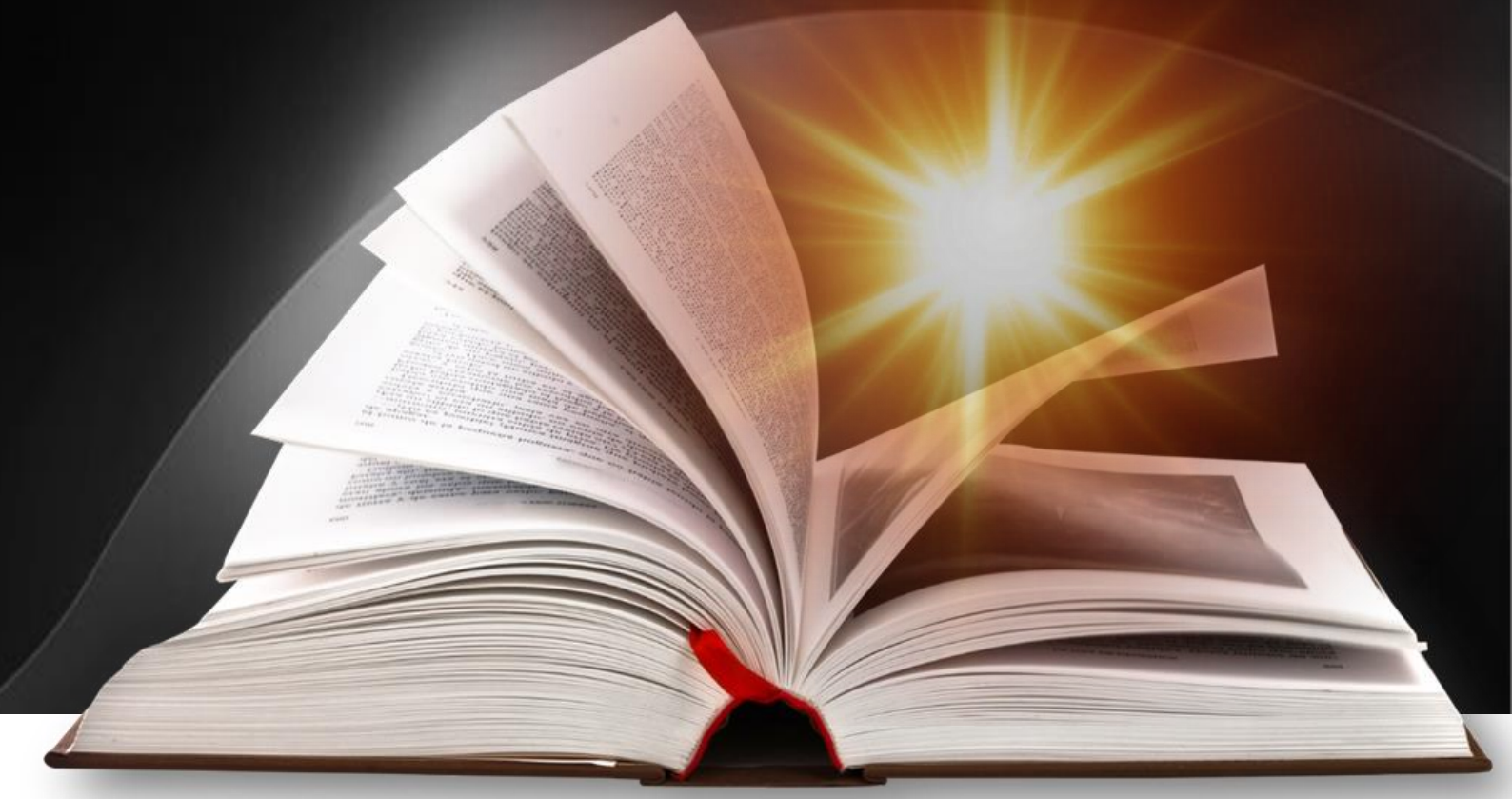
ISSN
: 2790-6248
: 2790-6256

RPJ

Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse

- Pan African Youth Journal -



Volume 2, n°3, Septembre - Décembre 2023

EDITIONS LUMUMBA
Un nouvel élan de l'édition africaine

Association Panafricaine pour l'Encadrement et la Formation de la Jeunesse

AS
African Scientific Universe

Afrindala Group

The Messiah complex in Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

[Le Complexe du Messie dans I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings de Maya Angelou]

Tégawendé Stéphane OUEDRAOGO
Wôkoudo Marcel MASSIMBO
Université Joseph KI-ZERBO / Burkina Faso
E-mail: massiwok@gmail.com

ISSN
: 2790-6248
: 2790-6256

Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse

- Pan African Youth Journal -

DOI : https://doi.org/10.58610/RPJ.2790.6248.6256.31
Editions Lumumba I Afriscience I Association Panafricaine pour l'Encadrement et la Formation de la Jeunesse

EDITIONS LUMUMBA
Un nouvel élan de l'édition africaine

Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse (RPJ)
ISSN : 2790-6248
e-ISSN : 2790-6256
Volume 2, n°3, Septembre – Décembre 2023
© Editions Lumumba - APANAEFJ
Bibliothèque Nationale du Congo I Ordonnance loi n° 89-010
du 11 janvier 1989 – Permis d'implantation n° BNC/DPHK/08/2022

Afrindala Group

La Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse (RPJ) est une revue scientifique internationale, interdisciplinaire et interactive. Elle se veut un lieu de diffusion de travaux de recherche originaux et substantiels sur diverses questions liées aux enjeux et défis des sociétés africaines, dans toutes les disciplines scientifiques. La RPJ est enregistrée par le Centre International de l'ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) sous les numéros ISSN : 2790-6256 et e-ISSN : 2790-6248.

