Engaging Feminism:

A Pedagogy for Aboriginal Peoples

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Abstract

The effects of colonization are still evident in Aboriginal communities. This thesis examines feminism in relation to the colonial experiences of Aboriginal people. Drawing on feminist theories, this thesis explores how the ideology and practices of male dominance were imposed through colonization in Aboriginal societies. European male dominance has been modeled throughout colonization and assimilation, and this set the standard for future gender relations in Western society and in Aboriginal communities. Patriarchy is deeply embedded in our society, and because Aboriginal people have been affected by this, historically and in the present, they in turn absorb these practices as normal thought and behavior. The marginalization and oppression of Aboriginal people is due to colonization; however, patriarchal practices were also modeled in this process and this has caused Aboriginal women to be further marginalized. This thesis uses feminist theory, an analysis of patriarchy, and social constructionism to demonstrate how Aboriginal women continue to be marginalized, and how feminism may be a source of empowerment for Aboriginal people.

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Ekosi. Ninanaskomon e-kiminikawiyahn kapikiskweyan.

Dedication:

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Virginia Helen McKay and my sister Bernadette

McKay. Your strength and independence have been modeled gracefully.

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Introduction

This research analyzes gender relations in Aboriginal communities by correlating European values and practices with the experiences of Aboriginal people in colonization. Feminism is used as a point of reference to make sense of the marginalization of Aboriginal women. It is my observation that there has been little mention of employing a feminist analysis as a source of empowerment for Aboriginal women, within both academic discourse and in Aboriginal communities. Yet, feminism offers an explanation of the political, economic and social situations of Aboriginal women and it puts forward an explanation of their (our) history with oppression.

This research is motivated by personal experiences and observations of gender inequality in Aboriginal communities. I am a Cree Métis woman who was raised with Catholic beliefs and practices. The people in the Aboriginal community I was raised in speak Cree as their first language, as do I. The traditional customs followed in my community involve living off the land. I gained registered Indian status through the amendment of Bill C 31. Having been raised in a single-parent family in an Aboriginal community, I have experienced, observed, and researched the effects of gender inequality in mainstream Euro-Canadian society and in Aboriginal communities. My research has provided a sense of validation and empowerment by using feminist analysis to understand the history of Aboriginal women.

This research is also motivated by the experiences I had while working for a number of years as a social worker. I witnessed many single parent Aboriginal women who had very limited resources to support themselves. Often the fathers of

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the children were not involved in their children's lives, and/or did not financially

support their children. I believed there had to be a reason why this was taking place.

I knew colonization created oppression and marginalization for all Aboriginal

people; however, many Aboriginal women have had to assume the entire

responsibility of parenting children while Aboriginal men have been at the fore of

representing the needs and aspirations of all Aboriginal people in political arenas

(Blaney, 2003). Hearing the voices of Aboriginal women in the public domain has

been a rarity. My thoughts on gender inequality have taken shape as I have reflected

on these experiences throughout my life. These observations motivated me to

pursue addressing this injustice. My work experience and life observations have

resulted in recognizing gender inequality in both Western society and Aboriginal

communities. The plight of Aboriginal women needs to be addressed, and it is not

fair to them if no analysis is offered for the oppression and marginalization that

continues to be a part of their life.

Engaging feminism has brought a sense of purpose to my existence. My

experiences in marginalization, rejection, exclusion and oppression have been

caused by the patriarchal nature of colonization and feminism has been helpful in

understanding women's history. Feminism offers me validation and empowerment

whereas before I often felt unvalued.

As an educator I am responsible for sharing knowledge about the history of

Aboriginal peoples using a race, class and gender analysis. My pedagogy includes

using a feminist standpoint in how I communicate and make decisions. I offer

feminism to be used as a pedagogy for Aboriginal peoples because it heightens our awareness of how inequality is actualized.

This research draws on postmodern theories of subjectivity which challenges the notions of essentialist unitary subject positions. Indigenous studies have traditionally advocated facilitating cultural revitalization; however, there are many Aboriginal people who have not had the opportunity to experience traditional lifestyles due to colonialism and, because of this, some often feel a sense of isolation. There are multiple experiences and identities Aboriginal people possess, and postmodern theory offers one way to speak to these conditions. This research is not intended to diminish or declare that traditional culture is extinct; it is merely to acknowledge that many Aboriginal people experience their lives outside the traditional cultural paradigm.

I believe denying that gender inequality exists within Aboriginal communities denies the lived experiences of those Aboriginal women who endure oppression, subjugation, and marginalization in their own communities, as a result of their gender. In analyzing gender relations, Aboriginal women may be better equipped to understand and maybe even change their social situations. This research does not account for all Aboriginal women because Aboriginal people have different life experiences, in relation to how colonization has impacted and affected their lives.

I wish to explore both the history of feminism, and how it has changed over time. I do not perceive it as a movement that serves to benefit only white women. Freedman (2002) suggests that women's movements have evolved throughout

history, and feminism offers women a political position that will enhance their self-determination. She indicates feminism was a reaction toward unequal distribution of individual wealth. Feminism offers Aboriginal women a point of reference in making sense of their life experiences.

Aboriginal peoples discussed in this thesis refer to the First Nations, Metis, non-status Indians, and Inuit. *In Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (2000), Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffins say that "the term 'aboriginal' was coined as early as 1667 to describe the indigenous inhabitants of places encountered by European explorers, adventurers or seamen" (p. 4). The term Aboriginal will be used as it encompasses all the people who are descendants of the first peoples of Canada. Because I am now a registered Indian, my status has become First Nations; however, my upbringing was largely influenced by Euro-Canadian society, except that I learned the Cree language first. My background is not unlike other newly registered Aboriginal people.

This research has been developed with the understanding that feminism is a useful set of beliefs for Aboriginal people to espouse in our search for social, political and economic equity. In understanding the marginalization of Aboriginal women, feminism is often rejected by Aboriginal scholars because it is associated as belonging to only white women, for example, Ouellette (2002) argues that traditional Aboriginal culture continues to exist and gender roles remain complementary. Aboriginal societies frequently claim that cultural revitalization will restore Aboriginal self-determination and I suggest that we must also look at how the dominant society has imposed colonial rule and consider its effects. The

focus on cultural revitalization fails to recognize the impact of colonization and how it has affected gender relations in Aboriginal communities and families. The imposition of European gender ideals often leave Aboriginal women exposed to violence and poverty while men are endorsed to display power and control over 'their' women. Feminism can be a source of enlightenment and empowerment for Aboriginal peoples because it speaks to the gender relations in Aboriginal communities and it also adds to our current understanding of colonization.

In order to examine how feminism is of value to Aboriginal people, this thesis will explore the history of patriarchy, the emergence of feminism, how social constructionism contributes to an understanding of racialization, and how the adoption of patriarchy affects marginalized Aboriginal and African-American communities.

An important point of departure is understanding how patriarchy has been normalized through history. Patriarchal practices are social constructs that are learned throughout history and which spill over and are imposed onto non-European communities and societies through processes of colonization including the imposition of Christianity. In response to male dominance, or patriarchy, feminism has been used as a source of liberation for all women. This thesis looks at the history of feminism and how it relates to Aboriginal women. My research argues that contemporary Aboriginal societies continue to operate within influences of Western patriarchy. This research is not intended to dismiss traditional Aboriginal culture as non-existent; it is however, meant to shed some light on how Western societal practices and influences seep through the walls of Aboriginal customs which

are then adopted as norms in Aboriginal communities. Examining various forms of gender inequality within Aboriginal communities will enhance an awareness of the diverse social situations of Aboriginal people. When gender inequality is recognized, feminist theory can be a valuable tool for Aboriginal women to understand the complexities of their oppression. Acknowledging the full range of women's movements throughout history opens opportunities for Aboriginal women to relate to common oppressions experienced because of their gender in both Western and Aboriginal societies.

The methodology used in this thesis draws on postmodern and social constructionist theories of identity and subjectivity to examine current Aboriginal identity politics. "Indian" imagery is critiqued because in colonization, the "Indian identity" was heavily determined by European settlers. Stereotypical imagery of "real Indian identity" has resulted, and this has contributed to social and political commitments and investments in essentialist ideas of Aboriginal identity. One purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that Aboriginal people have diverse experiences that do not fit into the images that have been portrayed in media. Europeans created a dichotomous imagery of Aboriginal women as "squaws" or "Indian princesses", and these constructs remain alive in many non-Aboriginal people's minds. Aboriginal women's identity continues to be perceived as inferior by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, and that Aboriginal women are available for use by men prevails.

Patriarchy was introduced in Aboriginal communities during early contact with Europeans. European gender roles were imposed onto Aboriginal people as

Christian family values. Race and gender have been used to establish notions of inferiority and superiority; Aboriginal women have become devalued because of the patriarchal nature of colonization. With Europeans imposing their social structures onto Aboriginal societies, Victorian ideals of gender roles were used in the education of "Indian" students. Victorian ideals of gender roles were patriarchal and Indian students learned this kind of social behavior and it has been carried forward in time (Chiefcalf, 2002).

The work of bell hooks is used to draw correlations with the experiences of marginalization and oppression of African-American and Aboriginal peoples in colonization. bell hooks is a Black woman scholar who advocates a feminist standpoint as a source of liberation for all people. The oppression and marginalization that African-American and Aboriginal people have experienced has created adverse effects on them, and these include practicing internalized racism and the psychological effects of learned inferiority. The commonalities between these two groups show that colonization has used patriarchy in maintaining dominance and the effects of this are now evident in these groups. Colonization and slavery involved processes of racialization and inferiorization.

This thesis consists of reviewing existing literature on feminist theory, colonization, patriarchy and how colonized people experience their social conditions. The objective is to explore how feminist theory may be of value to Aboriginal women. This research is a theoretical inquiry. This thesis will be separated into six sections. Chapter One is entitled "Manifestation of Patriarchy".

The purpose of this chapter is to establish how social conditions of Aboriginal people have been influenced by Western patriarchal practices in society.

Chapter Two is entitled "Assertion of Feminism." This chapter explores definitions of feminism and provides a history of women's movements and the different types of feminist movements that have existed. This chapter will also speak to how feminism emerged in response to patriarchy and how feminism has also broadened to include women of color.

Chapter Three is entitled "Social Constructionism, Discourse, and Identity." The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how colonization has informed aspects of Aboriginal identity, and how early European settlers created this. This chapter will examine how images of "real Indians" have been used to sell merchandise and these images became the measure of the "real Indian" in the minds of Western society. The reason for including this argument is to demonstrate how Western society has dictated what a "real Indian" is suppose to be, and how this encourages or promotes essentialist images of Aboriginal peoples. The chapter is intended to illustrate that identity is socially constructed and produced in history, and has material and social effects.

Chapter Four is entitled "Introduction of Patriarchy to Aboriginal Communities." This chapter looks at the effects of colonization in Aboriginal communities. It is meant to inform how notions of inferiority and superiority were defined in colonialism. This chapter is intended to show how patriarchal practices were modeled and learned during colonization. This chapter will focus on how patriarchy was introduced and imposed on Aboriginal peoples.

Chapter five is entitled "Gender Analysis of bell hooks". This chapter is intended to explore how bell hooks analyzes race, gender and class in relation to the experiences of African-Americans. Although this work is specific to African-American people, it parallels many of the conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada. hooks offers reasons why African-American women might embrace a feminist standpoint. hooks' research is influenced by a feminist standpoint and her experiences with inequality were mainly because of her race (Black) and gender (woman). She articulates how patriarchy is actualized within African-American communities and families, which parallels what happens in Aboriginal communities.

Chapter Six is entitled "Feminism and Aboriginal Women." It is a review of scholarship of Aboriginal women as it relates to the issues facing Aboriginal women. This chapter will examine the implications of essentialist notions of Aboriginal identity. This chapter also critiques how culture is perceived by Aboriginal people. It is intended to illustrate that the identity of Aboriginal people is affected by colonization and the imposition of patriarchal practices.

The conclusion speaks to the reluctance of Aboriginal women to espouse a feminist standpoint. Feminism and women's movements are constantly changing in time and location, just as Aboriginal women are not in their pure state of "traditional" existence because of colonization. Essentialist perspectives of culture and what constitutes a "real Indian" are woven into the debate of whether feminism is compatible or applicable to Aboriginal women. Through my experiences, observations and research, I suggest that feminism may be a site of liberation for all Aboriginal people.

Chapter One

Manifestation of Patriarchy

European society has been organized around male dominance and male control. This organization for male dominance gave men almost exclusive rights to make decisions that impact their families, communities, and societies. This hierarchical ordering of people whereby men are deemed more important than women is known as patriarchy. European societies have developed this belief system and the socio-economic practices that both have ensured and maintained patriarchy which was imposed on Canada and United States during colonial expansion. An illustration of what patriarchy looks like will offer an understanding of how it functions and how it has been actualized in society. A gender analysis of historical social relations shows that much of how Western society functions have been shaped from a male perspective.

1.1 What is patriarchy?

Patriarchal societies favor men over women in matters of decision making, positions of authority, and ownership of property. Johnson (1997), a sociologist who taught at Hartford College for Women, describes patriarchy as:

> A society is patriarchal to the degree that it is male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered. It also involves as one of its key aspects the oppression of women. Patriarchy is male-dominated in that positions of authority-political, economic, legal, religious, educational, military, domestic-are generally reserved for men. Heads of states, corporate CEOs and board members, religious leaders, school principals, members of legislatures at all levels of government, senior law partners, tenured full professors, generals and admirals, and even those identified as 'head of household' all tend to be male under patriarchy. (p. 5)

In a patriarchal society, Johnson (1997) argues, women who earn their way to one of these positions of authority are often measured against men in similar positions.

Men who occupy positions of authority are assumed to have attained those positions due to natural dominance. Patriarchy perpetuates male dominance.

Throughout history male dominance has been asserted through a set of practices that has caused women to be seen as naturally subordinate to men. For example, in a patriarchal system women and girls learn to see themselves from the standpoint of men. Li and Bolaria (1994) say that patriarchy is "[a] societal phenomenon marked by the domination of certain men over other men, all women and children. A system of ruling where power is exercised as domination over others and stems from the historical emergence of the oppression of women" (p. 84). Li and Bolaria further suggest that because women see themselves from the standpoint of men, they begin to form an internalized view of themselves based on their association with men. This internalized view is the result of adopting patriarchal perspectives which lead to women undervaluing themselves. Generations of patriarchal conditioning are perpetuated as women and girls are socialized to learn they are inferior to men.

Domination has been maintained by middle-to upper- class men throughout history. Men from the lower-class are subordinated by those elite men in power. All women and children are dominated by men because it is the men who have held the power to disseminate the belief of male superiority as a natural phenomenon. Li and Bolaria (1994) say that the invisibility of women in historical public and professional settings has not been an oversight. In order for patriarchy to continue as a normal occurrence, societal practices and ideologies of male domination and male control must be maintained by men.

Patriarchy is dependent on the roles men and women assume and it is also

dependent on women accepting subordination. Masculinity is rigidly defined under

patriarchy. Women need to be constructed as subordinate in order to legitimize men

in control and power. Ruth (1990) defines this dynamic as, "a society ruled by a

certain kind of men wielding a certain kind of power – a society that reflects the

underlying values of the traditional male ideal" (p. 45). Ruth (1990) argues that the

masculine ideal has qualities of intelligence, honesty, courage, and in contemporary

times, the masculine hero is sexual and tough. Many of these masculine ideals are

determined by television and media. A warrior image fits the masculine ideal of

patriarchal men. Ideal patriarchal men are not supposed to be delicate, sensitive,

emotional, fearful, needy, and tender because these characteristics are reserved for

women. Ruth (1994) lists patriarchal ideals of masculinity as:

Warrior Virtues	*Not-Male (Complement)*
aggressiveness	passivity
courage	timidity
physical strength and health	fragility and delicacy
self-control and emotional reserve	expressiveness
perseverance and endurance	frailty
competence and rationality	emotionality
independence	needfulness
self-reliance, autonomy	dependence
individuality	humility
sexual potency	chastity, innocence or receptivity.

(p. 47)

Because today patriarchal practices are heavily influenced by the media and

television, this gendered division of human qualities becomes the lived reality for a

lot of people. Men need to conform to these images in order to be recognized as

"real" men. Ruth (1994) suggests that when men do not adopt these expectations of

masculine roles, they are often faced with social trauma and internal conflict. She adds,

> People will punish him for his deviation, through rejection, ostracism, ridicule, or formidable signs of hostility. Because he is not a "man's man" or a "real" man, he is apt to find himself ill received both in traditional male environments and among many traditional women. (p. 51)

Often women may be just as harsh in condemning men for not obeying patriarchal masculine roles because of the patriarchal conditioning of society. Patriarchal practices continue to heavily influence gender relations in society. "Normal" behavior is measured using a patriarchal reference.

1.2 Systems of beliefs in Patriarchy

Patriarchal practices are made manifest in many ways. In terms of a system of beliefs, there are two main assurances that gender inequality is actualized in patriarchy. First, there is a belief that men are more important than women, and second, the belief that men have the right to control women. Societal participation in patriarchy generally revolves around these patriarchal beliefs.

Gender roles in a patriarchal society are determined by men for their benefit. Ideas of gender superiority and inferiority are necessary to maintain because that is where men locate their entitlement to dominate. There are many assumptions about gender in a patriarchal society, and Lerner (1993) explains these include the following ideas:

> Men and women are essentially different creatures, not only in their biological equipment, but in their needs, capacities and functions. Men and women also differ in the way they were created and in the social function assigned to them by God.
> Men are "naturally" superior, stronger and more rational, therefore designed to be dominant. From this follows that men are political citizens and responsible for and representing the polity. Women are "naturally"

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weaker, inferior in intellectual and rational capacities, unstable emotionally and therefore incapable of political participation. They stand outside of the polity.

Men, by their rational minds, explain and order the world. Women by their nurturant function sustain daily life and the continuity of the species. While both functions are essential, that of men is superior to that of women. Another way of saying this is that men are engaged in "transcendent" activities, women-like lower class people of both sexes-are engaged in "immanent" activities.

Men have an inherent right to control the sexuality and the reproductive functions of women, while women have no such right over men.

Men mediate between humans and God. Women reach God through the mediation of men. (pp. 3-4)

These assumptions have a long history in the Western world and they are certainly still evident today. Christianity has also, historically, supported the idea that men are superior and women are to remain on the margins of men's position in life.

The belief, in a patriarchal society, that men are more important then women is evident in the language that is used. Misogyny is evident in Western society. Gender inequality is normalized and misogyny becomes a part of our mainstream culture. For example, Johnson (1997) illustrates how misogyny is embedded in everyday language:

Not to be overlooked is the routine of insulting males with names that link them to females-sissy (sister), girl, pussy, son of a bitch, mama's boy. Notice, however, that the worst way to insult a woman isn't to call her a man or a 'daddy's girl'; it's to call her a woman by another name by highlighting or maligning femaleness itself-bitch, whore, cunt. (pp. 38-39)

The very essence of womanhood is linked to undesirable attributes of humanity whereby it is important that insults are located in pejorative terms for her sexuality. The English language normalizes this injustice toward women and in this way misogyny becomes a part of our mainstream culture.

In the public sphere patriarchy is actualized in many forms. Men continue to hold a majority of positions of authority, such as managers, principals, and supervisors; and cronyism perpetuates this. Men who hold positions of authority are known to sexually harass female subordinates, and may assume that masculinity sanctions men harassing women. A man with many partners is seen as a stud and is often praised for his virile masculinity, while a woman who does the same, is a "bitch" or "slut" and is to be shunned or socially excommunicated. Friendly women are seen as inviting sexual advances, or teasing masculinity. It is socially acceptable for a man to have a younger female partner while a woman who is older than her male partner is viewed as unnatural and unacceptable. As men grow older they are often regarded as sophisticated while an older woman's image deteriorates. Johnson (1997) says:

> These [patriarchal] rules range from laws that require men to fight in wars not of their own choosing to customary expectations that mothers will provide child care, or that when a woman shows sexual interest in a man or merely smiles or acts friendly, she gives up her right to say no and control her own body. (p. 86)

Capitalism is deeply rooted in patriarchy and human despair which is part of the history and legacy of male dominance. It is European men who colonized nations in their quest for wealth. This was done by taking land and resources during colonization. Economic systems such as capitalism have favored men to be leaders and decision makers which adversely affect women and children around the world. Johnson (1997) says:

> Patriarchy's roots are also the roots of most of human misery and injustice, including race, class, and ethnic oppression and the destruction of the natural environment....Patriarchal nation states arm themselves to the teeth and develop rigid hierarchies to control their own people and 'defend' themselves

as the potential victims of other patriarchal states....The war system is a self-perpetuating and self-justifying cycle for control and fear supported by the illusion that there are bad guys and good guys, with everyone laying claim to the latter...Beneath the good guy/bad guy mask is a system controlled by a deadly patriarchal cycle in which control as a response to fear simply causes more fear. (p. 51)

Patriarchy is firmly established in our society. It not only condones/sanctions the control and abuse of women; it is used to perpetuate fear of the next hypothetical entity that threatens individual masculinity or patriarchal nations. With the obsession of power, control and wealth, patriarchy produces a society that values capitalism. In the history of male dominance, men promote their own self interest and exclude women from the economic and political system.

In patriarchal conditioning men believe they have the right to control women. This control has been evident throughout history. Women's sexuality and domestic labor has been owned by husbands and/or fathers. Women have been treated as objects and have been seen as sexual badges for men. The control men have had over women is also extended to men of color because of patriarchal conditioning in society (hooks, 2004).

Men socialized in our society take patriarchal practices as normal ways of societal participation because of its long existence. Because of this history, Johnson (1997) argues that men equate normal heterosexuality with men having access to women's bodies for sex. He argues that:

Such a system encourages men to value women primarily in terms of their ability to meet men's needs and desires and to support men's self-image as potent and in control. The huge pornography industry for example, exists primarily to provide men with female images available for them to appropriate and incorporate into masturbatory fantasies. As a result, men's use of coercion and violence in order to control women sexuality and their use of women as objects on which to act out feelings of rage, shame,

frustration, or fear are commonplace, not only in behavior, but as popular themes in literature, films, and other mass media. (p. 96)

The further one dissects how patriarchy is evident in our society, the more it becomes obvious that it has been operating with the priority of men's interests. Johnson also says that some of the men who have most internalized patriarchy will be the first to assert their love for their mother; however, this does not prove that they are innocent of practicing gender inequality because our society operates with patriarchal influences and it is difficult for men to attempt to stand outside of patriarchy because our society privileges men regardless. It is necessary to compare women as objects to men as this perpetuates the practice of male dominance.

Historically and continuing today in various forms, women's domestic labor, both wife and daughter, has been owned by the husband/father. A patriarchal society allows men to control women. Long held beliefs suggest that it is the women who create the problems of society; therefore, it is men's responsibility to take control over this matter (Freedman, 2002). In the transfer of ownership from father to husband, not only has her labor been owned by men but her sexuality is also a part of the contract of marriage in which it is controlled. In regard to this practice, Freedman (2002) says:

Since women's reproductive labor provided these workers, reproduction itself became a commodity, something purchased from a father when a young man's family paid a bride-price to a young woman's family. In order to ensure the husband's paternity, and with it his ownership of the wealth produced by children, women had to be chaste before marriage and faithful within it. (p. 23)

She adds that women's reproductive power and her labor helped in acquiring wealth for the family. The wife's contribution has not been recognized because it is

believed to be owned by the husband, and the economic gain a family acquires is seen as a reflection of the husband's work and worth. Women's domestic labor has historically gone under-valued and owned by the husband or father because of patriarchy.

Men have the right to control women and often use women to protect their image. Johnson (1997) says, "heterosexual men are encouraged to use women as badges of success to protect and enhance their standing in the eyes of other men" (Johnson, 1997, p. 34). Women who have become one of the badges of success to men have also been called trophy women. Because the media portrays the desired image of a woman, women under patriarchal conditioning fall into the abyss of pursuing that desired look. The media also portrays women as primarily sexual objects always ready and available to men, which is one way patriarchy is perpetuated. There is no pride in being objectified as a trophy for men; however, as Johnson would argue, we are prisoners of a socially constructed reality and it is difficult to see life differently from how it has been constructed (2004).

