

The Feminist contrast in the films of the Color Purple and Desert Flower

Zhuozheng Feng

Suiyang district committee propaganda department, Shangqiu 476000, China

Abstract

The Color Purple and Desert Flower are both films about black women. The Color Purple is about the life experience of black female Celie who facing oppression gradually awakens her self-consciousness and begin to resists oppression. Desert Flower tells the story about Waris Dirie, a shepherdess from Somalia left Africa to escape a forced marriage, going out on her own in London and eventually becoming a super model to the world. Both works reflect the struggle of black women against racial discrimination, and also realize their life ideals to different degrees.

Keywords

The Feminist, racial discrimination, the black women.

1. Introduction

The feminist movement began as early as 1791, when Olympe de Gouges, the women's leader of the French Revolution, published the Declaration of Women's Rights and Women's Citizenship, or the Declaration of Women's Rights. The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Civil Rights of Women states: "Women are born free persons and have equal rights with men. In the Declaration of Human and Civil rights of France and the Declaration of independence of the United States, "rights of man" means only the rights of men, not women. The feminist movement emerged in this context, meaning women's human rights, pushing women's human rights from the periphery into the mainstream, making women's rights an important part of the whole human rights. Feminist criticism, as a fashion for textual criticism or discursive criticism, did not appear in the West until the political turmoil of the late 1960s. In fact, as early as the beginning of the last century, Virginia Woolf, one of the inspirators of contemporary feminist criticism, had noted that there was a lack of women's voices in mainstream discourse, and that women in most literary works were actually just saying what male writers wanted them to say and doing what male writers wanted them to do. Feminist literary criticism is the ideological presentation after the women's liberation movement in the second half of the 19th century went deep into the field of culture and literature, and was accompanied by the second feminist movement after the 1960s. In the course of its development and evolution, it has formed two major criticism factions in Britain, America and France, each with its different representative characters and theoretical characteristics. In the Anglo-American school, black feminist literary criticism constitutes a force that cannot be ignored. In addition to the gender perspective heavily relied on by traditional feminist criticism, they also introduced the racial perspective, which enriched the theoretical implications of feminist literary criticism. The *Color Purple* and *Desert Flower* were both written by black women writer. Although they were created in different times, they contain great female power and have impressive literary effects. Both of these works depict the image of a black woman. They experienced a painful life, suffered from sexual gender bias, and then lost their identity and voice in the process of growing up, but in the end, they found their own value, and realized the dual independence of career and spirit. This thesis is based on feminist theory, based on the

two films *the Color Purple* and *Desert Flower* , Comparing and analyzing the similarities and differences of feminism in the two films.

2. The feminism in the Color Purple

2.1. Self-liberating Shug

The author cast Shug's character as a key figure in helping Celie on her feminist path. Shug is a singing girl who charms Celie's husband, she has never been afraid of Albert, Albert even went into kitchens for her that he had never been in before, and he always gives her a flattering smile, something that Celie never once enjoyed. She also travels regularly, which shows her feminist characteristics and possesses many characteristics of modern women. However, it is Celie's weak and kind help to conquer her heart, and Shug also made a song named after Celie's own name for Celie, which brought Celie unprecedented emotion and touch. It is also Shug's help that makes Celie change her ideas from body to heart, accept a new world outlook and life outlook, promoting the awakening of Celie's feminist consciousness. At the end of the story, she leads the group in a song filled with laughter and hope, and she finally reached reconciliation with her father.

2.2. Strong Nettie

Sister Nettie can not stand the harassment of her stepfather, and came to live with Celie, which is the happiest period of time for Celie in her new home. During that period of time, Celie not only shared her attitude and ideas about her new home with Nettie , but also learned from Nettie the attitude of intellectual women to life. Nettie taught Celie to read and study, which opened a new door to Celie's world, and the books that Nettie left to Celie became the key to accompany Celie through the painful time and open the door to the new world. Different from Celie, when Albert tries to violate her, she fights for her virginity. When Albert kicked her out of the house, she said to Celie, "Only death will do us part." After separation, Nettie brought up Celie's children, went to other places and did a lot of charity work, and reached the place where her heart desired. These are the manifestations of her feminism.

2.3. Resistant Sophia

In the article, Sophia is a sexist protester. Facing the pressure of male power, she rose up against it with her own strength. In Sophia's resistance, the male power world became less powerful, which also brought Celie a new world view and a new female living state that Celie had never encountered or seen in her life world. She openly argue with Albert for her own happiness, and become an equal in the marriage with Harpo. When the mayor's wife asks her to be her maid, she says "hell, no" and bravely fights back when she is violently attacked by the mayor. Feminism is strongly embodied in her.

3. The feminism in Dessert Flower

3.1. Waris Dirie

The film is based on the best-selling autobiographical book by Somali-born black model Waris Deary. Born in the Somali desert, she was raped by her father's friend at the age of four. At the age of five, she was forced to undergo the same female circumcision that had claimed her sister's life years earlier. When she was 12 years old, she was married to a 60-year-old man by her father for five camels. For the first time, her awareness of feminism awakens. She ran away barefoot and almost became food in the mouth of lions in the desert. With the help of her grandmother, she was able to work as a servant in London. The second time her awareness of feminism awakens is she choose to stay at London when Somalia's civil war is over . Then she is accidentally discovered by a photographer and became a popular model. Waris escape from the

desert of Somalia to become one of the world's top models, a fighter against oppression, and the extraordinary courage she exemplifies in her life can inspire all of us to face life's unexpected challenges.

