

Self-determination in Pearl Cleage's Flyin' West

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Date of Article</p> <p>Received : 2022/5/26</p> <p>Received in revised form: 2022/6/16</p> <p>Accepted: 2022/6/23</p> <p>Available online: 2023/1/15</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Identity, migration, African American Women, self-determination</p>	<p>Self-determination has always been regarded as one of the most essential aspects of human existence. Even if they are compelled to abandon their ancestral homelands, one can give up their possessions to defend their rights. Pearl Cleage uses her female perspective to clarify her own perspective of population movement in order to reestablish the individuality of African Americans in the United States. Moreover, she emphasizes how her female characters endure multiple times because they are both female as well as black, resulting in their movement from one location, the south, to the next, the west. The research also discusses the reasons for black woman migration due to certain social conditions in order to maintain their respectable personality.</p>

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Introduction

Self-Determination Theory

Definition

The ability to maintain one's own affairs, create efficient decision, as well as think for oneself is referred to as self-determination. Self-determination theory is a theory of human motivation and personality that proposes that when people's wishes for competence, connectedness, and independence are met, they can become self-determined. The presence or absence of natural circumstances (in folk's major emergencies and developmental backgrounds) that allow them to meet these basic needs is a crucial determinant as to whether or not they will show strength and psychological wellbeing. People are more

comfortable when they pursue things that are self - determined and associated with their own goals – it not only helps them sound more responsible for the consequences, but it also allows them to devote more time to what they want or need to do. Self-determination theory can be useful in determining what motivates a person's behavior. Most, if not all, people would like to believe as if they have both the freedom and the abilities to make their own decisions(Deci,1971).

The Right to Self-Determination:

In its most basic form, the right to self-determination refers to an individuals' tendency to choose their own fate. The basic concept, in specific, enables people to choose

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their own political standing and financial, cultural, as well as social growth. The exercise of this right can lead to a wide range of results, from political independence to complete implementation into a state. The privilege to choose is important, and the consequence of a people's choice should not influence the right to choose. However, in practice, states' attitudes toward a people's or nation's real claim are often influenced by the potential result of a self-determination workout. So the right to self-determination gave people the ability to choose their ideological, financial, sociocultural, as well as cultural identities. It was a necessary condition for democracy to exist. It was not a gift, but a basic right that applied to all, including Palestinians who were denied the right to form their own state. Their fight was validated by the global community, and Israel, the last bastion of colonialism, must recognize that its invasion of the regions was criminal and continued to be a source of tension and hostility, posing a threat to inter-people coexistence. As a result, it must review its policies. Failure to recognize the right to self-determination amounted to a principle violation and a moral code violation(De Waart,1994).

Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West* in Self-Determination

Flyin' West was written by Pearl Cleage in 1992. It describes the journey of four females seeking independence as well as trying to escape racist violence. It begins with a conversation between (Miss Leah and Sophie) in their Nicodemus, Kansas residence. They share speeches in Nicodemus, in the West, about how to acknowledge a free land after fleeing Memphis, in the South, due to

discrimination. Fannie (32 years old and a slave) and Wil (40 years old and a slave) are outdoors talking about social friends and colleagues and flowering plants. Sophie is excited to open a class and a reading room in Nicodemus. Minnie and her partner Frank (36 and of mixed racial parents) arrived back from London. Frank was financially dependent on his light skin father, who sent him cash. Frank's white brothers ended giving him money once his father died, and he was snip off from his light skin relatives. He insisted that Minnie must sell her territory to white investors so that they could keep living in luxury, but she, Miss Leah, and the other younger sister rejected. As a result, Frank regularly mistreats Minnie physically, prompting her sisters to murder him. Miss Leah was the ringleader behind Frank's death by poisoning an apple pie(Barrios,2009).

Rebellion, mobility, self-determination, violence against women, the connection of females to one another, possible contribution to downturn, financial personal freedom in the African American society, husband and wife victimization, women managing their own lifestyles, and encounters with sexual assault are all themes explored in *Flyin' West*. These concepts in this play are linked to key influences of black woman migration and appropriate answers for preserving their rights and life(Sammons,2007).