When men feel frustration about their life women commonly are acceptable targets for that frustration. Johnson (1997) says, "no matter what other men do to a man or how deeply they control his life, he can always feel culturally superior to women and take out his anger and frustration on them" (p. 37). He argues that when men are being subordinated by other men, they are able to take out their feelings of inadequacy on women in their lives, as a form of compensation for being marginalized because of their social class or race. When race and class issues arise, one oppression is used to compensate for another. He gives the example of

"working-class people [who]....can always look down on people receiving welfare, just as lower-class whites can feel superior to people of color" (Johnson, 1997, p. 37). People who experience multi-levels of marginalization (e.g. poor people of color) often seek out a form of superiority within their own group and this is internalized oppression and or internalized racism. Men of color who are from the lower class often feel especially marginalized because they are unable to measure up to patriarchal manhood by providing material well-being for the family. A hierarchy of men shows that men of any racial group are more important than women (Johnson, 1997).

Patriarchy has done immense damage to gender relationships. Under a patriarchal society, men are valued and women are devalued. Decisions are made by men, usually for the benefit of men. Women are considered secondary to men in a patriarchal society, and this justifies women's marginalization in public and private settings (Johnson, 1997).

1.3 Effects of Patriarchy

The effects of patriarchy differ for men, women, family and public life. Patriarchy privileges men, and decisions regarding women and children have been made by husbands and/or fathers. It is necessary to show the differential effects of patriarchy between men and women, and how it relates to the family and public life, as it demonstrates how male dominance has been normalized.

The effects of patriarchy on men have largely been beneficial for them. Johnson (1997) argues that control is the guiding force in patriarchy, and fear is the underlying motivation. In patriarchy, men are not allowed to show weakness

because this suggests a lack of control. Johnson says patriarchy involves men

competing with other men, and women are secondary under this schema. Under this

belief system, women are seen as mere servants to the male ego. In order for

patriarchy to exist, misogyny must be a part of the patriarchal dynamic. Johnson

(1997) discusses the control men need in patriarchy:

> Under patriarchy, control shapes not only the broad outlines of social life but
> also men's inner lives. It does this through its central place in the definition
> of masculinity: a real man is in control or at least gives the impression of
> being in control. The more men see control as central to their sense of self,
> well-being, worth, and safety, the more driven they feel to go after it and to
> organize their inner and outer lives around it. This takes men away from
> connection to others and themselves and toward disconnection. This is
> because control involves a relationship between controller and controlled,
> and disconnection is an integral part of that relationship. In order to control
> something, we have to see it as a separate 'other'. (p. 27)

The separate other is the inferior, and these are women. Men who distance

themselves from others is an indication they have been influenced by patriarchal

conditioning and it is difficult to deviate from the male ideal because of the

consequences described by Ruth (1990), including ridicule and hostility.

The continued subordination of women keeps patriarchy going. It is

necessary for men to see themselves as autonomous and disconnected from women

because this adds to the illusion of what constitutes a 'real man'. Johnson (1997)

says that all the control men have over women is what patriarchal manhood is about.

If this becomes reversed, it is viewed as unnatural. Johnson (1997) says:

> A woman perceived as controlling a man is typically labeled a 'castrating
> bitch' or a 'ball buster,' and the man she supposedly controls is looked down
> upon as 'hen-pecked,' 'pussy whipped,' and barely a man at all. But there are
> no insulting terms for a man who controls a woman - by having the last
> word, not letting her work outside the home, deciding when she'll have sex,
> or limiting her time with other women - or the woman he controls. There is

no need for such words because men controlling women is what patriarchal manhood is all about. (pp 27-28)

The lack of language that speaks to women being controlled shows how patriarchy is naturalized in society.

Johnson argues that men are in constant competition with other men for power and control. Fear is the driving force because men do not want to be outdone by another man. Patriarchy twists men's perceptions of what being in control looks like. It is a constant competition and disconnection with people that men need in patriarchy. Johnson says that the more men are immersed into patriarchal practices, the more insecure they are of themselves. He (1997) says:

> Men's fear of other men is crucial because patriarchy is driven by how men both cause and respond to it. Since patriarchy is organized around male-identified control, men's path of least resistance is to protect themselves by increasing their own sense of control, and patriarchy provides many ways to do it....They learn to keep their feelings to themselves rather than be vulnerable at the wrong moment to someone looking for an advantage. They learn to win an argument, always have an answer, and never admit they're wrong. They learn early on not to play with girls unless its in the back seats of cars, and go out of their way to avoid the appearance that women can control them. They pump iron, talk and follow sports, study boxing and martial arts, learn to use guns, play football or hockey or rugby. In all these ways they cope with their own fear and inspire it in others, while still maintaining an underlying commitment to men, what men do, and the system that binds them together. (pp. 28-29)

Men are generally more concerned about what other men think of them than with what women think of them.   In considering how patriarchy is male centered and male dominated, men's relationships with other men involve a constant policing of a patriarchal masculine image. Masculine ideals are dictated by mainstream culture which in turn affects men's behavior.

The effects of patriarchy are entirely different for women. Women are viewed as inferior, and this justifies their subordinate positions in families and communities. Women's position in life is relegated to the private sphere, where their primary responsibility includes being mothers and maintaining households. There are rigid sex roles for women that are determined by men. Because of the history of subordination by men, women internalize thoughts of inferiority of themselves. Women are also vulnerable to male violence because patriarchy establishes men at the top of the hierarchy.

In a patriarchal society, women are viewed as sexual objects, or sexual playmates. As an example, clothing that is designed for women are made to appear sexy or revealing. Yet, because women are "sex-things" (Ruth, 1990), and unlike human "men", she is prohibited from enjoying her sexuality or sensuality. Ruth says:

> In patriarchy, women in our sexual roles are ideally to function not as self-affirming, self-fulfilling human beings but rather as beautiful dolls to be looked at, touched, felt, experienced for arousal, used for titillation (for sexual release or the sale of merchandise), to be enjoyed, consumed, ultimately used up and traded in for a newer model thing. (p. 225)

Women in patriarchy are objectified and their humanness is negated by men.

Husbands are not expected to partake in household and parental duties. Rather, his contribution to the household is mainly through his paid employment. The wife's primary role is as a 'housewife'. Ruth (1990) describes these responsibilities:

> Care of the inhabitants does not end with children, however, for a wife is also expected to care for her husband in much the same way as she cares for their offspring. She is to feed him, cook his favorite dishes, buy and maintain his clothes, arrange his home to suit him, pack his suitcase when he goes on a

trip, arrange entertainment for him on Saturday night, entertain his business friends, arrange doctor's appointments for him (even against his will), listen to him, and support and "understand" him. (p. 212)

Her responsibility is to satisfy the children's needs, the husband's needs and maintain the household. Ruth (1990) says that the wife's homemaking job is considered non-work whereby "it is not a job with visible, recognizable and acknowledged demands" (p. 213). In patriarchal conditioning, women's primary position in society is expected to remain in the private sphere.

Historically, men have dominated the political, economic and social aspects of life. Women have been denied access to the economic system, political arenas, and education up until recently. Because of the male-dominated public sphere of politics, economic systems, and education, women were denied a documented history. Denying a women's history has resulted in women internalizing thoughts of inferiority (Lerner, 1993). Women have been put in positions of vulnerability because they have been taught for hundreds of years that they are inferior. Patriarchy establishes a belief that men can abuse women because of the years of conditioning that male dominance is natural.

The effects of patriarchy on families are largely determined by men, who have been considered the head of the household. Husbands and fathers control who will be the legitimate heir, and this is usually a male child of the family. Included in patriarchal families is the enshrinement of heterosexuality (Ruth, 1990).

Throughout history male dominance and control have been vital for patriarchal survival. Generations of female offspring have been subordinate to male offspring. Ownership of female offspring was transferred over to new husbands

when a daughter married. Freedman (2002) describes how daughters have had

responsibilities to protect the father's and future husband's image:

> Both religion and law required that peasant women [European women] obey
> their husbands as superior, and men expected to rule within their households.
> At the wedding of their daughter, a father transferred to her new husband
> both the responsibility for protecting her and the right to her labor. (p. 30)

The right to her labor equates with the new wife becoming property to the new

husband. It was believed, and enshrined by law, that a husband and wife were

considered as one entity and this was controlled by the husband (Freedman, 2002).

Marriage arrangements have been controlled by fathers, and husbands inherited

ownership of the family unit in patriarchal families.

Freedman (2002) suggests that patriarchal families evolved from the

specialization of farming. She says that around 3100 to 600 BCE, families tended to

be egalitarian, and that this shifted when agricultural life became profitable for

families. Male children became the favored offspring. Freedman (2002) states,

"More-specialized farming, the barter of surplus goods, and an emerging class

hierarchy contributed to patriarchal families in which only male children inherited

property and wives became subjects in their husband's home" (p. 22). Patriarchal

families continue to prefer male children and female children are tolerated until they

are married.

There is an over-valuing of heterosexuality in patriarchal societies. Male-

dominated conditioning portrays marriage as a union resulting from women who fall

in love with "Mr. Right" and that they will live happily ever after (Ruth, 1990).

Heterosexuality becomes a fantasy and is held up as the only form of love

relationships. Ruth (1990) lists promises that are assumed to take place in

heterosexual marriages. Some of these are:

- You will have someone to make you happy.
- You have a father for your children.
- You will be socially secure as part of a couple.
- You will have a place in this world, a meaning, and you will love it.
- You will gain status and prestige as someone's chosen wife. You will not be an on "old maid."
- You will be financially secure.
- You will be happy. (p. 209)

Patriarchy ensures that men are viewed as superior and women need men to elevate

their status by getting married. People who do not conform to this heterosexual

marriage fantasies are viewed as deviant and often face negative societal

consequences, such as shaming and social excommunication. Heterosexuality in a

patriarchal society is constructed as the norm of love relationships (Ruth, 1990).

The effects of patriarchy on public life are that positions of authority are

usually viewed as rightfully belonging to men.   Freedman (2002) shows how,

historically, societies have favored sons over daughters and this created the setting

for future generations of unequal gender relationships. She says:

> A girl is "merely a weed," in a Zulu saying. According to the Old Testament, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Set the value of a male between ages of twenty and sixty at fifty shekels…and if it is a female, set the value at thirty shekels.'" A Dutch proverb declares that a "house full of daughters is like a cellar full of sour beer," while Koreans learn that a "girl lets you down twice, once at birth and the second time when she marries." Even contemporary parents usually prefer male children; a 1983 survey of forty countries found only two with daughter preference and only thirteen with equal preference for boys or girls. Where strong son preferences persist, parents may selectively abort female fetuses and neglect girls, leading to higher mortality rates for female infants in parts of the world, such as India and China. (p. 19)

Globally, public life has overtly placed greater privilege on males, and as a result of this males are given more opportunity to advance in society. It is the men who have been in positions of power and they have ensured that these positions remain applicable to males only.

Out of patriarchal practices, capitalism emerged as another form of male dominance. Johnson (1997) says family work that once determined a man's worth changed after economic surplus was reached during agricultural life. Men and women entered a work force in which they were paid for their labor and this was the beginning of industrialization. During this transition from agricultural life to industrialization, men continued to hold positions of power. Johnson (1997) says:

> Industrial capitalism was shrinking the family's sphere of influence and shifting the focus of social power outward to rapidly growing institutions such as the state, science, industry, and schools….For most people, patriarchy went from being relatively simple family systems to something much larger and more complex as the tools and settings for practicing the religion of power multiplied. (pp. 42 & 43)

As a result of industrialization, and globalization much of the world changed to a cash economy where men dominated, and "earning power not surprisingly became the only legitimate measure of productivity, worth, and independence, with the result that women were defined as economically dependent 'non-workers'" (p. 146). Patriarchy has accommodated capitalism where women's work has become devalued, and the next avenue of acquiring power is through the economic systems where men dominate. Johnson (1990) adds, "The competition that patriarchy encourages among men positions men in relation to industrial capitalism as workers or managers, and this profoundly affects how men feel about themselves" (201).

The quest for economic surplus, possession, power and competition is capitalism and a patriarchal construct.

1.4 Why does patriarchy continue?

Patriarchy continues in part because it is difficult to unlearn a system that has been in existence for so long. Male power and male control has become entrenched and normalized in society because of its long history. Patriarchal beliefs and practices perpetuate notions of male dominance. Contemporary practices of patriarchy are minimized because it is thought that patriarchal practices of the past are no longer relevant, now that women are allowed to become educated and own property.

The invisibility of patriarchy is in need of exposure because it is so subtle and invisible that it appears natural. Johnson (1997) says it is almost a guarantee that men in society do not have to fear being raped. Women, on the other hand, are in constant watch of their environment because there is always that potential that it could happen. Johnson (1997) argues:

> No woman is immune, for example, to the cultural devaluing of women's bodies as sexual objects to be exploited in public and private life, or the ongoing threat of sexual and domestic violence. To a rapist, the most powerful woman in the land is first and foremost a woman, and this more than anything else culturally marks her as potential victim. (p. 19)

Patriarchy has created a discourse that women are primarily sexual objects for the use or abuse by men, and rape is about enacting power and domination.

Patriarchy is enshrined in religion and media, and these systems particularly perpetuate male dominance and male control. Religion as described by Lerner has created men as the mediators between a creator, or God, and people. The devaluing

of women is supported by religion. The belief systems in religion create women as secondary to men, and this supports preservation and continuation of patriarchy.

Media has been a major source of patriarchy's continuation. Advertising often places women in positions of availability by accentuating their sexuality. The ideal female physique is also dictated by television. For example, this is achieved through movies where female characters, with their slender, attractive and curvy figures, are waiting for "Prince Charming" to arrive to save them from their unmarried status. This suggests that a woman is not complete without a man, and that her role is as a sexual object for a man's consumption. Patriarchy becomes inescapable when messages in media and television continue to portray rigid sex roles.

The manifestation of patriarchy continues. It takes on many forms, but it is invisible because it has had a long life and it has become normalized. Johnson (1997) speaks about how patriarchy is invisible and actualized in our daily lives. Women's bodies, in a patriarchal society, are considered to be for the use of men. Dominance has been maintained by a white-middle to upper class-society and inferiority is attached to women and superiority to men.

Summary

This chapter has provided a picture of what patriarchy looks like. Male dominance and male control is considered the norm of social life because of the long history of patriarchy. Patriarchy continues to be practiced in contemporary society. It has been necessary to illustrate how patriarchy appears as this creates opportunity for understanding history and influence future action. System of beliefs in

patriarchy show how patriarchy has been normalized in society. The effects of patriarchy on men, women, family and public life differ but the common denominator is that males have been is positions of power while women have been secondary, and therefore inferior to men. Patriarchy continues because male dominance has been made to appear as natural human occurrence. Because of the history of male dominance and male control, women's movements emerged to challenge male domination and female subordination.

Chapter Two

Assertion of Feminism

Feminism is a response to male dominance. Women's movements have not

all been called feminist movements; however, they are all considered movements

based on responding to male dominance (and this includes right wing and

conservative movements meant to reassert the belief that men are naturally dominant

to women). For the purpose of this thesis, women's historical marginalization and

oppression are the focus. Although the women's movement in Western societies

was initially started by white middle-and upper-class women, it has evolved to

include women with diverse backgrounds. Feminism began with women

questioning their place in a patriarchal society. The control men had over women

was examined and this established the ground on which women stated their concerns

about being subjugated to men (Lerner, 1993). Hence, feminist consciousness was

initiated by women and remains a source of empowerment.

2.1 What is feminism?

A definition of feminism that enhances this understanding of the position of

women in a patriarchal society is necessary. Lerner (1993) articulates her beliefs of

a feminist consciousness:

> I define feminist consciousness as the awareness of women that they belong
> to a subordinate group; that they have suffered wrongs as a group; that their
> condition of subordination is not natural, but is societally determined; that
> they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally, that
> they must and can provide an alternate vision of societal organization in
> which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self determination.
> (p. 14)

Feminist consciousness challenges patriarchal practices, and its purpose is to seek

equality between men and women, rather than perpetuating notions of the superiority

of men and inferiority of women that are apparent in patriarchy. Feminist

consciousness developed over time and has taken different forms throughout history

and is based on collective thought and action.

Recognizing the history of women's marginalization and oppression is what

creates the motivation to make change. Lerner says that a collective vision is

necessary because it adds strength to women's assertion that male dominance is an

unjust social practice. She says feminism offers a different vision for the

organization of society, a vision whereby equality of men and women is practiced

(1993).

Feminism emerged when women collectively began to take notice that they

were subjugated to men. Women's movements have differed throughout time and

place. Freedman (2002) defines feminism as:

> a belief that women and men are inherently of equal worth. Because most
> societies privilege men as a group, social movements are necessary to
> achieve equality between women and men, with the understanding that
> gender always intersects with other social hierarchies. (p.   7)

She asserts there are four parts to her definition.   'Equal worth' is used because the

purpose to feminism is to seek equal value for male and female persons and the tasks

they do. Freedman says she uses 'privilege' in her definition to assert that personal

benefits have historically been given to male children because of patriarchy, and

women and girls have been secondary to men and boys. Social movements are

necessary in order for change to happen on a personal level or group action.

Freedman also says that recognition of a "social hierarchy" is a part of

understanding feminism because gender is not the sole determinant of inequality: race, class, culture, and sexuality also affect how people will be treated. She says, "If we ignore these intersecting hierarchies and create a feminism that serves only the interests of women who have more privilege, we reinforce other social inequalities that disadvantage both women and men in the name of improving women's opportunities" (p. 8). Feminism has not been static; rather, it has evolved throughout history to include many different subjective locations.

A sociological perspective toward gender and sex is understood by taking into account cultural practices. Because of the history of male dominance, or patriarchy, women in Western societies have taken notice and action against the inequality they have historically experienced. Feminism has been used to create awareness of gender inequality in society, and it has also been used as a jumping off point in taking action to address the inequality. Li and Bolaria (1994) define feminism as:

> An awareness of the special problems women face in contemporary society and a commitment to better the condition of women. It is characterized by political involvement as well as an attempt to understand the roots of women's oppression. There is also a firm belief that, in eradicating women's oppression, society itself will be transformed and become egalitarian for all peoples. (p. 84)

In a patriarchal society, it is believed that masculine and feminine behaviors match the physiological makeup of men and women. This perception creates rigid expectations of gender roles that are thought to be unchangeable (Li and Bolaria, 1994). Culturally-determined gender roles have been created by a society that is patriarchal, and it has been the men who have dominated the social, political and economic areas of life throughout history. Patriarchal societies enforce hierarchies

where men are thought to be more important than women, and feminism is used to counter that practice where equal opportunity and equal worth for both genders is asserted.

2.2 How did feminism emerge?

The emergence of feminism was due to women noticing the unequal status granted men and women. Feminists took issue with the practice that women were the property of fathers and husbands. Women's bodies were regulated by fathers and husbands. Women's right to personhood was denied by men and this was achieved by not allowing women to own property or, enter into contracts, education and citizenship. Women recognized the unequal status that was ascribed to them and they banded together in collective action to rectify the wrong done to them and worked toward a more inclusive society. Civil rights campaigns and the abolition of slavery created the opportunity for women to reflect on their own history, and education has been, and is, one means of addressing inequity.

In *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy* (1993), Gerda Lerner argues that woman can only create lasting social change through collective power. Lerner goes through history to discuss how male dominance was maintained. She states that male dominance was perpetuated by men who documented the history of social life as a male endeavor. Because texts were written by men they assumed or promoted their own superiority, women were assumed to lack intelligence, but in actuality, women were not allowed to be literate. Patriarchy has a long and deeply rooted history in the Western world. The idea of men as natural rulers and as naturally superior to women has been kept alive by men.

Lerner writes about the famous philosopher, Aristotle, who "had fixed women in a status of being less-than-human. The female is, in his words, 'as it were, a mutilated male'" (Lerner, 1993, p. 6). Having an "intellectual" man describe women in this way has had the effect of upholding the belief that women's subjugation is normal and natural. Patriarchy continues to manifest in many different ways, and it is therefore necessary to keep feminist consciousness going because Western society continues to be based on men having power.

In regard to the education of women, Lerner (1993) says that this was one way male dominance was maintained. She suggests that if a woman wanted to be educated it had to be a choice between wifehood/motherhood, or a life of aloneness. Men, on the other hand, were freer to pursue specialization because women were expected to support their husbands and look after the children and household. Because of the lack of education for women, women have internalized thoughts of inferiority of themselves because they have been taught this for so long. Lerner (1993) argues that,

> The systemic educational disadvantaging of women has affected women's self-perceptions, their ability to conceptualize their own situation and their ability to conceive of societal solutions to improve it....Women, for far longer than any other structured group in society, have lived in a condition of trained ignorance, alienated from their own collective experience through the denial of the existence of Women's History. Even more important, women have for millennia been forced to prove to themselves and to others their capacity for full humanity and their capacity for abstract thoughts. This has skewed the intellectual development of women as a group, since their major intellectual endeavor had to be to counteract the pervasive patriarchal assumptions of their inferiority and incompleteness as human beings. (p. 10)

Because women were denied the existence of a woman's history, this had adverse effects in their educational development. Women have had to continuously

rediscover the same things about their history because standard history did not pass down information about them which is a legacy of men who wrote history in support of their own interests. Women were denied access to education because men assumed dominance which in turn hindered women's intellectual growth (Lerner, 1993).

Women took issue with the lack of women's educational opportunity. Educational opportunities were not available to women because it was believed they were supposed to be in the home looking after children and, household (Freedman, 2002). Women were also considered to not have the capacity for logical and analytical thought processes (Lerner, 1993). At different times and locations, women's groups were formed to voice their concerns about being marginalized. Women banded together to discuss how their education could be achieved. A feminist consciousness helped in women's educational advancements such as the Women's Institute of Ontario where women organized in rural communities to promote school-based domestic science (Prentice, Bourne, Brandt, Light, Mitchinson, & Black, 1988). This group was given assistance from the Ontario provincial government "including cash subsidies for hiring lectures and demonstrators to teach courses in hygiene, nutrition, cooking, home nursing and sewing" (Prentice, et al., 1988). This group formed fifty two branches within the province and it had a considerable role in the development of continuing education for adults and these branches sought to improve rural schools, and introduced health-related concerns for children (Prentice et al., 1988). Women's early educational

concerns had to do mainly with social and health related issues for women and children in society.

The impact of female subordination has made it a very difficult process for women to work toward equal treatment. Because it has been the men who have dominated society and made rules, male dominance has appeared to be a natural process. Lerner asserts that some non-elite men have been able to access economic resources and education in patriarchy, but women always lag behind men of the same class. She also says that women have historically been considered as subhuman which has justified exclusion.

The issue of voting rights and citizenship has been one aspect of public life where feminism emerged. For example, shortly after the formation of the Declaration of Independence, Lerner (1993) explains that when voting rights were in question for the Negro, the northern United States wanted the Negro to be considered as property and the southern United States representatives wanted the Negro to be considered as human because the slave owners wanted to control and own the votes of the slaves. The reason for this was because there were more people in the southern United States, which included more slaves and more votes, than in the northern United States. The logic used in regard to the Negro had to do with gaining dominance in the House of Representatives, and "definitions, in this case, were determined not by reason, logic or moral considerations, but by political/economic interest" (Lerner, 1993, p. 7). At the end of this debate, it was concluded that the Negro was considered three-fifths of a man, and therefore allowed to vote. Lerner (1993) adds:

It was different for women. There was no controversy or debate on the definition of a voter as a male. The American Constitution embodied the patriarchal assumption, shared by the entire society, that women were not members of the polity. It was felt necessary by the founders to define the status of indentured servants, persons "bound to Service for Term of Years," and of Indians in regard to voting rights, but there was no need felt even to mention, much less to explain or justify, that while women were to be counted among "the whole number of free persons" in each state for purposes of representation, they had no right to vote and to be elected to public office (U.S. Constitution, Article I, 3). (p. 8)

At this time, there was no entertaining the idea of women voting; it was a mere fact of life that women were subordinate to men. Patriarchy was firmly embedded in the family and society in general and, while the expressions of patriarchy have changed somewhat, they remain none-the-less.

