

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Kyiv National Linguistic University

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**TERM PAPER**

**Symbolic Images in Poem “Caged Bird” by Maya Angelou**

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CSc (Linguistics)

Kyiv 2024

Міністерство освіти і науки України  
 Київський національний лінгвістичний університет  
 Кафедра англійської філології і філософії мови

**КУРСОВА РОБОТА**

на тему: **Символічні образи у вірші Майї Анжелу “Caged Bird”**

студентки 4 курсу групи мла 05-20 факультету германської  
 філології і перекладу

денної форми здобуття освіти

спеціальності 035 філологія

спеціалізації 035.041 германські мови та

літератури (переклад включно), перша –

англійська

освітньо-професійної програми англійська

мова і друга іноземна мова: усний і

письмовий переклад

**Ткачук Юлії Сергіївни**

Науковий керівник: кандидат філологічних

наук, доцент **Редька Інна Анатоліївна**

Національна шкала \_\_\_\_\_

Кількість балів: \_\_\_\_\_

Оцінка: ЄКТС \_\_\_\_\_

Члени комісії

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м. Київ – 2024 р.

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## INTRODUCTION

This coursework is dedicated to exploring the symbolism in Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird" and interpreting selected symbolic images.

In contemporary literary studies, the symbolism in poetry is one of the key areas of research as it reveals deep and intricate aspects of artistic creation and human existence. In this coursework, we examine the theoretical foundations of studying symbolic images in the poetic text, as well as their practical realization using Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird" as an example. Our study delves into the concepts of symbol and symbolism, their typology, functions, and roles in exploring themes and expressive elements in poetic texts.

This coursework provides an opportunity to delve deeper into the world of symbolism in poetry and helps to reveal its functionality as a means of literary expression. It is important to determine how symbols function in the text, how they are perceived by the audience, and what semantic load they carry. By analyzing various symbols and their impact on the interpretation of the work, we can understand the themes and ideas that poets seek to express through symbolic images.

Our research will help identify how symbols reveal and reinforce thematic motifs in the poetic text, how they evoke emotional responses, and prompt the reader to a deeper understanding of the text. We will also pay attention to the role of context and cultural background in the perception and interpretation of symbols.

**The relevance of this study** lies in the fact that symbolism in poetry is an important tool for revealing profound meanings and themes, as well as for enriching the reader's experience by uncovering new layers of interpretation of works of art.

**The object of the study** is the symbolic images in Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird".

**The subject of the study** is functioning of symbols in "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou.

**The aim of the study** is to reveal the theoretical concepts of symbolism in the poetic text, as well as to investigate the functions and significance of symbolic images in poetic texts using the selected work as an example.

The stated aim involves the following **tasks**:

1. examine the theoretical concepts of symbol and symbolism in literature;
2. investigate the classification of symbols based on their purpose and type;
3. reveal functions of symbols in poetic texts;
4. examine the practical realization of symbolic images in the poem “The Caged Bird” by Maya Angelou.

To accomplish these tasks, we employed the following theoretical and practical research methods:

- linguo-stylistic analysis to identify the symbolic imagery and its function within the text;
- the method of textual analysis to uncover the thematic essence of the text within networked complexity;
- methods of text interpretation to explore various elements, such as language use, literary devices, context, and cultural references, to establish the author's intentions, thematic elements, and key messages.

**The theoretical significance of the study** lies in the fact that the obtained data can be useful for a deeper understanding of the concept of symbolism and symbolic images in literature. Specifically, the acquired theoretical knowledge on this topic can contribute to understanding the mechanisms of symbolic expression in literature and revealing the functions of symbols in artistic texts.

**The practical value of the study** lies in the fact that its materials and conclusions can be applied in the practice of specialized courses and in the compilation of guides or textbooks for students/readers with the aim of better understanding poetic works through the analysis of symbols, enhancing the reader's experience, and developing critical thinking. Additionally, the theoretical foundation and analysis of symbolic images in Maya Angelou's poem “Caged Bird” can serve as a basis for studying other symbolic signs in the works of this author and others.

