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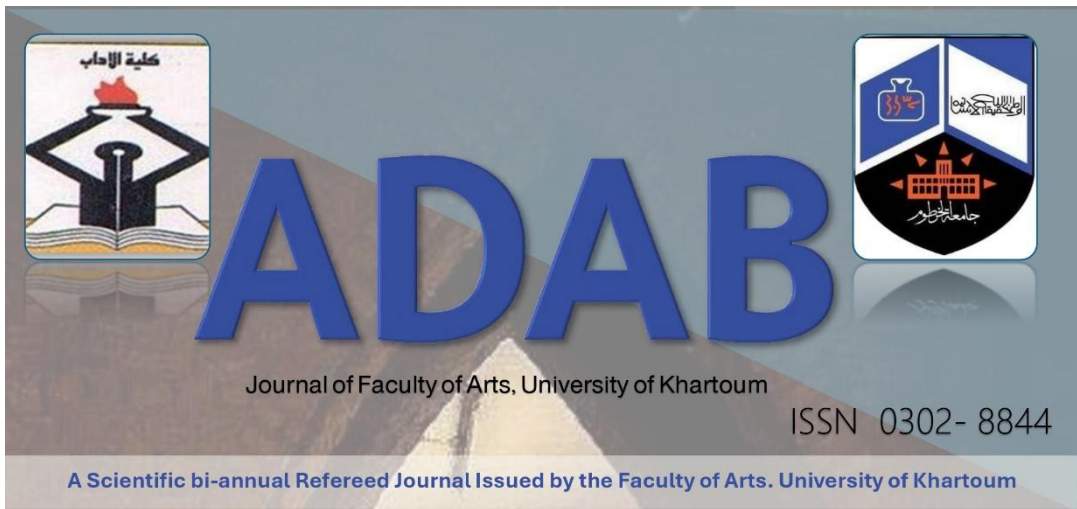
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The Architecture of the Self: Defense Mechanisms and Post-Traumatic Growth in Angelou's Narrative *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

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Abstract

*This study examines the psychological evolution of the protagonist in Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (IKWCBS), tracing her transformation from a traumatized, "displaced" child into a resilient and emotionally fulfilled young woman. Utilizing a psychoanalytic framework, the paper posits that the narrative serves as a fictional projection of the author's own recovered memories, functioning as a medium for psychological healing. The methodology leans heavily on Freudian psychoanalytic concepts—specifically Defense Mechanisms—to analyze how the protagonist, Maya, navigates the debilitating effects of parental abandonment, racial inferiority, and sexual abuse. The analysis explores how the "child-adult" first-person narrative voice facilitates a confessional and reflective mode akin to psychotherapy, allowing for the "purgation" of suppressed trauma. Key psychological processes, including denial, displacement, object-loss identification, and dissociation (manifested in Maya's five-year silence), are examined as survival strategies that eventually pave the way for recovery. Furthermore, the paper incorporates insights from narrative therapists and trauma theorists, such as Michael White, James Penne baker, and Jennifer Freyd, to argue that Angelou's act of "putting stress into words" transforms personal victimization into a communal metaphor for the Black female experience. Ultimately, the study concludes that by channeling traumatic memory into the creative act of writing, Angelou achieves a "cathartic dimension" that restores psychological health and celebrates the inspirational power of resilience.*

Keywords: Defense Mechanisms, denial, displacement, object-loss identification, dissociation, parental abandonment, racial inferiority, Narrative Therapy, and Catharsis

المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة التطور النفسي لبطلنة رواية مايا أنجيلو (أعرف لماذا يغرد الطائر الحبيس) (IKWCBS)، حيث تتبع تحولها من طفلة نازحة تعاني من الصدمات، إلى امرأة شابة مرنة ومكتملة عاطفياً. وباستخدام إطار تحليلي نفسي، تفترض الورقة أن النص السردى يعمل إسقاطاً خيالياً للذكريات المؤلفة المستعادة، حيث يؤدي وظيفة الوسيط لتحقيق الشفاء النفسي. تعتمد المنهجية بشكل كبير على مفاهيم التحليل النفسي الفرويدي وتحديداً آليات الدفاع: لتحليل كيفية تعامل البطلنة (مايا) مع الآثار الموهنة لرفض الوالدين، والشعور بالدونية العرقية، والانتهاك الجنسي. يستعرض التحليل كيف يساهم صوت الراوي (طفل- بالغ) بضمير المتكلم في تسهيل نمط اعترافي وتأملي يشبه العلاج النفسي، مما يسمح بتطهير الصدمات المكبوتة. كما تبحث الدراسة في العمليات النفسية المحورية، بما في ذلك الإنكار، والزواج، والتوحد مع فقد الهوية، والانفصال عن المجتمع- والذي تجسد في صمت مايا الذي دام خمس سنوات - باعتبارها استراتيجيات للبقاء مهدت الطريق للتعافي في نهاية المطاف. علاوة على ذلك، تستعرض الدراسة رؤى من معالجي السرد ومنظري الصدمات، مثل مايكل وايت، وجيمس بنبيكر، وجينيفر فريد، لإثبات أن فعل أنجيلو (المتمثل في صياغة الضغوط في كلمات (يحول ضحية الصدمة الشخصية إلى استعادة جماعية لتجربة المرأة السوداء. وتخلص الدراسة في النهاية إلى أن أنجيلو، من خلال توجيه الذاكرة الصادمة نحو الفعل الإبداعي للكثابة، تحقق بعداً تطهيرياً يعيد الصحة النفسية ويحتفي بالقوة المهمة للقدرة على الصمود.

الكلمات المفتاحية: آليات دفاع، إنكار، الزواج، فقدان الهوية، الانفصال عن المجتمع، رفض الوالدين، دونية عرقية، العلاج السردى، والتطهير والتنفيس

الانفعالي

This paper traces *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* protagonist's growth on the personal level as Maya evolves from a displaced, abandoned and unloved, abused child debilitated by her inferiority complex as an ugly black girl into an emotionally fulfilled, confident, strong-willed, young woman who accepts her color, race and embraces the joys of motherhood after the restoration of her maternal bond with her mother and her own giving birth to a child.

The analyses operate within the hypothesis that the protagonist's personal traumas are fictional projections of those of her author's cast in the form of recovered memories in quest of psychological healing. The evolution of Maya's character is performed in the form of reminiscences of particular childhood traumas that disrupt her healthy growth into maturity. These traumas involve her psychologically destabilizing displacement, emotionally shattering parental abandonment and her painfully devastating sexual abuse and child molestation. The method of presentation is through the dominant technique of the child-adult first person voice involving the confessional, reflective mode and occasionally the impressionistic technique of the stream of consciousness. As noted both techniques are related to the field of psychotherapy.

