
THE IMAGERY OF CAGED BIRD IN SUSAN GLASPELL'S *TRIFLES* AND KHALIL GIBRAN'S *BROKEN WINGS*

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Abstract: The aim of this paper presentation is to study the imagery of caged bird in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* and Khalil Gibran's *Broken Wings*. Caged bird literally means a bird which is locked in a cage. At the same time with the word caged bird we can find multiple connotation and different traces. The imagery of caged bird used in a text can be compared to a character who feels like a caged bird, the character which identifies oneself with the caged bird. The character might be locked up physically in a particular place or they may be mentally locked by the society and feel like a caged bird.

Keywords: Broken wings, caged bird, locked physically, locked mentally.

Introduction: Caged bird literally means a bird which is locked in a cage. At the same time with the word caged bird we can find multiple connotation and different traces. The imagery of caged bird used in a text can be compared to a character who feels like a caged bird, the character which identifies oneself with the caged bird. The character might be locked up physically in a particular place or they may be mentally locked by the society and feel like a caged bird.

Susan Keating Glaspell was an American playwright, journalist, actress and novelist. She has written around fifty short stories, nine novels and fifteen plays. She was born on 1876. She attended Davenport public school. She was graduated in 1894. Then she became a journalist for local newspaper. She enrolled herself at Drake's University. After her graduation she started working fulltime as a reporter for newspaper.

Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* was one of the best one act plays in American literature. In this play there is a character called Minnie who is the main character in the play. Her husband was John Wright. The play begins with the murder of John Wright. And the police officers, sheriff Henry Peters and his wife and the young county attorney George Henderson came to investigate the case along with John Wright's neighbour Mr and Mrs Hale. The men commented about Mrs Wright and women in general. Mrs Peter and Mrs Hale defended it for her. They found an empty bird cage later they found a box with death canary bird exactly in the way Minnie's husband was killed which was the important evidence in the case.

John Wright was a domineering character who does not care about his wife's feeling. Even Mrs Hale tells that he is a hard person.

Mrs Hale feels bad for Minnie's life. Thus there won't be cheerfulness in their lives and they don't have children. Minnie suffers in loneliness and lack of love. She is oppressed by her husband and suffocated her feelings within herself. Even Mrs Hale feels bad

for not visiting Minnie's house.

Minnie finds her true self only in the canary bird. She will be soft and sing like the canary bird. Her true self is also caged like the canary bird. She identifies herself with the canary bird which was locked in a cage. Because similar way she was locked in her married life.

In this play John Wright disconnected the communication with the outside people by restricting his wife, not to use telephone. In this context John Wright is the greatest criminal than his wife because he separated her from the outside world. According to the society, wife should obey her husband. But her husband made her a caged bird locked up and disconnected from the outside world and controlled her to do his will.

Minnie spends most of the time in isolation in her married life. She was fragile, sensitive and lovable person but being alone and knot in the sanctity of marriage without happiness filled with oppression because of his hard and fast rule. She was unable to express her thoughts and feelings to him or to people from outside.

These things raise inner agony, pressure which broke out like the Jar of cherries. And these things give her the feeling of a caged bird. She tolerated the suffering her husband gave her, silently like a bird in the cage without fighting like a human being.

The bird was also like a child for Minnie, she considered it as a substitute of child. In her silence in the solitary life the canary bird's voice is the only relief for her. Canary's song is the voice of her soul. Her very spirit is with the caged canary bird.

John Wright in anger wrung the bird's head and the canary bird died. He not only killed the canary bird but he killed his wife's very spirit along with the bird. When he killed the bird which resembles her life the little hope to her life was also cruelly killed in the hands of her husband.

When Mrs Hale and Mrs Peters found the death canary bird in the similar way John Wright was dead.

They found that Mrs Wright killed her husband. These ladies can identify the pain that Mrs Minnie Wright undergone and they thought the incident when their pet animal was killed by a boy and their anger arose to kill that boy at that time so both the woman understood the feeling of Minnie.

Minnie tolerated all the things her husband did but when he killed her lovable bird which is the only thing that gives meaning to her life. She was unable to be like a caged bird. She killed her husband in the same way her husband killed the bird. She stepped out of the caged life by killing her husband. Her true self as a lovable person was killed along with bird so she became arrogant as her husband to relieve herself from this bond of marriage.