**Structure of the work.** The coursework consists of two chapters, conclusions to each of them, general conclusions, résumé, list of used sources, and list of illustrative sources. The introduction briefly presents the theoretical foundations,

features of the work's theme, main purpose and objectives of the research, relevance, theoretical and practical significance of the study. The first chapter examines the theoretical foundations of symbolism and symbolic images. The second chapter puts on view their practical implementation using the poem "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou as an example. General conclusions summarize the research results and indicate the most important theoretical and practical elements.

## **CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF SYMBOLIC IMAGES STUDYING IN POETIC**

### **1.1. Concepts of symbol and symbolism in literature**

For a deeper understanding of the subject matter of the course work, let us first familiarize ourselves with the concepts of symbol and symbolism as such.

In accordance with dictionaries, symbol, in the simplest sense, is anything that stands for or represents something else beyond it – usually an idea conventionally associated with it (Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms, Chris Baldick, 2001; p.263); by way of an alternative, a symbol is a word, place, character, or object that means something beyond what it is on a literal level (Literary terms and Definitions, Wheeler, K.).

Meanwhile, many scholars have also tried to define the concept of symbol, including Ferdinand de Saussure whose theory of sign gives more emphasis to internal structure devoted to cognitive thought process or activity of human minds in structuring the physical (material) or intangible (abstract) signs of their environments or surroundings, and among them is the structure of linguistic signs in the language system that allows them to function as human beings and communicate with each other. Saussure's theory is considered as the proponent to the thought that "language does not reflect reality, but rather constructs it, because we do not only use language or give meaning to anything that exists in the world of reality, but also to anything that does not exist in it" (Hoenisch, S., Saussure's Sign, 2015).

Apropos of symbolism term accordingly to Northrop Frye it (symbolism) usually conveys not so much a meaning as a vague expectation that the writer is going to try to be up to date (Northrop Frye, Symbol and Symbolism, 1952). Frye outlined the anticipation that writers set up when they employ symbols in their works, emphasizing the vibrant and evolving nature of symbolic elements.

"Symbols are the imaginative signposts of life" (Margot Asquith). Consequently, everything we come across in this life has a deep meaning and is significant. Enigmas are hiding behind the curtains of our senses, expressing wildly scattered and sometimes incomprehensible edges of existence that trigger interest

and desire. Material objects, like a watch, for example, may be more than just a thing; it represents a deep, uncanny connection with a particular person and has the ability to go beyond mere symbolism and reveal preeminent, hidden truths. Like all circular forms incorporating a number of internal elements, the clock may be interpreted as a kind of mandala. Since the essence of the clock is to tell the time, the predominant symbolism is that of number. As a machine, the clock is related to the notions of 'perpetual motion', automata, mechanism and to the magical creation of beings that pursue their own autonomous existence (A Dictionary of Symbols, J.E. Cirlot, 106).

Concordantly, a clock in Orwell's dystopian novel emphasizes the oppressive nature of the government and symbolizes the control and surveillance exercised by the Party: "From somewhere far away there floated the faint shouts of children: in the room itself there was no sound except the insect voice of the clock" (Orwell, 1984). Alternately, in "The Old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway: "Age is my alarm clock," the old man said. "Why do old men wake so early? Is it to have longer days?" - the clock embodies the relentless passage of time and Santiago's struggle against both natural forces and his own aging. The ticking clock serves as a reminder of mortality and the inevitability of death.

Symbols take on new meanings as a result of the setting in which they are used. Symbols are inherently dualistic; they are both memories and expectations, concealing and revealing all at once. They act as a repository of our experience, reflecting not only our own background, but also the universal one embodied in various manifestations.

Subsequently, a symbol is any word, place, character, or object that denotes something beyond its literal existence, typically embodying an idea conventionally associated with it whilst symbolism is the representation of some concepts through other ones.

## **1.2. Typology of symbols**



“In a poetic text, a verbal symbol is traditionally defined as a multisubjective conventional motivated sign, in terms of content, which has two equal cores: direct concretely denotative meaning and figurative, abstract” (Horchak T.).

In the typology of symbols section, we introduce a semantic classification of verbal images-symbols based on the nature of their original meaning, derived referential meaning, and semantic transposition.

The Dictionary of language and linguistics (Hartmann and Stork, 1981) includes the entries of “Sign” (Chinese version, 1981) and “Semiotics” (1981), with the former dividing human signs into oral and writing signs and the latter defining semiotics as a systematic study of linguistic and non-linguistic signs. Though both definitions mention linguistic signs, which are comparatively easier to understand, it was not elaborated what non-linguistic signs are and what they consist of.

