

# Inner Pulchritude is Immortal: Maya Angelou's *Phenomenal Woman*

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## Abstract

*Maya Angelou is the most predominant African American post colonial feminist in the Contemporary era. Angelou's writing sketch the significance of redefining physical beauty among male-dominated society. She brought massive changes in American Community being a proud soul hearted woman. She always pin points the issues of racism and emancipation of female feelings through her writings. Angelou's 'Phenomenal Woman' is an epoch making poem and have discussed the inner pulchritude of woman. Her inner beauty is more vital and proudly called herself as phenomenally phenomenal woman. Conversely, Angelou condemns the racial imbalance between white and black community in America. This paper vividly depicts that how a woman can be optimistic always in her life.*

**Keywords: Inner Beauty, Phenomenal, Racial Imbalance, Male Domination, Optimistic**

Phenomenal Woman is an optimistic poem written by Maya Angelou, a paramount figure in feminist world. It rejoices the beauty, immortal power, and resilience of women, foreground the significance of self-confidence and self-determination. Feminist metaphysics explores the nature of reality and identity from a feminist standpoint. It challenges customary understandings of gender and advocates for a more all-encompassing equitable society.

Angelou's words are a witness to the pliability and spirit of women all over the place. Through her poetry, she uplifts and empowers women, reminding them of their intrinsic strength and ability to overcome any face up they may face. Angelou's bulletin words enhancing women to clinch their individuality without seeking justification from others. She accentuates that beauty is not defined by physical traits but by the way a woman carries herself with self-confidence with dignity.

In the feminist analysis of Angelou's 'Phenomenal Woman' celebrates woman's valour, strength, beauty, and resilience of women while exigent societal norms and beauty standards. It signifies the importance of self-confidence, self-love, and self-acceptance of one's authenticity, ultimately empowering women to embrace their own uniqueness and recognize their worth.

'Phenomenal Woman' by Maya Angelou is an influential poem that can be analyzed through a feminist lens. She had written in a very confident and self-assured tone, the poem confronts society's narrow definition of beauty and presents a more inclusive and self-affirming perspective. Maya Angelou's 'Phenomenal Woman' is a powerful and empowering poem that celebrates the strength and beauty of women. It was first published in 1978 and has since become one of Angelou's most vibe creating works.

The poem 'Phenomenal Woman' highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing women for their splendor, intelligence, charm, and charisma, rather than focusing exclusively on physical appearance. It encourages women to embrace their individuality and sole qualities, reminding them of their inherent worth and inner strength. The main subject of Maya Angelou's poem 'Phenomenal Woman' is an empowerment and celebration of women's exceptional beauty and strength. The poem the idea that spot on beauty comes from within inner self, regardless of communal standards or conventional physical attractiveness.

Maya Angelou's writing challenges traditional beauty norms by stress, the confidence and self-assurance of a woman who does not fit societal expectations, yet conveys an irresistible magnetism. The speaker in the poem points out that a woman's power and allure come from her self-acceptance, self-confidence, and self-love. This theme promotes the idea that every woman possesses inherent worth and the ability to influence and inspire others.

In 'Phenomenal Woman', Angelou explores her confidence and pride in her own identity as a woman. She enriches that true beauty comes from within and is not exclusively defined by society's standards. The poem emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance and self-love, encouraging women to embrace their uniqueness and celebrate their own worth.

'Phenomenal Woman' has vibrated with people from all walks of life and continues to inspire and empower women around the world. It serves as reminder that every woman is extraordinary in her own way and should be celebrated for her individuality. Through her words, Angelou inspires women to be proud of their curves, flaws, and imperfections, reminding them that their worth goes far beyond their appearance. She encourages women to embrace their inner power, resilience, and wisdom. It vividly explores through the poetic lines that,

*Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.  
 I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size  
 But when I start to tell them,  
 They think I'm telling lies.  
 I say,  
 It's in the reach of my arms,*

*The span of my hips,  
 The stride of my step,  
 The curl of my lips.  
 I'm a woman  
 Phenomenally.  
 Phenomenal woman,  
 That's me.*

Maya Angelou's poem 'Phenomenal Woman' delivers a powerful message of self-confidence, inner strength, and the celebration of one's unique qualities. The poem acknowledges the beauty and grace that lies within all women, regardless of society's narrow standards of beauty. All the way through vivid imagery and lyrical language, Angelou portrays a sense of pride and boldness in being a woman. The poem serves as an anthem to boost and empower women, encouraging them to embrace their uniqueness and stand tall in a world that often tries to diminish their worth.

