Plot and Characters Analysis

On Novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou

A Paper

Presented To The Faculty Of Letters And Humanities

As a Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements

For The Degree Of Strata 1

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APPROVAL SHEET

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ABSTRACT

Ratu Aliyah, Plot and Character Analysis on Novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. Paper, Jakarta: Adab and Humanities Faculty, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, August 2010.

This research discusses about Maya Angelo’s life struggling in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* Novel. The writer studied the plot and character on the novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is the unit analysis. The theory of intrinsic element is used as the theoretical framework. This study applies the library research and complied data are data analyzed through the descriptive qualitative analysis method. To answer the research question and to make this research more complete, the writer explains Maya Angelo’s life, the direct statement of the author and the reaction from the other characters are the ways to know and understand about intrinsic elements analysis describing autobiography Maya Angelo’s life and experience struggling.

The result of the research found that the novel is setting up the story in Arkansas America, the plot came with forward style with a little background in the beginning, characteristics of Maya Angelo described as a black ugly woman. Finally the writer concludes the theme that can be concluded from the author who created this novel is that there should be no difference between black and white people in gaining their rights.
DECLARATION

Herby I declare that this submission in my own and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Serang, Juni 2010

Ratu Aliyah
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TABLE OF CONTENT

APPROVAL SHEET .......................................................................................................... i

LEGALIZATION OF PAPER .................................................................................... ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .......................................................................................... iii

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................... iv

DECLARATION ......................................................................................................... v

TABLE OF CONTENT ............................................................................................ vi

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................... 1

A. Background of The Study .................................................................................. 1
B. Statements of the Research ............................................................................... 4
C. Objective of the Research .................................................................................. 4
D. Significance of The Study .................................................................................. 4
E. Scope and Limitation ......................................................................................... 5
F. Methodology of the Research ........................................................................... 5
   1. Method and Data Collection ....................................................................... 5
   2. Analysis of Data ......................................................................................... 5
   3. Unit Analysis ............................................................................................. 5
   4. Instrument of the Research ....................................................................... 6
   5. Place and Time of the Research ............................................................... 6
CHAPTER II: THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK ........................................... 7

A. The Definition of Novel ....................................................................... 7
B. Intrinsic Elements of Novel................................................................. 9
C. Description of Character....................................................................... 12
D. Description of Plot................................................................................ 14

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH FINDINGS ........................................................ 17

A. The Synopsis of The Novel.................................................................... 17
B. Analysis of Main Characters.................................................................. 19
C. Analysis of Plot......................................................................................... 23

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION ................................ 32

A. Conclusion................................................................................................. 32
B. Suggestion................................................................................................. 33

REFERENCES

APPENDIXES
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Literary work is an application of feeling and language toward real life. One of literary work is novel. The novel as an exploration or chronic of living dreaming, illustration in standard work, influence, connections, result, destroy or human behavior.¹

During the 18th century the novel adopted features of the old romance and became one of the major literary genres. It is today defined mostly by its ability to become the object of literary criticism demanding artistic merit and a specific ‘literary’ style—or specific literary styles.² The novel is probably is not hard to discover. Public attraction to the novel is partly owing to current reaction (and perhaps temporary) away from the other major literary form.³

One of the famous novels is I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou. This novel was published in 1969. I Know Why The

¹ Dennis Walder, Approaching Literature The Realist Novel, (London: The Open University, 1995), p. 9
³ Durlame and Hughes, Literature, (New Jersey: Prenne Hall, inc, 1965), p.440
*Caged Bird Sings* is a novel of social protest by African American to the government of America and white American in 1930. Angelouu adapted it in her works like themes to the black experience of oppression, discrimination and prejudice in America. The novel of *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* is a view personal author, Maya Angelou. The great interesting from this novel is talking about personal author’s life from memory of past in every character as a real reflection of author’s life.

Maya Angelou (born Marguerite Johnson April 4, 1928\(^\text{th}\)) is an American poet, memoirist, actress and an important figure in the American Civil Right Movement. She has been honored by numerous academic institutions throughout her career. She has been awarded a fellowship by Yale University, and also served as a Rockefeller Foundations Scholar in Italy. Angelouu has taught at the University of Ghana, University of Kansas and at Wake Forest University, where she holds a lifetime chair as the Z. smith Reynolds Professor of American Studies. Outside academic, Angelouu has achieved recognition for her poetry from bodies honoring achievement in music and theater. She has received a nomination for the Tony Awards, and in 1993 won the Grammy Awards for Best Spoken Word Album for On the Pulse of Morning. In 2005, Angelouu was honored by Oprah Winfrey at her “Legends Ball” along with 25 other African-American women whom Winfrey considered inspirational.\(^4\)

Angelou’s first work of literature, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*, is an autobiography. Angelou’s disruptive life inspired her to write this book. It reflects the essence of her struggle to the restrictions that were placed upon her in a hostile environment. Angelou wrote with a twist of lyrical imagery along with a touch of realism. The title of this book is taken from the poem “Sympathy” by the great black poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar. The work displays an impulse towards transcendence.

