

## ROBERT HAYDEN, THE HISTORIAN AND THE SYMBOLIST IN *ANGLE OF ASCENT*

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### ABSTRACT

Analysis of Robert Hayden's (1913-1980) poems revealed the significant place history and symbolism occupied in his poems. The present study aimed to explore the historical elements and the pervasive sense of the past in Hayden's *Angle of Ascent* (1975). *Angle of Ascent* showed Hayden's interest in Afro-American history since he knew that it was misrepresented and distorted and hence it was imperative for him to correct the misconceptions surrounding it. *Angle of Ascent* also re-enacted the collaboration of Hayden's character as a symbolist and an historian and emphasised the remarkable fertility of their union as the bipolar extremes of his unique poetic genius. Symbolism in Hayden's poems allowed him to reinforce various meanings using symbols to show different meanings. Hayden's poetry also made it clear that since the horrible actualities of life can realise their true meaning in the higher order of spirit, the transcendent realm should reveal a meaning to man as long as it is materialised in his own experience.

**KEYWORDS:** Afro-American History, Historical Misconceptions, Symbolism, Ideal and Real, Divine Inclinations

### INTRODUCTION

The present study focuses on the remarkable fertility of the symbolist's union with the historian, which are deemed the bipolar extremes of Robert Hayden's (1913-1980) unique poetic genius. Wilburn Williams writes, "Robert Hayden is a poet whose symbolistic imagination is intent on divining the shape of a transcendent order of spirit and grace that might redeem a world bent on its own destruction" (68). Hayden also strikes a balance between the conflicting claims of the ideal and the actual showing that one cannot be mentioned apart from the other. W. Williams contends, "The realities of imagination and the actualities of history are bound together in an alliance that makes neither thinkable without the other" (68). Hayden's poetry suggests that since the horrible actualities of life can realise their true meaning in the higher order of spirit, the transcendent realm should reveal a meaning to man as long as it is materialised in his own experience to save him from annihilation and destruction.

What Ralph Wald Emerson (1803-1882), the poet, leader of the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century and the one indispensable figure of any discussion on American symbolism, once said about the poet's duty can obviously be applicable to Hayden:

The poet, like the electric rod, must reach from a point nearer the sky than all surrounding objects, down to the earth, and into the dark wet soil, or neither is of use. The poet must not only converse with pure thought, but he must demonstrate it almost to the senses. His words must be pictures, his verses must be spheres and cubes, to be seen and smelled and handled. (148) This opinion of Emerson can serve both as an accurate representation of what Hayden does in his work and as a necessary corrective to the divine inclinations of his symbolist genius.

On the other hand, no discussion of Hayden's poetry can avoid the question of the place a sense of history occupies in his work. Readers can detect a pervasive sense of the past and a powerful elegiac strain in his work. Charles T. Davis describes the crucial contribution of Hayden's extensive research in the slave trade to his poem

“Middle Passage,” and he has also called attention to the importance of Hayden’s comprehension of the Afro-American folk tradition to other poems such as “O Daedalus, Fly Away Home,” “The Ballad of Nat Turner,” and “Runagate Runagate” (87).

Being aware of the paradox in his poetic career, Hayden has referred to himself as a “romantic realist,” a “symbolist compelled to be realistic.” Michael Harper has also called him a “symbolist poet struggling with the facts of history” (qtd. in Goldstein and Chrisman 162). Hence, it would be a huge mistake to think that Hayden, the historian, is contradicting Hayden, the symbolist. A close reading of some of his poems in *Angle of Ascent* will support such a conclusion. Because of the popularity of “Middle Passage” and “Runagate Runagate,” which are poems black in subject matter and sometimes even black in use of language, the historical impulse in Hayden is closely connected in the minds of many readers with the poet’s pride in his own blackness. Since “Hayden’s recognition of his blackness is widely perceived as a grudging one, the symbolist in Hayden is often viewed as the enemy of his essentially historical, and black, muse” (Williams, W.74). Nonetheless, Hayden’s extensive exploitation of symbolism in his poetry was to negate the claims that he must forget about symbolism and focus only on his roots as a black poet. Hayden wanted to be judged as a poet not as a Negro poet and probably his usage of symbolism in his poetry is to “quiet the suspicion that Hayden’s symbolist clings parasitically to the creativity of his black historian” (Williams, W.74). Hence, the Symbolist in Hayden is not at odds with the historian. As an historian, Hayden summons up the significant facts of a poet’s ancestry; and the symbolist immediately changes them into the terms of art.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

