

## **Johnson on Patriarchy**

Since we're "stuck in a model of social life that views everything as beginning and ending with individuals," we have trouble understanding how systems like patriarchy work apart of individual behavior and attitudes.

"Patriarchy's defining elements are its male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered character, but this is just the beginning. At its core, patriarchy is a set of symbols and ideas that make up a culture embodied by everything from the content of everyday conversation to literature and film. Patriarchal culture includes ideas about the nature of things, including men, women, and humanity... It's about how social life is and how it's supposed to be; about what's expected of people and about how they feel. It's about standards of feminine beauty and masculine toughness.... It's about defining women and men as opposites, about the 'naturalness' of male aggression, competition, and dominance and of female caring, cooperation, and subordination. It's about the valuing of masculinity and maleness and devaluing femininity and femaleness...."

"To live in a patriarchal culture is to learn what's expected of us as men and women, the rules that regulate punishment and reward based on how we behave and appear."

Implications for understanding patriarchy:

1. Although people experience patriarchy as existing externally to them, we participate in it; we are of it and it is of us.
2. Patriarchy isn't static; it is "an ongoing process that's continuously shaped and reshaped."