Les Éditions Lumumba, sous la houlette du label panafricain Afrindala Group, branche scientifique « Afriscience », sont une maison d'édition enregistrée en RD Congo conformément à l'Ordonnance-Loi n° 89-010 du 11 janvier 1989 et opérant sous le permis d'établissement n° BNC/DPHK/08/2022. Enregistrées auprès de l'Agence Internationale de l'ISBN, par l'intermédiaire de l'Agence Francophone pour la Numérotation Internationale du Livre (AFNIL), les Éditions Lumumba sont enregistrées sous l'identifiant éditeur : 978-2-38489.

Le comité scientifique international, composé d'enseignants et de spécialistes d'Afrique et d'ailleurs, assure une diversité d'expertises et de perspectives. En tant que membre de Crossref, une organisation américaine participant à l'indexation globale du contenu scientifique, les Éditions Lumumba bénéficient d'un préfixe DOI (10.58610) pour attribuer un DOI unique à chaque œuvre éditée. Cela permet aux publications d'être accessibles à des milliers de membres de Crossref et à des centaines d'organisations, y compris des institutions scientifiques et universitaires du monde entier, augmentant considérablement la visibilité et l'impact international des travaux publiés.

Les Éditions Lumumba s'appuient sur un vaste réseau de distributeurs et de partenaires internationaux, incluant des universités, des ONG et de grandes plateformes telles que CAIRN.INFO (la plus grande bibliothèque numérique francophone), DILICOM, OpenEdition Books, la plateforme Afriscience, etc.

© Editions Lumumba, décémbre 2023

Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse

— RPJ —

- Pan African Youth Journal –

Revue scientifique internationale, interdisciplinaire et interactive

Périodicité : avril, août et décembre
Prix du numéro : 30 USD
Abonnement annuel : 100 USD
Version numérique disponible sur : www.afriscience.org
Suivez-nous sur nos réseaux sociaux :
@editionslumumba | @afriscience

Imprimé en République Démocratique du Congo

Tél. (+243) 90 43 370 19
Email : contact@editionslumumba.com
Site web : www.editionslumumba.com
Siège : 10, avenue de la Moto croisement boulevard M'siri, ville de Lubumbashi, RD Congo

Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse – RPJ –
©Editions Lumumba
ISSN: 2790-6248 I e-ISSN: 2790-6256
Volume 2, n°3, Septembre – Décembre 2023

Editorial

C'est avec une exaltation palpable que nous vous convions à explorer les tréfonds de la pensée et de l'innovation africaines à travers ce dernier chef-d'œuvre, le couronnement de l'année 2023 pour la Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse. À l'intérieur de ces pages, se déploie une mosaïque foisonnante d'idées et de perspectives, émanant des esprits les plus éclairés du continent africain et au-delà.

Notre objectif transcendantal reste clair et impérieux : éclairer la scène intellectuelle pour les décideurs politiques, les chercheurs, les acteurs sociaux et toutes les âmes assoiffées de connaissance, en offrant des données scientifiques solides comme socle inébranlable.

La Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse s'est affirmée comme une voix internationale, un carrefour où convergent et s'entrelacent des études profondément enracinées dans la réalité africaine. Autrefois freinées par des barrières éditoriales, ces études rayonnent désormais, reflétant la diversité des voix et des expériences qui composent la richesse de notre continent.

L'essor fulgurant de la science africaine est un patrimoine collectif à cultiver, une source d'énergie à entretenir avec ferveur. Les membres dévoués de notre comité scientifique, accompagnés d'experts issus d'horizons variés, ont embrassé avec ardeur le défi d'enrichir la pensée africaine. La diversité des connaissances et des idées, s'étendant des confins d'Afrique et au-delà, fait de la RPJ une plateforme panafricaine en constante métamorphose, porteuse d'une promesse renouvelée à chaque page.

En tant que bastion de la recherche africaine, la RPJ s'engage avec intransigeance à maintenir des normes de qualité rigoureuses, chaque article publié étant le fruit d'un processus de sélection sérieux avec un taux d'acceptation de 50%. L'enthousiasme chaleureux que nous recevons d'un public vaste et diversifié, tant africain qu'international, est une attestation vibrante de notre engagement indéfectible à promouvoir une science africaine robuste et irréprochable.

Ce numéro exceptionnel présente les contributions de chercheurs éminents, explorant des domaines aussi variés que la jeunesse, l'éducation, le sport, l'environnement, le développement durable, la santé, la psychologie, le droit, la politique, la sociologie, les lettres, les langues, et les arts. Chacun de ces articles, ciselé avec minutie, offre une plongée captivante dans des thématiques cruciales pour notre temps.

