

A critical analysis of patriarchy sociology essay



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In the article "Patriarchy, the System", Allan Johnson defines patriarchy, and in doing so addresses the common misconceptions and stereotypes that people inaccurately identify with the term. He argues that people tend to generalize and attach the term patriarchy with men, and therefore come to the conclusion that all men are oppressive people.[1] Johnson recognizes a pattern in which women feel free to blame men for oppressing them and therefore men take it personally and become defensive. He argues that women will blame men for patriarchy "simply because they're men." [2] Johnson also considers the possibility that perhaps people are simply confused, that they cannot distinguish the difference between patriarchy as a system and the individual. He argues that people have to recognize this, and examine larger contexts, in order to solve social problems. Johnson suggests that race, gender and class oppression are not actually oppression, but rather "the sum of individual failings". [3] Johnson argues that in order to solve social problems, these misconceptions must be cleared up. "If we're ever going to work toward real change, it's a confusion we'll have to clear up." [4] Johnson effectively identifies common misconceptions about patriarchy, and convincingly argues that this ignorance and individualist perspective is contributing to problems within society.

Allan Johnson goes on to argue that patriarchy is organized around relationships and shared understandings, and he argues that this can limit you to some degree. [5] Johnson provides an interesting perspective on how we participate in our social lives. He makes a very good point when he suggests that patriarchy can exist without men being portrayed as the

villains. People tend to follow along with what society deems is the norm. This is significant; as it explains why individuals make the decisions that they do, in a larger social context. Johnson further analyzes what patriarchy really means, and explains that it is simply part of our culture, and the symbols and ideas within it. He argues that “ the make up of patriarchal culture” is important to understand because it “ affects the structure of social life.”[6]He discusses the possibility that culture enforces gender roles and power positions, therefore shaping and influencing our values.

Allan Johnson goes on to say that everyone contributes to patriarchy, the system, whether they're aware of it or not. We are all involved in patriarchy, but it does not necessarily mean that women are the victims, and men are the oppressors. He explains that who we think we are is closely related to who others think we should be and where we fit in social systems. He sums up his ideas by stating that all men and women are involved in patriarchy because we occupy “ social positions.”[7]This further proves his point, that patriarchy cannot be constrained to individuals themselves, as patriarchy is beyond the individual experience.

This article studies the concept of patriarchy as a framework. It provides a sociological perspective on social inequalities and attempts to explain why they exist. Johnson convincingly argues that people don't truly understand the origins of patriarchy. He has taken the term patriarchy and uses a sociological approach to uncover what it really is, a social construction or framework. He defines patriarchy in broader social terms and effectively proves that there may be oppressive individuals in society but patriarchy is not the result of all men being oppressive people, it is the result of

individuals collectively possessing power. The sociological approach that Johnson uses helps to examine and analyze society as a whole, a structure in which everyone participates in and contributes to. This approach can help to explain why individuals act out certain behaviors in their own social lives. Perhaps people behave in such patriarchal ways because “the system” has influenced us in such ways. Maybe gender oppression has nothing to do with men being patriarchal, but more to do with how our society has been constructed and how our culture and our ideas about men and women have been shaped within it. Johnson helps us to use our sociological imagination to better understand the problems society currently faces.

To conclude, Allan Johnson’s article “Patriarchy, the System” can help us to analyze society in broader social terms in order to understand systems like patriarchy and our participation within these larger systems. Johnson’s article helps us to use a sociological perspective to better understand the individual and why things like gender oppression occur. This article is useful, as Johnson’s argument could be applied to other social contexts as well. This article allows us to further our knowledge of social constructions and how we participate in them, and therefore how we can change them to improve equality and eliminate the ideas present in our culture that limit us.