

Un-domesticating Black Women in Maya Angelou's "Caged Bird" and "Woman Work" in Light of Intersectionality and Anti-essentialism

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ABSTRACT:

Black people are mindful of what it means to be black in relation to whiteness, which is known as black consciousness. They are aware of white man's strategies of marginalizing and domesticating women due to their blackness and gender. The narratives of racial discrimination against the black women and the essentialist thought of domesticating them with their counter narratives are not investigated in Maya Angelou's poetry in light of the *Critical Race Theory* and *Critical Race Feminism*. Thus, this paper aims at examining the narratives of racial discrimination and essentialism against black women and their counter narratives in Maya Angelou's selected poems in light of the CRT's tenet of intersectionality and CRF's tenet of anti-essentialism. The selected poems "Cage Bird" and "Woman Work" are textually analyzed in light of the assumptions of intersectionality and anti-essentialism to outline her strategies in the face of discriminative and racial strategies of the Whites. This paper concludes that "Caged Bird" introduces Angelou's counter-narrative through the singing of the caged bird which reaches the distant sky as a sign of the call for demanding freedom and un-domesticating women. In addition, Angelou's un-domesticating strategies are presented in her "Woman Work" through the rejection of the essentialist thought of householding women and the call for un-domestication via the natural world.

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1. Introduction

Black people worldwide have several challenges and hardships in a variety of spheres of life. In addition to the history itself, their suffering and dehumanization are ingrained in their minds. There is no denying that Black people endured a significant lot of suffering and a prolonged absence of rights (Hamidi, 2017, p.34). Blacks have experienced various acts of violence and degradation due to their skin color and race. Their blackness is considered a stigma in the Western ideology in order to privilege the white race at the expense of the black one.

African Americans faced social constraints that limited their access to opportunities, networks, education, income, health care, and legal treatment. They are often associated with low status, criminal stereotypes, and negative connotations. Black people lived in impoverished rural areas, living in dilapidated homes grouped in tiny communities in or close to the plantations where they were employed (Banajil et al., 2021, p.2). Historically, they are associated with poverty, ignorance and satanism by the whites to keep them voiceless and powerless.

The murder of George Floyd, as an example, in 2020 by a white police officer in a Minneapolis has led to anti-racism demonstrations in the United States. Similar incidents, which frequently result in racial upheavals, have occurred multiple times in the United States in recent years. Compared to their white counterparts, unarmed Black men are more likely to be the victims of police harassment and abuse. The use of deadly force by the racist police that has been ingrained in the criminal justice system for many years has made police violence against Black people worse. (Kazemi and Ghaziani, 2021, p.57). They are racially profiled

wherever they go and face discrimination every single day in all aspects of life due to their skin color.

Skin color is linked to ethnic dominance; a person with dark skin can never fully escape its grip. Non-white people may pretend to be ethnic in order to avoid being classified as such. For example, African migrants may teach their children to speak with an accent so they won't be recognized as African Americans. In other cases, they may try to rid themselves of all ethnic markers, whether they be linguistic, religious, or cultural, in order to avoid stigmatization or discrimination (Desmond and Emirbayer, 2009, p.340).

Tyson discusses the reasons why there are so many more African-Americans incarcerated than white people saying:

The prison population is largely black and brown; chief executive officers [of corporations], surgeons, and university presidents are almost all white. ...[B]lack families have, on the average, about one-tenth of the assets of their white counterparts. They pay more for many products and services, including cars. People of color lead shorter lives, receive worse medical care, complete fewer years of school, and occupy more menial jobs than do whites. A recent United Nations report showed that African Americans in the United States [if thought of as comprising a nation of their own] would make up the twenty-seventh ranked nation in the world... [in terms of] social well-being. Latinos would rank thirty-third. (2006, p.368)

The black people are easy targets for the whites because they internalized the Western thought and definitions dictated upon them. They accepted the passive attributes given to them because the European culture relies on the binary thought, in which the whites signify power, masters, superiority and angelism, while the blacks signify powerlessness, slaves, inferiority and satanism.