Notre équipe éditoriale, main dans la main avec notre comité scientifique et nos évaluateurs externes, travaille sans relâche avec les auteurs pour garantir la qualité et

la pertinence de chaque contribution. Cette synergie collaborative est cruciale pour propulser la science africaine au pinacle international, assurant que les sociétés africaines récoltent pleinement les fruits de la recherche novatrice.

Nous vous invitons à vous plonger avec passion dans ce numéro captivant, à dévoiler les trésors de la science africaine et à rejoindre notre communauté de lecteurs. En participant à cette aventure intellectuelle, vous contribuez à renforcer l'influence de la science africaine à l'échelle mondiale, ouvrant ainsi la voie à des sociétés africaines éclairées par les lumières de la recherche de qualité. Embarquez avec nous dans ce voyage fascinant à travers les découvertes, les innovations, et les idées qui sculptent le futur dynamique de l'Afrique et du monde.

Dr Basile Mulwani Makelele
Professeur des Universités

Equipe de la revue

Comité de rédaction

- Directeur de Publication : M. le Pr. Basile Mulwani Makelele, RD. Congo
- Rédacteur en chef : M. le Pr. Philippe Kasongo Maloba Tshikala, Belgique
- Rédacteur en chef Adjoint : M. Valery Ngoy Ndala, RD. Congo
- Examinateur principal : Jean-Micky Kafuwa Musongo, RD Congo
- Secrétaire éditorial : William Agbaka, Bénin
- Coordinateur du processus d'adhésion : Marie Mbatshiona Mundi, RD Congo
- Gestionnaire administratif : Banon Zinsou Côme, Bénin
- Gestionnaire financière : Clarisse Mwelwa Bilepo
- Coordinateur des partenariats : Fidèle Bukasa Kabwe, RD Congo
- Gestionnaire des statistiques : Kalunga Shakoli Dieu Merci, RD Congo
- Traducteur en chef : Dr. Fo-Koku D. Woameno, Togo
- Correcteur principal : Jean-Micky Kafuwa Musongo, RD Congo
- Responsable de la publication en ligne : Mme Blin Acouh Marie-José, Côte d'Ivoire

Comité éditorial :

- Abdoulaye Ouedraogo, PhD, Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de la Planification (MEFP), Burkina Faso
- Abi-Kaberou Gildas, PhD, UAC/ENS-Porto-Novo/Laboratoire de Pédagogie et Didactique des Sciences Humaines (LaPEDIH), Bénin
- Adaba Koffi Amessou, PhD, Université de Lomé, Togo
- Akimou Tchagnaou, PhD, Université de Zinder, Niger
- Ambombi Eyolo Azede Espoir, PhD, Chaire MBA, Afrikan campus, République du Congo
- Amoussou Franck, PhD, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin
- Ballo Drissa, PhD, Enseignant-chercheur, Mali
- Basile Mulwani Makelele, PhD, Université de Lubumbashi, République démocratique du Congo
- Bekolo Engoudou Bruno, PhD, Université de Douala, Cameroun
- Bitouga Bernard Aristide, PhD, Université de Douala, Cameroun
- BOUMA Carine Nadège, PhD, Université de Bamenda, Cameroun

- Christian Bumute, PhD, Université de Likasi, RD Congo
- Essome Lele Gislain Arnaud, PhD, Unité de recherche ECLLA, Université Jean-Monnet Saint-Étienne, Cameroun
- Félix N'dia Anon, PhD, Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire
- Fidélie Ntshikala Mbuya, PhD, Université de Kolwezi, RD Congo
- Fo-Koku D. Woameno, PhD, Université de Lomé, Togo
- Gaby Ilunga Mutombo, PhD, Université de Lubumbashi, RD Congo
- Gano Nouhou, PhD, Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, Sénégal
- Gninneyo Sylvestre-Pierre NIYA, PhD, École Normale Supérieure, Burkina Faso
- José Ngoy Wa Ngoy Twite, PhD, Université de Kolwezi, RD Congo
- Kabiena Kuluila Pierre Valery Dieudonné, PhD, Université Officielle de Mbuji-Mayi, RD Congo
- Kabuya-Kabeya Sthilobo Hilaire, PhD, Université Officielle de Mbuji-Mayi, RD Congo
- Kaniki Wa Cilombo Joseph-Robert, PhD, Université Officielle de Mbuji-Mayi, RD Congo
- Kongue Toyindou, PhD, Université de Lomé, Togo
- Lago Blé Angelin, PhD, Université Jean-Lorougnon Guede, Daloa, Côte d'Ivoire
- Lokossou Bonaventure, PhD, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin
- Matthias Cinyabuguma, PhD, Banque mondiale, RD Congo
- Melingui Ayissi, PhD, Université de Douala, Cameroun
- Metsena Ndjavoua, PhD, Université de Maroua, Cameroun
- Mohamed Atteyoub H. dit Modibo SIDIBÉ, PhD, Université des Sciences Sociales et de Gestion de Bamako (USSGB), Mali
- Moussa Coulibaly, PhD, Université Assane Seck de Ziguinchor, Sénégal
- Moussa Dourfaye Abdoul-kadze, PhD, Service de la santé, Niger
- Nebie Boukary, PhD, Université de Fada N'Gourma, Burkina Faso
- Ngala Ntumba Peter, PhD, Université Officielle de Mbuji-Mayi, RD Congo
- Ngono Ossango Pangrace, PhD, Université de Yaoundé, Cameroun
- Nkongolo Mulami Kapweka Alphonse, PhD, Université Officielle de Mbuji-Mayi, RD Congo
- Ntita Ntita Jean Christ, PhD, Université Officielle de Mbuji-Mayi, RD Congo
- Nyebe Atangana Sandrine, PhD, Ministère de l'Éducation Secondaire, Cameroun
- Patrice M'Bétien KONE, PhD, Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire

