

Female oppression  
history and its role  
today philosophy  
essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Humanistic/sameness feminism is that everyone is equal; everyone is a “self” no matter their gender. The main focus is on the common humanity between woman and men (Notes from 10-6).

In Mill's argument he states that we would be equal, however women suppress themselves into the stereotype they're in. Years ago they did not speak up; they were expected to be the arm candy and only do what was told of them. No one had the courage to step outside the box and speak up for themselves. Women made themselves into “artificial” beings. They allowed the men to mold them and bake them into any form they wished. They initiated the stereotype for non-educated, child bearer, stepford wife. Mill's argument was telling woman that we needed to break free from all of this instead of sitting back and watching it kill the beauty from within. Sameness feminism in his eyes was to break the stereotype against women, against discriminated groups, so that we could all be treated equally.

Schechter also explains humanist feminism in her argument. She explains the problem with battered women cases and how they're not handled properly. They need to be dealt with just as much importance as a case involving a male would, or the way any other case of that nature would be treated. If battered cases were categorized with cases of abused children or gang violence, they would receive the same strict consequences and the probability of them happening would decrease. In her article, Schechter discusses how she feels the problems should be worked out between the families. This I completely disagree with because I feel that no one, whether the victim male or female, would want to be counseled with the person who threatened their life. The victim is not going to want to work on the problems

<https://assignbuster.com/female-oppression-history-and-its-role-today-philosophy-essay/>

because the same situation could potentially play out again. All in all I feel that society is too concerned with keeping the families together instead of focusing on the safety of each individual within the case. Humanist feminism in this case is not so much about making everyone equal (because women were still a suppressed gender), but making the cases against them and every discriminated race/gender qualify for equal attention.

Simone de Beauvoir also discusses the idea of a humanist feminism approach. The article discusses how women are inferior to men. They lack the qualities and characteristics that would make a powerful leader. She talks about that no matter what the definition of the "other" is; society would always categorize a group as being that because there are two; men and women. When de Beauvoir discusses the bipolarity between the sexes, stating that men are the positive and neutral pole and women are the negative pole, it best explains the humanist feminism approach. Women are striving to become not of man, but of their equal; equal as in work distribution, income, social status, etc. They need to stop portraying us as a negative, and start treating us as a neutral gender, just like man.

## **Question #2**

Gynocentric feminism is "women centered" feminism. It emphasizes the point of view from a woman. It is the different fundamental attributes of men and women (Notes from 10-6).

Gilligan explains this idea with two main points; justice perspective and care perspective. The justice perspective is what is right or wrong by law or how a person views justice within their own society. It is how you think the problem

through based on the laws and what you know is right/wrong, rather than relying solely on your gut feeling. Care perspective is based on how you feel the situation should be handled based on your experiences. It is like the Golden Rule, " Treat others the way you would want to be treated." I mix these two perspectives daily based on the situation and who is involved. With family you would lean more towards gut feeling because you have a bond with them and a love that you need to maintain. With strangers or situations you stumble across, you would use the justice perspective. This way you can handle the situation based on facts and law and both people get an equal chance.

Young discusses the " Five Faces of Oppression." No matter what type of group is being discriminated against or bullied because of race/gender, it all leads back to oppression in society. Woman often face these more than other categories just based on our history. We have been suppressed in every form possible and these are issues that we still have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. We deal with exploitation within the workplace; suffer from rape and battery, sovereignty, " othering." Young doesn't just focus on women; he focuses on all discriminated categories and states that they will experience a different combination of the five faces at some point (from Young handout).

Lorde exemplifies gynocentric feminism in the sense that women are disempowered based on the fact that their sexual and erotic behaviors are denied. Erotic in the form of being a strong suppressed feeling women have towards something they desire. It is entirely a woman's feeling. In our lives we were conditioned to feel erotic only in the bedroom with our male

<https://assignbuster.com/female-oppression-history-and-its-role-today-philosophy-essay/>

companion. It was unheard of for woman to feel erotic with themselves or even with other women. Being only a feeling and idea from women, it can threaten patriarchy because men have no control over it. We have finally broken out of the mold and have found other means of pleasure than solely from a man.

