

Ethnicity: oppression and racism essay

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



The birdcage clearly illustrates Tatum's idea of that members of the oppressed group always believe the distorted messages that others hold about their own group. In this comparison, a critical analysis reveals that the oppressed group does not always have a wider perspective view of their situation.

Instead, they have a narrow and fixed view of their situations. This makes them unable to see the sense in the whole activity. Remarkably, the lack of macroscopic view of the entire situations results to immobility and reduction among the womenfolk (Rothenberg, 2010). For example, the case of a burdened man hurrying to open doors for able-bodied women who are free of physical burdens.

Although the woman can shallowly view the man as caring, but in reality, this scenario portrays the woman as invisible and incompetent, thus needs help. To prove this, when a woman may require substantial assistance, there will be no man ready to offer support. Ironically, the womenfolk adore men who offer useless support.

Some of the instances that can be compared to the bars of the cage include scenarios where the people who are oppressed assume that nothing is happening, and participate in their oppression either directly or indirectly. For instance, women who are oppressed have to smile and be cheerful for them to be accepted in the society.

According to the oppressors, women should be docile and submissive to their men; therefore, they pretend to be happy even at a time when they feel

oppressed (Rothenberg, 2010). In addition, women struggle to protect their livelihoods by avoiding countering oppressive situations for them not be viewed as angry, bitter, and dangerous.

Clearly, the women conform to these notions in order to be seen as good people in the society. They view themselves as sub human beings, the invisibles who do not occupy space. As a result, they contribute towards their elimination.

Moreover, young women in the U. S. frequently scorn their fellow female friends who are heterosexually active. These women view the sexually active fellows as loose and unprincipled. On the other hand, young females who restrain themselves from sexual activity receive negative comments from their parents, claiming that they may become unpopular.

Worst still, these group of females may be charged with lesbianism. In addition, there is a presumption that if a heterosexually active woman is raped, she liked the ordeal due to her active status (Rothenberg, 2010).

However, for heterosexually inactive female, rape is presumed to be due to her frustration and repression; therefore, she liked it. It is obviously difficult to defend one's self in such a society with a rotten and fixed mind. Since the society accepts these conditions and are not rebellious, these scenarios reveal a strong belief among the oppressed members in the distorted messages.

A person who is caged can either accept and conform to the distorted messages or decide to only alienate himself/herself from the misconceptions and search for the reality with an independent mind that is, they take the responsibility of finding the truth. In Beverly Daniel Tatum's article, an example of a caged individual who decided not to change was the newly trained English teacher who held the opinion that there are no black authors.

Another example is that of the four-year old kids in preschool. When they were asked to draw an Indian, all their pictures had feathers and weapons, which indicated aggressive and violent individuals. These misconceptions are not due to some people's fault, but it is the societal set up that has the stereotyping messages against some groups. Some of the people who have internalised the distorted messages can even refer to other human beings as uncivilised, uncultured, barbaric, and backward.

These groups of people can even view themselves as superior beings while others are animals. On the other hand, some people who critical and creative thinkers will have to doubt their own mindsets and the societal perceptions. In this process, they will subject their thoughts to an autonomous analysis to prove their validity and truth.

Afterwards, they will only hold what they have their evidence as true and discard those that do not have solid facts. An example is the narration by a white woman on how she enjoyed some privileges because of the colour of her skin but not because of whom she was (Rothenberg, 2010). She felt

guilty and cheated even though she received such favours; she felt sympathetic for the blacks.

The above phenomena can affect the life of affected individuals. There are two groups: the victims and the actors. A victim who is racially abused can even die if the society does not develop mechanisms to mitigate such oppressive behaviours. There can be constant stigmatization in terms of colour of the skin, gender, and religious affiliation.

Further, the victims can lose their self-esteem hence perform poorly in the learning centres. The actors, on the other hand, may develop a fixed mind on different ideologies. For example, in Tatum's article there were two white students who argued over Cleopatra being a Black woman or a White woman.

Notably, one of the students said that Cleopatra was not a Black because she was beautiful. This is quite astonishing on the students' perception about blacks. Evidently, these students have a different notion of beautiful people.

Rothenberg, P. S. (2010). *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States* (8th ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.