- Philippe Kasongo Maloba Tshikala, PhD, Université de Lubumbashi, RD Congo
- Raymond-Bernard Ahouandjinou, PhD, Université d'Abomey Calavi, Bénin
- Serge Caleb Mbula Musasa Mwadianvita, PhD, Université Pédagogique Nationale (UPN) de Kinshasa, RD Congo
- Sidibé Ousmane, PhD, Université de San Pedro, Côte d'Ivoire
- Yamsoumouna Ndimma Joël, PhD, Centre d'Études et de Recherche en Droit International et Communautaire (CEDIC), Tchad

Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse
Revue scientifique internationale
ISSN : 2790-6248 I e-ISSN : 2790-6256
Editions Lumumba
Un nouvel élan de l'édition africaine
Email : contact@editionslumumba.com
Afriscience
African Scientific Universe

The Messiah complex in Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

[Le Complexe du Messie dans I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings de Maya Angelou]

Tégawendé Stéphane OUEDRAOGO
Wôkoudo Marcel MASSIMBO
Université Joseph KI-ZERBO / Burkina Faso
E-mail: massiwok@gmail.com

Résumé

Portant un regard critique à travers la théorie psychanalytique de Sigmund Freud, nous sondons la tradition du Messie dans la littérature africaine-américaine afin de montrer comment le complexe du Messie contribue à la construction de l'identité africaine-américaine. Notre article étudie alors l'identité de l'héroïne de l'autobiographie écrite par Maya Angelou, afin de répondre à la question de la place de la littérature africaine-américaine dans la construction de l'identité américaine.

Mots-clés : africain-américain, revendication, complexe, identité, messie

Abstract

This paper studies the Messiah complex in Maya Angelou's autobiography. Through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, we probe into the Messiah tradition of Maya Angelou's work in order to highlight how the Messiah complex helps in the construct of American identity. We investigate the identity of Maya the heroine to answer the question pertaining to the place of African American literature in the American identity.

Keywords : african-american, claiming, complex, identity, messiah

0. Introduction

African American literature still does not occupy its rightful place not only in the U.S., but in the world in general. Even though being gradually recognized as literature *per se* thanks to scholars and critics including W.E.B Dubois (1868-1963), Richard Wright (1908-1960) and Toni Morrison (1931-2019) to name only a few, this literature is for good or for worse, considered a sub-branch of American literature. There is absolutely no doubt that this is due to the biases, stereotypes and clichés people of African descent have always been subject to worldwide. The French theologian Bruno Chenu is of that opinion of bias anyway. For the Bible scholar, "three stereotypes circulated about Africans: they were "black", "savage" and "pagan" (Chenu, 2000, p. 19) before they even landed in the U.S. Such stereotypes continue to inform the African American life.

Indeed, the race and culture of the African American people, is that of a suppressed people in bondage in the U.S. This people is literally and figuratively marked by the hot irons, the whips, the dehumanizing and blatant hatred of slavery (1619-1865), rape, discrimination as well as racism. Citing the historian Hubert Deschamps (1900-1979), Chenu (2000) maintains on the matter that "the descendants of slaves still feel [even today] the red iron that marked their ancestors" (p.26). One would therefore not do any justice to the descendants of Africans when talking about their identity, if one does not stress the potential complexes on the subconscious of this people.

Indeed, African Americans may have, due to racist socialization, internalized a complex of inferiority (Fanon 1967), or they may have rightly developed the Invisibility Syndrome, which syndrome is according to Erika R. Carr and Lindsey M. West (2013), prompted by "repeated experiences of perceived racial discrimination that perpetuate a feeling of low self-worth in the individual" (p.121). This syndrome is of course not caused by supernatural powers like Harry Potter's Cloak of Invisibility, but rather, by the insidious effects of racism. It is well illustrated by Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) whereby the hero laments over being invisible in the following words: "they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination indeed, everything and anything except me (p.4). W.E.B. DuBois (1903) was certainly right in his predictions about this era, "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line, the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (p.52).

In addition to the problem of the color line, slavery was followed by more lynchings, oppression and discrimination, which may have prompted schizophrenia and paranoia

among many psychological issues, which issues are revealed through behavior patterns like "hypervigilance," "outburst of anger" and "the feeling of a foreshortened future" observed in the subconscious of contemporary African American characters (DeGruy, 2005, p.77). However, would reducing the identity of African American characters to these patterns of behavior not be too simplistic and stereotypical?