The occurrences of *Flyin' West* are based on actual events from African American history, complete with hard personality struggles. In 1965, the "Moynihan Report" conducted a survey on the "Negro Family," and the study concluded that the root of enslavement was deeper than separation, that

had caused in joblessness, shabby shelter, inadequate education, and poor hospital attention. A large number of dark skin families were forced to split up. However, the connections of affection and love, the social ethics that governed family relations, and the genuine conviction on remaining beside each other protected them from racism's threat. Cleage records this fact by describing a conversation of sisters outside Nicodemus' door. After being apart from Memphis, where they had lost their loved ones, dignity, and spirits, they acknowledge to perform their own religious ceremony. When they were able to liberate themselves from enslavement, they performed the ritual of remaining next to each other eternally with all their confidence, adore, power, and fortitude, and they viewed it as a sacred covenant between them (Sammons ,2007).

Sophie: Today, we like to assert that our livelihoods are ours alone, and no one else's.

And we decide to hold the very day we left Memphis and

headed west together to be liberated women in our hearts as a sacred thing between all of us.

Fannie and Minnie: We put our faith in you.

Sophie: And all of our might.

Fannie and Minnie: And all our might.

Sophie: And all of our bravery.

Fannie and Minnie: And all of our bravery.

Sophie: And our undying love.

Fannie and Minnie: And all our love (1.3.63).

Cleage depicts the outcome for black people as their movement and willingness to be in constant transition from one location to another location to maintain their individuality. She re-created that individuality in the context of their journey from the south to the west,

and she embodied the personalities of her dark skin characters. She is consumed by the question of who the individual believes himself or herself to be and who will become. The immigrant sisters are an intersection of racism and discrimination in which the authoritarian predicament of Black women is connected to the condition of white woman workers. As the title implies, the females in this play relocate to some other part of America in search of a better life and also to reclaim their individuality as Black people. Sophie's persona achieves this goal of exit since she aspires to be free when she takes on the city of Nicodemus to reestablish African American individuality and enjoy living as a human being. She hopes that dark skin people will be able to work really hard for own selves, but not for light skin people. She desires that black children could live as free as other children around the world, without even being purchased by supervisors(Perkins,1996).

violent behavior is an another factor that drove the ladies to Nicodemus. That kind of abuse against Minnie is connected to Frank's cruel treatment. The sisters' decision to leave Memphis was driven by a wish to be free of white society obstacles. Dark skin people in Nicodemus also have and exert power in their society, which allows them to defeat property traders. Sophie depicts this horrifying picture of racist terrible treatment of blacks by whites in Memphis in her talk to Frank in Act I, Scene iii, which prompted her and her sisters to relocate to Nicodemus(Perkins,1996).

Sophie: Memphis was rich of crazed light skin men who pretended that they weren't bound by the law or common human decency

whenever it happened to come to black folks.
pulling people away
in the dead of night They were free to do as
they pleased. In their homes,
black females are not secure. (I.3.62)

Frank Charles' philosophy of male superiority over his partner Minnie is however depicted in Cleage's *Flyin' West*. It strengthens the idea of female's personality abolishment and depicts them as the other. The migrant sisters had the power to demolish the racist and male supremacist gaze that had dismissed their presence. They created a refute that reverses the discrimination stare. Sexual assault, enslavement, as well as white supremacy, according to some feminist theorists in the initial stages of the anti-rape progression, are the most important reasons for mobility. The supposition that white entrepreneurs have unrestricted access to the bodies of black females is a defining chronological feature of racial prejudice (Goddard, 2007).

The representation of individualism which originated from the depths of Western society is the representation of social personality. The financial subjugation of Black females is enriched by capitalist philosophy, since the latter were utilised by the capitalists who constitute the majority of light skin men in American society. As a consequence, Black African' economic position is influenced by what white America receives and spends. Pearl Cleage is part of a large group of authors who focused on aiding their black female characters in positively identifying themselves rather than functioning against prejudices. She gave her actors the ability to communicate their own names and tell their own stories. Cleage shows the significance of pertaining and the hope of

independence in the play when Sophie, who symbolizes the chief, speaks. She tells Miss Leah about her ambition to become a contributing member of American society. As any free citizen, she wishes to be self-sufficient. She wants to be free of enslavement, discrimination, and subjugation (Foster, 2009).

