The Way Women are viewed in Race, Class, and Gender

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**Women in Society**

Women are the backbone of many societies. They bring the people into this world, and while they are here they are loved and nurtured by these women. They are the homemakers, who keep the house clean, they are the caretakers, who takes care of the sick, this people are the cooks, who make meals at the end of each day, this special creatures are the lovers, who make sure their spouses are satisfied, they are the tutors, who help with late night homework, and they are so much more… Throughout the different cultures of society, women are seen differently. This is the same between genders, and classes. Women see women different than men, sometimes it is positive, and sometimes it is negative. The class that one is in also has an impact women are seen. Society does not have a set standard on where women should be on the totem pole; therefore it is up to the individual to decide.

The women’s movement was bigger than it has ever been in the 1970s; there was always a shaky alliance between white women and women of color. The fact the dominant women group had an “attitude” with the minority group affected the growth of organization coming to pass. Both groups had to come to gain some sort of identity during the women’s movement, because both sides want to feel as if they have a say. (Mizrahi) Many white in the woman’s movement saw that gender and racial equality was different, when in fact it was. The women may have been the backbone of the racial equality fight; they were still seen as the inferior ones. (Harnois)

**Races of Women/Stereotypes**

The prison system is where women of color fall short, people who grow up female, poor, and of color are going to criminalize society. (Fine) Black women who grow up in poverty are thought to have low self-esteem and are put off into “determined” statistics, such as being put in welfare, or being labeled a “hoe.” African American women are also seen as protectors as you go
higher into the social classes. They are seen as the dominators, and the head of their household. Black women want to work, as well as take care of their children. They want to be noticed, and do not follow the rule of “be seen, but not heard.” Many people take judgment when it comes to black women. They assume black women are the fighting types that don’t take things lightly. Black women had the hardest fight against inequality, because they faced oppression based on race, class, gender, and a legacy of struggle against such oppression. (Harnois)

Korean women who immigrate you are forced to gain “American” names. Being a woman in America from another country forces these girls into two different classes if they cannot speak English fluently. One immigrant, by American name as Lucy, was forced in between two social classes, because she was an immigrant worker, with less than fluent English skills. She was in the immigrant working class neighborhood, which looked completely different to her than the American Middle class. Women are shaped by their social relations, with regards to race, class, and gender. Korean women are made to take care of house and home before anything else can be touched or taken care of. The men in their household must be content, before their own happiness has even been touched on. (Parks)

It is assumed that white women are the more laid-back homemakers. White women are the ones who are submissive, and sit back and let the man take control, because throughout history this is what they were taught. In history white women were taught that the man is in control, and what the man says goes. They have been taught through the centuries, they were taught to take care of their husbands, because throughout history, they married older men in order to have children, and because of that they took care of those children, as well as their husband. White women are consider the more submissive women who are willing to accept things easier than a lot of black women. This is not because they feel as if men are better than
women, but because this is the way that they were raised. It comes from their background. What is put into a person as a child is what will come out of them in the future.

**Women and Social Classes**

The social standing also has a large influence on the way women are perceived. It is a majority stereotypical, but at the same time it is the way life is. Depending on the class that one is in determines the way the matriarchs are viewed. Women hold a very important spot in some of these households, and in others their spot is very minimal if existent at all. Class separations are bound to happen, because the wealthy only compose 1% of the population. (Lott) Families now are separate in standing based on status, expectations, and power. People are labeled as poor, working class, middle class, or wealthy.

Middle class women are often the topic of feminist scholars. Career women conflict with stay-at-home women. This is simple a simple comparison. Some career women hope and wish that they could stay home, and spend more time with their families, but they know that they have to go and make money for their family. They know how important it is to bring something to the table, whether they are the sole caregiver or not. While, stay-at-home moms, some are quite content in where they are, while others wish they could do more, and work, and provide for their household, even if they don’t HAVE to.

Low-income families have hard times, their family concerns mix with work, but they also have to be able to afford childcare, but with that come finding inexpensive childcare that is still high quality. Low income women have to face the facts of skipping meals, relying on pantries, being afraid of losing their home, and buying usually low-quality, and high quality foods. They must fit the needs. (Lott) According to the National’s Women’s Law Center, low income women have very poor health.
Middle income women are also considering working class. Whether they have a job or not is varied. Some of the women work, while some are stay at home mothers. This is the typical family which consists of brick house, white picket fence, 2.5 kids, and traditional family. This is what a majority of America consists of. These are the women that compete with each other in the working mother, or stay at home mother situation. Some of these women tend to their house and home all day, while others go out and assist with the bills, and bring something to the table with their husband.

Upper class women have a large stereotype as well. They are viewed as the “uppity” type. The kind of woman who does not want to be dirty. She wants everything in her house to be perfect; there should not be anything out of place in her house. It should be immaculate in case of company. Her children attend private school, or the most elite schools in the city. These are the types of things that occur in a “stereotypical” upper class household, that women take control over.

**Sociological Perspective**

If Karl Marx were still around, he would look at this topic with wide eyes. This is a prime example of the Conflict Theory. Problems lay with the social organizations. Social life falls within economic relationships. This is the way that things are. Society contradicts itself, we are supposed to be a place for each other, an equal society, but America is far from this. Many of the feminist groups contradict what another group may want. This is how things were in the civil rights days. Although they were fighting for racial equality, at the time women were still given the short end of the stick. Women still could not vote, and majority of the jobs women could do included being at home, or included cleaning, cooking, or looking after someone else child. This is just the way society is set-up, even if it is very unfair. This causes conflict between the men
fighting, and the women wanting things to be fair. In actuality, the Marx theory was quite unequal when it came to women, and didn’t give it much attention. There was the thought it was more dramatic and interesting forms of deviance came from men and boys. The very first time that feminist conflict theorist arose was when domestic violence and rape arose. The woman theorist that is similar to Marx conflict theory is MackKinnon. (Sutherland). Mackinnon lets it be known that Marx singles out women, and is engaging the social conflicts even further.

The way women are viewed has always been a problem in America. It is not that they are hated, it’s because they are the minority. Some groups have it worse than others. Women who are a part of a cultural minority have it against them in two ways. In the past things were even worse. Women were viewed as cleaners, and baby makers. They were not useful in any other sense. They were used to make the men who were useful, and the cooks that were needed to clean if they were black. If they were white, they were given to older men at a very young age, and yet and still made to have babies. As the times have progressed, there are women politicians, doctors, and musicians. Women are the background of our society. It is because of women a lot of great things have been invented, and brought to us. A few of these things are: The circular saw, a colored flare system, and those chocolate chip cookies that Santa Clause loves so much.

Women play an intricate part in society regardless of their class or gender. It is because of well-known feminists such as Susan B. Anthony and Kate Chopin that American is where it is when women are involved. As long as people are dedicated, and hopeful for a bright future all is possible. As long as people do not willingly sit around and let women become the less submissive in society, they will move forward. As long as one knows the direction they are trying to go in… that is where they will go.
References