*I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* is a 1969 autobiographical novel about the early years of author Maya Angelou’s life. The autobiographical explores the isolation and loneliness faced by Angelou, and the attributes of her characters that helped her cope with the prejudice of society. Quite graphic in nature, the text deals with issues including childhood, rape, racism and sexism, which has generated controversy. The novel is the first in a six-volume autobiographical series, covering her childhood and young adult experience.

The background of study above makes the writer in deep curiosity to research it in this humble paper. This matter has interested the writer to analyze the theme or idea author which author wants to tell through her novel and the writer checks it with analyzing intrinsic elements. Those intrinsic elements are finding how the story running is, what roles the characters were, social setting in America. The writer would like to analyze the novel *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* from its intrinsically side.
B. Statements of the Research

Based on analysis above, the points of question in this research are:

1. How is the plot described in the novel of *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*?
2. How the major characters influence the development of the plot in the novel of *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*?

C. Objective of the Research

Instantaneously, the aims of this research are:

The research is intended to know the plot structure of the novel *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*. It is especially aimed at knowing the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution on the storyline and also the characters develops on the novel.

D. Significance of the Research

By analyzing the plot and characters on the novel, the writer hopes the result of this research would be advantages for the reader who like reading novel and can be used for the English Letters Department as one references in studying of literary work.

E. Scope and Limitation
Indeed, this research is accentuated properly into describing the whole of Otto biography Maya Angelou’s life and experience struggling among racialism on sexism intimidated her and her environment. The prime source or primary datum in this research is Maya Angelou’s work “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” (1969).

F. Methodology of the Research

1. Method and Data Collection

The writer conducts the research by using qualitative descriptive method. The method tries to describe the plot of the story in I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings novel. The description is based on the threat data as found in the novel I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou.

2. Analysis of Data

In this paper, the data is analyzed qualitatively. The data connected with some events, expressions and conflicts that happen in the novel then analyzed by the theory of the plot.

3. Unit Analysis

4. **Instrument of the Research**

The research instrument is the writer herself who analyzed the novel carefully and accurately by examining the text of the novel and relating with sociological literature approach.

5. **Place and Time of the Research**

The research begins in the last semester of academic year 2005-2006, at the Department of English Letters, the Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta.
A. **The Definition of Novel**

A novel (from *French* Nouvelle Italian “novella”, “new”) is an extended, generally fictional narrative, typically in prose. Until the eighteenth century, the word referred specifically to short fictions of love and figure as opposed to *romances*, which were epic-length works about love and adventure. Literary theory of genres has not yet managed to isolate a “single definite, stable characteristic of novel” that holds without reservations.

During the 18th century the novel adopted features of the old romance and became one of the major literary genres. It is today defined mostly by its ability to become the object of literary criticism demanding artistic merit and a specific ‘literary’ style or specific literary styles.\(^5\)

One meaning of the English word novel has remained stable: “novel” can still signify what is new owing to its “novelty”. When it comes to fiction, however, the meaning of the term has changed over time:

a. The period 1200-1750 saw a rise of the novel (originally a short piece of fiction) rivaling the romance (the epic-length performance). This development, which one could describe as the first rise of the novel,

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occurred across Europe, though only the Spanish and the English went one step further and allowed the word novel (Spanish: novella) to become their term for fictional narratives.

b. The period 1700-1800 saw the rise of a “new romance” in reaction to the production of potentially scandalous novels. The movement encountered a complex situation in the English market, where the term “new romance” could hardly be ventured, after the novel had done so much to transform taste. The new genre also adopted the name novel: this new novel was a work of new epic proportions, which the effect that the English (and Spanish) eventually needed a new word for the original short “novel” : the term novella was created to fill the gap in English, “short story” brought a further refinement.

The novel is probably the most popular literary form in this present age, and reasons for it is popularity is not hard to discover. Public attraction to the novel the other major literary form. Novel is a story in prose about imaginary people long enough to cover a book. There two important to understand a novel. They are the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements are the analysis of the literature itself without looking to the relation with the external aspects. They are theme, plot, character, setting, and point of view. And the extrinsic elements are the analysis of the literature work itself looking to the

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relation with the extern aspects such as sociology, psychology, religious, and philosophy.