Because of the terrible and unbearable circumstances of the black people throughout the world, *The Black Consciousness Movement* was founded in the late 1960s by South African activist Steve Biko. In reaction to the dehumanization and deprivation of Black people during Apartheid and racial oppression, the *Black Consciousness Movement* focused on race as a determinant of Black oppression in South Africa. Biko's definition of "Black" encompassed not only Africans but also Asians and "coloureds" or South Africans of mixed race, including those of African, European, and or Asian heritage (Aliyu, 2021, p.4). The problem of profiling non-European races is universalized and institutionalized by the white European forces to control other non-white races and exploit them socially, militarily, economically and politically.

In an interview on YouTube, Kimberlé Crenshaw says:

that when social injustice such as racism, sexism and gender come together can create very serious and difficult problem that African-Americans will face and endure. Crenshaw explains that she uses intersectionality as a way to show how many social problems when combine together can create more levels of social injustice. (TED 5:01)

Also, Crenshaw talked about male-domination society in her article "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color" by saying that in a male domination society, black women are both physically and psychologically marginalized. They are more likely to be raped than the white women. Rape crisis is considered a very serious problem in the feminist agenda (2013, p.1251). Of course, the African-American woman got the lion's share of humiliation and subordination because she was living the racist society with

her black man, as well as the patriarchal society that deprives her of her own rights as a woman due to her gender as a female.

Black women were sexually assaulted by white men not as women in general but as Black women in particular because they were sexually vulnerable to racist dominance due to their femininity. Black women were essentially denied any protection because they were Black. A legal system that made it practically impossible for a white man to be found guilty of raping a black woman served to further solidify this white male hegemony (Demarginalizing the Intersection, 1989, p.158).

Patriarchal racists circulated a biased narrative, *The Angel of the House*, against women in general and the black women in particular in order to domesticate them to the household business only. Barbara Rogers says in her *The Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies* (2005) that:

In Western industrial society gender distinctions are commonly rationalized by beliefs about the central importance of women's role in child-rearing, and the imputed operation of a maternal 'instinct'. There is also the assumption that all men are 'naturally' incapable of nurturing children and, to compensate, are 'naturally' stronger than all women, who are deemed incapable of heavy work. The work that women perform, regardless of its actual character, is seen as somehow 'not-work', or at best very light work. (p.7)

Martina Girsang, Elita Modesta Br. Sembiring, Veracy Silalahi, and Srisofian Sianturi wrote a study titled "The Interpretation of Maya Angelou's Selected Poems: Gender Discrimination" (2022) with the aim of identifying the poems in *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* that are related to the theme of "Gender Discrimination" and how gender discrimination is depicted in Maya Angelou's Selected Poems. Any unfair treatment based on a person's gender is considered gender discrimination. The information comes from a selection of Maya Angelou's poems. They are 'Weekend Glory', 'Equality', 'Still I Rise', 'Caged Bird', and 'Phenomenal Woman' (p.1). In conclusion, Maya Angelou's five chosen poems present the speaker as a powerful, courageous, and self-assured woman who is willing to battle against gender inequality. Her feelings as a courageous woman who aspires to alter societal stereotypes about women are expressed in each poem. The most crucial thing, as a woman and a human, is to be appreciative and self-assured. The speaker illustrates many strategies for surviving or battling in society (p.12).

Eirini Eleftheriou Katerina T. Frantzi's "The Power of Symbolism: Unveiling Maya Angelou's Poetic Themes" (2024) explores a corpus of research on a few poems by Maya Angelou using a dual methodology of sentiment analysis and literature review. The study reveals the complex effects of symbolism on the underlying themes of Angelou's poetry. Her art is resonant with themes like unity, fear of the difference, racial prejudice, resilience, and the wider range of the human experience. A crucial component that gives these subjects further depth and gives her poetry a deep sense of meaning is symbolism (p.22). In conclusion, this study demonstrates how Angelou employs potent imagery, metaphors, and symbolism to address issues of memory, loss, and the long-lasting effects of historical trauma, like as slavery and displacement, by applying sentiment analysis and literary assessment to her writing. The results show that in addition to reflecting personal feelings, Angelou's poetry also explores larger social themes and encourages readers to interact with both individual and community histories (p.31).

