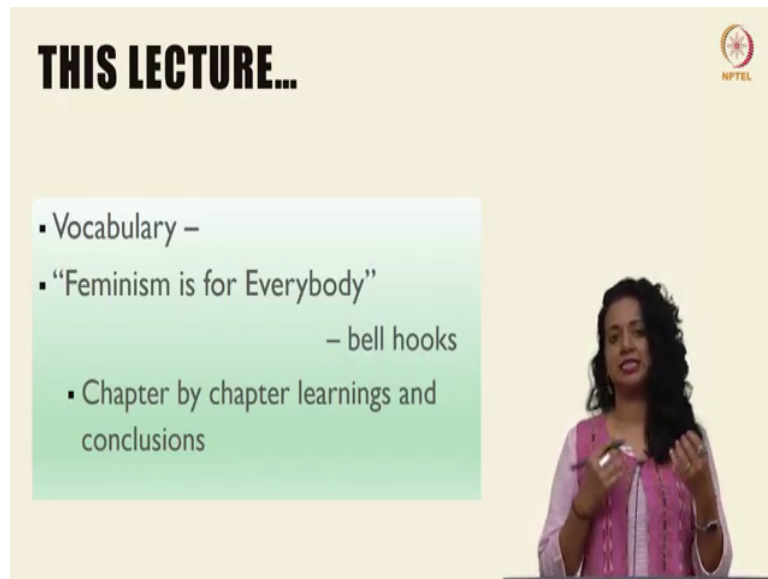


Feminism Concepts and Theories
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Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
Vocabulary (Cont'd)

Welcome to Feminism Concepts and Theories, our third lecture for this week.

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THIS LECTURE...

- Vocabulary –
- “Feminism is for Everybody”
– bell hooks
- Chapter by chapter learnings and conclusions

NPTEL

The slide features a video inset of Professor Mathangi Krishnamurthy, a woman with dark curly hair wearing a pink and white patterned top, speaking and gesturing with her hands.

In this lecture we are going to continue with our queries regarding vocabulary, except we are doing something else this time around. We are going to use bell hooks’s book “Feminism is for Everybody” in order to anchor our discussion. If you remember from last lecture, we did use a couple of concepts from the book in order to pepper our understanding of feminist vocabulary.

So, today we are doing something a little bit more ambitious, we are going to continue with feminist vocabulary but we are going to use the book in order to be able to locate vocabulary in each of the chapters. So, please pay careful attention. This is going to be one of the more important lectures for this week, because we are going to read an entire book. And while reading it, I know the thought might be intimidating, we are going to continue focusing on concepts.

So, my goals are two fold, one I want to be able to locate concepts in “Feminism is for Everybody” and in the process also be able to have a common understanding of how is it that we read something in particular relation to feminist theory. So, let us get started. Please also

remember that as we go along there will be chapter by chapter learnings and conclusions, so I suggest that you guys keep a copy to take notes.

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FEMINISM

- A system of ideas that examines the roots and reasons for women's subordination in relation to male/ masculine privilege.
- In tension with male-centred ideas and discourse
- It is an ideology
- It is also a movement for socio-political change based on said ideology
- It posits gender as the primary category of analysis

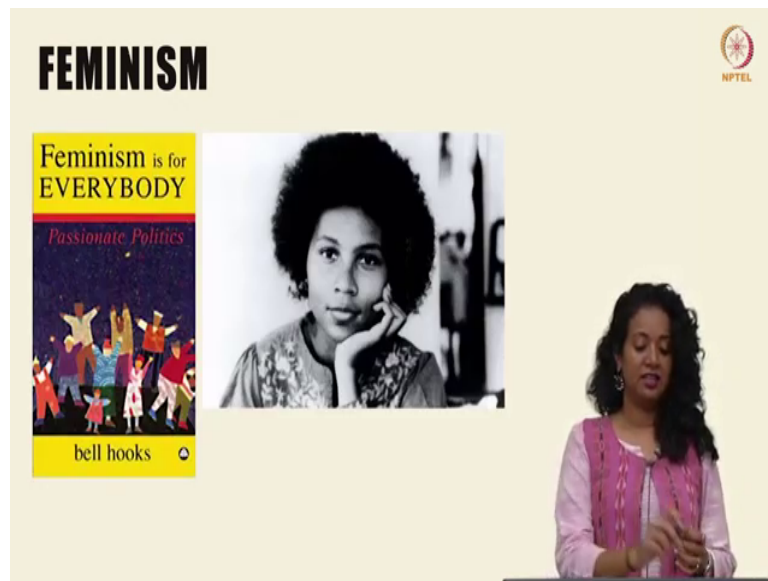
The slide also features a video inset of a woman with dark hair, wearing a pink top, speaking and gesturing with her right hand. In the top right corner of the slide, there is a logo for NPTEL (National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning).

Just to give you a little bit of a reminder, we went through this in the last lecture but feminism is a system of ideas that examines the roots and reasons for women subordination in relation to male or masculine privilege, and these terms will keep coming back, so just a little bit of a rehearsal. It is in tension with male-centred ideas and discourse which means it is not against or for or any kind of very clear positions. It is about friction and tensions, it is about augmentation. It is an ideology and I went over the ways in which I am using ideology in relation to this lecture.

Also a movement for socio-political change based on said ideology. Now, this is also important to rehearse because keep in mind that bell hooks's book "Feminism is for Everybody" is not merely a theoretical intervention. It is rooted very-very clearly in the history of the feminist movement in the United States. It is also located in relation to the expansion of concepts in relation to such a location.

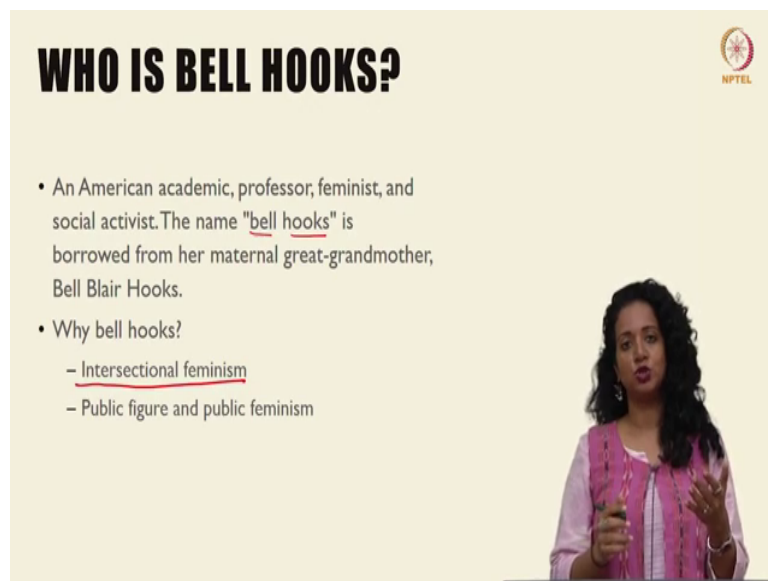
Meaning, think of it as a dialectic. Something happens in society, it influences conceptualizations, conceptualizations influence movement and actions and behaviour in society and it keeps going. And not to say that this is a very clear division of labour and that is why it is important for feminist theory, for us as students of feminist theories to be rooted in the everyday, I will keep coming back to this. Again, lest I have under emphasized this before. It posits gender as the primary category of analysis.