Usually signs exist in physical forms, in the meaning they carry, and in the media carrying the signs themselves. However not all signs are visible.

Considering the literal meaning, verbal image-symbols are divided into tangible and intangible. The former objectify a certain integrity, distinguished from the surrounding world through human activity and cognition. Among them are biomorphic, anthropomorphic, artifactual and object-spatial verbal image-symbols. Intangible verbal images, in terms of direct significance, denote spatial and temporal characteristics, attributes, phenomena, processes, etc. Such verbal image-symbols in this work are classified as temporal, spatial, spiritual-cultural, substantial, phenomenological, attributive, and procedural.

Belonging to the tangible category is the artifactually symbolic verbal image “jar” in “Anecdote of the Jar” by W. Stevens, symbolizing civilization displacing primal nature. Examples of intangible symbols include spatial verbal image-symbols “out far” and “in deep” in R. Frost's poem “Neither Out Far nor In Deep,” where they symbolically represent the external and internal, the known and the unknown.

Regarding the nature of semantic transposition, verbal image-symbols are traditionally divided into metaphorical and metonymic categories. The foundation of these divisions lies in analogy and association, relying on universal conceptual

connections – object similitude and implication. Analogy and association in the structure of verbal image-symbols can possess both strong and weak characteristics, determining the degree of symbolism of such verbal images. For instance, metonymic verbal image-symbols like “bread” and “roses” in J. Oppenheim's poem, symbolizing material and spiritual needs of women in society, are characterized by a higher degree of symbolism in terms of symbolic significance, as they are established and widely known. A lower degree of symbolism is observed in the verbal image-symbol “asphodel” in W. Williams's work, signifying the love of an elderly person, distinguished by depth and constancy, as such symbolic significance is not codified, nor fixed in the dictionary.

In addition to metaphorical and metonymic symbols, conventional verbal image-symbols are distinguished, which are not directly motivated and rely on social and cultural conventions. The symbolic meaning in this case is established through the interpreter's encyclopedic knowledge. In T.S. Eliot's poetic text “The Waste Land,” the verbal image-symbol “jug-jug” is associated with the myth of Philomela, raped by the cruel and debauched king Tereus and nowadays perceived as nothing, but violence.

In terms of derived referential sense, depending on the nature of the conveyed information, moral-ethical, theosophical, and emotional verbal image-symbols are distinguished. Moral-ethical verbal image-symbols actualize concepts of moral order – *good, evil, honor, dignity, pride, tolerance, conscience*, embodying the highest spiritual values of humanity. An example of a moral-ethical verbal image-symbol is “the black finger, pointing upwards” by A. Grimke, representing the pride, steadfastness, and resilience of African Americans.

Theosophical verbal image-symbols embody universal mental formations with abstract semantics, such as *God, eternity, faith, destiny, soul, life, death*. The verbal image-symbol “the still-point” in T.S. Eliot's “Four Quartets,” dedicated to contemplations on the concept of time, symbolizes eternity, the divine principle, the Logos.

Emotional verbal image-symbols embody emotionally-teleonomical and emotional concepts such as *joy, love, happiness, satisfaction, fear, anger, disappointment*. For instance, “marigolds” in W. Williams's poem “A Negro Woman” are emotionally-teleonomical, symbolizing joy and happiness.

Hence, the study of symbols explores the complex connection between the various forms of human expression. We investigate the vast array of linguistic and non-linguistic signals using a typology that classifies verbal images-symbols. While conventional symbols highlight cultural norms, the traditional separation into metaphorical and metonymic symbols provides insight into analogous and associative connections. Furthermore, theosophical, moral, ethical, and emotive linguistic pictures and symbols disclose levels of human experience encoded in language. The study of symbols generally demonstrates an elaborate relationship between the tangible and intangible areas of communication.

### **1.3. The role of symbolic images in exploring theme in poetic texts**

Examining the profounder notion of symbol, we can observe a correlation that this term has been used by scholars, critics, and writers since the times of distant epochs to the present day, because they always fill the artistic image with depth and expressiveness and contribute to the close interweaving of plot, subtext, real, mythological, and historical plans.

