

The Master Butchers Singing Club is a novel written in 2003 by Louise Erdrich. It reveals the story about Fidelis Waldvogel and Delphine Watzka. Having experienced the killing fields of World War II, Fidelis Waldvogel returns back home to the German village, where he marries the pregnant widow of his best friend. He is full of ambitions to build his own business, a home for his family, and to create the best singing club in his town. The book breaks many important issues like values, family, betrayal, memory and loss. But the most striking feature of this novel is that it conveys the German American cultural tradition, which is the autobiographical resemblance of Louise Erdrich. Although the book can be read very quickly, it has rather complex plot, which is hanging upon the reader. We cannot give up when reading it, because we are involved in reality, which is very close to our personal experience. That is why, the reader is expected to draw parallels and find connections within the whole novel.

In this essay we would like to profoundly analyze the character of Fidelis Waldvogel as he is regarded to be the protagonist of the story, being engaged in most of the actions depicted through this novel. Fidelis Waldvogel is a German American immigrant and a former sniper who took part in World War II. Most of the readers can be captivated by his personality and calling shift from sniper to butcher. I personally admire his strong position in life. He is placed in this book to indicate that human consciousness with clear vision can always lead to success and inner tranquility. Fidelis remains to be faithful to his personal convictions and to his sweethearts. He is always responsible for his actions. On the other hand, the author intentionally places Fidelis as the embodiment of contrast. From one side, his beautiful voice speaks volumes of his creative personality; from the other side, this voice has no direct linkage to his brutal profession. All this creates a mystery, which is carried on till the very end of the story.

One more strong point about Fidelis Waldvogel is that he is not only the mysterious character, but also a part of the themes depiction. The reader is able to understand the author's message and implications with the help of Waldvogel's actions. The loyalty of the protagonist is also a complicated phenomenon in the novel. When creating a club, Fidelis was aimed at singing

American and native German songs, but later the club decides to quit singing German songs, which are sung by Waldvogel in his moments of loneliness. Although, Erdrich illustrates the family, which is not limited to blood relations, the deep family traditions are preserved. Fidelis is ready to marry the pregnant woman and raise a child of his best dead friend. And this illustrates how meaningful and important relations can be even in biological families, where people do not necessarily rest upon love and emotions, but rather upon family values and life mission.

Waldvogel is also seen to carry the national tradition. Living in America, he does not retrieve his principles and does not refuse from his German roots. That is why, he is targeted to establish the butcher's singing club, which can be very similar to that in Germany. Although only two butchers with nice voices are involved in this club, Fidelis is successful in making his dream come true and, perhaps, is intended to extend the butchers membership in the singing club somewhere beyond the pages of the book.

Fidelis Waldvogel is confident enough to achieve the desirable result in his life. From his early childhood he knows that he is “born in the phenomenon of strength” (Erdrich 2003, p. 35). And he is strong as the army sharpshooter, sausage-maker and singing butcher. He is all the time ready to self-breakthrough. He is motivated by the strong will to make constant progress through personal experience. This way, he is placed to take part in a war to prove his professional military skills. Afterwards, he starts with the idea of sausage-making, works as the apprentice in the butcher shop and finally opens his own butcher's. Additionally, Fidelis is able not to forget his German roots and childhood dream. That is why he is successful to create his butchers singing club. The life of Fidelis could be called the constant gradation from one mountain to another, reaching the highest peak in butchers singing club. That is why, Erdrich gives the respective title to her book to denote the final destination of Waldvogel's life efforts. Due to the fact that Fidelis and all other characters are mostly description rather than presence, the events are seen to appear in full tranquility, although the plot itself is relatively strained.

Works cited

Erdrich, Louise. *The Master Butchers Singing Club*. Harper Collins. 400 pp. ISBN 0066209773.
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