

Feminist Writings
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Understanding Patriarchy Part I

So, hi and welcome to the course entitled 'Gender and Literature'. So, we have had a couple of introductory lectures already. So, we will start with the first text today, which is entitled 'Understanding Patriarchy by Bell Hooks'. So, it is an essay by Bell Hooks which talks about the problems of patriarchy, the politics of patriarchy and also the production of patriarchy – How was patriarchy produced in different setting. So, the space becomes very important, the sites of production becomes very important...

And one of the many interesting things which this essay does... It is of completely deconstructs the ontology of victimhood. Right? So, it deconstructs the binary between the abusive man and the passively suffering woman and it looks at patriarchy as a more complex phenomenon: as something which affects men as well as women, and it looks at men as sufferers of patriarchy as well; even when they are perpetrators of patriarchy.

So, the whole point between the perpetrator and the suffer – that borderline blurs away in this essay. So instead of a neat binary between the perpetrating man and the suffering woman, we have instead, a very complex phenomenon of patriarchy which is examined as a production and the promotion and perpetration of a certain kind of discursive apparatus...and patriarchy is seen over here as a discursive apparatus – something which is surreptitiously performing, surreptitiously structured.

You don't realize it is there. It is like any grand narrative. It just appears as a given. It appears as a pre-discursive, meta-discursive quality...as a non-construct - something which is always already there. That is the whole point of a grand narrative - that it must appear as a seamless given, as a seamless phenomenon, which is non-discursive and non-constructed in quality.

The other thing which this essay does, among the many interesting things, is that it looks at... What I mentioned in the previous lecture: the entanglement between textuality and experientially... right? So while doing gender studies, we need to resist this tendency towards textuality all the time, because if you reduce everything to a text, then that takes away the

experientially of the phenomenon, right? So if we are looking at ideally the balance between textuality and experientially...those of you who have done my course in culture studies, would know that there is a very interesting book written by Young Hacking on exactly this subject. It is called 'Social Construction of What'.

It is a critique of excessive constructionism; it is a critique of this tendency of excessive textualisation of any phenomenon. Now patriarchy over here, in this essay, is described as a discursive phenomenon, but equally as an experiential phenomenon. Right? There are very graphic description of experiences described by Bell Hooks, where she talks about anecdotal evidence, anecdotal accounts of her own understanding, her own experience of patriarchy; her brother's experience in patriarchy; her partner's experience in patriarchy, etc.

The focus here, of course, is an American patriarchy – the setting is American but it is sufficiently local. It is sufficiently generic and local to be used as a model to understand patriarchy in different settings as well. Right? So, what this essay offers us is a very interesting theory of the production of patriarchy but also a very vivid and almost visceral experience of patriarchy as an experience. So again, we are back to this entanglement between textuality and viscosity. It is a visceral phenomenon – something which we feel, something we go through at a very core, embodied level. At the same time, it is a discursive apparatus designed to promote, perpetrate, protect certain categories of human beings, certain categories of production, etc.

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Patriarchy is the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation. Yet most men do not use the word “patriarchy” in everyday life. Most men never think about patriarchy—what it means, how it is created and sustained. Many men in our nation would not be able to spell the word or pronounce it correctly. The word “patriarchy” just is not a part of their normal everyday thought or speech. Men who have heard and know the word usually associate it with women’s liberation, with feminism, and therefore dismiss it as irrelevant to their own experiences. I have been standing at podiums talking about patriarchy for more than thirty years. It is a word I use daily, and men who hear me use it often ask me what I mean by it.



Now, if you look at this opening sentence of this book – of this essay, which is: ‘Patriarchy as a single most life threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit, in our nation’. So this should be on your screen at the moment...The first sentence of this essay where the definition of patriarchy takes off...Interestingly medical metaphors, right? So there is a degree of medicalization of patriarchy that Hooks offers so quite clearly. She looks at patriarchy as a pathology, something which is a disease, which suffers...which assaults the male body and spirit in our nation. And also notice the sight of victimhood over here, right?

So, quite clearly from the very inception this essay is telling us that the victims of patriarchy are actually the men – the male body because they are the ones who then become the perpetrators of patriarchy but that perpetration takes place after they have been indoctrinated. So indoctrination, interpolation, these become part of the victimhood of patriarchy. They become victims of patriarchy through the process of indoctrination. And, of course, they become bigger victims of patriarchy by being perpetrators of patriarchy. Right? So again we are looking at blurring of borderlines between perpetration and the suffering in the hands of patriarchy.