In particular, the message of 'Phenomenal Woman' emphasizes the importance of self-love, self-acceptance, and the celebration of all women's uniqueness and strength. It encourages women to be confident in their own skin and to recognize the incredible qualities they possess within themselves. She showed herself as lines follow,

*I walk into a room  
 Just as cool as you please,  
 And to a man,  
 The fellows stand or  
 Fall down on their knees.  
 Then they swarm around me,  
 A hive of honey bees.*

'Phenomenal Woman' is a powerful and empowering poem that celebrates the strength and resilience of women. The poem begins with the repetition of the phrase in order to emphasize the speaker's identity and self-assurance. Angelou immediately establishes a strong and positive tone, asserting that despite not conforming to society's conventional standards of beauty; she still possesses an undeniable allure and confidence.

Angelou's use of vivid imagery and metaphors throughout the poem adds depth and impact to her words. For instance, she compares herself to moon, the stars to highlight her inner radiance and splendor, which goes beyond physical appearance.

By choosing celestial images, Angelou suggests that a woman's beauty and worth extend far beyond what can be seen on the surface. The lines speak as

*I say,  
It's in the arch of my back,  
The sun of my smile,  
The ride of my breasts,  
The grace of my style.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.*

Furthermore, the poem highlights the speaker's pride in her unique qualities that make her stand out. Angelou emphasizes the influence she has on others, stating that people are drawn to her a thus challenging the notion that beauty is solely determined by external features. By affirming her own worth, she encourages other women to embrace their individuality and recognize their own inner strength. In addition, she explores themes of self-acceptance and self-love. Angelou suggests that true beauty comes from within and is not dependent on external validation. By embracing her own identity unapologetically, the speaker inspires other women to do the same and reject societal pressures to conform.

Overall, 'Phenomenal Woman' is a powerful and uplifting poem that celebrates the essence and worth of women beyond societal standards. Maya Angelou's skillful use of language, imagery, and her confident and assertive tone make this poem a timeless declaration of self-acceptance, self-love, and female empowerment. On the whole, the poem celebrates the resilience, beauty, and spirit of women, showcasing the idea that their strength lies not only in their physical appearance but also in their attitudes and self-belief.

From a feminist perspective, 'Phenomenal Woman' celebrates inner strength and self-confidence of women, challenging societal expectations and norms. The poem emphasizes the speaker's unique qualities, highlighting her physical and intellectual attributes without conforming to conventional beauty standards. This approach promotes the idea that a woman's worth is not solely based on appearance, but on her individuality and inner spirit.

The poem also addresses the societal pressures imposed on women and the struggle for self-acceptance. It empowers women by acknowledging and reclaiming their inherent beauty and worth, independent of external validation. The repeated refrain, 'I'm a woman, phenomenally', reinforces the speaker's assertion of her identity and strength. Angelou's choice of words and imagery in the poem challenges objectification and fosters a sense of sisterhood and solidarity among women. By describing herself as a 'Phenomenal Woman' who cannot be defined by the narrow standards of beauty and attractiveness, Angelou encourages women to embrace their unique qualities and reject society's attempts to categorize or diminish them.

Maya Angelou's 'Phenomenal Woman' celebrates the strength, resilience, and beauty of women, particularly African American women, and has often been interpreted through a feminist lens. From a feminist perspective, the poem speaks to the empowerment of women, challenging traditional beauty standards and societal expectations. It addresses the idea that real beauty lies within a woman's confidence, self-assurance, and authenticity, rather than conforming to society's narrow definitions of attractiveness.

Furthermore, Phenomenal Woman highlights the spirit of women in the face of adversity and societal pressures. It showcases the power that comes from self-acceptance and self-love, rejecting the notion that women must conform to unrealistic standards in order to be considered extraordinary. This field of study delves into questions surrounding gender identity, social construction, and the impact of patriarchal systems on our perceptions of self. By examining the patterns of identity, feminists aim to challenge and redefine societal norms, encouraging individuals to break free from restrictive gender roles and embrace their unique experiences and identities. Maya Angelou concludes the poem by saying an optimistic note as follow,

*Now you understand  
Just why my head's not bowed.  
I don't shout or jump about  
Or have to talk real loud.  
When you see me passing,  
It ought to make you proud.*

I say,  
 It's in the click of my heels,  
 The bend of my hair,  
 the palm of my hand,  
 The need for my care.  
 Cause I'm a woman  
 Phenomenally.  
 Phenomenal woman,  
 That's me.

Overall, 'Phenomenal Woman' can be seen as a feminist anthem, celebrating the self-assurance, resilience, and empowerment of women. It urges women to recognize their exceptional qualities and reject societal pressures, thereby promoting gender equality and encouraging a more inclusive and diverse understanding of beauty.

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