

## A Stylistic Analysis of the poem "And Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou

Harith Yousif Hasan<sup>1</sup> & Prof. Dr. Wayees Jallud Ibrahim<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>University of Mosul, Collage of Basic Education, Department of English

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### ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the stylistic analysis of the poem "And Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou. The study uses a statistical method in analyzing and clarifying the messages that the writer wanted to convey to the reader through the use of numbers, percentages and their interpretation. Researchers and critics who are interested in literature, especially poetry rely on personal tendencies and opinions. In this study, the method used does not depend on personal opinion, but rather relies entirely on numbers to evaluate the stylistic characterization of the literary work. In this study, we want to analyze and examine the parts of speech in the poem to understand the literary work in its entirety. Analyzing the poem line by line allows us to break the poem down in order to study its structure, form and language. The analysis aims to know the style used by the author in her literary work, to understand the meaning of sentences and phrases that selected by the writer. Some poems are written just for the pleasure of reading the ones that are just lovely in themselves, even on the surface level. Many poems, however, require a little deeper digging to get to the poet's intended message. Poems, like almost all other forms of art, often tell us something about the author's views on society, love, contemporary issues, or a variety of other topics that can be connected to larger, universal themes. The study concluded that the statistical analysis is useful for analyzing the literary text, clarifying the messages that the writer wants to convey to the reader, away from personal opinions and tendencies, and makes results based on a scientific statistical analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

The challenge is discovering which aspects in a text most accurately represent an author's style, i.e. determining which sets of features in a text most accurately summarize an author's style. Finding suitable numerical representations of an author's underlying style is an issue when undertaking a statistical analysis of literary style. Many conventional multivariate approaches can be introduced and motivated through quantitative literary style analysis. Each text can be viewed as a collection of multivariate observation, in which case we are immediately confronted with the challenges of evaluating high-dimensional data. The standard queries apply: How can we view the data? What distinguishes it from the competition? Are there any structures that stand out? In this circumstance, we also have the advantage of being able to assess and understand the data based on some immediate knowledge of the subject matter. Then, using traditional multivariate approaches, you may contrast and compare the styles of many authors, and possibly assign authorship.

Any literary piece of writing must have a distinct style. It honors the author in a special way. The same concept or thing explored by many other authors is presented with new meanings and dimensions by a writer using stylistic devices and dignified style. As a result, style is the fundamental factor that distinguishes each writer. Stylistics is a branch of linguistics that studies various

types. It is the study of how to use words and vocabulary correctly in a sentence or piece of writing. Style and Stylistics are defined differently by different scholars but having somewhat similar concepts.

The analysis of style and the techniques used in written language is referred to as stylistics. Every critic and scholar has his own definition of stylistics. **Widdowson (1975)** describes stylistics as the analysis of literary discourse from a linguistic perspective, distinguishing stylistics from literary criticism and emphasizing the importance of linguistics as a linking technique.

The field of literary stylistics is so broad that no attempt can be made here to provide a systematic record of its evolution, particularly as parallel, overlapping or associated developments have occurred in several nations.

In the work of **Bally (1951)** a marked contrast can be seen between the Bally School of Stylistics' rigorous and restricted methods and the more expansive process of those who were more concerned with literature as an art. Bally and his followers were concerned with developing a general structure of stylistic possibilities that could be extended as it could be applied to all modes of utterance to all literary work. The establishment of a standard against which stylistic deviations could be measured was a keystone of their system. It is open to question from the literary point of view, mainly for taking uncolored descriptive language as the paradigm of all language. This may be a legitimate methodological convenience, but there seems to be a certain perversity in it since it is hardly ever of this kind to demonstrate 'natural language on Bally's own. The contrast can be seen in the work of some Germany writers whose key reference point is not a norm or a system, but a literary art work's complete being. The task here is to differentiate anything that can be clearly labeled 'stylistics'. How does Stilforschung differ from the vast unorganized field of literary criticism so conceived—criticism of the ordinary historical, impressionistic, or belletristic kinds to be improved by stylistics?