Perhaps, the African American character in exile in the U.S. never truly embraced the American identity and culture in which he/she has been immersed by force ever since the brutal capture of their ancestors on the shores of Africa, and the inhumane deportation as well as treatment in the U.S. African American characters have perhaps embraced parts of the culture, but not all. DeGruy (2005) is nonetheless convinced that the legacy of trauma on the African American subconscious, serves to uncover the true identity of African Americans. In her *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* (2005) for instance, the critic holds that, "black slaves were hypervigilant about the whereabouts of their children, for such hypervigilance meant survival" (p.77). Being constantly threatened of extinction by the institution of slavery, Africans and their descendants automatically activated in their unconscious, coping strategies prompted by the instinct of conservation, all for the sake of their survival.

At any rate, this paper suggests that Maya the heroine of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) does not display the syndrome of invisibility or the inferiority complex, but rather uses survival techniques as well as a Messiah complex to reconstruct her identity. Would the Messiah complex then be the sole identity of African American characters? In the following of this paper, we will, through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, investigate Maya's identity. By doing so, we will answer the question pertaining to the identity of African American characters in general, for "the local and the universal, the particular and the general are always intrinsically linked" according to literary scholar Claudio Guillén (1993, p.5).

1. Background of the Freudian Psychoanalytic theory

Maya displays many unconscious behavior patterns. In order to understand them, there is a dire need to study her mind. The mind and mental states are however studied by psychoanalysis. This theory is based on the idea according to which, mental life and states strongly influence people's conscious and unconscious behaviors. Maya is a character based on poet, actress and Civil Rights activist Maya Angelou. The heroine is therefore the product of the human mind. Psychoanalyzing her unconscious

behaviors would not be too far-fetched, it is even very *à-propos*. Now, psychoanalysis is based on childhood events which influence later adult behaviors.

In this respect, the American Psychoanalytic Association (APA) stipulates that psychoanalysts are mainly concerned with understanding individuals through the exploration of their unrecognized impulses hidden in the unconscious. Psychoanalytic treatment is thus based on the idea that people are frequently motivated by unrecognized wishes and desires, which originate in one's unconscious (VandenBos 2015). This is the case with the heroine, Maya.

The APA's view on psychology is corroborated by Lipner et al. (2017) when they define psychoanalysis as a theory and a technique which considers the unconscious as a key element influencing human adaptation and behavior. Still in the same regard, F. Monte (1977) holds that it is the belief in the existence of unconscious internal states governing people's behaviors that guided Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The common point between these definitions of psychoanalysis is the stress put on the power of the unconscious to influence conscious behaviors.

The unconscious behaviors of the heroine*,* as well as her strong conscious will to fight not only for herself, but for her own race, and to rescue it from oppression are patent signs of a complex which can be located in her unconscious, hence the need to study it. In addition, the heroine reproduces differently the behavior of her parents who, by abandoning her, gave up their duty to provide her with love, affection, and protection. Indeed, she who was deprived of parental love takes upon herself the responsibility to care for her African American fellows as well as white people who are in contact with her, like her first employer Mrs. Cullinan,

> On our way home one evening, Miss Glory told me that Mrs. Cullinan couldn't have children. She said that the doctor had taken out all her lady parts. If Mrs. Cullinan was walking around without those essentials, it explained why she drank alcohol out of unmarked bottles. I felt pity for her. Mrs. Cullinan didn't know what she missed. Or maybe she did. Poor Mrs. Cullinan (Angelou, 1966, p.46)

Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) development of psychoanalysis in the late 19th early 20th centuries provides interesting insight into studying such behavior patterns. Unlike his predecessors such as Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893) and Josef Breuer (1842–1925) who relied only on hypnosis in their treatments of hysterical neurosis, Freud was convinced that hypnosis was not the most relevant method as it was not able to suppress neurotic troubles (Lipner and al. 2017). Freud (1919) demonstrated that these troubles have their origins in the unconscious. He explained that the satisfaction of people's instinctive needs such as eating and drinking provides some pleasure and

thus, have an unconscious sexual dimension. This satisfaction occurs through three progressive stages during childhood: the oral stage (the erogenous zone is the mouth), the anal stage (the anus is the erogenous zone) and the phallic stage (the genitals are the erogenous zone). This theory, which is not the only one developed by Freud implies that any dissatisfaction of the aforementioned instinctive impulses during childhood may result in later disorders.

The absence of Maya's parents during her childhood clearly denotes that she did not benefit from support as she went through these crucial stages in her psychological development. Such a shortfall constitutes a fertile ground for the development of complexes, including the Messiah Complex. The reader may claim that Maya consciously intimates her African American readers to follow her path and reconstruct their broken African American identity. Stanley Fish defends anyhow that readers create meaning as they read (Tyson 2006).

In his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud introduced another concept to the field of psychoanalysis, i.e., the"Oedipus complex."The critic drew the term Oedipus from Greek mythology, i.e., prince Oedipus. Oedipus' parricidal murder and his incestuous marriage with his mother are the events which interested Freud. Actually, Oedipus' behaviors occurred as the result of an unconscious complex sexual desire manifested in the relationship between Oedipus and his mother.

