

A Perspective on the Oppression of Women from Why Women Kill

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Abstract: With the soaring development of the global economy and material wealth accumulated. Some feminist critics hold this view that the human culture is wholly and entirely governed by patriarchy. And they focus on analyzing how the images of men and women in various works reflect the situations of unfair treatment against women. And this paper will employ feminism and gender criticism to take an in-depth look into the three heroines in *Why Women Kill* to identify where the oppression upon women is from and the reasons behind the discriminatory practices.

Keywords: Why Women Kill; Gender criticism; Feminist strategies; Oppression of women

Feminism is a social theory or social movement which origin from female experience. Discrimination, stereotype, materialization, especially materialization of physical sex, division of house chores, oppression, patriarchy and so on characterized the feminism even though there are many schools such as radical feminism, separatist feminism, or cyber-feminism.^[1]

Gender criticism is one kind of integrated study mode and it is the further development of feminism. And then, the gender critics put their eyes on the criticism of masculinity in that they support this perspective that some of male's characteristics which are complex and can be generated and regenerated to be a more complicated structure with some specific purposes almost are detrimental for female such as the desire of showing off, appetite of conquest and the libido of sexuality.^[2]

1. The Sources of Oppression upon Females

1.1 American Heroine in the Sixties, Beth Ann Stanton

In the 1960s' in America, Beth Ann Stanton was a housewife as her husband, Bob Stanton, wished and required. And it is a truth universally acknowledged that a married man in possession of a good fortune and an obedient wife must be in want of a lover. In one episode, during the conversation between Bob and their guests, he tapped the coffee cup towards his wife, hinting that he wanted one more cup of coffee. And for this action we could be aware of that Bob in some way treats Beth Ann like a maid, because tapping the cup is a gesture for a maid not for a wife, and if you want it, just ask for it. That a man cheats in marriage is a constant thing and Bob is no exception. He has had love affairs with different women for years. Feeling the lie, she instantly drove car out to that restaurant, and then proved what she's heard. Unpredictably, Beth Ann acquainted with April and they became intimate friends. But the last straw overwhelming Beth Ann completely was the truth, the death of her daughter. On the day of that road accident directly causing the death, the one who should be really responsible for this accident forgot to close the door backyard. And Beth Ann hasn't known the real situation and blamed herself for long time until the secretary of her husband told her the truth that all faults were on Bob. And in the 1960s, few occupations were accessible to women so many women like as Beth Ann had to be a housewife.^[3]

1.2 American Heroine in the Eighties, Simone Grove

In this era, the second feminist movement came to an end because there were some backlashes.^[4] Simone Grove has been hoodwinked by her husband Carol Grove, a homosexual and also her third husband. She scanned those photos where her husband was kissing with other men. Divorce was a must but she wanted the separation to be amiable enough so that she could maintain her face. Being the wife of a homosexual ought to be humiliated, which was commonplace at that time. So, Simone asked Carol to come upstairs and roared at him, requiring him to leave the mansion and keep everything secret until they divorce. But then he pretended to take a bottle of pills, but he in reality hid these pills under the sofa, aimed at evoking some sympathy.

Where there are men, there are schadenfreude and even dangers. Tommy, a teenager, the son of Naomi Harte who is the female bosom friend of Simone, paid court to Simone. Nonetheless, people would seldom trigger the mortal danger. After the exposure of the scandal between Tommy and Simone, Naomi planned to kill Simone by running over her, so she lurked on the underground park waiting for Simone downstairs. But Simone narrowly escaped. Aftermath Naomi a few days later propagated that Carol was gay and infected with AIDS.

1.3 American Heroine in Contemporary Times, Taylor Harding

Taylor Harding, a black lawyer, has an open marriage in sex with her husband, Eli Cohen, who is a scriptwriter. Taylor is a bisexual and hunting girls. So naturally they agreed on an open marriage. And the story begins with the coming of a playmate of

Taylor, Jade. One night when Taylor asked for Eli to consent Jade staying at their mansion for a few days, at first he was unwilling, but after glancing at Jade, he shook and said yes. Jade is a thinking girl for staying longer exactly, so she has done a lot by all means. With some tricks, Jade became a member of this family.

When Taylor was on a business trip, Eli and Jade got closer in physicality and Jade lured Eli with some pills because the deadline of handing up script was coming soon, and then Eli's old habit resurfaced. Eli is fond of taking heroin and when he is high he always maxes out his credit card for shopping, but the one who copes with the aftermath of such a disaster was Taylor at a heavy expense. With the help of heroin Eli finished his script which was bidden for a good price, After Jade knew this, she and Eli showed Taylor the door directly. However Taylor investigated Jade and the real identity of Jade was that firstly the Jade was a fake name, and then she has been adopted for several times, because she had been caught stealing money or murdering.

2. The Reasons behind Oppression

2.1 American Heroine in the Sixties, Beth Ann Stanton

Why men cheating in marriage is nothing new? Basically speaking, the cost for cheating is not the same for men and women. And Bob weaned Beth Ann off dream and freedom. And this is what feminists want to correct, because in this family female is inferior to male, so Beth Ann has to give her dream up, but not her husband.^[5]

While, what the man dose is only fertilize one child. So the parental investment is unequal for men and women, and the parental investment theory, to a great extent, accounts for that contrast with females who prefer to choose a long-term and stable relation with a man, yet males prefer short and changeable relations. In the eyes of feminists, the thought that men are created noble while women are created humble is proved vividly in families. By and large, Bob continuously has love affairs with different women and have a clear conscience, which manifests the difference in parental investment again. On the other dimension, the cheating behavior originates from one characteristics about man, playfulness. Playfulness has a good name, curiosity.

2.2 American Heroine in the Eighties, Simone Grove

Simone also has been cheated, but Carol was dating with men. And when Simone accidentally found her husband's cheating, she chose to keep it secret until they would divorce decently, because she wanted her friends to consider their break-up normal in morality, in case she would be mocked or even humiliated. We often hear of that if one woman is divorced, seldom man would marry her, and it is an unwritten rule that a married female is not as satisfactory as an unmarried one. However, in this case, there is no vice versa. This is what feminists called stereotype against women.

But Simone's oppression is not only from her husband. For her, the stereotype against women harassed her most. On one hand, a divorced woman ought to be met with carping comments. On the traditional stereotype, when a couple breaks up, the guilty one must be the woman. As feminists said our society is entirely controlled by males so economy as well as consensus of female are inclined to male. As feminists say, our society is completely dominated by the patriarchy.

2.3 American Heroine in Contemporary Times, Taylor Harding

The last heroine, Taylor, also has suffered cheating. And her oppression in a great portion is from his husband Eli and her playmate Jade. The libido indeed for the sexuality is one important motivation for man, which is a true portrayal of the view of gender critics, and this view is that some features in the inner heart of men bring about the disadvantages against women, and in this case, the feature is the libido for sexuality. The show of one hero saving a beauty from plight was on again, he broke the window illegally and the dog went away with them. Back home, Taylor roared at Eli because she was forced to be a conspirator and this could have her lawyer license revoked.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, from the perspective of feminism and gender criticism, from the 1960s to the 1980s, and to the contemporary America female has been oppressed till nowadays, even if the social status and importance were raised. But the oppression never stops, for it just changes in ways and forms. And this TV series also is calling for everyone to everyone to strive. The last but not least, with the sight of feminist critics and gender critics to analyze and unscramble this series is not going to make the gender antagonism, but to eliminate the divergence between men and women by communication, so as to build a harmonious society with joint efforts.

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