Many women's groups campaigned for women's suffrage in Canada and, "ultimately, extraordinarily persistent efforts of the suffragist campaigners paid off. The campaign, after all, [took] some sixty years to win" (Prentice, et al., 1988, pp 208 – 209). Groups such as the Manitoba Political Equality League of 1913, Canadian Suffrage Association of 1907, and Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association of 1907 helped in making women's right to vote happen. It was a long battle women had fought and in 1916 women's organizing produced their enfranchisement in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba (Prentice, et al., 1988).

In early Euro-Canadian society agricultural life was the main source of livelihood. Both men and women worked hard to keep the family fed and sheltered. Freedman suggests that families had more children so they could benefit from their labor, but as time progressed, work became more sophisticated and families gained surplus from their labor. Eventually women's labor was relegated to the private sphere where their primary responsibility was to maintain the household and nurture

children. Men's positioning became a public matter because it was economic surplus that gave men "respectable" status. The unequal status associated with public and private spheres has been detrimental to women. As a result of these historical practices, women's labor has become invisible. Freedman (2002) speaks to the invisibility of women's work:

> As capitalism and industrialization drew workers out of the home and measured labor's worth through wages, the gap in the value of men's and women's work widened. Unpaid domestic duties limited most women's options when men first joined the wage labor force. When women did work for pay, they faced a 'double day' of performing both household and wage labor. Having to juggle competing identities as mothers and workers further disadvantaged women in the labor market. (p. 124)

When women worked for paid labor, they were expected to maintain the household and childcare while the men did not have any other responsibilities. Although women's work has been devalued, Freedman (2002) says that it "has been essential to the growth of capitalist economy" (p. 124). Also, since women worked for the family and contributed financial gain in this way, her work was legally owned by her husband (Freedman 2002) which caused her labor to go unnoticed and unappreciated.

Women's work continues to get unnoticed especially if it is domestic work. Women often work a double day by going to paid work for eight hours and then going home to another eight hours of parenting and household responsibilities. This inequality continues to be the norm today. The kinds of paid work women do in the work force can also be viewed in relation to men's privilege. Johnson (1997) relates employment to gender inequality:

> Because patriarchy is male-identified and male-centered, women and the work they do tends to be devalued, if not made invisible. In their industrial

capitalist form, for example, patriarchal cultures do not define the unpaid domestic work that women do as real work, and if women do something, it tends to be valued less then when men do it. As women's numbers in male-dominated occupations increase, the prestige and income that go with them tend to decline, a pattern found in a variety of occupations, from telephone operators and secretary to psychotherapists. (p. 12)

Women's groups were formed to discuss their concerns such as minimum wage for women and property rights for married women. These groups recognized women were abused in their paid employment, and were not allowed to own property and this was a source of agitation. Prentice et al (1988) say that "[b]etween 1872 and 1907, Married Women's Property Acts were passed in all the common-law provinces except Alberta. A married women's personal property, including her earnings, were at least her own" (p. 187), and this was brought about the collective efforts of women. An organization called the Women's Labor League was formed and this group sought to address "the economic exploitation of women and attributed their subordination to the capitalist system" (p. 278).   Feminism has offered the opportunity to make change, by bringing attention to these forms of inequality and injustice.

2.3 Backlash to Feminism

There is a backlash toward feminism that needs elaboration. This is particularly so for women of color and their concerns with it. Freedman (2002) says that feminism is often feared by women of color because it is believed that it takes away the strength of racial movements and because feminism is associated with Western colonialism. As an illustration of this, she says:

For women of color, feminism has often seemed competitive with movements for racial justice. In former colonies and developing countries,

suspicion, if not fear, of feminism may result from its association with Western colonialism. (p. 11)

Although all that is sought by feminists is equal worth for both genders, it is often seen by racialized groups as privileging women over men. Women of color have been reluctant to take up feminism because it is seen as a white women's movement that does not take into account the experiences of the subjugation of women of color. Freedman further argues that there is a deeply held myth of equal opportunity in the United States which may cause women of color to reject feminism because their experiences of oppression and marginalization, on the basis of race, are viewed as not legitimate by some white feminists (Freedman, 2002).

Women of color often experienced obstacles in their communities when they had embraced a feminist standpoint (Freedman, 2002). Sometimes these women of color were accused of abandoning the race issues people of color have experienced. Freedman (2002) says:

Women of color who shared feminist goals faced dual obstacles from their communities and from women's movements. Black nationalists, for example, urged women to align with racial rather than sexual politics, primarily by supporting men through women's roles as wives and mothers. (p. 90)

This backlash for women of color was particularly difficult to overcome because the oppression they had experienced was due to their race, but gender also created hardship for them because patriarchy provides privilege to all men to some degree.

Freedman (2002) talks about Barbara Smith's speech on the issue of an inclusive feminism:

As she told a predominantly white audience at the National Women's Studies Association meeting in 1979, "The reason racism is a feminist issue is easily explained by the inherent definition of feminism." In Smith's view, the

struggle to free *all* women had to include "women of color, working-class women, poor women, disabled women, Jewish women, lesbians, old women – as well as white, economically privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement". (p. 92)

This speech summed up many of the concerns women had about feminism and it created strength to the movement in asserting difference in women's experiences.

Subjectivity has impacted how feminism is viewed by women of color. In 1920, Freedman says that a group of African-American women met to discuss how they would integrate into white organizations. Burns Hope, a Black Woman, claimed she wanted to stand beside white women in their endeavor for emancipation. But unity in feminism had many issues to overcome, and race was the major one. Freedman (2002) says, "In a nation [United States] that simultaneously championed freedom, exterminated native people, and enslaved Africans, it is not surprising that issues of race would become so central to women's movements" (p. 75). Naming difference has added strength to feminism because it recognized the different experiences and positions of women of color. However, what is often justifiably resented is the class privilege that elite people have, and feminism is certainly affected by it. White European men and women have wealth and resources that has been produced by the labor of slaves and poor working-class people. The history of wealth and poverty necessitates looking at race and class issues. Freedman (2002) says:

> While the Spanish seized land and labor in Mexico and Peru, the Dutch, English, and other Europeans transported twelve million African men and women to the Americas between 1500 and 1800 to raise sugar, cane, cotton, and tobacco. The profits earned by slave traders, slave owners, and merchants helped finance the industrial revolution in England and the United States. (p.75)

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It is not surprising that there be some resentment by African American people and other non-white people of the wealth that has been acquired and maintained by elite white people. The feminist movement is often disrupted by class elitism because of how wealth was acquired, and this remains a struggle for those committed to the feminist movement. This struggle also applies to Aboriginal people whose land and resources were appropriated by European settlers, and the effects of colonization continue to be felt today (Blaney, 2003).

The backlash to feminism came from women of color who had experienced oppression and marginalization because of their race and gender. Feminism was thought to be a white women's movement and that it did not apply to women of color. Once these issues of racism and sexism were voiced, feminism evolved to include women of color whereby their subjective position is given validity.

2.4 Who initiated women's movements?

Those women who became educated usually came from privileged backgrounds because they were the only women who could afford time to study rather than works as most had to, just to survive. Lerner (1993) says that her research comes from studying white upper-class wealthy women, and she asserts "that is precisely the problematic of women's intellectual history: for women, far longer than for men, education was a class privilege" (p. 16). It was the elite women who had access to education first and it was these women who created the awareness of women's subjugation which has been a long and reoccurring process of discovery. Lerner asserts that in order for change to occur, a collective vision of an alternative society is necessary.

In its initial development, feminism was asserted by white upper or middle class women because they began to recognize they had been marginalized by men. Lerner (1993) argues that because these white women had access to education they were in a better position to see how history had been documented by men. In the white elite women's quest for equality, the experiences of women of color were not yet considered. To women of color, feminism began to be viewed as an elite white women's movement. Freedman (2002) says, "many women of color felt excluded from a theory that elevated gender at the expense of race or class identity" (p. 89). However, this assertion by women of color was necessary because it provided them an opportunity to voice their position as oppressed groups because of race and gender.

Maternalism was one basis of the first women's movements that spoke about women's rights to education and voting. Freedman (2002) says that maternalism was valorized because it gave women a legitimate voice in gaining education as this enhanced their roles as mothers. She also says:

> Historians have applied a variety of labels to women's efforts to transform social policy in the name of family protection. These labels range from "female consciousness" and "difference feminism" to the Latin American concept of *marianismo* and the idea of "social motherhood"....But maternalism could be a double-edge sword. Women might mobilize as mothers to gain rights, but they could also be confined as mothers to a dependent economic and political role....Feminists had to walk a thin line, balancing their identities as mothers with their demands for equality. In the process, they articulated a powerful defense of female difference as a source of political authority. (Freedman, 2002, p. 65)

The evolution of feminism has resulted in movements that differed in time and location.

Valorizing women's roles as mothers brought women into the public sphere whereby they were allowed an education. Emphasizing women as mothers has given women their personhood where they have been given the right to an education so that they can educate their sons for political life (Freedman, 2002, p 64 & 65). Maternalism had two sides to it; one, women's roles as mothers was emphasized and this gave them the opportunity to become educated and enter public life; and two, women's roles as mothers was also valorized but it was used to advocate for the justification of separate spheres for men and women which excluded women from the polity but highlighted their moral character. However maternalism has been viewed, it caused women's roles to become a matter of public debate, and this movement legitimized women's suffrage, education, and mobilized pay equity.

Women's issues have also become human rights matters. The legacy of male dominance has caused extreme forms of control over women. For example, Freedman (2002) says, "Today European and North American feminists defend reproductive choice, while African feminists seek to eliminate female genital cutting and Indian feminists target dowry deaths and domestic violence" (p. 336). Feminists also argue that forced sterilization, rape, and domestic violence is a human rights issue. Freedman says that it is also a human rights issue when laws allow men to kill or beat their wives because of alleged adultery, and this continues to happen today. Women's issues have become human rights issues, and feminist movements have been useful in achieving some gender equity (Freedman, 2002).

During the Civil Rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s, many social groups, such as African Americans, Native Americans, and women, asserted that

racial and gender oppression caused inequality. It was at this time that feminism

gained strength. Feminism took on many issues that pertained to women, such as

rape, unwanted pregnancies, lesbian desires, illegal abortions, etc (Freedman, 2002).

Liberal feminism was questioned because of its lack of recognition that patriarchy

was a problem in society, because liberal feminists believed in individual women

gaining access to higher positions as the solution to women's inequality, as opposed

to recognizing the unequal structure of society. In response to patriarchal wounds,

Freedman (2002) says that women-only spaces were formed to discuss their past

marginalization. She (2002) adds:

> A group called Radicallesbians drew connections between the rejection of
> male dominance and the assertion of sexual love for other women....By
> embracing lesbianism as a positive identity, they rejected the stigma of
> mental illness that had previously been attached to love between women.
> (Freedman, p. 88)

Essentially, these liberation struggles created opportunity for historically

marginalized groups to assert their own identity and to gain validity. Civil rights

movements inspired women's movements by their anti-war sentiments.

The recognition of equal rights was established during the civil rights

movements. Freedman (2002) says that "Employers could no longer rely

exclusively on word-of-mouth referrals to recruit workers, for such old-boy network

hiring perpetuated the gender and racial inequalities of the workforce" (p. 177).

Affirmative Action programs were created to stop the exclusionary practices of

hiring; this meant hiring more women and/or members of minority groups and

people of color. Freedman (2002) says that, "Affirmative action attempts to tip the

balance toward women and minorities, not in order to achieve reverse discrimination

but rather to ensure equal opportunity" (182). The social movements that erupted in the 1960s established the setting for a much needed equal opportunity setting because prior to that it was mainly the white upper–middle class men that were mobilized in employment and privileged.

Summary

Feminism emerged because of the past marginalization and oppression women experienced in patriarchal societies. It was initially started by elite white women who could afford to become educated rather than working to survive. The issues that were brought forward had to do with recognition of women's personhood including control of their bodies, labor power, and rights to education and citizenship. The backlash to feminism came from women of color who felt they were excluded from the movement because feminism did not take into account racial issues. Women of color began to embrace feminism after they voiced their concerns that race and gender both caused their oppression and marginalization. Maternalism was an ideological basis of the first feminist movements that brought women's issues into the public realm. Although maternalism valorized women's role as mothers, it created the opportunity for women to be heard and abetted the cause of women's suffrage, education, and pay equity. As feminism continues to evolve, contemporary issues persist and human rights violations are brought forward in an effort to liberate women from extreme forms of abuse and oppression. Feminism offers all women (and men) a source of emancipation and understanding of gender inequality.

Chapter Three

Social Constructionism, Discourse and Identity

The production of Aboriginal identity has deep roots in colonization and has been greatly influenced by European settlers throughout this period. European settler identity has depended on the construction of the superior and inferior dichotomy as it related to colonized or indigenous groups. Superiority was assumed by the Europeans and inferiority was presumed to belong to those who were non-white. Notions of superiority were determined not only by racial categories, but also gender which placed European men in positions of superiority, and European women as subordinate to them. Europeans believed that non-white people were heathen and uncivilized and were in need of salvation. In addition to race, European gender ideals were used to compare differences between gender relations of Aboriginal peoples and Europeans (Chiefcalf, 2002). Assimilationist policies and practices were used to make Aboriginal people more like Europeans although they were never considered equals.

This chapter examines how Aboriginal identity is influenced and informed by the effects of colonization. Colonization has had an immense impact on expectations of gender roles in Aboriginal communities. Patriarchal practices enforced through colonization have also affected how gender will be regarded in Aboriginal communities. In considering that the processes of colonization were undertaken using male dominance and male control, the production of identity has been greatly shaped by European men. Traditional Aboriginal lifestyles were suppressed and or altered by assimilationist practices. Aboriginal people have been

immersed in Western social practices because it was forced on them as a result of assimilationist efforts. The production of identity has been created through social processes enforced by European men and their institutions.

3.1 Theory of Partial Perspective

Forming an understanding of one's position in life involves theorizing subjectivity. Historically speaking, research has been mainly conducted by white men who thought themselves to be impartial and objective; the information they produced, through subjective processes, then became truth claims (Haraway, 1991). European upper-and middle class men occupied these positions of authority that declared what was objective truth. Some feminists who have become scientists challenge these notions of objective truth by claiming that scientific enquiry involves subjectivity (Haraway, 1991). Donna Haraway (1991) in *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* addresses this issue. She points out that issues arise out of scientific research, such as bias versus objectivity, and use versus misuse. Gender has not been taken into consideration by white male researchers because it has been assumed by this same group that males are naturally logical and rational, while women are presented as emotional and as using intuition when making decisions (Haraway, 2002).

Haraway speaks about a theory of partial perspective, which is all that people have in making sense of their environment. Partial perspective challenges taken-for-granted truth claims that were previously constructed by European scientists. As a female scientist she says, "We need the power of modern critical theories of how

meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to live in meanings and bodies that have a chance for the future" (Haraway, 1991, p. 187). She advocates paying attention to research that is conducted by women as it adds another perspective in research. Her purpose is not to discredit male research but to give attention to research conducted by women. She asserts that a partial perspective is involved in research.

Partial perspective refers to being unable to be in all subjective positions because of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, etc., and she suggests "subjugated standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world" (Haraway, 1991, p. 191), which are measures of truth claims. White middle class men have had the luxury of doing research because they can afford to do it, while poor people, women, or people of color often face a struggle to acquiring food and shelter, and even to getting an education. The knowledge produced therefore does not represent the perspective of all people. Subjugated standpoints, such as a feminist perspective, offer new insight to research. Haraway (1991) says, "Struggles over what will count as rational accounts of the world are struggles over how to see" (p. 194), which involves subjectivity.

Situated knowledge or partial perspective speaks to how Aboriginal women have been viewed. The effects of the social construction of Aboriginal women as dissolute, sinister, and uncivilized have been damaging to their social, political and economic conditions (Carter, 1997). This construction is a mere partial perspective that was used to benefit a certain race and class. The notion that Aboriginal women

are naturally subordinate is rooted in colonization; understanding this history offers

hope for Aboriginal women to participate in society as equally important members.

3.2 What is Social Constructionism?

Individuals are produced through discourses which shape their material and

social world (Burr, 1995). Social constructionism is about how a perspective toward

an object or human shapes or influences how it will be viewed. The theory of social

constructionism enables a better understanding of how discourses are used in

shaping our understanding of people and objects. Burr (1995) says, "A productive

line of enquiry has focused upon the performative qualities of discourse, that is,

what people are doing with their talk or writing, what they are trying to achieve" (p.

47). The productive line of enquiry in this thesis is to demonstrate how discourse

about Aboriginal women was socially constructed by European men, during

colonization, which suggested that Aboriginal women are naturally inferior and

which continues to have effects today.

3.3 What is social constructionist theory of discourse?

Meaning is produced through a process of social construction, where

languages and practices shape how a particular object or person is viewed.

Discourse has to do with languages and it is structured in the many ways in which

meaning gets made. Burr (1995) says:

> A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images,
> stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular
> version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event
> (or person or class of persons), a particular way of representing it or them in
> a certain light. (p. 48)

Constructed discourses have a history and develop through language, ideologies, and social and material practices. People develop an understanding of an object or person or group of people from the discourses available to them. Gender relations are created and affirmed through discourse that has developed through history. An example is the notion of masculinized public space and feminized private space.

Some discourses have been given the "stamp" of truth by people in positions of authority and this perpetuates an illusion of superiority. Burr argues that our society is organized and operates with discourses that were developed by people in dominant positions. Burr (1995) gives the following example: "discourse such as 'education as a meritocracy' and career success as 'survival of the fittest' serve to justify the greater wealth and opportunities of the (relatively powerful) middle-class by representing education and capitalism as unbiased, egalitarian institutions" (p. 55). The notion of truth, therefore, is unstable because people have their own perception of it, through discourses that have been socially constructed. Subjectivity is involved in shifting through the multitude of discourses that are available for people to make sense of, but they also originate from a culture in society that has largely been socially constructed by European people and those with socio-political power. Burr (1995) says:

> The actions, words and thoughts of human beings appear to be reduced to the level of by-products of bigger linguistic entities of which we may be largely unaware. Our hopes, desires, and intentions become the products of cultural, discursive structures, not the products of human agents. (p. 59)

Persons are therefore a product of their environment that has been influenced and created by other people, and some discourses are invested with more power and influence than others.

All people are influenced by discourses and this shapes their understanding of others. Burr (1995) says, "Given that there are numerous and conflicting discourses surrounding any 'object', we are left with no notions of 'truth'….All we have is a variety of different discourses or perspectives, each apparently equally valid" (p. 60). What becomes knowledge is sustained by social processes, and knowledge and social action go together. Burr offers an anti-essentialist perspective toward social life. Knowledge is shaped by the context of space and time. Colonization influenced how the Aboriginal woman's identity would be constructed. Social constructionism challenges notions of objective truth, and identity is formed through the context of the history of our social world. Experience is not necessarily truth; because Aboriginal women, or I, have experienced marginalization and oppression does not mean that I am naturally inferior. Aboriginal women are not naturally degenerate; it is a construction produced in colonization.

3.4 What is social constructionist theory of identity?

The social construction of identity is woven into the language we use. Discourse is born out of language which affects identity. Our identity is also influenced by other people, as Burr (1995) says:

> Our identity arises out of interactions with other people and is based on language. We can now say that our identity is constructed out of the discourses culturally available to us, and which we draw upon in our communication with other people. People's identities are achieved by a subtle interweaving of many different 'threads'. (p. 51)

These threads are things like age, class, education level, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. Burr (1995) gives the example of a discourse about a black person, "the 'youth' who is black, working-class, unemployed, and male is likely to be

represented or 'constructed' out of rather different discourses of youth than the 'youth' who is white, middle-class, employed, and female" (p. 52). This analogy is the same as the experiences of Aboriginal women who are assumed to be of naturally suspicious character by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples; an Aboriginal woman who is shopping for clothing is often followed around, but if a white person is doing the same thing, there is far less chance that the white woman will be under surveillance. The discourses and actions attached to understandings of Aboriginal women have generally been negative and have had a long history.

All people are influenced by social constructionism where we all try to make sense of our experiences in social life by using the multitude of discourses that have been previously produced. Burr (1995) says:

> For each of us, then, a multitude of discourses is constantly at work constructing and producing our identity. Our identity therefore originates not from inside the person, but from the social realm, where people swim in a sea of language and other signs, a sea that is invisible to us because it is the very medium of our existence as social beings. (p. 53)

With this understanding, it is believed that political influences that shape the social world are socially constructed, and this includes how individual identity is perceived.

Aboriginal identity is not without the influence of Western society. The discourse available about Aboriginal identity often creates essentialist notions of what is taken to be "real Indian identity" (Francis, 1992). The history of how Indians have been idealized and demoralized results in stereotypical images of Aboriginal people. My assertion here is that Aboriginal people have been affected by colonization, which affects their identity. I argue that although cultural traditions

are important to hold on to and rejuvenate, they fail to address how colonization

affects Aboriginal people, individually and collectively. The purpose of this chapter

is not to minimize cultural revitalization and traditional Aboriginal customs, but to

assert that patriarchal practices from Western society have become part of the

Aboriginal experience whether in traditional or nuclear family settings. A discourse

analysis of the production of identity is necessary to show how Aboriginal identity

has been greatly influenced by patriarchy and colonization.

Aboriginal identity has been produced by European settlers as monolithic

and standardized: "The Indian is the invention of the Europeans" (Francis, 1992, p.

4). Francis says there is no such thing as a "real" Indian; however, because of how

the "Indian" has been portrayed through media and representation, a mythical

"Indian" was constructed. The mythical "Indian" continues to exist in many

people's minds, leading to stereotypical images that influence how people perceive

Aboriginal identity (Francis, 1992).

Aboriginal people are often associated as being earthly and attuned to nature,

as if Western practices and history have not influenced their existence. The

"imaginary Indian" that Francis talks about perpetuates this imagery. Francis says,

"I don't think I have to argue the fact that many non-Natives continue to believe that

Indians have an innate nobility of character which somehow derives from their long

connection with the American continent and their innocence of industrial society"

(Francis, 1992, p. 7). He further suggests that the Europeans created this image

because of their need to be superior. Non-Aboriginal people constructed Aboriginal

peoples as the "Other", and unlike Europeans. The creation of the "Other" was

necessary in order for Europeans to situate themselves in the colony. Francis (1992) states:

> At this point Whites set themselves the task of inventing a new identity for themselves as Canadians. The image of the Other, the Indian, was integral to this process of self-identification. The Other came to stand for the everything the Euro-Canadian was not. (p. 8)

Indian imagery has produced much influence in regard to Aboriginal identity, both for the Aboriginal persons and Euro-Canadians. For the Aboriginal person, it created an essentialist production of Aboriginal identity, where it is believed that all native people are supposed to be an ideal stereotypical image that is without influence of Western society; this is a contradiction because all native people have been affected by colonization. Euro-Canadians, who are not familiar with history and the effects of colonization, associate Aboriginal identity with the imagery that was created by early settlers. The production of "Indian" imagery based on the "Other," needs to be interrupted because Aboriginal people are far more diverse than the imagery constructed by Europeans.

