

***SINGIN' AND SWINGIN' AND GETTIN' MERRY LIKE
CHRISTMAS: MAYA ANGELOU'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE
PRACTICES OF RACISM AND SEXISM***

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra*
in English Letters



By

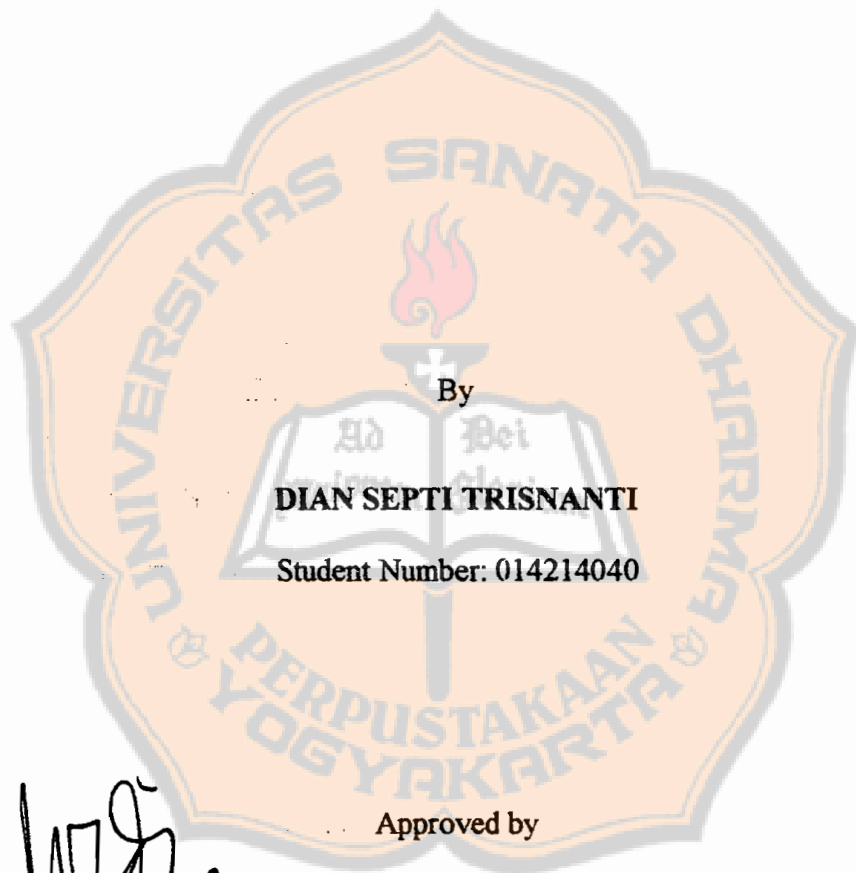
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2006**

A Sarjana Sastra Undergraduate Thesis

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By

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REACH THE STARS FOR THE OPPRESSED



FOR

My BELOVED PARENTS and SISTERS,

My COMRADES IN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY,

*MY COMRADES IN THE LEAGUE of NATIONAL STUDENT
FOR DEMOCRACY,*

*MY COMRADES IN THE FRONT OF NATIONAL LABOR
UNION,*

MY COMRADES IN THE NATIONAL PEASANTS UNION,

AND

MY COMRADES IN THE POOR PEOPLE UNION,

- I LOVE YOU ALL -

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, the writer would like to say thank you to God in heaven for the grace so that she has finished her thesis. The thesis entitled ***“Singin’ and Swingin’ and Gettin’ Merry Like Christmas: Maya Angelou’s Struggle Against the Practices of Racism and Sexism.”*** In this part, the writer also would like to say thank you to some persons who have helped the writing of this thesis:

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The writer expects some critics and suggestion from the readers that will contribute the greatest benefit to those who are interested in reading research. Finally, the writer hopes that the thesis will be useful for the readers.

Dian Septi Trisnanti



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ABSTRACT

TH. DIAN SEPTI TRISNANTI (2006). *SINGIN' AND SWINGIN' AND GETTIN' MERRY LIKE CHRISTMAS: MAYA ANGELOU'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE PRACTICES OF RACISM AND SEXISM*. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University.

American Black people, especially American Black women are usually oppressed by racism. In this case, American Black women are not only oppressed by racism but also sexism. However, the main character in the autobiographical novel, Maya Angelou, is a strong woman. She has to struggle against the practices of racism and sexism in her life.

This fact motivates the writer focus on three topics. Firstly, the writer focuses on how Maya Angelou's character is described in the autobiographical novel. Secondly, the writer focuses on Maya Angelou's experiences of the practices of racism and sexism. And lastly, the writer focuses on how Maya Angelou struggles against the practices of racism and sexism she experiences.

In analyzing the autobiographical novel, the writer uses the Black feminist approach. This theory is applied to help the writer to find the practices of racism and sexism toward the main character. By using this approach, the writer understands the American Black women oppression in the United States during that time.

Finally, the writer concludes that the main character is described as a strong woman. She does not only struggle against the practices of racism but also sexism. During 1950's, American Black people cannot enjoy the same public accommodations as the white. At the same time, as an American Black woman, she also has to face sexist oppression in family, job and society. Her position is subordinate. Therefore, she should liberate herself from the oppression. She finally gets her independence and becomes a successful dancer and singer.

ABSTRAK

TH. DIAN SEPTI TRISNANTI (2006). *SINGIN' AND SWINGIN' AND GETTIN' MERRY LIKE CHRISTMAS: MAYA ANGELOU'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE PRACTICES OF RACISM AND SEXISM*. Yogyakarta: Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Orang kulit hitam di Amerika, khususnya perempuan kulit hitamnya ditindas oleh rasisme. Terutama perempuan kulit hitam di Amerika yang tidak hanya ditindas oleh rasisme tapi juga oleh seksisme. Bagaimanapun toh utama dalam novel ini, Maya Angelou, adalah seorang perempuan yang tangguh. Ia harus berjuang melawan praktek rasisme dan seksisme yang dialaminya.

Fakta ini memotivasi penulis untuk memfokuskan diri pada topik ini. Pertama-tama, penulis fokus pada bagaimana karakter Maya Angelou digambarkan dalam novel autobiografi ini. Ke dua, penulis fokus pada praktek-praktek rasisme dan seksisme yang dialami Maya Angelou. Dan yang terakhir ialah tentang bagaimana Maya Angelou melakukan perlawanan terhadap praktek-praktek rasisme dan seksisme yang dialaminya.

Dalam menganalisa novel autobiografi ini, penulis menggunakan pendekatan feminisme kulit hitam. Teori ini digunakan untuk membantu penulis dalam menemukan praktek-praktek rasisme dan seksisme terhadap tokoh utamanya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan ini, penulis bisa memahami penindasan terhadap perempuan kulit hitam di Amerika Serikat pada saat itu.

Akhirnya, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa tokoh utama adalah perempuan yang tangguh. Dia tidak hanya berjuang melawan praktek rasisme tapi juga seksisme. Pada masa 1950an, orang kulit hitam di Amerika tidak bisa menikmati fasilitas publik sebagaimana orang kulit putih. Pada saat yang sama, sebagai perempuan kulit hitam di Amerika, ia juga harus menghadapi penindasan seksual dalam keluarga, pekerjaan dan masyarakat. Posisinya subordinat. Oleh karena itu, ia harus membebaskan dirinya dari penindasan tersebut. Ia akhirnya memperoleh kebebasannya dan menjadi seorang penyanyi dan penari yang sukses.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

To study literature, the first thing to know is the definition of literature itself. It is important because it will help the readers to discuss much more about literature. Based on *Literary Criticism, An Introduction to theory and Practice*, literature is text whose certain qualities contain some elements, such as plot, character, tone, symbol, conflict, that often represents the author's life and has major function to teach good values and clearly, to entertain the readers (Bressler, 1999:10).

Many works of literature teach good values to the readers, such as novels, biographies and autobiographies. which have their own characteristics. According to Abrams, a Novel is a sort tale in prose (Abrams, 1970: 112). Otherwise, a biography is a work of literature that tells the person's life, which concerns on the life of central figure and the setting of time (Thrall and Hibbart, 1986: 56). The last is an Autobiography that can be identified as the story of person's life, which is written by the person itself that can be identified as a narration of the author's life, in which some events that are necessary to be introspected are stressed (Thrall and Hibbart, 1986: 43). In summary, an autobiography is a record of important events that gives good values to the readers. Another explanation is added by Lennox and Birch in their essay "Maya Angelou (b. 1928) Autobiography: The Creation

of A Positive Black Female Self', that the writing can be called as an autobiographical writing if the author employs narrative techniques to disguise authorial control and the author becomes the subject (Lenox and Birch, 1994:121). Furthermore, Lennox and Birch also explain that the autobiographical writing is not a whole truth because it is a subjective writing of the past life, in which the author might be selective in telling her past life.

