

Introduction to Cultural Studies
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Lecture – 42
Bell Hooks - Understanding Patriarchy - III

So, hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled introduction to cultural studies, we have been looking at Bell hooks essay understanding patriarchy, we have already had 2 lectures on this essay and we stopped at a very interesting and unsettling point in the last lecture where a female child was beaten and abused by the big daddy, the big patriarchal figure for not being obedient enough to the patriarchal principles.

And Hooks mentions the trauma, the suffering, the violence, the pornography of patriarchy and violence which was unleashed on her at a particular point of time how that was a very moving experience; emotionally unsettling experience or existentially unsettling experience and of course that the fact of physical beating was painful enough and what is also interesting is how the mother comes to the child at the end of that particular session, where she is banished in a room in a dark room isolated, alienated for not being conformist.

And how the mother comes to the female child and explains to her that it is actually her fault that she wanted to do things which a girl ought not to do just because she happens to be a girl and how girls come to the same thing as boys do and if they wanted to do those things, they are punished, they are reprimanded and they are punitive measures may be taken against them and this particular episode of the big daddy beating the female child for not being a conformist becomes the punitive measure, becomes punishment for the disobedient deviant child okay.

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I remember this traumatic event so well because it was a story told again and again within our family. No one cared that the constant retelling might trigger post-traumatic stress; the retelling was necessary to reinforce both the message and the remembered state of absolute powerlessness. The recollection of this brutal whipping of a little-girl daughter by a big strong man, served as more than just a reminder to me of my gendered place, it was a reminder to everyone watching/remembering, to all my siblings, male and female, and to our grown-woman mother that our patriarchal father wa

So, we move on with the essay in this particular lecture, we talked about how similar situations have psychological effects and how this particular experience created a deep-seated traumatic effect on the girl child's mind and she says, I remember this traumatic event so well because it was a story told again and again within our family, no one cared that a constant retelling might trigger post-traumatic stress, the retelling was necessary to reinforce both the message and the remembered state of absolute powerlessness.

So, this is a very key component of granulated or stereotypes as we see as we have seen already when we read empower (()) (02:26), you know it has been repeated all the time it has to be repeated ad infinitum just to reinforce a point, just to consolidate the point just so everyone gets to know the replications or the retribution for not being an obedient girl child.

If you are not an obedient girl child, you will be punished, you will be violently punished, you will be beaten, you will be abused and it is perfectly fine because that is what happens to disobedient children and you know, this particular episode becomes a very interesting reminder of that kind of a punishment that kind of a punitive measure taking against a disobedient female child you know, the punitive measure obviously being carried out by the patriarchal age and the patriarchal figure.

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whipping of a little-girl daughter by a big strong man, served as more than just a reminder to me of my gendered place, it was a reminder to everyone watching/remembering, to all my siblings, male and female, and to our grown-woman mother that our patriarchal father was the ruler in our household. We were to remember that if we did not obey his rules, we would be punished, punished even unto death. This is the way we were experientially schooled in the art of patriarchy.

The big daddy in question so, the recollection of this brutal whipping of the little girl-daughter by a big strong man served as more than just a reminder to everyone watching remembering to all my siblings, male and female and to our grown women mother that our patriarchal father was ruler in our household. We were to remember that if we do not obey his rules; we would be punished, punished even unto death.

This is a way we were experientially schooled in the art of patriarchy, so this is a point that I have been suggest you in the very beginning of this particular essay, the experientiality of patriarchy it is not just a discursive phenomenon, it is not just a textbook which needs to be obeyed, it is experience which needs to be obeyed and the experience of being punished if we do not obey, the physical experience of violence, the abuse that you get as a female child if you do not obey patriarchy, if you do not conform to patriarchy.

And this punishment is spectacular this punishment happens as a public spectacle almost a public spectacle in front of everyone (()) (04:08) everyone being complicit in different degrees to the punishment, the perpetrator is a big daddy but the mother is a complicit agent to this entire session she comes and tells the daughter later on that you know this had to happen because you are not being a good daughter, you are not being an obedient daughter.

So, the big daddy did the right thing by beating you by abusing you, so let this be a lesson for you, so this particular experience was retold was you know, repeated over and over again just to hammer home the point the hegemony of the big daddy, the big daddy being a monstrous figure, the big daddy not just being a monstrous figure, I mean he was monstrous in this

particular episode but he is a grand patriarch who over rules and controls and rein forces all kinds of rituals.

