaiming her sense of belongingness through her reading of literature and most importantly peeping deep into her psyche as a part of her narration as an inspired, bold and outspoken individual who doesn't care about the bold attempt of representing a struggled life with all the candid and open discussion. In all her autobiographies, she penned her transformation from a mute girl to a bold and confident girl by

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experimenting with different jobs and relocating herself to different cities of Southern and Northern America to make her living and supporting her son Guy. Trauma literature has become a crucial field in understanding how individuals narrate suffering, memory and recovery. Psychological trauma, especially when experienced in childhood, leaves deep emotional and cognitive imprints that often shape identity across a lifetime. Maya Angelou's autobiographical series stands as a powerful literary testimony to trauma, survival and resilience. Her first three autobiographies—*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), *Gather Together in My Name* (1974) and *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976)—chronicle her journey from childhood trauma to adult self-discovery. Through the lens of trauma studies and psychology, Angelou's works reveal how traumatic experiences disrupt language, identity and self-worth, while simultaneously demonstrating the human capacity for healing and positivity. Drawing on trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth and Judith Herman, this paper argues that Angelou's autobiographies transform personal trauma into collective testimony, emphasizing resilience, creativity and hope as pathways toward psychological recovery.

Trauma Studies : A Psychological Framework :

Trauma studies, rooted in psychology and literary theory, examine how overwhelming experiences resist normal cognitive processing. Cathy Caruth defines trauma as an event that is "experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known" (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). Such experiences return later through silence, repetition and fragmented memory. Judith

Herman further explains that trauma damages an individual's sense of safety, trust and control, often leading to withdrawal, guilt and emotional numbing (Herman, 1992, p. 33).

Angelou's autobiographies align closely with these theories. Rather than presenting trauma as a single moment, she depicts it as an ongoing psychological condition affecting behavior, relationships and self-image. However, unlike purely tragic trauma narratives, Angelou's writing consistently moves toward positivity, self-acceptance and empowerment, making her work distinctive in trauma literature.

Childhood Trauma and Silence in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* :

Angelou's first autobiography centers on childhood sexual abuse and its devastating psychological consequences. After being assaulted by her mother's boyfriend, young Maya withdraws into silence:

"I stopped talking. I stopped talking to anyone except Bailey." (Angelou, 1969, p. 85)

From a psychological perspective, this silence represents selective mutism, a trauma response often observed in abused children. Trauma disrupts language because speech becomes associated with danger. Maya's belief that her voice caused her abuser's death intensifies this response:

"I thought my voice had killed him." (Angelou, 1969, p. 88)

According to Herman, self-blame allows survivors to believe the world is still predictable, even if that belief is psychologically damaging (Herman 54). Angelou's silence thus becomes both a symptom of trauma and a survival mechanism. Despite this suffering, *Caged Bird* also introduces the theme of posi-

vity through endurance. Maya's love for literature, poetry and storytelling gradually restores her voice. Her recovery begins not through forgetting trauma, but through reclaiming language, suggesting that healing is possible even after deep psychological wounds.

Trauma's After-effects and Risk-Taking in *Gather Together in My Name* :

While *Caged Bird* focuses on childhood trauma, *Gather Together in My Name* explores trauma's lingering effects in adolescence and early adulthood. Psychology recognizes that unresolved childhood trauma often manifests in impulsivity, unstable relationships and risky behaviour. Angelou openly acknowledges this phase of her life:

"I didn't come to grips with my life,
but I accepted it."

(Angelou, 1974, p. 15)

This statement reflects emotional numbing, a coping strategy where individuals avoid confronting pain by surrendering to circumstances. Angelou's involvement in dangerous environments and morally ambiguous situations reflects trauma theory's assertion that survivors often struggle with self-worth and boundaries. However, Angelou's narrative voice is retrospective and reflective. By admitting her mistakes, she demonstrates growing psychological awareness. Trauma studies emphasize that narration itself is therapeutic, allowing survivors to impose structure on chaotic memory. Angelou does not romanticize suffering; instead, she frames it as a learning process, reinforcing the theme of positivity through self-awareness and accountability.

Fragmented Identity and Survival :

Trauma disrupts a coherent sense of

self. In *Gather Together in My Name*, Angelou writes:

"I lived in the wreckage of my
choices." (Angelou, 1974, p. 109)

The metaphor of "wreckage" illustrates psychological fragmentation. Trauma survivors often experience identity confusion, oscillating between strength and vulnerability. Yet Angelou's ability to name this "wreckage" indicates progress. Psychology emphasizes that recognizing damage is the first step toward healing. Angelou's honesty resists victimhood while acknowledging pain. This balance reflects resilience, defined in psychology as the ability to adapt despite adversity. Her narrative transforms trauma into experience rather than destiny, reinforcing a positive, forward-looking perspective.

Creativity and Healing in *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* :

The third autobiography marks a significant shift from survival to growth. Angelou's involvement in music and performance becomes a form of emotional refuge:

"Music was my refuge. I could crawl
into the space between the notes and
curl my back to loneliness."

(Angelou, 1976, p. 36)

Trauma psychology highlights creative expression as a powerful healing tool. When verbal language fails, art provides alternative pathways for emotional release. Music allows Angelou to reconnect with joy, community and self-expression. Unlike her childhood silence, this phase represents reclaimed voice rather than enforced muteness. Positivity in this text does not deny trauma; instead, it coexists with it. Angelou demonstrates that healing is not linear but cumulative. Her growing confidence reflects what psychologists

call post-traumatic growth, where individuals develop strength, empathy and purpose after suffering.

Reclaiming Voice, Agency and Positivity :

One of Angelou's most significant achievements across her autobiographies is the reclamation of voice. She reflects:

"I was learning to trust myself and that was the most difficult lesson."

(Angelou, 1976, p. 182)

Trauma often damages self-trust, making decision-making and self-belief difficult. Angelou's acknowledgment of this struggle highlights psychological realism while affirming growth. Positivity in her work emerges not as naïve optimism, but as earned confidence. From a trauma studies perspective, Angelou moves through Herman's three stages of recovery: safety, remembrance and reconnection. Her autobiographies provide safety through reflection, remembrance through narrative and reconnection through art, relationships and self-trust.

Autobiography as a Testimony and Collective Healing :

Angelou's personal trauma transcends individual experience and becomes collective testimony, especially for Black women whose voices were historically silenced. Trauma studies emphasize the importance of witnessing; telling one's story allows others to recognize their own pain and resilience. Angelou's positivity lies in her refusal to let trauma define her limits. She presents survival as an act of resistance and creativity as liberation. Her autobiographies thus function not only as literary works but also as psychological maps for healing.

Conclusion :

Maya Angelou's first three autobiographies offer a profound exploration of trauma, psychological survival and positivity. Through the lens of trauma studies and psychology, her works reveal how trauma disrupts language, identity and self-worth, while also demonstrating the transformative power of resilience, creativity and self-expression. Angelou does not erase trauma; she reshapes it into narrative strength. By reclaiming her voice, Angelou challenges silence, shame and fear, turning personal suffering into collective empowerment. Her autobiographies affirm that while trauma may shape a life, it does not have to define its outcome. Ultimately, Angelou's legacy lies in her ability to transform pain into purpose and survival into celebration.

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