In this case, the writer chooses an autobiography entitled *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* that is published in 1976, to be analysed. This autobiography is the third volume of five autobiographies she has written, they are *I know Why The Caged Bird Sing* (1970), *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976), *The Heart of A Woman* (1981), *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes* (1986). Additionally, the writer chooses this autobiographical writing because the writer finds it interesting, since the reader can view the value of Angelou's life in experiencing the practices of racism and sexism and in what way she struggles to get out of the oppression.

Singin' And Swingin' And Gettin Merry Like Christmas tells about the life of Maya Angelou who survives as a black woman. In her third autobiographical writing, Maya Angelou marries a Greek named Tosh Angelos but she feels unhappy. She is trapped in domestic roles, in which her life is confined in domestic job. Besides, she cannot make decision by herself so that she loses her independence. Feeling unhappy, she decides to get divorce and starts struggling to earn money for her only son, Clyde. Here

then, she finds racial and sexual discrimination in her career. As written in the essay "Maya Angelou (9B.1928) Autobiography: The Creation of a positive black female self": "In this she also charts her developing career in show business and her maturing awareness of both black sexism and white racism" (Lenox and Birch, 1994: 126). The discriminations that she experiences as an American Black female awaken her awareness to struggle against the discriminations and she also struggles for her only son. In short, she has to be the financial provider and a single mother for her son, while she also experiences the discrimination because of her race and sex.

When reading the autobiographical writing, the writer also finds that Angelou as a Black woman is oppressed by racism and sexism that works together as Bell Hooks stated in *AIN'T I A WOAMAN, black women and feminism*: "Institutionalized sexism -that is, patriarchy- formed the base of the American social structure along with racial imperialism" (Hooks, 1981: 15). Bell Hooks explains that sexism constructs the patriarchal society, in which female are discriminated and dominated by male. Furthermore, she explains that sexism works along with racism in oppressing the Black female. The matter of fact, the racial discrimination that is accepted by the American Black provides a larger risk for American Black women to be oppressed.

Moreover, there are three points that will be explored in this research. The first point is how Maya Angelou's character is described in the autobiography. The second point is the practices of racism and sexism that are experienced by Maya Angelou as the central character. The last is in what

way Angelou struggles against the practices of racism and sexism, in which Angelou's struggle can be viewed as the reaction against the oppression. In fact, it is interesting to discuss since the both racism and sexism are still practiced, such as the Rape of Chinese women during the riots of 1998 in Indonesia that is explored by Al Qurby in his article "Eliminate the Racialism of Chinese" <<http://www.suaramerdeka.com/harian/0405/11/opi04.htm>> (20 February 2005).

The thesis may give a perspective to the readers that the racism and sexism are related one each other in oppressing the women so that the practices of racism and sexism have to be eliminated because no race or sex is more dominant than the other. Thus, it will be important to study the practices of racism and sexism toward women, since the both ideologies are unfair and discriminate a group of society based on their race and sex. Indeed, this thesis will explore the practices of racism and sexism that oppress the central character as a Black woman and her struggle against them.

B. Problem Formulation

The background of the study brings questions that will become the problems of the study, which are formulated as follows:

1. How is Maya Angelou's character described in the autobiography?
2. What are the practices of racism and sexism that the main character, Maya Angelou, experiences as seen through the autobiography?

3. How does the main character struggle against the oppressions as seen through her acts and thoughts?

C. Objectives of the Study

The research aims to explain to the readers about Maya Angelou's experiences of the practices of racism and sexism that are presented in the autobiography. It also aims to see how she struggles against the practices of racism and sexism as the reaction toward the oppression she experiences.

The writer also hopes that this research will give clear explanation to the reader in understanding the autobiography as the reflection of Angelou's struggle against practices of racism and sexism.

D. The Definition of Terms

According to Miles in *A Dictionary of Cultural & Critical Theory*, Racism is a process of racialization in which social relation between people are differentiated based on their race and culture (1996: 449)

Sexism, based on the book entitled *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*, is a social relationship in which males dominate females (1990: 202). In *Global Gender Issues*, Betty states that Sexism is a system that dichotomises the roles of males and females in social and economic based on physical differences (Peterson & Runyan, 1993:30)

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Review of Related Studies

This part contains the criticisms of the author and her works. Some deal with the qualities of the novel's style in reflecting the author's idea about the struggle against the practices of racism and sexism.

Through her autobiographical writing, *Singin and Swingin and Gettin Merry Like Christmas*, Maya Angelou presents a resistance to Black women's oppression in racist and sexist society, in which she shares her experiences with her own character. The article "Maya Angelou (b.1928) Autobiography: The Creation of A Positive Black Female Self", in the book entitled *Black American Women's Writing, A Quilt of Many Colours*, said that Angelou's autobiography must be seen as the voices of the Black who survived of oppression (Lennox & Birch, 1994: 122). Furthermore, it is also said that her travel in Europe as singer and dancer increase her political awareness. It also gives her experience to combine her career and role as a mother, in which she has to struggle as a mother and financial provider (Lennox & Birch, 1994: 126).

According to *Liberating Literature: Feminist Fiction in America*, Maya Angelou's autobiography shows how complicated to be a Black African-American (Laurett, 1994: 121). While in the essay "Gender, race, class and

fiction", Lizbeth has said that Angelou's autobiography is a Black women's writing that teach you how to resist the oppression (Lizbeth, 1994: 152).

It seems that through the literary work, Maya Angelou tries to explore her experiences as a Black female in Whites' dominant society. Maya Angelou as the central character feels not only racial oppression but also sexual oppression. The two kinds of oppressions make her struggle hard not only to be the economic provider and protector of her son but also for her independence.

Another criticism about Porgy and Bess as the symbol of the Black's triumph and it is also the success of Angelou's in reaching her independence and her struggle in facing sexist and racist oppression in her life. As Cudjoe states in *Black Women Writers that Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* does not only tell the success of black company but also personal success of a Black woman in reaching her independence. <http://cstcc.library.chattanooga.org/library/temple/mable.html> (20 February 2005).

Another essay in <http://voices.cla.umn.edu/newsite/authors/ANGELOUmaya.html> (20 February 2005) states that Angelou's work of literatures shows a picture of a Black woman who reaches awareness to survive of racial prejudice and masculine prejudice. It argues that Angelou writes her literary works to speak up for the Black's life that are oppressed by racism, especially the Black women who are not only oppressed by racism but also sexism.

In this thesis, based on the criticism and articles collected, the writer will concern on the central character, Maya Angelou, who experiences the oppression as a Black female, in what way these experiences develop her awareness to struggle for her life. In short, the writer tries to provide more study on Angelou's character, not on Porgy and Bess as the symbol of Black triumphs, as stated in the previous criticism. In depth, it concerns with Angelou's struggles in facing the practices of racism and sexism that are found in the autobiography that will be analysed.

Conclusively, the writer will analyze the third autobiography based on the previous study, in order to build the comprehensive analysis. This analysis then, will discover the author's idea about the oppression of racism and sexism, and in what way the main character struggles against them.

B. Review of Related Theories

B.1 Theories on character and characterization

Abrams says in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, that characters are the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, in which their moral qualities are expressed in their dialogue and action (Abrams, 1970:20). The book entitled *An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama* states that character is an imagined person in the story (Kennedy and Gioia, 1970: 60)

According to Stanton, most stories contain a *central character*, which is relevant to every event in the story; usually the events cause some changes either in him or in our attitude toward him (Stanton, 1965:17). In addition,

there are two kinds of characters; they are flat characters and round characters. Flat characters are constant; there is no change throughout the story. In contrast, round characters may change throughout the story (Kennedy and Gioia, 1970: 61).

Characterization, based on *The Writing Book, A Work Book for Fiction Writers*, is everything that the writers do to build up the characters. Moreover, characterization is the process of transforming the real-life people into fiction characters (Greenville, 1990: 36)

There are three important methods of characterization as stated in *A Handbook to Literature*. They are: (1) the explicit presentation through direct exposition that is illustrated by action; (2) the presentation of character by action with little comment from the author so that the readers can recognize the character through the actions; (3) the presentation within the character without the comment from the author, it also present the emotions and action in the character itself, hoping that the readers will understand the attributes of the character (Thrall and Hibbart, 1986: 81)

In general, these theories of character and characterizations are used to help the writer in analyzing the major character, in this case Maya Angelou. The deep analysis on Angelou's character is needed to learn how her character is developed.