So his word is law now, the question is you can replace big daddy with government, you can replace big daddy with nation, you can replace big daddy with religion and you will get the same principle, you get the same structure right, so it has a structural quality to it at the whole point you know being repeated a whole point of being subjugated, a whole part being subordinated if you do not obey the patriarchal principle becomes a really key issue over here.

So the big daddy becomes a symbolic function over here, symbolic signifier of patriarchy, patriarchy which would punish you if we do not obey his rules, patriarchy which pornographically punish you and abuse you and beat you and assault you, sometimes the point of death if you do not obey the principles that it lays out for you especially as a female child okay.

So, we were experientially schooled in the art of patriarchy, so indoctrination is a great experiential in quality and this experientiality is very important term over here. So, again we are looking at a mainly about discursivity, experientiality, the experience of being beaten, the experience of being abused, experience of being assaulted by the big daddy with a patriarchal figure for not being obedient enough that becomes a very key component in this particular session okay.

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There is nothing unique or even exceptional about this experience. Listen to the voices of wounded grown children raised in patriarchal homes and you will hear different versions with the same underlying theme, the use of violence to reinforce our indoctrination and acceptance of patriarchy. In *How Can I Get Through to You?* family therapist Terrence Real tells how his sons were initiated into patriarchal thinking even as their parents worked to create a loving home in which antipatriarchal values prevailed. He tells of how his young son Alexander enjoyed dressing as Barbie until boys playing with his older brother witnessed his Barbie persona and let him know by their gaze and their shocked, disapproving silence that his behavior was unacceptable:

So, there is nothing unique or even exceptional about this experience, so Hooks says what clearly that it may have been a traumatic experience for me but it is nothing unique about it at all it is nothing exceptional about it at all because it happens all the time, it is something which we suffer all the time as female children. Listen to the voices of wounded grown children raised in patriarchal homes and you will hear different versions with the same underlying theme, the use of violence to reinforce our indoctrination and acceptance of patriarchy.

So, the violence becomes very effective instrument to consolidate or reinforce patriarchy, so if we disobey patriarchy, if we move away from patriarchy then violence becomes the de facto, the default mechanism of control of coercion. In how can I get through to you? The female therapist Terrence Real very important book.

How can I get through to you is about a therapy writer, family therapist, sorry the family therapist Terrence Real tells how his sons were initiated into patriarchal thinking even as their parents worked to create a loving home in which anti patriarchal values prevailed. He tells us how this young son Alexandra enjoyed dressing as Barbie until boys playing with his elder brother witnessed his Barbie persona.

And let him know by their gaze and their shocked disapproving silence that his behaviour was unacceptable. So, again look at something so seemingly innocuous a Barbie doll which is traditionally a female toy now, what if a boy plays with that what if a little boy finds the Barbie more interesting and more engaging than a toy machine gun than a toy marble and that becomes a problem.

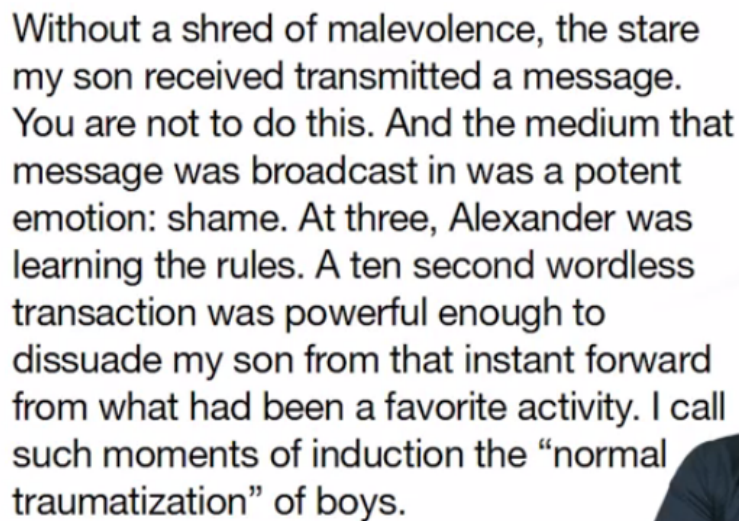
Because then you are subjected to a gaze which is just (()) (07:45) which is judging you as inefficient, inadequate etc. and that becomes a very deep problem you know in even in households which try which make an attempt to be anti-patriarchalism. Terrence real says over here, then he tried to create a household for his children which is anti-patriarchal which will bring them up in a way it is not traditionally patriarchal.