B. Intrinsic Elements of Novel

The intrinsic elements of novel include plot, character, setting and theme. Our discussions of each of these elements individually allow us to highlight the characteristic features of novel in a convenient way. We should remember, however, that analysis of any single element of novel (plot, for example) should not blind us to its function in conjunction with other elements (such as character). When characters do something, action takes place this action provokes other actions. Action takes place somewhere at some time; this is the setting of the play.

A plot is a causal sequence of events, the “why” for the things that happen in the story. The plot draws the reader into the character’s lives and helps the reader understand the choices that the characters make.

Setting is where the story takes place. It also when the story takes place in some cases. Basically, setting is an environment for the action and the characters. Setting sometimes minimized by the writer to emphasize other elements of the story.\(^7\) Panuti Sudjiman and Hudson differentiate setting as:

1. Physical setting
   
   Physical setting are the geographical location, including topography, place, and scenery even the details of a room interior, building and region.

2. Social setting

\(^7\) Larry M. Sutton, et al. op. cit. p.6
Social setting includes the description of the societies, social community, and their characters, value, traditions, the way of life and cultures in fictions.

3. Spiritual setting

The spiritual setting gives some information about the emotional environment of the character.8

Setting is a term in literature and drama usually referring to the time and location in which a story takes place. The term is relevant for various forms of literary expression, such as short stories, novels, dramas, and screenplay.

Broadly speaking, the setting provides the main backdrop for the story and often the overall tone for it as well. For example, many of William Faulkner’s novels are set in the early 20th Century in Yoknapatawpha Country, a fictional country in the American South. More specifically, the term “setting” can also refer to the time or location of single scene in a large story. In John Cheever’s short story “The Swimmer”, for the example, the story’s protagonist visits various swimming pools in his neighborhood with each pool.9

Eudora Welty said:

“Every story would be another story, and unrecognizable if it took up its characters and plot and happened somewhere else... fiction depends for its life on place. Place is the

8 Panuti Sudjiman, op. cit. p.45

9 http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Setting
Writers describe the world they know. Sights, sounds, colors, and textures are all vividly painted in words as an artist paints images on canvas. A writer imagines a story to be happening in a place that is rooted in his or her mind. The location of a story’s actions, along with the time in which it occurs, is the setting.

Setting is created by language. How many or how few details we learn is up to the author. Many authors leave a lot these details up to the reader’s imagination.

Theme is broad idea in a story, or a message conveyed by a work. This message is usually about life, society or human nature. Themes are usually implied rather than explicitly stated. Deep thematic content is not required in literature: however, some reader would say that all stories inherently project some kind of outlook on life that can be taken as a theme, regardless of whether or not this is intent of the author. Analysis of changes in dynamic characters can provide insight into a particular theme.10

The theme of a fable is its moral. The theme of parable is its teaching. The theme of a piece of fiction is its view about life and how people behave. In fiction, the theme is not intended to teach or preach. In fact, it is not presented directly at all. You extract it from the characters, action, and setting that make up the story. In other words, you must figure out the theme yourself.

10 http://www.learnear.org/exhibits/literature/read/theme.html
The writer’s task is to communicate on common ground with the reader. Although the particulars of your experience may be different from the details of the story, the general underlying truths behind the story may be just the connection that both you and the writer are seeking.

Each literary work has its own message. This message can be moral, political, and religious, etc. usually the theme of a literary work represents the theme than the writer tries to convey, describe or criticize. For knowing the theme of a literary work. Theme is the basic idea of literary work. We can say that the theme is the essence and has a goal or an idea of a literary work, theme is the basic idea of literary work. We can say that the theme is message that the author tries should notice the relationship between the theme and the other elements in the central meaning discovered by the writer in the process of writing and the story only by throughout and responsive reading of the story, involving a constant awareness of the relation among the parts of the story and the parts of whole.\(^{11}\)

C. Description of Character

Character is presumably an imaged person who inhabits a story although that simple definition may admit to a few exceptions. Characters classified based on their function into two types, namely the main character (central character) and subordinate characters (supporting character). Main character (central character) is the most dominant character and often involves with other characters that exist in

a story. A character who holds the leading role is the main character or the protagonist. Protagonist always becomes a central character in a story. He even becomes a central attention in a story. The criterion, which is used to identify the main characters but on the highest intensity of their involve men in the story. And the subordinate character (supporting character) is the character that supports the main character. A subordinate character is the character that is not posited in the central of the story, but the presence is really needed to support the main character.

Characters are often described as being flat or round, static or dynamic. A flat character is not fully developed. The writer may reveal only one two personality traits. A round character is a very complex individual, more like real life with several facts to his personality. A static character is one who does not really change in the progress of the story: he is the same person at the end as he was in the beginning. But a dynamic character does change, psychologically, physically, or otherwise. The author can describe his character physically: age, height, weight, and so forth. He can develop a character though action and can also depict character though dialogue. Characterization is the player’s emotion, attitude, desire, and the others.