B.2 Theory on Race

Benedict argues in her book *Race and Racism* (1942), quoted in the book entitled *Racism* by Robert Miles, race is a differentiation of people

based on their physical characteristics that are hereditary classified into three races, the Caucasian, Mongoloid, and Negroid and can be studied scientifically (Miles, 1989:44). In addition, Miles states that race is usually used to differentiate the group of people based on skin color. According to Dunn in his article "Race and Biology", race is biologically the result of the population's process in adapting its environment. Moreover, he states that race is a group of intermarrying individuals that make them biologically different with the others (Miles, 1956: 253). Furthermore, in *Racial Theories* (1987), quoted in *A Dictionary of Cultural & Critical Theory*, Banton argues that these biological differences are caused by genetic variability, mutation or natural selection that cannot cause the cultural differentiation, in which, many factors such as economic, ideology and history cause the cultural differentiation (Payne, 1996: 449). The differences of races classify the society in groups; in short the classification is made based on their physical characteristics. The fact is some races are inferior, while the others are superior that discriminate the inferior ones. Additionally, Dunn also explains that *Homo sapiens* is the ancestor of all races. The descendents of this species are different from one to another because of the biological heredity that is influenced by its environment (Dunn, 1956: 246)

In other words, Miles argues that the word race commonly appears in biology science or genetic and social science that is used specifically to differentiate the people based the specific genes (Miles, 1989: 70). He also states that race is the representation of human beings (Miles, 1989: 71). In

general, Miles wants to argue that the word 'race' is firstly used in sciences such as biology and genetic, in which it becomes the basic of people differentiation.

Although the whole races are from one species the biological characteristic is different from one each other. These differences are caused by some factors that influence them, such as the condition where they live and genes. These characteristics are biological heredity, in which the people have the biological characteristics from their parents.

B.3 Theory on Racism

a. Definition of Racism

Racism is "attitudes or actions or institutionalized system, which systematically subordinated a person or group because of their colors." <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/racesex/> (20 February 2005). Miles states that Racism is a process of racialization, in which the social interactions among people are constructed based on biological characteristic or cultural characteristic (Payne, 1996: 449). Moreover, Comas says that racism provides inequality that is absolute and unconditional (Comas, 1956:53).

The other theory on Racism is stated by Bell Hooks in her book entitled *AIN'T I A WOMAN, black women and feminism*, she argues that the term racism is commonly used to describe the racial discrimination or prejudice toward black people by white people (Hooks, 1981: 119). Thus, racism is a political ideology that

constructs the race hatred in the society. The other arguments on Racism is explored by Benedict that Racism is the product of the nineteenth century thought that human beings are ranked in hierarchy, in which, some group of ethnics are superior while the other are inferior (Miles, 1989: 45). Racism itself includes the act, thought social habits that are discriminative to the ethnic group that is supposed to be inferior. Furthermore, Miles concludes that Racism is a set of ideology that divides ethnic group hierarchically to legitimate the inequality among those groups of society, in this case, in order to maintain the power of the white (Miles, 1989: 45). In addition, again Miles states in his book *Racism*, that the concept of racism lies in all activities and practices that purposed to keep the inequality between the group of society and also to protect the advantage of the superior group (Miles, 1989: 50). All of these arguments show that racism is an error ideology of the nineteenth century society that maintains the subordinate position of inferior people to be exploited, such as the Jews that are discriminated by NAZI, which believes that the Aryan is the superior ethnic and Jews are intelligently inferior (Miles, 1961: 61)

Rose argues in his essay "The Roots of Prejudice", that Racism is a set of popular beliefs that includes some elements as follows:

1. The differences of body and mind between groups, that are biological hereditary and unchangeable.

2. Habits, attitudes, beliefs, behavior and other things we have before we born.
3. All differences between minority and majority groups are supposed to be the signs of inferiority.
4. The efforts to prevent intermarriage between groups of society.

He also adds that the belief of racism causes the racial prejudice upon the color people (Rose, 1956: 223). Otherwise, racism produces the racial prejudice in social, economy and political life.

b. Racial discrimination and prejudice

Rose argues that racial prejudice practically results in discrimination toward particular group of people (Rose, 1956: 215). Furthermore, he states that racial prejudice produces economy exploitation and political domination. For example, the expansion of European countries to Asian or African countries, in which the European countries dominate the political power and practice racial prejudices in the Asian or African countries (Rose, 1956: 216). In this case, these racial prejudices discriminate Black people in economy, political and social life as Maya Angelou experiences in this autobiographical writing.

In addition, Comas said that color prejudice create an inferiority mental on Black people (Comas, 1956: 28). The discriminative attitudes on Black people shape the inferiority that is hereditary given from generation to generation. He adds that the Black's position in

political, economy, and social is purely caused by the White colonization and exploitation (Comas, 1956: 29). Additionally, the stock of racial prejudices also can be seen through the stereotype attributed upon the Black such as their brains are smaller, not smart on arithmetic, have lower intelligence, cannot govern their self, they are like children, emotional, unoriginal, uncreative, and unintellectual, in which these stereotypes create inferiority mental upon the Black and systematically decrease their roles in politic, economy and social aspect (Montagu, 1953:39). For instance, the forbidden interracial marriage that happened during slavery, in which the Whites will be punished if they get married with Black females as stated by Giddings in her book entitled *When and Where I Enter* (Giddings, 1981: 38). Obviously these experiences of racial prejudice will give some impact into the Black mentality by which they are psychologically oppressed.

B.4 Theory on sex and gender

Millet's *Sexual Politics* as stated in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, argues that sex is biologically differentiated and gender is psychological concept that is created by the culture, which creates the sexual identity (Millets, 1999: 199). In fact, there are some myths about women that women are believed as inferior being, less intelligence, more emotional and unstable. Hence, they are employed only in menial and routine jobs that are less skill needed (Montagu, 1953:25).

In other words, the myths upon women in the society are the results of gender differentiated that are created culturally not naturally created.

Further explanation based on *Global Gender Issues* published in 1993, argues that sex is biological differences between male and females, while gender distinguish masculinity and femininity. The masculinity can be characterized as strong, powerful, active, superior, whereas femininity can be characterized as weak, inferior, passive. Furthermore, male and female in the society are taught how to be masculine or feminine and result the inequality between men and women. The inequality between men and women can be seen through the job division between men and women, the men have more opportunities to work outside, and women have to do domestic job such as take care the children, serve their husband and etc that are domestic jobs (Peterson & Runyan, 1993:6). Additionally, the distinction between sex and gender, according to Butler, sex is biological characteristic that every one has and gender is culturally constructed. It can be said that gender is the multiple interpretation on sex (Butler, 1998: 346). She also adds that gender is culturally supposed to be destiny (Butler, 1998: 347).

C.1 Review on History of African-American Women

The Black women's positions in the society are subordinated not only by the patriarchal system but also the racist system that are embodied in the United States. For years, the Black women were forced to work not only in the domestic but also outside the house even if they did not want to

(Giddings, 1981: 141). This tradition, Davis explained, happened since the slavery, in which the Black women were worked outside their house than the White women (Davis, 1983:5). Continuously, by 1950 the percentage of domestic worker declined to 42%. Nevertheless, the discrimination still occurs upon the Black but these better conditions can be seen as the progresses of Black people especially the Black women.

Moreover, Giddings explained that the pressure to Black women to work made them had two roles in society, in which she has to do her role as a worker and at the same time she has to rear her children (Giddings, 1984:148). Thus, the Black women were burdened by the roles, in which they had to responsible for the family financial and also the growth of her children. In addition, this Black women's condition were getting worse because of their low economic condition. Besides, there were some bad stereotypes that were labeled to the black women: the Black women were labeled as evil, treacherous, bitchy, stubborn, and hateful. In addition, these bad stereotypes were supported by Christian mythology, which places the Black women as the source of sin (Hooks, 1981:85). This mythology placed the Black women as object to be exploited, in which they will have great risk of sexual harassment where ever they go.

The sexism, which placed the black women in inferior position, is a social system that protected the black male sexuality and it legalized the black females exploitation (Hooks, 1981:24).

In addition, she explained that the Whites built a social hierarchy according to the race and sex that placed the White men in the first

position, White women second or equal with the Black male and finally the Black women in the last rank by which this Black women position gave them a great risk to be exploited (Hooks, 1981:53).

In other words, Montagu said that the bad attribute upon Black women for many generations were generally also attributed to second-class women in a patriarchal society (Montagu, 1953: 21). Moreover, Amy Jacques Garvey concluded that Black women were forced to take care their children, to teach them to love their race, demanding all the men to respect them, counter the race doctrine upon their children and furthermore they had to work to earn money for their family (Giddings, 1981:194).

C.2 Review on History of Black People in United States During 1950's

The life of Black people in USA began when they were kidnapped from their origin, Africa, by the colonizer. Furthermore they were used as slaves to work for the colonizer throughout Europe and America. In short, they were sold as slaves, in which they were not subject but object that they had no voice to speak up their rights (William II, 1998:35). Furthermore, the slaves were not allowed to study bible because they were afraid if the slaves would find the truth inside the Bible (William II, 1998:55).