Images and symbols encryptedly convey what the author really wanted to say, but did not do so for one reason or another. They create the subtext of a work, i.e. its depth, and reveal the true meaning of what is written. The correct interpretation of symbols contributes to a deep and faithful reading of literary texts. Misunderstanding the symbolic nature of images, on the contrary, can lead to gross errors in the interpretation of the text, to distortion of the author's intention. Considering the concept of symbolism and its role in revealing themes and imagery in the context of poetic texts, Svitlana Shurma referred to the term "The Great Chain of Being". Her study focuses on how this concept affects the structure and metaphorical specificity of poetic speech, which contributes to a better

understanding and interpretation of poetic texts with their deeper meaning, for understanding symbols is the key to understanding a work.

In literature, symbols serve multiple purposes. They provide layers of complexity to an otherwise simple storyline and allow greater exploration of themes and characters. Moreover, they evoke emotional responses, stimulating your imagination while also challenging your understanding of the narrative (Symbolic Storytelling: How Imagery Creates Deeper Resonance, Paul Jenkins, 2023).

Symbols are an integral part of fiction, as they:

<b>Convey Complex Ideas</b>	Symbolism allows poets to communicate abstract and complex ideas in a condensed and evocative manner. By using symbols, poets can express emotions, concepts, and themes that might be challenging to articulate directly.
<b>Create Depth and Richness</b>	Symbols add depth and layers of meaning to a poem, transforming it from a simple description or narrative into a multi-dimensional work that engages readers on intellectual and emotional levels.
<b>Invoke Emotions and Imagery</b>	Symbols have the power to evoke strong emotions and vivid imagery. They can trigger associations and memories in readers, creating a more profound and personal connection with the poem.
<b>Invite Interpretation</b>	Symbolism encourages readers to actively participate in the poem's meaning-making process. The open-

	ended nature of symbols allows for multiple interpretations, making poetry a more interactive and thought-provoking experience.
<b>Convey Universal Themes</b>	Certain symbols carry universal meanings and are recognized across cultures. These symbols can help poets explore themes and ideas that resonate with people from diverse backgrounds, creating a sense of shared human experience.
<b>Infuse Ambiguity and Mystery</b>	Symbolism can introduce ambiguity and mystery into poetry, leaving room for readers to explore different layers of meaning and discover new insights with each reading.
<b>Add Artistic Beauty</b>	Skillful use of symbols enhances the aesthetic quality of poetry. Poets can craft vivid and imaginative imagery, making the language more lyrical and visually appealing.
<b>Represent Personal Expression</b>	Personal symbols in poetry, unique to the poet's experiences and emotions, allow for a more intimate and authentic form of self-expression.
<b>Critique Society and Culture</b>	Political or social symbols in poetry can be used to critique societal norms, express dissent, or advocate for social change.

<b>Build Themes and Motifs</b>	Symbols can be repeated throughout a poem or a collection of poems, building thematic motifs that unify the work and create a sense of coherence (Symbolism in poetry, Tochukwu Ezebube, 2023).
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To put it concisely, symbolism has the potential to be a tremendous tool for elevating storytelling when used correctly; it enables writers to transmit intricate ideas fast to their audience without having to explain every detail. Through an awareness of these diverse aspects of symbolism, writers can create stories that grab the imagination of their audience while delivering deeper meanings.

### **Conclusions to Chapter 1**

A symbol is an external, visible emblematic sign of an internal, invisible form, intended to express what cannot be said. Thus, symbols have a deep meaning and significance that exceeds their literal existence. Symbolism is a way of representing some concepts through others, which allows writers to convey complex ideas and themes in their works.

Verbal figurative and symbolic elements are divided into tangible and intangible, depending on their direct meaning and semantic transposition. Metaphorical and metonymic symbols, as well as conventional symbols, reveal differences in the transformation of concepts through analogy and association.

Symbols in literature perform a versatile function: they enrich the plot, enable the exploration of themes and characters, trigger emotional reactions, prompt interpretation, and represent personal statements.

## CHAPTER 2. FUNCTIONS OF SYMBOLIC IMAGES IN 'CAGED BIRD' BY MAYA ANGELOU

### 2.1. Symbolism of the “caged bird” image

As we can observe symbols might have different meanings and interpretations based on various aspects such as personal perception of the world, cultural features, historical characteristics, etc.