It is ironic that Euro-Canadians portrayed Aboriginal people with attributes that would be desirable but at the same time not as highly valued as those of Europeans. This selective practice was produced to benefit the Euro-Canadians. Marketing the "imaginary Indian" was profitable for Europeans. Francis (1992) says:

> B.F. Goodrich wished to associate its shoes with speed, strength and durability. There was no better way to do this than to associate them with the Indian, known for his ability to run like the wind for hours at a time. Of course, shoes were not the first products to be marketed with the help of the Indian image. (p. 173)

Many other products that were sold were associated with the "imaginary Indian," such as Red Indian motor oil, Iroquois Beer, Pocahontas perfume, and Squaw Brand canned vegetables. Francis also talks about sports teams that were named after Indians, like the Braves, and the Redskins. He states, "the irony of seeking victory by invoking the totemic power of a socially oppressed people was apparently not recognized" (Francis, 1992, p. 174). The "imaginary Indian," who is supposed to be strong, silent, and a courageous person, has an impact on how Aboriginal people are perceived today. Investing Aboriginal people with attributes of strength and courage contributes to a mythology that they are not affected by colonization and this is damaging to their identity and sense of self especially when colonization caused their marginalization. The social conditions of Aboriginal peoples are ignored when their identity is associated with this mythical "Indian," and the effects of colonization, such as poverty, are disregarded. The production of the "imaginary Indian" has been used to minimize the effects of colonization on Aboriginal peoples and this suggests that the social conditions of Aboriginal peoples of today is not because of colonialism, but of their own doing (Francis, 1992). Investing Aboriginal peoples with these attributes is used to minimize any feelings of guilt or responsibility by Euro-Canadian settlers and/or colonizers. The "imaginary Indian" has been used for the benefit of Europeans and in actuality Aboriginal people were abused throughout this process.

The effects of advertising have created an image that "the best Indian was the historical Indian" (Francis, 1992, p. 176). Aboriginal people of today are considered less worthy of attention because they do not portray the "imaginary Indian"

accurately. Appropriating Aboriginal cultures is used for financial gain for Europeans. The marketing of Aboriginal cultures has had powerful influences because much of the expectations created by the "imaginary Indian" still exist. Francis says that non-Aboriginal people have been eager to accept images that conform to the "imaginary Indian" because they represent what they want (1992, p. 176). He also mentions that although Pauline Johnson, the daughter of a Mohawk chief and a European woman, was writing and talking about Aboriginal people in 1982, her fame was lionized because it fit the stereotypical "imaginary Indian." She gained much popularity with Europeans because she embodied representation of the imaginary "Indian princess" and "the voice of the Indian" (Francis, 1992, p. 114). This voice of "the Indian" is evidence of an essentialist understanding of Aboriginal identity in that it is assumed there is only one authentic voice.

The production of identity is of particular importance to address because there are important consequences for particular identities. Based on my observation, Eurocentric gender ideals, for example, often leave Aboriginal women marginalized and exposed to violence and poverty while Aboriginal men learn they have the right to control the women in their lives. The effects of patriarchy introduced through colonization means that men are held to be superior to women within the same social classes and race. In this way, Aboriginal women, who are seen to occupy the lowest level within this social hierarchy become subordinated not only to Aboriginal men but to all men.

The identity of Aboriginal women has been largely influenced by patriarchal ideologies and practices introduced through colonization (Blaney, 2002). The

discourse created by Europeans portrayed Aboriginal women as unworthy and responsible for their own oppression. This thinking has survived over generations because of patriarchal discourses. During colonization, Europeans needed to construct Aboriginal peoples as inferior because it created a sense of superiority for them which justified colonialist practices of assimilation and the appropriation of lands and resources.

Burr (1995) says a discourse about an object or a person has many different discourses associated with it. For the purpose of this thesis, it is being demonstrated that the patriarchal nature of our society has caused Aboriginal women to experience belittlement and abuse, throughout colonization, and I am arguing that it is a social construction.

The creation, and process, of "Othering" effects are also discussed by Gail Guthrie Valaskakis in *Sacajawea and Her Sisters: Images and Native Women* (1999). Valaskakis writes about the production of native womanhood. She says that Europeans constructed native women in a way that was dichotomous, either as Indian princesses or squaws (p 123 & 124). The Indian princess was one to be yearned for and appreciated, and the Indian squaw was one to be rejected. She says this imagery was used to entice European settlers to come to the new colony. The dichotomy of the Indian princess and dirty squaw continues to be conjured up in contemporary society by Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal peoples.

Francis (1992) talks about Pauline Johnson whose identity was largely constructed by Euro-Canadians and who represented the exotic "Other" that Euro-Canadians wanted. She also epitomized the Indian princess that was portrayed in

media as Aboriginal womanhood. On the other extreme, and opposite to the "Indian princess," was the "dirty squaw." This was also a stereotypical image of Aboriginal women as projected by non-Aboriginal people. The squaw was portrayed as immoral, undesirable, sexually promiscuous, and dirty. The more "squaws" were conjured up in the collective imagination of European people, the more Aboriginal peoples were confined to the fringes of white settlements. Francis (1992) gives the example of Helen Betty Osborne, a Cree woman from northern Manitoba, who was brutally murdered by a group of white men and how the circumstances surrounding her death were silenced for many years. Imagery of Aboriginal women authorizes perceptions of her as an object, sexually available, and disposable.

Aboriginal women have been constructed by European settlers as "princesses" or "squaws," but the actual experiences of Aboriginal women are not mentioned. Valaskakis (1999) says discourse about native people has been mostly about noble and savage or villain and victim. These images have been portrayed in media such as postcards and calendars. The production of the native identity has been largely influenced by how early settlers transitioned into the new colony. Valaskakis (1999) says:

> Imagine in North America's long gaze on the Plains Indian in the period of western settlement, Indians are folkloric figures of the teepees and war bonnet, the buffalo hunt and pow wow. These are images of Native nations frozen in time and history, tribal peoples constructed in print and celluloid, silent social imaginaries without a past or a future. (p. 119)

Colonization has shaped the production of identity in ways that benefit Europeans and disadvantage Aboriginal people by appropriating, excluding, and creating stereotypical images.

Romanticizing "Indian identity" was used to invite new settlers to North America. Constructing the "Indian princess" with ideal physical characteristics, which were modeled on Caucasian features only with darker skin, made it seem like these were the type of "Indian people" who populated the new colony, which would make it encouraging for new settlers (Valaskakis, 1999). Valaskakis (1999) says, "The social imaginaries of historicized and romanticized Indian women were appropriated and propagated to accommodate the growth of immigration and industry and the interrelated expansion of railroads, mail service, and advertising" (p. 125). Marketing Aboriginal womanhood was a financial benefit for Europeans, and Valaskakis says these Aboriginal women representations were the first pin-up girls in North America. She further adds that, "These statue-like figures of the imagination marketed the North American West as alluring, unoccupied, and available and now open to railroad travel" (Valaskakis, 1999, p. 125). Constructing and appropriating Aboriginal womanhood was both a false reality and a financial gain.

Aboriginal women continue to feel the effects of these representations. The dichotomy of "squaw" and "Indian princess" creates a dualistic and essentialist notion of Aboriginal women's identity. The experiences of Aboriginal women in colonization were not discussed during early settler times or in present day scholarship and a static identity of Aboriginal womanhood was created. Treating the Aboriginal woman as the "Other" caused her existence to be minimized which therefore increased her marginalization. Valaskakis (1999) says:

> These contradictory images of Indian women continue to objectify and
> degrade in transformations of the villain or the victim, the torturer or the

sufferer; and neither the romanticized Indian princess nor the primitive squaw allows newcomers to identity First Nations as equals, as owners of this land, Indians with homes and families, jobs, and community institutions. (p. 132)

Aboriginal women have been oppressed and marginalized due to colonization, and this continues to affect their lives in both Aboriginal communities and Western society. The dual image of Aboriginal women, as "squaw" or "princess", ignores their actual experiences in colonization. Aboriginal women face marginalization and subjugation due to the European constructs of their identity. Because of the images, Aboriginal women are viewed as objects and not to be regarded as equal citizens.

The production of identity has affected all women throughout colonization. It is well documented that Aboriginal women were one of the least appreciated during the settlement phase because they were no longer needed by European men after they transitioned into the colony and climate (Ng, 1993). European women, on the other hand, were set at a higher status than Aboriginal women, as determined by European men. White women were constructed to be pure and vulnerable while Aboriginal women were the exact opposite (Carter, 1997).

Women's identity has been a process of social construction that does not always reflect the actual experiences of women (Carter, 1997). Race and gender are categories that were created by European men. White women were constructed to be the preferred wife with her pure and vulnerable status who was seen as having the capacity to uplift the uncivilized, and Aboriginal women were portrayed as the drudges of society (Carter, 1997). Carter (1999) says that special attention was given to White mothers and women for taming the land and the attention Aboriginal

women got was for their assistance in helping settlers survive the new colony.

European men and women thought themselves to be superior to the Aboriginal

peoples. In regard to the racialization of women, Carter (1997) says:

> Despite the fact that these race-specific ideologies of womanhood were at odds with the actual lives of most women, they proved to be persistent and played a powerful role in relegating women of different ethnicities to certain jobs and physical locales. Government as well as police authorities capitalized on these different racial/ethnic images of women, which helped to determine strategies of exclusion and control. (p. 13)

She also notes that even when race was not an issue, women have always been

labeled as either desirable or to be rejected in relation to elite men, but English

women tend to be more favored within the White population.

It was expected that White women act and be subordinate to men because of

their supposed meek disposition and vulnerable position which was used to inflate

the male ego. Carter (1997) says:

> They [European women] could only fit into this well-entrenched power structure as subordinates, needing care and protection. There was no recognition of their remarkable accomplishments. Many of them were widows who were solely responsible for their children and in need of British support, and they had to stress their dependence and weakness in order to earn this support. (p. 13)

Portraying the Euro-Canadian women as dependent on European men affirmed the

superiority of European men. A paternalistic and patriarchal power structure was

reinforced. The superiority and inferiority that was assumed to exist created much

hardship for Aboriginal women. Colonial rule did not agree with extending property

and privilege to Aboriginal women who had lost their husbands; White women were

also not allowed to own property but they had more advantages than Aboriginal

women did. European men wanted to keep European inheritance strictly within the

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White society by not legitimizing inheritance to Aboriginal wives and mixed blood

children.

Europeans of the Red River area, during early settlement, constructed

Aboriginal women as impure and innately malign (Carter, 1997). The patriarchal

nature of the new colony established grounds for much hardship for Aboriginal

women, whereas European women were portrayed as meek and needing protection.

Carter (1997) compares the perception of Aboriginal women and European women

of this time:

> Focusing on the coverage of the three-month trial in the local paper, the
> Nor'Wester, Smith describes how white women, particularly Abigail Corbet,
> the English wife of the accused [of seducing a sixteen year old Aboriginal
> girl], were cast as paragons of virtue, exemplifying "sterling character, noble
> sentiments, refined emotions, genteel deportment, and most importantly,
> sexual purity." They were weak, vulnerable, and frail. Women of
> Aboriginal ancestry, particularly Maria Thomas, were prostitutes who
> "articulated inappropriate sexual knowledge, and gadded about in public,
> destroying the domestic happiness of respectable families and the reputations
> of respectable neighborhoods." (p. 19)

Aboriginal women were vilified resulting in the sexual assaults they commonly

experienced to be minimized and not taken seriously (Carter, 1997). European

women's perceived weakness was in turn used to define the perceived courage and

masculine strength of European men.

The discourse created about Aboriginal and European women justified

separate social spaces for them. The way that Aboriginal women were constructed

as wretched while European women were produced as respectable thereby justify the

ill treatment experienced by Aboriginal women. Carter (1997) states:

> The Canadian state at this time was increasingly adopting segregationist
> policies towards the Aboriginal people of the West, and central to these
> policies were images of Aboriginal women as dissolute, dangerous and

sinister, in comparison to their fragile and vulnerable pure-white counterparts. (p. 159)

The press printed stories that degraded Aboriginal women and portrayed images that European men were doing Aboriginal peoples a favor by civilizing them (Carter, 1997). Other stories were conjured up that degraded Aboriginal women, such as creating stories about Aboriginal communities selling Aboriginal women, like property, by bargaining marriage arrangements (Carter, 1997). The production of the Aboriginal women's identity was negatively influenced by this time in history and this discourse continues to affect Aboriginal women today.

Missionaries often aided in dehumanizing Aboriginal women. In the eyes of the missionaries, they thought they were doing Aboriginal women a favor by Christianizing them (Carter, 1997). Carter (1997) talks about the discourse created about Aboriginal women:

> They [Aboriginal women] were the drudges who performed all the labor, chattels that were purchased and sold, and at the absolute mercy of their owners or husbands, who felt free to cast them aside when old or unwanted in order to make room for a new wife. (p. 162)

Christianity was seen as uplifting Aboriginal women from their uncivilized positions. This was contradictory because Europeans appropriated the labor of Aboriginal women while they condemned them for their degeneracy. Dehumanizing Aboriginal women did not stop Europeans from appropriating their labor mainly because they benefited from it.

Aboriginal people's social mobility was legally restricted by European men for different reasons. For example, First Nations were to remain on the reserve and only when given a pass from the Indian agent could they leave. One reason the pass

system was introduced was to keep First Nations women away from towns and villages because it was assumed they were there for prostitution. First Nations women could not participate in the market economy because they were not allowed to leave the reserve. They were left with no means of support on reserve, and often faced starvation. Carter (1997) says, "Classified as prostitutes, Aboriginal women were regarded as particularly threatening to morality and health" (p. 187). She states that a new legislation, under the Indian Act, was created specifically for Aboriginal women to be easily convicted of prostitution. She adds, "As legal historian Constance Backhouse has observed, this separate criminal legislation, 'with its attendant emphasis on the activities of Indians rather than whites, revealed that racial discrimination ran deep through the veins of nineteenth-century Canadian society'" (p. 187). This legal restriction put on Aboriginal women is an indication of the separate spaces that European and Aboriginal women would occupy.

Murdered Aboriginal women of the past and present have often not been taken seriously due to a social construction that they are disposable. The investigation of murdered Aboriginal women has been very minimal. In the dominant society Aboriginal women are often viewed mainly as "squaws" and "prostitutes," constituting their deaths as insignificant and unimportant. Carter (1997) says that at times when Aboriginal women are murdered by white men, the accused is often released, given minimal sentences, or their sentencing is influenced by letters of support by other white people that spoke of the moral character of the accused. As an example of this injustice, Carter talks about the case of an Aboriginal woman who, in 1889, had been a prostitute and had been murdered by a

white man. Carter (1997) says, "As a final indignity, Rosalie was not allowed to be buried in the mission grave yard, though she had been baptized into the Roman Catholic Church, for the priests regarded her as a prostitute who died in sin" (p. 190). As a contemporary example of this, Warren Goulding (2001) in *Just Another Indian* talks about serial killer John Crawford who murdered numerous Aboriginal women in the 1990s. The media coverage of this case received little attention and this can be attributed to the continuing construction of Aboriginal women as unimportant and disposable. The marginalization of Aboriginal women has been justified with the belief that they were and are inherently inferior to everyone else.

During colonization, Aboriginal women were portrayed negatively in the media and this promoted further abuse. Carter (1997) says:

> As already noted, during the events of 1885, Indian women were popularly represented in the press as violent instigators of atrocities. They were also depicted as lewd and licentious, particularly after 1885, in order to deflect criticism from the behavior of government officials and the NWMP, and to legitimate the constraints placed on the activities and movements of Indian women in the world off the reserve. (p. 160)

 The production of present-day identity is rooted in this history. Many people continue to be influenced by the negative imagery that was created during this time. Aboriginal women continue to be marginalized and face many challenges in their efforts to liberate themselves. While women in general are not taken seriously, Aboriginal women regularly fall beneath even this limited attention. Such representations of Aboriginal women in a patriarchal society leaves them marginalized and without any support.

Social construction theory of identity separates sexuality from reproduction and women's gendered roles as wives and mothers. A society places meaning on

how gender and sexuality are to be interpreted. Time and culture influence how gender is perceived (Vance, 1995). For example, the legal restriction placed on Aboriginal women to stay on reservations was a social construction of their identity as "dirty" and "promiscuous" women. Vance (1995) says, "Sexuality is mediated by historical and cultural factors" (p. 42), and the restrictions and labels placed upon Aboriginal women of the late 1800s and early 1900s affirms this. Social construction of negative gender identification caused implications for Aboriginal women, and the patriarchal nature of colonization also contributes to their marginalization in history and present day.

Vance (1995) suggests that a "cultural influence model" be used in understanding gender and sexuality. She says, "In this model, sexuality is seen as the basic material – a kind of universal Play Doh – on which culture works, a naturalized category which remains closed to investigation and analysis" (1995, p. 44). Social construction theory recognizes that culture shapes how gender and sexuality will be constructed (Vance, 1995). Sexuality has many meanings associated with it, such as sexual differences, masculinity, femininity, intercourse, homosexuality, etc. Social construction theory deconstructs these many meanings (Vance, 1995). Sexuality and gender are two different categories, but they have blended understandings (Vance,1995). The discourse created in colonization portrayed Aboriginal women as "dirty squaws," "prostitutes," "promiscuous," and this continues to affect how they are viewed and treated in contemporary times. The "universal Play Doh" created in colonization formed Aboriginal women's identity as degenerate which has caused their subordination to be viewed as natural. European

settlers justified their presumed superiority through particular social constructs of gender and sexuality created in opposition to the other.

3.5 How is inferiorization and racialization a social construction?

Patriarchy was entrenched during colonization and a system of racialization persists because superiority and inferiority are necessary components in an endeavor that seeks power and control over a socially-constructed subordinate group (Castagna & Dei, 2000). Racialization is a process that has been used in colonialism that supports racial inequality between Europeans and other groups, such as Aboriginal and African American peoples. Castagna and Dei (2000) state that, "race is an ideological and political construct with both subjective reality and a material base" (p. 19). Racialization is born out of colonization because inequality was necessary to perpetuate, if material well being and political control is to be maintained. The racialization of African American and Aboriginal peoples has been demonstrated in the history of colonization. The concept of race was determined by Europeans and was used to legitimize exploitation and subjugation. In relation to racialized identity, Castagna and Dei (2000) state that:

> An examination of the everyday, common-sense knowledge and practices of racism reveals the ascription of race to "other" but not to the dominant group…Many times, however, white is deracialized and rendered invisible in the eyes of the dominant group…Whiteness does not only represent itself as a universal marker for being civilized, but also being raceless. (p. 30)

Racialization is created through binary constructions of superiority and inferiority. Those people non-white have historically been portrayed as second class, subordinate, and unimportant (Castagna & Dei, 2000). Racialization in a patriarchal

society places Aboriginal women and African American women at a disadvantage because privilege is extended to men only (hooks, 2004O.

As practiced in colonization, European settlers constructed Aboriginal and African-American people as inferior. This process is known as the inferiorization of those people who do not belong to the elite group; that is, not white. Inferiorization is necessary to maintain as it perpetuates notions of superiority and inferiority. Aspects of superiority were associated with, and not exclusive, to whiteness, maleness, goodness, and civilization. Inferiority was associated with non-whiteness, femaleness (elite white women are generally excluded in this category but they are still inferior to elite men), evil, and uncivilized (McConaghy, 2000).

In a contemporary version of how inferiorization is perpetuated, John Willinsky (1998) speaks about how this process continues today. He discusses how the history of education has been produced to create a binary opposition of superiority and inferiority of races. He (1998) says:

> We need to learn again how centuries of studying, classifying, and ordering humanity within and imperial context gave rise to peculiar and powerful ideas of race, culture, and nation that were, in effect, conceptual instruments that the West used both to divide up and to educate the world. (pp. 2 & 3)

The constructs were necessary for the Europeans people because the subordinate other was needed to affirm their assumed superiority.

Willinsky (1998) discusses how the dominant group maintains inferiorization in modern times. Constructing the Euro-Canadian as the norm of Canadian citizenship produces an inferiorization of other ethnic groups, including Aboriginal peoples. In reference to how education was developed in colonization, Willinsky says:

Much of the knowledge achieved through conquest and colonization was understood to legitimate the political and cultural domination of imperialism. The resulting perspective on the world formed an educational legacy that we have now to reconsider. We cannot readily sort through and discard the colonially tainted understandings we carry, without devoting attention to how our view of the world has been shaped by imperialism's educational projects, which included fostering a science and geography of race; renaming a good part of the world in homage to its adventurers' homesick sense of place; and imposing languages and literature on the colonized in an effort to teach them why they were subservient to a born-to-rule civilization. (1998, pp. 3&4)

Willinsky illustrates how inferiorization has been implemented and how this continues to be actualized in our contemporary society. Inferiorization was a necessary part in obtaining control over colonized groups.

Understandings of race and inferiority were intrinsic to colonization. Imperialism established male dominance, known as patriarchy, to control those who were non-white, or the "Other", and women in general. Imperialism brought into existence entrenched patriarchal practices and beliefs that continue to be felt in modern times (Blaney, 2003).

Summary

Partial perspective has been used to make sense of how knowledge has historically been legitimized. Partial perspective is about looking at how taken-for-granted knowledge is constructed from a particular standpoint (Haraway, 1991). Subjugated voices open up new possibility and meaning that shift position of power. Partial perspective offers another angle of looking at how knowledge is formed, and how subjectivity is involved in research. Therefore, the theory of partial perspective offers validity to the idea that knowledge is developed to serve the interests of those in power, and subjugated viewpoints offer another perspective that deserves validity.

Social constructionism is about how a perspective toward an object or human shapes how it will be viewed and treated. In social constructionism there are a number of discourses that are used in shaping an understanding of a person or thing. Identity is also produced out of social constructionism whereby discourses produce identities that are taken-for-granted or naturalized. Our identity comes out of social influences. Through processes of colonization, Aboriginal identity has been greatly influenced, and informed by Euro-Canadian society. Aboriginal women's identity has been specifically shaped by the dichotomous and essentialist social construction of the "Indian princess" and the "dirty squaw." The marginalization that Aboriginal women currently experience is partly caused by this construction.

Racialization and inferiorization are processes that have been used to determine who is non-white, or of non-European ancestry and thus of lesser status. Aboriginal peoples and peoples of color are constructed as subordinate to Euro-Canadians which is used to justify their marginalization. These social processes, whereby Aboriginal people are deemed inferior, are further elaborated in the next chapter by showing how patriarchy was imposed in Aboriginal societies during early colonization.

Chapter Four

Introduction of Patriarchy in Aboriginal Communities

Patriarchy is a practice that was implemented during colonization.

Assimilation was the process by which Aboriginal peoples were to become like

Europeans, but the assumption was that Aboriginal peoples could never be equal to

them (Leacock, 1991). Assimilation was constructed around the notion of male

superiority and dominance. Gender inequality was enforced as part of colonization

which most Aboriginal people came to practice as the norm in their social life. The

path of Aboriginal peoples, since colonization began, has largely been a process of

adopting and practicing Eurocentric gender roles. Placing greater value on the male

gender has caused unearned privileging to occur, which causes relationships to be

unequal and problematic in Aboriginal communities. It is now necessary to show

how patriarchy was imposed during colonization.

4.1 Patriarchy in a wider context

Male dominance has been a part of colonization in Canada, and in the wider

context, it was also applied throughout the world as European countries set out to

dominate and control new colonies. Other lands were also affected by the

patriarchal practices of male-dominated European conquests. Ashcroft, et al. (2000)

say that:

> Economic, political and military dominance enabled the dissemination of
> European ideas through the powerful agencies of education and publishing.
> But it was the power of imperial discourse rather than military or economic
> might that confirmed the hegemony of imperialism in the later nineteenth
> century. (p. 127)

Patriarchy was widely imposed in colonizing nations around the world. As an example, the colonization of Asia is discussed by Stoler (1997). It was the Dutch, French and British who colonized much of Asia, and Stoler asserts that colonial authority and racial distinction were based on gendered terms. It is helpful to use her research to show how European dominance and patriarchy was used in imperialism. Stoler asserts that one of the many practices of patriarchy involves devaluing indigenous women and children, and increasing control over women.

Stoler (1991) says that colonial morality was used in maintaining dominance over colonized subjects. Europeans took extra measures in constructing themselves as better than other races. She (1991) says:

> Like the modernization of colonialism itself, with its scientific management and educated technocrats with limited local knowledge, colonial communities of the early twentieth century were rethinking the ways in which their authority should be expressed. This rethinking took the form of asserting a distinct colonial morality, explicit in its reorientation toward the racial and class markers of "Europeanness," emphasizing transnational racial commonalities despite national differences – distilling a *Homo Europeaus* of superior health, wealth, and intelligence as a white man's norm. (p. 357)

Europeans used measures that would make the creation of their superiority appear as a natural occurrence. These notions of superiority and inferiority continue to be manifested today.