So, it is the single most life threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation. Yet most men do not use the word patriarchy in everyday life. Most men never think about patriarchy – what it means, how it is created and sustained. So, like any grand narrative, it

is consumed unquestionably. You don't sit back and have any ambivalent for patriarchy. We don't have this ambivalent understanding of patriarchy which would reveal it to be a construct. Right? And that is true almost for any grand narrative... in order to pass out as a grand narrative; it must masquerade as something given, something which is just out there, always there, and should not be questioned etc. So there is hardly any ambivalence when it comes to acknowledging patriarchy or acknowledging the effects of patriarchy – the adverse effects of patriarchy among men.

Many men in our nation – the nation we have been in – The United States...many men in our nation would not be able to spell the word or pronounce it correctly. So even at a very superficial or semantic level, the word patriarchy almost doesn't appear in public discourses and debates of agenda and debates about of feminism. There are other words which are used; there are other terms which are used. But there is a tendency to resist the core problem – to not acknowledge the real problem.

So there is a lot of talk about male violence and there is a lot of talk about the woman suffering the violence in the hands of men in households in domestic settings; but there is a degree of reluctance when it comes to addressing the real hard core problem which is patriarchy because it is not unequivocally condemned; because patriarchy has its benefits. Patriarchy produces its rewards and benefits and there is no unequivocal critique of patriarchy which is something which is missing in the most sophisticated feminist discourses.

What Hooks is saying over here is, as a new age feminist, is people who really want to engage at the level of gender dynamics, gender identity, one thing we should do at the very outset is to define the problem, localize the problem, locate the problem in patriarchy and the entire institution of patriarchy, and the entire modus operandi of patriarchy. So the word patriarchy is just not a part of the normal everyday thought or speech. See even rhetorically, even semantically, the word doesn't appear as often as it should in any debate about gender, in any debate about feminism, in any debate about masculine violence, etc. Men, who have heard and know the word, usually associate it with 'Women's Liberation' and with 'Feminism' and therefore dismiss it as irrelevant to their own experiences.

Now this is a very important sentence because what it does is: to the common man, to everyday...every common man in the street, the word patriarchy is axiomatically associated with feminism and with women's liberation and these are the things which they think, do not relate to them. These are the things which they think, do not affect them. So it is very easy to dismiss the word 'patriarchy', as being rhetorically reified category – it is something that academics do, something that people who are feminists do, etc.

So again this divorce of feminism from the everydayness, is a result of the refusal to acknowledge patriarchy. Right? So what Hooks is saying here is: "If we are really to be feminists, if we are really to engage with the gender problem, we must make it, we must bring it to the level of everydayness; because the gender dynamics, the gender difference, the gender discrimination is actually operative at a daily level and not at a sophisticated academic level. Right?"

So to associate the word patriarchy with some kind of an elegant and elitist feminist movement is big disservice to the entire cause of feminism and to the entire cause of gender politics, in general. So this is something which we need to do. We need to put patriarchy, understand patriarchy at a ground level, how does it operate in a domestic setting, in an intimate setting, in your household...in a middle class home in America, etc. Right?

So, I have been standing at podiums, talking about patriarchy for more than 30 years. It is a word I use daily and men who hear me, often ask me what I mean by it. So it is one of those very common words... where everyone knows is there, but no one quite understands what it connotes or what it means and this lack of understanding is very strategic because there is a degree of refusal to engage with patriarchy at all because patriarchy is not always evil. Patriarchy can also be benevolent. Patriarchy can be protective. Patriarchy can take care of you. So to brand it as an unequivocally evil, is a difficult thing to do; hence the reluctance to engage with patriarchy at a critical level.

Right so when it comes to, later in the essay, when it comes to asking people: Is male violence bad? Everyone would say 'Yes'. Everyone would say "Yes, male violence against women is a bad thing and it should be stopped...etc. But if you extend the question and go to the real cause of male violence, and if you ask the related question: "Is patriarchy bad?" Then the answer is not so

unequivocal. It's more.... there is a degree of hesitance, there is ambivalence, in branding patriarchy as necessarily a bad thing, that is the section we will study in details as we move on.

