

Analysis paper

Business



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Each year I watched the field across from the Store turn caterpillar green, then gradually frosty white. I knew exactly how long it would be before the big wagons would pull into the front yard and load on the cotton pickers at daybreak to carry them to the remains of slavery’s plantations” (Angelou, p. 115). Maya Angelou describes the life of cotton-pickers in the nonfiction story, “ Cotton-Picking Time.

” This paper will give an analysis of “ Cotton-Picking Time” and discuss the author’s intent along with the rhythm, choice of words, tone, and satire.

Also this paper will discuss the purpose of the essay, techniques used by the author, theme, and the tension between facts and events of the short story. Maya grew up mainly at her grandmother’s house and store in a small town in Arkansas. She grew up in a small community, which consisted of slaves who worked in the cotton fields. Her grandmother’s store was a meeting place in the mornings and evenings for the cotton pickers. Many of the cotton pickers walked miles to reach the pick-up place to start their day.

Many of the cotton pickers would purchase their lunches at the store for the day.

Angelou describes the cotton harvest in much detail on the slave’s plantations. The work is hard work and backbreaking with little wages, which keep the cotton pickers in debt. They are not any better off than when they started. “ In cotton-picking time the late afternoons revealed the harshness of Black Southern life, which in the early morning had been softened by nature’s blessing of grogginess, forgetfulness and the soft lamplight” (Angelou, p.

117). In this sentence, Angelou compares the mornings with the afternoons giving two different aspects of the day.

The mornings were better than the evenings for the cotton pickers. Angelou describes her younger life by working in the store seemed to be an adventure for her. Every day she recalls the smell of the store as odors of onions, oranges, and kerosene all mixed together. The odor is removed when the wooden slat is removed from the door, which brought in the cotton pickers for their early morning shopping.

The cotton pickers made the place exciting and interesting. The mornings were happy and boastful, but the evenings were a different story for the cotton pickers.

They came in the late afternoon drained by their hard work and nothing to show for it. They were constantly wondering how they were going to make ends meet and get by in life. They were bitter in the afternoons than in the mornings.

In the story, Angelou describes the contrast in detail. “ If the morning sounds and smells were touched with the supernatural, the late afternoon had all the features of the normal Arkansas life” (Angelou, p. 116). The theme of the story is the difficulty of being a black slave in the South.

The black cotton pickers or slaves were in debt with Maya’s grandmother at the store and at the white commissary downtown.

“ No matter how much they had picked, it wasn’t enough” (Angelou, p. 116). The cotton pickers were dirt-disappointed. They worked hard and had nothing to show for it. The Store is a symbol in the story.

The Store is a gathering place for the cotton pickers everyday. The Store was where Maya spent her childhood days. The Store symbolized hope for the cotton pickers and loyalty of them. Also it represented a strong community in which the cotton pickers met each day. The Store was a gathering spot for them. “ Cotton-Picking Time” is written in the first person by Maya Angelou as she recalls her childhood days.

The story is written from both a child’s and adult’s perspective. The tone of the author is somewhat comical and hopeful. In the story this was revealed when Angelou discusses how the slaves would compete at picking the most cotton. “ In those tender mornings the Store was full of laughing, joking, boasting and bragging. One man was going to pick tow hundred pounds of cotton, and another three hundred.

Even the children were promising to bring home fo’ bits and six bits” (Angelou, p. 116).

The cotton pickers made it a competition to see who would outdo the other. This attitude was somewhat of a game to them. The story was entertaining but also informative of the lives of Southern black cotton pickers. Angelou describes the morning and evenings very precise and full of detail in which the reader can hear and smell the surroundings of the Store.

The mornings were more optimistic while the evenings were pessimistic in which Angelou describes in the story. The cotton pickers had hope each morning, but only to end the day with the same disappointment of getting no further ahead in life.

In conclusion, “ Cotton-Picking Time” was very entertaining, but informative of the lives of Southern black cotton picker in Arkansas. Angelou describes the lives of the cotton pickers and their hard work, but gaining no monetary success only debt to the Store and white commissary downtown. The Store was a place, which gave them hopes and dreams for a better life.