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Oct 27th, 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

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Recommended Citation

Ejupi, Vlera and Bashota, Halil, "The Cosmopolitan echo of Maya Angelou in her novel ``I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings``" (2018). *UBT International Conference*. 135.

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The Cosmopolitan echo of Maya Angelou in the novel “I know why the caged bird sings”

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Abstract. A whole portrayal of the most brilliant echoes against the unbearable shown racist feelings on the black population is without any doubt pretty well mirrored in the American novel ‘I know why the caged bird sings’ by Maya Angelou. The sad echoes of extremely loneliness, the feeling of being under evaluated, of being disregarded as human beings, are depicted in a marvelous way in this novel. Maya had not a pleasant childhood at all. She was the sister of Bailey whose parents were divorced. They were sent to St. Louis. From this moment, the very realistic feelings about her life have been shown throughout the whole novel. First of all, the author puts the emphasis on the unbearable oppression of racism so freely shown on the blacks, the humiliation that she has to go through almost all her life, the unpleasant situations that she has to experience. That is why this book is an ode to the cosmopolitan echoes which are hidden in almost every single word of throughout the whole novel. The whole novel is an autobiographical story of Maya’s life. She struggles about one of the worst evils present even nowadays in a great number of countries all around the world. She feels imprisoned inside the metal bars which symbolize her stress, pain, complete dissatisfaction with the idea how bad and harmful can human beings be. Her living in one and only one place, that is the frequent movement from one place to another also causes her an enormous stress, because she raises her voice against the planned dislocation of the black people from one place to another, thus not having a stable living place. She also writes about her own dissatisfaction of her physical look, beginning with her teeth. Still, this is a wonderful novel which deals with the extremely harmful deformities of a lot of societies in the so called ‘‘our modern world’’.

Keywords: *loneliness, oppression, racism, evil, dissatisfaction*

Rather humanely, Maya Angelou opens her heart in front of the readers. She manages successfully as well as professionally to dig into her own mind and soul. There is no doubt that she digs every single moment from the huge mosaic of her experience, thus making all the readers familiar with the inner side of her very sad life. She bravely reveals all `the skeletons in her cupboard` and thus she becomes braver and braver led by her conviction that only truth is the only savior from every evil that one can encounter in the long and tiresome journey called life. Even though she is a very sensitive person, she bravely describes everything about the steps she had to climb as a black woman, in the steep and painful road of her life full of revolt, disillusioned caused by the frequent vulgar moments, which destroyed her aspirations, but somebody who just by chance, has got only another color of the skin, a white one.

Without any doubt, the novel `I know why the caged bird sings` by Maya Angelou, from the very title, which consists of rather symbolical words, gives the ideas to the reader about the strong messages which are present in the whole novel. The author, actually, with all her capacity is being rather straight forward in revealing in an extremely pure and genuine way her contemplations, reactions and counter feelings throughout the whole novel. Her tone is an extremely, purely realistic and truthful way about the way she has experienced the black and white relations in the society she used to live in. Actually she is stultified by the whites` racism and the blacks` inferiority to this question. So the both sides are being caught in the cage which is called lack of respect from the one side, and the big desire to get rid of this evil , from the other side. This is the main thematic as well as the symbolic echo which is heard rather loudly inside the cage. It is the black people who are being caught by the web of racism and the whites who are caught by their blindness.

Is it difficult to dedicate your life to pour all your energy in a constant struggle of her mind, which is dictating her all her to life that she does not have any destructive feelings toward the whites, but a never ending tribute to make these relations nothing but humane. She needs desperately to equalize this imbalance by never doing anything wrong, but just make a true account of what is really going on.

This is the reason why, the novel `I know why the caged bird sings` by Maya Angelou, from the very title, which consists of symbolical words, gives the ideas to the reader about the strong messages which are present in the whole novel. The author, actually, with all her capacity is being quite straight forward in revealing in an extremely pure and genuine way her contemplations, reactions and counter feelings throughout the whole novel. Her tone is a purely realistic and truthful way about the way she has experienced the black and white relations in the society she used to live in. Actually she is stultified by the whites` racism and the blacks` inferiority to this question. So the both sides are being caught in the cage which is called lack of respect from the one side, and the big desire to get rid of this evil, from the other side. This is the main thematic as well as the symbolic echo which is heard rather loudly inside the cage. It is the black people who are being caught by the web of racism and the whites who are caught by their web of blindness and insanity.