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Nothing discounts the old antifeminist projection of men as all-powerful more than their basic ignorance of a major facet of the political system that shapes and informs male identity and sense of self from birth until death. I often use the phrase "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy" to describe the interlocking political systems that are the foundation of our nation's politics. Of these systems the one that we all learn the most about growing up is the system of patriarchy, even if we never know the word, because patriarchal gender roles are assigned to us as children and we are given continual guidance about the ways we can best fulfill these roles.



So nothing discounts the whole anti-feminist projection of men as all-powerful more than the basic ignorance of a major facet of the political system that shapes and forms male identity and sense of self from birth until death. The second narrative of birth until death, which is a narrative of indoctrination, a narrative of interpolation, internalization, and again when I use these words: Internalization, indoctrination; of course, we need to be careful because these happen at a very hard core neural cognitive level as well as at an artificial discursive level and this constant loop between the inside and the outside.

How you think in your brain, how you consume the discursive apparatus outside of you, is something which we need to pay a lot of attention to, when we are doing gender studies because the entirety of gender studies is based on this consumption of the discursive apparatus around you...The subscription, the consumption, the indoctrination, which then informs the way you think – the very neural way in which thought process happen in your brain, is actually determined discursively by your consumption of the discourses around you. So one of the key things, one of the key categories in gender studies, a category which will keep returning to, through the various texts that we do, is embodiment.

I think, I believe I have talked about embodiment in the previous lectures on culture studies as well but we need to reassert the importance of embodiment in feminist writings and gender studies, etc. An embodiment can be seen as a neuro-category – is the way you process your thoughts and the way you behave with your body, etc. But also my work in definition of embodiment is a form of navigation. It is the way you navigate with the discursive apparatus. It is the way you navigate with the environment; and of course by environment – environment is a very complex category. The environment can be the natural environment, it can be the ideological environment, it can be the discursive environment, etc.

So, how do you navigate with it at an embodied level, at a sartorial level, at a linguistic level, etc.? Let's say embodiment becomes a very complex performance in more ways than one. So, you know we find that there is a lot of illusion embodiment in this essay: that patriarchy demands a certain kind of embodiment and certain kind of performance in embodiment and certain kind of engagement in the discursive apparatus, right? So we need to locate and identify patriarchy and examine it as what it is.

So from the time of birth until the time of death, there is like one grand narrative on male domination, etc. But interestingly what Hooks is saying is that we need to understand the ontology of privilege over here. It is a very selective kind of privilege which is produced at different kinds of sites. What this essay aims to do, is that it aims to deconstruct the privilege and expose it as pathology. Right? It is not really a privilege- it is a pathology, it's a lack that needs to be understood, and needs to be examined, and it needs to be learned for what it is. So the degree of unlearning...that needs to happen when we are examining patriarchy. So, men must unlearn their privilege, and discover that to be a pathology, discover that to be a lack which is something that informs patriarchal thought processes.

So, I often use the phrase Imperialist White Supremacists Capitalist Patriarchy. So look at all the adjectives which are combined together over here. Imperialist White-Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy – these are all the topological extensions of patriarchy. Imperialist...There is 'White', so there is a racial category of patriarchy as well. There is 'supremacists', 'capitalists', etc.

And, of course, when we are doing any study of gender, race becomes a very important factor so that is, one of the reasons why we need to be careful while using feminism with a capital 'F'. So,

you know it is very easy to brand feminism as a grand narrative which then becomes the white woman's narrative; right? But then that, sometimes that does a disservice to other feminist movements happening in other parts of the world...Where the entire ontology of agency is very different. So what is agency to a white, wealthy Manhattan woman...might be very different for what is agency to another woman in another part of the world which is economically less privileged and racially more reified Right? So we need to take these categories into consideration as well.

Okay. So this is a phrase used by Hooks: Imperialist White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy, to describe the interlocking political systems that are the foundation of our nation's politics. If you look at American Politics, you will find this is probably true for almost any kind of historical situation Imperialist White Expansionist Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy. That's the whole point. It is the entire ontology of patriarchy at a political discursive level.

Of these systems, the one that we learn the most about growing up is the system of patriarchy. Even if you never know the word, because the patriarchal gender roles are assigned to us as children and we are given continual guidance about the ways we can best fulfill these roles.