Nevertheless, the oppression of black people still existed in different type during 1950's. It was segregation, which was known as

Plessy vs Ferguson that campaigned the "separate but equal", which arranged the segregation in public accommodations (William II, 1998:84). In fact, this policy did not give any freedom for the Black, by which they were discriminated in public accommodations, including in seeking jobs. Moreover, this policy was practiced till 1950's, in which during this time the Black people began their rebel against the policy. It can be shown through the event in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955, when a Black woman named Rosa Parks was arrested because she refused to give her seat to the White who did not get any place to sit, then it motivated the Black to do a boycott of the city bus line for 381 days until the segregation on bus system was ended (Hum, 1994:17). This event indicated that the discrimination to the Black, motivated the Black to start their struggle against the segregation. The resistance of Black people against segregation resulted the *Brown v. Board of Education* that was produced by Supreme Court in 1954, which decided to stop segregation in public school.

In addition, based on the book entitled *The Negro in the United States*, what the Supreme Court decided to order abolished segregation in public schools was resisted by five of southern states and White Citizens Councils. These resistances proved that the Blacks were not accepted yet by White society. Furthermore, during 1956 there were also found that sixteen states and thirty-six cities had built some agencies to eliminate discrimination so that the Negroes could have the same opportunities for

employment (Logan, 1957: 95). Unfortunately, Black women were still forced to receive the lower pay jobs such as kitchen work (Hum, 1994:43). It proved that Black women were oppressed not only because they were Blacks but eventually because they were women.

In conclusion, the discriminations to the Black people still happen in different types such as the racial segregation on the bus system, education, employment that built their political conscious that can be seen through their acts, for example, the boycott in Alabama, Montgomery as the reaction against segregation in bus system can be seen as the progressive act (Hum, 1994:17). The policy to abolish the segregation in public accommodations gave the opportunities to Black people although this policy did not yet give complete equality to them.

C. Theoretical Framework

In analysing the problems of the study, which are formulated in Chapter I, the writer focuses on Maya Angelou's character and her experiences of the practices of racism and sexism and also her struggle against the oppression. The writer, in answering the problem formulation uses some theories that will provide clear analysis. In addition, the writer also uses the other criticisms on the novel, that were obtained through internet and books searching that contributes her analysis in order to have different perspectives about autobiography.

Moreover, one of the theories used by the writer are the theory on character and characterization that help the writer to analyse how the central character is developed and the theory of race and racism, which will help the writer to learn in depth how racism discriminate the Black based on their race. Additionally, the theory of sex and gender will provide the explanation how the females' position is constructed based on their sex. Moreover, the review on the history of American Black women is used to help the writer to clearly understand the reaction against racism and sexism as the manifestation of all Black women's experiences in the past that built her awareness as a part of Black women. Furthermore, the review on the history of black people in USA will give further explanation about the experiences of Black people on racism that became the reason of Maya Angelou's reaction upon the practices of racism she faced

Conclusively, by applying the related studies and the theories as stated above, the writer assumes that it can help her to solve the questions that are formulated in problem formulation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

In this thesis, the writer wants to analyze the autobiographical writing that is written by Maya Angelou. By reading the story, the reader can learn about the practices of racism and sexism and in what way Maya Angelou as a Black woman struggles against the oppression she experiences.

Liberating Literature: A Feminist Fiction in America states that Maya Angelou gives the reader the history of African-American since political and cultural movements since the end of Harlem renaissance through *Porgy and Bess* to the civil right movement and Black Nationalism (Laurett, 1994:118). These life history of African American can be seen through her five volumes of her auto biographies, they are *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sing* (1969), *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976), *The Heart of a Woman* (1981), and *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986). In this case, the autobiography that will be analyzed is *Singin' and Swingin' and Getting' Merry Like Christmas* that is published in 1976 by Bantam book. The novel consists of 242 pages that are divided into 30 chapters.

The autobiography is about the life and love of Maya Angeiou in her young age. This autobiography is the third volume of her autobiographies, which tells a story about her struggle as a mother and a Black woman in the

White-dominated society. The central character in the novel that is Maya Angelou herself, represents the Black woman's life at that time. In case, Maya Angelou tries to speak up the Black woman's right.

Basically, *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* is about Maya Angelou who is married to a Greek. Firstly, she thinks that the man is kind enough because he is not an American but finally she realizes that her husband oppresses her. Then she fights to be an independent woman and reach her freedom as a Black woman.

B. Approach of the Study

in analyzing the autobiography, the writer chooses Black Feminist criticism, that is Afro-American Feminist Criticism, in which this criticism can lead to a sharp analysis. Afro-American feminist criticism according to *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Feminist Literary Criticism*, began in 1974 when *Black World* containing the essays of June Jordan and Mary Helen Washington is published, followed by the publication of Alice Walker's *In Search of our Mothers' Garden* (Hum, 1994: 172).

During 1960's and 1970's, it was the growth of Black women writers, which brought about Afro-American Feminist Criticism. In fact, until the 1970's Black women writers were supposed to be absent in Black literary history. These facts force some Black women writers to find the role of Black women writer in Black literary history. The first stage of Afro – American feminist criticism was centered on Black women writers by doing research.

They are Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, Barbara Smith, and Barbara Christian, with Valerie Smith, Mary Helen Washington, Gloria T. Hull and Toni Cade Bambara who did the research on Black Literature and literary history that concerned on Black women writers. In this research, they also found the differences and multiplicities of Black women's aesthetics (Hum, 1994: 173). The second stage is to search the expression of Black female identity by preparing bibliographies, for example: the collection of J.R. Roberts on Black writings, in which she found that the bibliographies she collected, described the denial of Black lesbian experience. In this case, Roberts wanted to relate the Black writing nowadays with its cultural heritage (Hum, 1994: 174).

Furthermore, Barbara Smith states that feminist criticism should be concerned on the history of Black women, and the second, criticism has to make an ideologically reading of differences. Moreover, Black feminist criticisms are concerned on cultural history, the language and new critical techniques (Hum, 1994: 179). Barbara also states in her essay "Toward A Black Feminist Criticism (1977)" in the book untitled *Feminism: A Reader*, that Black feminist criticism should find how Black women writers explore the sexual and racial politics and certainly the Black and female identity, it also has to see the Black women writings as a direct result of social, political, economic experiences to share (Hum, 1992:374). Other Black woman writer, Audre Lorde states that Racism is an internalized view, in which one race's culture more superior to the other (Hum, 1994: 179). In addition, she states

that Black feminist criticism provides non-patriarchal and non-racist thinking (Hum, 1994:180).

Based on the explanation above, the writer realizes that she has to do few steps in applying the theory in her research. First, she has to find the racial and sexual oppression that are experienced by the central character, in which the writer can view the experiences of central character as the motivation to the other Black women to resist the oppression they face. Second, she has to gather the information on black women history in USA to learn the life of Black women, how the racism and sexism influences their whole life, including Maya Angelou as the part of Black women. Finally, the writer hopes that by using this approach she can give sharp analysis in answering the questions that are formulated in problem formulation.

C. Method of the Study

The method of study that is used by the writer in this research was the library research, that some data from books, articles, essays, glossaries and website should be gathered and chosen as the information in writing the thesis. The primary data was the novel itself, that is *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* by Maya Angelou. Furthermore, the finding of secondary sources were collected and selected from many sources and references from books of literary criticism, encyclopedia of literature, and websites that could give worthwhile information about the novel.

The writer used *Black American Women's Writing*, edited by Lennox & Birch that was very helpful in giving the important opinion of the author of the novel itself. The writer also used *The race Questions in Modern Science*, in getting information about Racism. These books provide worthwhile contribution in this research.

There were six steps the writer used in this thesis. First, the writer did the close reading, so that she gets the central issues. The second was collecting the secondary sources on related studies, literary and, reviews, critics. The third step was the writer explored the character of Maya Angelou, how her character is developed. The fourth step was the writer explored the practices of racism and sexism that are experienced by Maya Angelou as the central character. Fifth, the writer was paying attention on the major character in struggling against the oppression Lastly, the writer made conclusion of the whole analysis in this research.



CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer wants to answer the questions that are formulated in the chapter I. Firstly, the writer wants to describe the character of Maya Angelou in the autobiographical writing, and then she will reveal the practices of racism and sexism experienced by the main character in society, job and family. Furthermore, she tries to analyze how the main character fights against the oppression she experiences as seen through her acts and thought. By answering the questions, the writer finds how the main character struggles against the practices of racism and sexism.

A. The character of Maya Angelou described in the autobiographical novel

Maya Angelou is a Black woman whose real name Marguerite Johnson, who was born and raised in Stamp, Arkansas. She is a very tall girl and she does not feel confident with it.

I was Marguerite Johnson, from Arkansas, from the General Merchandise Store and the C.M.E church. I was the too tall, unpretty colored girl who had been born to unhappy parents and raised in the dirt roads of Arkansas...(p. 179).

