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In this article, “*Here's the deal with Elizabeth Warren's Native American heritage*”, the author examines and lays out the situation behind Elizabeth Warren and her Native American heritage. The article states that many politicians, specifically Trump, declared that she had been lying about her Native American heritage, and had been using it to gain advantage in her career. In the article, the author states “‘Professor Warren claimed that she was a Native American, a person of color,’” he said during a debate. ‘And as you can see, she's not.’”¹ This article touches upon the issue of intersectionality. Intersectionality is the overlapping of different oppressions, such as race, gender, and class. Many people fail to see how people’s oppression is intersecting. In this article, it talks about how Elizabeth Warren is forced to take a DNA test to prove her Native American heritage because “she does not look the part”. She is seen as a white woman, despite her claiming that she had Native American roots. She is misrepresented in society because people do not believe her claims. She was oppressed in society, especially in the government for being a woman, and for claiming her Native roots, which puts her into a minority group. The men in the government are the ones who are falsifying her claims, and trying to prove her wrong. The situation shows how a man’s word is still held above a woman's claims and experiences.

Based off of Lober’s “*The Social Construction of Gender*” and Smith’s “*Three Pillars of White of White Supremacy*”, the accusations placed upon Elizabeth Warren falls under the themes of gender as a social construct, slavery and capitalism, and gender and colonialism. As Lorber stated, “gender is a process of creating distinguishable social statuses for the assignments

¹ Krieg, Gregory. “Here's the Deal with Elizabeth Warren's Native American Heritage.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 15 Oct. 2018, www.cnn.com/2016/06/29/politics/elizabeth-warren-native-american-pocahontas/index.html.

of rights and responsibilities...gender creates the social differences which defines 'women' and 'man'"(101). He also states that gender is created through social interaction, and is not something which is assigned to you at birth. Gender is different from sex in that way. It is incredible to see that the women have reached the point that they have today in our society. However, women are still seen as inferior to men, and that is because of how the idea of the stereotypical woman. Most women are raised in a way that they still fit somewhat into the stereotype of what a woman should be in our society today. Elizabeth Warren has broken the stereotype and come into such a high position of power. However, even though she holds power in the society, her words are still inferior to the men surrounding her. The men's words are taken in higher regard than her claims. Trump claims that she is lying about her heritage and even calls her a racist. She has to prove herself in the eyes of the people by going through with a DNA test as her words did not hold enough value to be true in society, especially to the men in power. Even when she proves her Native heritage, it is just brushed aside. She is still seen as beneath the men around her in the government even though she may hold a position which is equal to some men around her. Her position of power and the place that she had reached in today's society shows how gender is a social construct. Elizabeth Warren breaks free of the stereotype of a woman, however she still faces oppression for being a woman and for claiming to be of Native American origin. Her role as a woman is shaped by how she had interacted with those around her and her experiences. The article also slightly touches upon the theme of capitalism. As Smith states in "*The Three Pillars of White Supremacy*", "the capitalist system commodifies all workers....a racial hierarchy to this system"(2). Even though Warren is in a position of power, she is still somewhat controlled by the men in her life. She has to prove herself and prove her

claims because men in power had tried to falsify her claims. Even in a position of power, she still falls beneath and is inferior to the men in a similar position as her. Finally, this article also touched upon the theme of genocide/colonialism. Smith states that in the pillar of genocide and colonialism “indigenous people must always be disappearing, in order to allow non-indigenous people the rightful claim over this land.”²(2). When Warren claims that she has Native American roots, she is called a liar, and there was no proof as to whether or not she was telling the truth, and when her claim proved to be true, it was brushed aside by Trump. Even though this fact proved to be true, it did not hold any value as Trump still had power over Warren. He did not have to rectify his misconception of Warren’s heritage or all the claims that he had made against Warren. He is seen as the one in a higher position in politics, in gender, and in race. This ties into the theme of genocide and race because Warren had to prove that she was of a minority group because her claim was held below the word of Trump and other men in high positions of power. The fact that after she was proven to be correct, the issue was brushed aside as if it were insignificant. She was misrepresented and continues to be misrepresented in a way. It shows how Trump, a “non-indigenous” person, had “a rightful claim” over the matters in government and is not fully addressed.

There are many layers to this issue and two layers are specifically addressed in this article, gender and race. First and foremost, Elizabeth Warren is oppressed because she is a woman. She is in a position of power, however she is not taken as seriously as the men in these positions. This is how sexism shows up in this situation. Warren is accused of lying to gain an advantage in the political system. People do not believe her claims, and the men in these high

² HETEROPATRIARCHY AND THE THREE PILLARS OF WHITE SUPREMACY RETHINKING WOMEN OF COLOR ORGANIZING

positions of power believe that she had lied her way to the top. This shows that these people believe that she is not capable as a woman, and that she had to take underhanded methods to reach the place that she is in today. She is also oppressed because she claims to have Native American roots. Although she does not look like it, she claims to have Native roots from her mother's side. This is the main issue addressed in this article. She is oppressed because she claims to be a minority.

Feminism might help us understand the situation through the idea of intersectionality. Individuals refuse to see that there are more layers to a person than just gender, or just ethnicity. Although intersectionality shows up in this article through the interlocking oppressions of race and gender, the article can also relate to the topic of white privilege. As Julie Zeilinger states in her piece, "*The Brutal Truth Every White Feminist Needs to Hear*", "White feminists use theories and perspectives from women of color (and even imagery) to seem as though they're being diverse," but effectively "only really care about their own experiences as well as propping up their own voices,"³. This idea of white privilege is an underlying idea in this article, however it shows up in another article regarding the same event. In a New York Times article written by Astead Herndon, the author writes about a speech that Warren had given to graduates of Morgan State University. In her speech she states that the government has always discriminated against those of color, and especially blacks. Herndon states that "Ms. Warren attempted to make clear that she understands the intersections of race and injustice better than others on the left."⁴ She is

³ Juliezeilinger. "The One Brutal Truth That Every White Feminist Needs to Hear." *Mic*, Mic Network Inc., 25 Oct. 2015, mic.com/articles/125084/the-brutal-truth-every-white-feminist-needs-to-hear#.17qdR5RUy.

⁴ Herndon, Astead W. "Elizabeth Warren, Speaking to Black Graduates, Warns 'The Rules Are Rigged'." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 14 Dec. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/12/14/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-president.html?rref=collection/timestopic/Race and Ethnicity&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics@ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=2&pgtype=collection.

using the claims made against her and her experiences to relate to the people of color, reach out to them, and gain their favor. Herndon also states that “Ms. Warren is taking outreach to black communities in preparation of a possible national campaign.” . This shows how she is still a part of the majority group and is trying to use her voice, her experiences to connect to those who are facing “similar” issues of being misrepresented and misunderstood in our society, and using this to her advantage.

Works Cited

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