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15 Ibid
D. Description of Plot

A plot is a series of related events or episodes that make up a story. Plot is a structure of events a rising out of a conflict and this is consists of prolog. Unity (completeness) is achieved as these rises to a climax, a “dramatic height”, and on to a conclusion. At times, of course, the conclusion may be unexpected or even absurd, but nevertheless it should grow out of the story. In general, the plot of a story is a conflict and it is resolution.\textsuperscript{16}

In narrative, a plot is the rendering and ordering of the events and of a story, particularly towards the achievement of some particular artistic or emotional effect.

If an author writes, “The king died and then the queen died”, there is no plot for a story. But by writing, “The king died and then the queen died of grief”, the writer has provided a plot line for a story.

A plot’s structure is the way in which the story elements are arranged. Writers vary structure depending on the needs of the story. For example, in a mystery, the author will withhold plot exposition until later in the story. In William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” it is only at the end of the story that we learn what Miss Emily has been up to all those years while locked away in her Southern mansion.

The basic plot of any story is moving through five distinct section or stage, namely:

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid
a. Exposition is the beginning section in which the author provides the necessary background information of the story such as the scene, the situation, the action, introduction of the characters and the conflict, of the potential for the conflict.

b. Complication is sometimes referred to as the rising action. In this stage, the conflict is develop gradually and intensified. It is the catalyst that begins the major conflict.

c. Crisis is also referred to as the climax. It is the turning point in the story that moment at which the plot reaches is point of greatest emotional intensity.

d. Falling action is when the tension lowered and the plot moves towards its appointed conclusion.

e. Resolution is the final section of the story. It reveals the outcome of the conflict and establishes some new stability.¹⁷

In other source, the plot is based on seven distinct stages, they are:

1. Initial situation – the beginning. It is the first incident that makes the story move.

2. Conflict or Problem – goal which the main character of the story has to achieve.

3. Complication – obstacles which the main character has to overcome.

4. Climax – highest point of interest of the story.

¹⁷ Larry M. Sutton, et al. op.cit. p.5
5. Suspense – point of tension. It arouses the interest of the readers.

6. Denouement or Resolution – what happens to the character after overcoming all obstacles/failing to achieve the desired result and reaching/not reaching his end result and reaching/not reaching his goal.

7. Conclusion – the end result of the climax.\(^{18}\)

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Generally speaking, at this point, the writer will elaborate the inquiry of Angelou’s work, especially *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, concerning about intrinsic elements, it should be done, because of a novel, usually, comprising the idea whom the authors intend to expose, either explicitly or implicitly based on their experiences. That is why, this research now tends to disclose the missing in disguise based on Angelou’s work, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

A. The Synopsis of the Novel

The novel follows Marguerite’s (later called My, or Maya, by her brother) young life and the struggles she undergoes in the racist South. Abandoned by their parents at an early age, she and her older brother, Bailey, live with their grandmother “Momma”, and her crippled uncle in Stamps, Arkansas, where her grandmother operates a general store.

Many of the problems Marguerite encounters in her childhood stem from the prejudices of her white neighbors who treat her family at the best with cool respect and, at the worst, blatant contempt. Furthermore, despite, the fact that Momma is wealthier than most of the white neighbors, the white neighbors’ children hassle them insolently, one girl even revealing her pubic hair to Momma. These events, along with Marguerite’s feelings of inferiority to other white and
black children, despite her above-average intelligence, cause her to initially start out as a self-conscious and short-tempered girl.

A turning point in the novel occurs when Marguerite and Bailey’s father unexpectedly appears at their home to send them to live with their Mother in St. Louis. While there, Marguerite, only nine years old at that time, is raped by her mother’s boyfriend, Mr. Freeman, which traumatizes her. Mr. Freeman is later murdered after escaping jail time, which further burdens her with guilt and causes her to withdraw from all other people except for her brother. Even after moving back to Stamps, Marguerite remains reclusive until she meets the amiable Bertha Flowers who supplies her with books to encourage her love of reading, and coaxes her out of her shell.

As Marguerite grows up, she experiences many other instances of racism, including an old white woman who shortens her name to “Mary”, hence reducing her name to more common one; white speakers at a graduation ceremony who disparage the black audience by implying their limited job opportunities; and the white town dentist’s refusal to operate on Marguerite’s rotting tooth, even when Momma reminds him of a loan he owed her.

