

Birdcage Exercise- Mahzuza Rahaman

In Marilyn Frye's essay, she uses a metaphor of a birdcage as a representation of oppression. In the analogy, she is comparing the birdcage to one's ability to see and recognize oppression. She writes about how when focusing on one tiny aspect of the problem, we lose sight or understanding of the problem as a whole. She writes about how "...you could look at that one wire... and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire at any time..."¹. People become so engrossed in one tiny portion of the problem, and fail to acknowledge the whole problem and how people are affected by it.

In the analogy that Frye draws between a birdcage and oppression, she does a good job in explaining how when someone focuses on one aspect, they fail to recognize the problem as a whole. This analogy does a good job in explaining how some people only seem to pay attention to the one aspect that they fit into. For example, most colored people only see the oppression they are facing, or other colored people are facing. People do see the oppression faced by others in other social groups, however they do not acknowledge it in the same way that they acknowledge the oppression that they face. While this analogy describes how people focus on a specific aspect of oppression, the analogy could have done a better job in explaining how some people just see the whole cage, but not each individual wire. They may see it as one wire wrapped around to create a cage. They see the cage as a whole, but fail to see each individual aspect of it. Many people may recognize oppression, and know about it, however they may fail to recognize the aspects that make up oppression, and the different types of oppression that people face.

¹ Frye, Marilyn. "Oppression." *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Freedom: Crossing Press, 2007.

