

Lesson 1. Power And Privilege

Appendix. A2

Opposite World

When you turn on the television and hear about what world leaders are doing, you mainly see the pictures and names of women.

Men and women are seen as different, with men understood as naturally more nurturing and sweet, while women are thought of as naturally more direct and strong. When a baby is born, it is common for men to stay home and take care of the little boy or girl.

Because males are seen as more vulnerable than females, they are often encouraged to do quieter activities, like reading, playing with dolls and cooking. On the other hand, females are encouraged to be active, strong and athletic from a young age. If females play with dolls or back down from a fight, they are often teased for acting like a 'little boy.'

Professional female athletes can make millions of pounds and many little girls dream about reaching such a professional status. Stadiums fill to watch women play football and rugby – and almost every male and female in society owns a piece of clothing with their favourite female athlete's name on it.

When both men and women speak, they often use the word 'womankind' to describe human beings. Books, plays, movies and religions refer to life as the story of 'womankind' and to God as 'she'. In school, both boys and girls have been taught about the brave female 'sheroes' throughout history who have shaped society. Schools teach that female leaders have created the laws and institutions that exist in society.

When men get married, the tradition is that their last name becomes that of their new wife. This honour of being given the last name of the woman who will bear their child is something that men dream about from a young age. Everyone knows that a man's ultimate goal in life is to find a woman to love him. Children's fairy tales often tell the story of a young boy searching for his princess to save him.

Most movies, commercials, videos and magazines are made by and for women and the roles of men often require them to wear little clothing and act silly. The media that is made for men often focuses on how they can please or attract a woman.

When men walk down the street, it is not unusual for groups of women to stare at their bodies and comment on how they look. Most men say they feel uncomfortable when this happens but women often tell them that it is just a compliment. Many people say that is just how girls act and boys should expect it. If a woman doesn't act this way, both men and women often immediately question her sexual orientation or tease her about being 'gay'.

Imagine it had been this way every day of your life.