

In her article, Marilyn Frye lays out a framework for understanding what it means to be oppressed in order to clarify the murky relationship that exists between misery and oppression: that one is miserable does not necessarily communicate that one is oppressed, nor does one's lack of misery communicate that one is *not* oppressed. To be oppressed, Frye argues, means to be caught up in or caged between forces that "jointly . . . restrain, restrict or prevent [one's] motion or mobility" (2). For Frye, we fail to recognise forms of oppression when we view the world microscopically and thus it is only macroscopically that we are able to recognise how individual acts constitute a system of oppression that restrains, restricts, and immobilises groups of people; we must consider how a particular barrier fits in with other forces present in the world in order to determine whether it constitutes a form of oppression. Additionally, Frye points out that one's encounter of a barrier in the world does not in itself communicate that one is oppressed; we must consider *whose interests are being served* by a particular barrier. One fails to be oppressed, for example, when one's freedom is restricted for the benefit of the group or for an ultimate end which serves one's own interest. Lastly, Frye points out that individuals are not oppressed on their merit of individuals, but on their membership to a particular category of people and that we fail to recognise forms of oppression when we forget to examine particular categories of people *as a group*. Women's oppression, for Frye, is characterised as "the service of men and men's interests as men define them" (9) and takes the form of personal service, sexual service, and ego service, though the individual manifestations of each vary according to individual women's situations.

Frye recognises that the particular instances of oppression which an individual experiences vary as a function of her membership to various racial and economic groups ("The details of the subjective experience of this servitude are local. They vary with economic class

and race and ethnic tradition as well as the personalities of the men in question” (9)), but I wonder whether or not her theory of oppression allows for meaningful acknowledgement of the way in which one form of oppression (eg. gender) may be *transformed* by the other forms of oppression an individual experiences. If it does, is it problematic that Frye sees other instances of oppression as derivative of gender oppression? (Remember that many women report other forms of oppression as more salient to their experiences than gender oppression).