*Angle of Ascent* (1975) is supposedly written by Hayden to update the conventional history of black literature. The poems in this collection feature a strong logic of history. For Vera Kutzinski, *Angle of Ascent* is the perspective, or angle, of perception Hayden “brings to bear on his historical and cultural identity and on the language that shapes and textures that identity” (307), indicating that both Hayden the historian and the symbolist strongly collaborate in this collection of poems. Furthermore, Alysia Harris says, “Given the dearth of black poets celebrated within the American literary canon, *Angle of Ascent* is an essential text that pilots readers through the deep and yawning poetic traditions practiced by African-Americans” (“Rev. of *Angle of Ascent*”). In addition, Hayden’s symbolist imagination in *Angle of Ascent* focuses on divining the character of a transcendent order of grace and spirit that may convert a world bent on its own annihilation and destruction.

The symbol is an image, object, or a word that evokes an additional meaning that transcends and is often more abstract than its literal meaning. In literature, symbols are learning devices for evoking intricate ideas without applying meticulous explanations that would make a piece of writing look more of an essay than an experience. A literary symbol can be a character, object, action, setting, name, or other thing in the literary work that upholds its literal meaning while suggesting different meanings. These symbols go beyond traditional symbols as they gain their respective symbolic meaning in the context of a certain piece of writing.

In this context, studies maintain that no discussion of Hayden’s poetry can fail to address a sense of history prevailing in his work conveyed through symbolism. To begin with the pervasive sense of history in Hayden’s work, Davis argues that Hayden captures Afro-American folk tradition in poems such as “Runagate Runagate,” first published in 1949. Other studies argue that Hayden has called himself a “romantic realist” referring to a “symbolist compelled to be realistic” (Williams, W. 73). Others like Harper call Hayden a “symbolist poet struggling with history facts” (qtd. in Goldstein and Chrisman 162). Therefore, nothing is possibly more tempting or mistaken than to suppose that the

historian trait in Hayden does not agree with the symbolist rationale and a close analysis of the poetry does not support such a conclusion. For instance, Hayden's famous poem "Runagate Runagate," refutes this claim as it is described as being distinctly black in theme and black in use of its language (Williams, P. 102).

Laurence Goldstein and Robert Chrisman maintain that a review of Hayden's work dwells so much on the manifold possibilities of Hayden's symbolism. Yet, history is also a critical element in Hayden's poetry since his poems demonstrate the level of his mastery of tradition, which is both Euro-American and Afro-American in nature. Hayden said he was invariably interested in pursuing Afro-American history, and that when he was a young poet, he knew that his history was misrepresented giving him the need to understand and defend his past.

He elaborates that he "set out to correct the misconceptions and to destroy some of the stereotypes and clichés which surround Negro history" (qtd. in Friedlander 129). Therefore, no analysis of Hayden's poetry can ignore the place that history occupies in his poems.

However, Collins argues that while it is apparent that the symbolist approach is overt in many of Hayden's poems including "Middle Passage," it is not apparent whether history operates overtly in some of his poems (334). To understand his interest in history as an integral part in his representation of the mystery of time, one notes that Hayden is intrigued by the change process evident through the artistic and psychological impact of his dramatic re-creations of historical contexts rather than just the nature of those events. In his entire works of poetry, the audience encounters imagination and memory pitted against the loss of time passage.

According to W. Williams, the fundamental source of Hayden's productivity, the wellspring of his poetic activity, lies in the ability of the human memory to negotiate the distance between time past and time present and the capacity of a profoundly sympathetic imagination to transcend the space between self and other. The complex interactions generated by the life of memory and imagination define the basic unity of Hayden's work. (74)

So, the intricate interactions created by the life of memory and imagination specify the unified source of Hayden's poems. Hayden suffers in trying to describe a past that has been distorted and misrepresented. As W. Williams claims, "It is a speechless past peopled with renowned personalities who are ironically impersonal" (75).

Hayden's poems are about his imaginative endeavor to reforge his broken links with his past. According to him, the past should not be the past at all. Thus, his work is about someone confronting history as an active participant in it, not a distant participant lamenting his alienation. It is clear that Hayden's past dwells in the present. So, though Hayden's mind is obsessed with the past, his poems indicate the audience's present. Hayden's poem "Middle Passage" develops from death "to life upon these shores," and the audience becomes aware of this life and these shores and at the same time understands the historical reality of slavery.