4. The similarity of feminism between the Color Purple and Desert flower

4.1. The same female power support

4.1.1. Celie in the Color Purple

Black Celie lives in the South of the United States, at the age of 14 was raped by her stepfather, the children born were sent away, and later she was forced to marry Albert, a black man with four children. After marriage, Celie is used as a tool to do housework and vent sexual desire, and leads a miserable life. She did not even dare to call Albert by his first name, only Mr. The oppressed life deprived Celie of her right to speak, and the loss of her right to speak turned Celie into a "non-existent invisible person", she could not see the value and significance of her own existence. Celie accepted all kinds of pain. Celie's painful early life was just a microcosm of the oppression of black women. Poisoned by patriarchal culture, women unconsciously turn the demands of patriarchal society on them into demands on themselves, and this internalized demand makes them submit to their enslaved status, and unknowingly act as an ally of the oppressor, becoming another mountain to oppress other women. Celie envy Sophia's daring, because that is the life she dared not try. But when Sophia rises up against her oppressive husband Harper, Celie's advice to Harper is "beat her". The consciousness of servility has been deeply rooted in Sally's mind. Celie can finally stand on her own and become an independent and mature woman can't do without the help of Nettie, Sophie and Shug. Nettie's companionship and help did not completely save Celie's world, but the power of knowledge accumulated for Celie's later life. At the same time, the fuse that finally transforms Celie into a feminist and takes the road of living a new life for herself is also that she finally receives a letter from Nettie, that Nettie is still in the world, waiting to meet Celie. Sophia's experience did not completely help Celie to embark on the road of feminism. On the contrary, Sophia's reckless behavior of simple resistance and violence against violence failed to completely change the state of discrimination and oppression in the world deeply affected by gender discrimination and racial discrimination, but suffered setbacks and failures in the world of racial discrimination. Sophia's experience also brought Celie new thinking, simple violence against gender discrimination is not enough, can not completely solve the real problem. However, Sophia's experience has made Celie re-understand the society around her, and readjust her mentality, just waiting for the right time to come. The film cast Shug's character as a key figure in helping Celie on her feminist path. Shug is a singing girl who charms Celie's husband. However, it is Celie's weak and kind help to conquer her heart, and Shug also made a song named after Celie's own name for Celie, which brought Celie unprecedented emotion and touch. In the movie, Celie has two of her biggest laughs, one when she's wearing Shug's clothes and one when she's being kissed by Shug. It is also Shug's help that makes Celie change her ideas from body to heart, learn to love herself and accept a new life outlook. It promote the awakening of Celie's feminist consciousness. At a family gathering, Celie berates her husband for decades of oppression and bondage, and leaves her patriarchal family with Sophie and Shug to start a new life.

4.1.2. Waris Dirie in Desert flower

The awakening of Waris Dirie's female consciousness is inseparable from the help of her mother, grandmother and good friend Marilyn. Her mother witnessed her escaping from Somalia but did not stop it, to some degree acquiescing in her quest for a new life. According to her grandmother, her mother once ran away from home to marry a nomad for love, perhaps her mother regretted the decision and hoped that her daughter could go the way she wanted to go. When she escaped to her grandmother's house she tried to persuade her to return to the desert but she resisted.

Her grandmother helped her get a passport to work as a maid at her aunt's house in London, becoming her second female noblewoman. The third noblewoman was her good friend Marilyn, who took her in and told her she must go out to work. For women, work is an important characteristic of independence.

5. The difference of feminism between the *Color Purple* and *Desert flower*

5.1. The awakening of self-awareness

For Waris, the awakening of self-awareness has been more active. Her first self-awareness awakening is her first escaping from the desert. To stay in London is the second time. Falling in love with a black boy is the third time. Getting divorced and to become a spokesperson for the United Nations against circumcision is the fourth time. She has been actively fighting against fate. Different from Waris, Celie experienced the disappearance of her dearest sister Nettie, Sophie's prison life, and the help of Shug, finally beginning to wake up and take the road of resisting male chauvinism and escaping from the patriarchal family.

5.2. Varying degrees of success

Celie got rid of her painful marriage, opened her own tailor shop, gained financial independence, and realized a leap in self-worth. While Waris stood on the world stage and spoke out for women who have been circumcised around the world, reflecting a larger feminism.

6. Conclusion

The inspiration brought to people by both of *the Color Purple* or *Desert flower* is that modern society is a civilized and developed society, and this society is bound to become a society of equality, fairness and justice for all, and all feudal male discrimination and oppression against women are untenable. Women should make themselves capable of standing in the society in order to truly achieve equality with men. Women and men together constitute our world, and men and women should enjoy inherent freedom and equality. At the same time, people of different skin colors and races should be equal and live in harmony with each other. Every natural person is a product of nature and has equal rights to enjoy the sunshine and enjoy life, just as in the end of the films, the protagonist Celie and Nettie laugh together in the sun wearing the beautiful purple dresses, and Waris stands on the shining speaking platform.

References

- [1] [1]Frédérique, V. P. Waris Dirie and the ritualization of FGM: When rites can be
- [2] wrong [J]. Quarterly Journal of Ideology, 2005, 28, 3-4.
- [3] [2]Walker, A. The color purple [M]. New York: Pocket Books, 1982.
- [4] [3]Li chuanyi, Wang wei. An analysis of feminism—A case study of Desert Flower[J].
- [5] Overseas English, 2012, 11, 6-7.
- [6] Huang Ying. A comparative study of The Color Purple and Desert Flower from the perspective of feminism [J]. Foreign language studies, 2020, 26, 64-65.
- [7] Lin Xiaoli. Interpretation of The Color Purple from the perspective of film Narratology [J]. Beauty and times, 2022, 30, 144-146.
- [8] Zhang zhimin. "Blooming" in multiple fields -- A review of the biopic Desert Flower [J]. China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House, 2022, 147-152.
- [9] [7] Zhao Siqi. A study of black feminist literary criticism by Bell Hooks [M]. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2014.