Through these techniques Angelou reenacts episodes from her own personal life in the form of fictionalized experiences recovered through memories by the protagonist of *IKWCBS*. Through these memories, Angelou confesses under the license of art, deeply traumatizing experiences and hidden secrets in her own childhood and adolescence, like her abandonment by her parents as a child, sexual molestation by her mother's boyfriend, and her teenage pregnancy outside the wedlock. The strategies she uses to project these experiences and their related psychological conflicts onto the protagonist's quest and by which the latter resolves them are regarded as defense mechanisms through which emotional stress is alleviated and psychological health restored and preserved. Hence, in this phase of the protagonist's characterization, the study leans heavily on particular Freudian psychoanalytic concepts-namely what he terms Defense Mechanism- as a methodology of analysis.

According to Freud, the pioneer of psychotherapy, the disclosing, in writing of personal problems can be beneficially therapeutic. Reminiscent of a patient confessional account, confession in fictional writing of an author's personal traumas could be cathartic due to his/her revelation of objective facts accompanied by a report of his/her emotional responses. This triggers emotional and physical symptom known as purgation resulting from emotional out pouring, confessions and revelations. Beside its healing power personal narrative, as the French academic Phillippe Lejeune contains, can result in reconciliation to what happened leading to contentment. Although the journey back to the past can be painful, the process is

healing by discovering how much one has transformed through difficulty"(Lejeune,1989, p.131) Another narrative therapist -Michael White-emphasizes this reconciliatory aspect of personal narrative by stating that "retrieving the past in writing is a coping mechanism through which a writer reassembles his/her scattered memories and brings them into a cohesive whole. In the process many details unfold; clues become moments of epiphany, feelings are processed and stuck energy is discharged, bringing closure to the unfinished aspects of one's life."(White, 2007, p. 129)

This therapeutic effect highlighted by this psychotherapist is related by the psychologist White to the collective benefits of psychological recovery by 'letting go' in writing of the embattled emotional and psychological conflicts. For the past decade an increasing number of studies have confirmed this cathartic dimension of personal narrative, showing that when one writes about emotionally disturbing experiences, significant physical and mental improvement follows. The mere disclosing in writing of personal traumas is cathartic due to the relief of anxiety or depression resulting from suppressed negative Passions weighing on the subconscious. [Psychological Science,1997, vol.8, No.3, p.162-66]

When memory recording is linked to confession and reflection -as in the case of Angelou's technique in *IKWCBS* - a narrative mode results challenging instrumental approaches to reflection as a logic- scientific knowing. As shown thus far in Angelou's technique of the child-adult narrator, which she uses to present her protagonist. Confession is dominated by a discourse of a personal reflective mode accompanied by unreflective accounts of personal discovery and growth drawing equally on social construction. This is apparent in the book in the author's interlocking of two simultaneous lines of experiences. On the communal level Angelou writes about racial violence, broken families and economic injustice. On the personal level she discloses painful traumas that she experienced first-hand insulated from the feelings and history of her Black community.

In his essay "Putting Stress into Words- Health, Linguistics and Therapeutic Implications", in a book entitled *Science Direct: Behavior Research and Therapy*, James, W. Penna baker states that in the personal narratives of upsetting experiences "the construction of a coherent story together with the re-experiencing of negative emotions on paper work together as therapy preventing the effect of a traumatic past on the personality development."(Penna baker, 1993. Vol .5-6), P.539-548)

Focusing on the role of such a past on the current lives of their patients, both Freud and Javial Jannet note that fragmented memories of past traumatic events dominated the mental life of many of their patients. They built their findings and the nature of their psychotherapy on this recognition. Jannet in particular, contends that

"memories of traumatic events persist as unassimilated fixed ideas that impede the development of alternative states of consciousness, including dissociative phenomena, such as fugue states, amnesias, and chronic states of helplessness and depression." She also notes that "unbidden memories of traumas may return as physical sensations." (Janet, 1889/1984, p. 274) Susan Pease Banitt testifies to the same findings noting that "traumatic events overwhelm our abilities to cope. We cannot heal until we move fully through those traumas." (Pease Banitt, 2012, pp. 539–548)

As stated earlier, Angelou never acknowledged that she wrote *IKWCBS* as a conscious attempt at healing. Her declared aim is stated in an interview in which she declared that she wrote the book in response to a challenge from her friend and editor Robert Lommis to tell her life story in creative art. Lommis himself asserted having resorted to reserve psychology to induce Angelou to fictionalize her life story in his words: "If someone suggests that she can't do something, she considers it a challenge and immediately accepts the proposal." (Angelou, 2009, p. 57) As expected Angelou responded to the challenge and promised Lommis she would prepare a main script. (Hager, 2011, p. 57)

Yet by accepting to uncover her traumatic past, especially the childhood phase in the form of an auto-fictional memoir Angelou might have felt even though subconsciously the need for 'letting go' of this past to avoid its constricting effect on her current life. She might have equally understood that the revelation and acknowledgment of a disturbed past would pave the way, through acceptance and confession, to recovery. But surely by channeling the negative passions involved in trauma into the energizing act of writing, and by purging herself in the safe outlet of art, Angelou musters a new strength to survive again and invest her energy in the healthy practice of creativity. Michael Rose highlights this inspirational value of the healing power of personal narrative in his words: "The power we discover inside ourselves as we survive a threatening experience can be utilized equally well outside of ourselves too." (Rosentunt, 2011)

As discussed before one of the most emotionally destabilizing childhood experiences that impeded Angelou's healthy growth into maturity is her abandonment by her parents to the care of her grandmother Momma at the age of three. Her brother Bailey who shared the experience was barely four years old; their abandonment triggers a process of displacement as the two children continue to meander between their grandmother's house in Arkansas and their family's house in St. Louis. In *IKWCBS* Angelou displaces her own feelings of insecurity, emotional distress and anger at her negligent parents, by fictionalizing all in her protagonist's recovered memories of her own experience of abandonment.

According to childhood psychologists, children when exposed to the extreme terror of separation from their parents respond first by denial, then grief, protest, anger, despair, introversion or numbing. This makes them turn towards the nearest available source of comfort to return to a state of both physical and psychological equilibrium. In the book, Maya and her brother display a response typical of this chain of reaction. When they first arrive at Arkansas as displaced, rejected children, a young Maya, in a matter-of-fact tone simply reports the incident while an adult Maya directs her incisive irony at the parents describing their act of sending them to their grandmother's home as shipping: "Our parents had decided to put an end to their calamitous marriage, and Father shipped us home to his mother." (Angelou, 2011, p.6)

Maya's sense of insecurity and pain are highlighted in the church scene with which the book opens. An emotionally shattered three years old Maya is obliged to recite to the church congregation a poem which opening lines reveal her acute awareness of her predicament as a displaced unwanted child disguised in her denial: "I did not come to stay." (Ibid., p.3) Left with no option Maya begins to adapt to her new situation, making of Arkansas community and her grandmother's store her whole world: "The town reacted to us as its inhabitants had reacted to all things new before our coming. It regarded us without curiosity but with caution, and after we were seen to be harmless (and children) it closed in around us, as a mother embraces a stranger child. Warmly, but not too familiarly." (Ibid., p.7)

This child-mother motif which continues to inform Angelou's depiction of the protagonist but comes to the fore when Momma assumes the role of the caregiver to the abandoned children; Maya in her turn substitutes Momma, the latter's son Uncle Willie and her own brother Bailey for the absent father-mother figures. Substitution is a phenomenal act typical of abandoned children who recur to it as a form of defense mechanism against the trauma of loss and separation. As psychologists claim "trauma can only be worked through after a secure bond is established with another person. The presence of an attachment figure provides children with the security necessary to explore their life experience and to interrupt the inner or social isolation that keeps one stuck in a repetitive pattern." (van der Kolk, 2014, p. 112).