*Angle of Ascent* demonstrates the level of Hayden's mastery of tradition, which is both Euro-American and Afro-American in nature (Williams, P. 164). Hayden also said in a 1972 interview that he was invariably interested in pursuing Afro-American history because he knew that his history was misrepresented, which necessitates that he clearly understands his past. So, in his pursuit of history, it is evident that through symbolism all of Hayden's poems are conceived as lending a black perspective on the neglected issues of American history.

For example, Hayden shows "Crispus Attucks" as a representative symbol of a revolutionary spirit. Studies point out that beyond such direct patriotic comparison, Hayden displays the unrecognized meaning for the Attucks' importance as an individual who resembles the progression from slavery to manhood (Baxter 45).

Finally, according to Robert Greensberg, it can be argued that in Hayden's poetry imagination realities and historical actualities are tied together in a seamless symbiotic alliance that it is impossible to decipher without the other. As such, Hayden focuses on the tension between the tragic character of life and the richness of his imagination by bringing the past into the present life (252).

### **ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLISM AND HISTORY IN *ANGLE OF ASCENT***

As mentioned earlier, Hayden's poetry features both symbolism and historical concepts. W. Williams echoes this by stating that *Angle of Ascent* re-enacts the course of a collaboration of Hayden's character as both a symbolist and an historian (83). He adds that as an Historian, Hayden "summons up the essential facts of the poet's ancestry"; and as a symbolist, he "immediately translates them into the terms of art" (83). He exemplifies this through his "Beginnings" poem:

Plowdens, Finns,  
 Sheffeyes, Haydens,  
 Westerfields,  
 Pennsylvania gothic,  
 Kentucky homespun,  
 Virginia baroque. (Poem and Music.com)

As the poem moves forward in time, Hayden particularizes ancestors. Joe Finn appears "to join Abe Lincoln's men" and "disappears into his name." The poem depicts Great Grandma Easter who lingers longer before the poet's gaze and who is not prominent for the role she played in an historic conflict, but rather for her individual traits: "Great grandma Easter, on my father's side, was a Virginia Freedman's Indian bride./ She was more than six feet tall. At ninety could/ still chop and tote firewood" (poem and Music.com). The progress to the individuation accompanying the poem's proceeding to the present and the sharpness of the concern on the portrait of an ancestor indicate the specific ancestor's closeness to Hayden's own present. This connects to Hayden's growth in the awareness of the figurative language possibilities. So, "As the historian's field of view contracts, the symbolist's artfulness becomes increasingly apparent" (Williams, W. 84). With progress from summaries of the lives of both Joe Finn and Great Grandma Easter to focus on the moments in the poet's aunt lives, symbolism is reveling in the words because the beauty of their rhythm and sound becomes more apparent: "Melissabelle and Sarah Jane-oh they took all the prizes one Hallowe'en. And we'll let the calico curtain fall" (Poem and Music.com).

However, when Hayden himself finally appears, change occurs. The historian principle fortifies his centrality, as the conclusion section of the poem is "The Crystal Cave Elegy" and the steady flow of the poem towards life and present is shortly reversed in remembrance of the demise of the miner Floyd Collins. Hayden, as a symbolist increases the audience's involvement in his artistic work and does not conclude his poem in an artistic preoccupation with his inner life, but turns noticeably in prayer for the Collins' liberation. The changeless paradise of imagination is summoned to release humanity from time limitation:

Poor game loner  
 trapped in the rock  
 of Crystal Cave, ...

... (I taste the  
 darkness yet)  
 my greenhorn dream of  
 life. Alive down there  
 in his grave. (Poem and Music.com)

Hence, “The province of the poet is neither the realist’s moonscape of inert matter nor the romantic’s starfire of pure spirit, but the middle kingdom of actual earth that unites the two” (Williams, W. 85). As an historian and a symbolist Hayden joins romanticism and realism together to grab a productive terrain as their own, making symbolism and history blend skillfully in the poem. Consequently, symbols in “Beginnings” evoke intricate ideas without applying detailed explanations. The conventional symbols that Hayden uses are object and setting that uphold their literal meaning while suggesting different meanings. These symbols go beyond traditional symbols as they gain their respective symbolic meaning in the context of the poem.