Karl comprehensive work on Dante (*Die Gottliche Komodie*, Heidelberg, 1929-10) is primarily a thorough and systematic study into all the different streams of medieval culture that contributed to the thinking of Dante. The book's American translation is simply called *Medieval Culture*, and this shows what is indeed the case, that cultural history is the bulk of the work, not style-study at all. The long segment on 'The Poetry of the Divine Comedy' is an effort to give the whole poem a stylistic study. But the precision and refinement that stylistic analysis requires are almost necessarily missed by an attempt on such a huge scale. In the technique, there is nothing distinctive, which simply comes down to a rehearsal of the *Commedia* events, and a commentary on their emotional energy, order and structure, a very pedestrian conventional literary commentary. It seems that Vossler was fascinated with

With the definition of a literary work's internal examination, without ever being able to decide on its exact bearing and intent. In essence, his book on Benvenuto Cellini is a psychological analysis; and in other works, Vossler is drawn to the study of national characteristics as articulated by literary style (*The Spirit of Language* is too concerned to be congenial to non-Teutonic readers with the German soul). The inference of Vossler, expressed by others as well is that style-analysis in its 'objective nature clearly correlates with literary criticism. With the factor of subjective personal interest purged away, it is simply literary criticism. (ibid)

In **Hatzfeld (1949)** clumsily titled article, 'Stylistic Criticism as Art-minded Philology', another way of describing stylistics is found. In the title, the distinction is also indicated: stylistic analysis is simply philology with the added aesthetic dimension in the traditional German sense. Similar to Meyer-comparative Liibke's philology, Bally's stylistics severely renounced aesthetic considerations. If all or any of these lines of investigation are re-directed towards aesthetic objects we have literary stylistics.

### ***1.1 Statement of the Problem***

Some researchers and critics when dealing with a literary piece, give their own opinion or depend on the opinions of other critics and researchers, and when they want to evaluate a literary work they look at the surface meaning of the literary piece without going deeper into the text and study the lines and words and calculate the numbers of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs using the statistical method to analyze the literary piece through this method we can see the theme, ideas, emotions and poetic devices the writer want to express in his literary piece. Most teachers of literature, students, researchers, and syllabus designers when they analyze and interpret literary texts, depending on their subjective reflective judgments rather than on objective factual statistical, scientific analysis.

## **2. Aims**

The purpose of literary analysis is to interpret the meaning of a poem and appreciate it on a deeper level .The analysis aims to know the style used by the author in her literary work, to find out the types of figurative languages in the poem, to understand the meaning of sentences and phrases that selected by the writer, to find out the number of parts of speech used in the poem, to find out the effect of the number of each part of speech on the meaning, it also aims to analyze a literary piece, a poem, stylistically to arrive at factual empirical scientific linguistic characterization which is not based on intuition and subjective reflection using statistical analysis and frequency count of words, phrases, and sentences of the poem, to arrive at real concrete results.

### ***2.1 Hypothesis***

It is hypothesized that the statistical experimental analysis is a useful method for stylistic characterization of a poem.

## **3. Methodology**

In this study we will take the poem line by line, word by word to see how many the of parts of speech are repeated in the poem and why the writer mention that types in her poem and how these types effect the meaning of the poem. So we will deal with numbers and percentages of the words like nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions and the articles and how many times they are repeated in the poem to understand the meaning by using statistical method.

### ***3.1 Model***

The model is worth consideration because it is based on a linguistic analysis of literature. Halliday et al (1964) state that "no student should be pushed into literary work until he has a sufficient linguistic ability to understand, enjoy and appreciate the literary texts that he will be studying". We have attempted an interpretation of the poem "And Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou on the basis of linguistic analysis which is to follow in these papers. The text is analysed in terms of Halliday's "Systemic Linguistics". We are therefore, interested in finding out how Angelou's "And Still I Rise" exemplifies the language system, a closed (finite) system like the system of tense, the system of gender and the system of pronouns.

"It is misleading in teaching a literary text communicatively to focus on a part of the text in isolation. We have, therefore, to consider the text in its entirety" (Yadugiri:1997). There are also grounds to believe that a linguistically oriented approach can ensure student's motivation and makes learning possible because the student can make use of his knowledge of grammar and linguistics in the literature class. This approach also encourages student participation. They are expected to analyze the form and discover the poetic meaning and the effect of linguistic structure (sharma, 1982).

