Struggles Of The Oppressed Woman Essay, Research Paper

Throughout history, society has constantly oppressed woman, making it harder for

her to achieve what it is that she so desires. In modern day society, a female has to work

twice as hard as a male does to reach the same desired goal. Stemming from our

ancestor?s beliefs and morals that women belong in the home, these two compositions,

written by Amy Tan and Lynn Bloom, illustrate these beliefs concerning the roles of the

women in society. In both cases, the women involved write of their struggles and the

ways in which each overcame them. Women are highly outnumbered as, professors

governmental figures, doctors and many other prestigious positions. This fact alone

exemplifies the struggles of a woman in society. Though the goals, the obstacles, and the

situations were all different, the beliefs reflected by each author are very much alike.

Amy Tan?s, The Red Candle, is the story of Amy?s upbringing, mainly

concerning her marriage. In Taiyuanese society, women do not have much freedom

concerning how they live. Having no control over the process of selecting a husband,

Tan?s future husband is chosen at the age of two. Living in the strict Taiyuanese society,

her life was carved in stone at an extremely early age. In her early years, all thoughts and

actions were directed to the development of a good wife for her future husband. A

contract was made, between the Tan?s and the Huangs, concerning the future of their

children. Tyan-yu, Tan?s future husband, would have all of the power in the marriage,

leaving Tan nothing but orders. How would a woman be able to live a life, which she has

no control over? Being oppressed by her own society, how would Tan strive to gain

control of her life? The one privilege that she desires is to have the control to gain what

she wants and likes. These simple desires are exactly what Lynn Z. Bloom strives for

also.

Lynn Z. Bloom?s auto-biographical composition, Teaching College English As A

Woman, reflects being a female college professor and the struggles that come with the

task. Like Tan, Bloom was constantly rejected and oppressed while trying to attain what

she desired. She had many obstacles to overcome in order to reach her goal of becoming

a full time successful college professor. Knowing that she was well qualified and

deserved certain positions, she fought back and ultimately overcame these obstacles, just

as Tan.

Amy Tan and Lynn Bloom were from totally different backrounds and had totally

different goals to achieve. Though, almost every aspect of their lives was different they

both had the same types of problems to overcome. The problems that they faced were

many, but the one that they had in common was that of oppression. Being oppressed by

their peers played integral parts in both of their lives. First starting when she was a baby,

Tan experienced oppression her whole life. Never able to make her own decisions,

having her life planned, without any consent, and being treated as a slave by the Huangs,

were some of the reasons that Tan felt she had to overcome this oppression that

imprisoned her. This imprisonment denied her of the person she wanted to be. Bloom

experienced this same type of oppression, but on a much lower scale, in her quest of

becoming a college English professor. Once earning her position of Teacher Assistant

she came to realize that teaching as a woman has many disadvantages. She was often

rejected from jobs that she knew she was qualified for, and even those that she landed

had very tight restrictions. There are similarities in the restrictions that Bloom faced and

the restrictions that Tan faced. Tan was allowed certain actions while other actions were

not allowed; as is the case with Bloom, she was not allowed to voice her own opinion in

her class, partly because she was a woman. Bloom talks about ?her voice? that she

always ignored. She just accepted the way things were. Tan also accepted the way

things were, never making what she knew was the right choice. Tan and Bloom were

very much alike in that they were afraid of their superiors. They both thought they had

no rights to act on their own and do as they feel. The two were also alike in the fact that

they developed, over time, a very strong personality which helped them achieve their

goals. Bloom had a demeaning, one sentence written recommendation, that she used

once but vowed never to use again. This exemplifies that she was strong and did not

want that kind of help. Tan, also vowed, that she would not be controlled by a family

such as the Huang?s, demonstrating her will power.

Even though they shared many things in common they had their differences. The

one difference that stood out the most was the supporting male. Bloom had a very

supportive man beside her during her struggle. When commuting two thousand miles per

week to one of her jobs, Martin said ?go for it?, and took care of the children. This was

not the case with Tan and her husband, Tyan-yu. Tyan-yu did not respect the narrator

and always gave her a hard time. This is mainly what drove her do act out against this

oppression. Tan and Bloom also had very different approaches to how they would reach

each respective goal. Bloom was an extremely aggressive person, never accepting the

fact that she got rejected or harassed. She was a work horse, never giving up on her

dream. Realizing that the obstacles would always be there, she worked to overcome

them, accepting any job she could get and working extremely hard to advance and get her

tenure. Tan was different in the way that she approached her problem. Never speaking

or acting out, it seemed as though she accepted it. She had accepted the fact that her life

was planned for her and she had nothing to do about it. She accepted this fact for many

years and even when she was living with Tyan-yu she never disagreed with anything.

This is the way in which many women deal with oppression, just accepting it and not

doing anything about is extremely common in Taiyuanese culture. Tan writes, ?After a

while, I hurt so much I didn?t feel any difference.? This is a key example of the

narrator?s acceptance of her problem. Though, in the end she did resist, for most of her

life the she was acted as a coward by accepting the problem. Another difference

between the two is how they finally overcame the conflict. Bloom, outright, just defeated

it by pure will and perseverance; while Tan had to lie, and hope the Huang?s believed

her. Because of this, I believe Bloom is a much stronger person.

The two women portrayed in these two compositions had qualities that were

similar and qualities that separated them. They were equal in that they were each

presented with an oppressive problem. These problems, though extremely different from

one another, rooted from the basic fact that women are oppressed. I call this a fact

because in our society oppression is all around. Though it is becoming more scarce little

by little, oppression still plays a dominant role in a woman?s life. The final result for

both women was of victory over oppression. For both of these women to go against the

standards and values of their culture and society is a victory in itself. For these women to

actually achieve what they initially set out to do, makes it an even greater victory. Both

were oppressed, but both had different ways to overcome this oppression. Though both

defeated their struggles with hard work and determination, the path that each took is what

ultimately separated the two. Both Bloom and the narrator overcame these problems

with hard work and powerful determination. It is this powerful determination that makes

these two so much alike, but it is the in which they used this will to overcome their

problems that ultimately separated the two.