

# A feeling of domination essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Bullying](#)



After reading “ Women Are Not Free,” by Sandra Lee Bartky, I see myself having feminist views. These views are not extreme and I do not fully agree with her philosophy on the subject. First, Bartky seems to be obsessed with domination by the male species. She wants women to view themselves as “ victims of a sexist society that is based on male oppression.” This statement is very harsh. I believe that if women see themselves as victims they are playing into the idea of male domination.

What I do agree with are that some of the ideas expressed in this work reflect self-fulfilling prophecies. For instance, Bartky states that the “ oppressed become to themselves their own oppressors,” I agree with this because sometimes women feel that they are just going to be paid less, or not taken seriously because of their gender so they do not try as hard.

Bartky refers to psychological oppression as an institution and states that “ it serves to make the work of domination easier by breaking the spirit of the dominated and by rendering them incapable of understanding the nature of those agencies responsible for the subjugation.” I agree with this statement only because it happens. But it only happens to those women that are too weak or too naïve to stand up for themselves or to make a change. With the domination and enslavement by “ those agencies” a woman’s self worth is put to the test and normally the “ agencies” win. Also, as outlined by Bartky, the low self-esteem leads to poverty, which in turn leads to an inferior feeling.

Next Bartky lists three general areas where the domination occurs; they are stereotyping, cultural domination and sexual objectification.

Bartky begins to speak very harshly about the stereotyping of women. She brings up the pursuit of autonomy that philosophers strive for. But these philosophers that have published works about achieving autonomy have all been men. Especially in Platonic time where women were not considered anything more than baby makers. Changing the minds of what men and women have been taught in regard to women roles or what we all have always observed is going to take eons to change. Even in today's education a majority of history that is taught to us is male oriented, I do not blame educators, men have dominated history it happened for what ever reason and it can not be changed. Even in this class the only female philosopher that I read anything about is Sandra Lee Bartky and again I do not blame my educator, this being a basic 101 class that does not have the time to reach all philosophers.

She really ruffles my feathers when she states " women deny their femininity when they undertake action that is too self-regarding or independent." As a young and very independent woman I never deny my femininity in any task that I strive to conquer. But on the other hand I understand where she is going. She says that women are only allowed to make one " major" decision in life and that that is " hard won;" that is finding a husband. Any decision after that stems from the husband. Also after women are married the decisions are handed down from the man. I think that most marriages do appear to be male dominated because the woman reverts back to history and plays helpless to make the man feel like he has control, or maybe he really is, which in turn writes history over and over again.

The next aspect that Bartky touches on is about women belong and/or starting their own culture, or colony. She seems to want to make women more separated from the unity and equality that she is so frustrated at trying to achieve. She wants women to be grouped as the Jewish or African Americans have been labeled. This is supposed to let all women relate to each other and be more powerful because they are a group. This makes no sense. This would lead to a more divided line and in turn more stereotyping and more oppression.

We now move on to sexual objectification. Bartky uses an example of a woman in a job interview with a male. The male stares at her breasts the entire time and she does not get the job. I believe that this has probably happened but I think that more often than not those women get the job because of those breasts. But if it were men that had breasts women would do the same thing.

Her next example is of a woman walking down the street and hearing catcalls directed at her. Her feelings before the incident were those of confidence and after the verbal abuse she felt self-conscious of her every move. I agree with this part of sexual objectification. I have experienced this many times. After you have been whistled at you become aware of everything. How your clothes look, what your image portrays. It makes you want to rethink your personality, how you carry yourself. With all the sexual hype in your society with advertisements and what the perfect body looks like it is hard to keep your self-esteem when you do not add up to the 36 24 36. Bartky addresses how “ordinary standards of hygiene would be

insufficient” and they are when your clothes, your figure, and your hairstyle are used to judge you. I do not agree with her that it is men that do this although some may.

Women are the ones who are cruel to one another. They shun you if you are not in style or you do not have a petite figure. I am both victim and abuser on these. I also agree with Bartky as she says, “ the bodies we have to work with are deficient to begin with.” Those that lack self confidence do feel that they do not have anything to work with, that they will never look like that woman on the cover of Cosmopolitan magazine. But here again I believe that it is other women that make them feel like this not some dominating male. On the other hand, if you are comfortable with your body, wear the latest styles and have a good haircut you are egotistical and/or snobby. Here again these judgements are made by other women not a man.

Bartky proceeded to tell about an important line in the constitution “ all men are created equal.” Her opinion of this statement is “ I can believe, inconsistently, what my oppressors have always believed; that some types of persons are less equal than others.” I do agree with this only because when those lines were written they only gender the authors had in mind, were men. This is not to say that it was wrong, it is a sign of the time that they were presently living. But these “ others” that she refers to have come along way and need to realize those things are not going to change over night. I do not even foresee it ever changing to the extent that she would like to see it changed. I do not know that women, as a majority would even want it that way. Some women like to be the homemaker; they like to depend on

their man to make all the important decisions. For example, the recent study that was released concerning women's earnings compared to men. It was found that women did in fact earn less but not because some man was trying to oppress them but because women chose to take more time off from work, to raise families, etc. Again, this is not a negative thing it is just nature. Women are the only ones who can bare children, those who choose not have a family can be the percentage that earn just as much if not more in the work place. I just feel that there are more important things to address in this world than who is beating whom in the gender race.

Overall, I believe women do not have to feel dominated or oppressed unless they chose too. Women are free and if they have any courage at all they would fix what they do not like or find a way to either get around it or to learn to live with it. You can not force women to become outspoken feminist advocates. There will always be someone whom feels that they are mistreated or dominated by someone. If it were not for stress and conflict and differences this world would not go around.

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