Male dominance as a form of social conformity has been deeply rooted in the colonizer and colonized dynamic. Colonizers have been white middle-class men and the colonized have been both men of color, and all women. The idea that male supremacy is natural has been long lived, especially in imperialism. Stoler (1991) suggests that European women were initially not allowed to go to the new colonies until the European men secured dominance over the land. In her research, she says

Asian women became objects of possession. Concubines were seen as necessary for

colonial rule to occur because they helped European men transition into the new

climates. Stoler (1991) says:

> Handbooks for incoming plantation employees bound for Tonkin, Sumatra,
> Malaya urged men to find local "companions" as a prerequisite for quick
> acclimatization, as insulation from the ill-health that sexual abstention,
> isolation, and boredom were thought to bring (Butcher 1979:200, 202;
> Hesselink 1987:208; Braconier 1933:922; Dixon 1913:77). (p. 348)

Because of the patriarchal nature of European practices, indigenous women were

considered as objects to cater to male needs. European male dominance ensured

indigenous women were to be used during initial contact with the new colony, but

after European men became acclimatized, indigenous women were open to be

abandoned or abused (Stoler, 1991).

Indigenous women in the new colonies were thought to have no rights at all

because their existence was to accommodate European men. Because of this belief,

indigenous women became concubines but never legitimate spouses to European

men. Stoler (1991) says:

> "Concubinage" was a contemporary term that referred to the cohabitation
> outside of marriage between European men and Asian Women: in fact, it
> glossed a wide range of arrangements that included sexual access to a non-
> European woman as well as demands on her labor and legal rights to the
> children she bore (Pollmann 1986:100; Lucas 1986:86). Native women (like
> European women in a later period) were to keep men physically and
> psychologically fit for work and marginally content, not distracting or urging
> them out of line, imposing neither the time-consuming nor the financial
> responsibilities that European family life was thought to demand (Chivas-
> Baron 1929:103). (p. 348)

European men constructed themselves as extraordinary and special people whose

time and attention were to be appreciated. The subordination of all women,

including European women, was necessary because this perpetuated European male

superiority. Indigenous women were portrayed as disposable with no inherent value; the construction of indigenous womanhood in this way is due to patriarchy and remains in existence today.

In Stoler's (1997) analysis of non-white women as perceived by European men, she applies Edward Said's discourse of "Orientalism" to her understanding of the role of indigenous women. She says:

> Thus, in Edward Said's treatment of Orientalist discourse, the sexual submission and possession of Oriental women by European men "stands for the pattern of relative strength between East and West". In this "male power-fantasy," the Orient is penetrated, silenced and possessed. (p. 346)

Stoler says that sexual submission and possession were seen as a symbol of domination. Sexual control of indigenous women was viewed by colonizing men as a reflection of gender subordination and colonial authority. Under the patriarchal regime of colonization, European men assumed there were no boundaries on what they could do.

The environment of the new colonies was considered untamed by Europeans. With this belief, European people thought that the indigenous people who populated the colony were the same (Stoler, 1997). Stoler (1997) says that Europeans created a common theme, or discourse, that suggested the inferiority of the indigenous people, in particular, indigenous women. She (1997) says:

> Colonial scientific reports and the popular press are laced with statements and queries varying on a common theme: "native women bear contagions"; "white women become sterile in the tropics"; "colonial men are susceptible to physical, mental and moral degeneration when they remain in their colonial posts too long." (p. 346)

These themes suggested that it was the fault of the colonized that European people might become sick. The fact that indigenous women were constructed as being

contaminated continues to affect how globally indigenous women are perceived and treated today.

In the initial contact with indigenous people, European men needed indigenous women to help with the transition into the new colonies. These transitions took the form of unions between European men and indigenous women, providing European men with survival skills, and knowledge about trading areas. The perspective toward indigenous peoples changed with time, and not for the better. In the latter parts of colonization, indigenous people were then labeled as being hindrances and degenerates that were impositions to European conquest (Stoler, 1997). Notions of inferiority were conjured up in order to justify supremacy. These ideas of inferiority also affected the children born out of the unions between European men and indigenous women. Stoler (1997) says attention was placed upon community solidarity, respectability and mental health, by the Europeans. The mixed blood children came to be associated with the degenerate qualities they inherited from their mother's native blood. Stoler (1997) adds:

> Concubinage became not only the source of individual breakdown and ill-health but the biological and social root of racial degeneration and political unrest. Children born of these unions were "the fruits of a regrettable weakness", physically marked and morally marred with "the defaults and mediocre qualities of their [native] mothers". (p. 360)

With these kinds of judgments placed upon mixed blood children, European men believed they were not responsible for parenting these children because they were already damaged.

The European fathers of mixed blood children did not have to assume parental responsibility. Stoler (1997) says that the local communities were also

apprehensive to accept the mixed blood children into their community. She suggests

that these children posed a threat to European pureness and this became problematic

because a classification system had been established in order to keep white prestige.

Stoler (1997) argues that:

> Although European men legally acknowledged their progeny, many
> repatriated to Holland, Britain, or France and cut off ties and support to
> mother and children. Native women had responsibility for, but attenuated
> rights over, their own offspring. They could neither prevent their children
> from being taken from them nor contest paternal suitability for custody.
> While the legal system favored a European   upbringing, it made no demands
> on European men to provide it; many children became wards of the state,
> subject to the scrutiny and imposed charity of the European-born community
> at large. (p. 360)

The legacy of abandoning indigenous children has had a huge effect on

future generations. The illegitimate status ascribed to these offspring negatively

impacted these children because they were considered unworthy. European men

have been given the discretion of participating in parenting because of the

patriarchal system of European society (Stoler, 1997).

Stoler (1997) says that it was believed that the future of mixed blood children

had been predetermined; they would make amoral choices caused by their native

blood. She says:

> The preoccupation with creating a patriotic loyalty to French and Dutch
> culture among children was symptomatic of a more general fear – namely,
> that there were *already* patricides of the colonial fatherland in the making;
> that the girls would grow up to fall into prostitution; that the boys – with
> emotional ties to native woman and indigenous society – would grow up to
> join the *verbasterd* (degenerate) and *decivilise* enemies of the state.
> (p. 362)

It seems apparent that if there was anything that was "predetermined" it would be

the European quest for superiority and racial purity. Basic humanity was not

recognized because of the preoccupation with supremacy. The measures that were taken to bestow illegitimacy have had far reaching effects on contemporary society. Patriarchy legitimizes men's abandoning of "illegitimate" children.

The effect of patriarchy in early imperialism continues to be felt today. Although Stoler speaks about the Asian experience with colonialism, it parallels the experiences with Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Patriarchy imposed in colonialism, persists in contemporary Canadian society. It is now necessary to trace how patriarchy was imposed in Canada.

4.2 Locating Patriarchy in Canadian Colonial History

Europeans who colonized nations carried beliefs that they were superior to others wherever they went. The social construction of the "Other" as inferior was needed in order to justify the marginalization of indigenous peoples. There was nothing natural about determining these labels. The history of Aboriginal peoples, since colonization, has been about hardship, and a reorganization of community structure and social relations. Many Aboriginal people have adopted the colonizer's social practices as a result of forced assimilation. It was assumed that because Aboriginals people did things differently, they were doing it wrong. In a patriarchal society, men are believed to be superior to women, and "whiteness" is believed to be superior to other races. Because of this, Aboriginal women and women of color are often faced with double marginalization. It is imperative to show how patriarchy was imposed onto Canadian Aboriginal societies.

The history of patriarchy in Aboriginal communities points to colonization. Colonization involved imposing Christian values and beliefs onto Aboriginal

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peoples. Since European society modeled male dominance, this kind of social structure was enforced in Canadian Aboriginal communities. Although it is suggested that gender roles were complementary in traditional Aboriginal societies (Ouellette, 2002), these relationships have changed drastically to mirror European custom. Early missionaries came to the new colony to convert Aboriginal people to Christianity and this created the setting for patriarchy to take hold.

In her research on the Montagnais society of the early colonial period in the 1600 and 1700s, Leacock (1991) speaks about the social structure prior to European influence:

> Indeed, personal autonomy for every individual, rather than obedience to a leader, was central to the organization and ethics of Montagnais society. This lack of hierarchy, whether in the nuclear family or within the larger group, troubled the French who urged the Montagnais to appoint leaders and to put wives firmly under their husbands' control. (pp. 11-12)

Leacock's research focuses on this group specifically because her data came from a Jesuit priest who wrote in a journal during his initial contact with these people. Starting in 1632, the priest, Paul Le Jeune, had documented that these people were self-supporting and had personal autonomy, a form of social structure that he abhorred and sought to change.

Leacock talks about a transition period into the Montagnais society whereby the priest first learned the language and culture before attempting to convert the Aboriginal people to Christianity. It was believed that learning the culture and language would aid in convincing the Aboriginal people to convert. The priest believed the Montagnais society was living the wrong way of life because it had no hierarchy and men did not rule. Imposing Christian beliefs would ensure hierarchy

would be established with men in dominant positions. Leacock (1991) speaks about

the confusing role of women as perceived by European men, during this time:

> The view that the hard work of Native American women made them slaves
> was commonly expressed by European observers who did not know
> personally the people about whom they were writing. The statement about
> female authority, however, was written by a man who knew the Montagnais-
> Naskapi well and recognized that women controlled their own work and
> made decisions accordingly. Paul Le Jeune, superior of the Jesuit mission at
> Quebec, had spent a winter in a Montagnais lodge in order to learn the
> language and understand the culture of the people he was supposed to
> convert and "civilize". (p. 13)

Although Montagnais men and women had their own duties in their communities,

the Europeans could not make sense of female autonomy and they thought this was

unacceptable.

Leacock (1991) writes that the priest Paul Le Jeune thought of four essential

ways of "civilizing" the Montagnais society. The first would be to establish

permanent settlements because this would aid in quick conversion. The second idea

had to do with introducing the principle of punishment, which would make it easier

to get the attention needed to impose Christian hierarchy. The third

recommendation was to educate the "savage" children. The fourth method would be

the "introduction of European family structure, with male authority, female fidelity,

and the elimination of the right of divorce" (Leacock, 1991, p. 14). These

recommendations reflect the style of organization and domination of European

society. It was deemed wrong, to the Europeans, that men and women could have

equal importance in family and community settings.

Ng's (1993) research focuses on the European settler and the fur trade era of

Canadian colonial history. Aboriginal women were used for political and economic

gain, as their kinship ties provided a pathway to the resources Europeans were

seeking, during the fur trade era. Once the resources were secured by European

men, Aboriginal women were no longer considered an asset, and their status

changed to "Subjects of the Crown" (p. 53), in contrast to the wives and allies they

once were. Ng argues that, "It is important to point out that the ideology of

European supremacy rooted in the notion of private property and Christian morality,

and the deployment of this ideology for the subordination of the native people, had a

material base" (p. 54). Aboriginal people came to be seen as inferior after land and

resources were acquired by the Europeans, and supremacy was connected to

Christianity, private property, and farming, all of which were outside the traditions

of Aboriginal peoples (Ng, 1993). Although Aboriginal women helped European

men get established in the new colonies, their status changed drastically when they

were no longer valued and needed.

In a contemporary understanding of inequality, Ng (1993) discusses the

issues of racism, classism, and sexism as it pertains to Canadian history. She

suggests that categories of class, race and sex have "common sense" ideological

beliefs associated with them. Ng asserts that in building the Canadian nation, those

in power were British or French men and decisions that were made during

colonialism were made primarily by these men. Activities that were organized by

men in power were done to benefit their class and race. All non-white people took

subordinate positions to the Europeans.

Ng (1993) says these categories of race, sex and class have a history that can

be located in time and place. She (1993) says:

> I want to move away from treating race, gender, and class as categories designating different and separate domains of social life to discovering how they are relations that organize our productive and reproductive activities, located in time and place. That is, these are not merely abstract theoretical categories; they are concrete social relations that are discoverable in the everyday world of experience. (Ng, p. 50)

Class is a socio-economic position made in history and through economic and political relations where groups of people differentiate themselves from other groups in their productive and reproductive quests. Ng says that gender is a relation that has also been socially constructed in terms of dominance and subordination, where women, in general, are subordinate to men. She says these categories are relations that are experienced in everyday life and they have changed in time. Aboriginal women have become subordinate to Aboriginal men because of the patriarchal nature of colonialism; Aboriginal peoples have been considered inferior, by Europeans, but Aboriginal women have become subordinate in their own communities, because of patriarchy.

Sexism and racism are about systems of domination and subordination where white men are privileged and anyone who deviates from this is treated with suspicion. Discourse that has developed over history has been constructed around an idea of naturalized superiority. Ng (1993) says:

> Thus in Canada, white European men, especially those of British and French descent, are seen to be superior to women and to people from other racial and ethnic origins. Systems of ideas and practices have been developed over time to justify and support this notion of superiority. These ideas become the premise on which societal norms and values are based, and practices become the "normal" ways of doing things. (p. 52)

Throughout colonization, and into contemporary times, "normal" ways of doing and seeing things have been through male dominance and white supremacy, and Aboriginal people have internalized this as well.

Because of the inequality that was created during colonization, it continues to be a part of contemporary society. "Common sense" ideas of superiority have evolved from this period. Ng (1993) says that "common sense" is used to draw attention to forms of action that have become ordinary ways of doing things, in which individuals have little consciousness, but appear as normal forms of action and or words. Common sense vocabulary are things like, "Indian giver" and "niggers", just to name a few which perpetuates thoughts and practices of inferiority. Many common sense notions of superiority and inferiority are a product of colonization.

Abuse of Aboriginal women occurred after European men acquired dominance over the new colonies. European people assumed they were socially, politically and economically superior to other races. The degenerate status ascribed to Aboriginal peoples, was constructed as though their inferiority was natural because it was continually being re-inscribed by Europeans (Ng, 1993).

The impositions of Eurocentric values that are patriarchal originate from colonialism. Aboriginal peoples learned European practices during the assimilation period. Aboriginal education, therefore, had racist and sexist ideologies embedded in it. The purpose of assimilation was to turn Aboriginal people into European, although never equal. The practices of European society have been unconsciously adopted by Aboriginal people because assimilation ensured it would occur. Ng

(1993) describes the superior and inferior dichotomy that Aboriginal people experienced in assimilation:

> Initially education of the native was carried out by the missionaries. It had a two-fold purpose: to make the "Indians" into dutiful and loyal subjects of the Crown to prepare them to adopt a new mode of production. This process was racist in the sense that it was through religion and education that the ideology of European superiority and supremacy was inculcated among the Native people. It was sexist in that while men were taught farming skills, such as how to clear land and hold a plow, women, under the tutelage of the missionaries' wives and daughters, were taught "civilized domestic skills" (Clubine, 1991, p. 15). (p. 54)

The educational process taught European values to Aboriginal peoples whereby European supremacy was imposed in education and religion. Christianity had its patriarchal hierarchy, and education meant preparing Aboriginal peoples to serve European interests where Aboriginal women did domestic work and Aboriginal men labored in farms (Ng, 1993).

Victorian ideologies of gender were a product of industrialization (Chiefcalf, 2002). Industrialization brought forward private and public spheres with gender assignment prescribed. The prescribing of gender ideals was imposed through the education of First Nations. In order to perpetuate the notion of superiority, European women modeled a Victorian style of behavior that suggested this was the best way of acting. White women's "civilized" behavior was used to convey a sense of purity, legitimacy and superiority (Chiefcalf, 2002).

During industrialization social and economic factors brought forward a middle-class society. Many colonizers were drawn from this new middle class. Research done by Chiefcalf (2002) demonstrates how patriarchal values were imposed onto First Nations people of Saskatchewan through education. Chiefcalf

(2002) says that industrialization produced separate spheres of private and public

spaces. During the Victorian era, women were to occupy the private sphere at home

and men occupied the public sphere of employment, business and politics. Marriage

and the patriarchal family were held as most important in Victorian ideals. Chiefcalf

(2002) asserts, "Yet, Victorian ideals of gender identities, relations, and roles

differed along lines of class, ethnicity, and race" (p.18). Lower and working class

people were considered subordinate to the middle class society, and the middle class

participated in activities that would re-inscribe dominance.

Educating First Nations children into Victorian ideologies of gender roles

created a reconstruction of European social and family arrangements for Aboriginal

families. Victorian ideologies had inscriptions of male dominance that was taught to

First Nations children; after all, the purpose of assimilation was to make Aboriginal

people like Europeans by removing traditional culture from their every day

practices. However, the goal was never to have Aboriginal people on an equal

economic or social footing. Victorian ideologies of gender roles created separate

spheres for men and women in terms of work expectations. Chiefcalf (2002) speaks

about the purpose of educating First Nations children in colonialism:

> Education became a primary means of transforming the gender structures of
> Aboriginal peoples on the prairies. Methods of educating Aboriginal People
> were both formal and informal. There were, for example, numerous types of
> informal adult education for First Nations, such as farm instruction for men
> and domestic instruction for women on reserves. More significant, however,
> was the carefully constructed system of formal education for Aboriginal
> children, which was designed to assimilate children while destroying their
> traditional culture. (p. 55)

Educating Aboriginal children into Victorian and Eurocentric practices has had

profound effects on subsequent generations of Aboriginal people where absorption

of new customs and ideologies has been largely successful. While farming and agricultural life are not the only way of sustenance in contemporary society, patriarchal practices continue to be integral to social life (Chiefcalf, 2002).

Victorian ideology usually included a belief in Social Darwinism. Chiefcalf (2002) asserts that it was believed that people passed through an evolution of being hunters to farmers. With this belief, Chiefcalf (2002) says, "Through economic changes, government legislation, and forms of education, Euro-Canadians attempted to transform Aboriginal peoples to fit within a Christian, patriarchal, sedentary, and industrial-agricultural lifestyle" (p. 59). Victorian ideology involved creating distinct roles for men and women, where men were portrayed as more important than women in patriarchal colonization. Women were responsible for domestic work that included childcare, making clothing, and gardening, while men were trained for farming and care of livestock.

Victorian gender styles were favored after European men became accustomed to the new colony. As a result Aboriginal women and mixed blood children were abandoned for more desirable European women who acted in that way. European women were viewed as being superior to Aboriginal women. With more European women arriving, the transformation of Aboriginal women into domestic servants was pursued with European women being the teachers (Chiefcalf, 2003). Chiefcalf (2002) further suggests that Aboriginal men were instructed to become breadwinners by becoming farmers, farmhands, or tradesmen but were not allowed to fully succeed.

Attaining legitimacy and therefore identification as worthy women was constantly being sought by women during colonization. European women needed to be seen as superior to Aboriginal women in order to elevate their status. Vulnerability and purity of European women were the measure of ideal womanhood, while Aboriginal women were portrayed as the opposite (Carter, 1997). These two groups of women were forced to compete with one another in their effort to be legitimized in colonial patriarchy; however, the voices of European women were heard because of the assumed supremacy in whiteness (Carter, 1997). Carter (1997) suggests that images of Aboriginal women were deliberately constructed in opposition to European women. She (1997) speaks about the binary opposition of women during colonization:

> The particular identity of white women depended for its articulation on a sense of difference from indigenous women. What it meant to be a white woman was rooted in a series of negative assumptions about the malign influence of Aboriginal women. The meanings of and different ways of being female were constantly referred to each other, with Aboriginal women always appearing deficient. The powerful ideologies of white and Aboriginal femininity functioned to inform both groups of their appropriate space and place. (p. 205)

The competition that existed between European women and Aboriginal women was produced out of the patriarchal structure in colonialism, but Aboriginal women were always seen as inferior. One thing that is guaranteed is that all women were considered not as important as European men. Patriarchy constructed all non-European people and women as subordinate to European men; however, Aboriginal women have been one of the most, if not the most, marginalized group.

Summary

The imposition of patriarchy in Aboriginal communities has been achieved through colonization. Aboriginal people are affected by colonization, and have therefore been affected by patriarchal practices. Canadian society operates with European based values and practices, and this includes Aboriginal peoples. Patriarchal practices have been perpetuated throughout history and Aboriginal peoples have learned these during their assimilation into Canadian colonial society.

Colonization has largely been about adopting Christian and European values and practices. Europeans arrived in the new colonies with the idea that they were superior to Aboriginal peoples, and as a way of civilizing them, Christianity was imposed. Christianity, with its attendant hierarchy in gender relations, was introduced to Aboriginal people. Gender relations went from personal autonomy in Aboriginal communities, to male dominance when Christian values were established. It was necessary for the Europeans to see themselves as superior to the Aboriginal people because it justified ill treatment to Aboriginal people, especially Aboriginal women. Patriarchy has ensured that all men are privileged because of their gender, and this, I argue, has been adopted in Aboriginal societies.

Ann Stoler (1997) and Roxana Ng (1993) both assert that in early colonization, Aboriginal women were used for European men to transition into the new climate. After these men became accustomed to the new environment, Aboriginal women were viewed as disposable. Stoler (1997) has argued that Indigenous women were deemed inferior after Europeans dominated the new colonies, and that they were mainly used for sex, labor and access to their mixed

blood children was determined by European men. Ng (1993) says that a common sense ideology was developed by Europeans as though they were naturally superior to other races, especially Aboriginal women. The status ascribed to Aboriginal women has become that of degenerate, disposable, sexually available, and unworthy, and this has been viewed as their natural condition.

Chiefcalf (2002) argues that Victorian ideologies of gender roles were taught during the education of First Nations children, and this was geared toward future work. These schools had firmly established gender roles for Aboriginal girls and boys. Industrial schools used gendered division of labor as lessons for Aboriginal students to learn and carry forward in their lives. European women modeled Victorian styles of behavior which was believed to be associated with purity and desirability. While Aboriginal women were socially constructed as the opposite of European women, they were needed in order to make European women seem better because "civilization" and supremacy were associated with European qualities, thus to affirming white women's rights and citizenship.

Further analysis of the effects of patriarchy on colonized people is taken up by bell hooks who studies the relationship of patriarchy to African American communities. Her research is helpful to understand the internalization of patriarchy and the usefulness of feminism to oppose the effects that are evident in contemporary Aboriginal communities.

Chapter Five

bell hooks on Gender Analysis

There are parallel experiences between African American and Aboriginal people because of their involvement in colonization. It is necessary to analyze these experiences because it brings further understanding of how colonization continues to affect these historically marginalized groups. It is helpful to use bell hooks' work because she uses a feminist analysis in conceptualizing the situations of African American people and she suggests forms of action in addressing the inequalities they face. Colonization has been practiced using male dominance and this becomes the focus of feminist social action in African American communities as discussed by bell hooks.

5.1 Who is bell hooks?

bell hooks is an African-American woman who grew up in the southern United States during the segregation era. She is the author of many books on race, gender, and class issues. hooks advocates a feminist standpoint. She associates her experiences with the history of colonization. Her research on the African American people's experiences reveals similarities to what I understand to be the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in relation to colonization. The similarities are based upon my experiences and observation of patriarchal practices in Aboriginal communities; I will also take this up in the next chapter which is specifically about the effects of colonization on Aboriginal peoples.

bell hooks is a pseudonym; her real name is Gloria Watkins. She uses bell hooks in her writing in honor of her mother and grandmother. hooks critiques how colonialism has affected our contemporary society, which she often refers to as a

"white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." She (2000) provides an explanation of

what this kind of society means:

> When I use the rubric of transnational white supremacist capitalist patriarchy as the standard by which I measure my own engagement with systems of domination, it is always the politics of class that calls out the deepest challenge. In the space of race and gender I am most likely to stand among those victimized; class is the one place where I have a choice about where I stand. Many folks with economic privilege who remain silent about economic injustice are silent because they do not want to interrogate where they stand. Sadly, all too often they stand in a place that is hypocritical. To challenge racism or sexism or both without linking these systems to economic structures of exploitation and our collective participation in the upholding and maintenance of such structures, however marginal that engagement may be, is ultimately to betray a vision of justice for all. Such hypocrisy has been displayed blatantly by Western feminists from privileged classes (most of whom are white) who deplore sexist mistreatment of women by men, while condoning paying women of color both here and abroad inadequate wages (often to perform the labor that "frees" the privileged to be liberated career women) or supporting the elimination of welfare. The transnational corporate capitalist agenda is gendered and racialized. (p. 161)

hooks teaches about the effects of colonization on the African American population.