Finally, when even her brother Bailey is disturbed by the discovery of the corpse of a black man whom some white men took pleasure in seeing, Momma decides to move the family to permanently live with their mother in San Francisco, California for their mental well-being.
Marguerite, now more frequently called “Maya”, enters adolescence, but not without awkwardness. She becomes worried that she might be a lesbian (which she equates with being a hermaphrodite), and initiates sexual intercourse with a teenage boy she knows only vaguely to dispel this fear. The encounter cause her to become pregnant which she hides from her family until in her eighth month of pregnancy to be able to graduate from high school. Maya gives birth to a beautiful baby boy and begins her trek to adulthood by accepting her role as a mother to her newborn son.

B. Analysis of Main Characters

1. Maya Angelou (Marguerite Ann Johnson)

Maya Angelou-named Ann Johnson at birth at birth-writes about her experience growing up as a black girl in the rural south and in the cities of St. Louis, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Haunted by her displacement from her biological parent and her sense that she is ugly, Maya often isolates herself, escaping into her reading. Angelou’s autobiography traces the start of her development into an independent, wise, and compassionate woman.

At the beginning of I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya is a Precocious young girl suffering not just from the typical traumas associated with being black and female in America, but also from the trauma of this placement. Smart and imaginative, optimist and strong, like in page 268 paragraph of I know Why the Caged Bird Sings:
I would have the job. I would be a conductorette and sling a full money changer from my belt. I would.

Maya nevertheless feels that people judge her unfairly due to her ungainly appearance. Feeling misunderstood, she fantasizes that she is a blond-haired, blue-eyed girl trapped in a “black ugly dream” and will soon wake up and reveal her true self. Maya describes her social and familial displacement as “unnecessary insult” on top of the general difficulties associated with growing up as a black girl in the segregated American South. The South presents Maya with three tremendous impediments: white prejudice, black powerlessness, and female subjugation. In addition to these broad societal obstacles, Maya endures many personal traumas in her lifetimes as well. Her parents abandon and her need for physical affection lead to further struggles. Five years later, she must live in an unknown city where she seeks comfort in Mr. Freeman, who molests and rapes her. At age ten, having already witnessed callous whites mistreating the people she loves most, such as woman, Maya begins to experience racism directly. Mrs. Cullinan tries to rename and demean her, and the racist, white dentist Dr. Lincolns says he would rather stick his hand in a dog’s mouth than treat Maya’s problem.

2. Bailey Johnson

Maya’s older brother by one year, Bailey is the most important person in Maya’s life throughout her childhood. When moved around from place to place, Bailey and Maya depend on each other to achieve some semblance of stability and continuity in their lives. Unlike Maya, Bailey is graceful, attractive, outgoing, and charming, and many consider him the jewel of his family. Bailey uses his skills
and status to protect Maya. With his charms, he defends her against criticism and insults. Bailey and Maya share not just in tragedies but also in private jokes and a love of language and poetry.

One of the most striking differences between Maya and Bailey is their ability to confront racism. Bailey explains to Maya early on that when he senses the negative effects of racism, he essentially puts his soul to sleep so that he can forget the incident. Maya, however, learns to resist racism actively. Bailey and Maya grow further apart as they go through adolescence, and Bailey continues to withdraw deeper into himself. Even so, Maya continues to confide in him, asking for advice about her pregnancy. He continues to show his love for her as well, replying quickly to his sister and giving caring advice.

The return to Stamps from St. Louis traumatizes Bailey, and though he never blames his sister, he remains tormented by his longing for his mother. He expresses his longing through moodiness, sarcasm, and a bold assertion of his independence. In Stamps, he finds outlets for his longing for maternal affection by watching the white movie star who looks like Vivian and by playing “Momma and Papa” with Joyce, his buxom girlfriend who is four years his senior. In San Francisco, Bailey tries to win his mother’s approval by imitating the people she befriends—he becomes the pimp-like boyfriend of a white prostitute. Bailey moves out at age sixteen and gets a job on the Southern Pacific Railroad, explaining that he and Vivian have come to an understanding with each other and that he has grown wise beyond his years.
“sister, I’ll have two cans of sardines.”
“I’m gonna work so fast today, I’m gonna make you look like standing still”.

3. Annie Henderson (Momma)

Maya and Bailey’s paternal grandmother, Momma raises them for most of their childhood. She owns the only store in the black section of Stamps, Arkansas, and it serves as the central gathering place for the black community. She has owned the store for about twenty-five years, starting it as a mobile lunch counter and eventually building the store in the heart of the black community. Not knowing that Momma was black, a judge once subpoenaed her as “Mrs. Henderson,” which cemented her elevated status in the mind of the black community.