Maya does not feel confident with her appearance but she is a brave woman in deciding her future such as when she decides to get divorce and prefers to be a single mother. It is a difficult choice but she dares to decide it. "He was tired of marriage; all right then I would leave him" (p. 38). Besides, Maya is a

smart Black woman, who has critical thinking upon the racist society. It can be seen through her opinion about the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* that had banned racial segregation in education. She criticizes that many White people do not agree with the rules.

I knew many whites were displeased by the ruling, but I never heard them discuss it (p. 109).

It shows her critical thinking upon the Whites, which are racist and discriminative to the Black, in which many whites do not support the rule that will give equal right to black people in education.

Moreover, Maya Angelou is a strong woman, who never gives up in facing her life. It can be seen through her struggle to rear her son alone that she has ever worked in two places, so that she can earn much money for her son.

My salary from the little real estate office and the dress shop downtown barely paid rent and my son's baby sitter (p. 3)

She never gives up to work hard for her son till then she becomes a success dancer and singer in Porgy and Bess Company. However, all of these are for her son, so that her son can get a better life although her job forces her to live apart with her son.

I sent my dollars home to pay for Clyde's keep and to assuage my guilt at being away from him (p. 20)

In short, Clyde becomes her motivation to keep alive, in which she struggles for her son's life. Besides, Maya Angelou is a religious woman that she looks for her God that is not a White person like the society's description.

I didn't like that God, but He did seem more real than a maker who was just thought and spirit. I wish for someone in between (p. 18).

In fact, she start looking for a religion that provide a God she really wants, till then she interested in joining Judaism because she thinks that Jews are also oppressed by racism.

The Hebrew children in the fiery furnace elicited constant sympathy from the black community because our American experience mirrored their ancient tribulation. With that familiarity, I figured Judaism was going to be snap! (p. 19)

Unfortunately, Maya is refused to join in Judaism because she is not a Jew. The other proves that Maya is a religious person is when she keeps going to church although her husband, Tosh forbids her. "I planned a secret crawl through neighborhood churches" (p. 28). It shows Maya's consistency in her belief with God.

B. The practices of racism and sexism as seen in the autobiographical novel

1. The Practices of racism

There are some issues of racism presented in the autobiographical novel, in which, Maya Angelou as the central character experiences the practices of racism in society, job and family.

1.1 In Society

American Black people as a part of the white dominated society experience some practices of racism such as Maya's experiences when

she finds the kind of racist attitude upon the Black musicians, who are discriminated in jazz music.

Members from the large white jazz orchestras visited Black after-hours joints. They would ask to sit in on jam sessions. Black musicians often refused, saying, "The white boys come, smoke up all pot, steal the chord changes, then go back to their good paying jobs, and keep us Black musicians out of union." (p. 17)

Maya's words above explain that Black musicians are not admitted as jazz musicians, in which they are kept out of the jazz union because of their skin color. This racist act makes Black musicians refuse the White jazz musicians to sit in on jam session as the kind of their hatred upon the Whites.

Moreover, there is another practice of racism in society that can be seen through the description of God as a White, like what Maya experiences when she is a child.

The God of my childhood was an old, white, Vandyck-bearded Father Time, who roared up thunder, then puffed out His cheeks and blew down hurricanes on His errant children (p. 18)

These descriptions of God show that God is identical with the Whites, who are superior. Furthermore, the superiority of White people is presented in God's characteristics that strengthen the domination of White people in society. Besides, for years before the slavery, Black people were not permitted to worship God, in this case Christianity, because when they started worship God and studied Bible they would

already know that all human beings were created equally (William II, 1998:55). That is what Maya Angelou explores as follows

...Her owner wouldn't allow his Negroes to worship God (it might give them ideas) and they did so on pain of being lashed (p. 29)

The fact shows that the practices of racism in society also enter the private life, such as religion, in which Black people cannot chose their own religion freely. In addition, Black people also cannot engage in marriage with the Whites that can be seen through the racist attitude Maya finds when she decides to marry a White man. This decision is difficult because Tosh is a White person, who is supposed to be the enemy of the Black.

Anger and guilt decided before my birth that black was black and white was white and although the two might share sex, they must never exchange love (p. 23).

The history of Black people in USA also records that in the past, during seventeenth century, a White person would be banished by the society if he married a Black person (Giddings, 1984: 38). This fact shows that interracial marriage was forbidden in the past and influences the relation between White and Black people in sharing love. In this case, Maya's opinion upon interracial marriage, that White and Black people may not share loves is influenced by the Black's experiences on racism for decades. In addition, the history of Black people oppression will be a clear reason not to get married with a White person.

I would never forget the slavery tales, or my southern past, where all white, including the poor and ignorant, had the right to speak rudely to and even physically abuse any Negro they met. I knew the ugliness of white prejudice. Obviously there was no common ground on which Tosh and I might meet (p. 23).

Nevertheless, finally, she changes her mind and decides to get married with Tosh although she realizes that there will be some risk she finds. Getting married with a white Greeks, bring a consequence that her new family will be discriminated in society. It is shown when her family takes a walk in the park, in which every one stare at them strangely and nudged one each other.

Awareness gradually grew in my mind that people stared, nudged each other and frowned when we three walked in the parks or went to the movies. The distaste on their faces called me back to a history of discrimination and murders of every type (p. 29)

The attitudes of the society upon her family give a picture of society that is racist upon the color people, including black people. After her marriage is broken, Maya's view about interracial marriage is cynical. It is shown through her statement upon the interracial marriage between a Black male with a White woman that also shows her racist thinking upon the Whites

Be careful of white women with colored men. They might marry and bear children, but when they get what they want out of the men, they leave their children and go back to their own people (p. 110).

Maya's statement that White women will be more faithful to their race rather than their colored husband shows her negative thinking upon the

White women, as the part of white community, who oppressed them for many years. She also states that the Black people try to ignore the White's existence, the white's superiority.

Among the many perversities in American race relation is the fact that Blacks do not relish looking closely at whites. After hundreds of years of being the invisible people ourselves, as soon as many of us have achieved economic security we try to force whites into nonexistence by ignoring them (p. 136).

Maya explains clearly that the experiences of Black oppression for many years give a lesson for them not to have relation with the Whites who oppress them. In fact, their experiences of oppression are clear enough to be a reason to ignore the whites.

Maya Angelou experiences one more racist discrimination in social life when she is invited to her Jorie's wine party, where she is the only Black woman in that party. The discrimination can be shown through the attitudes of the guests in the party, in which, no one talk to her. She realizes that she is a black person, who is not allowed to present in the party.

None of the company spoke to me. That I was one of the three Negroes in the room, the only Negro woman and a stranger as well, was not sufficiently exotic reason to attract attention (p. 68)

As a matter of fact, there is only Don who addresses her and introduces her to the guests and only a woman who pays attention to her statement.

Only the plum-soft women marked the statement and cared.
Each round face softened and smiled on me (p. 68).

The attitudes of the guests who do not care with her presence prove that Black people are marginalized in social life. The other example of racist attitude in social life is shown through the way people talk to her, in which one of guest call her 'brown cow' that shows racial remark. "How now, brown cow?" (P. 69) or when one of the guest laughs at her because she states that Calypso is a folk music. 'They were laughing at me and I was expected to join them' (p. 72). She realizes that according to White people, calypso is not folk music because it is the Black's music. In short, this opinion also shows the White's view upon the Black's inferiority that Black people are not viewed as human beings who have to be respected.

The other practice of racism is the segregation in public accommodations including the segregation of the Whites and Black in school. It also happens to Maya when she is child in Stamps, Arkansas (p. 110). This policy was decided in 1896 by the Supreme Court that was known as *Plessy vs. Ferguson* and given the "separate but equal" doctrine (Williams II, 1998:84). As times goes on, the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* banned the racial segregation in education during 1954 (Williams II, 1998:100). This is what Maya discussed with Jim, a Black middle class who visits her show.

I sat down and found myself in the middle of a discussion on the recent Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* that had banned racial segregation in education. Jim and I and a pretty blond woman on the other side of the table argued that not only was the ruling just, it was very late in coming (p. 109)

The text above shows that the racial segregation brings injustice in Black people's life. It discriminates them in public facilities. In addition, the racial integration in education also gives hopes to Black people to be equal although it comes late.

1.2 In Job

There are some practices of racism in job presented in the autobiographical novel, in which Black women were supposed to work in domestic job for the Whites. In the United States, the Black women were employed as paid domestic workers for the white women to keep her family alive although during the World War I they were placed in better job but after the World War I their position was given in menial job again (Davis, 1981:237-238). In this case, during the late 1950's this tradition happened. Maya has to work in a white family to keep alive, does many domestic jobs such as cut flowers, of other people's clothes etc.