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This is bell hooks's book "Feminism is for Everybody" Passionate Politics. Keep this in mind, please have it on hand as you go through the first week of lectures.

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Very-very important question, who is bell hooks? Why is it that I have chosen this text as your introduction for feminist theory? Why not something a little bit more local or located? And the reasons are many, but let me first give you a bit of a biographical introduction to who bell hooks. bell hooks is an American academic, professor, feminist and social activist. The name "bell hooks" is borrowed from her great grandmother, Bell Blair Hooks.

Now, if you will notice, she uses small letters in her name. Now, this is important to remember because when you cite her please make sure to reproduce her name in this fashion and the reason she does this is to take away from similarity with her great grandmother, of course, but also to emphasize, now the work she does is far more important than the remembrance of her name.

In other words, the author is only as important as a contributions and interventions if not lesser. So, bell hooks academic, professor, feminist, activist and as you can see this is interconnected work, what she teaches and talks about is also related to how she acts in the world. And this kind of attempted seamlessness between how we think, how we think about the world and its ways of behaving conceptualizations must also influence directly the ways in which we are able to live in the world is a cornerstone of feminist theory.

I have already gone over this beforehand, why bell hooks? But there is another thing to remember. bell hooks is an interesting figure and herself primarily also because of her removal from our local scenarios. As this class continues to move in the direction of theory, we must remember that it is not just about contemporary feminism, it is also about the ways in which we understand the larger feminist movement in various parts of the world.

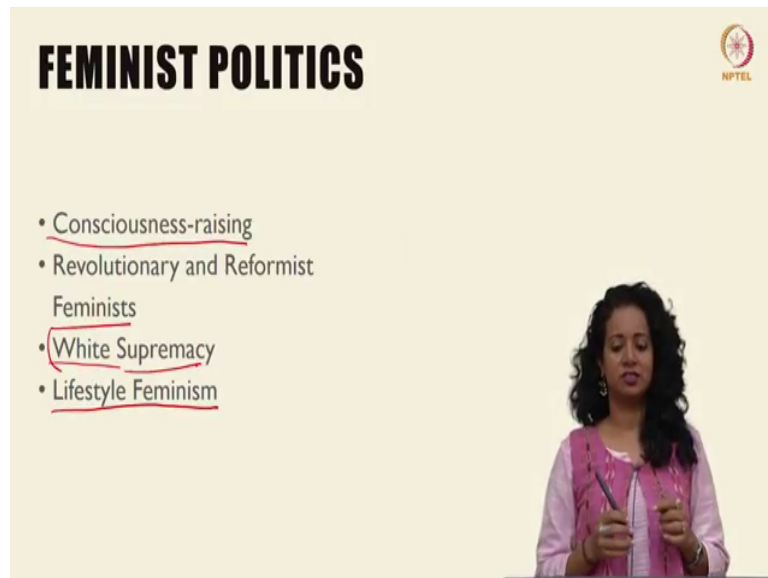
And for reasons that I do not want to go into right now, often theoretical production has been European, North American, or the Global North Specific and we have read it in relation to that before trying to understand how is it that it works for us. So, a large part of this is universal, a large part of this is particular and you can choose what to take.

This is an important set of terms to remember. Intersectional feminism, meaning of course gender is important in the world, but gender also matters in relation to other categories of identity and therefore, bell hooks like many others is an intersectional feminist. Meaning, she understands gender to be one of the important forces in the world influenced by all other forces at the same time. Meaning, any kind of impact that we assess cannot isolate gender.

Two, bell hooks is a public figure and I cannot overemphasize the role of public feminisms. Feminist theory is not meant just for academia, it is meant to guide our actions in the world, it is meant to intervene in how is it that the patriarchy is constructed and therefore, it is important for us, for this class, for theory to engage with public feminism and what it says in the world. We will keep coming back to this especially in relation to feminism in popular

culture, but for now these are some of the reasons why I thought we should start of reading bell hooks.

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Let us start with the first chapter. The first chapter, feminist politics after the introduction, goes straight to the heart of the matter and speaks about the rise of a particular kind of feminist organising in the United States. Let us engage briefly with one of the most important concepts in this chapter which is that of consciousness raising. Now, consciousness raising presupposes a couple of things.

One, there are many ways none of us would deny the fact that we want to live an equal life, it just matters differently to different people in terms of how they understand such equality. So, consciousness raising for feminist politics in the US was a form of mobilisation of women to say while you think that your lives are alright, while none of this might seem particularly egregious to you, perhaps together we can start paying attention to the small ways in which inequalities perpetuated through and in a patriarchal system.

So, sometimes it consisted of extremely home-grown activities like meetings in people's backyards where they got together to read popular text, to be able to exchange their everyday experiences and share the ways in which they understood the terms of gender equality or inequality. And you can see how this is a collective ethic because here you are looking at consciousness raising as if there is a collective kind of fervour that together we must take everybody with us in order for the feminist movement to have any kind of import in the world.

So, there is a revolutionary fervour to it, there is a certain kind of... What is the term for it? There is a way in which you are converting people to a cause that you think is worthy. We will talk about the problems of this later on especially in the weeks when I am discussing the 'Three Waves of Feminism'. But for now, it is important to be able to register that there was a certain kind of collective feeling, there was an excitement in the air, it is the kind of excitement one can imagine when suddenly a community of people speaks about feeling something together.

It can be tremendously transformational, it can be remarkably assuring for people who feel that their feelings are lonely feelings, that only you have felt like you are discriminated against in the world and actually you may not be borne out. Suddenly, in this particular point of the movement there came a collective of women, who said, "You are not alone. I feel the same way. We all should do something." And this is important to understand the next set of terms in this chapter which is about revolutionary and reformist feminist.

Now, the terms are giveaways, what is a revolutionary feminist, what is a reformist feminist and you come against this binary. You come up against this binary in other political scenarios too. People who want change can be revolutionary, they can be reformist. Revolutionary feminist understood the entire system is corrupt as there being a constitutive basic problem that can only be resolved if we uproot the whole thing, which means a revolution has to come for there to be substantive change. So, there is revolutionary feminism.

Reformist feminist on the other hand spoke about small changes. They said, "Surely society is a bit unwieldy, the world is an unwieldy entity over which we do not have that much control and honestly a large part of it works. So, why is it that one must uproot it entirely? So, reformist feminism is about the understanding the small changes will add up. The change comes about not in an exponential but in an incremental fashion, little here, little then and slowly before you know it, everything has changed.