But even so, he realized I mean you know, there is this discourse of patriarchy all around you in school, in playgrounds, in offices, in cafes and everywhere people are judging you if you are failing to live up to the patriarchal principles. If as a child, if as a boy child, you engage, you

obsessed with Barbie dolls then the other boy is around of your age you appears, they would look down on you, look down upon you.

And then you know you are just you are measured as being inefficient and that becomes traumatic in some sense.

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Without a shred of malevolence, the stare my son received transmitted a message. You are not to do this. And the medium that message was broadcast in was a potent emotion: shame. At three, Alexander was learning the rules. A ten second wordless transaction was powerful enough to dissuade my son from that instant forward from what had been a favorite activity. I call such moments of induction the “normal traumatization” of boys.

So, without a shred of malevolence, the stare my son received transmitted a message, so it did not be malevolent, it did not be evil, it did not be directly harmful but it will still have a message, it will still convey a message. You are not to do this and the medium that message was broadcast in was a potent emotion, shame; so the shame becomes very potent emotion, so if you are made to feel shame or what you are if you are made for the shame for inadequacy as a person as a masculine person then that becomes a problem.

And then that becomes very key instrument for subjugation, all three sorry at three, Alexander was learning the rules, a 10 second wordless transaction was powerful enough to dissuade my son from that instant forward from what had been a favourite activity. I call such moments of induction, the normal traumatization of boys. So, look at the phrase which is used over here normal traumatization, so it sounds a bit of an oxymoron that is exactly what it is

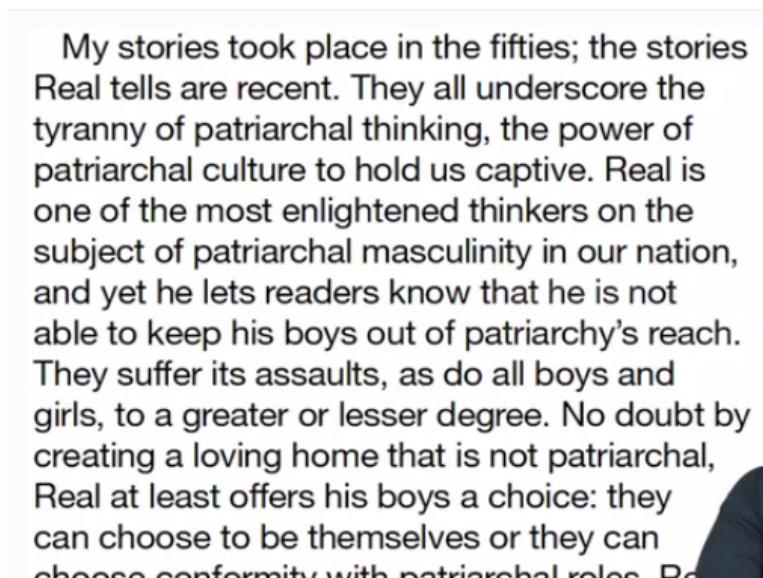
It is a traumatization but it so normalized, so seemingly non-evil, so seemingly nonviolent that becomes from his passive think but it still an experience of trauma because you have been just as inefficient as inadequate as someone who is not living up to the patriarchal principles not

living up to the codes of a patriarchal behaviour, so a 10 second wordless transaction, it does not have to have a word, it does not have to have any language.

It just needs to however transaction just needs to have a gaze, it just needs to have a measuring gaze through which the entire transaction to the tradition type persona, entire person the subject is just to be ineffective and ineffectual, okay to indoctrinate boys into the rules of patriarchy, we force them to feel pain unto denied their feelings, some this is a point in the essay which offers a really complex understanding of patriarchy in terms of how patriarchy you know becomes more of torture not just for girls but also for boys.