The second poem to be discussed is “Runagate Runagate.” The poem depicts the theme of man-in-relation to man by showing the black slaves in relation to white masters. As such, the historical impulse in the poem connects with the minds of various readers Hayden’s pride in his own black trait. The poem discusses the celebrated black revolutionist Harriet Tubman, who freed many slaves:

Runs of alls rises stumbles on from darkness into darkness  
 And the darkness thicketed with shapes of terror  
 ...and blackness ahead and when shall I reach that somewhere  
 Morning and keep on going and never turn back and keep on /going  
 Runagate  
 Runagate  
 Runagate (Poem and Music.com)

These lines are considered an archaic expression for a runaway slave and, from the beginning, dramatic tension is clear as they bring alive the sense of dangerous expertise and the desperate, breathless, and uneven flight experienced by the runaway slaves.

Darkness in language is reflected in: “Verbs in the present tense, lack of punctuation, use of various feet from the prevailing trochaics in line one, extra syllables in line four, which help evoke the sense of dramatic tension and create reader’s involvement in the situation” (Williams, P. 102). The ordeal of slaves and their struggle to run away and reach the morning after the long and cold night is clearly manifested by Hayden’s images and symbolic language. Obviously referring to the whole symbolic implications of this period in history as a time of darkness, Hayden uses the journey northward (upward on a map) as a “figural expression of incipient spiritual ascent. Just as the speaker has, after his descent, journeyed through the dark to discover the ‘hidden ones’ and his own means for escape and enlightenment, so this poem uses the physical journey to symbolize that spiritual pilgrimage” (Hatcher). In the poem Hayden discusses the problem of reconciling Christianity and slave trading. The poet’s historical perspective becomes more evident in part two as the poet becomes the “lad,” who listens to unrepentant slaver’s memories as regards the beginnings of the “wretched trade in Africa

in greed, vanity, war, deception, devastation, and disease” (Poem and Music.com). In part three this historical perspective acquires an important spiritual dimension as the slave ships become “shuttles in the rocking loom of history” and the pattern from the loom itself emerges. The poet promises the “actual shore,” and the journey to it, the middle passage, becomes a descent into death resembling the dark night of the soul. The “shore” is life at the end of death, but first blacks must experience death, a “voyage whose chartings are unlove” (Poem and Music.com).

The reference to the storm in “Middle Passage” predicts the kinds of violent changes resultant from the mutinies and revolts carried out by slaves. Physically, the storm throws the *Amistad* off its intended course, which forecasts the drastic change that will result from the slave mutiny. The *Amistad* is significant to the revolutionist Hayden as it changed the course of the Afro-American history by reversing the direction of the Middle Passage, not only in geographical terms, but also in conceptual ones. Although “Middle Passage” is identified as “Voyage through death,” it is finally recognized as an internal journey, a rite of passage.

Another poem in Hayden’s *Angle of Ascent* that features his use of history and symbolism is “Stars” (Poem and Music.com) which is a five-section poem, in which a speaker arrives at light years from the earth in the space remoteness. It also suggests that a poet is star-like similar to an African-American freedom fighter “Sojourner Truth,” who adhered to the abolitionists as her models and became cosmological herself. In the same manner the poet-speaker upholds “Stars” and gains mastery in the art, and thus he becomes a star like. In the first section of the poem, Hayden adheres to the symbolism concepts. He alludes to a constellation Orion. In this section, the space remoteness is what makes Hayden, the artist, arrive to the apex of his ascent in his art. This symbolic import of Hayden’s destination is inherent in three sources (Greek mythology, cosmology and Bahaism). Hayden’s profound commitment is to the rationale of the Bahai religion and the symbolic meaning placed upon the stars as lesser luminaries compared to the sun. Bahaism rests upon this, while all things depict the beauty of God, with lesser or greater clarity, the sun is ostensibly the utmost source of light and thus a symbol of God, who is a spiritual light (Williams, P. 154).

Part two of the poem mentions nine stars referring to significant figures in Greek mythology. However, cosmology and the main literary doctrines are the concepts that Hayden utilizes to develop a metaphor within the poem (Williams, P. 155). When a speaker wonders at the manifestation of the stars’ present, he also recognizes that whatever he sees is really a light that has taken “eons” years after its creation to get to the viewers. Therefore, the speaker observes that “star” is a paradox that Hayden uses to ensure his mind is warm. Conceivably, Hayden also posits to the intransience and durability of written words long after the demise of a writer.