Freud thus stipulates that during childhood, children between three to five years of age normally believe they are in competition with their parent of the same gender for the love and affection of their parent of the opposite sex. He terms this, the Oedipus conflict (Tyson 2006).In the case of the mythological character Oedipus, Freud suggests that murdering his father is the result of the frustration Oedipus certainly felt against his father who, by possessing his mother, prevented young Oedipus from enjoying his mother's affection. What Freud reveals here, is that any poor conduct or worse, the absence of the oedipal conflict during childhood may have later repercussions in adults. Actually, children in such situations would be unable to identify with parents of the same sex, which could result in difficulties to develop a mature sexual identity (Karlsson 2010).

In Maya's case for instance, the heroine did not have the chance to experience the Oedipus conflict as such: her parents abandoned her at the age of seven. The heroine was even "shipped" like furniture to her grandmother (Maya Angelou, 1969, p.4). Consequently, the latter had absolutely no father to feel sexual desire for, and no mother to hate during her childhood. The behavior of her parents at this crucial stage

of psycho-emotional development has certainly had repercussions on her personality and could perhaps explain the reason why she presents symptoms of a complex. Daouda Loum in "Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*: A Coming of Age Novel" (2017) is even convinced that Maya's family is not the only African American family to face fragmentation, "the divided family is a metaphor for a black American society that keeps tearing itself apart. Maya's childhood is a perfect illustration of the erratic and perturbed life which results from this breaking up (p.59).

Indeed, through the narrative of her own life experience, Maya unconsciously shows that it is her duty to draw African Americans' attention on the importance of building strong family ties, which is key to their psychological and social development as well as success. There is thus no wonder why, among the most widely-read black female novelists, who are at the edge of the re-evaluation and reconstruction of the black woman's identity from both a humanistic consciousness and a female sensitivity, one can mention Maya Angelou—Marguerite Johnson her real name (Loum, 2017, p.58).

The exploration of the human unconscious is an interesting additional contribution that Freud made to psychoanalysis. The unconscious stands for the storehouse which keeps "painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them" (Tyson, 2006, p.12-13). Thus, Maya's unconscious is the place where painful experiences such as her rape are kept. Writing on it, she declared, "there was the pain. A breaking and entering when even the senses are torn apart. The act of rape on an eight-year-old body is a matter of the child's body breaking open, because the body can, and the mind of the rapist cannot stop" (Angelou, 1969, p.33). Fear of her parents' abandonment and the unresolved oedipal conflict were stored in her unconscious through repression.

Repression is however a temporary solution for these unwanted and painful experiences because they may reappear and influence conscious behaviors (Tyson 2006). For instance, Maya's repressed desire for parental love and affection leads her not to hate Mr. Freeman, her mother's boyfriend who raped her at the age of eight. Instead of feeling hatred and disgust for the man who soiled her dignity, Maya rather feels pity and guilt when Mr. Freeman is murdered by unknown people, certainly, as a punishment for raping her. Maya's compassion for her oppressor is nevertheless, reminiscent of the Christian Messiah Jesus Christ, who even though crucified, begged God to forgive his oppressors for "they do not know what they are doing" (*New Jerusalem Bible,* Luke. 23.34). It is therefore deducible that Maya associates her identity to that of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

As for the personalities of individuals, Freud believes that they are made up of three key ingredients which interact with one another. The first ingredient is the "id" which is made of all the unconscious, basic, and primary drives. The second is the "ego", which is the moderating self of personality. It represents the realistic and objective side of the self and prevents the "id" from satisfying needs and desires that are not socially acceptable. Last but not least is the "superego, "which contains the values and beliefs that parents and society teach. The interaction between the id, the ego, and the superego shape individual personalities.

Due to their absence when she was only seven, Maya's parents unconsciously tore her personality. She would have normally developed an inferiority complex or the Invisibility Syndrome. However, by observing the pride of her black community for its skin color, by observing its resilience against racism, Maya learned to love herself, to trust in her own capacities, and this helped her stop thinking that she was less beautiful than white girls. Self-confidence was therefore influential in building her personality and identity. With self-pride and confidence, the heroine does not mince her words when it comes to denouncing her unconscious ambivalence. She thus exclaims,

> Wouldn't they be surprised when one day I woke out of myblack ugly dream, and my real hair, which was long and blonde, would take the place of the kinky mass that Momma wouldn't letme straighten? When they saw my light-blue eyes, they wouldunderstand why I had never picked up a Southern accent, orspoken the language like they did, and why I had to be forced toeat pigs' tails. Because I was really white and a cruel magician hadturned me into a too-big Negro girl, with kinky black hair, broadfeet, and a space between her teeth that would hold a pencil (Angelou, 1969, p.2)

The illustrations provided here suggest that the scope of psychoanalysis can be extended to literature, for it unravels the heroine's unconscious behavior patterns such as ambivalence which is caused by the trauma of slavery and racism.

2. Feeling Responsible for the other: The Messiah Complex

From the Latin root *complexus*, "complex" means "involved, intricate, complicated, not easily analyzed, not simple or not straight forward." The Online Etymology Dictionary informs that the word "complex" was first coined in 1907 by the Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung (1875 – 1961). The word later evolved to become the psychological sense of connected group of repressed ideas. A complex

is thus, an underlying structure that is objectified as a theme by grouping clusters of emotions, memories, perceptions, and wishes in the personal unconscious. It is a psychoanalytic term, found extensively used in the works of Carl G. Jung as well as the Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud.