I'll have had enough whenever I can walk beyond my door

and turn around with my eyes shut, seeing nothing but property

belonging to me and my sisters as far the eye can really see. (I.1.49)

Pearl Cleage is interested in women consciousness, in which the concept of self is inextricably linked to the concept of society. She emphasizes that one's self is not an autonomous entity. She believes that the self occurs in the families and communities, and that this affiliation among folks provides African American females with a substantial sense of self-definition. As a result, Cleage thinks that Black sisters' strong points in this play stem from their female knowledge. It is the incorporating philosophy through which Black females fight gender and ethnic persecution, according to her (Anderson, 2005).

So according to dark skin women's literary studies, when an unrestricted female embarks on a journey of self-discovery and consciousness, she evolves into a black female and pushes the story. Miss Leah and the three sisters took a trip to assert and restructure their identities. Cleage's *Flyin' West* represents the mobility to the west in order for emerging black female characters to achieve individual freedom. The actors in *Flyin' West* believe that moving west will allow them to reclaim at least some of their individuality that seemed to

have escaped them while they were growing up in the south. As a result, the protagonists in *Flyin' West* are looking for a sense of self-identity, as evidenced by the notion of westward migration. When Minnie asks Sophie to notify Frank out about black sisters' mobility to the west, Cleage explains the goal (Williams, 2009).

Minnie: Please describe the ceremony.

Tell the story of the day we left Memphis and headed

west to become free women. (I.2.61)

Through out Minnie and Frank's journey to London, Cleage indicates the significance of liberation as well as the significance of relocation for African Americans. Minnie tells her sisters that she "did feel so independent," that she "could get anything, go anywhere, and purchase whatever she wanted" (II.i.68). When Frank informs Fannie that Londoners "recognize me like such a human being...", he indirect means continues to support his step to London while also criticizing the African American society (II.v.76). He indirectly denies his black identity while praising white people's human behavior. The creation of black female identity in the African American community is deeply embedded in the psycho-social history of America, which crafted a dehumanized gender orientation for Blacks in order to justify their oppression. As a result, Cleage has never gone through life without always being woman and black. She believes that relocating Black power in order to build a strong individuality is a necessary first step toward reaching the aim of being an integral part in this existence. The sisters contributed to the development of a fresh black identity in the West. Sophie's gesture against Frank was

an attempt to transform African American weakness and subservience into a demand for respect (Campbell, 2010).

The mobility has had a significant impact on American public life, economy, and culture at large. It focused Americans' consideration on the gap between their nationwide ideologies and national realities. In the U.S.A, it exacerbated racial tensions. Cleage demonstrates how the migration of people can reveal a lot about American society. The matter of constructed identities is a complicated matter that writers face when recording the history of certain peoples. As a result, scholars have worked hard to figure out how groups of people came together (Campbell, 2010).

Conclusion

Through pure love as well as teamwork in their fresh region of the United States, all of the sisters worked out in their own acknowledgement of their self-definition. Black sisters served their purpose of guarding their property and individuality by reassuring blacks not to purchase their areas of land and to try to murder Frank. When they left their homeland and went west, they triumphed over both discrimination and misogyny. Their togetherness and love for one another provided them with capacity. Throughout history, these two factors have helped fuel the significance of identity. To summarize, Cleage proved that no matter how powerful their adversaries are in this universe, African Americans cannot abandon their true self. Slavery is being abolished, which is a good thing.

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تقرير المصير في مسرحية بيل كليج (الهجرة باتجاه الغرب)

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الملخص:

لظالم اعتبر تقرير المصير أحد أهم جوانب الوجود البشري. حتى لو اضطروا إلى التخلي عن أوطان أجدادهم ، يمكن للمرء أن يتخلى عن ممتلكاتهم للدفاع عن حقوقهم. تستخدم بيرل كلايج منظورها الأنثوي لتوضيح منظورها الخاص للحركة السكانية من أجل إعادة تأسيس شخصية الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي في الولايات المتحدة. علاوة على ذلك ، تؤكد على كيفية تحمل شخصياتها النسائية عدة مرات لأن كلاهما من الإناث وكذلك السود ، مما أدى إلى حركتهن من موقع ، وهو الجنوب ، إلى الغرب الذي يليه. كما يناقش البحث أسباب هجرة المرأة السوداء لظروف اجتماعية معينة حفاظاً على شخصيتها المحترمة. الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية ، الهجرة ، المرأة الأمريكية من أصل أفريقي ، تقرير المصير