### 3.2 Data Collection and Procedures

In the present work we will analyse the poem "And Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou 1928-2014. In this study we will count nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions and the articles to see how many times they are mentioned in the poem and get the percentages of each of them to understand the meanings of the poem.

### 4. Data Analysis

In the current study we will arrange the data in tables to show their numbers and percentages then to see the effect of the form on the meaning of the poem. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of lexical and auxiliary verbs.

Table 1(a) Numbers and Percentages of Lexical and Auxiliary Verbs in the poem.

| Types of Verbs | Numbers | %     |
|----------------|---------|-------|
| Lexical        | 39      | 63.9% |
| Auxiliary      | 22      | 36.1% |
| Total          | 61      | 100%  |

Table 1(a) above shows that lexical verbs which contain the meaning constitute 39 (63.9%) of the total number of verbs. For example (walk, pumping, write, trod, rise), this shows that the writer is concerned with lexical items and the poem is full of meaning. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of Auxiliary verbs. Table 1(b) Numbers and Percentages of Auxiliary Verbs in the poem.

| Types of Auxiliary verbs |             | Numbers of verbs | %     |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------|
| Primary                  | Do          | 6                | 27.2% |
|                          | Be          | 5                | 22.8% |
|                          | Have        | 3                | 13.6% |
| Modal                    | Probability | 5                | 22.8% |
|                          | Future      | 3                | 13.6% |
| Total                    |             | 22               | 100%  |

Table 1(b) above shows that the writer used the verb "do" six times (27.2%). For example (Does my sassiness upset you?) and (Don't you take it awful hard). The verb "do" performs an activity or a task. This shows that the writer is concerned with action, progress, and activity.

The least frequently used verbs in the poem are future and they are used three times (13.6%). For example (will). The poet is not concerned with what will happen after the present, She didn't want to wait for the future, but she talks in the present time. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of dynamic and stative verbs in the poem.

Table 1(c) Numbers and Percentages of Dynamic and Stative Verbs in the poem.

| Types of Verbs | Numbers | %     |
|----------------|---------|-------|
| Dynamic        | 26      | 66.7% |
| Stative        | 13      | 33.3% |
| Total          | 39      | 100%  |

Table 1(c) shows that Dynamic verbs form 26 (66.7%) of the total number of dynamic and stative verbs. For example (rise, falling shoot, cut, kill). Dynamic verbs show that the poet has a lot of energy and a strong personality.

A dynamic personality always changing and makes the progress of a power-producing movement. The writer has an active powerful personality. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of transitive and intransitive verbs.

Table 1(d) Numbers and Percentages of Transitive and Intransitive Verbs in the poem.

| Types of Verbs | Numbers | %     |
|----------------|---------|-------|
| Intransitive   | 20      | 51.2% |
| Transitive     | 19      | 48.8% |
| Total          | 39      | 100%  |

Table 1(d) above shows that Intransitive verbs are 20 (51.2%) of the total number of transitive and intransitive verbs. For example (want, cries, come, dance). Intransitive verbs take no direct object. This shows that the poet does not talk about a particular object or person and she addresses all people. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of regular and irregular verbs.

Table 1(e) Numbers and Percentages of Regular and Irregular Verbs in the poem.

| Types of Verbs | Numbers | %     |
|----------------|---------|-------|
| Irregular      | 29      | 74.3% |
| Regular        | 10      | 25.7% |
| Total          | 39      | 100%  |

Table 1(e) above shows that irregular verbs form 29 (74.3%) of the total number of regular and irregular verbs. For example (write, trod). Irregular verbs do not follow the usual rules, they should be memorized, the verbs are not formed in the normal way. This shows that the writer didn't follow the rules. The table also shows that regular verbs are the least frequent in the poem, they constitute 10 (25.7%) of the total number of verbs. For example (offend, kill). Regular means following a pattern. This shows that the writer didn't follow rules and usual patterns. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of singular and plural nouns.

Table 2(a) Numbers and Percentages of Singular and Plural Nouns in the poem.

| Types of Nouns | Numbers | %    |
|----------------|---------|------|
| Singular       | 27      | 60%  |
| Plural         | 18      | 40%  |
| Total          | 45      | 100% |

Table 2(a) above shows that the most frequently used in the poem are singular nouns, they form 27(60%). For example (slave, dream, history, dirt, dust) the singular is a noun that refers to one person or thing. This means that the writer talks to every single person alone and sends her message to them. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of abstract and concrete nouns.