A secured parental bond is seen by these psychologists as a strong predictor of a stable childhood. According to them secure attachment to parents in children is a primary cause for a future coherent life. The quality of a child's emotional life as well as his/ her security will be negatively affected by how his/her parents treat him/her as a child. Adult caregivers' attachment to their children is evaluated as a measure of a healthy childhood and maturation, and of the stability and security of the child-parent bond.

In IKWCBS, the disruption of this bond leaves Maya vulnerable to all the emotional hazards voiced above by child psychologists' scholars. To combat these hazards Maya adopts several defense mechanisms as preventive measures against emotional collapse. For the first five years of the abandonment she recurs to denial-convincing herself that her parents are dead: "Until that Christmas when we received the gifts I had been confident that they were both dead. I could cry anytime I wanted by picturing my mother (I didn't quite know what she looks like) lying in her coffin." (Angelou, 2011, p.51) Denial is a defense mechanism against anxiety through which as Halls states:

"The ego may try to master danger by adopting realistic problem-solving methods, or it may attempt to alleviate anxiety by using methods that deny, falsify, or distort reality and that impede the psychological development of personality. They tie up the psychological energy which could be used for more effective ego activities. When the defense becomes very influential it dominates the ego and limits its flexibility and adaptability. If the defenses fail to hold, the ego has nothing to fall back upon and is overwhelmed by anxiety. The result is a nervous breakdown. The reason for the existence of the defense mechanism is a developmental one." (Hall, 1954, p.85)

But Maya's defense mechanism of self-delusion fails when she and her brother receive Christmas gifts from their parents "one Christmas we received gifts from our mother and father" (Ibid, p.50) Yet, instead of giving comfort, the gifts merely release suppressed anger and give voice to questions the children have been reluctant to ask before: "The gifts opened the door to questions that neither of us wanted to ask. Why did they send us away? And what did we do so wrong? So Wrong? Why, at three and four, did we have tags put on our arms to be sent by train alone from long Beach, California, to Stamps, Arkansas, with only the porter to look after us?" (Angelou, 2011, p.51) The children's anger is manifested outwardly in the aggressive act of destroying the gifts: "Bailey and I tore the stuffing out of the doll the day after Christmas, but he warned me that I had to keep the tea set in good condition because any day or night she might come riding up." (Ibid, p.52) Again, aggression is a defense mechanism against repressed negative passions which Freud defines as follows: "Aggression is overt, often harmful social interaction with the intention of inflicting damage or other unpleasantness upon another individual. It may occur either in retaliation or without provocation. In humans, frustration due to blocked goals can cause aggression." (Buss, A.H., 1961) The Psychology of Aggression. Hoboken, N. J: John Welly)

In a serial reaction, aggression gives way to self-blame as the children begin to hope for a family reunion: "If the things really did come from Mother maybe it meant that she was getting ready to come and get us. Maybe she had just been angry

at something we had done, but was forgiving us and would send for us soon." (Ibid, p.52) In the meantime, in the caring and the dutiful Momma, Maya seeks refuge from the emotional hazards of the abandonment. Her parents' act is viewed by her as a form of rejection that denies her love, acceptance and emotional fulfilment which Momma can provide. Momma, unlike a natural mother is a strong-willed nurturer who demonstrates affection not by physical proximity or verbal expression, but by enforcing law, harsh disciplining, orders and emphasis on Christian teachings, morals and traditions. Maya remembers Momma threatening her: "Move and I'll tear you up. So, obedient to the unvoiced command, I sit still." (Ibid, p.38) But even when Maya detects the difference between the substitute and the substituted for, she adapts emotionally to Momma's version of motherhood-even appreciates it.

This is expressed metaphorically in the heart-shaped design she draws for her: "It was a large heart with lots of hearts growing smaller inside, and piercing from the outside rim to the smallest heart was an arrow." (Angelou, 2011, p.32) Maya's concept of motherhood as marked by physical attachment and verbally expressed emotions changes as she begins to adapt to Momma's brand of maternal love. In her turn Maya develops a detached ambivalent attitude marked by reverence, respect and obedience for the grandmother: "I loved her with a rush. She said nothing- no "Don't worry" or "Don't get tender-hearted." Just the gentle pressure of her rough hand conveyed her own concern and assurance to me." (Ibid, p.111) To avoid disruption in her newly-formed bond, Maya willingly concedes to the strict routine and tough measures Momma adopts in her upbringing along with her brother. She not only succumbs to Momma's demands of her but ultimately comes to identify with the grandmother's code of ethics.

Maya's behavior is consistent with the psychologist Hall's notion that when the parents are unavailable the child tries to regain love and acceptance by obeying the available caregiver. As he states: "It is common among children who have been rejected by their parents that they try to regain parental love by behaving in accordance with the expectations of the parents." (Hall, 1954, p.77) Maya's behavioral change is also related to what Freud terms as object-loss identification, which he explains as follows: "A child will identify with what he thinks the parents want him to be. Or a person who has lost a parent by separation or death may resolve to model his character upon the ideals of the missing parent. This is the way in which the ego-ideal is formed. Object-loss identification may serve to restore the actual object. By being good the child actually regains parental affection. Or it may serve to take the place of the lost object." (Ibid, p. 77)

Maya's attitude towards her grandmother equally constitutes a form of defense mechanism known as displacement resulting from a subject's recognition of the disparity between the object substituted for and the available substitute. As Halls

explains: "An important determiner of the direction that displacement takes is in the degree of resemblance between the original and substitute object, or what amounts to the same thing, the extent to which the objects are identified with one another...When the degree of the resemblance becomes less and less with each successive displacement and the final choice may be quite different and less satisfying than the original object, the final choice represents a compromise between the conflicting demands of the id, superego and the external world."(Halls,1954, P.81-82)

Biographically among the multiple traumas Angelou endures as a child her rape at the age of eight by her mother's live-in boyfriend is the most psychologically damaging. The incident is a watershed in Angelou's life which though briefly depicted in *IKWCBS* overwhelms her portrayal of the protagonist. Angelou's self-disclosure of what is regarded as a disgraceful secret goes contrary to prevalent views of researchers in the psychology of rape victims. What they observe is that victims of such abuse have difficulty going public for fear of their community's censure. Angelou, when asked in an interview, why she decided to disclose the event responded by stating: "I wanted to display the complexities of rape-to prevent it from happening to somebody else, so that everybody who had been raped might gain understanding and not to blame herself for it."(Braxton,1999, p.4)

Angelou's statement highlights the communal benefits of acknowledging personal secrets which others might find disgracing. By confessing her own victimization as a child, she wanted to help others not to engage in similar harmful situations. Children in particular could learn that they were not responsible for the chaos, violence and despair surrounding them. Yet as adults they have to understand that there are choices to be made and consequences to be met. The message intimated in Angelou's testimony is that acknowledgement of child rape trauma as opposed to denial prevents its repetition and helps victims purge its associated negative passions of pain, shame, anger and helplessness.