In this class we are not debating which is better. There is no particular tendency that I want you all to head towards, which is either revolutionary or reform. You are free to think in any way you choose, but these are the kinds of assumptions that undergird these forms of politics. So, in the chapter hooks speaks about the differences between these kinds of feminist but also locates these tendencies in white supremacy.

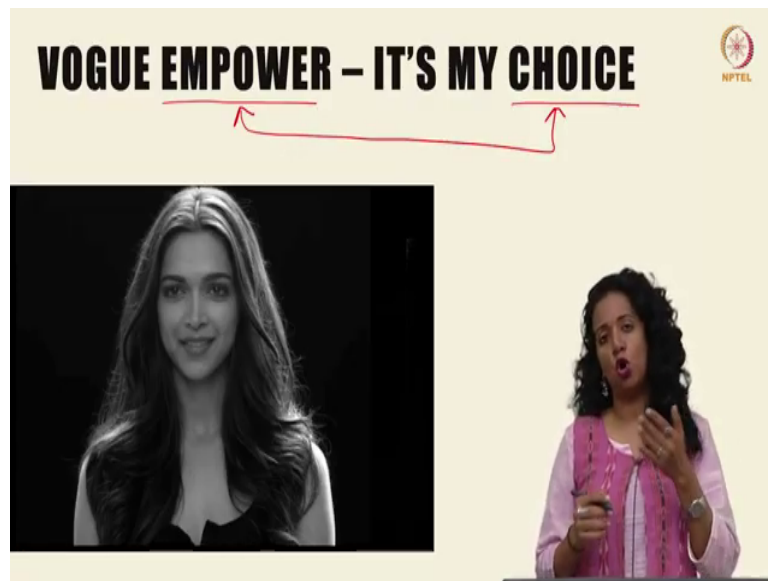
Now, remember bell hooks is talking about feminism in the United States which experienced a certain amount of change in relation to the understanding that early feminist interventions had to do with the demands and the needs and the feelings of white women, of Caucasian women, of women who in terms of race and class experience certain kinds of privileges that were not available to African-American women.

And therefore, the revolutionary feminist said that, "Reformist feminism only addresses the needs of white feminists, what about us? And for our needs to be addressed there have to be bigger changes in society than a mere tweaking of things here and there." Therefore, white supremacy or the idea that there is an understanding of who counts as superior or naturally deserving or entitled in American society has to do with race is what undergirds this term. We will come back to it a little later on in the chapter on race and gender.

And lastly, this is hooks's term what she calls lifestyle feminism. Now, lifestyle feminism should strike you by its very term is something that hooks does not like. She is not suggesting that we adopt lifestyle feminism, in fact, she is critiquing it soundly saying lifestyle feminism is what takes away from the possibilities of the feminist movement. Because lifestyle feminism tells you that you are free to be feminist in any way you want and societal change is not required.

So, you liked being feminist by asking for a raise in salary, go for it. You like being feminist by asking that your partner share your cooking duties, go for it. And besides that nobody ever need expand this into other understandings that will allow every woman to be liberated in a similar fashion. She decries and critic soundly the selfish understanding that only allows for the needs of a certain set of women to be fulfilled. And to give you an example of such lifestyle feminism, closer home let us take a quick peek at such an example of lifestyle feminism.

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Anybody remember this video that cause such a ruckus on Indian social media, it was Deepika Padukone's 'Vogue Empower – It's My Choice'. Now, break down the words used in this, there are clear kinds of signals as to how is that one must consume this video 'Empower – It's My Choice'. Empowerment comes through making choices. The video allowed for viewers to think that empowerment is possible as long as you make a choice and in fact it was a plea arguing that all the women's choices are both valid and allowable in our society and that is the true meaning of empowerment.

Think a little bit about why this would qualifies lifestyle feminism and the ways in which this might be subject to critic by bell hooks. For one it does not represent all kinds of women in society, it is a state of celebrity women, yes? Two, this idea of choice itself has got so much to do with market economy. Meaning, within a set of choices chose, do not have to employee any imagination as long as you make that choice you are an empowered women.

And lastly, it completely negates and neglects the factors that do not allow for women to make choices. The kinds of obstacles that prevent them from being choosing subjects in the world, be the family, state, society, opinion, upbringing, acculturation what have you. So, in many ways the video came across is rather naive by saying that just by declaring something as choice does not make it either empowerment or liberation.

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CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING

- "Feminists are made, not born"
- Consciousness-raising sessions
 - "... imitating the model of AA meetings, feminist consciousness-raising groups will take place in communities, offering the message of feminist thinking to everyone irrespective of class, race, or gender."
- Feminist thinking
 - Clarifying the collective nature of patriarchal domination
- Males as allies

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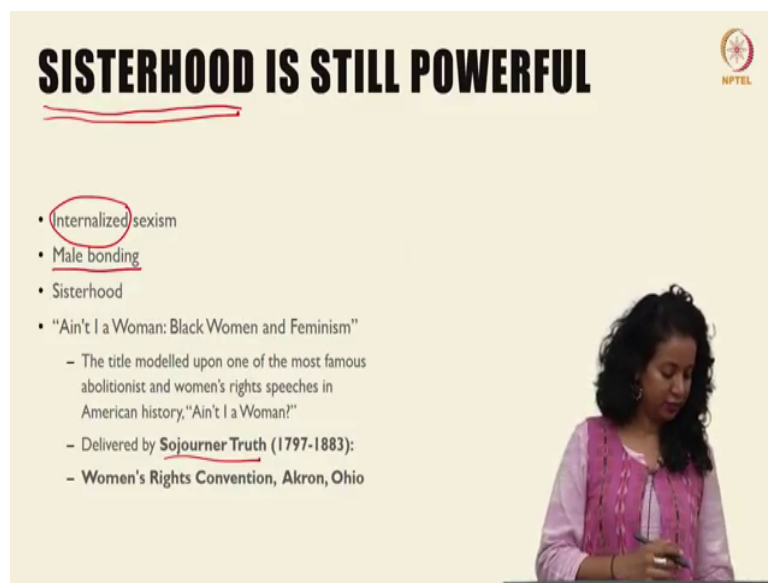
Consciousness raising. Moving on to the term that we introduced in the last chapter this was based upon this understanding that feminist are made not born, which means that feminism itself is a particular subject position that one has to come to. It is not something that is waiting to emerge automatically. There is an education and a mobilization involved in bringing together the feminist movement, something that I gestured to also in relation to the last chapter.

Consciousness-raising sessions which I spoke about were model like AA meetings and for those who do not know AA meetings are 'alcoholics anonymous' meetings, which hope to bring together the community in order that people can support each other in overcoming addiction. Now, clearly feminism is not seeking to overcome any kind of addiction except to patriarchy, but in that model community is important, inclusion is important, kindness towards one another, understanding of one another, giving a patient ear to one another are the principles upon which these consciousness-raising sessions were modelled.