Khalil Gibran was born on January 6th, 1883 in the town of Bsharri in the modern day Lebanon, as a young man he immigrated with his family to the United States, where he studied art and began his literary career, writing in both English and Arabic. He was a Lebanese artist, poet and writer.

His full Arabic name was Jubran Khalil Jubran. Gibran studied art with the sculptor Auguste Rodin in Paris and Arabic literature in Beirut before settling in New York City in 1912. A romantic mystic and visionary writer, he preached love, beauty, freedom and redemption in his work.

He is chiefly known in the English-speaking world for his 1923 book *The Prophet*, an early example of inspirational fiction including a series of philosophical essays written in poetic English prose. Khalil Gibran's *Broken Wings* is one of the important contributions to literature.

In Khalil Gibran's *Broken Wings*, Gibran loved Selma. Selma brought column of light which dispels darkness of his life. The first Eve led Adam out of paradise by her will but Selma made him enter willingly into paradise of pure love and virtue by her sweetness. Selma's virtue and purity surrounded not in her large eyes but in the light which emanated from her eyes. It is not in her red lips but in the sweetness of her words. It is not in her ivory neck but in its slight bow to the front. It was not in her perfect figure but in the nobility of her spirit. According to Gibran, Selma is the only white torch in the darkness of corruption and violence in the society. Selma was slender as a ray of moonlight coming through window. Her voice was sweet her words fell from her lips are like drops of dew falling from the petals of flowers when they are disturbed by wind. Selma looked like a Lilly bent to the carpet of green grass by the breeze of dawn. She looked like a statue of ivory sculptured by the finger of some worshiper of Ishtar, goddess of beauty and love. Selma was also compared to beautiful star. Gibran and Selma loved each other but the Bishop wants Selma to be married

to his nephew. So he called Selma's father Farris Effandi and spoke about marriage, Selma's father knew the bishop's nephew was dangerous, his heart full of hate, his wickedness and corruption. But in his society everybody obeys bishop's words. Farris Effandi was like a bird in the cage. He was caught by bishop's words he did not know the way to relieve his daughter from that cage. He was filled with agony to give his daughter to the wicked man and her departure from their place which will lead him to solitude.

Selma is compared to a bird with broken wings. "Selma's face clouded and her eyes froze as if she felt a premonition of death. Then she screamed, like a bird shot down, suffering and trembling, and in a choked voice." (785). Selma is like a bird with broken wings in the norms of the society. Bishop is the hunter who shoots Selma. He has prepared a golden cage for this bird with broken wings. She married bishop's nephew Mansour Bey, though she undergoes agony in her life with her wicked husband she tried to be a good wife. Finally giving birth to her child she died and got eternal freedom from the cage.

Gibran is also a bird caught in a cage. He is also the prisoner of love. "Here, all the hopes of Gibran, who is living as a prisoner of love beyond the seas, were buried in this spot he lost his happiness, drained his tears and forgot his smile" (761). Gibran's hopes and happiness and love are also buried in the tomb of Selma. Gibran is locked in the prison of sadness. Gibran is imprisoned in the darkness of youth, as a falcon suffers in its cage when it sees a flock of birds flying freely in the spacious sky. Gibran's suffering is compared to white Lilly. If Gibran does not have diversion or friends or companions in his games, his life will be like narrow prison which leads to a cage that is like a white Lilly which trembles before the breeze and open in the day break and folds its leaves in the night. In the narrow prison or cage Gibran can only see the spider webs.

Gibran who gains happiness, who felt entering into paradise with the light which radiated from Selma is gone and dead. His hopes and light in his life is buried. Thus Gibran is also compared to bird with broken wings. All the three characters that are Farris Effandi, Selma and Gibran are caught in hands of faith and closed in a cage.

Conclusion: In Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* Minnie identify herself with the caged canary bird which is physically caught in a cage and in Khalil Gibran's *Broken Wings*, Farris Effandi, Selma and Gibran are caught in the cage mentally to follow the societal norms. Thus these characters are caught in a cage physically and mentally.

Lovelace's impassioned lines on freedom, To Althea, From Prison:

“Stone walls do not a prison make,

Nor iron bars a cage” (101).

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