For, conclusions drawn from a child's perspective retain their power into adulthood until verbalized and examined. Once the trauma is located in time and place distinctions could be made between current life stresses and what happened in the past, decreasing its impact on the present. On the enduring effects of unacknowledged trauma maintains that "no pain is as devastating as the pain a person refuses to face, and suffering is so lasting as suffering left unacknowledged."(Levine, 1997, p.28) Nevertheless Angelou herself declared that she did not find the process of writing about her rape cathartic: "Rather, she found relief in "telling the truth"(Angelou& Tate, 1989, p.151).

Yet her revelation of her own rape in the safe medium of art must have helped

her displace in fiction long standing embattled passions of anger, pain, guilt and shame related to the trauma. Writing about it without disguise is not only an act of courage and responsibility on Angelou's part but also of purgation leading to catharsis. Angelou's self-revelation must have also helped her gain perspective of and reconciliation to what had happened. Victims who experienced traumas similar to hers when asked about what helped them most in overcoming the impact of their traumas attributed their improvement to having engaged in an activity or relationship in which they had been able to displace the negative energy and explore the trauma and their reactions to it.

Angelou, personally, when asked decades later how she was able to survive such trauma she attributed it to communal support and human compassion: "I cannot remember a time when I was not loved by somebody." (Angelou, 2011, p. 22) As Angelou's answer affirms a victim's voluntary confession, rather than generating hostility and condemnation, elicits support sympathy and understanding. This is particularly true in the context of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural communities like Angelou's.

Many critics on the other hand commend Angelou's honest depiction of her rape as a child. Rather than censorship it receives positive views that relate the depiction to Angelou's career as a political activist and an ardent feminist. Scholar Vermillion admits that "a black woman who writes about her rape risks reinforcing negative stereotypes about her race and gender." (Vermillion, 1994, p.55) But, in Angelou's case, he goes on to explain, rape is used as "a metaphor of the suffering of the black African American woman." (Ibid, P.55)

Angelou, he explains, utilizes this metaphor "first to internalize then challenge 20th Century racist conceptions of the black female body as physically unattractive." (Ibid, p.55) Rape, he maintains, in Angelou's concept is "a representation of the black girl's difficulty in controlling, understanding and respecting both her body and her words" (Ibid, p.55) African American literary scholar Selwyn. R. Cudjoe calls Angelou's depiction of rape "a burden", a demonstration of "the manner in which the black female is violated in her tender years." and "an unnecessary insult of Southern girlhood in her movement to adolescence." (Cudjoe, 1984, pp. 10–11)

In the book, the disgraceful rape episode takes place when the eight years old protagonist-Maya returns from Arkansas in the company of her father to reunite with her mother- Vivian in St. Louis. Vivian is a dancer and a singer but makes her living by gambling in St. Louis's night clubs. Eager for motherly love and care, young Maya thinks of her home coming as the end of her familial displacement and emotional deprivation and starvation. But the child is disappointed to discover that

her most of the day and night out of the house mother is preoccupied with her own self and busy life. Not only does she neglect Maya but keeps her at the periphery of her existence. Vivian's live- Boyfriend-Mr. Freeman is equally neglected by the mother. With his physical, mental and economic limitations he is totally dependent-psychologically and emotionally- on her. He is a nobody who exists in the shadow of Vivian's self-sufficient and breathtaking personality. Maya describes him as having "the sluggish inferiority of old men married to young women. He watched her [Vivian's] every move, and when she left the room his eyes allowed her reluctantly to go."(Angelou,2011, p.68)

His animalistic and subordinate nature is intimated in Maya's description of him as "a big brown bear. Who is simply waiting for mother and put his whole self into the waiting."(Ibid., p.69) Feeling marginalized, both Maya and Mr. Freeman become vulnerable victims? Mr. Freeman feeling neglected fills the void by sexually harassing Maya; Maya- deprived of love and care- falls easy prey in his ensnarement. In the first person's confessional mode, Maya describes the cycle of mutual need and deprivation that culminates in the rape. It all started with Maya sleeping in one bed with her mother and Mr. Freeman: "On my particularly bad nights my mother would take me in to sleep with her, in the large bed with Mr. Freeman."(Ibid., p.70)

The physical proximity tempts Freeman to molest the child when her mother is out. Maya, craving for physical contact instinctively succumbs to him. Reasoning her act for herself Maya confesses: "Before, my world had been Bailey, food, Momma, the store, reading books and Uncle Willie. Now, for the first time, it included physical contact."(Ibid., p.73) Unable to identify the nature of her attraction to Mr. Freeman she interprets it as parental feelings:" This was probably my real father and we had found each other at last."(Ibid., p.72) When Mr. Freeman withdraws for a while Maya misses the forbidden interaction, even encourages it: "I began to feel lonely for Mr. Freeman and the encasement in his big arms."(Ibid., p.73)

Maya's reaching out for physical contact and its subsequent acceleration is typical of children neglected by their parents and which child psychologists call separation response. In their premises, children seek increased attachment in the face of external danger. Pain, fear and loss of loved ones or protectors evoke efforts to attract increased care. As Haworth affirms, "the immediate consequence of maternal rejection is the accentuation of proximity seeking on the part of the child." (Haworth, 1964, p. 114)

As is typical of child abusers Mr. Freeman threatens to kill Maya's beloved brother Bailey if she tells on him: "If you ever tell anybody what we did, I'll have to kill Bailey."(Angelou,2011, p.72) Maya keeps silent partly to ensure her brother's

safety but partly for fear of losing the physical gratification. In an inside view in her stream of consciousness she argues with herself: "If he thought I was naughty, would that mean that he would never hold me again? Or admit that he was my father? I had made him ashamed of me." (Ibid., p.72)

Again, Maya's surrendering to Freeman's threats is explainable as part of the psychology of abused children. In the absence of the ordinary source of comfort psychologists observe that "children may turn to their tormenters developing strong emotional ties with people who intermittently harass or threaten them." (Herman, 1992, p. 102) Mr. Freeman's abused of Maya constitute what is known in psychiatry as trust betrayal resulting in betrayal trauma. As Jennifer J. Freyd states: "Betrayal trauma occurs when the people or institutions on which a person depends for survival significantly violate that person's trust or well-being: Childhood physical, emotional, or sexual abuses perpetrated by a caregiver are examples of betrayal trauma." (Freyd, 2008, p. 408)