Is it difficult to dedicate your life in pouring all your energy in a constant struggle of the mind, which is dictating her, the author, all her to life that she does not have any destructive feelings toward the whites, but a never ending tribute to make these relations nothing but humane. She needs desperately to equalize this imbalance by never doing anything wrong, but just make a true account of what is really going on.

As a result of her opinion about the world she was surrounded by, she is put in the vicious circle of the outside factors which play a rather strong way of making her life more difficult. But it is dignity, fairness, a very healthy way of contemplating, which help her be a person to be worshiped, by the reader on the one way, but on the other make huger her cosmopolitanism with her behavior toward the people of the white race. She is a perfect example of a perfectly creating image of the society she lives in. When the main character of this novel, Maya Angelou, was no older than only three, while her brother only four, without knowing anything about the difficulties, dangers, and everything that caused harm, without being aware of the fact that they were walking directly into the thorns of the dangerous and extremely unpredictable paths of the long journey called – life, their father removed them from his life, thus sending them from California, in a place called Stamps in the state called Arkansas. They were sent to their father's grandparents, when Maya was only three.

The pivot figure, of the future life of Maya, remains her grandmother, keeping in mind that their parents had divorced, having in mind that they have been rejected physically as well as spiritually, since they got to get acquainted with their own selves.

California during the 60's was a nightmarish land for the black people to live in. It was a land of wild antagonisms quite beyond the reach of a normal human mind. It was a place of a complete irrationality, of a desperate need to run of the country, but the question is – where -....The reflections of this period are present even nowadays. The appearance of the emblematic young senator John F. Kennedy, with an origin from Massachusetts, sharing with the people his ambitions to fight against the segregation of the black people, in `The Civil Rights Act` of 1964, banned any kind of employment discrimination based on the race, religion, sex and of any kind of discrimination. Documents are to be signed, it only takes a moment to do so, but the mentality of the people is something that cannot be changed, or it can take a whole life to do so.

The color of her skin is one of the most distinctive traits. They were not whites. That had nothing in common with the white good looking girls, as well as with the handsome white boys. But somehow Maya had an innate strength and an enormous dignity, which was morally pushing her to keep her head up and never feel underestimated, first from her outside look, and then from her inner desire to leave an important impression, and that was running away from her cage to fly, because the immense sky is very clear and maybe not big enough to hug her endless cosmopolitanism, which is the culmination of her ceaseless fights against one of the worst specters of the human society – racism, discrimination, despair, humiliation...

That is why her grandmother whose name was Annie Henderson, called Momma, who owned a small store where she sold the things only to the black people. It is here in Stamps where she felt as always very discriminated, as a result of her first reciting of a

poem in the church, after what she was trying to encounter the reality she faced with. This reality consisted of different people who would have destroyed everybody with a black skin, different kind of organizations by the white skins against the black skins.

One day, quite out of blue, the father of these two children, comes where they live, and takes them to continue their lives with their mother, whose name was Vivian. Her family, apart from their mother consisted of three extremely bad-tempered brothers. But this is not the end of the story and of the difficulties which struck Maya one after the other. Vivian happens to have a boyfriend, who rapes Maya, and then obviously, he forces her to keep her mouth shut, otherwise she would have to bear a lot of consequences. But, quite unexpectedly, her mother's brothers find blood in her trousers, and realize immediately what had happened. Vivian's lover is being sent in front of the judge. During the trial, she refuses to tell the truth, and after that she has had her biggest pang of remorse in her life ever. So she decided to remain silent and not contact anyone she knew except her brother Bailey.

