

Feminist Writings
Professor Avishek Parui
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Madras
Understanding Patriarchy Part II

(Refer Slide Time: 00:16)



So, hello and welcome to this N P T E L course entitled Gender and Literature where we are looking at Bell Hooks' essay 'Understanding Patriarchy'. So, we have already had one lecture on this essay and we will just continue with our text today and the following lectures to come.

So, we see how this essay is interesting in the sense that it completely deconstructs this very need binary between the male perpetrator and women victim. So it looks away from the binary, it deconstructs the binary, it does away with the binary of looking at this gender divide between the aggressive perpetrating male and the passive powerless women.

And Hooks makes a very clear argument that, you know we need to move away from this dualistic position and look at the core problem of patriarchy and locate patriarchy as the core problem which affects people of different gender. So it does not matter if you are a man or a woman. You are affected by patriarchy in adverse way.

And this adverse effect of patriarchy is described in medical terms by Hooks as we have seen already that she talks about the patriarchy being a disease which affects the men and women and it is a pathology which is endemic to the society etc. And that is how she looks at patriarchy as a problem.

So it is very interesting take on patriarchy. It is very interesting take on gender inequality, gender trouble, gender problems that Hooks' is offering us here. So, it is more for poor structure that has taken on patriarchy, right and she says quite clearly and very various sections in the essay which will come by, you know frequently.

And that is the word patriarchy does not appear often enough in seminars and polite conversations and debates about gender etc.

So she says people talk about kinds of things. People talk of gender inequality, gender abuse, male abuse on woman, woman's sufferings, woman's problems etc, male alcoholism but they very seldom locate the core problem or the core cause of these reasons, all this you know phenomenon, that is patriarchy.

So patriarchy as a core cause of all the problems is hardly, very seldom identified, articulated or addressed. And she says one of the first things we should do as feminists, as people who believe in gender equality is locate patriarchy as a core problem and then seek to address the problem and engage with the problem as best we can, Ok.

So one of the complex things about this essay is that, a, it does away with the dualism of, you know male abuser and woman abused, that kind of a binary is done away with and secondly it also looks at anecdotal references. So, it talks about real lived experiences, not just patriarchy as a textual construct, not just patriarchy as a social construct but patriarchy as a lived reality.

And that is something that Hooks is really keen on. And that connects us to some of the, one of the things that I have talked about already when we introduced this course in the very first lecture and that is the combination, the balance of the complex of textuality and experientiality.

So there is a danger if you look at everything at as text as I mentioned earlier; we also need to take account of the fact that these are very experiential phenomena. Gender is a very experiential phenomena and if we do away, if we ignore and avoid and disregard the

experientiality of gender then we are doing a disservice to the whole complexity of gender trouble.

And Hooks is someone who is very keen on experientiality as well, she also talks about how patriarchy is constructed, contained, consolidated and, you know, in different kinds of illogical apparatus, different kinds of institutional apparatus

But also an equally importantly she talks about the experience of patriarchy, the experientiality of patriarchy and she gives a very, very frequent anecdotal evidences from her own life, from her own childhood and her own male partners in terms of, in order to collaborate the problems that she is trying to describe here.

So, and this is the working definition of patriarchy, the Hooks has offered ready and we just rehearse as before we move on to the other sections of the essay.

And she says what really over here;

(Refer Slide Time: 04:13)



fulfill these roles.

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.

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

people. Our sense of gender roles was learned from our parents, from the ways we saw them behave. My brother and I remember our confusion about gender. In reality I was stronger and more violent than my brother, which we learned quickly was bad. And he was a gentle, peaceful boy, which we learned was really bad. Although we were often confused, we knew one fact for certain: we could not be and act the way we wanted to, doing what we felt like. It was clear to us that our behavior had to follow a predetermined, gendered script. We both learned the word "patriarchy" in our adult life, when we learned that the script that had determined what we should be, the identities we should make, was based on patriarchal values and beliefs about gender.

I was always more interested in challenging patriarchy than my brother because it was the system that was always keeping me out of things that I wanted to do. In our family life of the fifties, my brother was the one who came. My brother had a more traditional role in the family; he had a more traditional size and shape.