With regard to the image of bird itself which belongs to the winged being it is symbolic of spiritualization. The bird, according to Jung, is a beneficent animal representing spirits or angels, supernatural aid, thoughts and flights of fancy (A Dictionary of Symbols, Edited by Juan Eduardo Cirlot).

Nevertheless, as we read the poem (“The complete collected poems of Maya Angelou”, p.299), we encounter non-singular word “bird”, but with the descriptive adjective “caged” that decidedly determines its symbolic semantics.

A bird in a cage represents limitation, tyranny, and imprisonment. When the little cage obstructs the wings' ability to spread and restricts the range of motion, the situation becomes particularly dire. The restricted freedom is further highlighted by tied feet.

The image of "caged bird" can be considered an intangible verbal image-symbol, as it does not represent a concrete object, but an abstract idea of confinement and the desire for freedom. It is also a spatial and phenomenological verbal image-symbol, as it expresses the physical aspects of imprisonment and the desire for freedom.

In Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird", a combination of several literary devices is used to express the image of the "caged bird" and its symbolic meaning, such as:

- A metaphor for limited freedom and the desire for freedom. The caged bird represents the state of imprisonment and the desire for liberty.
- Epithets to emphasize the state of the bird and its environment. For example, "narrow cage" helps to convey a sense of confinement and fear.

- Metonymy, which represents not only the bird itself, but also stands for any limited life deprived of the possibility of free expression.

These literary devices help the author to effectively convey the symbolic meaning of the "caged bird" and its importance for the theme of the poem.

In the meantime, the caged bird's song attains a more profound meaning and represents a mournful manifestation of the soul. The bird's song, which becomes a symbol of the unrestrained drive to express oneself and follow aspirations despite obstacles and constraints, conveys the bird's yearning for escape even under harsh conditions. The bird's song may be heard "on the distant hill" in this context, signifying faith and hope that the desired freedom can be acquired even in the most trying circumstances.

Concisely, the image of a caged bird adopts the connotations of constraints and confinement while conveying the tragic contrast between the desirable freedom and the actual captivity thus invoking strong emotions/ vibrant imagery and fostering critique of societal norms.

## 2.2. Symbolism of the "free bird" image

We may notice the use of juxtaposition in Maya Angelou's poem, establishing a counterpoint between the free birds and the caged birds.

Considering the image of "free bird" in Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird," we can view it as an intangible verbal image-symbol that expresses the abstract idea of freedom and self-sufficiency. It does not represent a specific object, but embodies the universal concept of an individual's right to be free. Moreover, this specific symbol is anthropomorphic in the sense that it embodies human-like qualities and characteristics, particularly those associated with freedom and autonomy. By attributing human-like traits to the bird, such as the desire for freedom and the ability to soar, the poem creates a relatable and empathetic connection between the reader and the symbol; emotionally-teleonomical in the sense of powerful emotional responses tied to the innate human desire for freedom – "teleonomical" refers to the human longing for liberation from constraints, whether physical, emotional, or societal. "Emotional" refers to the ability to evoke feelings of hope, aspiration, and



the yearning for a life unfettered by limitations; and spiritual-cultural in the sense of various cultures and belief systems, where the bird has often been symbolically associated with freedom, transcendence, and the human spirit's ability to soar beyond earthly constraints.

While the enslaved bird symbolizes the subjugation of black people, the free bird is a symbol of the white population and their legitimate advantages in all spheres of life, both spiritual and material. It is not bound by a cage or circumstances, free to fly and move. A free bird floats with the flow, meaning that life is easy and provided with all possible benefits, they do not have to make efforts to combat difficulties, i.e., swim against the current. They are so much helped by all the animate and inanimate things that exist on earth that they even dare to go up to the sky and claim it as their own which reflects the inner state of a free bird who feels that they have their own space and belong to the great kingdom of heaven. The sky is the symbol of infinity, the absence of constraints, endless possibilities, the sky, after all, is not a limit, but the ground is (especially for birds) according to Allen Roulsten. Leaping on the back of the wind indicates the forward-looking nature of a free spirit bird, which is not afraid of challenges and is ready to feel the flow of the wind of life; orange sun rays symbolize the desire for light, warmth and height. A free bird allows itself a higher level of existence; and thoughts of other breezes and trade winds indicate a wider world and the ability to think outside of limitations. Because they were born under a lucky star to be able to dream of such large-scale things, while caged birds are fighting for the basic right to exist.