Part three of the poem focuses on “Sojourner Truth,” a liberated slave, suffragette and abolitionist. When she followed the stars, the mind becomes as the poet says, “a star.” In part four of the poems, Hayden focuses on the cosmological concept and the “pulsars” as well as, the “quasars.” Actually, “pulsars” and “quasars” are extremely star-like, luminous, and blue-like objects, some of which emit wave that can be detected on earth. Thus, Hayden understands the scientific explanation, and he is likewise aware that “Cosmic Ouija” name for the “pulsars” and “quasars” gives them spiritual qualities. Therefore, he presumes a poetic license strengthening the notion of stars. The “pulsars” and “quasars” are the integral parts of the Orion constellation, in which Hayden achieves art mastery and moves closer to God. Further, this viewpoint is a position from which Hayden can perceive and send critical poetic messages to others (Williams, P. 156).

Part five of the “Stars” poem titled “The Nine pointed Star” is a lyrical poem of three short stanzas with each representing a unique arrangement through division. The poem’s first stanza focuses on a purely scientific observation relating to the stars. The second stanza centers on the symbolic meaning concerning a certain star; while the third stanza is

about an affirmation of part one stance. In stanza one, from a viewpoint of earth, Hayden perceives cosmos expanse and pinpoints two categories of stars, “variable stars” and “stable stars” and their respective astronomical features. In stanza two, Hayden gives all his attention to a certain star in the expanse that he outlines. It is a star that he discerns its significance in his incremental explanation of its importance, in this form, “a Nine-Pointed Star,” a “sun star” and the integral part of a “nuclear will.” Each of the explanations carries a symbolic import in the Hayden’s religious belief.

While in astronomy, “sun star” symbolizes a star like the sun-like scale, in Bahaism concepts such as “sun star” and the “Nine-Pointed Star,” symbolize unity and perfection. In addition, if the “sun concept” focuses on son, Jesus, as well as, Baha’u’llah refers to a son, thus each of them embodies God and they form an integral part of God’s will, which is a “nuclear will” (Williams, P. 156). Generally speaking, symbols in the “Stars” poem by Hayden evoke intricate ideas without using meticulous and detailed explanations. The conventional symbols that Hayden uses are object and setting that maintain their literal meaning while suggesting different meanings. These symbols go beyond traditional symbols; as they gain their respective symbolic meaning in the context of the poem.

Hayden also uses symbolism in the pursuit of his cosmological theme in “Two Egyptian Portrait Masks” (Poem and Music. com) poems. The poems in particular focus on man’s endeavour to find God and the function of a man acting as God’s precursor to others not so advanced as him. The first poem is “Nefert-iti” while the other is “Akhenaten.” Both are pursuing a concept of a controversial Pharaoh and his elegantly beautiful queen. The “Nefert-iti” poem pays homage to a renowned queen, so it exalts her physical and spiritual beauty.

The poem says, “she is fair of face” and her exquisiteness is “carved on stelae” (line 2); Hayden says, “she has burnt out/loveliness,” which is “alive in stone” (lines 11-12). Hayden complements her beauty by giving her spiritual beauty. In line with this, he asserts that she was “Mistress of Happiness, Joyous, a Lady of Grace,” and a person who “was Great in Love.” By emphasizing those qualities through capital letters, Hayden enhances her physical beauty and merges it with a “disposition,” which “cheers her lord.” The main allusions that Hayden employs include the rare facts known about Nefert-iti as the Akhenaten’s queen, as well as, the mother of the six daughters. The concept of “stelae do” symbolizes a royal family in showing scenes of domestic harmony. Nefert-iti is seen playing with two of her daughter, while Akhenaten kisses her. In addition, another poem scene portrays the Pharaoh giving her a flower.

In the third stanza, Hayden’s explanation is extremely symbolic and outlines Aten’s association with God. He symbolically describes the rationale of God as “multi-single like the sun,” on a play on son, who is an integral part of the trinity. Furthermore, the poem characterizes Aten as “reflecting Him by Him” reflected in lines nine to ten. The fourth stanza shows that Aten may have created Anubis’ howl, a reference to the turmoil that Aten’s ascendancy created within the “Third Empire’s henotheistic pantheon” where “Amon Re” was the main god and Anubis was a minor god. Definitely, through symbolism Hayden alludes to the daunting task Akhenaten did to ascertain Aten’s ascendancy.

