

The hunchback of notre dame

Linguistics, English



Oppression in modern society Oppression is still prevalent in our modern society. Oppression is a common phenomenon in every society despite the emergence of various human activists groups and advancement in democracy worldwide. There exist various forms of oppression, which vary from one place to another, within, and among various groups of people. For instance, there exists gender discrimination, class discrimination, discrimination of the physically challenged, racial discrimination, religious discrimination, and dictatorship among others (Cudd, 103). All of these forms of discrimination constitute forms of oppression within the society. However, in the film Hunchback of Notre Dame, there occurs classism, dictatorship, classism, discrimination due to physical appearance.

Classism is common in our modern society. Our society comprises of different groups leading to the formation of classes. There occurs the middle class, high class and the low class (Cudd, 105). People in the high class have some privileges and accorded respect in the society. They are treated in a special way unlike the rest of the classes. Middle class group enjoy few privileges unlike those offered to the high-class group. The worst affected comprises the low class group. People in the low class experience various forms of discrimination and enjoy few privileges compared to the other class groups. For instance, they live in slums; have little access to social services such as proper health care, poor sanitation, often manipulated politically by people from the high-class group (Cudd, 106). Just like in the film The Hunchback of Notre Dame, the king is referred as His most Christian Majesty, Louis XI. This indicates that he is highly regarded in the society and thus had massive power and privileges bestowed upon him (Wallace). Therefore, he

belongs to the high class. Moreover, the archbishop belongs to the middle class while the kings' subjects comprise the low class group. This group does not enjoy some of the privileges enjoyed by the king and the archbishop. Dictatorship forms another form of oppression in the society. In most societies, kings and rulers have some autonomous powers bestowed upon them. Such powers and privileges do not exist with the subjects and thus contribute to oppression. In most instances, some actions and conducts by the rulers go unquestionable since the subjects may fear victimization. Just like in the film, king Louis XI is regarded as His Most Christian Majesty thus, making him the ruler and preside over all religious functions with the assistance of the archbishop (Wallace). When the film describes the king, it says, " His most Christian Majesty, Louis XI—a crafty oppressor of his people, whose dungeons were always full, whose executioners always busy" (Wallace).

Moreover, he acts as the mediator between his subjects and their god and this makes the subject revere him. Thus, he does not share the superiority with any person thereby meaning that the remaining members of the society constitute his subjects. In this case, the subjects do not have powers bestowed upon them in order to conduct religious functions, thereby denying them the opportunity for full participation in religious and governing roles (Wallace). Therefore, they only have to comply with the rules and laws established by the king. Just like in the modern world, the common person does not have the authority to establish some rules and laws affecting them, thereby leading to oppression and reason for social unrest in the society. This occurs due to the existence of some autonomous or absolute powers,

which the rulers use to suppress the subjects, resulting in the unrest (Cudd, 107). Consequently, in some places of work and institutions, some of the managers have some powers bestowed upon them, which they use to suppress the juniors. For instance, in most places of work, there are major incidences of salary delay, victimization, and denial of salary or unfair salary deductions, which oppress the juniors (Cudd, 109). In addition, we need to obey our boss's instructions, even though sometimes we know they are wrong.

In Studs Terkel's *Stephen Cruz*, he quotes the main character as saying, " My bosses were telling me I had all the ' ingredients' for top management. All that was required was to ' get to know our business'" (Terkel, 23). This warning was issued to encourage Stephen to " fall in line, and stay within that fence". Without recognizing this situation, Stephen would never achieve something in this field. For most businesses, obedience is the basic rule. The management may impose some of the rules, which the workers never participated in the formulation, but which affect them in their daily places of work.

Sexism is common in our society. Women are the most affected due their gender and men's perception of their weaknesses (Cudd, 111). Some men regard women as lesser beings who must not be regarded as equal to men. This is a form of oppression since women feel underrated and unappreciated. Moreover, some men regard women as tools for entertainment and who are to be abandoned after attainment of satisfaction (Cudd, 111). Just like in the film, Esmeralda is a beautiful woman who attracts and charms majority of the men with her beauty. According to Phoebus, Esmeralda appears as a

flower, which glows in order to be recognized, thus, no need to recognize her but just exploit her beauty for personal satisfaction (Cudd, 107). She devotes her love to this man, but she does not get any rewards (Wallace). Because men regard women as objects for their entertainment, they do not put enough respect and emotion to women. Without their true emotion, women are disdained and the relationship is unfair. Phoebus shows his playboy attitude at the very beginning; he was dating with a woman, but after he saw the Gypsy girl dancing, he looked as if he was totally attracted by the young dancing girl. His sight was not a kind of sincere appreciation, but simply a kind of desire for a young girl. On seeing Esmeralda, he decides to abandon his former girlfriend in order to start relationship her (Wallace). This lowers the dignity of the former girlfriend, as she looks like a tool that after being used and becomes of lower value, it is abandoned for a new one.

Just like in our contemporary world, some men still despise women and consider them as sex tools where they get sexual satisfaction without the need for permanent attachment despite some of the women showing attachment and need for long lasting relationships (Cudd, 127). Moreover, some nude pictures of the females posted in social media may result in arousal of men in the society, thus driving them to satisfy their needs without consideration of such actions.

Discrimination due to physical appearance is common in every society. People with disabilities experience discrimination due to their natural appearance. People who are not physically challenged tend to mistreat or underrate disabled individuals and consider them lesser beings that cannot perform certain functions (Cudd, 129). Just like in the film, Quasimodo is a

hunchback described as ugly and portrayed quite grotesquely in the film (Wallace). He is the church bell ringer, an occupation that renders him deaf due to the loud sounds of the bell. His parents abandoned him when he was child due his abnormal appearance. According to his parents, his abnormal looks were causing discomfort (Wallace). Throughout the film, people mock and ridicule Quasimodo for his looks and his disability. In this situation, he suffers due to his physical appearance thus causing a form of oppression in his life.

Work Cited

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