Table 2(b) Numbers and Percentages of Abstract and Concrete Nouns in the poem.

| Types of Nouns | Numbers | %     |
|----------------|---------|-------|
| Abstract       | 24      | 53.3% |
| Concrete       | 21      | 46.7% |
| Total          | 45      | 100%  |

Table 2(b) above shows that abstract nouns are 24 (53.3%). For example (lies, sassiness, words, hatefulness, air). They are based on general ideas and not on any particular person, thing, or situation. This means that the writer is concerned with ideas and mind. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of countable and uncountable nouns.

Table 2(c) Numbers and Percentages of Countable and Uncountable Nouns in the poem.

| Types of Nouns | Numbers | %    |
|----------------|---------|------|
| Countable      | 27      | 60%  |
| Uncountable    | 18      | 40%  |
| Total          | 45      | 100% |

Table 2(c) above shows that countable nouns are 27 (60%). For example (head, eyes, moons, suns, tides) they can be used in the plural. This means that the writer talks about issues that we can count and deal with. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of common proper, and compound nouns.

Table 2(d) Numbers and Percentages of Common, Proper and Compound Nouns in the poem.

| Types of Nouns | Numbers | %    |
|----------------|---------|------|
| Common         | 26      | 65%  |
| Proper         | 8       | 20%  |
| Compound       | 6       | 15%  |
| Total          | 40      | 100% |

Table 2(d) above shows that common nouns are 26 (65%). For example (past, pain, terror, fear). Common nouns are more frequent, happening often existing in large numbers or many places. This means that the writer is concerned with the largest number of people and the most frequent issues. Table 2(d) also shows that compound nouns are the least frequently used 6(15%) in the poem. For example (oil wells, living room). They are nouns made of two or more words or parts of words, written as one or more words, or joined by a hyphen. This means that the writer is not concerned with compound meaning but she used the most popular and easy meaning in her poem. Her style is easy to understand. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of pronouns.

Table 3 Numbers and Percentages of Pronouns in the poem.

| Types of Pronouns | Numbers | %    |
|-------------------|---------|------|
| Personal          | 27      | 54%  |
| Possessive        | 12      | 24%  |
| Objective         | 11      | 22%  |
| Total             | 50      | 100% |

Table 3 above shows that personal pronouns are 27 (54%). For example (I, you) this means the poet is connected with individual people, especially their feelings, characters and relationships. This shows that the writer addressed each individual person and touches the feelings.

The least frequently used pronouns in the poem are objective pronouns they form 11 (22%). For example (me, it). This means that the writer is concerned with facts. The following table shows numbers and percentages of adverbs.

Table 4 Numbers and Percentages of Adverbs in the poem.

| Types of Adverbs | Numbers | %    |
|------------------|---------|------|
| Place            | 9       | 56%  |
| Time             | 3       | 19%  |
| Degree           | 3       | 19%  |
| Manner           | 1       | 6%   |
| Total            | 16      | 100% |

Table 4 above shows that the adverbs of place are the most frequent among adverbs they form 9 (56%). For example(down,

behind). These adverbs add more information about a place. This means that the writer is concerned with place in general, in any place there are oppressed people.

Table 4 also shows that the least frequently used adverb is the adverb of manner which constitutes only 1(6%) of the total number of adverbs. For example (wondrously). This shows that the writer didn't care about how things happen. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of adjectives in the poem.

Table 5 Numbers and Percentages of Adjectives in the poem.

| Types of Adjectives | Numbers | %     |
|---------------------|---------|-------|
| Descriptive         | 14      | 50%   |
| Similarity          | 9       | 32.2% |
| Intensifier         | 2       | 7.1%  |
| Compound            | 2       | 7.1%  |
| Possessive          | 1       | 3.6%  |
| Total               | 28      | 100%  |

Table 5 shows that descriptive adjectives form 14 (50%) of the total number of adjectives. For example(bitter and hard). They say how language is actually used without giving rules for how it should be used. This means that the writer describes a lot of ideas without the rules which make this happen. The least frequently used adjectives are possessives, They are used only once (3.6%). For example (own). This shows that the writer didn't want to put the receiver's mind , feelings and body under the possession of anybody else and she wants to make him free in everything. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of prepositions.