The moment the word 'fulfill' comes, we realize that we are talking about conformity over here; right? So there is a degree of conformity towards a certain code. Patriarchy entails or requires the production of certain codes – certain coded behavior. Right? So a large part of parenting – a large part of middle class parenting in America and of course that can be said about many parts of the world as well... is about bringing up children in a way, what would make them conformist to certain kinds of codes of patriarchal behavior – how we can best fulfill those roles. And like any grand narrative, patriarchy will also reward you for conforming to those roles. So, it will reward you with the value system, it will reward you tangibly with material systems, etc.

Then we will see a little later in the essay how the question of visibility, agency – they become very big when it comes to patriarchy. So, if you are conforming to the codes consistently, then you become more visible. You become more agentic as an individual, as an entity, as yourself in the patriarchal setting.

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Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. When my older brother and I were born with a year separating us in age, patriarchy determined how we would each be regarded by our parents. Both our parents believed in patriarchy; they had been taught patriarchal thinking through religion.



Okay so what is patriarchy? What is the working definition of patriarchy that Hooks is offering over here? ...and this is what she says: “Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence.”

So it is a very loaded definition of patriarchy, where the word violence comes; the word terrorism comes; the word empowerment comes, etc. But the operative thing for us for the purpose of this particular course is that it is the system which insists that males are inherently dominating. And if you look at it very carefully, you will find that this is an irrational insistence. It is actually not rational, right? But the irrationality of patriarchy is disguised completely and then what we have instead, is a degree of rationalization of this kind of insistence. Right?

So it is a completely spurious rationalization. It is a form of rationality which is created, artificially engineered, you might say; in order to create the system of production, perpetration, and promotion of some kind of behavior, right? So like any grand narrative, it is actually rational in quality but the irrationality is we face today and what we have instead is a different order of rationality which then makes it, which masquerades, and which then eventually becomes a pre-discursive given.

You don't even question that as a discourse. You don't even discover its discursivity, right? And that discovery of discursivity is important because the moment you discover its discursivity, then you begin to question it as a construct. Then the whole point of deconstruction begins from that. When you are able to recognize something as a construct, then you are able to deconstruct it. It is the next natural step as deconstruction.

However, if you don't recognize it as a construct and if it appears as a pre-discursive given, then obviously it becomes difficult to deconstruct it. So the whole point of patriarchy like any grand narrative is to, you face today, its constructed quality, its irrationality, and instead imposing order of rationality and order of hegemony which does away with any possibility of questioning. Right? And what does it want? What does it aspire to create? What does it design to do?

It is designed...you know...to entail or facilitate dominance over the weak, dominance through psychological terrorism and violence. Now we will see in this essay, the very ontology of violence is problematized. It is not just violence at the physical level. It is not just beating up people corporeally. It is also psychological violence. It is also about fear. It is also about the value added system which will tell you that you should be scared and you should be fearful if you are not obeying certain rules.

Of course as you know, those of us who read Althusser, would know that this is mostly rampant with certain apparatus: the ideological state apparatus, the repressed apparatus, the ISA and RSA, and then at a very micro level, perhaps the very first ISA is the family where a child is born, the value system in which the child is brought up...right? ...which indoctrinates the child into consuming certain kind of codes and then there is a value added quality to those codes: If you consume those codes and if you are an obedient child, if you are conforming to those codes, you are rewarded materially, tangibly, intangibly, etc. That is the whole point and that is the whole discourse that this is designed for patriarchal promotion.

And the converse is true as well. If you are non-conformist, if you are subversive, if you are a (())(19:34) child, then obviously you are punished in different degrees. The punishment could be psychological, the punishment could be corporeal, the punishment could be happening at the level of the body: when the body of the child is confined and contained and coerced into becoming a conformist but equally it can also create psychological terrorism. It is a very

interesting word that Hooks is using. Now we find, when we read the essay that the whole point of terrorism, the whole point of trauma in this essay is problematized. The very ontology of trauma is problematized and there is a reference to PTSD in the essay – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Now, when we hear the word PTSD, we think of Vietnam, we think of the war sites, we think of Iraq, we think of something which happens to war veterans in battlefields, where people kill each other with very sophisticated weapons. However, this is a refreshing new radical thing that this essay offers. It says that in order to be traumatized you don't necessary have to go to a war zone. Trauma can also happen even inside your family. Trauma can happen even in an intimate space – the most domestic, intimate space which can be dramatically de-familiarized and then become a battleground of contestation, a battleground of different kind of conflicts, etc. which can you know create or generate a residual trauma which might become permanent in quality. So the entire ontology of trauma – the entire site of trauma is de-familiarized and as I say...as you see in a moment.