"I had done many things to make a living but I drew the line at cleaning white folks houses. I had tried that and lasted only one day. The waxed tabies, cut flowers, closets of other people's clothes totally disoriented me. I hated the figure carpets, tiled kitchens and refrigerators filled with someone else's dinner leftovers" (p. 5)

Finally, Maya decides to stop the job and starts working in the little real estate office and the dress shop downtown. One day, a White woman offers her a job in a record shop that surprises her with the offering because as far as she knows, the Whites will never treat Black people well. Thus, she has to be careful working in the White's place just like her friend's advice.

"Tell her you'll take the job and then watch her like a hawk. You know white women. They pull off their drawers, lay down first, and then scream rape. If you are not careful, she'll get weak and faint on you, then before you know it you'll be washing windows, and scrubbing the floor." (p. 8)

Ivone is worried that Maya will be oppressed by her master as what happened to the Black women for years before. In fact, Maya has ever been fired before as a teacher of dance school because she promises to teach African primitive dance to her black middle class students.

I had lost a job in a leading dance school in Cleveland because I promised to teach African primitive dance to the children to the children of the black middle class (p. 76)

It is unfair that she is fired just because she wants to introduce the culture of African. In this case, the racist attitude purposes to prevent the Black to learn their brother's culture in Africa. This experience of being fired from the job, once again happens to her when she works as a dancer of Garden of Allah. She is the first Black woman who works in Garden of Allah and maybe she will find people discriminate her, like what the man, who works there, says to her.

Rita, we've never had a colored girl here before, so people might say something. Don't get upset. If a customer gets out of line with any of the girls in a coming-on way, I take care of that, but uh, if they say something about your color, I can't help that. 'Cause you are colored right?" (p.51)

The man's warning to Maya proves that Black people will be in risk condition wherever they are, including in work place, where the discriminations are exist. More over, Maya also experiences the practice of racism from her master who fires her because she makes more money than the others in selling the drinks.

"...I want to tell you. I'm putting you on notice,. Two weeks. You start looking for another place..." (p. 64)

She realizes that the main reason she is fired is not because she makes more money than the others but because she is Black, since Babe who is not a Black was fired because she married a Black man. She already knows that she will experience a worse condition than Babe.

I remembered Babe. She was as white as they, but just because she slept side by side with her black husband, she was banned from the street. And how about me? I was black all over (p. 64).

In short, Maya knows that she will be treated badly because of her black skin while Babe who is a white also experiences racist attitude because of her Black husband. It proves how the racism is practiced in every single event in Black people's life or the Whites, who share their life with Black people. After being fired, she works as a dancer and singer in Purple Onion but again she experiences the practices of racism when the company suggests her to sing as a Cuban, not a

Negro. The company wants her to act not as Negro that means she has to put off her identity as a Negro in her career. That's what Ivonne says when Maya tells her that she has to act as a Cuban and changes her name. "They want you to stop being Negro..." (p 78). The point that Ivonne questioned is why Maya should pretend to be a Cuban and not as who she is, while in reality, she is a Negro. All of those practices of racism in job, commonly, are the result of racism ideology that is built to maintain the White power and keep the subordinated position of Black people, to be inferior.

1.3 In Family

The practices of racism are not only found in society or job but also in family. It is shown through Maya's mother who forbids her to marry a white Greek. This fact also proves that racist attitude can be done by Black people who were discriminated for many years. "Well, remember that white folks have taken advantage of Black people for centuries."(p. 23). Maya's mother reminds her that white people are their enemy who have to be blamed for the Black people's suffering and there is no clear reason to get married with the Whites.

Getting married with a White provides some risk, in which she has to face her son's jealousy upon Tosh's race and her son's hatred upon his own race. The view that black is bad comes to Clyde's mind just like the other black people who deny their own existence.

"Mom-ouch-when am I going to grow up-ouch-and have good hair like Dad's?"

The mixed marriage bludgeoned home. My son thought that the whites straight hair was better than his natural abundant curls (p. 30).

The opinion that White people's appearance is better than Black people's, interferes Clyde's mind. Maya realizes what is going on to her son because she ever felt the same, when she disliked her skin and body.

2. The Practices of Sexism

Beside the issues or racism, the autobiographical novel also explores the issues of the practices of sexism that Maya Angelou experiences in society, job and family that will be explained below.

2.1 In Society

There are some stereotypes upon women in society that place women as second citizen. The stereotypes are inferior, passive, weak, while men are strong, superior, active (Peterson & Runyan, 1993:6). These stereotypes build women to be dependent on men, in which, they will get happiness if they have a man beside them that is legalized in the institution called marriage. Hence, Maya wants to have a husband who will give her happiness just like other women.

If I were married, "my husband" (the words sounded as unreal as "my bank account") would set me up in a fine house, which my good taste would develop into a home (p. 10).

From the quotation above, Maya views marriage as an institution that can save her from poverty and she sees a husband as a bank account

who will fulfill her needs. In fact, in USA, after the World War II, there are less Black women who get married and have to be a Black single mother for their children (Collins, 2000:63). That is what Maya says about the Black women, who are often unmarried and bear their children alone.

We found ourselves too often unmarried, bearing lonely pregnancies and washing for two and a half children each who would gurgle happily behind that picket fence while we drove men to work in our friendly- looking wagon (p. 14).

It is hard for her that she has to rear her son alone, that is why she wishes a man who will be her husband and a father for her son. In short, she wants to build a perfect marriage that will bring her a safety condition. "Marriage would give me a world free from danger, diseases and want" (p. 14).

Furthermore, Maya has to find herself oppressed not only because of her skin but also her sex. She experiences by herself how she is raped in her young age by her mother's boyfriend and has to have a baby in teen age, that means she has to work hard to rear her baby.

...raped at seven and returned to California at thirteen. My son was born when I was sixteen, and determined to raise them. I had worked as a dancer in nightclubs, fry cook in hamburger joints, dinner cook in a Creole restaurant and once had a job in a mechanic's shop, taking the paint off cars with my hands (p. 25).

In this case, the sexism that places women, especially Black women in inferior position gives them more risk to experience sexual harassment

like Maya's experiences in the past. In short, women are not the reason of rape but it is sexism that becomes the cause of rape or sexual harassment. Additionally, Maya has ever been warned by an old man, who finds her in bar alone and not refused his invitation.

Dear Clara,

I tell you like I tell my own daughter. Be careful of strangers. Everybody smile at you don't have to mean you no good. I'll be back in two months from now. You be a good girl, hear? You'll make some boy a good wife.

Abner Green (p. 40)

Here, Maya introduces herself as Clara and accepts the old man's invitation to spend the night in the hotel and finds herself alone in the next morning. It is only a letter from the old man that advises her to be careful to strangers who can do something bad to her. It explains that women always in danger position wherever they are. In depth, for Black women, they will have more risk than white women because there are some bad labels to Black women such as evil, treacherous, bitchy, stubborn and hateful. These racist-sexists label were the mythology of Christian that describe Black woman as the source of sin (Hooks, 1981:85). Maya also says about these bad labels upon Black women during slavery, in which these labels became the main reason of their master to exploit them

I had heard all my life that white males, from boyhood to senility, dreamed of slipping into the slave cabin of young “

hot momma” and “ripping off a piece of black tail”. My arrogance and my hatred of slavery would not allow me to consciously batten on that image (p. 60).

Maya states that she hates the label of “hot momma” upon the Black female slave during the slavery. This label is purpose to underestimate the Black women, in which Black women is seen unworthy and deserved to be exploited.

2.2 In Job

After she decides to get divorced with her husband, she has to be a single mother for her only son. Thus, she needs to work again in order to earn money to take care her son, Clyde. Moreover, in her new job, she has to wear a sexy costume (a beige net bras and G-string) because there is only their body that the women have to be sold.

My body was all I had to offer and few of the serious-faced men in the audience seemed to notice (p. 54).

Maya’s statements provide evidence that women are exploited physically. In this case, women’s body is used to give profit to the businessmen. Besides she also has to sell champagne cocktail, in which for each bottle she can get some tips from the buyer. In addition, she has to accompany the guests and has to experience sexual harassment from the guests who asks a question that purpose to disregard her.

“Did you ever make love to a white man?”

“No”

“Would you like to?” (p. 61)

The questions describe how White people view upon Black women, that Black women are easy to be invited to share sexual activity. Maya realizes on that risk but she promises not to accept their offer to sleep with them. Furthermore, most of these guys only want to see women's body to have fun while they are boring of their wife.

These old guys come in strip joints because they want to look at pretty women. Pretty naked women. Some of them are married, but their wives are old or young and mean (p.57).

It explains that women's body is used to attract the guys to come and enjoy their naked body. They have right to enjoy another women's body although they already have wives.