Juan Du's research "Exploring the Theme of Self-Actualization in Maya Angelou's Poetry" is another study of the issue of African Americans' self-actualization in Angelou's poetry. Angelou inspires African Americans to embrace their Black identity and carry on their

African cultural heritage by redefining blackness and praising self-accepted Black individuals (2014, p. 65). It concludes that by urging African Americans to enjoy and maintain their Black culture, her work successfully awakens their self-consciousness. Angelou works hard to redefine blackness in order to restore her people's identity and self-consciousness. They can rejuvenate themselves and gain a true understanding of themselves by integrating into their ancestors' culture. By doing this, she leads African Americans out of the margins and preserves ethnic culture. Consequently, Maya Angelou is a cultural poet who carries out the cultural transmission role (2014, p. 69).

Critics continue to focus on the theme of Black oppression. Ahmed's "Oppression and Survival in Maya Angelou's Poetry" (2021) demonstrates how Angelou was eager to portray the anguish, sadness, and wretchedness that her people experienced as a result of the terrible consequences of racism and slavery. For Angelou, tenacity and resistance were the only paths to liberty and equality in the United States. The researcher employs the analytical technique of New Historicism to clarify such concepts in Angelou's poetry (p.3). The poet stresses her desire to instill in them a spirit of defiance and resistance. She does everything in her power to encourage her fellow Black people to resist their suffering and work towards their emancipation. Consequently, readers are able to observe the author's transition from private to public matters concerning Black Americans. Her poetry masterfully reveals how the author's resolute attitude of conflict and resistance, which she embraced throughout her life, appears to be extended to the public living situations of all coloured Americans (p.28).

Thus, the un-domesticating strategies in Maya Angelou's "Cage Bird" and "Woman Work" are investigated in this article following the assumptions of CRT's tenet of intersectionality and CRF's tenet of anti-essentialism.

2.1 Discussion: From Silence to Song: A Fight for Voice in Angelou's "Caged Bird"

Blacks suffer a lot under the oppressive laws of the white society. Blacks' interaction with white individuals has been problematic for a long time (Crenshaw, Mapping the Margins 1264). Institutions of power classify people into two classes: superiors represented by the Whites and inferiors represented by Blacks. In an interview, Crenshaw states that numerous social justice issues, such as sexism and racism, frequently overlap, leading to several tiers of social injustice (TED 5: 01).

In Angelou's poem "Caged Bird" written in the collection "Shaker, why don't you sing?" (1983), we have two types of birds. One is "free" and the second is "imprisoned". Through these two birds, she tries to attract the attention of the world toward Blacks' suffering, especially women, and how they are victimized under the prejudiced racist system controlled by the Whites:

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun sky
and dares to the claim sky. (Angelou,1983, pp.299-300, L. 1-7)

The free bird lives a normal and happy life. He can fly away in the sky; nobody can prevent him from doing what he likes to do as well as he can take and choose whatever he wants. He flies here and there between the beautiful flowers and downstream. The free bird can see the amazing color of the sky during sunset. The free bird stands for the white man's freedom, and

independence that he "dares to claim the sky" as a sign of his desire of possession. A lot of options are available for the Whites in all aspects of life just like the free birds finding their catches easily "fat worm waiting" for them. Many opportunities are waiting for them in the future. Bell Hooks explained Western thinking by saying that "in Western cultural thought there is a belief that the superior should control the inferior" (1984, p.35). The whites believe that the world is created to be used by them only. They put laws align with their desire in order to exploit black people particularly women as Hooks said "women were exploited or oppressed" (1984, p.35).

The poem is built upon a comparison between a free bird and a caged one. Each one stands as a metaphor for a certain kind of people, namely the Whites and the Blacks. In the light of intersectionality, in this poem we can see the intersection of race, because according to the race the black is the caged bird and the white is the free one. So, because of the racial definition, she compares the black people to the caged bird depending on race. After describing the life of the free bird enjoying all the luxuries of life which symbolically represent the lives of the white people. In the second stanza, the poet shifts to talk about the caged bird:

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage (8-11)