The fifth stanza concludes this poem with a spiritual affirmation revealing the comprehensiveness and depth of Hayden’s focus on God. Such affirmation centers on the history and symbolism of Hayden. Symbols in the “Two Egyptian Portrait Masks” poem evoke intricate ideas without applying thorough explanations. The traditional symbols that Hayden uses are objects, language, and historical settings that maintain their literal meaning while suggesting different meanings about god and religion within the historical context. These symbols go beyond traditional symbols as they gain their respective symbolic meaning in the context of the poem.

Moreover, in the four-line poem “Crispus Attucks” (Poem and Music.com) Hayden visually reinforces the concept of a neglected black hero by diminishing him to a mere name appended in a footnote. Miller Baxter says,

“A faceless name that extends his poem implication with allusion and imagery, he depicts Attucks as “props up/by bayonets,” forever falling. More significantly, this “moot hero” is “shrouded in Betsy Ross/ and Garvey flags” enhance mantled and obscured by the contrary forces of conventional white patriotism together with thwarted black nationalism (46). As such, in the symbolic presentation of Attucks, Hayden condenses American history into a contradiction and then propels it into the present by rendering Attucks’ portrait as an immutable figure that remains perpetually in pursuit of liberty eternally indescribable through implication, the progression of truth (Baxter 46). This pursuit of truth is what also informs his characterization of other characters, particularly black heroes who led a rebellion against the society for which Crispus Attucks died. For the white American, Attucks emerges as a hero shrouded in the extremely visible implication of Betsy Ross’s contribution about the American flag. Similarly, the black Americans perceive him likewise.

P. Williams argues that Attucks’s “was a sacrifice wasted on a nation that was never to claim him as one of its own and ‘shrouded’ in the black, green, and orange flag that served Marcus Garvey’s back-to-Africa movement of 1920s and, more recently, the black militants of the 1960s” (160). Thus, both the flags are “propped up/by bayonets.” Possibly this alludes to the many wars by America since the start of the revolutionary war in addition to the “black nationalist militancy of the 1960s.” Hence, in both cases, it appears that Hayden suggests that the flags are “forever falling.” Hayden presents Attucks as a representative symbol of a revolutionary spirit. Studies argue that beyond such direct patriotic comparison, Hayden displays the unrecognized meaning for the Attucks’s importance as an individual who resembles the progression from slavery to manhood (Baxter 45):

Name in a footnote. Faceless name Moot hero shrouded in Betsy Ross and Garvey flags--propped up by bayonets, forever falling. (Poem and Music.com)

As it is evident from “Crispus Attucks,” symbolism and history blend skillfully by Hayden. It has become clear that symbols in this poem evoke intricate ideas without applying conscientious explanations. The conventional symbols that Hayden uses are object and setting that maintain their literal meaning in addition to suggesting other meanings. These symbols go beyond usual symbols; as they gain their respective symbolic meaning in the context of the “Crispus Attucks” poem.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of *Angle of Ascent* by Robert Hayden, it is apparent that this series of poems features symbolism and history principles. Hayden as an historian and a symbolist joins various concepts to grab audience’s attention making symbolism and history in the poems to blend skillfully. *Angle of Ascent* thus re-enacts the course of a collaboration of Hayden’s character as both a symbolist and an historian. This study supports other studies on Hayden’s poems showing Hayden’s identification with blackness and how symbolism in his poems builds on the historical concepts.

Hayden’s poems reflect an interest in Afro-American history as he knew that his history was misrepresented, giving him the need to clearly understand and correct the misconceptions about his past. *Angles of Ascent* focuses on the conventional history of black literature. As an extensive collection of modern poetry, *Angle of Ascent* skillfully archives some of the most provocative African-American voices in the American literary catalogue. It is also apparent that Hayden’s poems are about his imaginative endeavour to mend his broken links with his past. In his work, audiences confront history as the active participants in it, not as the distant participants bemoaning their alienation. This is because Hayden carries the past into the present through symbolism. To conclude, this study proved that the Symbolist in Hayden is not at odds with the historian. As an historian, Hayden summons up the significant facts of a poet’s ancestry but as a symbolist, he immediately changes them into art.

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