

*Pick one question and answer it with a short essay*

1. According to Catharine MacKinnon,

Consciousness raising can also affirm that although women are deprived of power, within the necessity of their compliance is a form of power which they possess but have not yet seized. Mostly, women comply. Women learn they are defined in terms of subordinate roles; failing to challenge these roles confirms male supremacy in a way it needs. Daily social actions are seen to cooperate with and conform to a principle. They are not random, natural, socially neutral, or without meaning beyond themselves. They are not freely willed, but they are actions nonetheless. From seeing that such actions have meaning for maintaining and constantly reaffirming the structure of male supremacy at their expense, women can come to see the possibility, even the necessity of acting differently. Women can act because they have been acting all along. Although it is one thing to act to preserve power relations and quite another to act to challenge them, once it is seen that these relations require daily acquiescence, acting on different principles, even in very small ways, seems not quite so impossible.

Offer an interpretation of MacKinnon's claims in this passage. A good interpretation might include answers to the following questions.

(a) What does it come to that "Mostly, women comply"? Give an example or examples of "daily social action" that "cooperate with" a "principle" of male supremacy?

(b) In what ways does male power "require" complying actions by women? Continuing your earlier example(s), explain a respect in which the complying actions you've described serves to "maintain" and "reaffirm" male supremacy.

(c) Why does women's discovery that women are complying with male power through their actions help women to understand that they can act to challenge male power? Illustrate the role of this insight by continuing your earlier examples.

2. (a) What does it mean to claim that women and men are biologically natural kinds of human being distinguished by sex-specific biological natures?

(b) Consider the patriarchal family-household as it's described by Shulamith Firestone or Christine Delphy. Women perform unpaid labor—in sexual activity, pregnancy, childbirth, caring for and raising children, caring for other members of the household, producing goods for consumption within the household, or producing goods to be sold outside the home—at the direction, subject to the control, and to the benefit of the male head of household. Men perform other kinds of work, typically outside the home and for a wage.

(c) Offer an interpretation of the claim that this division of labor is "natural," using the idea that men and women specialize in work for which they are suited by their

biological natures and simply because they are naturally suited for those kinds of labor.

(d) Explain Delphy's claim that this division of labor rests on men's power to compel women to perform certain kinds of work as unpaid labor. Explain how this claim offers an alternative to the claim that the division of labor is true

(e) Suppose that Delphy's claim is true. Does it follow that biologically natural differences in persons' capacities for gestation, childbirth, and nursing play no role in explaining the division of labor?