

OLOC Confronting Sexism Series March 21, 2023 Notes

Rena Grasso gave the introduction: **Male Supremacy: Facts and Fictions.**

It's a story that has dominated humanity for 6000 years. How have you "heard" it? How has the story affected you, and our society at-large? How is this narrative both true and false. Can we change the story? What would we change, and how? The framework of this series is systemic sexism – we are making it concrete – what does it mean? Male Supremacy is a system ideology, belief systems that males are supreme, above, better than and women are not supreme, less than, inferior. This belief system carries other attributes such as reason and mind are better than emotion. Aggression is more valued than female passivity; strong than weak. This is a composite of beliefs – they affect how people see the world.

Example: in a study, two essays were submitted that were exactly alike, but one was signed by Mary McKay and the other one was signed by John McKay. The essays were given to a cohort of men and women to grade. The one group of men and women who graded John's gave him 2 points higher than the other group of men and women who graded Mary's lower – male supremacy.

Comments/Statements:

- Tomboy: there is nothing as dangerous as having a label put on you; had to wear a dress but wore pants underneath; children pick up on this same as racism; language – definitions have changed over the years but laws still trip us up and restrict us; male preference for language even in sign language and computers (master hard drive and second one is the slave hard drive); male – war, big guns, missiles, etc. and the killing of the planet; eliminate capitalism to eliminate patriarchy, eliminate patriarchy to eliminate capitalism.
- A child of 4.5 years and brother 1.5 years at the family holiday: the brother got typical male toys and when she tried to touch the truck was told, "Don't touch, it's your brother's." The brother was most valued, and she was not important.
- Junior high – girls had to take home economics and boys got to take shop; girls had to learn how to make a bed, clean, etc. In high school – wanted more and was still told to take home economics. Recent times – went to buy a car and had 16 years of age son with her at the dealership, the salesman only talked to the son.
- When young, experiencing the Thanksgiving holiday where the mother and sisters did all the cooking with the men sitting in the living room watching television – didn't want to be with the women who were working so hard and didn't want to be with the men who just watched television.
- In high school was a good student in biology and got the highest grades; wanted to go to medical school but was told by the counselor that she should be wearing makeup and that it wouldn't be fair to take some boy's place in medical school. So went to nursing school and hated it – she caved in. She was starting a business and wanted to buy a cargo van, but the salesmen kept telling her that she didn't need one and that she only needs a mini van, they wouldn't even let her test drive a cargo van; now only does business with women. After divorce she tried to get a business loan and every place said no but she found out that her ex-husband got a loan right away.
- As an electrical engineer she did tons of work to when she went to Home Depot and was talking to the electrical guy, he would only answer to her wife who had a short haircut and a hat on thinking probably she was a guy.
- A boy invited her to his house but the other boys there started teasing them that they were "boyfriend and girlfriend" which was not true; had to be careful with males; heterosexual assumptions; wanted to be an

altar girl in church but was not allowed, only boys, girls had to clean the church and do the food; it is everywhere in everything.

- Sports: girls could only play half court in basketball, maybe because it would hurt them?? The basketballs for the girls were worn out, had the worst court time – just one hour and the boys made sure that was all they got; she was far better than the boys in baseball (Little League) but of course girls could play in Little League. In college the women had one uniform for all their sports teams and of course the boys had new uniforms and different ones for each team.
- Unconscious to sexism/male supremacy: in the 1950s and 1960s concerns at that time was racism as Black people were raising issues so became involved for fairness; grew up mostly in a woman's sphere so it wasn't until the 1970s and did some women's liberation reading and consciousness raising when a ton of bricks fell on her head – sexism/male supremacy is so sneaky and it hit hard to see what the limits were and are; as long as it exists, all white males benefit – we say no but for the majority it does not work.
- Summer camp: mixed relay races and she wanted to be the one who rowed the boat because she was good at it being taught by her father and she had to argue with the boys to be able to do it.
- Even on a plane where the flight attendant asks the guy sitting next to her, "Sir, what would you like?" and then turns to her and does not address her at all, just asked her the question. The male is Sir, and she is nothing. Do not have the freedoms... god is man; Mary is the mourning mother; any powerful image is male only; in sports girls had to wear skirts; brothers were the princes... it feel like that; shaming. Lesbians grew up with some resistance and oppressed heterosexual women had no willfulness to resist.
- With children stuff last a lifetime; pores are all blocked by this crap, need to blow them out; pervasiveness of male supremacy – still comes up.
- We think things change so much but, when daughter was in sports, there was always a citywide male athlete of the year award dinner; at the time with the National Organization for Women, contacted the Minneapolis newspaper and a group of girls and women had a demonstration outside that dinner – the only women who were allowed in were the ones who served the dinner; sign – "You don't need a penis to play ball"; after the demonstration they started a separate girls athlete of the year award dinner...
- Sports: the boys had the nifty jackets not girls; what about women's sports – who is watching/attending their games?
- Billie Jean King worked to get the same winning money for the women and men.
- But still hear "women doctors, women lawyers" you never hear men doctors, men lawyers, also actress.
- Women have made idea statements and the men would say, "Isn't that so cute"; men steal women's ideas.
- Are males supreme? More hair, most are stronger physically (warrior society); physical strength – separate by race and sex; we are suppressed, used, traumatized childhoods; continue to work to eliminate this.
- Worked as a laborer as an electrical engineer with men; have the attitude – would not be put down by men, worked her way up; all male oriented; she would cram her education down their throats – attitude.
- Women are smarter, more productive, different, more complete, professional!
- Activities of daily living – if a man is washing dishes the get, "look at that guy, he's washing dishes" or if they happen to be taking care of the children people make a big deal about it when the mom does it pretty much 24/7 and no one says anything; women are the caregivers and don't get credit.
- Positive note: granddaughter wants to go into engineering at Virginia Tech where they are courting her to go there.
- Individual triumphs, etc. don't change the system... this is not just individual.