In addition, the Black women who are forced to work, face a great problem and they have to leave their house to work everyday and at the same time have to rear their children, giving attention to their children (Giddings, 1984:148). In this case, as a single mother, Maya Angelou also has to rear her son in her spare time. It is difficult for Maya when she has to leave her son to her mom because she has to travel to Europe with the company. In fact, as a woman, she has either two responsibilities to work and rear her son. As a mother, Maya worries of her son who has to live without her.

My mind turned over and over like a flipped coin: Paris, then Clyde's mother less birthday party, Rome and my son's evening prayers said to Fluke, Madrid and Clyde struggling alone with his schoolwork (p. 128).

Maya feels guilty when she has to leave her son to go to the Europe tour. Her feeling of guilty is the result of social order that places Black women to work and has to do her duty to rear the children.

2.3 In Family

The women's stereotypes weaken the women's position in family. It can be seen through Maya's experiences in her multiracial family she builds. Maya experiences some oppression from her husband, who limits her independence. Since they get married, Tosh asks her to quit the job in record shop. "On Tosh's orders I quit my job. At last I was a housewife." (p.26). Maya starts being a good wife, who serves her husband and children like the image of women in society.

My life began to resemble a good housekeeping advertisement. I cooked well-balanced meals and molded fabulous jello deserts. My floors were dangerous with daily applications of wax and our furniture slick with polish (p. 26).

Maya does domestic jobs that a woman has to do as a wife and mother. In this case, her activities are only at home, while her activities outside are limited. Furthermore, she sees her husband as the one who provides safety for her son and herself that make her keeps silence upon the limitation of her independence in the marriage.

I came to love Tosh because he wrapped us in a cocoon of safety, and I made no protest at the bonds that were closing around my existence (p. 27).

The view that marriage is an institution that will give safety to women influences Maya's choice to keep silence and let her independence limited by her husband. As a good wife, she also has to surrender upon her husband opinion. In short, she has no right to contradict her husband that shows women subordination.

Tosh told Clyde that there was no God. When I contradict him, he asked me to prove His presence. I countered that we could not discuss an Entity, which didn't exist. He had been a debater at his university and told me that he could have argued either side with the same power; however, he knew for a fact there was no God, so I should surrendered (p. 27).

Maya realizes that she has to maintain her faith that God exists but as a good wife she has to surrender and has the same opinion with Tosh.

I knew I was a child of a God who existed but also the wife of a husband who was angered at my belief (p. 28)

Furthermore, Maya's status as a wife limits both her act and thought. It shows Tosh's superiority as a man whose right to control the woman's thought and act that forces Maya to be obedient. In fact, to keep her marriage, Maya decides to obey whatever her husband says, including to give up her faith upon God and not to go to church.

I would be an obedient, dutiful wife, restricting our arguments to semantic differences, never contradicting the substance of his views (p. 30)

Moreover, her commitment to devote her life for her family never brings happiness. Her wish that marriage will bring happiness is broken, her routine daily as a wife boring her but as a good wife she

has to hide it, pretends to be happy and accepts it as the part of her duties.

The sense that order was departing my life was refuted by the daily routine. My family would awaken. I would shower and head for the kitchen to begin making breakfast. Clyde would then take over the shower while Clyde dressed, collected his crayons and lunch pail for school (p. 35).

Realizing that she is unhappy, Maya prefers to keep her marriage. It shows that she does not want her marriage broken and keeps trying to be a good wife, who does everything to the family. She keeps doing her duties although it is boring her but she is disappointed when Tosh is angry of small things.

One new morning Tosh screamed from the bathroom "where in the hell are the goddamn dry towels?" (p. 35).

Not only that, Tosh also yells at her son. "Shut up, will you. I'd like a little fucking peace and quiet while eat." (p. 35). Tosh's yell to her son makes her very disappointed, because she thinks that Tosh is a good father for her son and now she has to face the fact that Tosh is not a good father, while she does everything to keep her marriage although she is unhappy. She realizes that she gives too much to Tosh and her family. What she has done then mean nothing when Tosh didn't respect her sacrifices to be obedient, dutiful wife, losing her independence.

What I had done? I had places my life within the confines of my marriage. I was everything the magazines said a wife should be. Constant, faithful and clean. I was

economical, I was compliant, never offering headaches as excuses, for not sharing the marital bed (p. 37).

Maya thinks that she makes herself a good wife for Tosh but it is never enough for Tosh. "I had been a good wife, kind and compliant. And that doesn't enough for him?" (p. 38). In other words, all of Maya's experiences prove that women's position is inferior in family that she has no right to protest. Besides, these experiences also prove that marriage is not always a safety place for a woman to get happiness and there will be no happiness in unequal relation.

C. Maya Angelou's struggle against the practices of racism and sexism

1. Maya Angelou's struggle against the practices of racism

An action will lead to reaction. Maya's experiences on the practices of racism teach her how to react upon the discriminations she experiences as a Black.

1.1 In Society

Being discriminated in society, Maya Angelou thinks that she has to survive by herself. She cannot wish the state would give her safety from the practices of racism while the state is the institution that legalizes the racism through its policy. That is the reason of her argument not to ask help from either the state or the Whites.

I hadn't asked them for help (I couldn't risk their refusal) and they loved me. There was no motive on earth on earth, which would bring me, bowed, to beg for aid from an institution, which scorned me and a government, which ignored me (p. 11)

In this case, Maya decides not to give up to keep alive among the racist oppression she has to face in society. It becomes her principle that motivates herself to defend herself from many kinds of racist oppression in her own society. Furthermore, the principle is significant because it gives her an ability to stand of racist oppression and how to make changes in her life to be better than before.

In addition, she has a motivation to resist the practices of racism by showing to the Whites that she can do things that white people can do.

If white people could drink wine like kool-aid, then there was no reason on God's green earth I could not do the same (p. 70).

Although her act is only in a small thing (drink the same type of wine), but it shows her existence, that she already exists and equal with white people so that she has the same right with them. The act is important as a kind of effort to be accepted by the white group in the party. Moreover, she dares to stand up for her race when the white laugh at her opinion that calypso music is a folk song.

Do you think calypso isn't folk music? Folks sing it. Or do you believe because the folks are Negroes their music doesn't count or that because they are Negroes they aren't folks? (p. 73)

Maya argues that Black people have right to be respected, including their songs. She keeps maintain her argument, that there is nothing wrong with calypso. “What’s wrong with calypso?” (p. 73). When Jori argues that the reason why calypso is not a folk song just because it always uses the words like ‘dis’ and ‘dat’ that are unusual, Maya asks him why the words used by Black people are claimed as strange language.

“When you or any white person says ‘dis’ or ‘dat’ it is certain that you intend to ridicule. When a black person says it, it is because that’s the way he speaks. There’s a difference (p. 73).

She states that the words are ridicules for White people because it is not their words but for Black people, it is the way they speak and there is nothing wrong with it. In fact, White people have to respect Black people’s way of speaking. Maya’s effort to stand up for her race makes them accept her argument that calypso is folk song. It proves that Maya’s courage to oppose the arguments that calypso is not folk music result a positive response. In short, a courageous act to defend black people’s position is necessary to raise their bargaining position in front of White people, so that their existence is admitted.

1.2 In Job

Maya has ever worked in many work places in her life and she experiences many discriminations too. Her experience in working as a domestic worker gives her opinion that Black people is always

supposed to be slaves for the Whites. That becomes the reason why she stops working for the Whites and promises to herself that she will not become their servant anymore. "...I had tried that and lasted only one day..." (p.7). Her act to refuse to be a slave shows that she will not let herself being oppressed again just like her ancestor neither slavery nor after slavery. It is significant, in a way that Black people should have courage to refuse the oppression they experiences for many years.

Experiencing discriminations in job, Maya keep herself to work in Garden of Allah and when she is fired, Maya prefers to resist them rather than give up. That is what she shows when her master fires her because she earns more money than the other.

"Eddie, I don't care whether they like it or not. I haven't promised anybody anything. I've just made more money. Let's leave it at that, ok?" (p. 63)

She protests her master's decision to fire her because in her opinion it is unfair but her protests is useless when her master does not change his mind. "My protest innocence was forceful but without explanation" (p 63). In this case, Maya's protest shows her courage to protest the master decision that is unfair in treating her in job although her protest does not change the decision. She is finally fired but it does not mean she gives up by showing to other dancers that losing the job does not make her become a loser. "I offer them my most gracious smile,



looking into each woman eyes". After all, the important thing of Maya's act is that she does not give up to defend her rights and although it is fail, there are some positive values can be learn from that.

1.3 In Family

Maya's act to resist the practices of racism in the family can be seen through her decision to marry Tosh although her mother forbids her for the racist reason. Maya realizes that her mother will not permit her to marry Tosh because of his whiteness, but she does not change her decision to marry Tosh. Furthermore, Maya dares to resist the practices of racism from her own mother and it shows that she insists of her mind.