Also important to remember is that these sessions of the message of feminist thinking to everyone irrespective of class, race, or gender and these again have to do with the principle of inclusion that I was referring to, meaning, the only thing one has to have in common is a curiosity, an orientation towards bringing a certain kind of feminist change in society. The idea and the goal was to bring about a feminist thinking and therefore, one needed to clarify the collective nature of patriarchal domination.

Meaning, patriarchal domination exerts itself upon all of us singly and together in one fashion or the other, it is the basis of our current society. And very important, men were considered allies in this endeavour. If men cannot quite understand the experiences that women faced on account of not being women, they could still be allied in the project for feminist revolution or reform as the case may be, because surely one can understand inequality even if one does not experience this on their own.

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SISTERHOOD IS STILL POWERFUL

- Internalized sexism
- Male bonding
- Sisterhood
- "Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism"
 - The title modelled upon one of the most famous abolitionist and women's rights speeches in American history, "Ain't I a Woman?"
 - Delivered by Sojourner Truth (1797-1883):
 - Women's Rights Convention, Akron, Ohio

NPTTEL

(A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a pink top, is shown in the bottom right corner of the slide, looking down at a device in her hands.)

Our next chapter Sisterhood is Still Powerful brings to light another important concept the idea of sisterhood which follows from the idea of community itself. And here the endeavour that hooks is speaking about is in combating internalized sexism. Now, what is internalized sexism mean? It means that in many ways we are not producing a victim- perpetrator equation. We are not talking about women as perpetual victims and men as the aggressor or the ones that are constantly subjecting them to certain forms of domination. We are talking about the ways in which women themselves are formed within such a matrix.

In other words, women understand their positions to be inherently unequal and therefore, do not see it as unequal. If this is what we have been given or allowed, if these are the boundaries within which we are allowed to succeed or flourish in society, then those boundaries become our home and we are most comfortable in them. Not only are we most comfortable within those boundaries, we also prevent others from breaking their boundaries and this goes under the name of internalized sexism.

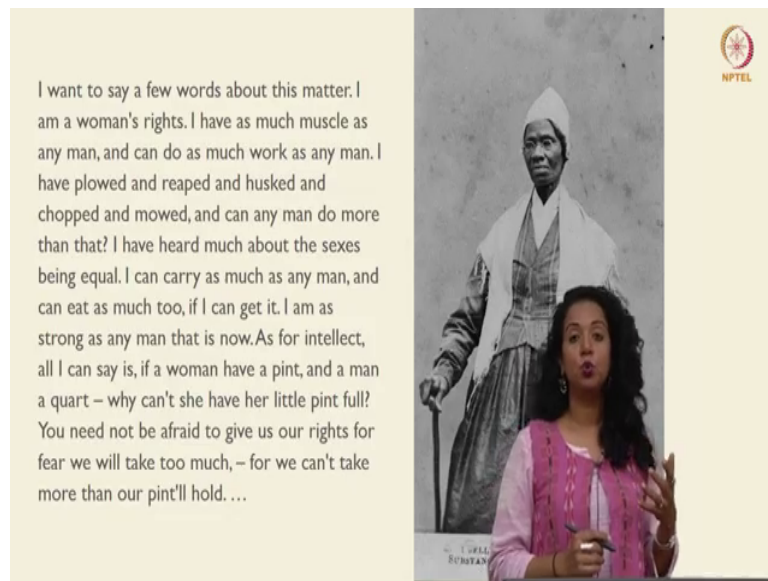
Now, remember this concept is important because it does not accord blame one way or the other, we are functioning only through a structural analysis that produces certain things in us as if they were natural, our thoughts, our feelings, our opinions, despite the kind of emphasis that current society has on free individuals. Structural thinking encourages us to remember that how we are formed depends on the ways in which we are educated, brought up, acculturated, in short on the discourses floating around in society that we internalize as truth.

Think about it as being constantly in a fake news world. How would you know the difference between fake and otherwise? And therefore, feminist theory suggest sisterhood as an antidote to internalized sexism which otherwise would constantly pit women in competition against one another. So, if men have possibilities of male bonding where they connect with one another, support one another, have another's backs, then we need sisterhood. And sisterhood allows us then to be braver because we are brave together.

In this, bell hooks also refers to her book "Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism". Here there is a particular kind of sisterhood that is also modelled on a dual experience of being both women and of being black. And the ways in which sisterhood between white women and African-American women was a difficult proposition because they were held apart by this understanding that white women's needs are universal needs and black women's needs are racial needs. And therefore, they cannot be spoken about in the same breath together.

In this title, she invokes another important figure in American history called Sojourner Truth who delivered a speech called "Ain't I a Woman" at the women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio making a plea for inclusion as a black women, not just as any kind of women saying "Ain't I a woman too, is not blackness something that should be acknowledged in my effort to put my questions and concerns and needs at the heart of the feminist movement?" I want to give you a little glimpse of that speech. So, let us just read a little excerpt.

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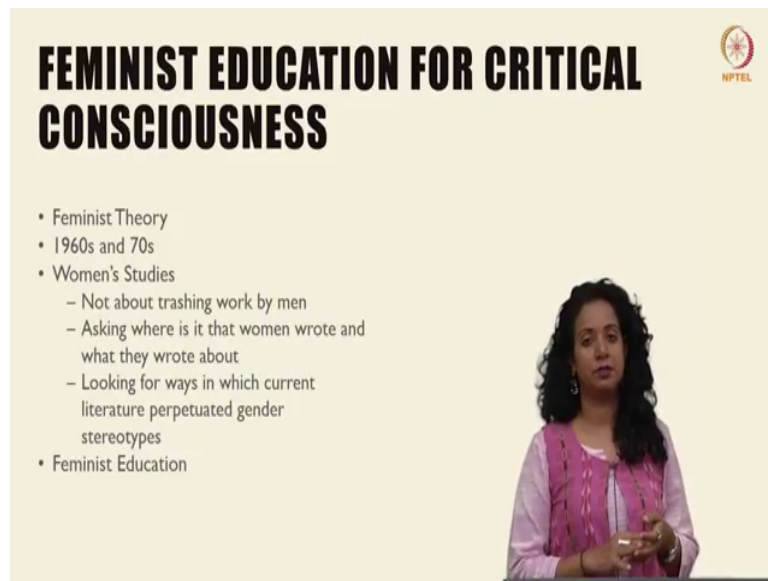
I want to say a few words about this matter, I am a women's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal. I can carry as much as any man and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now.

As for intellect, all I can say is, if a woman can have a pint, and a man a quart - why cannot she have a little pint full? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear that we will take too much, for we cannot take more than our pint will hold. This is Sojourner Truth on the frame and pay attention to what she is saying in order to understand what I referred to earlier in relation to white women.