Maya's failure to recognize the risk involved in Mr. Freeman's betrayal of trust is symptomatic of the psychological trauma. As Freyd rightly observes: "When psychological trauma involves betrayal, the victim may be less aware or less able to recall the traumatic experience because to do so will likely lead to confrontation or withdrawal by the betraying caregiver, threatening a necessary attachment relationship and thus the victim's survival." (Ibid., P.408-415)

Maya's failure to report the molestation, her own encouragement of it and Mr. Freeman's growing frustration with the mother culminate in the rape. In court, Maya lies that the rape took place the first time Freeman touched her inappropriately. Her incentive for lying is to escape the guilt of having remained silent but also the shame of having encouraged the molestation in the first place. Her fake testimony affirms that Freeman's act is premeditated. He is found guilty and sentenced to one year in a jail but is released the same afternoon of the trial. Later he is found dead, presumably murdered by Maya's violent Uncles. Following his death Maya experiences what is medically known as Post Stress Disorder. (Bloom, H. (Ed.). 2004., p.75)

This ushers her in a cycle of guilt-self-blame, shame, withdrawal and numbing all symptomatic of post stress trauma. Such disorders are experienced as researchers like Christina observes by those abused by someone close to them. Not only do the abused experience depression, dissociation and numbing but also think of themselves as morally tainted- ashamed, guilt ridden and sinful.

Dissociation and numbing in particular are defense mechanisms adopted by and phenomenal of victims of betrayal trauma in the words of the psychiatrist George

Eman Valliant Dissociation is" a temporary drastic modification of one's personal identity or character to avoid emotional distress, separation or postponement of a feeling that normally would accompany a situation or thought." (Vaillant, 1977, p. 73) In the aftermath of abusive relationships psychologists observe that victims dissociate emotionally first through disbelief followed by post trauma response of numbing and constriction resulting in inactivity, depression and self-deprecation. Maya typically begins by believing that the lawless act of vengeance resulting in Freeman's death is caused by her lie on the stand. Consequently, she blames herself, seeing her words as a bringer of death. As a result, she resolves to go mute and withdraw from everyone except Bailey: "Just my breath, carrying my words out, might poison people and they'd curl up and die like the black fat slugs that only pretended. I had to stop talking."(Angelou, 2011, p.85)

Angelou herself in an interview connects the violation of her body and the devaluation of her words through the depiction of herself-imposed, five-year long silence. Explaining her reasons for going mute she states exactly what she fictionalizes in her protagonist's monologue: "Thought if I spoke, my mouth would just issue out something that would kill people, randomly, so it was better not to talk."(Ibid., p.11) Maya's withdrawal and muteness are forms of dissociation and numbing noticed by the psychologist Reiker PP, Carman as a defense mechanism through which abused victims assume responsibility for the abuse to replace their feeling of helplessness with an illusion of control. Maya's self-blame and anger at the self are equally noticed by him as typical of victims of abused: "Anger directed against the self or others is always a central problem in the life of people who have been violated." (Reiker & Carmen, 1986, p.360-370)

Besides self-deprecation, Maya, affected by the Christian teachings" Momma had drilled into my [her] head." (Angelou,201, p.71) comes to believe she has sold herself to the devil:" I [she] had sold myself to the Devil and there could be no escape."(p.84) She even views the physical pain of the rape as a punishment for the sinful act: "What he did to me, and what I allowed, must have been very bad if already God let me hurt so much."(Ibid., p.79) Back in Arkansas when Uncle Willie avoids her she is relieved but feels ashamed and guilty-maker: "he would quickly send me on some errand that would take me out of his presence. When that happened I was both relieved and ashamed. I certainly didn't want a cripple's sympathy."(Ibid., p.89) She does not want him to think of her as "sinful and dirty."(Ibid., p.89)

As stated earlier, critic McPherson notices in his book:' Order out of Chaos' that "Angelou, in her demonstration of the passage from childhood to young adulthood, creatively uses the Christian myth and presents the themes of death, regeneration, and rebirth." (McPherson, 1990, p. 10) Moreover, Scholar Arnsberg agreed with the idea that "Maya's unsettled life in IKWCBS suggests her sense of

self as unendingly in the process of becoming, of dying and being reborn, in all its consequences. There is a pattern of birth, death and regeneration" as the scholar McPherson sees "Angelou, in her portrayal of the passage of her protagonist from childhood to young adulthood, creatively uses "this Christian myth and presents the themes of death, and rebirth." (Ibid., p.10)

Those critics conceive of the evolution of the protagonist's character in IKWCBS in terms of Christian theme of death and regeneration. Maya's five-years old long self-imposed and muteness is connected to the stage of death preceding her rebirth under the influence of Mrs. Flowers who later coaxes her out of her shell by introducing her to the world of books and literacy.

Biographically, this stage and its aftermath, in the protagonist's character growth is a fictional displacement of her Author-Angelou's own post-rape trauma. Maya's subsequent rehabilitation with the aid of Mrs. Flowers, her brief relapse into low self-esteem, loss of aim and moral compass are all details that Angelou depicts honestly and graphically in her portrayal of the early stage of the protagonist's adolescence.

Psychological, moral and behavioral confessions are characteristic of adolescents partaking of Maya's and her author's familial and personal circumstances. Yet, Angelou, like Maya, managed to rescue herself through discovering and making use of her innate capabilities of strength of will, singleness of aim and self-determination to regain a sense of direction, achieve success, solid identity and moral integrity. But what helped Angelou most was a careless pursuit of knowledge, literacy, and a passion for literacy and literature. As a child Angelou took refuge in the library and books as an escape into the world of fantasy from the constrictions of her familial and social displacement. Later she utilized literature and literacy to cope with and distract herself from the distress of her post-rape trauma. Her ceaseless quest for knowledge and literacy culminates in her becoming one of the most prominent Black writers of her race and time. Such failures, pursuits and successes of Angelou inform her portrayal of the protagonist Maya's adolescence a crucial stage in Maya's growth that marks her initiation into the adept phase. This phase witnesses her becoming the first black female, street car-conductor, talented dramatist, poet, and novelist, and culminates in her achievement as a writer and ultimately a loving, caring and responsible mother.

Besides books and literature Angelou had multiple sources of learning that enriched and solidified her knowledge. As a child she read through the Bible twice and memorized for it. As a woman of faith and a regular church goer, her grandmother Momma, contributed to her Christian teaching by exposing her to church sermonizing and Biblical scripture. Besides formal education Angelou's

knowledge is nourished by informal sources like African American cultural forms like the African American spiritual and oral tradition and her readings in slave narratives. The influence of these sources is evident in her continuous quoting from and referring to them in IKWCBS.