### **Question #3**

Dominance feminism is basically stating that men are dominant and women are suppressed. It explains that the dominant figure is one who has the upper hand in politics, businesses, and religion.

Marilyn Frye discusses the idea of being a “ Willful Virgin or a Lesbian.” Her idea is that you’re either a virgin, a married woman who is not having sex; one who is free and socially and sexually on her own (Pg. 330). Then you’re categorized as being a “ tease” or a “ bitch,” or even a lesbian. On the other hand if you’re openly having sex and you’re a straight woman, you’re a whore and easy. You’re either the stereotypical housewife or you must be a lesbian. Why can’t it be that you just want to express who you really are and not fall into the same category as a majority of the women? Frye is trying to explain dominance feminism in the way that women don’t even have control over their sexual desires. They are constrained and conformed to keep their bodies hidden for only their man to see.

Bartky also exemplifies dominance feminism by discussing many ways in which men hold the upper hand and women are suppressed. The idea of the Panopticon is a structure that allows you a view from all angles. It gives the watchmen the overall feeling of the highest power. That’s how men want to

be perceived over woman. Woman diet and focus their day around perfecting the latest fad or trend. They are expected to be soft and delicate, and keep to themselves. Our bodies are expected to be a timeless piece; never aging, never showing sign of wear. We are so used to this way of life that even when no one is there to tell us how to act or what to do, we have disciplined ourselves so much that these behaviors are natural.

Kimmel discusses the idea of masculinity. We believe that every man has “manhood.” We shrug off their actions because we expect it from them. If men are to branch out from the stereotype then we categorize them as gay. Men judge men just as the world judges women. It is just as much of a competition for them as any other being. They see who can get the nicest car, best job, biggest muscles, and the best looking girl. They use us to their advantage because it means that they must be doing “something” right. Men hold the power to overthrow another man’s power. They fear that another can strip away their exterior and find that they don’t possess the qualities that an ultra-man should. They themselves are the dominant gender, yet they suppress within their society. It is not a matter of whether or not what they’re doing (suppressing women or themselves) is right, its more about keeping their mouths shut to avoid being frowned upon. So all in all, men have the choice to either remain dominant over women as well as their own gender, or fear that they will be excluded and shut out from their “manhood.”

## **Question #6**

I believe that women’s personal lives matter in the case of sameness

feminism. The whole idea behind creating men and women equal depends <https://assignbuster.com/female-oppression-history-and-its-role-today-philosophy-essay/>

solely on their lives on a personal level. I believe that whether or not women will continue to dig themselves farther into the pit of suppression will determine which way feminists will lean. The idea of battered women is also a big personal issue. You have a choice whether or not to act upon it or hide because you feel you won't be taken seriously. Of course women do this to themselves, but it's only because of the way we've been conditioned all of these years.

Gynocentric feminism rests solely on a women's personal level; mainly because it translates into "women centered" feminism. It emphasizes a woman's point of view and focuses on what would benefit her. The care perspective goes hand in hand with this. That is how we react to situation based on our internal feelings and past experiences we've had. We then dissect the situation and handle it in a way that we would expect it to be if it were us on the receiving end. How we deal with exploitation and the suppressing of our erotic feelings can determine the class of woman that you become. We are conditioned to be of a certain nature, however it is our duty to break the mold and create a new meaning for the word woman.

Dominance feminism is the main issue in regards to "othering" of the female gender. It is exactly what it states; men are dominant and women are suppressed. Whether women stick to that suppression is the real situation. We have become so disciplined within ourselves that we act without being told. We have conformed ourselves to be the picturesque wife; flawless skin, perfect body, and well-mannered. Not all women want to be perceived in that light, but without it we'd be ridiculed. Men hold such power over us.

They control our actions, words, movements, sexuality. If we break the mold we are then placed into a new category; lesbian, whore, or even psycho.

These are all things that we have to take into consideration on a daily basis. We walk on eggshells trying not to bring attention to ourselves in a negative sense. Whether it is in the workplace or out having drinks with our friends, we try to keep a cool and collective façade so that we can prove to men that they don't have the control. We hold jobs in high positions, we run for president; we have our work published in books when it was unheard of. We have begun to crack the glass, now we just need to do something to make it shatter.