- Use of male strength: violence against women; men are not penalized; men can decide what to do with women's bodies; need attention to the systemic nature root in physically abusing and subduing us.
- Is there a link to supremacy? Yes – males are supreme in this society, power, who sets the agenda for science, funding research for war, for weaponry?
- What is the mission of technology? All male – women would have different places where the money for research would go.
- There is not an institution which is not affected; all male values; women buy in and follow.
- Male supremacy is in Texas and Florida with rulings over women's own bodies.
- All knowledge is socially structured; read Ti-Grace Atkinson writings – visionary; capitalism has to go – we are all part and we all suffer; lives are screwed up; need attitude; women as slaves – terrible backlash and war against us; matriarchal society and religion wiped out; need massive change; Roe v. Wade – women are hurting and going backwards; if women can't control their own reproduction... terrible spot we are in now; like Black women and men – slavery, no control over their bodies.
- Reproductive rights – attended some rallies and it was mostly older women; young women have not gotten it yet. Education – men setting the agenda making STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) are important and humanities are not/undervalued, but teaches us about living, reality. Male law system – women get together to rewrite the US constitution... need to speak among each other, change it. How would women punish rape? Women need to set the agenda.
- Patriarchy: subjugate, trap people, systemic, denied; answer? To be a “warrior” like men a way that they understand; look at the evidence – military power, physical power; take everything – steal the land, money, erasure and twisting of history; alternate messages; backlash; resilience... keep sharing who we are.
- Texas has women walking around with unviable pregnancies and they could be put in jail if it was taken care of even if the fetus is dead.
- Granddaughter at Michigan Tech in engineering; Missouri has banned all abortions and now the drugs; Walgreens is going along with this – it affects all women; need to find ways around all these things.
- Women are still getting hostilities such as in engineering; women left those work situations because of the toxicities, were frozen out, not listened to; the women engineers and others in “male” dominated fields still need to be continually supported.
- Sexism, male supremacy – need to change it; need more focus on these issues even within OLOC; enlighten more women; change the atmosphere; so important to reinvigorate discussion on patriarchy and sexism because it is so muted; we must begin to talk about this again, a prelude to change; we are swamped with all the issues; just to talk to each other helps and is very, very important to do this work.

This is a very good lead in to handling the systemic sexism in institutions upcoming topic.

From the Chat:

And who makes the laws?

This has been great. So sorry I have to leave for an appointment. Looking forward to the next time.

Thank you for making this space happen.

Not all men but always men. XX

Just thinking of that.

Post March Session Comments

I was lucky to be an only child so never had to compete with brothers. My father was gone a lot on business which my mother liked because she was involved in lots of women's clubs. She had been a tomboy and on all the teams in high school so she might have been a little disappointed that I was not athletic. Because her dad was the manager of the sample room of a hardware company, he often brought home both girls and boys toys for her and her sister. I always had both as well. I was shocked when a woman I worked with was surprised I had a train. She was one of 3 sisters, and their father wouldn't let them have a train as he said they were only for boys. In elementary school another girl and I were always tops in our class and we were both later sent to a private girls school. She went in 5th and I went in 6th. So, I never felt inferior to boys or men till possibly college.