Essentially, the free bird acts as a symbol of white privilege, conveying complex ideas of the placidity of life without the constant struggle. Its downstream floating and reaching for the sky symbolize infinite possibilities and internal freedom creating depth and richness.

### **2.3. Other symbolic images**

Beyond the central imagery of the caged and free birds, Maya Angelou incorporates additional elements of nature symbolism to deepen the poem's impact and resonance.

Through her masterful use of nature symbolism in “Caged Bird,” Maya Angelou invites readers to contemplate the universal themes of freedom, oppression, and resilience in a deeply personal and evocative manner.

1. The cage – which is described as “narrow” – holds the bird captive, preventing it from living and moving freely. Through metaphors and personification, this cage comes to define the bird and strip it of its identity, indicated by the fact that the bird is referred to as the “caged bird” for the majority of the poem. As a symbol, the cage represents the historical and cultural oppression experienced by Black Americans, the emotional constraints imposed on Black individuals, stemming from fear of societal repercussions. By defining the bird solely by its captivity, the cage reflects how racial oppression reduces individuals to their race, denying them their full humanity. The use of epithets like "narrow" emphasizes the suffocating nature of the oppression;
2. The mention of the caged bird's song in Maya Angelou's “Caged Bird” holds deep symbolic significance. The song, described as being sung with a “fearful trill,” evokes the musical tradition of Black spirituals, which were sung by enslaved individuals as a means of expressing their suffering and longing for freedom. Therefore, the caged bird's song can be interpreted as a reflection of the profound pain and desire for liberation experienced by Black people throughout history. Moreover, the caged bird's song may also be understood metaphorically as an outcry against oppression, representing the collective voice of Black individuals striving for freedom and equality. Epithets like "fearful" amplify the emotional intensity of the song;
3. The symbol of wind stands for movement, and the longing for liberation. Throughout the poem, the wind is portrayed as a force that carries the caged bird's song to distant places, symbolizing the bird's yearning for freedom beyond the confines of its cage. Additionally, the wind can be interpreted as a symbol of change and transformation. Just as the wind is constantly in motion, so too is the struggle for freedom and equality;

4. Throughout the poem, the sun is depicted as a source of warmth and light, contrasting with the darkness experienced by the caged bird. The sun, with its radiant presence, symbolizes enlightenment and awareness. Just as the sun illuminates the world, so too does the bird's song shed light on the injustices. Epithets like "radiant" emphasize its symbolic brightness and positivity;
5. The downstream symbolizes the future, where the struggles and aspirations of the oppressed may find resolution and freedom. However, the current serves as a reminder of the continuous movement of life, with no guarantees of what lies ahead. Furthermore, the downstream can also represent progress. As the bird's song travels downstream, it suggests the spreading of awareness and the potential for social change;
6. The symbol of the sky represents freedom, expansiveness, and limitless possibility. It represents a realm of boundless opportunity, where the caged bird's spirit can soar unrestricted. By juxtaposing the bird's confinement with the immenseness of the sky through the epithet "vast", Angelou underscores the inherent desire for autonomy.

Therefore, Maya Angelou's use of nature symbolism in "Caged Bird" contributes to the profound exploration of universal themes such as freedom, persecution, and fortitude that emerge in the poem. Through a masterful incorporation of symbols such as the cage, bird song, wind, sun, current, and sky, Angelou invites readers to delve into the emotional and existential grapples experienced by marginalized people, especially black Americans. Ultimately, Angelou's masterful use of nature's symbolism in *Bird in the Cage* transcends the specifics of racial oppression and resonates with readers on a deeply personal level, performing a number of functions such as: building themes, inviting interpretation, creating richness, invoking emotions, criticism of society and culture.

### **Conclusions to Chapter 2**

In conclusion, an exploration of the symbolic imagery in Maya Angelou's "Caged Bird" extends our understanding of the poem's central themes of freedom, suppression, and endurance. Through the analysis of various symbols, such as the

caged bird, the free bird, and additional elements of nature symbolism, Angelou crafts a narrative that relates to readers on multiple levels.