Truth is saying, "I have as much muscle as any man can do as much work as any man," she is referring here to the plight of the African-American women worker. The kind who are not privy to the kinds of privileges that say white women may have had and that is a separate kind of discussion for the ways in which it confined American White women to the space of the home.

But this means naturally that the kinds of rights that African-American women would ask for would be different than the white women and this carries forth in any kind of scenario where we are discussing a community or women where differences must be accommodated and included in order to make the movement stronger.

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FEMINIST EDUCATION FOR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

- Feminist Theory
- 1960s and 70s
- Women's Studies
 - Not about trashing work by men
 - Asking where is it that women wrote and what they wrote about
 - Looking for ways in which current literature perpetuated gender stereotypes
- Feminist Education

The slide also features an inset video of a woman with dark hair, wearing a pink and white patterned top, speaking. In the top right corner, there is a small circular logo with the text 'NPTEL' below it.

The next chapter is on feminist education for critical consciousness. And here we see hooks moving towards the argument that the feminist movement also created a feminist education that was necessary in order to produce a larger understanding of what it means to interrupt and change patriarchal society. Such an education then demanded necessarily that there be literature produced about the feminist movement, about issues and about feminist thinking that could then work to understand. What are the ways in which women are absent from public intellectual production?

So, women studies, for example, which arose out of such feminist thinking in the 1960s and 1970s as a University based educational formation, was not about trashing work by men, it was not asking necessarily to begin with that where are the women in men's work? They were asking where are the women? What is it that we are writing and reading and how does such reading and writing adequately or inadequately speak about women's presence and experiences in the world?

For example, they were looking at the ways in which literature perpetuates gender stereotypes or the ways in which it invisibilizes women? That the hero is always the one moving the plot forward or the largest interventions in society are always brought forth by men. So, this was very-very important in arguing for a feminist education. Think about it seriously, can any movement succeed if it does not parallelly also produce a certain amount of literary production on the figures we are speaking about.

Because in a literate society this is the way in which you can bring about large scale change and make sure it is not just rooted in the location where the feminist activist speaks and holds fourth.

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Let me give your quick example of a book that is currently available on Amazon called ‘Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls’. Now, fairy tales, if you read the work of other theorist have long been argued for a site where society perpetuates its gender stereotypes. The prince is handsome in brave. The princess is a victim, sleeping, waiting to be rescued, shut away in a castle and when there is a meeting of the prince and princess that is when happiness abound because the rescuer has come to release.

In ‘Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls’ writers and illustrators come together to write the stories of important famous rebellious women in society and give them a little bit of a twist by speaking about them in the same tone as fairy tales do. So, you imitate the tone of the story, you produce beautiful illustrations in the same manner as a fairy tale book, but these are about women and these are about independent, strong, intrepid women in society.

So, let me read you a little bit of excerpt from one of this which is in “Ada Lovelace”. Once upon a time there was a girl named Ada, Ada who loved machines. She also loved the idea of flying. She studied birds to work out the perfect balance between wing size and body weight. She tested out materials, tried out several designs, she never managed to saw like a bird, but she created a beautiful book of full of drawings called Flyology, where she recorded all of her findings.

One night Ada went to a ball. There, she met a grumpy old mathematician named Charles Babbage. Ada was a brilliant mathematician herself and the two soon became good friends. Charles invited Ada to see a machine he had invented, he called it the difference engine. It could automatically add and subtract numbers, no one had ever done that before. Ada was hooked.

“What if he built a machine that could make more complicated calculations?” she said. Excited Ada and Charles started working. The machine was huge and it required an enormous steam engine. Ada wanted to go further, “What if this machine could play music and show letters as well as numbers?” She was describing a computer, way before modern computers were invented. Ada wrote the first computer programme in history.

December 10th 1815 to November 27th 1852, United Kingdom. And here is a beautiful illustration then of Ada Lovelace as well to accompany the text. Look how interesting such a rewriting can be in relation to feminist theory and the women’s movement. Think about the ways in which this text upends the convention of fairy tales. Starts with the very familiar ‘once upon a time there was a girl named Ada’, and then the rest of it changes, who loved machines.

Now, this is not something you expect that heroine of a fairy tale to love ‘machines’. And then it goes on to really delve into the ways in which Ada is a full person. Also notice, ‘she went to a ball’. Now, what do you expect the moment you see ball or a party, you expect that she is going to meet some handsome person, she is going to fall in love and that is the end of it.

Instead she meets a grumpy old mathematician named Charles Babbage who of course is very familiar in the understanding of scientific history. But then it goes on to say she was a brilliant mathematician herself. She has an identity of your own, she can hold her own in relation to Babbage and lo and behold, it does not say they fell in love, it says, ‘excited Ada and Charles started working’ that she is an independent entity who wants to pursue her passion.

Remember bell hooks *Passionate Politics*? This is about the ways in which a figure who is somebody passionate about science and machines can also produce something in collaboration with a man, instead of being subject to his rescuing tendencies. Therefore, “Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls” but not rebelling in the sense of upending all

conventions of society with rebelling in the sense of the ways in which one can understand how to be a woman and it need not necessarily stick to conventional fairy tale understandings.

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I would also like to bring your attention to work like the life of science dot com, a science media platform focused on science within society in India which took shape in 2016 as a project of two freelance science writers Ashima Dogra and Nandita Jayaraj. I would encourage that you follow their work, it chronicles biographies of women scientist that they met while hoping across laboratories and research institutions in India. Now, why are such visibility projects important?

Because they provide very-very important role models as we go about the business of education, if while growing up we only read about famous men and not famous women, then I suppose our ambitions can only be restricted to having romantic or otherwise relations with such men as opposed to becoming them ourselves. And therefore, in women studies, in such endeavours visibility is not a token project, it is important to forge a path for people in society to find different ways of being gender, different ways of being men and women in society.

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The slide features a title at the top: "OUR BODIES, OURSELVES/ FEMINIST SEXUAL POLITIC". Below the title is a list of bullet points:

- Sexuality
 - The rights of women to sexual freedom
 - Freedom of sexual choice
 - With whom and when
 - Pregnancy
 - Rights to safely terminate pregnancies
- Reproductive Rights
- One deserving of rights as well as value whether or not subject to men's desire

In the background, a woman with dark hair, wearing a pink top, is speaking. The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of the slide.

The next chapter 'Our Bodies, Ourselves' also connects to one of the later chapters called the Feminist Sexual Politic which deals with the question of women sexuality. Now, please remember that women sexuality is not merely about the freedom to have sex or not have sex or to have sexual relations. It is the freedom of sexual choice with whom and when? Meaning in your choice of partner and your choice of when is it that you are ready to have such form of sexuality in the world, it allows for people's differential understanding of self.