This is another harsh and ruthless blow on Maya's mind and her life. She was not a kind of personality who hated to pretend that she is an autistic and hides herself behind the door. So how can she keep on going cherishing her cosmopolitanism? By lies, by not yelling and not pointing her finger at the person who has harmed her, that is, let all her people to be blackmailed by a sick person who wants to remain unrevealed just because he has hurt a black young lady. How many black ladies have been raped by the whites and no one has ever known anything about their feelings about the whites. How many white birds, as symbols of Maya Angelou's life were caught on the cages built by the wickedness and mental superiority of the white people...Why did the black people feel guilty just because they were afraid to tell the truth. Why did they not destroy all the cages which prevented them to taste the freedom, everybody has got to live in a society where the rights of the people would be the same. That is why Her living in one and only one place, than is the frequent movement from one place to another also causes her an enormous stress, because she raises her voice against the planned dislocation of the black people from one place to another, thus not having a stable living place. She also writes about her own dissatisfaction of her physical look, beginning with her teeth. Still, this is a wonderful novel which deals with the extremely harmful deformities of a lot of societies in the so called "our modern world".

This is the reason why the authority by force has been imposed by the one of the harshest white people's organizations KKK. Maya has seen these wild formations of the white people who dressed themselves in white, with huge hoods on their heads, with only two holes on their faces, so that their eyes can be seen. They functioned during night times, and hunted people with black skin, and during day times they were moving freely, as if nothing had happened. They wanted to bring a new state organization in order to kill as many as possible black people. But after bad things, always the good things follow.

Then the narration of the novel continues with another interesting momentum, and that is Maya's hatred toward Mrs. Cullinan, who finally stops avoiding calling Maya by her real name. But finally, as a result of Maya's iron decision not to let her go with her wishes, she

is successful in making her finally to call her by the original name – Marguerite. She wants to “yell” at the whole world that whenever there is a strong will, there is a way out. On the other hand, Bailey, used to come back late from the movies on Saturdays, which makes Momma worried. Momma and Maya find him walking around and looking dejected; Maya is especially worried for him. At last Bailey tells her that he saw an actress in one of the movies who looks exactly like their mother. Maya goes with Bailey to all the movies that the actress has got a role on, and they think that it is their mother on screen. On the other hand, Momma’s store is crammed with people listening to a Joe Louis fight on the radio; he is fighting a white man, and of course they all support Joe Louis because he is black. When he wins, they believe that “Joe Louis had proved that we were the strongest people in the world”; his victory gives hope to the people of Stamps, as well as to the rest of the black people, wherever they lived..

Maya begins to form her first friendship, with a girl in her class named Louise. Then, Bailey meets Joyce, a girl 4 years older than him (he is 11, she is 15). Joyce begins to hang about the store to be around Bailey; Bailey begins to steal things for Joyce, who is poor. Joyce leaves suddenly, with a railroad porter she met, and Bailey becomes unpleasant toward Maya.

On a stormy, spooky night, George Taylor, whose wife, Florida Taylor, had died during the previous summer, comes by. Maya was forced to go to the funeral by Momma, and there she was confronted with the reality of death for the first time. She realized when she saw Mrs. Taylor’s body, how strong and how final death is, and this has a profound effect on her.

When the graduation day begins, Mr. Donleavy, who is a kind of school superintendent, is the graduation speaker. He tells of the much better opportunities given to the white school in town, and then mentions that some graduates of the black school have managed to become athletes.

Henry Reed starts to sing the “Negro National Anthem,” and so people join in and sing, and Maya feels a part of the black community for possibly the first time. Maya has two very bad cavities, so her dentist, as a white one treats her very bad that is why she is taken to a black dentist. After the horrible scene where they see a black person drowned in a pound, Momma decides to take them out to Los Angeles by train. Then the World war II starts, and Maya and Bailey are in San Francisco. She feels very much like a human being since she has been treated very properly by an excellent teacher.

Maya is homeless, and there happens to happen a real mosaic of black and white intolerance, until she returns home, of course a little bit grown old. Maya begins looking for a job, and after lots of trials she finally is hired as the first black streetcar conductor in San Francisco. She feels a lot of renaissances of the mind and soul when she goes the church and listen to the priests singing against the harms of the whites to the blacks. It is also another character who plays a dominant influence on her strengthening of her knowledge and her fight against the whites, Mrs. Flowers. That is why, Maya Angelou is a not caged bird any longer, because she came to realize that she belongs to the world of equality, where she will be treated in the same way just like everybody else, is this not she was striving for all her life???

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