The Messiah complex is also generally known as a savior or a Christ complex. Now*, according to* Science ABC, a person who feels responsible for saving or helping others is the prototype of *someone suffering from a savior complex (*Staughton 2022*).* It is similar to egotism, healthy Narcissism, Machiavellianism and Superiority complex (Habermas 2004). For these critics, psychological concepts related to the Messiah Complex include: compensation, empathy, entitlement, and grandiosity, etc.

The Messiah complex is thus, a state of mind in which an individual holds the belief of being destined to become a savior. In addition, it also is a state of mind in which an individual feels responsible for saving or assisting others. For example, for Habermas (2004), "the Apostle Paul isthe perfect example of this complex, when he declares publicly that God spoke to him, telling him he would serve as a conduit for people to change." (p.209)

According to the American Psychological Association's (APA) *Dictionary of Psychology*, the Messiah complex is the desire and compulsion to redeem or save others or the world (VandenBos & Association 2015). The individual concerned may accordingly harbor the delusion of being divine. It is in other words, the feeling of being called to not only redeem oneself from trauma, including the trauma of slavery, but also racism, discrimination, segregation, oppression and injustice. It can therefore be easily deduced, that it is the delusion of having been endowed with divine power to lead oneself as well as one's friends and family to Salvation *hic et nunc*.

According to the International Bipolar foundation however, the Messiah complex is a complex psychological state when a person believes that he/she is a savior today or he/she will be in the near future. An example of this complex may be found in patients who have schizophrenia and bipolar disorders. Additionally, the Messiah Complex is similar to the Jehovah complex which leads individuals to harbor the delusion of being divine. No wonder why Habermas holds the Apostle Paul as the perfect example of a it ((2004)).

3. Psychoanalysis of the Messiah Complex in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

As Lois Tyson (2006) writes, psychoanalysis can be useful in reading and understanding literary texts because these texts are written by human beings and they deal with human behaviors (p.11). As it does for human beings in real life, psychoanalysis provides interesting insights into understanding authors, characters, texts, and even audiences. In this perspective, Mahroof Hossain (2017) asserts that "in the process of explaining literature, psychoanalysis has been used and, in the process, literature has been used as a source for psychoanalytic conceptions" (p.41). His quote denotes the fact that psychoanalysts, starting with Freud himself, use literature as case studies for illustrating their theories.

Indeed, Hossain (2017) further reveals that Freud's study of the Greek mythological character Oedipus and of William Shakespeare's Hamlet helped him coin the "Oedipus Complex" and he used this to explain the effects reading literary works may have on readers (p.41). Freud's view on the link between psychoanalysis and literature is clearly stated in his 1908 *Creative writers and Day-dreaming.* In this work, Freud stipulates that literary works can be compared to daydreams because they are both the expressions of their authors' fantasies. These fantasies involve the accomplishment of the daydreamers' and of the literary writers' unsatisfied wishes (Hossain 2017). Maya's unconscious behavior patterns can thus be interpreted as day dreams and as unsatisfied wishes of the implied author.

Such unsatisfied wishes may find satisfaction in the imaginative reality daydreamers and literary writers create (Hossain 2017). For instance, Maya's belief that she had received a messianic mission to save her brethren, stands for one of the imaginative realities she created in her work to satisfy her fantasy of being the messiah of her race. Our paper uses psychoanalytical concepts such as the oedipal complex, repression, and the unconscious to examine the manifestation of Maya's Messiah complex and how this contributes in the construct of her identity.

4. Psychoanalyzing Maya's Unconscious Behaviors

In order to grasp the critical analysis of this part, it is important to have background information. Ouedraogo 2023 in the article "Craved on slavery and Freedom: the African American Identity," highlights the necessary background information for reading the mind and understanding African American characters. The critic contends therein that,

> the history of the descendants of enslaved Africans is characterized by their constant trauma of displacement, dispossession, continuous dehumanization, humiliation, racial segregation, and exploitation. African Americans were viewed for centuries as people with no history, no cultural heritage, no tradition, and no identity in white America, which undoubtedly led many to develop a complex of inferiority out of the racist socialization they were exposed to (Ouédraogo, 2023, p.24017).

Having this background knowledge makes it relatively easy to comprehend some readers who may see in the heroine Maya, "a freedom fighter," a leader of her race and time, because there exists on the one hand the informed reader, and on the other, the profane reader. Some critics even refer to the informed reader as "the reader who has attained the necessary literary competency to experience a text in the fullness of its linguistic and literary complexity" (Tyson, 2006, p.204).

For Christian readers in particular, Maya may displays traits of "the Messiah," whose coming will right all wrongs. It would therefore not be too far-fetched to diagnosed her with the Messiah complex, rather than the complex of inferiority or the Syndrome of Invisibility. This Messiah complex is even more manifest when she declares,

> If on Judgment Day I were summoned by St. Peter to give testimony to the used-to-be sheriff's act of kindness, I would be unable to say anything in his behalf. His confidence that my uncle and every other Black man who heard of the Klan's coming ride would scurry under their houses to hide in chicken droppings was too humiliating to hear (Angelou, 1969, p. 18).

Judgment Day is of course biblical language, and by using this imagery, the heroine is suggesting that she would not simply be redeemed at the end of her life. Most importantly, she believes that she has been called by God to seat on the throne of judgment and be a judge of the big and final trial of mankind, i.e., Judgment Day.