Also related is the question of pregnancy or what in the feminist theory pantheon are called reproductive rights. The question of reproductive rights of course has to do with sexuality, pregnancy, whether to reproduce or not, what time of life, at what stage, in what fashion and reproductive rights encapsulates it better because otherwise we get caught in the binary political question of abortion versus antiabortion or right to life campaigns as they call them across the world where women's bodies are pitted against the rights of the unborn child.

In this understanding reproductive rights means women should have control over the ways in which their bodies can or cannot be taken over, this has to be a way, that is negotiate with the women herself instead of dictated by spouse or society or religion or what have you. Now, remember that these are controversial questions, they are by no means simple and we will return to them later on in this series of lectures in order to understand its complicated location in society and culture.

Last point, we understand women's bodies and women as deserving of rights and value, whether or not subject to men's desire. Now, I will continue with this point in relation to the

next chapter, but remember this. That often women are taught that they only matter in society if they are desired by men and if not appropriate objects of desire they are invisible and not worthy of attention.

And such desire need not be sexual only, it could be desirability vis-a-vis being an appropriate woman in the family, a proper scientist, a good worker, always seeking men's validation and men's approval and this is something that 'Our Bodies, Ourselves' emphasizes that one need not have value in the world only in relation to men.

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To continue in the chapter 'Beauty Within and Without', we are dealing with a very-very important conception especially in relation to women, the definition of beauty itself. What count says beautiful? Who is beautiful in a society? What are the ways in which the body is broken down into its component parts in order for a woman to consider herself beautiful or worthy? And in this hooks is confronting sexist thinking about the female body also related to male desire.

hooks encourages us to think about self-esteem and self-love without approval from the outside to think about feminist thinking in relation to beauty as producing varied paradigms of beauty that need not conform to one set of standards. And one can see in society why this is a very-very difficult set of interventions. Starting from beauty pageants to the ways in which families comment upon girls and women and the ways in which they consider desirable for things like marriage or love, you are combating such sexist thinking about women's bodies at all fronts.

And therefore, the chapter encourages you to pay attention to concepts like body-shaming, to ideal body types, the ways in which choices of clothing also shape the perceptions of women in society. In other words, what are the multiple ways in which this idea of beauty is produced as a norm? The idea of a norm is very-very important to feminist thinking because norms are also produced within patriarchal society, they are not innocent, they do not come out of nowhere and they are meant also to pit women against one another in the hope that we can forever maintain this idea wherein women compete with one another for men's attention.

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The image shows a presentation slide with a light yellow background. On the left, there is a black decorative wavy border. The word 'CHECKLIST' is written in large, bold, black capital letters at the top left. In the top right corner, there is a small circular logo with a red border and the text 'NPTEL' below it. The main content of the slide is a list of four bullet points:

- If you see five new people in a day, who do you consider beautiful?
- What do the 'beautiful people' have in common?
 - Break the body down
 - Skin tone, height, hair, body proportions
- Who are your favorite beautiful public figures?
- What advantages does conventional beauty have?

In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a pink and white patterned top, looking thoughtful with her hand near her face.

In relation to the chapter perhaps try this exercise, if you see five new people in a day, think about who is it that you consider beautiful? What do these beautiful people have in common? Can you break their bodies down, skin tone, height, hair, body proportions? And I would encourage that you do this not just for women but also for men, it is not that men can escape these characterizations.

Perhaps, one can only go so far to say that men can compensate for lack of conventional beauty through other things, money, for example, think about the standard trope where an older not so good looking rich man is with a younger, much more beautiful woman, where the woman is called a gold digger, but the man is considered to be quite smart for having bagged the younger beautiful women.

Think about these dynamics in society and the ways in which they encourage these characterizations of ideal body types. Think about who your favourite public figures are and

why they are your favourite? Think also about the ways in which conventional beauty offers advantages to both men and women.

Now, remember the last is particularly important because conforming to societies norms gets you rewards in society because this is the only way that the patriarchal structure perpetuates itself. So, if you happen to conform to normal beauty standards, you will gain rewards more than the person who does not. And therefore, you will be encouraged to perpetuate the standards by saying I made it, what prevents somebody else from making it without realising that these norms and your accidental conformity with them is what allows you to make it.

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The image shows a presentation slide with a light yellow background. On the left, there is a black decorative wavy border. The title 'FEMINIST CLASS STRUGGLE' is written in bold black capital letters at the top. In the top right corner, there is a small red circular logo with the text 'NPTEL' below it. The main content is a bulleted list:

- What is class?
 - Much more than Marx's definition
 - Behaviour, habits, preferences
 - Feminist empowerment
 - Issues on the class agenda
 - Widenings gaps: Rich and poor
 - Feminization of poverty

In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a pink patterned top, looking down at her hands.

In the next chapter hooks address an important aspect of feminist struggle namely class. And in her understanding class is much more than Marx's definition of people's relations to the means of production, depending on whether you own them, or whether you are a wage labourer, you have a different socio-economic class. But hooks rightly points out the class is also about behaviour, habits and preferences and therefore, feminist empowerment cannot be realised unless we bring about a movement across classes that is not restricted to the middle class or to the upper class.

And this is fairly obvious if you look at the daily news around you. The only kind of atrocities very often that gain attention are those perpetuated upon the bodies of middle or upper class women. Often lower class women's bodies are considered to be negligible, unimportant or disposable.

And this is what she is addressing specifically in relation to things like widening gaps between the rich and the poor, which means that the kinds of atrocities that are suffered by lower class men will be doubly suffered by lower class women gesturing to concepts such as the feminization of poverty which refers to the ways in which as people suffer more and more poverty, the one suffering the most are lower class women. And therefore, feminist struggles cannot be spoken about unless we speak about them in relation to class differences.

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Moving on from such class struggle, this is an important chapter speaking about global feminism. Meaning, where is that feminism comes from? In this class we are speaking about it in relation to the global north or Europe but there are other kinds of feminisms as well that may not have supporting literature in English. In this class we are going to come to Indian feminism, its location and its context soon enough. But hooks is asking what about the relationship between feminism and decolonization.

Now, feminism since it is located currently in the global north must also acknowledge its relationship with former colonial struggles. Meaning, feminism cannot ignore the fact that the countries within which it takes route would also responsible for imperial domination over countries of the global south. And therefore, there cannot be a universalizing tendency for feminism without also taking into account decolonization struggles.

For example, think about Gayatri Spivak's really interesting saying where she calls it "white men saving brown women from brown men" in relation to the ways in which imperial powers of the global north continue to want to save women in the barbaric south where their men

perpetuate atrocities upon them. And then this she says feminism must call out imperial ambition at the same time as they call out the goals of the feminist movement. And therefore, hooks is calling for a transnational feminism, one which acknowledges the differences brought about in post-coloniality.

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The chapter on women at work is interested in the ways in which feminism also advocates economics self-sufficiency. Now, this is something that is hotly contested, often it depends on the kinds of work available to women as to whether they offer liberatory potential or not, but universally there seems to be some sort of agreement that women who have access to money on their own, by virtue of their own forms of work have the capacity to liberate themselves better than women who do not.