Her perspective comes out of her experiences as an African American woman who

was raised in a patriarchal family. She makes the claim that her first political stance

is for Black self-determination and claims feminism as a source of empowerment

although it does not take precedence over her experiences as a Black person

historically subjected to slavery and colonization (hooks, 2000).

hooks addresses how inequality is perpetuated in society. She writes about

the different experiences of African-American people in slavery and colonization.

Her research emphasizes the psychological effects of colonization on contemporary

African American people. She also elaborates on how internalized racism affects

members of racialized and colonized group(s). hooks' work is particularly

concerned with how patriarchy affects gender relationships in African American communities.

5.2 Commonalities between African American and Aboriginal peoples

The commonalities referred to in this research are in regard to how patriarchal oppression has affected these two groups of people. Using bell hooks' work, one is able to see how patriarchy has become a normal thought process in African American communities. Having absorbed European values, African American people continue to be socialized into them. Not only has patriarchal behavior been absorbed, capitalism has also become over valued whereby materialism is held out as the measure of success (hooks, 2004). hooks also asserts that internalized racism is problematic in African American communities; however, this is a symptom of slavery and colonization.

Historically speaking, the categorizing of people according to gender, race and class has left profound implications for Aboriginal and African-American women. In a contemporary patriarchal society, "women of color" often feel the brunt of the oppression caused by the male dominance imposed through colonialism. Men of different racial groups assume they have been bestowed with the right to have power and control over their female counterparts. African-American and Aboriginal women have the fewest benefits in a patriarchal colonial society because men are viewed as more important. With this understanding, it becomes necessary to seek out forms of action to resist the patriarchal influence of contemporary society by advocating a feminist standpoint.

Racism is often perceived as the dominant issue that people of color face. Dominance is often mistaken as whiteness only. This assumption is a serious matter that needs to be addressed among peoples of color because colonization is modeled around male dominance, and colonized people have been forced to mimic the behavior of the colonizers. Patriarchy exists to benefit men. hooks (1990) says, "In a white supremacist sexist society all women's bodies are devalued, but white women's bodies are more valued than those of women of color" (p. 62). In saying this, Black men also benefit from a patriarchal society even though they have historically been oppressed by racism.

In white supremacy, whiteness is valued and Blackness is associated with powerlessness and victimization. In reference to the negative imagery that is publicized about Black people, hooks (1992) says:

> Since black people, especially the underclass, are bombarded by messages that we have no value, are worthless, it is no wonder that we fall prey to nihilistic despair or forms of addiction that provide momentary escape, illusions of grandeur, and temporary freedom from the pain of facing reality. (p. 19)

These constant messages settle into the psyche of Black people and they start to believe that the images are an accurate depiction of the Black identity. Latching onto an escape mechanism is easier rather than having to deal with the daily struggles of racism, internalized racism, poverty and those dire situations that are a result of colonialism. Many Aboriginal people experience similar problems and escape mechanisms, such as alcohol and drugs which are sought after to numb reality (hooks, 2004).

hooks says that there are still segregated schools in the United States. White upper-class people have expensive houses and school facilities that are up to date with resources. Meanwhile inner city schools, downtown schools, or small-town schools are often populated with Black, Hispanic, or a non-white ethnic mixture of students who have limited resources and receive little education funding. She calls this the new segregation (hooks, 2003). As a result of segregation and class elitism, African American students or students of color, receive a quality of education that compares inadequately to those in white upper class neighborhoods. Students of color begin to associate education with whiteness because of entrenched socio-economic aparthied. hooks says, "Black students who mock their studious black peers have themselves been socialized via schools and mass media to believe that education has no positive meaning in their lives and that too much education will lead them away from blackness (hooks, 2003, p. 70)." Marginalization of people of color continues to be actualized today, and people of color absorb these negative re-enforcements which in turn affect their behavior toward one another (hooks, 2003).

African-American students who claim that education is about forgetting Blackness are under the effects of colonization (hooks, 2003). A symptom of the effects of colonization is when African-American people are attacked or belittled by other Black people because of their quest for a better life. Evidence of internalized racism includes the phenomenon of colonized people attacking members in their own group in an effort to keep them in their place. No colonized person is to move beyond being oppressed and marginalized. In the mind of a colonized person, being

a person of color is associated with unworthiness. Therefore internalized racism ensures s/he is kept in place.

Aboriginal people often participate in acts of internalized racism, especially when education is sought after; the Aboriginal person who pursues higher education is often viewed, in my experience, as "acting white." For example, in a conversation with some Aboriginal students where I assumed that my words would be respected as I had respected theirs, one of the Aboriginal students became agitated by my contribution to the conversation and suggested that "I had an answer for everything." In my experience, my words have often not been welcomed in Aboriginal settings and I perceive this as an act of internalized racism where I am not supposed to show intelligence and if I do I risk being socially excluded.

Within a setting where people of color are gathered, hooks says a sense of anti-intellectualism is often voiced and there is a reluctance to associate theory with practice (hooks, 1994). She suggests that these groups often focus on the action and doing something to create liberation for the oppressed and marginalized people to the exclusion of theoretical analysis. Referring to a gathering of mostly Black women talking about gender issues, hooks (1994) says:

> As it drew to a close, a black woman who had been particularly silent, said that she was not interested in all this theory and rhetoric, all this talk, that she was more interested in action, in doing something, that she was just 'tired' of all the talk. (p. 66)

Theory and practice are two components that are necessary to merge as they add strength to purpose. Anti-intellectualism may hinder a person's argument or purpose in an endeavor that seeks to liberate a group. In my experience, anti-intellectualism has caused much of my exclusion or rejection in Aboriginal groups, and I am often

called the "white woman." Anti-intellectualism is also practiced in Aboriginal communities and this is characteristic of groups that have a history of marginalization and oppression.

5.3 Internalization of Patriarchal, Eurocentric and Capitalist Values

hooks asserts that many African American people have learned to internalize patriarchal, Eurocentric and capitalist values because their marginalization and oppression is based on these practices. In order for a historically oppressed individual to gain legitimacy, s/he must adopt the dominant society's practices.

Slavery has had deep psychological effects on Black people. These effects continue to be manifested today. Historically powerless people generally yearn for a sense of power and accomplishment. However, the enormity of the effects of slavery and colonization linger. Considering that colonization was imposed using male dominance, hooks claims that Black men seek to dominate Black women with whom they are associated. hooks (1993) says, "after slavery ended, enormous tension and conflict emerged between black women and men as folks struggled to be self-determining. As they worked to create standards for community and family life, gender roles continued to be problematic" (p. 92). She explains that although Black women were actively involved in the civil rights movement, Black men continued to believe those women should be subordinate to them. Some Black men assumed patriarchal practices in their effort to become liberated. Social justice is not achieved by using patriarchal values in racial movements.

Black men often blame Black women for their situation. hooks (2004) suggests that Black men frequently have someone else to blame for their situation.

Patriarchal socialization dictates what it means to be a responsible male, yet many

Black men live in poverty that is due to colonization and they are not able to

measure up to these patriarchal expectations. In extending this to the Aboriginal

experience, Aboriginal men often take out their feelings of inadequacy on the

women in their lives. Many Aboriginal people live in poverty, and patriarchy

dictates that men are supposed to be the breadwinners and this creates tension and

feelings of inadequacy for Aboriginal men. With respect to Aboriginal men looking

to feel good about themselves, Bowker (1993) says:

> Other women attributed the number of one-parent homes and a lack of
> successful marriages to the inability of the male to feel good about himself
> and the need to always be reassured of his self-worth, namely by going from
> one relationship to another. (p. 149)

In order to sustain a version of self-worth, Aboriginal men often achieve this by

becoming involved with more than one woman.

It has become a practice where people of color demand more effort from

other people of color in hope of getting legitimate recognition for their actions. This

is particularly so in settings where there are white people. hooks (1990) says, "Often

in white settings we are like siblings fighting for the approval of 'white parents'

whose attention we now have" (p. 92). This is a big concern because people of color

become spectacles when their behavior is at the expense of another person of color,

and the white person's socially constructed sense of natural dominance is affirmed

by this. At a Third World feminism conference, hooks (1990) gives this example:

> When I arrived at the conference, I was mingling and heard of a number of
> participants talk about how they had come to see the fireworks, the negative
> confrontations that they were confident would take place between women of
> color there. Their comments and expectations reminded me of the many
> scenes fictively portrayed in African-American literature where black

people, most often male, fight one another publicly, to entertain white folks, making of themselves a dehumanized spectacle. (p. 92)

Aboriginal people have similar experiences as described by hooks. Often Aboriginal people who occupy positions of authority will work hard to get validation from white people by using harsher measures on other Aboriginal people. I once observed an Aboriginal man who, in a position of authority, used his power to keep another Aboriginal man in line in front of some white on-lookers, when the Aboriginal employee had not really done anything wrong. These kinds of actions result in an affirmation of white dominance; however, one must remember that it is the psychological damage caused by colonization that created this sense of inadequacy.

There are different reasons why the behavior of people of color is monitored by others in the same social group. hooks suggests that when Black people acted in a concerned manner, they were merely "overseeing" one another's actions. In another example she (1990) says, "Also we appear more qualified and trustworthy in the eyes of white people when we function as overseers, willing to crack the whip harder on each other" (p. 97). "The cracking of the whip" suggests that people of color constantly need discipline in their actions, just like what happened during slavery. People of color invoke internalized racism when harder measures are taken upon members of their own group in an effort to seek validation. hooks (1990) says, "sometimes black women in positions of authority and power impose internalized racist assumptions on those folks whom they have power to influence" and "confronting internalized racism and sexism must be a central agenda for both feminist and black liberation struggle" (p. 98). Internalized racism is the result of

slavery and colonization, and it negatively affects people of color and this perpetuates dysfunction. These types of actions may also apply to Aboriginal people, as shown in the previous example I observed.

Television becomes a small escape from the reality of living a life of hardship. Unfortunately, television is often what is perceived to be normal in the minds of marginalized people and this contributes to unrealistic notions of normality. hooks (2004) suggests that the longing for that fantasy black father, as seen on the Cosby show, created illusions, in single parent families, of what it means to belong to a loving and nurturing family. She adds, "since patriarchal culture overvalues the two-parent family, representing it as the ideal, all children in the nation who are raised in families that do not resemble this ideal have to be taught that their families are not defective" (p. 103). This observation includes a recognition that healthy family units do not necessarily have to be two-parent families, and that two-parent families are not necessarily healthy. Patriarchal conditioning imposes an assumption that a family unit must have the father present in order for legitimacy to be given.

hooks asserts that in a patriarchal culture, it is believed that the fathers are in charge of the family but childcare and parenting is a woman's work. This faulty assumption becomes damaging to the children who have no fatherly figure in their life. She suggests that Black children need that sense of affirmation from parental involvement, and that the care giving does not necessarily have to come from the biological parents. The history of Black male parenting is articulated by hooks (2004):

> From slavery on many black males have chosen to avoid parenting. They breed children they have no intention of raising. Colluding with black women who have been brainwashed by patriarchal thinking, they believe that father-love is not essential to a child's well being. (pp. 104-105).

Under the patriarchal regime, Black men, who have been oppressed and marginalized, yearn to have power and a sense of control in their lives by not becoming involved in their child's life because patriarchy affords them the luxury of being irresponsible. However, this behavior perpetuates the abandonment issues for the next generation. Patriarchy allows men the choice of becoming involved in parenting while the mother has no other choice; this is due to internalizing the practices of the dominant society.

A capitalist patriarchal society favors material well being and the use and abuse of women in general. Money and material well being was and is sought after by the easiest possible means. Colonized African American men search out a means of legitimacy in a white supremacist patriarchal society. hooks (2004) says the civil rights movement was short lived because mainstream society indicated that financial wealth was the way to real manhood, and so African American men abandoned struggle for liberation in favor of struggle for financial gain. She (2004) says:

> The invitation to participate in competitive money-making capitalist work, when made by the imperialist white-supremacist state, enticed masses of black folk, calling them away from the resistance struggle for liberation. Just as many white radicals came through the turbulent sixties and seventies only to find at the end of their journey that they were unable to truly give up access to money and power in the existing capitalist social structure (which they had critiqued as relentlessly as black militants had), black people were embracing capitalism wholeheartedly. The conservatization of sixties radicals began with their embracing an ethos of greed, one in which having enough money to be self-sufficient is not what matters, but having money to waste, having excess. Like their white counterparts, an ethos of greed began to permeate the psyche of black folks. (p.17)

The acquisition of money was seen as the answer to one's problems. African American men desperate to fit into a capitalist patriarchal society, sought after money by whatever means, including "taking money from wives and girlfriends, or by pimping women" (hooks, 2004, p. 21).

hooks says sports have also been a route for a Black man to compete for wealth. Instead of their Black male bodies being used and abused in their labor, these men are now able to gracefully show physical abilities in sports. She says, "playing professional sports was a primary work arena for black men to both assert patriarchal manhood or a humanist-based selfhood and make money" (2004, p. 22). Using a man's physique in a "professional" setting provides a sense of legitimacy while adhering to patriarchal values.

If recognition and wealth are not acquired through sports, music has become an opportunity to show one's abilities to participate in a capitalist patriarchal society. Music is seen as a place where Black men can show off their masculinity. Some Black men see music as an alternative to working for someone else (usually a white person). hooks (2004) warns that sometimes, "To a black man, work means putting yourself directly under a white man on a job and having to do what he says. Refusal to do so means being fired. Thus, work becomes synonymous with loss of respect" (p. 23). Considering the abuse of a Black man's labor in slavery, paid labor in contemporary times is often regarded as too difficult to acquire the wealth that is associated with respect. This mirrors the experience of Aboriginal people who get involved with criminal activity as a route to respectable status and easy money.

Criminal activity provides opportunity to gain wealth rather than finding employment. hooks (2004) says that Black men will hustle their own people to get money, and this is due to the overvaluing of wealth. She says "gangsta culture" was the pathway to patriarchal manhood, and:

> No wonder then that black males of all ages living the protestant work ethic, submitting in the racist white world, envy the lowdown hustler in the black communities who are not slaves to white power. As one gang member put it, 'working [for money] was considered weak'. (p. 25)

If African American men are not willing to do paid work by working for someone else, and if sports and music are not fruitful, then criminal activity is the next easiest avenue to work toward wealth and material well being. Television and media dictate what is popular and the messages that African American people receive is that our society is capitalist and patriarchal. If an African American man is to participate in this competition, it will be done by whatever means (hooks, 2004). hooks says this is how colonization and patriarchy have affected Black men.

5.4 Essentialist Notions of Identity

In *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1993) hooks talks about how the modern Black identity is influenced. She says that the "white supremacist patriarchal society" shapes who is privileged and who is not. hooks says that white supremacy is re-inscribed and reinforced in magazines, books, television, movies, or in public spaces such as photographs. Perpetuating representations of race that maintain oppression, exploitation and domination is an effect of white supremacist patriarchal society. She says that our society has internalized white supremacist values and aesthetics and this affects African American identity.

In *Eating the Other*, hooks describes how Black people are used for the benefit of white people. She (1993) says:

> A distinction must be made between the longing for ongoing cultural recognition of the creative source of particular African American cultural productions that emerge from distinct black experience, and essentialist investments in notions of ethnic purity that undergrid crude versions of black nationalism. (p. 30)

The commodification of Black culture denies history, and at the same time, marginalized groups "who have been ignored, rendered invisible, can be seduced by the emphasis on Otherness (1992, 26)" are promised recognition.

Essentialist views on the Black culture are produced from the commodification of the Other (marginalized group). This is often the case with Aboriginal culture, where essentialized culture is used to minimize white guilt, or facilitate to financial gain. White people consume Aboriginal culture through things like eating bannock and watching or participating in powwows as described by Daniel Francis (1992) in *The Imaginary Indian,* and this eliminates any need to address the effects of colonization.

With respect to feminism in the Black community, hooks (1992) talks about having to speak in front of a group of black women, "In this gathering, black female identity was made synonymous again and again with victimization. The black female voice that was deemed 'authentic' was the voice in pain; only the sound of hurting could be heard" (p. 44). She adds that a black feminist "essentialism" – black woman as victim - was constructed in that gathering.

Many Aboriginal peoples believe that cultural revitalization will liberate them; however, cultural revitalization has been made synonymous with victimization

in that the focus on rejuvenating culture negates the effects of the social, political

and economic conditions of Aboriginal peoples. It is indeed true that colonization

has caused the oppression of African American and Aboriginal people, but the

identity of these people does not necessarily have to be represented by hurt and pain

which is what essentialism encourages.

hooks asserts that after years of white-led feminist movements, Black women

can be a part of feminism where difference is acknowledged. She adds that

developing a feminist consciousness is a process that could lead to radical black

female subjectivity. hooks also warns that "often the black women who speak the

most about love and sisterhood are deeply attached to essentialist notions of black

female identity that promote a 'policing' of anyone who does not conform" (1992, p.

58). These are issues which women who advocate a feminist standpoint are faced.

hooks (1992) suggests that Black women often do not allow for radical subjectivity

and this creates a pit against each other. This also applies to Aboriginal women

because they have differing experiences with marginalization and oppression that

has been caused by colonialism.

Postmodernism enhances an awareness of the politics of location. *In

Postmodern Blackness* (hooks, 1990), hooks uses postmodern theory to point out

that Black people are complex and diverse individuals. She says that academia and

media project all Black people from an essentialized perspective, where all Black

people are thought to be the same with the same experiences. In using postmodern

theory, hooks says that one is able to demonstrate there are essentialist attitudes and

beliefs about people of color. Essentialism creates a monolithic identity for people

of color. hooks (1990) says:

> When black folks critique essentialism, we are empowered to recognize
> multiple experiences of black identity that are the lived conditions which
> make diverse cultural productions possible. When this diversity is ignored,
> it is easy to see black folks as falling into two categories: nationalist or
> assimilationist, black-identified or white-identified. Coming to terms with
> the impact of postmodernism for black experience, particularly as it changes
> our sense of identity, means we must and can rearticulate the basis for
> collective bonding. (p. 29)

This analysis applies to Aboriginal people where it must be recognized that all

Aboriginal people have diverse backgrounds. In using postmodernism, diversity is

acknowledged and this creates the ground for people to respect the experiences of

those affected by colonization. Essentialism does not allow for this recognition and

discourages collective bonding that is not based on Aboriginal woman as victim.

Often people of color resort to mimicking the stereotypical images of people

of color (hooks, 1990). Yet those people of color who resist this imagery are often

projected as abandoning their Black identity. hooks (1990) elaborates on how this

happens:

> Assertions of identity that bring complexity and variety to constructions of
> black subjectivity are often negated by conservative policing forces-that is,
> black people who dismiss differences among us by labeling some folks black
> and other not. Growing up, whenever I thought about life in ways that
> differed from my familiar status quo, from our segregated black community
> norms, I was called "Miss White Girl." This process of social
> excommunication from 'blackness' extends far beyond households. Folks
> who are concerned with preserving stereotypical identities can be most
> vicious in their condemnation of someone as not 'black'. (p. 20)

It is a common practice that people of color who are affected by racial oppression

keep other people of color from moving beyond the boundaries of socially

constructed ideas of what it means to be a person of color.

5.5 Black Men and Masculinity

In patriarchal socialization Black boys learn and are expected to assume rigid sex roles in adulthood. There are rigid rules about what it means to be a man. In a patriarchal society, men are not allowed to show their emotions in their families, communities, and society. Patriarchal socialization affects Black men where manhood is made synonymous with dominance, and dominance for Black men is difficult to exhibit in a white supremacist society.

hooks (2004) says that Black women often have high expectations for their sons, who are expected to provide for the emotional well being of their mothers. hooks claims that Black boys are often praised too much, in an effort to nurture their self-esteem, and this evolves into aggressive behavior when they reach adulthood because they are accustomed to being privileged. These mothers are trying to ensure their children develop healthy self-esteem so they can participate in society but this is inadequate for resisting racialization. hooks (2004) says powerlessness negatively impacts Black boys and men, and anger becomes normalized as an inherent attribute of Black men. Because of patriarchal society expectations on male behavior, men are not allowed to express grief. hooks says substance abuse becomes a temporary escape from poverty and despair that is caused by feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy (hooks, 2004). This has been my observation of Aboriginal peoples, whereby Aboriginal boys are often praised and encouraged while Aboriginal girls are expected to become mothers and wives.

In another attempt for recognition, Black men express themselves in rap music. hooks says that rap music was the medium used by Black men to gain voice.

She says that in a white supremacist patriarchal society, Black men produce "much rap music [that] is riddled with sexism and misogyny. Masculinity and femininity is rigidly defined in rap music" (1993, p. 35). In the mainstream culture, young Black men are seen as both desirable and dangerous. She suggests that rap music has the potential to be liberating when it does not conform to the patriarchal nature of society. Rap music is used in an effort to gain legitimacy in a white supremacist society.

There is often a suggestion, by media and television, that Black boys and men are naturally flawed. In a patriarchal society, men are particularly privileged. Black boys are no exception to this practice and it becomes internalized. hooks (2004) says, "Everything they do may be praised. This overindulgence is often perceived as love or positive caretaking when it is actually an assault on a child's self-worth, for it teaches the child grandiosity rather than self-acceptance" (p. 94).

A white supremacist patriarchal society dictates notions of normality and it regularly does not use people of color as an example of it. Aboriginal peoples are often portrayed as flawed as well; this is actualized in many forms. For example, I observed many Aboriginal families that praise their male children and when the child does not achieve success in his endeavor, the parent(s) often speak about his failure as a personal flaw. There are unrealistic expectations placed upon Aboriginal male children because in patriarchy there are rigid sex roles and success is often measured, especially in relation to men, by how much an individual succeeds in these roles.

Damaged emotional health results when a man is not allowed to express

emotions. The patriarchal society hinders men from showing feelings and emotions

because it is seen as not masculine. When feelings are bundled up inside a person,

they can turn into rage (hooks, 2004). Black men who become enraged eventually

become ashamed of their actions and this creates a further disconnection from other

people. Substance abuse is a means of keeping feelings in and rage at a distance.

Substance abuse is a way of numbing feelings. hooks (2004) speaks about the

repression Black men experience:

> In traditional patriarchal black culture, male grieving has no place. The black man who grieves is seen as weak. Oftentimes the only black male we see expressing grief (other than at a funeral) is the drunk whose emotionality is dismissed as caused merely by his addiction and not by pain. (p. 99)

There is tremendous stress and expectations put on Black men to measure up to

patriarchal demands. hooks (2004) asserts that:

> Racism does damage black males, but so does sexism, so does class elitism with its hedonistic materialism, and so does abandonment and abuse in family relationships. All the sources of black male pain and powerlessness must be named if healing is to take place, if black males are to reclaim their agency. (p. 100)

Colonization has had an immense negative impact on Black men, and the process of

healing is long and will be challenging.

The lack of interest of Black men to parent their children is a result of

patriarchal conditioning. Patriarchy establishes rigid rules of masculinity and

femininity. hooks (2004) says, "Trapped by dehumanizing toxic shame, wounded

black males must do the work of reclaiming their past in order to live fully in the

present" (p. 111). As a route to resisting patriarchy, hooks (2004) suggests:

> Confronting their childhoods and early relationships, looking at what they were taught and how the lessons learned affected their sense of themselves and others, wounded black males can begin to heal the hurt, to come out of isolation and let themselves live again. (p. 111)

Once black men come to consciousness about patriarchy, the possibility of working toward healthy parenthood will need no persuasion (hooks, 2004). This may also apply to Aboriginal men.