Similarly, Momma is the moral center of the family and especially of Maya’s life. Momma raises the children according to stern Christian values and strict rules. She is defined by an unshakable faith in God, her loyalty to her community, and a deep love for everything she touches. Despite the affection she feels for her grandchildren, she cares more about their well-being than her own needs, extracting them from the Stamps community when the racist pressures begin to affect Bailey negatively.

While in Stamps, Momma teaches Maya how to conduct herself around white people. She chooses her words, emotions, and battles carefully, especially when race plays a role. Momma considers herself a realist regarding race relations. She stands up for herself but believes that white people cannot be
spoken to without risking one’s life. When three nasty poor white children mock Momma from the yard one afternoon, Maya watches furiously, but Momma maintains her dignity by not even acknowledging their taunts. Though stern and not given to emotional or affectionate displays, Momma conveys the depth of her love for Maya and Bailey throughout the book.

From the analysis above, the writer conclude that Maya is a Precocious young girl suffering not just from the typical traumas associated with being black and female in America, but also from the trauma of this placement, and she endures many personal traumas in her lifetimes as well. But as she grows up, all problems she felt become the power to rise up and motivate her to be the powerful woman.

C. Analysis of Plot

The author may present a story’s events in strict chronological order with the event that actually occurred first presented in the sequence in which it took place. Many sequences are possible as the writer manipulates events to create interest, suspense, confusion, wonder, or other effects.

1. Exposition

The novel follows Marguerite’s (later called My, or Maya, by her brother) young life and the struggles she undergoes in the racist South. Abandoned by their parents at an early age, she and her older brother, Bailey, live with their
grandmother “Momma”, and her crippled uncle in stamps, Arkansas, where her grandmother operates a general store.

*If growing up is painful for the Southern Black girl, being aware of her displacement is the rust on the razor that threatens the throat. It is an unnecessary insult. (Angelou, p.4).*

This vivid assertion ends the opening section of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Although this section, which acts as a prologue, mostly emphasizes the point of view of Maya at five or six years old, this statement clearly comes from Angelou’s adult voice. Looking back on her childhood experience, Maya notes that she not only fell victim to a hostile, racist, and sexist society, but to other social forces as well including the displacement she feel her from family and her peers. Maya feels displaced primarily because when she was three years old, her parents sent her away to live with her grandmother. This early separation, as well as subsequent ones, leaves her feeling rootless for most of her childhood. Angelou’s autobiography likens the experience of growing up as a black girl in the segregated American South to having a razor at one’s throat. Her constant awareness of her own displacement—the fact that she differed from other children in appearance and that she did not have a sense of belonging associated with anyone or anyplace—becomes the “unnecessary insult” that she must deal with at such a young age. Over the course of the work, Maya details numerous negative effects of such displacement, including her susceptibility to Mr. Freeman’s sexual molestation.
Many of the problems marguerite encounters in her childhood stem from the prejudices of her white neighbors who treat her family at the best with cool respect and, at the worst, blatant contempt. Furthermore, despite the fact that Momma is wealthier than most of the white neighbors’ children hassle them in silently, one girl even revealing her pubic hair to Momma. These events, along with Marguerite’s feelings of inferiority to other white and black children, despite her above-average intelligence, cause her to initially start out as a self-conscious and short-tempered girl.

Marguerite, now more frequently called “Maya”, enters adolescence, but not without awkwardness. She becomes worried that she might be a lesbian (which she equates with being a hermaphrodite), and initiates sexual intercourse with a teenage boy she knows only vaguely to dispel this fear. The encounter causes her to become pregnant which she hides from her family until in her eighth month of pregnancy to be able to graduate from high school. Maya gives birth to a beautiful baby boy and begins her trek to adulthood by accepting her role as a mother to her newborn son.

A young black girl named Maya stands in front of her church congregation on Easter, unable to finish reciting a poem. She wears an unflattering altered taffeta dress that, she notes, is probably a secondhand dress form a white woman, and she fantasizes that one day she will wake up out of her “black ugly dream” and be white and blond instead of a large, unattractive African American girl.
After being humiliated in front of everyone and tripped by another child, she ends up running out of church peeing, crying, and laughing all the same time.

2. Rising Action

A turning point in the novel occurs when Marguerite and Bailey’s father unexpectedly appears at their home to send them to live with their mother in St. Louis. While there, Marguerite, only eight years old at that time, is raped by her mother’s boyfriend, Mr. Freeman, which traumatizes her. Mr. Freeman is later murdered after escaping jail time, which further burdens her with guilt and causes her to withdraw from all other people except for her brother. Even after moving back to Stamps, Marguerite remains reclusive until she meets the amiable Bertha Flowers who supplies her with books to encourage her love of reading, and coaxes her out of her shell.

