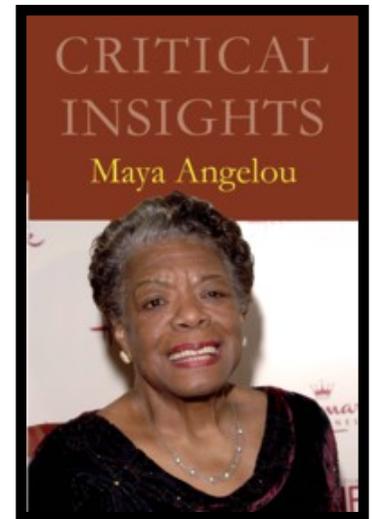


Critical Insights: Maya Angelou

Text Reviews

“Maya Angelou certainly carried a wide range of talents beyond her writing, but it is her prolific output as a poet, memoirist, and playwright which makes Angelou the ideal subject for a Critical Insights volume. **This book offers a rich contextual exploration of her life and times, in addition to a well-curated selection of textual analyses which give ample attention to her classic *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* but also discuss a number of her most beloved poems and other works.** Two opening chapters take a cursory look at Angelou’s unconventionally busy trajectory from abuse survivor to Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient. **While noting her many accomplishments, these chapters also provide a good sense of how Angelou lived in concert with major events of the twentieth century like the Civil Rights movement.** Four Critical Contexts essays follow and touch on the influence of other African American artists and their mediums, censorship, and more. **Martin Kich also offers a well-organized chronological review of writings on Angelou, such as obituaries, monographs and magazine articles.** The Critical Readings section separates essays looking at Angelou’s prose from those discussing her poetry. Seven essays make up the former section and include “Paradoxical Phrasing in the Later Autobiographies of Maya Angelou,” by Robert C. Evans, which looks at the development of her autobiographical writing style. Other pieces offer discussions with Angelou on her work. Of course, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is a constant reference point. Three essays discuss Angelou’s poetry. Notably, “On the Pulse of Peace: Maya Angelou, A Nation’s Poet” by Tomeiko Ashford Carter examines how Angelou’s poetry speaks to the greater American ideal. Supplemental material includes a chronology of Maya Angelou’s life (compelling in itself), a list of her works, a bibliography, and an index. **Recommended** for high school and college libraries.”

—ARBA



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