

Good example of book review on coming of age in mississippi

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



“ Coming of Age in Mississippi” is a classic autobiography of Anne Moody that was first published in the year 1968. Readers get to know about Moody’s life of her childhood and till late twenties. The book presents the struggle faced by African-Americans in Mississippi, and how it was to be grown up in a very racial state. The autobiography of Moody is unique in a sense that it reflects direct voice of a poor, oppressed black women, who is struggled to change the society and tried to make it a better pace for African-Americans. Moody was grown up in a society where racism was high and Blacks were not given citizenship. Civil War also could not guarantee freedom and equal rights to African-American people in rural south. The objective of this paper is to present a relationship between race, social movement and citizenship as show by the Moody in her autobiography. The book is divided into four sections that covers different aspects of Moody’s life including her childhood, high school & political awaking, college & political activism, as well as her involvement in civil movements. The story begins when Moody was four year old and her parents used to work in the field of a white man, Mr. Carter. The author describes extreme poverty in which Negroes used to live and Whites used to enjoy the money earned from the hard work of black labors in their fields. In south, all black families were living in wooden hovels and were forced to work at low wages. Moody’s mother, Toosweet used to leave Moody and her small sister under the care of her brother Lee when she was out in the field. Lee was very abusive towards the child but Toosweet has no other option. Muddy’s uncle used to beat her and her sister and his behavior gets clearly reflected when Lee says “ I’m going’ to burn you two cryin’ fools up. Then I won’t have to come here

and keep yo' asses every day" (Moody 7).

Violence, discrimination, scarcity of resources even food were common aspects of Moody's childhood. Moody worked for Mrs. Burke, though she never wanted to work under authoritarian and racist Burke but she was unable to leave that job. Moody explained her poverty when she says " I had to help secure that plate of dry beans if nothing else" (121). Moody also describes how racism existed in South, Mississippi damaged her family life and personal relationship of her parents. Moody's father was distressed with the fire that damaged his property and he abandoned his family due to anxiety, low income poor crops, weakening relationship with Toosweet and an affair with Florence, widow of Diddy's best friend. Moody's mother worked in houses of white people and in a coffee house to feed her children. Anne Moody decided not to be like her mother after observing all violence, racist practices and discriminations, happening around her in Mississippi. Moody life changed when she heard about the brutal murder of a young boy Emmitt Till who was just 15 years old. The boy was charged with allegation of going out of line with a white woman. Till was executed by a white man who was husband of the white woman. This event forced Moody to think about her fate and fate of all other black people who were badly treated by white people. Moody's anger against white people and racism was increasing day by day when she watched sufferings of her mother and family.

Mississippi was a very conservative state that did not change its attitude against blacks even after 13th amendment. Mississippi rejected abolishment of slavery in year 1865 and did not change the same till 1995. Hate against African-American was deeply rooted in the society of Mississippi. Various

incidents encouraged Moody to become an activist. Moody was a good scholar, she was best in her class that made her different from other black students. She decided not to be discouraged by any one including her teachers, students, bosses, poverty and violence. Moody after her college decided to become an activist without approval of her mother and sister. Moody says “ It no longer seemed important to prove anything. I had found something outside myself that gave meaning to my life” (286).

Moody learnt from each job that she performed and anger inside her kept on growing. She wanted to understand racial inequality and reasons behind it. She also wanted to break all the barriers, established by white society for blacks. In order to break the status quo and traditions, and gained citizenship rights, Moody got involved in political activism in Tougaloo College. Moody joined NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), an organization that was fighting for the rights of African Americans despite of protest shown by her mother and family. She had a dream to change the society and bring equality.

Moody became very active in civil rights movement and in NAACP. She participated in famous event of “ The Woolworth Sit-in” Jackson, Mississippi. The event received good media coverage and popularity and encouraged blacks to fight for their rights and reject racism. Moody was one of among three members and only black person who sat on the counter and faced aggression of white students. Moody later on joined CORE (Coalition for the Organization of Racial Equality) and received several threats, faced violent attacks and warnings from white people. Moody participated in several events and encouraged African American people to realize and exercise their

rights.

Moody plays a major role in encouraging black people to vote and play active role as citizen of the country. Moody deployed significant efforts in registering black people as voter and giving them citizenship, which reflect that black people also have equal right to choose their government as white. However, after deploying exhaustive efforts she realized that her efforts did not yield right results. Moody described her disappointment by saying “ We had “ dreamers” instead of leaders leading us” (335).

Anne moody portrays her agony, sufferings and real life experiences in her popular autobiography, “ Coming of Age in Mississippi”. The autobiography is a valuable piece of literature for people who are interested in understanding the issue of racism in the United States of America. The language and diction, used in the autobiography by moody, describes her bitterness towards the society but at the same time, her struggle and determination to fight back inspires readers in different ways.

Work Cited

Moody, Anne. *Coming of Age in Mississippi* . USA: Dell, 1992. Print.