As Marguerite grows up, she experiences many other instances of racism, including an old white woman who shortens her name to “Mary”, hence reducing her name to a more common one; white speakers at a graduation ceremony who disparage the black audience by implying their limited job opportunities; and the white town dentist’s refusal to operate on Marguerite’s rotting tooth, even when Momma reminds him of a loan he owed her.

Finally, when ever her brother Bailey is disturbed by the discovery of the corpse of a black man whom some white men took pleasure in seeing, Momma decides to move the family to permanently live with their mother in San Francisco, California for their mental well-being.
“My race groaned. It was our people falling. It was another lynching, yet another Black man hanging on a tree. One more woman ambushed and raped. This might be the end of the world. If Joe lost we were back in slavery and beyond help. It would all be true, the accusations that we were lower types of human beings. Only a little higher than the apes.” (Angelou,p.135).

During the annual summer fir's fry, women show off their baking and men fish in the nearby pond. Music and the noises of children’s games fill the air. Maya wanders into secluded clearing to sit on a tree and stare at the sky. Louise Kendrick’s, a pretty girl of the same age, comes upon her. At first shy toward each other, they soon hold hands and spin around while looking at the sky. They become best friends and spend hours trying to learn the complicated “Tut” language because it is even more esoteric than pig Latin.

While in the seventh grade, Maya receives a note from an eighth-grader, Tommy Valdon, asking her to be his valentine. She shows it to Louise, and Louise explains that valentines mean love. Maya says aloud, “Not ever again.” She does not explain what she means to Louise. They tear the note into tiny pieces and throw it into the wind. The day before Valentine’s Day, Maya’s teacher call the children by name and reads aloud cards sent to them from the eight-grade class. Tommy sends another letter to Maya, stating that he saw Maya and her friend tear up his note, but he does not think she meant to hurt his feelings. He signs the note with his initials. When Maya decides to throw caution to the wind and flirt with him, Tommy’s crush has already begun to wane.

“It was a nice letter and Tommy had beautiful penmanship. I was sorry I tore up the first. His statement that whether I answered him or not would
Not influence his affection reassured me. He couldn’t be after you know-what if he talked like that. I told Louise that the next time he came to the Store I was going to say something extra nice to him. Unfortunately the situation was so wonderful to me that each time I saw Tommy I melted in delicious giggles and was unable to form a coherent sentence. After awhile he stopped including me in his general glances. (Angelou, p 145-146).

3. Climax

After returning home, Maya overhears an argument between Dolores and Big Bailey. Dolores feels that Maya has come between them. Big Bailey leaves the house in a huff, leaving Dolores sobbing alone. Maya approaches Dolores and tells her that she never meant to come between them. Maya feels strong and honorable doing her good deed, but Dolores rebuffs Maya’s peaceful gesture and insults her, calling her mother, Vivian, a whore. Furious, Maya tells Dolores she is going to slap her and then does so. Dolores retaliates and Maya realizes that Dolores has stabbed her with scissors. Bleeding, Maya runs out of the house and locks herself in her father’s car. Big Bailey hears Dolores screaming and returns to investigate. He takes Dolores inside the house, where a woman bandages Maya’s wound. Afterward, he drives her to the home of another friend, where she spends the night. Big Bailey visits her at noon the next day and gives her some money, promising to return later that evening. Dreading having to face her father’s friends, Maya packs some food and leaves. She cannot return to Vivian, however, because she would never be able to hide her wound. Telling Vivian would only precipitate trouble between Vivian and Big Bailey, and Maya guiltily remembers Mr. Freeman’s death all too clearly.
My father come down the steps in a few and angrily slammed into the car. He sat in a corner of blood and I gave no warning. He must have pondering what to do with me when he felt the damp on his trousers. (Angelou, p. 247)

After leaving Big Bailey’s friends’ house, Maya spends the night in a car in a junkyard. When she wakes, a group of black, Mexican, and white homeless teenagers stand outside laughing at her through the windows. They tell her she can stay as long as she follows the rules: people of the opposite sex cannot sleep together, stealing is forbidden because it attracts police attention, and everyone works, committing their earnings to the community. Maya stays and her partner winds second prize during her last weekend. Maya learns to appreciate diversity and tolerance fully that month, something that influences her the rest of the life, she notes in retrospect. At the end of the summer, Maya calls Vivian and asks her to pay her airfare to San Francisco. The group accepts the news of her impending with detachment, although everyone wishes her well.

