# Social Disparities and Achievement Gaps in Selected poems of Maya Angelou and William Blake

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**Being a MA Thesis Submitted to the Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.**

**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Master of Arts Degree (MA) In English (Literature)**

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**2025**

**Certification**

This is to certify that Osereme Esther ONOBHAYEDO with matriculation number LCU/PG/005417 carried out this research work titled ↑Disparities and Achievement gaps in selected poems of Maya Angelou and William Blake↓ in the Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, for the award of Master Degree (M.A.) in English Language and that this has not been previously submitted.

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Dr. Olayinka Olumuyiwa Paul Date
(Promoter)

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Dr. Ufuoma Rebecca Davies Date
(Head of the Department)

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**Dedication**

This research  is dedicated to all the researchers and my Parents.

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**Acknowledgement**

This research work, titled ↑Disparities and Achievement Gaps in Selected Poems of Maya Angelou and William Blake↓, was carried out at Lead City University, Ibadan. The academic resources provided by the University Library, alongside the extensive use of digital materials and internet-based academic databases, played a pivotal role in sourcing relevant scholarly literature and primary texts. These materials were instrumental in shaping the depth and direction of the study. Additionally, the intellectual and environmental support encountered during academic engagements within Ibadan greatly enriched the qualitative aspects of this research.

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Despite the valuable support received from the individuals and institutions mentioned, I take sole responsibility for any shortcomings or errors that may be found in this research.

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**Abstract**

This thesis investigates the disparities and achievement gaps present in selected poems by Maya Angelou and William Blake, employing critical race theory and comparative analysis. The study adopts a qualitative research design with textual analysis as the primary methodology. The population consists of four selected poems, ↓Caged bird↓ and ↑Still I rise↓ by Maya Angelou , The little black boy↓ and ↑London↓ by William Blake. the data was collected through detailed content analysis of the poems. The study also incorporates secondary sources from academic articles, journals, and books to complement the primary analysis. Data analysis followed an interpretative approach, focusing on thematic, narrative analysis and expression patterns related to this topic. Through close readings of their works, the study examines how race, social class, and historical context influence the themes, language, and reception of their poetry. The research identifies and compares instances of social inequality, marginalization, and resistance within their respective oeuvres. By applying critical race theory, the thesis explores how Angelou and Blake's poems reflect and challenge systemic racism and power structures. The comparative approach highlights both the similarities and differences in their poetic strategies and socio-political critiques, shedding light on the enduring relevance of their work in addressing contemporary issues of inequality. The ultimate goal is to foster a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between literature, social justice, and cultural identity.

**Keywords**: Disparities, Achievement gaps, Comparative Analysis, Inequality, Systemic Racism.

**Word Count:** 224

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