So, we just saw how girls suffer abuse and a patriarchy, how girls are beaten up, how girls have been you know subjected to violence by big daddies, by the grand patriarchs but also we see how boys often lose the agency, they often lose the free will in terms of conformed into patriarchy in terms of compulsion to conform to patriarchy and patriarchal principles, so that becomes a problem and Hooks is very quick to highlight the problem.

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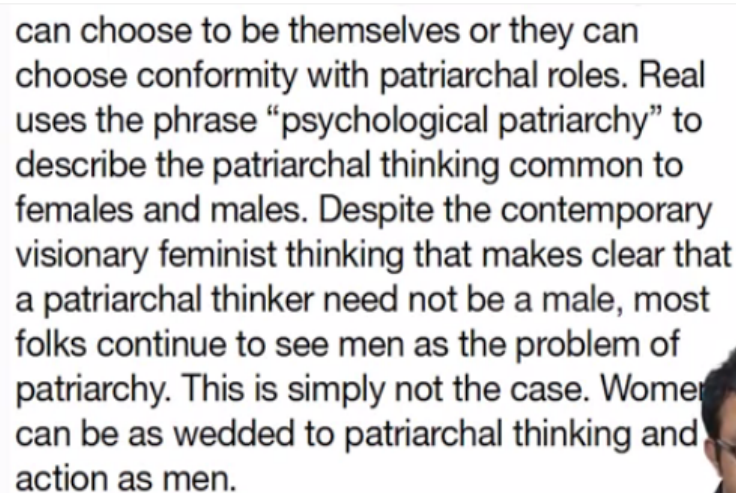
My stories took place in the fifties; the stories Real tells are recent. They all underscore the tyranny of patriarchal thinking, the power of patriarchal culture to hold us captive. Real is one of the most enlightened thinkers on the subject of patriarchal masculinity in our nation, and yet he lets readers know that he is not able to keep his boys out of patriarchy's reach. They suffer its assaults, as do all boys and girls, to a greater or lesser degree. No doubt by creating a loving home that is not patriarchal, Real at least offers his boys a choice: they can choose to be themselves or they can choose conformity with patriarchal roles. Re

So, my stories took place in the 50's that was a nineteen fifties actually reference to you and her own setting was different, her stories Real tells are recent, so Terrence Real, he was a family therapist write in this particular book the case studies, the Terrence real offers are recent a contemporary experience. They all underscore the tyranny a patriarchal thinking the power of patriarchal culture to hold us captive.

Real is one of the most enlightened thinkers on the subject of patriarchal masculinity in our nation and yet he lets readers know that he is not able to keep his boys out of patriarchy's reach, so patriarchy like capitalism, like religion, it has a bit of a ubiquitous present, it has an almost an omniscient, omnipresent quality so you can make an attempt, you can make an effort to have one zone, which is just patriarchy free zone but you know quickly come and consume you in a different form in a different strategy in a different kind of subterfuge in some sense.

So, even if you attempt, even if you try to keep the children how patriarchy is reach, patriarchy will find the children in some form, and will affect them in some form, so he is unable to keep the boys out of patriarchy's reach, they suffer its assaults as do all boys and girls to a greater or lesser degree, no doubt by creating a loving home that is not patriarchal, real at least offers his boys a choice.

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can choose to be themselves or they can choose conformity with patriarchal roles. Real uses the phrase "psychological patriarchy" to describe the patriarchal thinking common to females and males. Despite the contemporary visionary feminist thinking that makes clear that a patriarchal thinker need not be a male, most folks continue to see men as the problem of patriarchy. This is simply not the case. Women can be as wedded to patriarchal thinking and action as men.

They can choose to be themselves or they can choose conformity with patriarchal roles, Real uses the term the phrase psychological patriarchy to describe the patriarchal thinking common to females and males. Despite the contemporary visionary feminist thinking that makes clear that a patriarchal thinker need not be a male, most folks continue to see men as a problem of patriarchy, this is simply not the case.

Women can be as wedded to patriarchal thinking and actions as men, so this is the point they say where it really begins to become, so post-structuralist and complex and so it does not really matter if you are biologically a women or biologically a male, he can be equally patriarchal in all aspects, so the term psychological patriarchy that is offered over here by Terrance Real who

is a family therapist is obviously an example of the indoctrination; the psychological indoctrination, the subconscious indoctrination that takes place often without any violence.