There are complications to this thesis, we are not particularly show how this works, women could be working but the men at home could be the ones having access to their moneys, women could be working be paid unequally, women could be exploited by forms of work. So, all of these scenarios have to be considered before we understand work as a common liberatory possibility.

But we will come to that in this course in relation to the week where we discuss feminism and work. But women at work is important also in its understanding of the ways in which working women are able to traverse both private and public. Women at work, the chapter's important in its understanding that they divide between public and private which is necessary

to be able to confine women can be broken down through the act of working and this is something important to pay attention to.

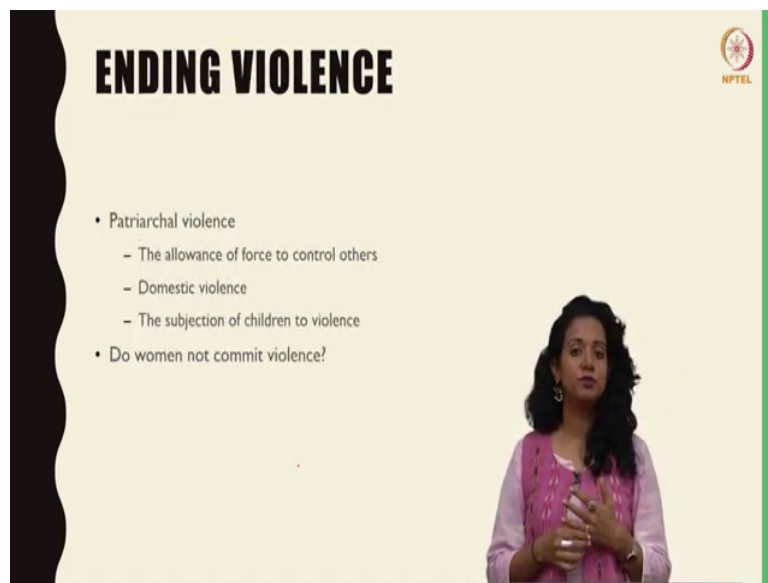
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We come now to the chapter on race and gender, where I have included another category which is important to us that of caste. Here the question is for the feminist movement itself. Meaning, can we accommodate differences based on race, caste in addition to gender or will that distract from our goals. And hooks answer is fairly simple, she says one cannot have a feminist movement without understanding it intersectionally.

Now, intersection is useful, if we think about something as a point on an axis, it is produced not just through one kind of difference gender, but also through race, but also through caste. And therefore, it is at the intersection of these three forms of identity that one can begin to apprehend the individual. And to hooks intersectional feminism is paramount in the feminist movement's goals.

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The slide features a light green background with a black wavy border on the left and a green vertical bar on the right. The title 'ENDING VIOLENCE' is in bold black text at the top left. An NPTEL logo is in the top right. The main content is a bulleted list:

- Patriarchal violence
 - The allowance of force to control others
 - Domestic violence
 - The subjection of children to violence
- Do women not commit violence?

A woman with dark hair, wearing a pink top, is shown in the bottom right corner, gesturing as if speaking.

From here hooks moves on to a chapter speaking about ending violence. And the heart of the matter in these chapters patriarchal violence defined by her as the allowance of force to control others. This might seem fairly common-sensical, the fact that society is ordered through the survival of the fittest like people like to misquote Darwin. And in this survival of the fittest those that are strongest win. What it also assumes is that the strongest must display their strength in order to dominate others in order to survive.

Societies everywhere seem to want to perpetuate this understanding by saying that dominance is necessary for people to know who is boss. So, be it at work, home or on the street, aggression and violence is the way to be in order to survive in everyday life. To hooks this is a problem and she sees enunciations of that everywhere you look, such as in terms like domestic violence which seems so innocent, violence in a domestic space.

To her domestic violence means that women will be subject to it over and over again within the confines of a private space where such violence cannot be addressed, one. Two, it is not that women are not violent. Do women not commit violence? Absolutely do, and in many ways where she identifies such forms of violence is again within the home space where women discipline children, where the child is subject to such form of disciplining under the guise of care, under the guise of parental care wherein violence is the way that men and women dominate children. And therefore, is there a way to end such a form of violence?

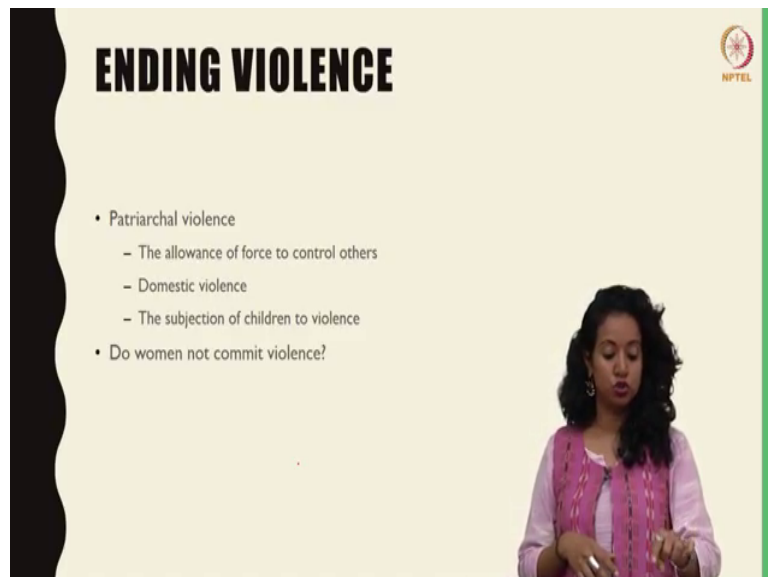
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FEMINIST MASCULINITY

- Men's liberation movement in reaction to negative portrayals of men in the feminist movement
- A vision of masculinity with self-esteem and self-love

The slide features a woman with dark hair, wearing a pink and white patterned vest over a light pink shirt, speaking from the bottom right corner. The background is a light beige color with a dark wavy border on the left and a green vertical bar on the right. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner.



ENDING VIOLENCE

- Patriarchal violence
 - The allowance of force to control others
 - Domestic violence
 - The subjection of children to violence
- Do women not commit violence?