The 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 note the terms which are used over here, the phrases, psychological terrorism and violence. So violence and terrorism are not just corporeal, not just body based, but it also becomes psychological, also becomes form of (())(4:45), forms a fear, structures of fear that are also injected in the minds of people who are expected to be conformist to patriarchy, to believe in patriarchy.

So patriarchy is a system which is designed to make, you know, men superior to women, to collaborate through different kinds of evidential backing, different kind of factual backing that men are superior to women in terms of their physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional endowments and so it is the job of the men to rule, to control, to take lead and it is the job of the woman to obey.

That is a very blunt definition of patriarchy but that is a working definition of patriarchy which we find operative in different disguises and different degrees of sophistication, in different institutions that we come by.

The first institution being family and family becomes a very important unit in this essay which is studied and revisited extensively by Hooks. So she gives very graphic descriptions of her own family in terms of how patriarchy was produced, promoted and protected by the familial figures with authority.

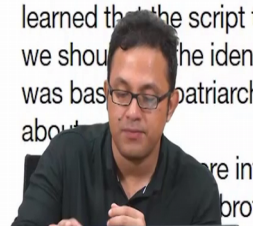
So now we have some anecdotal evidence collaborating the functioning of patriarchy as described by Hooks. So she says quite clearly, “When my older brother and I were born with the year separating

(Refer Slide Time: 06:03)

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.

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

and more violent than r
learned quickly was ba
peaceful boy, which we
Although we were ofte
one fact for certain: we
the way we wanted to,
was clear to us that ou
predetermined, gender
the word "patriarchy" i
learned that the script
we should the identi
was based on patriarcl
about
more int
prot



us in age, patriarchy determined how we would each be regarded by our parents.”

So the very moment of birth, you are born as a man, you are born as a woman, that determines the behavioral aspect, that determines behavior of construct, that you are born into. So parents of these children, one was the female child; one was the male child, they were born one year apart from each other.

The parents were indoctrinated, parents were consumers of patriarchy, of course they did not realize they were consuming a construct but they brought up the children differently in conformity to the norms of patriarchy. The female child is brought up in the way which was distinctly different from the way the male child was brought up and the entire politics of bring up, of parenting, of the politics of parenting relied on certain patriarchal parameters which included toys for children.

So we will see, we come by a point in essay very quickly where Hooks is describing actually how toys become very discursive in quality, the toys that people play with, children play with, you think those are most innocuous, innocent, non-discursive things.

But she talks of how toys, preparation of toys, your engagement with toys, the design of toys, these become profoundly patriarchal in quality and that sort of monitored to certain parameters of patriarchy, the toys, the male child supposed to play with, the female child is supposed to play with and supposed to be mapped out different in terms of design

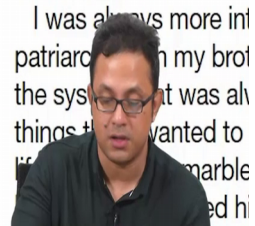
(Refer Slide Time: 07:24)

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.

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

one fact for certain: we the way we wanted to, was clear to us that our predetermined, gender the word "patriarchy" if learned that the script we should be, the identity was based on patriarchy about gender.

I was always more into patriarchy than my brother. The system that was always things that I wanted to live with. I was a marble statue. I was a statue.



and also in terms of the function.

So both her parents believed in patriarchy. They had been taught patriarchal thinking through religion. So religion of course becomes a very important institution in terms of, you know protecting and promoting patriarchy.

And we see historically how religion has always been an ally of this status quo, an ally of the hegemonic powers; hegemonic apparatus that control over, hegemonic apparatus of royalty, of fascism, of any kind of totalitarian control. We always find that in more often than not, religion was very close ally to such structures of control, such structures of surveillance.

And religion of course, it brings in some metaphysical meanings which, you know help consolidate the illogical, hegemonic illogical apparatus at that given point of time.