Considering herself a divine judge is a clear indication of her Messiah Complex. She does not spare a chance to invite her community to a revival of their spirituality, which also reveals her American identity of Christianity.

In addition, Maya's act of defiance of the *status quo*, when she decides to become the first black streetcar conductor in San Francisco, "one whole semester the street cars and I shimmied up and scooted down the sheer hills of San Francisco" (Angelou, 1969, p.190), echoes a messianic mission to lead her people out of their trauma. Being not only an African American, but also, a female African American streetcar conductor in the racist and segregated U.S. renders the heroine completely different from others.

Indeed, Maya's choice to become a car conductor can be read as a metaphor. She herein reveals a psychological desire to conduct her own life. She also shows unconsciously through her action that, she desires to chaperone her race, to lead the African American people to the promised land of freedom and justice. In fact, the destiny of her race had so far been conducted by white enslavers, masters and racists, without any possibility to denounce or act consciously against it. The psychological trauma of slavery and discrimination explains the reason why Maya is determined to have the ability to speed up, step on the brake, or stop at her own convenience, not only for herself but on behalf of her people as well.

This is a clear manifestation of Maya's Messiah complex since she presents herself as the conductor of her people, the leader of her destiny and that of her own community. From this unconscious desire, one can deduce that in fact, Maya's identity is that of an African American Messiah, a female African American Moses in the order of Harriet Tubman the Moses of her people. Maya's life narrative may therefore release African Americans from the insidious effects of racism, and lead them to the promised land of freedom and justice.

5. Conclusion

Slavery and its corollary of dehumanization succeeded in physically and psychologically traumatizing many enslaved Africans and their descendants. Most scholars have worked on the inferiority complex which is caused by racism, oppression, and belittling discourses towards Black people. Surprisingly, many of their descendants like Maya Angelou succeeded in making the best use of the complexes slavery may have caused. In her autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,* the heroine Maya, strives to go beyond the inferiority complex, feeds on race pride, to reconstruct her fragmented identity. Our paper argues that in the process, Maya built on the messiah complex. This leads her to feel responsible for the well-being of her African American community in an oppressive American society. Through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, we demonstrated that Maya's identity is that of an African American Messiah. She is a female African American Moses in the order of Harriet Tubman the Moses of her people.

6. References

American Psychoanalytic Association. *About psychoanalysis.* https://apsa.org/content/aboutpsychoanalysis. Accessed on November 27, 2022.

American Psychological Association. *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. https://dictionary.apa.org/messiah-complex. Accessed on November 27, 2022

Angelou, M. (1969). *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Random House, Inc., New York, and simultaneously in Canada by *Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.*

Carr, E. R. and West, L. M. (2013). "Inside the Therapy Room: A Case Study for Treating African American Men From a Multicultural/Feminist Perspective."*Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*Vol. 23, No. 2, 120–133.DOI: 10.1037/a0031422

Chenu, B. (2000). *Le Grand Livre des Negro Spirituels : Go Down Moses* France, *Editions Bayard*.

Claudio, G. (1993). *The Challenge of Comparative Literature.* Translated by Cola Franzen. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England. *Harvard University Press*.

Degruy, L. J. (2005). *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing.* Milwaukie, Oregon: *Uptone Press.*

Dubois, W.E.B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folks*, New York, *Oxford University Press.*

Earlie, P. (2017). "Psychoanalysis and Literature: The Challenge of Cliché"*. Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 282, 381-384. https://doi.org/10.3917/rip.282.0381.

Ellison, R. (1995), Invisible Man. New York: Vintage International

Fanon, F. (1967) *Black Skin, White Masks.*Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. London, United Kingdom. *Grove Press Inc.*

Gunnar, K. (2010). *Psychoanalysis in a New Light* (English Translation)*. Cambridge University Press; Cambridge, New York. Print.*

Habermas, R. G. (2004). "My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism: A Discussion between Anthony Flew and Gary Habermas".*Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 333. http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/Its_ fac_pubs/333.

Lipnerm, L., Mendelsohn, R. and Muran, J. C. (2017). "Psychoanalysis" in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Abnormal and Clinical Psychology*; SAGE Publications, Inc., Online ISBN: 9781483365817.

Loum D. (2017). "Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*: A Coming of Age Novel". *Revue du CAMES Littérature, langues et linguistique*, *Numéro 5, 58-71.*

Monte, F. C. (1977). *Beneath the mask*: *an introduction to theories of personality.* New York: *Praegar Publishers*.

Ouedraogo, T. S. (2023). "Craved on slavery and freedom: the African American identity." *International Journal of Current Research*, Vol. 15, Issue, 03, pp.24015-24019

Staughton, J. (2022). "What Is A Savior Complex?" *Science ABC.* https://www.scienceabc.com/social-science/what-is-a-saviorcomplex.html#:~:text=The%20general%20definition%20of%20someone,of%20those%20people%2C%20over%20time.

The New Jerusalem Bible. (1985). Wansbrough, H. (Ed.). *Doubleday*

Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide*. 2nd ed. NewYork, *Routledge*.

Vandenbos, G. R. (2015). *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. American Psychological Association.

.