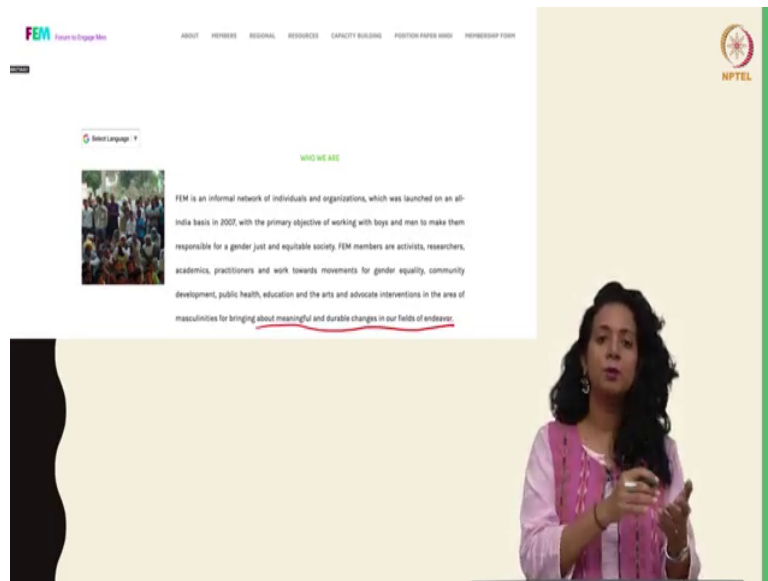
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In order to understand this she then addresses something that she calls feminist masculinity. In other words, if ending violence means that we should stop allowing people to think about force is being needed to control others, perhaps we also need to be able to understand men differently. And in a feminist masculinity you allow for the subjectivity of a man to be shaped by things other than force and dominance to be shaped by self-esteem and self-love that is not related to how much force they can exert upon other people around them.

And therefore, feminist masculinity is used to counter reactions such as the men's liberation movement which were responses to negative portrayals of men in the feminist movement. And in many ways this is a tricky situation because what the feminist movement is critiquing is actually patriarchal violence and the tendency to patriarchy often in men.

But when you collapse the two and when it begins to seem as if men are the cause and not patriarchal structures that produce men in particular fashion, then of course you give rise to things like men's liberation which are anti-women or anti-feminist. Instead such a vision of feminist masculinity allows us to understand the patriarchy subjects everybody to violence producing masculine men and feminine women.

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An example of work of such feminist masculinity could be things like the forum to engage men and informal network of individuals and organisations with the primary objective of working with boys and men, to make them responsible for a gender just and equitable society. And what they want to do is make interventions in the area of masculinities, for bringing about meaningful and durable changes in a fields of endeavour. And here it is really interesting to me that they have chosen men and boys as their target audience, by saying that the feminist movement needs to bring about change in all of society and not just women vis-à-vis men.

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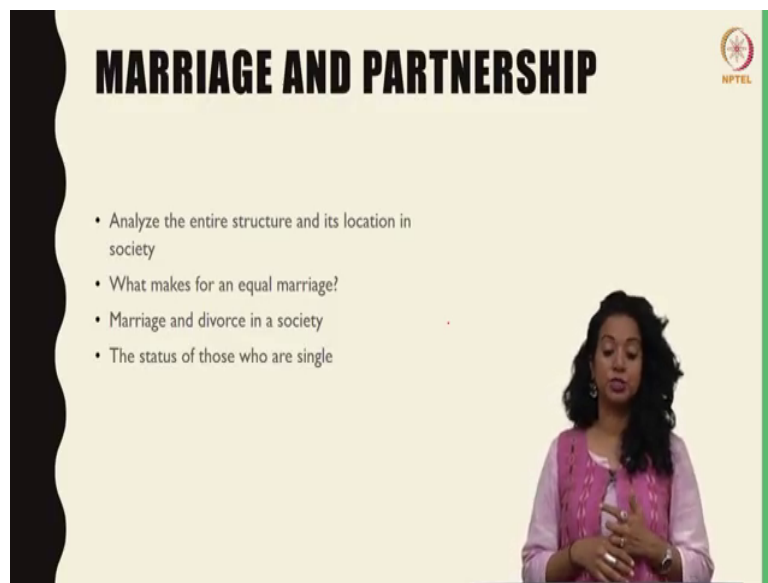


From ending violence and feminist masculinity we move on to feminist parenting that builds upon an earlier concept which speaks about how societies are based on autocratic rule over children. We consider children to have no civil rights, they are shamed, they are taught things, stomped down, they are expected to listen, they are expected to not have any kind of sensibility at all, unless shaped by parental care. And in this hooks is concerned with raising children in an anti-sexist environment.

Raising children in an anti-sexist environment and she says, “Well if they are subject to violence in the very active parenting, how will they learn otherwise?” Now, this chapter as in, now this chapter as in when I have taught it before has always been controversial. Because often I teach students who are between 18 to 20 years of age and they think about parenting as an environment in which force must be allowed because otherwise how will children listen? Children are waver, children are wild, they do not understand, they are the infantilized children.

And while that might seems slightly counterintuitive children are infants, hooks understanding is that only through true love, only through collaborative parenting, only through mutual understanding can children understand non-sexist behaviour, non-autocratic behaviour, non-forceful behaviour and continue to behave that way in their own lives as they grow up. So, therefore, to her feminist parenting also involves dismantling the assumptions of patriarchal behaviour within the family by both men and women and giving children the capacity to understand the world in less violent ways.

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MARRIAGE AND PARTNERSHIP

- Analyze the entire structure and its location in society
- What makes for an equal marriage?
- Marriage and divorce in a society
- The status of those who are single

The slide features a woman in a pink top speaking in the bottom right corner. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner. The slide has a black wavy border on the left and a green vertical bar on the right.

From there hooks moves onto the question of marriage and partnership, and this is a difficult one. So, I am going to throw it open to you all listening and I am going to ask you to think about the structure of marriage within society, what are the kinds of marriages, what are the roles that it plays, what are the roles of partnership? In this I mean partnership in the same ways that I mean marriage because there are different forms of contractual arrangements.

What makes for an equal marriage? Is it a bit of an oxymoron? What is the status of marriage and divorce in a society? What is the status of those who are single and non-partnered? And if you are able to ponder these questions, then what hooks is talking about will become clearer to you. In saying that structures and society are undergirded by patriarchal assumptions.

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FOR LATER LECTURES

- Lesbianism and Feminism
- Love
- Spirituality
- Visionary feminism

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And this forms the bulk of the books for later lectures, we will look at lesbianism and feminism and this comes in the weeks where we discuss Queer theory, we will talk about love, we will talk about spirituality and visionary feminism. And these chapters you should read through in any case, but we will unpack them for later lectures along with examples, so that you are able to understand what hooks project in the world is in relation to passionate politics.

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FOR OUR LAST LECTURE FOR WEEK 1

- Read select passages from the book
- For yourself
 - Note down interesting concepts
 - Read them in tandem with the newspaper or your daily headlines

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For our last lecture for this week which is coming up right after this, we will try and read select passages from the book that illustrate these concepts and also so you can get an idea of

how to read going forward as your reading. Please note down interesting concepts and try and read them in tandem with the newspaper or your daily headlines.

Now, if you are able to do the last, then you will begin to see concepts illuminated in the world and only then will they make sense to you. So, this is an exercise I will recommend for the rest of this course. So, until the next lecture when we read from the book please go over all of these concepts and try and read from the book yourself and we will try and deepen your practice with our last lecture for week 1, thank you.