Now that I was out free, I set thinking of my future. The obvious solution to my homelessness concerned me only briefly. (Angelou, p. 250)

4. Falling Action

I would have the job. I would be a conductorette and sling a full money changer from my belt. I would. (Angelou, p. 268)

Maya decides to take a semester off from school and work. For weeks, she persists in trying to get a job as a streetcar conductor despite racist hiring policies. She finally succeeds in becoming the first black person to work on the San Francisco streetcars. When she returns to school, she feels out of place among her classmates. American black women, she says, must not only face the common
problems associated with adolescence, but also racism and sexism. Therefore, it does not surprise her that black women who survive these conflicts possess strong characters.

_The black female is assaulted in her tender years by all those common forces of nature at the same time that she is caught in the tripartite crossfire of masculine prejudice, white illogical hate and black lack of power. The fact that the adult American Negro Female emerges a formidable character is often met with amazement, distaste and even belligerence._ (Angelou, p.272)

The well of Loneliness (a classic work of 1920s lesbian fiction by Radcliffe Hall) is Maya’s first introduction lesbianism. She does not really understand what lesbian is, and she begins to fear that she is turning into one because she confuses lesbianism with being a hermaphrodite. She not that she has a deep voice, underdeveloped breasts and hips, and no under-arm hair. She resolves to ask Vivian about a strange growth on her vagina. Vivian explains that the changes are perfectly normal.

Vivian’s answer relieves Maya, but she still has unanswered fears about whether she might be a lesbian. Maya decides to get a boy friend to settle the matter once and for all. However, all of her male acquaintances busily chase light-skinned, straight-haired girls. Maya casually and frankly propositions one of two handsome brothers who live near, but their unromantic, unsatisfying encounter does not relieve her anxieties about being an abnormal girl. Three weeks later, she discovers that she is pregnant.

Maya accept full responsibility for her pregnancy. She writes to bailey for advice, and he tells her to keep a secret. Vivian oppose abortions, and he fears she
would make Maya quit school. Maya throws herself into school and confesses after graduating that she is eight month pregnant. Vivian and Daddy cidell calmly accept Maya’s impending, unwed motherhood without condemnation.

Maya gives birth to a son. She is fascinated by the baby and afraid to touch him. Vivian finally makes Maya sleep with her three week-old son. Fearing that she will crush him, Maya attempts unsuccessfully to stay awake all night. Vivian makes her later to show how the baby lies, resting comfortably into the crook of her arm. Vivian tells Maya that she does not have to worry about doing the right place, she will do the right thing regardless. Maya peacefully returns to sleep next to her son.

From all analysis above, the writer can conclude that plot denotes the way in which events are arranged in a work of literature.
Conclusion

Based on this study, the writer concluded that Novel of *I know why the caged bird sings*, that presented the autobiography at the early years of author Maya Angelou’s life, description about racial discrimination, particularly, based in about her experience persisted since her age was seventeen, either the provoked to Maya herself or to black community at large.

This novel has a valuable point that describes the story based on Maya’s experiences. This novel also has a meaningful intrinsic elements consists of plot, setting, character and theme.

Based on the intrinsic elements analysis, *the point of view* of this novel describes that Maya Angelou speaks in the first person as she recounts her childhood. She writes both from a child’s point of view and from her perspective as an adult. *The setting* of time is 1930s–1950s, and the setting of place consists of Stamps, Arkansas; St. Louis, Missouri; Oakland, California; San Francisco, California. *The major conflict* in this novel consists of the time when Maya Angelou coming of age as a southern black girl, confronting racism, sexism, violence and loneliness. *From rising action side*, this novel describes about the condition of Maya when her parents’ divorce, so that Maya and Bailey are sent to Stamps and they move in with their mother in St. Louis, and so move to San Francisco to live with Vivian. Finally, Maya spends the summer with her father. *In climax*, this novel stated the condition of Maya when she runs away from her father,
displaying her first true act of self-reliance and independence after a lifelong struggle with feelings of inferiority and displacement; here, she displaces herself intentionally, leading to important lessons she learns about humanity while in the junkyard community. Some of falling action elements are talking about Maya’s condition when Maya lives for a month in the junkyard with a group of homeless teenagers, she becomes San Francisco’s first black streetcar conductor; she also becomes pregnant that made her in loneliness. The writer concluded from character element of the novel that Maya is a Precocious young girl suffering not just from the typical traumas associated with being black and female in America, but also from the trauma of this placement, and she endures many personal traumas in her lifetimes as well. But as she grows up, all problems she felt become the power to rise up and motivate her to be the powerful woman.

**Suggestion**

This study suggest that for understanding a novel is needed to know about the condition of Black American society at the twentieth century portrayed in story of novel *I know why the caged bird sings*. This is the humble study about intrinsic elements analysis from the writer. It might be useful for the writer specially and also the next researcher at the same analysis. The writer suggest for the next researcher in order to analyze the novel deeper and more perfect. It might be useful also for the institution of UIIN as the treasure of knowledge.
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