To liberate herself from the constrictions of her underprivileged station in life as an oppressed poor black girl, Angelou knew that she required deeper and more education. Consequently, she continued to feed her knowledge by reading literature, taking lessons in drama, dancing, the theatre and music. Her career was further enriched by the tour she took in Europe at the age of 26. At the age of 32 she qualified for a job as an editor in English Language paper published in Cairo. Later she was appointed a professor at the Ghana school of music and drama. This persistent pursuit of career culminated in her becoming one of the most famous writers in her time. Her success in her literary career was equally matched by similar contributions as a socio-political, civil-rights and feminist activist. By the age of 40 she was involved with the civil Christian Leadership conference, under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Beside her persistent pursuit of knowledge and making use of her innate intellectual talent and self-determination. Angelou owed her success to many strong black women who contributed to this success in variant ways during social stages in her life. Not only were these women role models for her but also maternal guides who care to her rescue when needed. Prominent among them was her grandmother Momma who instilled in her as early as her childhood a strong Christian faith, a deep sense of self-respect, dignity, discipline and perseverance. As a young student it was her teacher Miss Kirwin who was the first to single her out as a potential success: "She always remembered that I was Miss Johnson, who had a good mind and should be doing something with it." (Angelou, 2011, p.211)

Angelou stated Mrs. Flowers was another special black woman who came to her rescue when she returned to Arkansas devastated by her post-rape trauma. By introducing her to the world of books and literature she helped her cope with her anxiety and distress. Most importantly she managed to drag her out of her shell of muteness and dissociation. During her early adolescence, in the absence of parental guide, when Angelou had almost lost control over her life, it was her own mother Vivian who brought balance to her life, finally fulfilling her role as a mother. Under her guidance, support and direction Angelou was reconciled to her unplanned pregnancy and accept the responsibilities of motherhood.

In IKWCBS Angelou fictionalizes these biographical details to portray her protagonist's character as the latter moves from childhood to the early stages of adolescence. Like her author, a devastated Maya returns to Arkansas after the rape

incident mute and dissociated. With the help of Mrs. Flowers, she manages to regain her voice, self-worth and a newly born engagement with life. Flowers understand that Maya's muteness is the result of a deeply-seated fear of the destructive power of words. In response to Momma's request that helps Maya, she decides to take her under her wing and works cognitively to change her mindset and gradually encourages her to speak again. Mrs. Flowers is a fashionable, refined, cultured, gentle woman whom Maya regards as a model of a refined white folk lady: "She was like people I had never met personally. Like women in English novels who walked the moors (whatever they were)."(Ibid., p.92)

Making use of Maya's belief in her, her aim is to restore Maya's confidence in the spoken word as the healthy and affective means of human communication. She invites her to her house, bakes cookies for her and gives her books to read aloud. She then assigns her the task of memorizing a poem to recite during the next visit. Maya already isolated and depressed finds in Mrs. Flowers' neat and sophisticated household a safe haven and a psychological refuge. She is affected by Mrs. Flowers's love that gives her assure of self-worth and individuality: "I was liked, and what a difference it made. I was respected not as Mrs. Henderson's grandchild or Bailey's sister but for just being Marguerite Johnson."(Angelou,2011, p.98) Having secured Maya's confidence in her, Mrs. Flowers gradually convinces Maya about the positive power of language. Reminiscing about her first lessons with Mrs. Flowers Maya remembers: ". she began the first of what we later called" my lessons in life" she said that I must always be intolerant of ignorance but understands of illiteracy."(Ibid., p. 97)

Persuasively she argues to Maya that "language is man's way of communicating with his fellow man and it is language which separates him from lower animals."(Ibid., p.95) and that in the human voice "words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with the shades of deeper meaning."(Ibid., p.95) Mrs. Flowers further encourages Maya to listen carefully to what country people call 'mother wit' which engulfs the collective wisdom of generations. Gradually Mrs. Flowers introduces Maya to novel reading, even reciting aloud to her whole passages of novels:" Her voice slid in and curved down through and over the words. She was nearly singing"(Ibid., p.97) Eager to please Mrs. Flowers Maya responds to her question" How do you like it?"(Ibid., p.97) by speaking for the first time: "I had to speak...I said, yes, ma'am." It was the least I could do, but it was the most also "(Ibid., p.97-98)

Ultimately Mrs. Flowers convinces Maya of the positive power of language and empowers her to speak again. But more importantly Mrs. Flowers revives in Maya a natural love of literature shown earlier in her childhood obsession with William Shakespeare. As stated, earlier Maya as a child used to fill the emotional void by

escaping into the world of books and fantasy. She has been in particular in reading and memorizing works by William Shakespeare. As a literary icon and a symbol of white success Shakespeare is Maya's inspirational drive for knowledge, success and a stimulus for her later career as a writer. In her own words she describes him as her "first white love"(Angelou,2011, p.14) As an adult feminist, and human rights activist, Maya, like her author identifies with Shakespeare's empathy with the suffering of marginalized people. She ultimately comes to identify with him not only as a successful white writer but as one of her own black race and gender. As she puts it "Shakespeare was a black woman."(Ibid., p.22) Identification is a self-defense mechanism known as goal-oriented identification in which, as Hall explains "a frustrated person identifies with a successful person in order to be successful himself." (Halls,1954, p.76) Maya's pursuit of knowledge and passion for literature help her liberate herself from the limitations of her predicament as a black woman as well as cope with anxiety and trauma.

During this stage of early adolescence Maya like her author she lived through pivotal experiences that hindered her growth into a healthy maturation. Bravely on the threshold of the teenage stage, Maya is obliged to drive a car when her intoxicated father fails to do so. Her subsequent homelessness and home coming to witness her brother Bailey leaves home make them in print on her fragile personality, as already shattered by the residual of her childhood rape. The End of this phase is when she returns back to her mother's home. As she becomes morally confused, skepticism about her bisexuality and ending by making bad decisions. Her success to obtain a job of the first black female car conductor makes a turning point that with the aid of her mother rescues her from the edge of the precipice. Angelou experiences a relapse which appears in her confusion. This relapse is a normal psychological response that resulted from her rape in her childhood.

Being the first black female car conductor is a crucial experience for Maya's growth, since it asserts her capacity for independent action helping her to achieve self-independence and affirm her self-worth. In an introspective passage Maya describes how terrifying is the experience is yet how she manages to take control: "It was me, Marguerite, against the elemental opposition. As I twisted the steering wheel and forced the accelerator to the floor was controlling Mexico, and might and aloneness and inexperienced youth and Bailey Johnson, Sr., and death security, and even gravity."(Angelou,2011, p.232) This incident furthers her growing awareness that she can indeed do anything she sets her mind to, as her Mother Vivian continually insists on asserting to her regularly extolls.