The caged bird spends all its life in a "narrow cage" surrounded by the "bars" which prevent it from flying freely as well as restricting the line of his sight. It cannot see what is going on. The bird's inherent desire to fly, which is his most natural birthright, cannot be exercised. A caged bird is a metaphor for black people and for the gender discrimination they suffer from in their society. In his book, *The Social Contract*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau said, "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains" (2004, p.1). The Whites create very hard chains in the lives of the Blacks. The Blacks abilities are restricted by such chains. Black people do not have a lot of options in education and jobs particularly women in their society. This goes a line with Crenshaw's statement that "Black women will have to make it obvious in the African-American political community that patriarchy is a serious problem that has an adverse effect on the lives of both Black men and Black women" (Mapping the Margins, 2013, p.1295). In addition, Hooks said that "The class structure in American society has been shaped by the racial politics of whites supremacy" (1984, p.3). She explained that the Whites' society plants the seeds of domination in their minds as well as giving them the right to use the Blacks to their self-interest: "His wings are clipped and \ his feet are tied so he opens his throat to sing ". Although the caged bird's wings are clipped and his feet are tied and arrested in the prison, he doesn't give up. The poet recalls the days of slavery when the white masters tied the feet of the black slaves in order not to run away seeking freedom. He keeps singing, lets his voice be loud, and opens his throat to make the whole world hear him" so he opens his throat to sing". He takes the sky for his own, knowing that one day he will be free from all these restricted laws "sings of freedom". The caged bird uses his singing as a kind of resistance to reject his current situation. She motives her people to raise their voices just like the bird "opens his throat" demanding freedom and independence. So, in this poem, race intersects with ability the caged bird is powerless and unable to move his wings as he likes. His ability of flying is not exercised well, because of the cage. Angelou uses the cage as a symbol for her society which prevents Blacks from resisting so she uses her hands to write something help her people to get their rights and allow her demands to reach for the whole world. Crenshaw believes that one day all black people will "create a private world free from the diverse assaults on the public

lives of racially subordinated people" (Mapping the Margins, p.1257), just like Mohanty who says that an achievement is always "the result of active struggle" (Cited in Bohrer, 2019, p.94).

Angelou draws contrasting pictures between the two birds by saying: "The caged bird sings / with a fearful trill". The caged birds sing beautiful songs while the free bird is silent. This needs to keep thinking because it has a deep and ambiguous meaning. The caged bird keeps singing not from loneliness or sadness, but for hope and freedom. Angelou tries to inspire the Blacks to reject the oppressive laws. She tries to say even if you cannot fight physically, try to use your voice, but do not be silent. The workers in the farm do not know how to read or write because they don't have enough education so they used their voice to sing while they are working all the day. So, we can consider the bird's song as a symbol for the worker's songs. Angelou uses her talent in writing to convey her ideas. According to Angelou, the only way for black people to get back their identity is through language, which draws their attention to the unfairness, illusory democracy, and freedom of white people in contrast to the terrible circumstances faced by black women. Black people are inspired to challenge the traditional norms established by white male culture through the use of lyrical language.

Throughout the tunes of his singing, the caged bird tries to express his desires and attract the listeners' attention to the value and meaning of his songs. He sings about issues people do not know about:

of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill (17-20)

A lot of people don't know that people of color (POC) face violence due to their race, gender, or skin color. Currently, the issue of violence against black people is still common in American society. Black women experienced various acts of violence even from their black counterparts (Abdullah, et al, 2021, p. 2021). The murder of George Floyd is a good example of the ongoing political violence. Chauvin, a white police officer, kills George Floyd, a Black man, after standing on his neck for about ten minutes (Kazemi and Ghaziani, 2021, p. 57). A lot of boys and girls are killed like Floyd. Still, we do not know about them because the Whites neglect their life experience as Crenshaw said "Minority women's experiences of violence are disregarded, with the exception of cases where it garners white support for domestic violence initiatives within the white community" (Mapping the Margins, 2013, p.1260). Also, Crenshaw in an interview on YouTube explained that the police violence against Blacks is very real. (TED 11:58). The caged bird is psychologically uncomfortable. He suffers inside the cage from the "nightmares," just like black people who suffer a lot from racial discrimination inside their society.

The poet uses free verse to effectively convey the words of resistance and bring the people into harmony with their surroundings. It is the best mode of expression for Angelou to circulate resistance against the hegemony of the white people.