Right so psychological terrorism and violence become very big factors in patriarchy. Another factor is anecdotal evidence that Hooks is offering here. When my older brother and I were born with a year separating us in age, patriarchy determined how we would each be regarded by our parents. As a household, as a common middle class household, where a girl child and a boy child are born with one year separating them, however what is very quickly evident is that there is a difference in upbringing is very rampant – the way the girl child is brought up and the way the boy child is brought up...and also things as...apparently innocuous as toys become very-very gendered in quality. So we find there is a reference to a marble game that happens in this essay very-very soon. A marble game is supposed to be something that boys play well and we have an instance over here where the girl is better at the marble game than the boy is, and that becomes the cause of discomfort to the parents because that is not something the way it is normally designed as a narrative.

Now, what we have here is a compulsive production of normativity that happens in the family and that compulsive production of normativity is something which is very important for patriarchy to be operative in the first place. Now, what happens when a child innocently or

otherwise or deliberately questions this compulsive production of normativity, questions normativity; then the child is obviously is beaten and we have a very graphic and a very disturbing scene of child abuse described over here when the girl child is beaten by the very controlling and authoritative father figure; which very quickly becomes a symbolic scene of the female child being beaten by the father or centric figure. It is a very local, micro, real scene but also it becomes a very symbolic scene of the father figure, beating and abusing and chastising the female child for not obeying the patriarchal discourse, for not obeying or conforming to the codes of patriarchal behavior. In other words, not being a participant or a consumer of this compulsive production of normativity.

Okay, so how is this normativity produced? How are these discourses of normativity generated or determined? Both her parents believed in patriarchy. They had been taught patriarchal thinking through religion. So, we know that religion obviously historically has been used very conveniently and very effectively by patriarchy, by figures of authority, etc. which is more often than not, collusive with religion. Religion and patriarchy...religion...and almost all religions are patriarchal in quality...the language of religion is patriarchal in quality.

So there are religious texts which were historically, once upon a time, forbidden to be read by a woman, because of language... It would just be accessed by men...those languages were just given to men to be read, to be recited, and to be debated upon and women were forbidden directly from reading those particular scriptures. So we know religion has been quite hand in glove with patriarchy for the very historical regions of institution.

Almost all religions are patriarchal in quality. So religion becomes a very handy instrument to produce, promote, and perpetrate patriarchy and we see over here what Hooks is offering is a typical American South – the American Southern Household, middle class household, which believes in God in a very biblical way and that kind of biblical believe1 system very quickly becomes an extense under the patriarchal system in a non-religions space as well. So how does religion become an instrument of patriarchy? How does religion become Althuzian and ISA, Ideological State Apparatus? And this is how Hooks describes it:

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At church they had learned that God created man to rule the world and everything in it and that it was the work of women to help men perform these tasks, to obey, and to always assume a subordinate role in relation to a powerful man. They were taught that God was male. These teachings were reinforced in every institution they encountered-- schools, courthouses, clubs, sports arenas, as well as churches. Embracing patriarchal thinking, like everyone else around them, they taught it to their children because it seemed like a "natural" way to organize life.



At church they had learned that God created man to rule the world and everything in it, and it was the work of women to help men perform these tasks; to obey and to always assume a subordinate role in relation to a powerful man. So from the very inception, from the very genesis or the biblical genesis or the very beginning of religion we find more often than not – it's the man who was the center piece of creation and if you look at the book of genesis and the Bible that has been eluded to over here, that God created man and to give company to man, he created...God of course is 'He'...He created woman as someone who is secondary or subordinate to man in terms of helping man to carry out different roles.