A negative event that affects Maya's personal world view during this stage is her living as homeless for a short time. Maya's experience of homelessness comes in the aftermath of an argument between her and her father's girlfriend Dolores at a time

when Maya feels unwanted and humiliated. She leaves her father's house and lives in a car in the junkyard with other homeless adolescents for a month.

Despite its negativity Maya's homelessness teaches her lessons on survival, tolerance and diversity. With only herself to depend on, Maya feels lonely, abandoned but free and strong-willed: "I was a loose kite in a gentle wind floating with only my will for an anchor....I counted the headlights and said my prayers and fell asleep." (Ibid., p.245) Coming in close contact with youthful who are abandoned and deprived like herself, accepted and helped one another unconditionally teaches her lessons on commonality, belonging and human tolerance: "I was never again to sense myself so solidly outside the pale of the human race. The lack of criticism evidenced by our (ad hoc) community influenced me, and set a tone of tolerance for my life." (Ibid., p.247)

However, under the pressure of sheer need for shelter and care Maya ultimately seeks for mother Vivian's help and returns home. She calls Vivian and asks her to pay her airfare to San Francisco. In San Francisco, Maya notices that Adults have lost wisdom from the surface of their faces and come to recognize the educative value of life-hardship: "I reasoned that I had given up some youth for knowledge, but my gain was more valuable than the loss." (Angelou, 2011, p.248) When Maya arrives at home, she begins to rediscover her mother's unseen merits and reevaluate her from a new perspective: "I was at home, again. And my mother was a fine lady. Dolores was a fool and, more important, a lair." (Ibid., p.248)

On her return she finds that her mother has remarried Daddy Clidell and resettled in San Francisco. Maya depicts Daddy Clidell as the only true father figure she ever knows. She loves his strength and his tenderness "his character beckoned and elicited admiration" (Ibid., p.213) In her new step-father Maya finds a replacement for the father she never had. His character as she describes his: "He was a simple man who had no inferiority complex about his lack of education and, even more amazing, no superiority complex because he had succeeded despite that lack." (Ibid., p.213) As a father figure Daddy Clidell replaces father Big Bailey (during Maya's childhood). His satisfaction with this substitution heals her feeling of being unwanted and forgotten child: "Unexpectedly, I resembled him, and when he, Mother and I walked down the street his friends often said "Clidell, that's sure your daughter. Ain't no way you can deny her?" (Ibid., p.214)

Yet, Maya's homecoming and family reunion is mimed by her loss of her beloved brother Bailey who decides to leave home after a growing struggle between him and his mother: "He loved me." (Ibid., p.21) Maya depicts him as her only defender and supporter who understands her: "It was not that he pitied me but that he felt we were in the same boat for different reasons, and that I could understand

his frustration just as he could countenance my withdrawal." (Ibid., p.88) Bailey is the pride of the Henderson/Johnson family: "My pretty Black brother was my Kingdom come." (Ibid., P.23) After she returns home Maya notices that mother and Bailey relationship changed or what she calls power/love struggle has changed. Bailey has become much older too, his language has changed, his manners are indifferent: "I told myself that growing up was not the painless process one would have thought it to be." (Angelou, 2011, p.249)

Bailey's change at this phase in Maya's life is essential for her development, because, she used to believe that she is his concern, and that they used to share the same destiny, when he gives her the choice to leave with him: "Maya if you want to leave now, come on." (Ibid., p.253) Maya cries not for Bailey or for her mother or even for herself but for the helplessness of mortals who live the sufferings Life. Maya becomes terribly upset when Bailey finally moves out of Vivian's house. In spite of his assurance that he has a mature mind and that the time has come for him to leave the nest, she believes that he is too young for his age. After his departure Maya describes her room in her mother's house as a tomb, where it is impossible to stay, yet leaving holds no attraction for her; living everywhere else would be the anticlimactic after Mexico.

During this phase Maya develops a new understanding of herself and after one long semester she recognizes that her mother's awareness of life's risks assures her that she would be safe on the public transports as a car conductor. Ultimately Maya discovers that this experience makes her much wiser, older, and more independent. As she herself asserts: "I had gone from being ignorant of being ignorant to being aware of being aware. And the worst part of my awareness was that I didn't know what I was aware of." (Ibid., p. 262) Part of her growing awareness is her recognition of negative experiences contributes to her maturity process choosing death rather than to battle with life is the easier way out. Maturity comes only at a hash price: "It becomes easier to die and avoid conflicts than to maintain a constant battle with the superior forces of maturity." (Ibid., p.263)

In the adult Maya's voice Angelou's generalizes her own experience to include a whole generation. The message is summarized in Maya's epiphany that: "until recently each generation found it more expedient to plead guilty to the charge of being young and ignorant, easier to take the punishment meted out by the older generation." (Ibid., p.264)

Because of the nature and amount of traumatic experiences Maya goes through in childhood and teenage, she comes to grow older more quickly than the children around her. Her experiences—of driving the car in Mexico, living in the junkyard, returning to witness Bailey move out of the house, and then successfully

fighting to get a job as the first black conductor on the San Francisco streetcars, rather than to go back to the school where she would not belong—have made her suffer more than her peers but also mature.

Another crucial turn in the growth of Maya's identity as a black American woman is when she charts her own path, fighting to become the first black street car conductor in San Francisco. By looking for this job, Maya for the first time breaks the racist taboo which prohibited the black girl to become a car conductor in the racist society. Maya reflects her determined-spirit to take the job. Maya's words reveal her determination, strong will, and singleness of aim. They are highlighted in the added emphasis through capitalization as she tells to herself: "I WOULD HAVE THE JOB. I WOULD BE A CONDUCTOETTE AND SLING A FULL MONEY CHANGER FROM MY BELT. I WOULD." (p.260)

At the age of fifteen, Maya develops into adolescence with a singleness of mind and a stronger will. She refuses to give up the job she has chosen, and with her mother she gains knowledge about herself, about her mother's awareness of life's perils.

With Bailey's away the mother-daughter relationship undergoes chaotic change. Vivian ultimately comes to play her role as a mother worthwhile Maya gradually re-discusses and appreciates her mother's positive sides, from her Maya leaves to deal with life a new with passion and a singleness of aim and purpose: "Life is going to give you just what you put in it. Put your whole heart in everything you do, and pray, and then you can wait." Vivian equally asserts to Maya that: "God helps those who help themselves." (Angelou, 2011, p.261)

Vivian begins to play her role as a mother and take the responsibility of Maya. Meanwhile, Maya has developed her understanding of her mother Vivian and the way Maya and Bailey see her change from just a superhuman beauty to a real person with fears and insecurities of her own: "During this period of strain Mother and I began our first steps on the long path toward mutual adult admiration. She never asked for reports and didn't offer any detail... That I was no glory seeker was obvious to her, and that I had to exhaust every possibility before giving in was also clear." (Ibid., p.261) Vivian seems concerned with her children's well-being and even throws them a special party one night at two-thirty in the morning, enchanting Maya with her fun-loving and spontaneous nature. Although trained as a nurse, Vivian supports herself and her children by running poker games or gambling. Maya notes that even though Vivian reveals changeable, exaggerated outbreaks, she never compromises neither her power nor fairness and honesty.

