

Oppression both  
unaccepted. it  
happens in some



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Oppression is defined by The Collins Paperback English Dictionary as, to subjugate by cruelty, force. etc. To afflict or torment. To lie heavy on (the mind, etc.). According to one of the authors in the book Feminist Frontiers IV, Marilyn Frye says: The root of the word oppression is the element press.

The press of the crowd; pressed into the military service; to press a pair of pants; printing press; printing press; press the button. Presses are used to mold things or flatten them or reduce them in bulk. Something pressed is something caught between or among forces and barriers which are so related to each other that jointly they restrain, restrict or prevent the things motion or mobility.

Mold. Immobilise. Reduce. The word oppression is often related to feminism.

The statement that women are oppressed is often found with the statement that men are oppressed as well. According to Frye, oppressing is oppressive to those who oppress as well as to those they oppress. It is not only women who are oppressed; Men claim their oppression as the fact that they are not supposed to show their emotion, they aren't allowed to cry, it is unacceptable. In many countries, for example Afghanistan, women are deeply oppressed. They must cover their entire bodies with clothing, including their face or they will be severely punished with torture. In most parts of Canada and in many parts of the United States women are just as free as men are. Although there are instances of oppression, for example Frye writes in her article titled Oppression that it is common in the US for younger women to be in a bind where sexual activity and sexual inactivity are both unaccepted.

It happens in some parts of the country where girls might be called names like slut or whore for having had sexual relations with a boy. But the other girls who haven't had sex are often called prude or uptight. In these cases girls have no choice, it's a lose-lose situation.

They can't be accepted either way. This also goes for the way a woman dresses. If she dresses one way, perhaps wearing a low-neck shirt and a short skirt, she may be seen as easy because she's showing her sexual availability.

If she dresses another way by wearing a turtleneck and a pair of loose dress pants, she may be seen as uptight and self-conscious about her body.

Another form of oppression is the lack of power women have in a divorce. In the movie *For Richer, For Poorer* the woman in the film was physically abused by her husband and she left him with the children. Since the children were young she still had to mind them and was unable to get a job. Her husband refused to pay alimony or child support, while he was buying expensive suits, went to tanning salons and fancy gyms and drove a fancy car. According to the narrator in the film, like this woman, four out of ten marriages fail.

Women head eighty-five percent of single parent families. Eighty-five percent of men fail to support their families fully and sixty percent fail to support at all. Another fact stated in the film was that after a divorce men's standard of living goes up usually by sixty percent. Women's on the other hand goes down usually to forty percent. This goes to show that there is a lack of support programs for women and their children and that those women are oppressed. They are lacking freedom and their rights. In

Readings two there is references to how womens sexuality has a connection with economic, political dominance and the control that man has.

Rosalinda Mendez Gonzalez wrote Reading two, which is titled, Distinctions in Western Womens Experience: Ethnicity, Class, and Social Change. One of the main questions in this reading is What did the settlement of the land itself mean for the women of different classes and ethnicity? Many of the answers came from the focus on pioneer women and their lives. Their lives are studied through their diaries and or literature left behind. Gonzalez explains that this is biased. There is evidence of the experience of working class women, but when studying womens history we seem to be steered towards educated and/or elite women and their writings. Gonzalez explains that this is biased because not all women experienced what those women did and their experiences are often applied to all women.

Many women in history were unable to record their experiences because they were too poor. They did not hold diaries or attend school and were unable to read and write. Many women suffered great amounts of prejudice and most of them were black, Indian, Asian or Mexican. Gonzalez explains that the westward expansion brings into play a host of major economical, political and social developments. The development of the railroad went hand in hand with the western expansion, which in turn affected women in diverse ethnic and class backgrounds in a variety of ways. After the military, the railroads provided one of the most effective ways of destroying American Indian peoples subsistence on the Plains, by the establishment of the policy regarding paying sharpshooters to kill the buffalo.

Soon after the western expansion patriarchy came into place. Families that were patriarchal were particularly strong in the rural areas. Women were hired to pick cotton, as agricultural labourers but were never paid their own wages. Their salary would be given to her husband, father or brother.

Because of this system, which was called family wages, feudal relations in the countryside were difficult to breakdown, and wage labour did not offer women the economic independence that weakened patriarchal relations like urban and industrial employment did.

Giving the living conditions that the urban areas had, the domestic labour of women and children was overwhelming. They gathered and chopped wood for fuel, hauled water long distances from the river in buckets, hand-ground corn for long hours. They did this to make up for the lack of reasonable wages and public services. In today's society we do not see a lot of male dominance compared the dominance that took place years ago.

Much of the dominance is masked by the women who are suffering. Men often feel superior to women because they are making more money. Many women now days are making just as much money as men are but when a woman takes time off work to have children she becomes the weaker sex. She needs care, she needs love.

This is where male dominance plays a significant role. It is slowly changing but it will forever be the same. Men will never bear children. (Well it is not physically possible as of yet.) There is always going to be a sense of control or power over women by men until the day men become as weak as English Essays