The history of Black people's employment, positionality and how it has evolved over time is in need of attention. hooks (2004) says that the work ethic among the Black people used to be valued, and it also provided a sense of meaningfulness in life. She concedes that even though Black men used to have strong work ethics, they were often exposed to abuse in their place of employment especially before the civil rights movement. In a patriarchal society, she says, masculinity is associated with capitalism. Many Black men now do not have that strong work ethic because it means working hard for low wages and for white people. hooks (2004) suggests Black men often pursue professional sports as a way to legitimacy and it is also a way to assert patriarchal manhood. Black men also seek affirmation through music, even though that music is regularly full of misogyny. If sports and music cannot provide legitimacy, hooks says that criminal activity is the next preferred avenue. A feminist analysis of these issues is helpful to understanding where and how change can happen.

5.6 bell hooks Taking Up Feminism

A woman of color who advocates a feminist standpoint is not necessarily abandoning her race. Feminism is a response to the male dominance. There is a lot to be learned about the effects of patriarchy and colonization. hooks (1990) suggests

that the, "Black liberation struggle must be re-visioned so that it is no longer equated with maleness. We need a revolutionary vision of black liberation, one that emerges from a feminist standpoint and addresses the collective plight of black people" (p. 64). Maintaining a feminist standpoint does not mean it is not available to men. Feminism is a form of resistance to patriarchy, and colonization has been practiced using male dominance. If men of color are truly committed to the emancipation of their race, they will recognize the oppressive nature of patriarchy and will work toward liberating themselves of patriarchy and women of color.

hooks (1990) says "Assumptions that racism is more oppressive to black men than black women, then and now, are fundamentally based on acceptance of patriarchal notions of masculinity" (p. 75). Often men of color find it difficult to believe that sexism privileges them and this leads to reluctance to have meaningful dialogue about how inequality and injustices have affected African-American women and men differently (hooks, 1990). Feminism is not a movement that is anti-male. It is about confronting sexism because everyone in society has been socialized to absorb these thoughts and actions as normal because they are a construct imposed in colonization and slavery. hooks (2000) says that "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (p. viii), and men are not excluded in this movement; rather, it is meant to call attention to how patriarchy influences gender relations.

5.7 Educating as a Practice of Freedom

White supremacy is part of our daily lives. White people are privileged in society in part because whiteness is considered the norm and a neutral identity.

People of color regularly encountered a wide array of prejudicial attitudes enacted

on a common basis. It is not necessarily a matter of being hypersensitive about the

color of a person's skin; it is a fact of life that people of color have to be

continuously aware. On the other hand, not all white people possess prejudicial

attitudes toward people of color. In an effort to create an awareness of this, hooks

(2003) asserts:

> If we fail to acknowledge the value and significance of individual anti-racist
> white people we not only diminish the work they have done and do to
> transform their thinking and behavior, but we prevent other white people
> from learning by their example. (p. 57)

This acknowledgement may be difficult for some people of color because it has been

the white colonizers who created most oppression and inequality. It is also a normal

thought process for Black people and Aboriginal people to be suspicious of white

people's intentions because most of the history of the colonized has been full of

hardship. As hooks (2003) suggests, it is necessary to keep an open mind about

addressing how inequality is maintained and, as well, who is ready to talk about it.

Classrooms are prime settings for cultivating meaningful dialogue about social

justice issues, and this is education as a practice of freedom.

In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994*),*

bell hooks presents a style of teaching that promotes inclusiveness and emphasizes

building a learning community in the college classroom. Race, class, and gender are

all aspects of identity that are included in classroom dynamics. hooks says that

teaching to transgress involves education as an act of freedom, engaged pedagogy,

and feminist thinking. She uses her own experiences as a means to add strength and

validity to her arguments about social justice issues. hooks argues that education is

a practice of freedom where issues of race, sex, and class are discussed in the spirit of learning and moving beyond stereotypes.

Shame is a powerful method of perpetuating inequality faced by people of color. As the effects of colonization evolve, people of color have many obstacles to overcoming feelings of inadequacy. Shame is so ingrained in the psyche of marginalized people that it is often difficult to show one's potential because negative attention is anticipated. hooks (2003) adds:

> As long as educators are unwilling to acknowledge the overt and covert forms of psychological terrorism that are always in place when unenlightened white people (as well as unenlightened people of color who have internalized white-supremacist thinking) encounter people of color, especially people of color who do not conform to negative stereotypes, there can be no useful understanding of the role shame and shaming plays as a force preventing marginalized students from performing with excellence. (p. 98)

Shame is damaging to a person and it is often used to perpetuate notions of inferiority. To persons that have been affected by colonization, shame is a big part of their lived experience. hooks suggests that classrooms be a place for affirmation of difference and that respect be accorded to all voices, rather than using stereotypical images as the source of reference. The marginalization and oppression Aboriginal people have experienced has also produced feelings of shame that are difficult to overcome. I suggest that education will lead Aboriginal people to self-determination and can help to overcome those feelings of shame. My experiences with rejection, exclusion, and minimization have led me to rigorously pursue higher learning which has given me a sense of freedom. I will return to a notion of education as the practice of freedom in the next chapter that speaks to Aboriginal experiences with colonization.

Summary

There are parallel experiences between African American and Aboriginal peoples in colonization. bell hooks advocates a feminist standpoint and she speaks about the need to maintain this when seeking resolution to past and present inequality. She says that feminism is not only for women, it is also applicable to men. It is suggested that people of color are particularly invited to this social movement because colonization has negatively impacted their lives. Because colonization is patriarchal, men of color learn that male dominance is normalized and in this process women of color are devalued. When women and men of color realize how colonization affects gender, the possibilities begin to open up for future generations of people of color.

The works of bell hooks have intentionally been used because she speaks about the African-American experience in colonization. hooks elaborates on the effects of colonization on African-American people in a contemporary context. Her perspective on race, gender, and class issues is shared by a society she calls white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy. Because whiteness, class elitism, and male dominance have been portrayed as the norm of citizenship, anything different is deviant and unequal. She suggests that money, material well being and excess spending have been available to white elite men (and white elite women), and people of color generally use this as a measure of legitimacy in a patriarchal society. African-American and Aboriginal peoples are socialized to think that money and male dominance will lead to acceptance.

hooks says that a patriarchal society reinforces essentialist views of Black identity. Essentialism is when African American (and Aboriginal) identity is put into a monolithic category where all members are thought to be the same and have the same experiences of colonization. Essentialism does not take into account the diverse and differing experiences of peoples of color. hooks says the essentialist views of African American identity result in "policing" boundaries within these groups (hooks, 1990). She writes about how African-American people often use essentialist views of "Black experience" themselves. She says that essentialism creates a form of internalized racism in Black communities wherein people are frowned upon when they move away from exclusively addressing racial struggles (hooks, 1990). Internalized racism contributes to internal disagreement and fighting within a racial group and it is caused by internalizing a belief in the inferiority of one's racial group. An essentialist view of Aboriginal identity also exists in Aboriginal communities, and this will be discussed in the next chapter.

The argument here is that feminism can be a source of enlightenment and empowerment for all people of color, and education is a place for the practice of freedom. The solution put forward is that feminism is a movement for all people, and it is with the understanding that colonization constructed notions of superiority and inferiority which inevitably affected gender relations within racial groups, such as African American and Aboriginal communities. Colonization imposes patriarchy such that male dominance seems normal to colonized people. The history of colonization must be understood and put into the context of contemporary issues that people of color are faced with. Feminism offers that understanding and provides an

avenue for action. The experiences of Aboriginal peoples mirror those of African

American peoples as described by bell hooks. A feminist analysis will be used in

looking at the experiences of Aboriginal peoples affected by colonization.

Chapter Six

Feminism and Aboriginal Peoples

There has been much written about the different perspectives of feminism throughout history. As previously mentioned, feminist perspectives have been a response by women to male dominance and male control. Although it was started by upper-and middle-class white women who first had access to literacy, it has evolved to include women of color, which bell hooks clearly articulates. Contemporary society continues to be influenced by the long-lived patriarchal practices that were and are considered natural. North American society is certainly rooted in this history and patriarchy inevitably affects the public and private aspects of social life. It is necessary to challenge patriarchy, using an Aboriginal perspective, because Aboriginal peoples participate in Western society where gender inequality has been normalized.

Aboriginal people do not stand outside of the Western paradigm. The economics of contemporary life is organized around a European structure where Eurocentric governments administers funding to people and organizations. This includes the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs of Canada. The funding that First Nations and Metis organizations receive is administered with rules and regulations that have been developed by European influences. These rules and regulations have historically been established by European men in positions of authority. Political factors have served to benefit European men in particular and men in general, because they appoint men to be in positions of authority which is presumed to be a natural order of human existence. Patriarchy is perpetuated in

political aspects of life. Because political and economic factors were, and are,

dominated by men, social life evolved to benefit men and marginalize women.

Aboriginal peoples have been exposed to and observed male dominance throughout

colonization. Assimilation ensured that patriarchal practices are in place as

described by Chiefcalf (2002) in the education of First Nations children. Aboriginal

people have been influenced by Eurocentric practices that are male dominated and

male controlled, which are in turn, practiced in Aboriginal communities.

6.1 Why has feminism not been advocated by Aboriginal women?

The reluctance of Aboriginal peoples to embrace feminism is not clear;

however, evidence suggests that because feminism is perceived as a white woman's

movement, it does not apply to Aboriginal peoples. For example, Aboriginal

scholar, Grace Oulette (2002) believes that feminism is not applicable to Aboriginal

women because she sees Aboriginal men and women operating in a "traditional

cultural paradigm" where gender roles are complementary. However, feminism

does not have a criterion as to which races and ethnicities can embrace it. The

underlying principle to feminism is a resistance to male control and male dominance

which creates oppression and marginalization for women. Since Aboriginal peoples

are affected by colonization, and patriarchy was established while assimilation was

occurring, gender inequality has become a social norm. A feminist standpoint offers

Aboriginal peoples a position of empowerment where all Aboriginal peoples can

learn how their oppression and subjugation was actualized using patriarchal

practices.

In her refusal to advocate a feminist standpoint, Ouelette (2002) says:

As Aboriginal people, we believe that we do not need to scurry for a source of reference [feminism] that will validate this knowledge as reliable, because Indigenous values and beliefs continue to be passed on through oral tradition in our everyday lives.

To disrupt the harmonious relationship and holistic view of life through a denigration and denial of certain roles, such as motherhood, is an affront to Aboriginal women….Aboriginal women cannot fit neatly into the feminists' conceptions of human nature because of different cultural values and beliefs; in other words, because of conflicting world views. (p. 26)

Ouelette suggests that culture and tradition remain in a pure form, as they once were. She assumes that all Aboriginal people have been immersed in a "traditional Aboriginal culture" and that colonialism has not affected Aboriginal people. Although oral history has been used to rejuvenate "tradition," how can it be without the influence of Western society? It appears she romanticizes notions of culture as if colonialism has not impacted Aboriginal culture.

One idea put forward to explain the lack of an Aboriginal perspective in feminism is that feminism is an academic endeavor. It has been suggested that since Aboriginal women often do not complete high school, they are unable to reach the point of recognizing that feminism is beneficial to them. Patricia Montour-Angus (1995) speaks to this issue:

The way in which the aspirations of Aboriginal women are often characterized in the academic literature, including feminist writing, is often problematic. It is necessary to point out that many Aboriginal women do not have access to this literature and are often unaware of how they are talked about. Two facts substantiate this observation. Statistics indicate that the majority of Aboriginal people do not complete high school or access postsecondary education. Second, some Aboriginal people reside in remote areas and do not have easy access to places where books can be readily purchased. (p. 175)

This is an accurate observation, but what is also not widely known is that feminism is for everyone, and that cultural revitalization has ignored this movement which

results in ignoring how Aboriginal men are privileged in their communities because it is believed they are still enacting traditional roles. People in Aboriginal communities maybe aware of male dominance, but are not aware of how feminism applies to them.

Culture is commonly invoked to suggest that contemporary Aboriginal gender roles are a result of "tradition" (Ouellette, 2002). However, there is no pure tradition without patriarchal influence. In response to the reluctance to advocate a feminist standpoint, St. Denis (2004) argues that, "Feminism is not acknowledged as a form of analysis that has been engaged with and by racialized and Third world women. Feminism is often portrayed and criticized by Aboriginal women as a movement that suggests women want to emulate men" (St. Denis, personal communication, June 5, 2004).

Aboriginal women have much to benefit from feminism and it does not mean they are abandoning their Aboriginality; men, on the other hand, cannot escape the benefits of patriarchy because contemporary Aboriginal society continues to be influenced by it. An analysis of the history of Aboriginal women in colonialism provides fertile ground for collective vision in which subordination and domination are understood in the context of sexism and racism. Feminism offers Aboriginal women the space to speak about how colonialism has affected their lives in relation to their communities and Western society.

In regard to Aboriginal women, Ouellette (2002) argues that traditional gender roles remain alive and are practiced. She (2002) says:

> Aboriginal women hold various roles in their respective societies, as is evident in anthropological studies. Culture does shape a particular society's

view of what is appropriate behavior for women, but it also does so for men, children, and the elderly. It is commonly understood in Indigenous societies that everything in nature has a purpose and place. The worldview may not necessarily be documented, as it is passed on through oral tradition and has survived for generations. (pp. 25-26)

This rationalization lacks contextual analysis of the effects of colonization because she claims that tradition is still alive and well, while at the same time research on the social, political, and economic conditions of Aboriginal women has found them to be one of the most marginalized and oppressed groups. For example, the report published by Amnesty International entitled "*Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women In Canada*" (2004) speaks to the marginalization of Indigenous women. It is due to the patriarchal and racist nature of society that Aboriginal women have been under valued which continues to legitimize and normalize their oppression. Statistics provided by Saskatoon Anti-Poverty coalition (2004) said that "44 percent of Aboriginal people living off reserve live in poverty" (p. 27). This group also says that, "Employment equity has been slowly closing the wage gap between men and white women. However, the wage gap is widening for visible minority women, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities compared with men in these groups" (p. 27). Ouellette's argument does not take into account the negative effects of colonization on the economic and political situations of Aboriginal peoples including the imposition of patriarchal ideologies and practices.

6.2 How does the focus on traditional Aboriginal culture hinder a feminist analysis?

The idea that Ouellette (2002) proposes speaks about oppressed Aboriginal people of today, and she calls this "The Fourth World". She says, "It could be said that Aboriginal people are in a Fourth World because they are an oppressed people" (p. 91). Her focus on racial issues fails to address how Aboriginal men are privileged in the patriarchal society we live in. Colonization certainly has caused the oppression of Aboriginal people but much of our society operates using Western practices, which Aboriginal people participate in as well. The poverty Aboriginal people experience is rooted in colonialism and it persists because of racism and sexism. Ouellette erroneously assumes that Aboriginal men have not internalized patriarchal beliefs and that her focus is on racial issues. Her proposal does not adequately explain why Aboriginal men are privileged and abuse their power, while Aboriginal women are marginalized within their own communities and society in general.

In response to the effects of colonization, Aboriginal people have endeavored to reclaim tradition and this has been advocated as the route to restore Aboriginal self-determination. Cultural revitalization refers to the efforts of Aboriginal people to restore and rejuvenate traditional Aboriginal customs, as they once were practiced. Based on my observations, traditional practices are revitalized or rejuvenated by getting the information about what constitutes tradition from Aboriginal Elders through oral history. Cultural revitalization may indeed create a sense of identity for Aboriginal people; however, it has implications that create divisiveness in Aboriginal communities because of the effects of colonialism, as I have experienced and observed.

In many ways, the focus on cultural revitalization has created a fundamentalist perspective toward traditional Aboriginal culture and identity. Schick (2004) defines fundamentalism as follows:

> First, it claims the authority of the past as an unchanging reality, while reinterpreting precepts in a way that is new and unprecedented. It is committed to basic principles believed to be eternal and immutable. The past is revered and glorified; the good old days are seen as superior to the present. Second, it separates itself from those not in the creed. Solidarity is promoted through a sense of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness. The third practice is the redefinition of the fundamentalist community with respect to non-adherents, as well as a narrowing of acceptable belief and behavior among adherents. (Schick, Jaffe, & Watkinson, p. 153, 2004)

Fundamentalism in regard to traditional culture has negative implications for Aboriginal people. St. Denis (2004) argues that cultural revitalization, in its fundamentalist form, valorizes culture as pure and authentic, it encourages a categorization of Indianness (i.e. real, traditional, assimilated) and, it encourages a denial of history whereby Aboriginal ancestors are blamed for the loss of culture, it encourages notions of a mythical super-Indian, and it blames the victims of colonization by denying history and social change. There are other implications of fundamentalism to traditional Aboriginal culture; however, those noted speak to the everyday experiences of Aboriginal peoples. Fundamentalism toward traditional Aboriginal culture denies how colonialism continues to affect contemporary Aboriginal peoples.

In the hope of reclaiming and rejuvenating culture and tradition, many Aboriginal peoples are influenced by essentialist notions of Aboriginal identity which lead to fundamentalist attitudes about what constitutes authentic traditions (St. Denis, 2004). St. Denis (2004) argues that, "cultural revitalization has problematic

implications because of a kind of cultural absolutism it imposes on the native other"

(p. 42). One of the main themes in Aboriginal scholarship points to how race and

racism are the sole determining factors of the oppression of Aboriginal people. It is

indeed true that colonization has been one of the leading forces that caused damage

to traditional Aboriginal practices which impacts identity. This cannot be denied

because the current state of Aboriginal people speaks for itself. Since Aboriginal

people have been immersed in colonialism and assimilation, they have adopted some

of the values and practices of Eurocentric society. St. Denis (2004) warns how

colonialism has affected Aboriginal identity:

> The popular notion that one has lost one's culture, as opposed to having
> one's culture stolen, places the responsibility for making appropriate cultural
> adjustments on those who for so long were the targets of systemic and
> individual cultural change. In a project of cultural revitalization, Indian
> people are unwittingly held responsible for the problem of losing culture;
> they are produced as reckless caretakers of their culture. (p. 43)

Hence, the notions of culture and tradition must be critiqued in order to understand

how they create negative ramification for modern Aboriginal communities.

Some advocates of cultural revitalization say that tradition is alive and well,

and go on to suggest that Aboriginal families continue to operate this way. This

argument seems to be a contradiction because, on the one hand, it is argued that the

current state of Aboriginal people living in poverty is because of colonization; and,

on the other hand, tradition is somehow in a pure state even when colonization has

made a huge impact on Aboriginal identity and experience. This perspective also

suggests that it is the fault of the colonized that their situations are in a dire state

because Aboriginal people, at least since the 1970s, have been allowed to follow

their own traditions in their own communities. It is true that many Aboriginal

people live in poverty; however, the causes of poverty have its foundation in

colonialism. In her research on the educational experiences of Native American

women, Bowker (1993) says:

> What is important for educators to do is separate the impact of poverty from the impact of culture on the educational achievement of Indian children and to identify the processes by which poverty and cultural background affects success or lack of success. (p. 126)

The focus on culture creates blindness to the effects of colonialism. This focus on

culture encourages the perception that Aboriginal peoples have caused their own

demise because it is a part of their culture. The long history of representing

Aboriginal peoples as poor has established a discourse that their culture is the root

cause of their marginalization and poverty (Bowker,1993). The fact that Aboriginal

peoples were placed on reservations by the dominant group, with inadequate food

and shelter is hardly considered. The pain and damage that came out of colonialism

is not mentioned. Cultural restoration is considered the means to Aboriginal self-

determination (Ouellette, 2002).

The focus on cultural revitalization for Aboriginal peoples unfortunately

ignores the social, political and economic situations of Aboriginal peoples. Among

Aboriginal people a fundamentalist ideology develops when cultural revitalization is

viewed as the only available avenue for liberating Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal

women experience a "double whammy" when attention is put on cultural

revitalization in a patriarchal society. Cultural fundamentalism privileges

Aboriginal men and Aboriginal women are expected to support their male

counterparts. St. Denis (2004) argues:

A cultural discourse has assumed a level of sacredness and/or orthodoxy for explaining the social and educational conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada, so much so that other explanations for the on-going marginalization, exclusion, and oppression of Aboriginal people are denied and minimized. (p. 45)

Cultural revitalization has ramifications for Aboriginal women because racism is seen as the predominant issue facing Aboriginal people and this ignores sexism against Aboriginal women.

6.3 How does gender inequality appear in Aboriginal communities?

Gender inequality in Aboriginal communities is discussed by Ardy Bowker (1993). Bowker is of eastern Cherokee heritage and has taught at Montana State University. Her research focuses on Native American women and their success, or lack of success, in education. She conducted the research from 1989 to 1991, and the findings were published in 1993. Bowker interviewed nine hundred and ninety-one American Indian women, and these participants were from the northern United States. She says the participants had varying backgrounds in relation to education. They were high school dropouts, high school graduates, some with college education, some with associate degrees, few with completed bachelor's degrees, master's, or doctorates degrees. Although Bowker's research applies to American Indian women, there are likely many similarities with the Canadian experiences of Aboriginal women.

Aboriginal people in both Canada and United States face similar issues including poverty, inadequate health care, lack of employment opportunities, and lack of housing. For example, the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition (2004) state that, "the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities and Aboriginal persons is

twice the overall Canadian rate" (p. 27) and this would affect living conditions. Of particular relevance is the theme of male privilege in Native American communities that was shared by the participants of the research. Although Bowker's (1993) research is more than ten years old, many of the issues are still relevant.

Bowker (1993) discusses how feelings of hopelessness in Aboriginal communities often lead to teenage pregnancies and single-parenthood. Bowker found that Native communities are rife with alcoholism and dysfunctional family structures that are the result of poverty and feelings of hopelessness. The eldest daughter in these families is often faced with becoming the "parent" and providing food, shelter and nurturing to the younger siblings while parents are away drinking for days or weeks at a time (Bowker, 1993). Education for these parentified children becomes secondary because there is fear that child welfare authorities will apprehend younger siblings. As a result, the eldest daughters experience little nurturing and being loved. Teenage pregnancies and single parenthood, consequently, are often seen as a way of getting love. A sense of hopelessness from living in poverty creates behaviors that are considered part of Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples (Bowker, 1993). Bowker (1993) argues:

> if children do not view education as an asset or means to future opportunity, a culturally relevant curriculum will serve no purpose….it is important to separate the conditions of poverty from those of culture and to understand that some behaviors have become so ingrained within the cultures of poverty that we begin to accept those behaviors as a part of our respective cultures when they are nothing more than the consequences. (p. 173)

Single parenthood and teenage pregnancies are seen as "normal" conditions for people living in poverty. Teenage pregnancy and single parenthood are not necessarily about practicing one's culture; it is symptomatic of the problems caused

by colonialism where Aboriginal women, who have been socially constructed to be devalued, often fill that feeling of void by having children who will love them back (Bowker, 1993).