So from the very inception we find patriarchy is embedded historically in the rhetorical religion – in the way religion is created, designed, engineered and consumed in different forms in churches, and text books, and translations, etc. So the job of the woman is to obey and to always assume a subordinate role in relation to a powerful man. So power is localized, power rests with the man and it is the woman's job to help power continue by being subordinate to it. They were taught that God was male...Of course, there is no surprise to say...and the pronoun which is used for God in bible and in most scriptures as we are aware of is a 'He' pronoun – a male pronoun. These teachings were reinforced in every institution they encountered: schools, courthouses, clubs, sports arenas, as well as churches.

So, again, these are classic sites of ideological apparatus, where you know, this kind of discursivity is designed, produced, promoted and protected: schools, clubs, sports arenas...Sports arenas are very interesting because sports arenas we find that those become very important sites – for some kind of hyper masculinity, hyper patriarchy to be operative. Where if you are not masculine enough in certain sports arenas, you are not just chastised, you are rejected, you are abundant, you are punished; sometimes bodily and sometimes corporeally. So, sports becomes a very important site of study for those who are interested in gender and the relationship between gender and identity – the production of identity.

Okay, so embracing patriarchal thinking like everyone else around them, they taught it to their children, because it seemed like a natural way to organize life. The adjective and the ‘organize’ is very important over here – to design a narrative: a narrative of normativity. It is very important that this kind of patriarchal behavior – this kind of patriarchal belief system is naturalized. So naturalization or normativisation happens together in this kind of a setting.

So naturalizing an irrational discourse by making it appear as the most rational thing to do, is part of how normativity takes place. It is part of how something as absurd as ‘white man’s superiority’ is believed and consumed and subscribed to. Now, if you look at the history of patriarchy in almost any setting, one of the most classic examples of the alliance of patriarchy and politics is Imperialism.

If you look at European Imperialism, which is basically a ‘White Man’s Supremacy Narrative’; which was created in different kinds of ways – not just white men coming and beating up non-white men...But also the white men create an education system which helped promote the supremacy of the white man. So, part of the education system in the colonies as you know by now, was largely experimental. It was largely designed in order to protect and perpetrate a white man’s superiority. So you grew up consuming the white man’s literature, you grew up consuming the white man’s narrative of greatness and then you become a consensual consumer – you offer your consent to the entire ethos of Imperialism.

You believe it to be a good thing. You believe it to be a rescue mission as a native. If Imperialism managed to do that, then obviously that’s the highest form of success. You don’t need the military. You don’t require a military presence after that at all. If you make people into

consensual consumers, why would you need the military at all? They are very happy to be subordinate. They are very happy to be second fiddle to the white man's superiority.

So, you know we find patriarchy over here when it happened in Imperialism...In case of Imperialism it happened very directly through military – through mercantile inventions, etc....But also most surreptitiously through schools, through education systems, through religious transformations, through religious conversions, etc. Why you know patriarchy was operative in most surreptitious and perhaps more sophisticated ways.

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As their daughter I was taught that it was my role to serve, to be weak, to be free from the burden of thinking, to caretake and nurture others. My brother was taught that it was his role to be served; to provide; to be strong; to think, strategize, and plan; and to refuse to caretake or nurture others. I was taught that it was not proper for a female to be violent, that it was "unnatural." My brother was taught that his value would be determined by his will to do violence (albeit in appropriate settings). He was taught that for a boy, enjoying violence was a good thing (albeit in appropriate settings). He was taught that a



in appropriate settings). He was taught that a boy should not express feelings. I was taught that girls could and should express feelings, or at least some of them. When I responded with rage at being denied a toy, I was taught as a girl in a patriarchal household that rage was not an appropriate feminine feeling, that it should be not only not be expressed but be eradicated. When my brother responded with rage at being denied a toy, he was taught as a boy in a patriarchal



So what happens to a daughter, to a female child in such a conventional, conservative, patriarchal household? As their daughter, I was taught that it was my role to serve, to be weak, free from the burden of thinking, to care take and nurture others. My brother was taught that it was his role to be served, to provide, to be strong, to think, strategize and plan and refuse to care take or nurture others. We see a very clear and blunt binary in operation over here. The girl child is taught to be the nurturer and that she should play with dolls and kitchen utensils, etc. Then we find very quickly over here – the politics of toy- the politics of possessing toy, artifacts; it becomes very complex of gendered and discursive very quickly.