Visually speaking, in the first three stanzas, the poet uses short lines to describe the lives of the two birds, then she shifts in the fourth stanza to use long lines for the free bird only which means that the Whites have more freedom and power, "The free bird thinks of another breeze / and the trade winds soft through the singing trees". The free bird is looking for a more pleasant life. This visual aspect sends a clear message to the silencing strategies followed by the white people to cage the blacks literally and psychologically, "But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams / his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream". The caged bird fights to get

his simple legal rights in life. Even in the world of dreams, he could not find anything but nightmarish dreams:

but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom. (34-38)

Finally, the poet turns back to the short lines to talk about the caged bird, indicating that their suffering and problems are still there. She uses repetition to say that there is no real solution for those marginalized people. Yet, the caged bird, standing for the black people, keeps singing and chanting for freedom to remind his people of the urgency and necessity of fighting back against the racist stereotypes of the whites to gain freedom.

As such, Angelou states that the Whites utilize the factors of race and class to subordinate the black people and devalue them. As a reaction, she employs singing, visual poetry, and the comparison of two birds to release her mode of resistance to the racist attitudes of the white.

2. 2 Discussion: Angelou's "Work Woman": Re-birthing via Nature

People's identity and race impact their social standing and way of life. These two factors have the potential to produce unbearable disparities in life equality (Hooks, 1984, p.4). In reality, the majority of people worldwide think that Americans lead incredibly wonderful lives. Although their lives are completely different from others', they cannot be compared. Many people, including POC, who suffer from the unfair treatment of White people, are in need there and have no opportunity to exercise their rights. They are only used by the Whites to gain advantages. They are indifferent to their needs and sentiments, especially those of women. As Hooks explains it, "There are oppressed women in the United States, and it is both appropriate and necessary that we speak against such oppression" (Hooks, 1984, p.5). In addition to Hooks, Maria Stewart states that "It is useless for us any longer to sit with our hands folded, reproaching the whites; for that will never elevate us" (Richardson, 1987, p.53).

Angelou's poem "Work Woman" attempts to depict the second aspect of American existence, which is that of the impoverished. In America, black women are subjected to social dominance. The Whites physically and psychologically rape them. Black women were used in the home. They are unable to labor around the house, and if they do, their pay will be lower than others'. They work on their house responsibilities from sunrise to sunset as Barbara said in her book *The Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies* that "The beliefs about differences between women and men, which usually refer back to some mythical prehistorical society where men always hunted and women always stayed in the cave with the children, remain a very important element in social and cultural organization" (2005, p.11). In their society, women are treated like household objects, and no one pays attention to their feelings or desires. The Whites have every option at their disposal. Hooks' assertion that "white women are materially privileged, educated, and have a variety of career and lifestyle options available to them" (Hooks, 1984, p.4). In her poem "Women Work," Angelou reflects these ideas. We can see how exhausted the Black woman is from the start of the poem:

I've got the children to tend
The clothes to mend
The floor to mop
The food to shop

Then the chicken to fry
The baby to dry (Angelou,1983, p.241, L.1-6)

In the poem, the woman attempts to describe her day-to-day activities. She is really enthusiastic about her regimen. If she doesn't look after her kids, their food, shopping, plants, and farm animals, they will die. According to Stewart, women play very important roles and they should use these roles to get power "O ye mothers, what a responsibility rest on you! It is you that must create in the minds of your little girls and boys a thirst for knowledge, the love of virtue, and the cultivation of a pure heart" (p.35). The woman expresses her inner thoughts in this poem since she is exhausted from the inside out. This tired habit makes her feel like a prisoner. In this poem, race intersects with gender as well as with ability. The woman's ability and power of management are used in the house only. In the first part of the poem, the woman was exercising her role at home, because she is a woman. According to the stereotype of their society this is a normal job for a woman to stay at home and take care for the house whole. In addition to her work on the farm, the woman's lifestyle forces her to perform all of these household chores "And the cotton topic". She cannot say no or "I won't do this today" since, in her society's eyes, she is responsible for all of these tasks. Crenshaw explains in her book *Black Girls Matter* the impact of these tasks on the woman's level of education by saying "The family caretaking responsibilities fell far more heavily on girls than boys. These burdens thus not only undermine their sense of attachment to their schools, but may deprive them of career-building opportunities" (2015, p.38). The fact that no one values her efforts makes the woman quite depressed. Nobody is appreciative of her. If there is thankfulness, women generally don't care about their physical efforts. Her gender and the color of her skin make all of her efforts invisible to society. No one says anything positive to her after a long, exhausting day, which makes her feel as though all of her hard work has been in vain.