So, it can be violent, it can be abuse, it can be direct, it can be visceral, by the same time it can also be you know done in a more sophisticated way, a most sinister way we do not have to violence, it just gets a worked done that way, so women and men are coming equally complicit to patriarchy, coming equally wedded to patriarchal thinking and action and that is the point that I know that Bell hooks makes quite clearly at the stage and the essay okay.

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Psychotherapist John Bradshaw's clear-sighted definition of patriarchy in *Creating Love* is a useful one: "The dictionary defines 'patriarchy' as a 'social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family in both domestic and religious functions'." Patriarchy is characterized by male domination and power. He states further that "patriarchal rules still govern most of the world's religious, school systems, and family systems." Describing the most damaging of these rules, Bradshaw lists "blind obedience—the foundation upon which patriarchy stands; the repression of all emotions except fear; the destruction of individual

So, now she moves on to another example, another person, another figure in this particular examination, psychotherapist John Bradshaw's clear-sighted definition of patriarchy in creating love is a useful one, so you know he uses John Bradshaw who is a psychotherapist, his definition of patriarchy and a book called creating love and this is a definition that hooks finds interesting and what is the definition?

The dictionary defines patriarchy as a social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family in both domestic and religious functions. Patriarchy is characterised by male domination and power, he states that further the patriarchal rules still govern most of the world's religious, school systems and family systems, describing the most damaging of these rules, Bradshaw lists blind obedience, the foundation upon which patriarchy stands the repression of all emotions except fear.

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patriarchy stands; the repression of all emotions except fear; the destruction of individual willpower; and the repression of thinking whenever it departs from the authority figure's way of thinking." Patriarchal thinking shapes the values of our culture. We are socialized into this system, females as well as males. Most of us learned patriarchal attitudes in our family of origin, and they were usually taught to us by our mothers. These attitudes were reinforced in schools and religious institutions.

The destruction of individual willpower and the repression of thinking whatever; whenever it departs from the authority figures way of thinking. Patriarchal thinking shapes the values of a culture, we are socialized into the system females as well as males, most of us learned patriarchal attitudes in our family of origin and they were usually taught to us by our mothers. These attitudes were reinforced in schools and religious institutions.

So, the whole idea of patriarchy becomes you know, it is an organization; a social organization which obviously becomes indoctrination, it becomes a message, sometimes a moral message sometimes it was a virtue made out of it and you know the whole idea is to have the father figure as a head previously, he used to be a clan when the entire systems is a; when evolutionary systems where human beings you know flock together as groups.

There was one grand patriarch in a clan whose rule was a law who were the strongest male and that is same construct is replicated in different systems such as school, families, mortal families, religious institutions and religious functions etc. so it is about male domination and power. Now, this patriarchal rules governed the world's religious, school systems or family systems, so in every system of organization, every system of human interaction more often now that happens to be a grand patriarch who controls whose word is a law.

And he sets out the rules and ideologies which are followed and confirmed to you by the other subjects in question. Now, Bradshaw lists blind obedience the foundation upon which patriarchy stands the repression of all emotions except fear, the destruction of individual

willpower and the repression of thinking whatever it departs from authority figures ways of thinking.

So, what is blind obedience; the blind obedience is any kind of repression of all emotions except fear, so you know we have fear but everything else becomes repressed, it destroys individual thinking and repression of thinking whenever deviates from authority figures will, so the authority figure sets out the world sets out the logic, sets out the legitimacy thought system which must be conformed to.

If you move away from it then that becomes the problem and you repress that attitude, you repress that tendency to move away from it and that informs blind obedience, so these are qualities of blind obedience that Bradshaw highlights that Bell hooks finds interesting. So, patriarchal thinking shapes the values of our culture, we are socialized into the system females as well as males.

Most of us learned patriarchal attitudes, most of us learn patriarchal attitudes in our family of origin and they were usually taught to us by our mothers, these attitudes were reinforced in schools and religious institutions, so again we see how mothers become important in this patriarchal legacy, so the mother for the people who teach children; male children as well as female children the principle; the patriarchal principles which are then consolidated in schools, colleges, institutions, religious institutions etc. okay.