So, the brother, the male child is given guns and marbles and cars to play with, whereas the girl child is expected to be the nurturer so she is pushed into the kitchen space even at a proxy level – you know: the level of toys. The ludic space...the ludic space of play becomes very discursive in quality when it comes to patriarchy and play as I mentioned, is a very discursive phenomenon. You know, we do something like gender studies, we realize that even seemingly innocuous activities, such as games, plays, the games that children play; they are very-very patriarchal in quality; they are very-very gendered in quality in terms of the embeddedness of gender into the way the narratives work.

Okay, so my brother was taught that it was his role to be served; so he was expected to be waited upon as a male child – to provide, to be strong, to think, strategize, and plan and to refuse to or care take to nurture others. I was taught – the female child...I was taught, it was not proper for a female to be violent -that it was unnatural. So, this equation between men and natural violence is a very handy tool of patriarchy, because men are supposed to be strong, to go out there, conquer the world, you know, invade, territorialize, help in expansionist plans, etc.

So if you start it from a very micro level, at the very inception, where male children are taught to be violent, that it is good to be benevolently violent. It is good to be violent in a good way – in a value added way. Right? So you go on and become violent in a way that society wants you to be violent, right? So that is a good thing as a male child and obviously as a female child, you are taught the opposite: that you should not be violent at all. It is unnatural of you to be violent as a female child.

So, my brother was taught that his value would be determined by his will to do violent, albeit in appropriate settings. So obviously a boy child can't be violent against his own parents but he should be able to exert violence when need be in a different setting - in appropriate setting. So space, the site of violence becomes very important. He was taught that for a boy, enjoying violence was a good thing albeit in appropriate settings. He was taught that a boy should not express feelings. I was taught that a girl could and should express feelings or at least some of them.

Again, feelings become very-very gender in quality -the very Eurocentric division of the mind and the body, the rationality and the irrationality, are very-very gendered in quality. So if you look at the classic Cartesian theorem: "I think therefore I am"; it is not really a pronouncement of the entire humanity; it is a pronouncement on the white man's thinking. Let's just see, it is the enlightenment of the white male thinking and therefore becoming.

So 'I think therefore I am', is the white man - the Eurocentric way of becoming, the Eurocentric epistemological becoming through knowledge, through consciousness, through information in the brain...It is a very exclusive phenomenon. It is not inclusive in the sense that it doesn't talk about the woman; it doesn't talk about the non-white people in general as well. So these are very localized theorems which were conveniently made generalized with macro narratives of ...you know, of thought processes and enlightenment, etc.

So, he was taught that boys should not express feelings and I was taught that a girl could and should express feelings or at least some of them. When I responded with rage at being denied a toy, I was told as a girl in a patriarchal household that rage was not an appropriate feminine feeling; that it should not be...not be expressed but be eradicated. Not only should I not express rage but it should eradicate rage. And again, look at the value added quality to these kinds of teachings...so you are a good girl, if humanity eradicate or face of the rage... And you are a good boy if you can be violent when the situation demands violence from you. So, the value added quality...is very-very important and of course you are rewarded to conform to this value system tangibly as well as intangibly and you are punished again...intangibly and intangibly for being recalcitrant to carry on those codes.

Okay when my brother responded with rage at being denied a toy, he was taught: as a boy in a patriarchal household that his ability to express rage was good but that he had to learn the best setting to unleash his hostility. Right? So, it has to be at a proper place. You can't be hostile against your own parents. You can't be hostile in a domestic setting but in a world out there, if someone denies you your rights, it is perfectly within your rights to hit back as a male, and demand what you think is your own, what you think you rightfully possess. Okay...it was not good for him to use this rage to oppose the wishes of his parents but later when he grew up, he was taught that rage was permitted and that allowing rage to provoke him into violence would help him protect home and nation. And again, look at the very easy extensions which are happening: Home and nation. Right?

So protecting the home becomes a proxy of protecting the nation. So every male – every able male should be strong enough to protect the dignity of the home, protect the security of the home, through expression of rage, through expression of violence, to unleashing of selective and strategic hostility and the same kind of unleashing would be useful and effective when it comes to protecting the nation.

So we find these institutions, these sites, home, nation, etc. They become so patriarchally embedded in quality, in terms of the desired behavior for protection and promotion and perpetration. So, we will end at this point today and we will continue with this lecture in the coming lectures to come. Thank you for your attention.