Table 6 Numbers and Percentages of Prepositions in the poem.

| Types of Prepositions | Numbers | %     |
|-----------------------|---------|-------|
| Position              | 11      | 50%   |
| Place                 | 8       | 36.4% |
| Direction             | 3       | 13.6% |
| Total                 | 22      | 100%  |

Table 6 shows that the position preposition is the most frequently used which forms 11 (50%) of the total number of prepositions in the poem. For example (in, into). Place prepositions show the place where somebody/something is located, how somebody is sitting or standing, or how something is arranged, the situation that somebody is in, especially when it affects what they can and cannot do. This means that the writer wants the receivers to manage their lives, to do an action, and didn't stay static in the same situation.

Table 6 also shows that direction prepositions are the least frequently used they form 3 (13.6%) of the total number of prepositions. For example (from, out) . This means that the poet wants the reader to make his decision and not still under the control of others. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of articles.

Table 7 Numbers and Percentages of Articles in the poem.

| Types of Articles | Numbers | %     |
|-------------------|---------|-------|
| Definite          | 9       | 69.2% |
| Indefinite        | 4       | 30.8% |
| Total             | 13      | 100%  |

Table 7 shows that the most frequently used article is definite, they form 9 (69.2%) of the total number of articles. For example

(The). This means that the poet is sure of herself, her style is easily understood. This means that the writer is factual.

Table 7 also shows that indefinite article forms 4(30.8%) of the total number of articles. For example (a). This means that the writer is concerned with a period of time that has no fixed end and is not clearly defined. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of conjunctions.

Table 8 Numbers and Percentages of Conjunctions in the poem.

| Types of Conjunctions | Numbers | %    |
|-----------------------|---------|------|
| Link                  | 7       | 70%  |
| Contrast              | 2       | 20%  |
| Relation              | 1       | 10%  |
| Total                 | 10      | 100% |

Table 8 shows that linking conjunctions constitute 7 (70%) of the total number of conjunctions in the poem. For example (and, that) this means that the writer is concerned with the relationship between people or things, countries or organizations.

Table 8 also shows that the least frequently used conjunctions in the poem is relation conjunction. It shows the relation between the previous sentence and the following one, it is used only once (10%). For example (cause). This means that the poet is not concerned with the type of relation between her and the receiver whether the reader is brother, friend, or never met before.

## 5. Conclusion

1. The statistical analysis is useful to understand the literary meanings of the literary works.
2. The poet explains her strong wish to be free and she looks optimistic. The poem shows that she is strong enough and she will continue and survive and will resist for the sake of oppressed people. She is determined to be ready and strong to overcome her self-esteem. The poet concentrates on the importance of stubbornness and persistence.
3. "And still I rise" talks about determination to rise and stand up from adversity. The poet wants the reader to remember that the dark history and pressure which are addressed to her play no role in her future.

4. In "And Still I Rise" the poet expresses her courage, pride, self-empowerment, perseverance, struggle and injustice, and those issues are the main themes crafted in the poem.
5. Angelou stating all her messages and ideas with simple structures and words. She compares the nature of the oppressor with her determination and resilience to rise against challenges. She speaks about the positive attitude and the confidence that she possesses.
6. Angelou asserts that she is unstoppable and that she will overcome no matter what they do or say. She tells the reader about all that she has achieved through her perseverance and fighting.

### **5.1 Recommendations**

1. The researcher recommends that the readers should be careful when choosing a poem to read, the reader should choose something that helps him to change his way of thinking about the oppression and injustice, in the way of life in general.
2. The stylistic method is pedagogical, allowing students to widen their area of investigation in literary works while also learning the language from perspectives other than literary critique.
3. The researcher advises readers to pay attention to the differences in styles, which might lead to varied interpretations depending on the reader's attitudes, beliefs, and values.

### **5.2 Suggestions for future Research**

1. A Statistical Approach to Syllabic Alliteration in "The Onset" by Robert Frost could be used as a subject for future studies.
2. A Stylistic Analysis of figures of speech of the short story "The Lamp" by Agatha Christie.
3. A Stylistic Analysis of the novel "The Old Man and The Sea" by Ernest Hemmingway. Could be conducted as a subject for future study.

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