Aboriginal men are often placed in positions of authority and decision-making in Aboriginal communities. This is perceived by Aboriginal people as addressing oppression amongst them and practicing self-determination. However, Aboriginal men often abuse their power and this abuse of power is often legitimized (Martin-Hill, 2003). Aboriginal men and women have learned to accept male dominance through the patriarchal practices of Western society. Patriarchal practices seep through the walls of what is perceived as "Aboriginal cultural tradition". Blaney (2003) articulates:

> Present-day systemic and institutionalized patriarchy ensures that privileged male status in mainstream Canadian society is mirrored in Aboriginal communities. Men have considerable power in the political, economic and social spheres, and this enables violence against women and children. Many of us would argue that those masculine sites of power and influence are uncaring when it comes to violence and child apprehension in the lives of Aboriginal women, many of whom end up dead or disappeared in the mean streets of many urban centres across the country. (p. 162)

It is evident that the influence of patriarchy has entered the realm of the Aboriginal experience, and this is often misrepresented as males occupying traditional roles when in fact they are participating in gender inequality and oppression. Aboriginal men mimic the behavior of Euro-Canadian men in hope that they will be seen as competent colleagues, and at the same time, Aboriginal women are considered incompetent because most of the political representatives have been Euro-Canadian males. Euro-Canadian men have been socially constructed to be leaders, law-makers, and primary providers since colonialism and they rely on

assumed natural dominance in the subconscious of society to be dominant and these assumptions do not exclude Aboriginal people. Blaney (2003) argues that change is necessary because Aboriginal communities operate with sexism and neo-colonialism that result in men dominating women. St. Denis (2004) echoes the same concern:

> I would argue that most, if not all Aboriginal people, including both men and women who are living in western societies, are inundated from birth until death with western patriarchy and western forms of misogyny; I don't think we have escaped these structures and ideologies at all. (St. Denis, 2004)

Bowker (1993) speaks about double standards that are evident in Native American communities in regard to male and female roles. Native American women bear the brunt of work and responsibility for family matters, and Native American men are socialized to have more freedom. One example Bowker gives is when a Native American women chooses college education, she is often regarded as less traditional, or rather, "to be successful, an Indian female relinquishes her 'Indianness' at least in part" (Bowker, 1993, p. 184). She further suggests, in order to obtain legitimacy, the college-educated Native American woman will often involve herself with a traditional man who is less educated and often an alcoholic or an abuser. The educated Native American male, on the other hand, is free to form a relationship with non-Native women without negative judgment (Bowker, 1993).

Bowker also found that male drinkers who have committed to sobriety are given respect and recognition for their accomplishments; however, when a woman does the same, she is not given the same kind of attention and her past follows her around (1993, p. 196). Bowker (1993) says that Native American women "can never completely redeem herself-even if she is a good grandmother" (p. 196); however, Native American men who drink from teenage years up until his fifties,

suddenly become good grandfathers without negative judgment about his past. The

question that arises from these situations speaks to whether this is a traditional

practice or is it a learned behavior from the effects of colonization? The stigma that

has followed Aboriginal women throughout colonialism, as discussed by Carter

(1997), continues to impact how they will be perceived and treated. The

victimization of Aboriginal women positions them as not worthy of respect and

attention, from a patriarchal society; however, the victimization and recovery of

Aboriginal men commands recognition because of patriarchy, as I have observed in

Aboriginal communities.

      Blaney (2003) says that Aboriginal women continue to experience

marginalization and she calls this neo-colonialism. In her description of neo-

colonialism, she says it has to do with "male violence against women" (p. 162). In

her reference to missing Aboriginal women in Vancouver, she says "Having

Aboriginal male relatives of the "missing women" as spokespersons is akin to

having non-Aboriginal colonial delegates as our spokespersons" (pp. 162-163).

Aboriginal men who are in positions of authority often perceive their positions as

being traditional and these result in misuse of power; Aboriginal men learn how to

subordinate because they have experienced this in colonialism and this becomes the

social norm of reference in their positions of authority. Since much of society is

patriarchal, Aboriginal communities operate in the same way. Blaney (2003) asks,

"The best defense against assimilation is to sustain culture and tradition, but what

are we to do when reinstated tradition is steeped in misogyny?" (p. 167)? Liberation

is now difficult to reach because "tradition" is perceived as men having dominance.

Indigenous scholar Emma LaRocque (1996) shares this concern:

> The challenge is, finally, to ourselves as Native women caught within the burdens and contradictions of colonial history. We are being asked to confront some of our traditions at a time when there seems to be a great need for a recall of traditions to help us retain our identities as Aboriginal people. But there is no choice – as women we must be circumspect in our recall of tradition. We must ask ourselves whether and to what extent tradition is liberating to us as women. We must ask ourselves wherein lies (lie) our source(s) of empowerment. We know enough about human history that we cannot assume that all Aboriginal traditions universally respected and honoured women. (And is "respect" and "honour" all that we can ask for?). (LaRocque, p. 14)

Hanging on to "tradition" has not always been beneficial for Aboriginal women in their struggles for de-colonization. It may have caused their existence to be further marginalized because male dominance is assumed and women's productive and reproductive labor undervalued.

The argument in this thesis is that traditional Aboriginal customs, in North American, are not without patriarchal influence. There are Aboriginal scholars and Aboriginal women who affirm, through their experiences, that gender inequality does indeed exist in their respective communities. The concept of "tradition" needs to be deconstructed in contemporary times because the fact remains that all Aboriginal peoples are affected by colonization, especially with the widespread adoption and practice of Christianity, which is patriarchal. If tradition is not critiqued, the question remains, "Are Aboriginal women naturally inferior to all men?" Deerchild (2003) asserts:

> For many "traditionalists," our ceremonies, gender roles and philosophies have remained unchanged over time. This was the accepted way of doing things. To suggest that colonialism, racism, and sexism exist in our societies, much less our sacred spiritual practices, is almost taboo. Some say to just

question is disrespectful and invites bad fortune into your life because it displeases the spirits. It is certainly frowned upon in many ceremonial circles. Those that do question tradition are seen as outsiders to our cultures, or they are seen as people who are misguided about what the teachings mean. (p. 104)

The concept of tradition needs re-conceptualizing because contemporary conditions of Aboriginal women point to the need for liberation, and resorting to tradition does not offer a complete source of empowerment.

Parental responsibility was also a common theme that was mentioned in Bowker's (1993) research. It was stated that Native American women are often the sole caregivers of children while men are not expected to take any responsibility. One of the interviewees in Bowker's (1993) research said that Native American men went to powwows, were ranchers, and hung out with the guys. That same person also mentioned that society was sexist, with women policing one another to conform to these unequal parental roles. There are socially constructed expectations regarding how women should behave. Bowker (1993) says:

> Societal expectations, in fact, place women in a position of accepting poverty, abuse, unfaithfulness, and neglect at the hands of an alcohol-abusing spouse, lover or partner. Women who have been socialized with these beliefs have come to accept them as a part of the "Indian way" when, in fact, history repeatedly records that Indian women were never placed in those roles in Native societies prior to Euro-American contact. Furthermore, it appears that women who have been socialized in this manner have a great deal of difficulty in devising plans for escaping their fate. (pp. 197-198)

In the same argument about parenting, Bowker (1993) found that men were victims of the same socialization where they were not expected to partake in parental involvement. It was mentioned that when the roles of Native American men were focused upon, it was their "Indianness," such as dancing and participating in ceremonies that was the focal point, rather than assuming responsibility for families.

Ouellette (2002) asserts that Aboriginal men, women, children and elders have particular roles in traditional families yet, "elders" who abuse their power are legitimized as authentic traditional people. An example of this abuse of power is described by Dawn Martin Hill (2003), an indigenous scholar, who helped to organize a conference that focused on healing Aboriginal people from the effects of colonialism:

> Although thousands of Indigenous peoples were and still are profoundly moved by and healed through the healing movement, sensitive issues of abuse have surfaced. Abuses have ranged from sexual and physical to emotional and spiritual; their scope has ranged from public humiliation by traditional teachers to sexual harassment. I have experienced this myself. At one event I organized in 1995, a respected "Elder, spiritual leader and teacher" informed me that he would be staying at my house for the duration of the conference. When I told him that I didn't have any room he replied, "Well, I was planning on sleeping with you." Always dumbfounded when presented with such lechery, I fell all over my words and offered to pay for his hotel room. At the conference, as rebuttal to my rejecting his advances, he publicly took a few shots at my abilities to work with Elders and at my organizing skills. Even in the healing movement, saying NO has its social consequences for women and their families. (Martin-Hill, 2003, pp. 113-114)

Can tradition be questioned when Elders who are held in such high regard abuse their positions of authority? In a patriarchal society, men are privileged and this does not exclude Aboriginal men. This situation demonstrates how Aboriginal women continue to be viewed as sexually available to men.

6.4 How do essentialist ideas about identity impact Aboriginal people?

Essentialist perspectives of the Aboriginal identity have been created that hinder an understanding of how Aboriginal people have differing experiences in colonization. The pre-occupation with essentialism has created a monolithic and static identity that is ascribed to all Aboriginal peoples, as discussed by, among

others, Francis (1992) and Valaskakis (1999). Focusing strictly on cultural

revitalization has reinforced this essentialist perspective toward Aboriginal identity

wherein all Aboriginal people are supposed to follow a "traditional Aboriginal

culture". St. Denis (2004) discusses how cultural revitalization is in danger of

imposing a fundamentalist perspective of Aboriginal identity:

> Cultural revitalization, acting as a system of true beliefs, depends on a
> construction of Aboriginality as a timeless, unchanging essence. It operates
> with a fixed notion of culture and a social stratification that regulates degrees
> of authenticity. Cultural revitalization supports the development of national
> cultural fundamentalism, especially by encouraging a hierarchy of
> Indianness, partly through the valorization of authenticity and pristine
> traditions. This solution of cultural revitalization operates in a
> fundamentalist fashion that is closed to a critique about its effectiveness as a
> liberatory strategy. (p. 41)

 Aboriginal people have a long history of being marginalized and oppressed, now

manifesting in their own communities. Aboriginal identity is ambiguous because

not all Aboriginal people follow traditional culture, or even have access or context to

participate. St. Denis (2004) also suggests that when cultural revitalization is used

to counter inequality, it actually may work against Aboriginal people because it

denies history, in particular, how colonization has affected Aboriginal people of

today. Fundamentalist perspectives on culture create divisiveness in Aboriginal

communities by encouraging a hierarchy of Indianness.

Ouelette's (2002) theory of the Fourth World does not adequately address the

report published by Amnesty International (2004) regarding Indigenous women of

Canada which speaks to the marginalization and oppression of Aboriginal women.

She suggests that indigenous women mentioned in the report were functioning in a

"traditional" role where their marginalization and oppression was natural, and that colonization had little to do with their demise.

Ouellette states that the Fourth World theory refers to Aboriginal people of today who apparently continue to live in "traditional" paradigms where harmony is valued and gender inequality is not recognized (2002). First Nations people, likely at one time, lived in a harmony with nature and gender roles were complimentary; however, many Aboriginal people live and participate in the dominant Western paradigm with its patriarchal practices. Assimilation ensured that Western practices would be inescapable. Her research points to essentialist notions of Aboriginal identity.

6.5 How does feminism address gender inequality for Aboriginal people?

The infamous Bill C31 has been a source of marginalization for Aboriginal women in their home communities. Before the amendment, First Nations women who married non-status or European men, lost their association and membership to their home community because of this patriarchal law, and these Aboriginal women were often disassociated from kinship and were vulnerable to abuse because they could not return home. This amendment to the Indian Act, a Euro-Canadian law that is deeply patriarchal, is policed and monitored by Aboriginal people, men in particular, who are in positions of authority in their communities. As a contemporary example of the legacy of this Euro-Canadian construct, often in application to band membership in their community of origin, First Nations women are not accepted or their applications are withheld, from full membership. Even in Aboriginal communities Aboriginal women are marginalized because of the

patriarchal nature of colonialism which Aboriginal people have learned. In speaking

about the issue of the disenfranchisement of Aboriginal women, Blaney (2003) says:

> The Native Women's Association of Canada has identified these problems,
> stating that our matriarchal forms of government and matrilineal ways have
> been forgotten or abandoned and that patriarchy is so ingrained in our
> communities that it is now seen as a "traditional trait". (p. 158)

She further states how Aboriginal males are privileged and prioritized in decision-

making as opposed to Aboriginal women who are often ignored. For example, she

describes a brother and a sister who made an application to their bands for

membership; the brother's application was processed and prioritized; however, the

sister's application was ignored. Blaney (2003) says this is a form of internal

oppression. Gender inequality exists in Aboriginal communities. Blaney says that a

group of Aboriginal women identified as Aboriginal feminist has been formed in

Vancouver and they called themselves the Aboriginal Women's Action Network

(AWAN), and this organization brings attention to the inequality Aboriginal women

face in both Western society and Aboriginal communities, as in the case of the two

siblings who had applied for band membership. If feminism is not recognized as a

source of empowerment, the economic, political, and social situations of Aboriginal

people will likely remain the same with Aboriginal women living on the margins of

society.

The voices of Aboriginal women have not been heard because of the effects

of colonization. Their marginalization and oppression has been created by a

patriarchal and racist society. Lack of education is a symptom of their oppression.

Blaney (2003) says, "This is one of the barriers that prevent many Aboriginal

women from finding our voices and including our perspectives in the decolonization

struggle" (p. 156). Blaney says AWAN is a group that seeks to recognize and address the issues Aboriginal women face due to colonial systems that are deeply patriarchal, Aboriginal communities included. This is one example of an Aboriginal group that speaks to the struggles Aboriginal women have faced in Aboriginal communities and society in general. Once Aboriginal feminism is more widely known, it could be a source of empowerment from the oppression they experience, including "internal oppression" within their own Aboriginal communities. A feminist analysis can contribute to decolonization because it provides Aboriginal women the opportunity to be heard.

Indigenous scholar Emma LaRocque (2005) believes in a social purpose of knowledge, and this includes using a feminist analysis. She says that self-determination includes intellectual freedom and that we have to be ethically committed to human rights where freedom to pursue knowledge is allowed for Aboriginal people. LaRocque asserts that freedom to make choices is self-determination, and freedom to choose is a part of humanity. Feminism is about educating about history, the right to an education and the right to use this knowledge, which is the practice of freedom.

As a final note to patriarchy's implications for Aboriginal peoples, it must be noted that patriarchy has also produced capitalism as the answer to self-determination. Statistics prove that Aboriginal women and women of color live in the most impoverished conditions, a result of patriarchal and racist decision making that is rooted in North American colonial history. Saskatchewan First Nations are on that path of going after capitalism as a source of liberation by opening major

gambling centers. Those First Nations people who are making the decisions

regarding these economics are overwhelmingly men. What is problematic with this

solution is that the clientele in these institutions are mainly Aboriginal people who

are hoping to hit the 'big one', who are gambling their money away, and are likely

living in poverty. Another issue that is ignored in these gambling centers is that

Aboriginal people who have been oppressed and marginalized often have addictions

to drugs and alcohol, and these centers are prime locations for numbing the personal

issues that need to be dealt with because of colonization and assimilation. The few

that benefit from these gambling centers are the Aboriginal men who are in power.

Blaney (2004) speaks about how capitalism affects Aboriginal women:

> Capitalism sustains patriarchal models, and patriarchal models that uphold
> nuclear families also ravage our collective ways of being. As Aboriginal
> women, who simultaneously experience colonization and neo-colonialism,
> misogyny and poverty, our challenge in resisting each of these forms of
> oppression is great. (p. 168)

These gambling centers often perpetuate patriarchal practices where it is the men

who are in positions of authority. The quest for financial gain, for the benefit of a

few, is an endeavor that mirrors Western society's overvaluing of money. A

feminist analysis offers Aboriginal peoples an explanation of the effects of

colonization, with its patriarchal practices and quest for economic dominance.

Feminism offers an alternative vision of social change that seeks to address

oppression and domination.

Summary

It appears feminism has not been embraced by Aboriginal people because it

is perceived as a white women's movement. Perhaps the lack of recognition of the

importance of feminism contributes to continuing oppression because Aboriginal people have held on to the idea that culture and tradition are still alive in their purest form, without any influence from Western society and that they alone provide answers. This argument is contradictory because Aboriginal people are affected by colonization, and if Aboriginal people claim to have held on to true traditional culture, then the social conditions of Aboriginal people must be the result of their culture and have little to do with colonization.

Poverty is a serious issue in Aboriginal communities, and this is the result of the marginalization of Aboriginal people during colonialism, not the result of their culture. Unfortunately Aboriginal people have lived in poverty for so long that some of the dynamics that go on in Aboriginal communities may be mistaken for Aboriginal culture. The Fourth World, as described by Ouellette (2002) suggests that contemporary Aboriginal people are living in a Fourth World because they are oppressed. Her sole focus on race lacks recognition of gender inequality in Aboriginal communities that contributes to poverty.

Like Ouellette, many Aboriginal scholars and Aboriginal people advocate that they live in a "traditional Aboriginal paradigm", that is, without patriarchal influence. They suggest that feminism does not apply to Aboriginal people because traditional Aboriginal gender roles remain complementary. This thesis is intended to offer Aboriginal women a feminist standpoint as a form of decolonization. If traditional Aboriginal gender roles were complementary and inequality was not a part of social life, then feminism must be applicable to Aboriginal women because its purpose is to resist male dominance and control, and seek equal worth between

the genders. Those who refuse to embrace a feminist standpoint could be seen as enabling Aboriginal men to marginalize Aboriginal women.

The effects of colonization have resulted in opposing views of what constitutes tradition and culture. Aboriginal men who are given the position of "Elder," or "spiritual leaders" can misuse their power to control women, and their actions are legitimized because their role is seen as being 'traditional'. Fundamentalism results when tradition and culture are portrayed as pristine and authentic and beliefs are rigidly prescribed. Fundamentalist views on culture and tradition deny the history of the effects of colonialism on Aboriginal peoples.

In an effort to decolonize, a feminist analysis is proposed to liberate Aboriginal peoples. Feminism is not just for women; it is for men as well because there is a recognition in equality between men and women. In order to understand the social, political and economic conditions of contemporary Aboriginal peoples, history must be re-visited. Colonialism was modeled using male dominance and control, and this has been well learned in Aboriginal communities. It must be understood that Aboriginal men and women will benefit from relationships that are equal, which is what feminism advocates.

Conclusion

The contemporary situations of Aboriginal women are in need of immediate attention. Studies and reports have shown that Aboriginal women are one of the most marginalized groups in history (Amnesty International report, 2004). The history of Aboriginal people in colonialism is linked to the injustices that have occurred to Aboriginal people in general, but more specifically to Aboriginal women. Gender inequality has particularly been in existence at least since contact with European explorers, missionaries, and settlers.

Throughout colonization, male dominance was instilled as a method to control and dominate Aboriginal people. Patriarchy has its foundation in European societies that have been brought over to the colonies. European men set the standard as to how Indigenous societies were to be controlled and dominated. Aboriginal people were assimilated into the European way of life during colonization and patriarchal practices were used to assert superiority. Patriarchy continues to persist in contemporary society where Aboriginal peoples participate. Patriarchy has had a long existence and this has caused male dominance to appear as natural and normal. Aboriginal people have been affected by colonization with its patriarchal practices, and male dominance is expressed in Aboriginal communities.

White elite women have benefited from patriarchy, these women have also been devalued simply because they are women (Lerner, 1993). In a patriarchal society, all men are privileged to some degree, but women of color specifically experience marginalization because of their race and gender. Since patriarchy is about power and control, and much of our society operates in this way, people of

color also see this as the norm of social life. Women of color experience greater marginalization than their male counterparts because of patriarchy.

As a reaction to male dominance and male control, feminist consciousness was brought into existence. Although feminism was initially started by white elite women, it has evolved to include women of color. Feminism has evolved over the years and it has been used as a source of empowerment and liberation for women of color, as discussed by bell hooks (2000). Feminism provided the opportunity for women of color to voice their concerns and this was necessary because it brought their voices to the fore. Feminism is about seeking equal worth for everyone, male and female. Feminism is not about men bashing; it is meant to make visible and analyze the different power structures between men and women that have existed historically. Aboriginal women have much to gain from feminism, as a collective vision that seeks to address gender inequality.

The production of Aboriginal identity has negatively impacted Aboriginal women throughout colonization. Colonization popularized Aboriginal identity as inferior to that of the Europeans. Because of patriarchy, Aboriginal men learned male dominance and they have practiced this in their communities. Aboriginal women have been socially constructed to be devalued because they were considered the drudges of society during colonization. The common association of Aboriginal women with the "Indian squaw" or "the Indian princess" created an essentialized version of Aboriginal woman's identity that was established by the patriarchal stereotypes.

The negative images used to portray Aboriginal women continues to exist in many people's minds today; these visual images that guide mental constructs about Aboriginal women include "drudge", "alluring", "princess", "available for men's use," "temptress", and so on.   Aboriginal women are not naturally inferior; their inferiority is socially constructed.

Theories of social constructionism offer opportunity to understand processes by which Aboriginal women have been devalued. History and place influence how a person will be viewed. Aboriginal women at one time helped European men become established in Canada, but as the economy changed they were considered useless and disposable. Patriarchy was implemented during colonization and assimilation, and Aboriginal women's identity was constructed as degenerate and undesirable (Martin-Hill, 2003). The discourse that occurred from colonialism put Aboriginal women in vulnerable positions because they were devalued due to the patriarchal social order. The discourse that was created continues to be in existence, and this affects how Aboriginal women are viewed and treated.

Patriarchy was imposed onto Aboriginal communities during early contact with European people. Missionaries aided in the influence of patriarchy on Aboriginal communities. Leacock (1991) documented that some Aboriginal communities had an egalitarian society when the missionaries and European settlers arrived in North America. European gender roles were imposed during the colonization of Aboriginal peoples, and these roles were under the guise of Christianity. Europeans assumed they were superior to Aboriginal people and they imposed their own beliefs onto Aboriginal people because they thought Aboriginal

people were uncivilized. Superiority and inferiority were constantly being re-inscribed during colonialization. A "common sense" ideology was developed by European men that suggested that Aboriginal people were believed to be inferior to Europeans. A new system of social order, patriarchy, was modeled by the Europeans and Aboriginal people observed this behavior and this eventually became the norm. Aboriginal peoples learned European values and beliefs in colonization, and this includes male dominance.

bell hooks is a Black woman who grew up in the Southern United States during the segregation era. She advocates a feminist standpoint because she sees the gender inequality that has been created by colonization. hooks believes that Black people, or people of color, have been socially constructed to be inferior in colonialism. Black people, with their history of slavery and poverty, continue to face marginalization and oppression from colonialism; and she says Black men learn about patriarchal manhood through media and television and this becomes the social norm. hooks suggests that Black men expect women to be subordinate to them because society continues to operate as a patriarchy. The scholarship hooks contributes is of particular importance because her analysis of racist and sexist issues that "women of color" experience parallels the experiences of Aboriginal women; her understanding of these issues is motivated by her feminist standpoint and how colonialism continues to affect people of color.

It has been necessary to trace the history of Aboriginal women in order to come to some kind of understanding that explains the marginalization and oppression of Aboriginal women. The reluctance to embrace a feminist standpoint,

by Aboriginal women has been in question in this thesis. Notions of culture and tradition have created a fundamentalist perspective toward Aboriginal identity that suggests that feminism is not applicable to Aboriginal women. Fundamentalism of tradition and culture brings about an aspect of unquestioning belief about what "tradition" means, and has included legitimizing the abuse of power because it is under the guise of "tradition". Fundamentalism makes room for people in "traditional" roles to abuse their power, and this needs to be understood in the context of colonialism. A method of accountability needs to be developed. A pure and authentic culture and tradition does not exist because Western-style gender inequality is in operation in Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal women are often perceived as available for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men because of the discourse that was created during colonialism. Feminism offers Aboriginal women an opportunity to redress past and present injustices, both in Aboriginal communities and Western society.

It must also be acknowledged that many Aboriginal people find strength in practicing Native spirituality. This thesis is not meant to discredit that. As an Aboriginal woman who has been affected by colonization, I have come to appreciate some of the beliefs of Native Spirituality, in particular, that all children are gifts from the Creator. This thesis is meant to assert that gender inequality exists both in Aboriginal communities and Western society and that this affects Aboriginal peoples and marginalizes women. Advocating a feminist standpoint provides room for Aboriginal women to form a collective vision wherein inequality is understood and addressed within the Aboriginal community, and feminism offers Aboriginal peoples

the opportunity to rejuvenate complementary gender roles that once existed. Aboriginal peoples do not stand outside the dominant Western paradigm, and it must be acknowledged that European practices have influenced contemporary Aboriginal social interaction.

As an Aboriginal woman, I have experienced and observed gender inequality in Aboriginal communities and in Western society. Before becoming familiar with feminism, my life experiences were about marginalization in both settings. During my upbringing, the messages I received strongly suggested that my position in life was to remain in the margins of my home community and in mainstream society. Because of this, I protected myself by using silence. Education and university provided me with enlightenment and a sense of freedom. In understanding the history of Aboriginal people and the effects of colonialism, I found feminism to be a source of validation and empowerment.

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