Black women are viewed as strong in western society, although they are solely suited for domestic work and plantations. For this reason, Stewart said "Do not say we cannot make anything; but say we will try" (35). Hooks claims that Black people are presented with racist notions by western society. Black women are strong and superhuman in these tales. This mindset causes White women to ignore the possibility that Black women may be victims and oppressed in their communities (1984, p.13). The poem's female character attempts to draw attention to her nightlife. She wishes to assert her rights in life. She wants to assert that she has the right to go outside and spend her time in the great outdoors. The human body may cure itself from nature. She yearns to treat herself to something natural:

Shine on me, sunshine
Rain on me, rain
Fall softly, dewdrops
And cool my brow again (15-18)

In the second stanza, the woman rejects her lifestyle. She wants to get out the house and this oppressive stereotype. The woman is unhappy with her job and begs nature to be nice to her. As stated by Hooks, "Black women are in a usual position in the society because not only are we at the bottom of the occupational ladder, but our overall social status is lower than that of any other group" (1984, p.14), her life's circumstances do not align with her ambitions. To Maria Stewart, women should insist on their rights as she said "sue for your rights and privileges. Know the reason you cannot attain them" (Richardson, 1987, p.38). The woman believes that everyone has ignored her, treating her as if she is invisible, so she wants the sun to shine on her body. In order to cleanse herself of all the negative emotions within her spirit,

she summons the rains. She desires to be purified by it. She begs the dewdrops to cool her brow since it feels hot. She calls the sky and the sun to get freedom. The repressive laws of her society psychologically abuse her. Stewart wants women to try and ask for their desires "weary them with your importunities. You can but die if you make the attempt; and we shall certainly die if you do not" (Richardson, 1987, p. 38).

To the Black woman's cultural narrative, women were divided into two categories. The good woman who is raped by someone else and remains silent, while the bad woman is the one who is not raped. According to Crenshaw "Black woman are prepackaged as bad women with cultural narrative about good women who can be raped and the bad women who cannot" (Mapping the Margins, 2013, p.1271). Therefore, the term "rape" does not just refer to physical rape; it also refers to psychological rape. The woman in the poem realizes that other people have raped her life and that she mustn't remain silent to be regarded as a nice woman in her community. She should raise her voice to be heard:

Storm, blow me from here
With your fiercest wind
Let me float across the sky
Till I can rest again (19- 22)

The woman hopes that someone will rescue her from her wretched circumstances. She begs the "storm" to carry her away so she can soar into the wide skies. Changing is not easy; it needs something strong just like a storm. She wants the world to hear about her needs and hardships. Since the people on earth don't care about her needs, she believes that the only place she can rest is in the sky:

Fall gently, snowflakes
Cover me with white
Cold icy kisses and
Let me rest tonight. Sun, rain, curving sky (23-26)

Black people understand that their skin color, in addition to their ethnicity, is the cause of the persecution they endured. They hope that there is a method to turn them into white. They were tired of living that way. The woman in the poem stated, "Snowflakes cover me with white," as we can see. She is aware that her skin tone is the source of all her problems. The Blacks suffer because of their skin color. "Cold icy kisses and let me rest tonight" makes the woman unsatisfied emotionally, which could indicate that she is not sexually satisfied. The speech she makes in the poem reflects her suppressed appetite.

The woman believes that her life is someone else's (her home, kids, etc.). Being without anything of her own, she turns to the natural creatures that she owns. She believes that the sky and wild creatures belong to her: "Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone \Star shine, moon glow /You are all that I can call my own" (Angelou: 27-29). The life of POC is like this. The sorrow of Black woman is depicted in this poem by Angelou in a most appealing way.

In order to indulge her readers in the poem, Angelou uses beautiful imagery for examples "shine on me, sunshine", "The clothes to mend" and "Fall softly, dewdrops". Alliteration appears in the repetition of the consonant sounds \w\ and \t\ in " with white " and "tots to". All these devices serve woman's appeal to nature to nurture her and empower her with nature's healing power.