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The contemporary presence of female-headed households has led many people to assume that children in these households are not learning patriarchal values because no male is present. They assume that men are the sole teachers of patriarchal thinking. Yet many female-headed households endorse and promote patriarchal thinking with far greater passion than two-parent households. Because they do not have an experiential reality to challenge false fantasies of gender roles, women in such households are far more likely to idealize the patriarchal male role and patriarchal men than are women who

So, the contemporary presence of female-headed households has led many people to assume that children in those households are not learning patriarchal values because no male is present. So, again what Hooks is trying to offer over here is this moving away from (()) (17:59) binary of males being patriarchal and woman being, you know rebellious and non-patriarchal, so she says there are many instances today where entire house was run by woman, single moms, mothers who earned the living and whenever the father is absent either dead or absent.

And one would imagine, one would expect there was an expectation, general expectation these households of children would turn out to be less patriarchal than other heteronormative households but there is more often not the case where we find you know these children, these households can end up being as patriarchal, perhaps more patriarchal than households which do have a father figure, right.

So, you know that is a problem that Hooks is highlighting over here, so it is not an easy question that way and Hooks moves away from any kind of an easy equation in terms of looking at patriarchy and non-patriarchy okay. So, they assume that men are the sole teachers of patriarchal thinking, yet many female-headed households endorse and promote patriarchal thinking with far greater passion than two-parent households.

Sometimes, we find that you know single-parent households female parent households, they end up becoming more passionately patriarchal than two-parent households and as often the case as Hooks points out because they do not have an experiential reality to challenge false fantasies of gender roles, women in such households are far more likely to idealize the patriarchal male role and patriarchy men than are woman who live with patriarchy men every day.

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far more likely to idealize the patriarchal male role and patriarchal men than are women who live with patriarchal men every day. We need to highlight the role women play in perpetuating and sustaining patriarchal culture so that we will recognize patriarchy as a system women and men support equally, even if men receive more rewards from that system. Dismantling and changing patriarchal culture is work that men and women must do together.

Because these women do not actually live with the patriarchal men and they have this false fantasy of patriarchy which they cannot move away from, which they cannot you know refuse because there is no real men and when you do not have a real men then the entire false fantasy becomes the very successful fantasy because they do not know how to refute it.

If you have a real man, then he can confront the real man in different micro concentrations, you can confront the patriarchal principles in certain micro degrees and that process you can make an attempt, you can engage at least at some level to refute and to deconstruct patriarchal motives whereas if you do not have any father figure around, all you have is a false fantasy of patriarchy that do not quite know how to refuse; refuse.

Because there is no father figure, there is no real men, a real male present over there, so those households often end up becoming more fantastically patriarchal and use the word fantastic well literally I mean patriarchy becomes a fantasy which is adheres to you which is confirmed to you in those households simply because of lack of engagement within real men, so that becomes more fantastically patriarchal setting as Hooks points out.

So, we need to highlight the role women play in perpetuating and sustaining patriarchal culture, so that we will recognize patriarchy as a system women and men support equally, so patriarchy is not some kind of male logic alone, patriarchy is a system and a pessimist system and cultural system you know, a functional system, a legal system that is conformed to you that is upheld by man as well as woman and not just owned by men.

Even if men receive more rewards from that system, dismantling and changing patriarchal culture is work that men and women must do together, so that is a very important lesson, it is very important message of hooks trying to promote, trying to convey in this particular section where he says what she says that this man can patriarchy must be a collaborative effort, it must not be a confrontational effort.

There must not be a confrontation in men and women it should not be in men versus women, it should not be men who are bad and women who are victims that is very blunt binary of looking at a patriarchal system. The patriarchal system requires complicit you know participants who are men as well as women, so in order to dismantle patriarchy is equally important to have a more collaborative and more dialogic approach between men and women, if we are to do a serious dismantling, if you were to do a serious reconstruction our patriarchy has a system.

So, I stop at this point today but the point that hooks is trying to make here is; we need to move away from the binary of men versus woman which sometimes you know some orders of feminism, some brands of feminism get caught up in that kind of binary. And Hooks is obviously approach in the binary.

She is trying to move away from the binary and look at a more collaborative or more let us say a more complex approach to patriarchy which then will become a very key instrument mechanism if we will to dismantle and understand and deconstruct patriarchy in some form or the other, so I will stop at this point I will continue with this text in the following lectures, thank you for your attention.