Additionally, her marriage with a White forces her to become a historian, anthropology for her son, to grow her son's confidence with his appearance as a white. "I needed to become a historian, sociologist and anthropologist" (p. 30). It means that she has to have lot of knowledge as well as a historian, sociologist and anthropologist to give a clear explanation upon her son that having black skin is good and there is nothing wrong of being Black people.

"You are going to going to have hair like mine. Isn't that good?" (p. 30)

Maya tries to make her son understand that have curly hair is good but he keeps unbelief with Maya. She does not stop trying to explain to her

son by telling a story about a little African prince, who had hair like his.

He looked at me, half disbelieving, so I told him about a little African prince named Hannibal, who had hair like his (p. 30).

Maya already knows that it will be difficult to make her son to be confident with his existence but she does everything to explain to her son. The significance of her act to grow her son's confidence is how important for her son to be confident as a Black person in order to overcome the practices of racism that he experiences in his life.

2. Maya Angelou's struggle against the practices of sexism

According to Collins, during 1950's the African-American women are forced to work inside and outside the house, while the racist discrimination affects the relationship between work and family for African-American women (Collins, 2000:58). In this case, there are two kinds of oppression toward the black women; they are racism and sexism that are explored in the previous part of analysis. Here, the writer will explore how Maya reacts against the practices of sexism she has experienced in society, job and family.

2.1 In Society

Maya has ever experienced sexual harassment when she was seven years old that makes her life bitter. Nevertheless, this experience

teaches her to be strong, teaches her to continue her life by working hard in many jobs.

...I had worked as a dancer in night clubs, fry cook in hamburger joints, dinner cook in a Creole restaurant and once had a job in a mechanic's shop, taking the paint off cars with my hands (p. 25).

Her decision to continue her life after her mother's boyfriend rapes her is a kind of struggle to recover her life. Additionally, it is difficult for her but she keeps her struggle, including when she is pregnant and has to rear her son alone in her young age by working hard. That is the significance of Maya's struggle that her struggle brings her life to a better future and to come out of her shock.

Another struggle of Maya Angelou is also shown through her critical thinking upon the social order in society that places the women as second citizen, such as in the marriage. Maya states that women are supposed to keep their marriage although it does not bring happiness to them and limits their activities.

I thought women who accepted their husbands' inattention and sacrificed all their sovereignty for a humiliating marriage more, unsavory than the prostitutes who were drinking themselves awake in the noisy bar (p. 39).

Her critical thinking upon the institution of marriage is significant because it influences her act to get divorce that brings her a better life so that she can get her independence to decide everything about her own life.

2.2 In Job

Experiencing the practices of sexism in jobs, she reacts against them. When a guest asks her whether she likes to make love with the white or not in the Garden of Allah, she dares to resist their act by answering that she never wants it “No, I don’t think so.” She even does not give any chance to the guest to get closer with her by giving them no information to them about herself.

“Sure. Where’re you from?”

“N. Y.” N.O.Y.B. None of Your Business.” (p. 61)

Her act to protect herself by giving none of information about her is a kind of struggle to face the practices of sexism she finds in job. The significance of her act that raises her bargaining position in front of her white guest, so that they will not underestimate her anymore. She also promises to herself that she will not receive any invitation from her guests to the hotel.

The men awoke no curiosity in me. I did not follow them in my mind to their hotel rooms or their loveless homes (p. 61).

Her refusal to the guest’s invitation proves that she has struggled to resist the practices of sexism. The significance of her act is that her courage to refuse the invitation of the white guest although her act might be dangerous for her as a Black woman, who will get more risk than the White women.

2.2 In Family

The struggle of Maya Angelou can be seen through Maya's acts against the oppression that comes from her own husband. One of her acts is her protest to her white husband, who is angry with her without any reason. She chooses to protest rather than keep silence and does not receive what her husband does to her. "What do you mean, screaming at us that way?" (p. 37). She is very angry because she has done many things to serve her husband but now she cannot accept her husband's attitude to her and her son. Finally she makes decision to divorce because Maya realizes that marriage is not the only way to reach happiness.

...My marriage was over since I believed the legal bonds were only as good as the emotional desire to make them good...(p. 39)

Maya realizes that she has to end the marriage since the marriage itself becomes a bond for her independence as a human. Moreover, she does not change her mind although her friend, Ivone and her mother advice her to give her husband a chance to change.

I was no longer the dutiful wife ready with floors waxed and rugs beaten, with my finger between the pages of a cookbook and my body poised over the stove or spread-eagled on the bed (p. 41)

There will be no sacrifice to keep a family or giving too much for something useless. Maya has ready for her new life, gets off her unhappy marriage although she has to work hard to rear her son. In

fact, the significance of these acts is how Maya get out of the marriage that takes her independence as a human.

Furthermore, her struggle to rear her son is not an easy thing because she has to eliminate her son's dependence to her ex-husband. She realizes that Clyde loves Tosh very much and to make her son understand about the divorce is complicated. "Clyde was heartbroken by the separation." (p. 42). To makes her son recover from the heartbroken is a different struggle as a single mother. Although it is difficult, Maya keeps trying to explain to her son that she and her husband cannot live together anymore and forever. In short, she tries to get her son back, including his trust to her as his mother.

I used every wile in the mother's little homemaker kit to win my way back into my son's good graces (p. 43).

Actually, Maya realizes that her son's distrust is the impact of her decision to get divorced but Maya never stops trying. Moreover, this act is significant, in which the act is her struggle to overcome her problem after gets divorced being a single mother that is forced to do the two roles; as the financial provider and a mother for her son.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

After the discussion in chapter IV, the writer concludes that Maya Angelou's experiences of racism and sexism oppression influences her acts to struggle against the oppression that can be seen through her character in the third autobiography that is analyzed in this thesis.

Maya Angelou is the central character in the novel. She is a Black woman, whose real name Marguerite Johnson, who was born and raised in Stamp, Arkansas. She is a very tall girl and she does not confident with it. who finally realizes about the discriminations she has experienced in family, job and society. Her consciousness as a Black woman, who is oppressed by both racism and sexism is built. It develops her to be a brave woman who dares to decide something related with her future. It also develops her critical thinking upon the racist society, in which she lives. Furthermore, she is a strong woman who never gives up in facing her life. Besides she is a religious woman who dares to defend her belief.

Additionally, Maya Angelou as one of the Black people, experiences the oppression directly. She experiences the racist oppression in society, job and family in the world that is dominated by the Whites. In the society, she finds Black musicians discriminated in jazz music, in which they are kept out from the jazz union because of their skin color. Another kind of racist oppression is how the God is identical with the White, which is superior and strengthens the domination of White

in society. Besides, for years before, during the slavery, Black people were not permitted to worship God. This shows how the racist oppression interfered the private life. The other private life that is interfered by the racist oppression is the forbidden interracial marriage. In social life, she experiences racist discrimination when she is ignored in the White's party she attends and the other fact of racist discrimination happens in social accommodation like education segregation. In job, she finds herself forced to work in domestic job for the White. Besides, she was ever fired in the past as a teacher because she taught African primitive dance to her Black students. Her experience of being fired because of racism happens again to her when she gets more money than the other White dancers. In family, Maya experiences racist discrimination when she has to face the fact that her son envies her White husband's appearance, that the White's appearance is better than the Black's.

She also had to face the fact that as a Black woman; she experienced sexist oppression in society, job and family. In the society, for many centuries, the Black woman was labeled as an evil, treacherous, bitchy, stubborn, and hateful and the source of sin that place the Black women in danger even in her own family like what happens to her, who was raped by her mother's boy friend, and how her husband who was a Greece oppressed her, limited her activities. In addition, she has two roles as a woman that is constructed by the social order in society, to be a mother for her son and to work outside. Working outside, Maya experiences sexist oppression, when her body is exploited to get profit. It proves that women are seen not more than an object.

Her experiences of racist and sexist oppressions in society, job and family make her realize that Black people, especially Black women have different rights from the whites that motivate her to struggle against the oppressions she experiences. Her struggle against the oppression can be seen through her acts and her thought, especially when she thinks critically upon the state that never protect the Black's rights and how she acts bravely by showing different opinion with the Whites in the party she attends. Besides, she dares to make decision for her own life, such as getting divorced and prefers to be a single mother for her son. Her acts and thoughts explored above are significant, in which, it can raise her bargaining position in front of the Whites that make her existence is admitted. In addition, her acts and thoughts makes her life is better than before, in which she can find her happiness of being an independent woman, who rears her only son and keeps her career as a dancer and singer.

In short, Maya Angelou's experiences as a Black woman influence her view on racist and sexist oppression and motivate her to struggle against the oppression that can be seen through her acts and thoughts. Furthermore, Maya Angelou's experiences on the practices of racism and sexism and her struggles against the oppressions as seen through her third autobiographical novel can give values to the Black, especially Black women, how to react against the oppressions they experience.

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