After analyzing the poem, we find it fits the *Critical Race Feminism* which emerged as an extension of the *Critical Race Theory*, reacting against the tenet of essentialism. For CRT, White women's experience is like the black women's experience: "the experience of a white

woman dealing with a white man, or raising a white child, is the same experience that a Black woman has dealing with a Black man, or raising a Black child" (Grillo, 1995, p.19). But in reality, their experience is different. Angelou proves that in her "Woman Work", she portrays a black woman who spends her time in her house with a hard and monotonous routine. The woman asks for an opportunity to work outside as the white women do. This is clear when she says " Let me float across the sky / Till I can rest again". Her situation shows that the experiences of black and white women are different. CRF tries to change the mentality of western society and gives a chance for the black women to be free from the constructions of their patriarchal society, because they are voiceless and marginalized as Murji and Solomos say that black women "are disproportionately stalled at the bottom of every society economically, socially and politically" (2015, p.162). Angelou rejects the idea of essentialism that a woman is the angel of the house and supports anti-essentialist thought by picturing the situation of that woman.

Thus, in her "Woman Work," Angelou highlights the intersection of gender and race by stereotyping black women as passive, powerless, and subordinate. As a result, she responds to the call of natural elements to un-domesticate herself, which is her strategy of voicing black women and their journey of self-re-discovery.

3. Conclusion

After analyzing Angelou's two poems "Caged Bird" and "Woman Work" in light of intersectionality and anti-essentialism, we conclude that these two poems play a very vital role in reflecting Angelou's deep awareness about women's marginalization through the intersection of gender and race. In her "Caged Bird", the singing of the cage bird stands as a call for domesticated women to raise their voices rejecting domestication and calling for freedom in the patriarchal society. She wants to motivate women to reject silence under the oppressive laws of the Whites. Also, in "Woman Work", Angelou invites women to un-domesticate themselves via giving up the household activities and going out to the natural world as a strategy of subverting the patriarchal norms of besieging women at home. She wants them to understand their position and role in the external world as well. She introduces the woman appealing to the natural elements to empower her and save her from the patriarchal domestication.

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تفكيك ترويض المرأة السوداء في قصيدتي مايا أنجيلو "الطائر الحبيس" و "عمل المرأة" في ضوء تقاطعية الهوية ومناهضة الجوهريانية

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المستخلص:

يدرك السود تماماً ما يعنيه أن يكون المرء أسود في علاقته بفكرة البياض، وهو ما يعرف بوعي السود. فهم واعون باستراتيجيات الرجل الأبيض في تهميش النساء وترويضهن بسبب سمارهن وجنسهن. إن السرديات التي توثق التمييز العنصري ضد النساء السود، وكذلك الفكر الجوهري الذي يسعى إلى ترويضهن، وسردياتهن المضادة، لم تدرس في شعر مايا أنجيلو في ضوء نظرية العرق النقدية (CRT) والنسوية النقدية العرقية (CRF) ولذا تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل سرديات التمييز العنصري والفكر الجوهري ضد النساء السود وسردياتهن المضادة في قصائد مختارة لمايا أنجيلو، وذلك في ضوء مبدأ التقاطعية في نظرية العرق النقدية، ومبدأ مناهضة الجوهريانية في النسوية النقدية العرقية. ويتم تحليل القصيدتين المختارتين "الطائر الحبيس" و "عمل المرأة" تحليلاً نصياً في ضوء افتراضات التقاطعية ومناهضة الجوهريانية، للكشف عن استراتيجيات أنجيلو في مواجهة سياسات التمييز والعنصرية التي يمارسها البيض. وتخلص هذه الورقة إلى أن قصيدة "الطائر الحبيس" تمثل السردية المضادة لمايا أنجيلو من خلال غناء الطائر الحبيس الذي يصل صده إلى السماء البعيدة كرمز للمطالبة بالحرية وتحرير النساء من الترويض. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تقدّم استراتيجيات أنجيلو في مقاومة الترويض في قصيدة "عمل المرأة" من خلال رفض الفكر الجوهري الذي يحصر النساء في الأعمال المنزلية، والدعوة إلى التحرر عبر اللجوء إلى العالم الطبيعي.