The intangible, spatial, and phenomenological verbal image-symbol of the caged bird with intensified by metaphors, epithets and metonymy, depicts the spatial aspects of restrictions and imprisonment that marginalized people, particularly black Americans, have experienced under historical and cultural oppression. It emphasizes the tragic contrast between the dreamed-of freedom and the harsh reality of captivity, highlighting the emotional and physical limitations imposed by societal injustice.

Similarly, the anthropomorphic, emotionally-teleonomical, spiritual-cultural symbol of the free bird illustrates the privileges and advantages granted to the white people, symbolizing a life free from constant deprivation. The image of a free bird floating downstream and reaching for the sky symbolizes limitless possibilities and inner freedom, which is contrasted with the limited existence of a caged bird.

In addition, Angelou's integration of complementary elements of nature symbolism, such as wind, sun, current, and sky, adds depth and complexity to the poem's thematic exploration and fulfilling various functions, including themes building, interpretation inviting, richness creating, emotions invoking, society criticism. These symbols evoke ideas of movement, change, enlightenment, and limitless possibilities, further emphasizing the universal human experience of pursuing liberation and self-determination.

### **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

Beyond a literal reading, symbolic imagery in literary texts – especially poetry – reveals levels of meaning and thematic complexity. Poets and academics explore the depths of human experience, societal dynamics, and existential issues through symbol analysis, providing readers with a richer reading experience.

In literature, symbolism acts as a link between tangible and intangible worlds, enabling authors to describe difficult concepts and feelings clearly and succinctly. Poets employ symbols to provide their writings with a deeper meaning, so enabling readers to engage with the material on several levels of interpretation.

We have studied the definitions, typologies, and functions of symbols and symbolism in poetic expression within the theoretical framework that was introduced in Chapter 1. From Northrop Frye's practical applications to Saussure's abstract ideas and Horchak's researches, the discussion of symbols has offered a framework for comprehending their importance in literary interpretation.

Furthermore, the analysis of symbol typologies – which encompass conventional, metaphorical, metonymic, and immaterial categories – helped us to comprehend the diverse ways in which symbols are used in poetry writings. The categorization of symbols according to their theosophical, moral, ethical, and emotional derived referential meaning highlighted the complex character of symbolic representation and its functions.

Chapter 2 examines how Maya Angelou used symbolic imagery in her poem “Caged Bird,” highlighting how symbols may enlighten major ideas, elicit strong feelings, and encourage in-depth thought. Angelou has crafted a story that strikes a profound existential and sociological chord with readers by analyzing the symbols of the trapped and free birds as well as other aspects of nature, such the cage, bird singing, wind, sun, current, and sky.

Essentially, the study of symbolic images in poetic text provides insights into the complexities of existence, the struggle for freedom, and the resilience of the human spirit. Scholars and readers can uncover profound truths and hidden meanings in poetic text by exploring its symbolic language.

## РЕЗЮМЕ

Дослідження на тему символічні образи у вірші Майї Анжелу “Caged Bird” присвячено вивченню символізму в поетичному тексті, з акцентом на вище зазначеному літературному творі та інтерпретації символічних образів у ньому. Курсова робота складається зі вступу, двох розділів, загальних висновків, резюме, списку використаної літератури та списку ілюстративних джерел.

Перший розділ “Теоретичні засади вивчення символічних образів у поетичних текстах” (“Theoretical Background of Symbolic Images Studying in Poetic Texts”) має теоретичний характер і заглиблюється в загальну базу дослідження символічних образів у поезії. У ньому розглядається аналітичне підґрунтя, яке надає інформацію про символи та символізм, їхні ознаки, типологію, та роль у тематичному розкритті поетичних текстів.

Другий розділ “Функції символічних образів у творі “Caged Bird” Майї Анжелу” (“Functions of symbolic images in “Caged Bird” by Maya Angelou”) має практичний характер. У даній частині роботи увага зосереджується на практичному аналізі символічних образів у вірші Майї Анжелу. Також тут представлено дослідження різних символічних образів, їхніх функцій та смислового значення, яке в них закладено.

Насамкінець, дослідницька робота заглиблюється у значення символізму в поетичних текстах, зокрема, через аналіз символічних образів у вірші Майї Анжелу “Caged Bird”, пропонуючи уявлення про його тематичні дослідження та виражальні прийоми.

**Ключові слова:** *символізм, символічні образи, поезія, Майя Анжелу, “Caged Bird”.*

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