

"i nature and describing the birds fight against

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" I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" was written by Maya Angelou and has the same title as her autobiography.

As a result, it is clear that this title had great significance to Angelou.

Angelou is a Black American who grew up in the South during the Civil Right Movement in the 20th century, and she is expressing her feeling at the discrimination she suffered during her life. This poem is known with its deep meaning of the desire of freedom, as well as its vivid language use and the structure of the stanzas. Angelou wrote this poem in 1969, which is almost the end of the Civil Right Movement (1954-1968). As we all know, the Civil Right Movement worked for the end of the discrimination against African Americans.

Before the American Civil War, most of the blacks were slaves, especially in the South. After the Civil War, although Black American had freedom, only Whites had the right to vote, and some places even limited the citizenship to white only. The poem is illustrating the differences between African-Americans and White during the Civil Rights era, and it shows the depth of the feeling of living unfairly. While many African Americans were free during the time when Angelou published this poem, we can know from this poem that African-Americans were still not feeling free. Because of the color of her skin, she often felt that nobody would hear her voice, and she felt she was still experiencing slavery in some ways. This poem has seven stanzas in total.

In the first and second stanza, the author refers to nature and describing the birds fight against the orange sky, which shows the reader the appreciation

to the bird in natural habitat. The third and fourth stanza is describing a caged bird beside the free bird that can barely see the sky. The author uses the word " but" to begin the third stanza, which changes the tone of the poem from satisfied and joyful to dark and frustrating. Angelou uses the metaphor of a bird struggling to escape its cage in these two stanzas, as a major symbol throughout her poem. The caged bird represents Angelou's restriction resulting from discrimination.

In the fifth stanza, the author goes back to the free bird and describing more differences between it and the caged bird. She writes that the free bird enjoying " the trade winds soft through the sighing trees"(14-15). The next stanza talked about the real life of the caged bird again. It reveals the author's feeling about her own dream of ending the discrimination in the United States, and all African-Americans could have the legal recognition. The author uses metaphor again of her cage that made up by discrimination and racism. Although she sang, she felt her voice was not heard in the wide world, but only by those nearest her cage. The last stanza keeps focusing on the caged bird.

" The caged bird sings with a fearful trill; of things unknown but longed for still". This is the only repeated stanza in this poem, which is the same as the fourth, which means it is very important and significant in this poem. It implies that even though the caged bird has never experienced the freedom, but she still " sing a fearful trill" because she is created for freedom. In the first three stanzas, there is only two line of rhyme, which is " cage" and " rage"(6-7) at the beginning of the second stanza. The fourth stanza repeated

"-ill" sound in its first three lines, which is also an onomatopoeia that imitating the birdsong.

There are two different rhymes in the next stanza. One rhyme is " breeze" and " trees" in the " The free bird thinks of another breeze; and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees"(14-15) and the next line " And the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn, and he names the sky his own". The sixth stanza, which is also the only repeated stanza in this poem, include one rhyme-" dreams" and " scream" in the beginning two line.

" But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams; his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream"(18-19). The poem is one big metaphor, saying the Black Americans are the bird in the cage. For example, the author writes in the second stanza, " His wings are clipped and his feet are tied; so he opens his throat to sing"(8-9).

This text personifies the ability of twittering of bird and gives a vivid description of the caged bird. Besides, this sentence uses metaphor to compare caged bird to African Americans fighting for equality during the Civil Right Movement. The author uses the caged bird to describe the blacks, who did not have their rights and ability to do what they want. They endure the unfair treatment just like the bird in the cage. The sentence describes the bird is singing in the cage, which represents the African-Americans as well as she herself. On the other hand, it shows us that even though white people exclude the black and even caged them, they cannot stop the blacks to understand they are meant to be free, to help others and help themselves.

Maya Angelou tells everyone through her poem that there are still a lot of blacks suffering the unfair treatment today.

She points out the life of black people to attract people's attention, and she hopes the discrimination toward African American could stop soon.