This recognition on Maya's side foreshadows upcoming struggles for

survival and maternity that has yet to come. Not least formidable among them is her teenage pregnancy and her confused sure of herself as a female- namely her bisexuality.

Maya through herself- examine in the light of what she heard and read notices that: "I want to be a woman, but that seemed to be a world to which I was to be eternally refused entrance."(Ibid., p.272) But she still has fears about whether she might be abnormal. To satisfy her questions and to find out about her "normalcy" once and for all, Maya decides to have sex and try to work out a relationship with one of two brothers who live near her home. Three weeks later, with her questions still unanswered, she finds herself pregnant, and keeps her secret from everyone but Bailey.

Maya manages to graduate from her high school only three weeks before the birth of her son. Freud laid greater stress on the fact that perversions 'On Psychopathology (PFL 10)—the Oedipus complex. In the Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis "go through a process of development' that "they represent an end-product and not an initial manifestation ... that the sexual aberrations of childhood, as well as those of mature life, are ramifications of the same complex (London 1946) Otto Fenichel took up the point about the defensive function of perversions—of "experiences of sexual satisfactions which simultaneously gave a feeling of security by denying or contradicting some fear"...[though] neurotics, who have repressed perverse longings, may envy the perverts who express the perverse longings openly." (Fenichel, 1945, pp. 327–328)

Jean Clavreul, in his work, "The Perverse Couple", in Stuart Schneiderman ed., *Returning to Freud* (New York, 1980) others would stress how "there is always, in any perverse act, an aspect of rape, in the sense that the other must find himself drawn into the experience despite himself ... a loss or abandonment of subjectivity." (Clavreul, 1980, pp. 227–228) Similarly, Adam Phillips in his "On Kissing, Tickling and Being Bored" (London 1994) stresses that the object relations theory would point to the way "in perversion there is the refusal, the terror of strangeness"; to the way "the "pervert"...attacks imaginative elaboration through compulsive action with an accomplice; and this is done to mask psychic pain."(Phillips,1994,p.64)

Empirical studies would find "in the perverse relationships described...an absolute absence of any shared pleasures;"(Ibid., p.104) while at the theoretical level "perversions involve - the theory tells us—an attempted denial of the difference between the sexes and the generations", and include "the wish to damage and dehumanize ... the misery of the driven, damaging life."(Ibid., p.108)

Just as Maya's rape as a child appears to be the direct result of her displacement, in some ways her teenage pregnancy results from the early absence of her biological mother in her life as a directive agent and her continued effect of her neglect. Vivian certainly begins to take Maya seriously, but she does not take an active interest in finding out whether she has answered all of her questions; thinking that everything will be all right. When, Maya discovers that she is pregnant, she is overwhelmed by the catastrophe she brings to herself and takes all the blame for it "the crowded into her mind's tiniest corner by the massive pushing in of." (Angelou, 2011, p.227) In her fear, guilt, and self-revulsion, she had accepted her plight as the hapless, put-upon victim of fate and the Furies, but this time she had to face the fact that she had brought her new catastrophe upon herself.

Vivian is opposed to abortion, and Bailey is scared that she would quit school for the first three months: "I was adapting myself to the fact of pregnancy (I did not really link pregnancy to the possibility of my having a baby until weeks before my confinement)" (Ibid., p.277) Maya's acceptance of her responsibility for her pregnancy is mother mark of her moving into the adept phase- paving the way to later maturation to take place. Giving birth to her son ushers her even prematurely into her adulthood. When she confesses after graduating that she is eight months pregnant, Vivian and Daddy Clidell calmly accept the fact is that neither blaming nor punishing her for it: "to the fact that during what surely must have been a critical period I was not dragged down by hopelessness. Life had a conveyor-belt quality. It was unpursued and un-pursuing, and my only thought was to remain erect, and keep my secret along with my balance." (Ibid., p.278) Under the nursing and assuring influence of her mother Maya accepts the care and support of the child she gives birth to and ultimately comes to love and cherish it.

All over *IKWCBS*, Angelou portrays Maya's mother, Vivian Baxter Johnson, as an extremely vital personality, that she is the author's role model. Later through the events, Maya absorbs her personal philosophy and frequently quotes her maxims of life: "to describe her would be to write about a hurricane in its perfect power. Or the climbing, falling colors of a rainbow" (Angelou, 2011, p.49) Maya describes her beauty, and her autonomy: "She was like a pretty kite that floated just above my head. If I liked, I could pull it to me by saying I had to go to the toilet or by starting a fight with Bailey. I never did either, but the power made me tender to her." (Ibid., p.63) Maya the adult presents Vivian as so pretty: "I thought she looked just like the Virgin Mary. But what mother and daughter understand each other, or even have the sympathy for each other's lack of understanding?" (Ibid., p.67)

When Vivian finds it too inconvenient to care for her children or finds it too incompatible with her life style. She finds an excuse –a depressed Maya- to send them back to Stamps. Maya's mother is seen as a "shocking callus" and insensitive

by sending the little girl back to Stamps after been raped. Angelou through using the stream of consciousness travels inside her protagonist's mind showing the fear, pictures the children's needs for years to cope with the life of their mother: "Bailey persisted in calling her Mother Dear until the circumstance of proximity softened the phrase's formality to "Muh Dear," and finally to "M'Deah" I could never put my finger on her realness."(Ibid., p.66) Although the mother has prepared a place for the children, but all the time there is a hazard if they get on her nerves or if are disobedient, she can send them back to Stamps. The weight of appreciation and the threat, of a return to Momma were burden that blocked the childish wits into impassivity. She describes her mother saying that: "Mother hadn't been such pretty woman, light skinned with straight hair. She was educated, from a well-known family, and after all, wasn't she born in St. Louis? Then she was gay. She laughed all the time and made jokes"(Ibid., p.67) Maya is traumatized by events and full of unwarranted guilt. Stephanie A. Demetrakopoulos says that it is "puzzling and unsettling." (Demetrakopoulos, 1980, p. 183)

Vivian is just as guilt as Bailey, Sr. of betraying their children. Thus there existed an awareness of an imperfect relationship with mother as well as father. Even if not openly acknowledged, this would have a direct effect upon sense of worth.

During this stage in Maya's growth, and towards the end of her autobiographical memoir *IKWCBS*, the two main maternal influences on her change as well. While Momma becomes less effective as Maya herself becomes a mother, Momma's effect on her decrease, giving way to that of Vivian who gradually grows more actively involved in Maya's life. Another female figure affecting Maya's life is her maternal grandmother, Mrs. Baxter, for whom Angelou herself has great pride. She was very light-skinned and probably could have easily passed as white, her choices to remain in the black community, and she was a political activist; the Baxter understood the strength of unity. She and her family spoke Standard English.

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