So patriarchy more often than not finds its very big voice, very big ally in religion which is, as you find in the case of most religions that we know, you know perform patriarchy in polity, perform patriarchy with the rhetoric, perform patriarchy with the vocabulary in their functioning as well.

So how so? And this is an evidence of Hooks offering through her own example of being brought up in America in a family which believed in patriarchy, which believed in patriarchy promoted by religion.

At Church they had learned that God created

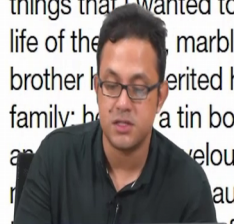
(Refer Slide Time: 08:49)

our parents believed in patriarchy; they had been taught patriarchal thinking through religion.

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.

predetermined, gender the word "patriarchy" in learned that the script we should be, the identity was based on patriarchy about gender.

I was always more into patriarchy than my brother. The system that was always things that I wanted to life of the marble brother had inherited his family: he was a tin box and a jealous man. I was not a natural



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. So the very inception of religious belief, the very indoctrination of religious belief was completely embedded with patriarchal parameter.

So it was a man, it was God who created the man and God of course is male and you know, the woman was created as an afterthought to be a partner of the man, to help him perform this task, etc.

To help in carry out his task and it is the job of the woman who was created as an afterthought to obey, to be (())(9:27) the desire and the wishes, ambitions of the man and it is always the man who is at forefront, the man who is foregrounded in terms of importance, in terms of significance.

So they were taught that God was male so the Voice of God was male, the pronoun used for God was male, the language of God was male, etc. These teachings were reinforced in every institution they encountered, schools, courthouses, clubs, sports arenas as well as churches.

Embracing patriarchal thinking life everyone else around them, they taught it to their children because It seemed like a natural way to organize life.

So you can see the word natural over here,

(Refer Slide Time: 10:04)

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.

As their daughter I was taught that it was

we should be, the idea was based on patriarchy about gender.

I was always more into patriarchy than my brother. The system that was all things that I wanted to life of the fifties, my brother had inherited his family; he had a tin box and she was marvelous my eyes, most beautiful together with them, often



put inside quotes and across there is a ring of irony operative over here. So whole point of patriarchy in order to become a grand narrative, like any grand narrative, it has to be naturalized.

It has to be normativised. In this act of naturalization and an act normativisation, it is something which patriarchy constantly promotes and produces and protects so like any grand narrative patriarchy too operates through naturalization.

You naturalize, you legitimize male superiority. You legitimize woman's inferiority. You naturalize the thought process which teaches you women are supposed to be conformists, women are supposed to be play second fiddle; you know they are, subservient to male desire, to male ambitions, for male will.

So once it is naturalized this kind of a discourse, then obviously you do not realize that this is a discourse in the first place. You escape; you manage to efface the discursivity of patriarchy by naturalizing it. So I will say it again, you managed to efface the discursivity of patriarchy by naturalizing it.

So the process of naturalization is also, is aimed at effacing, at making invisible the discursivity of patriarchy. You do not realize this discourse; you do not realize as a

constructed discourse, a constructed category which is discursive quality and you do not realize it because it is constantly naturalized with different forms, different apparatus, different structures etc.

As a daughter I was taught that it was my role to serve, to be weak, to be free from the burden of thinking,

(Refer Slide Time: 11:37)

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



to caretake and nurture others. So you know, you look at the verbs over here, to serve, to be weak, to be free from the burden of thinking. So thinking was a burden which was best left untouched by women.

So women should not be thinking, women should not be thoughtful. A woman should just carry out the functions expected of them. Women should just carry out the functions ordered to them, right and so that was very much a part of her crude patriarchal discourse which is operative over here.

It does not want to conceal its crudeness in the way, but the point is you do not realize this crude because it is so naturalized. If something which is constantly naturalized and normativised. It is made into a norm. It is made into a natural thing. So it is just something that you do. It is something you are supposed to do unquestioningly.

Okay, so it was my role to serve, to be weak, to be free from the burden of thinking, to caretake and nurture others; so nurturing quality something which is taught to women, something which is celebrated in women.

So if you are a woman, a female child you are supposed to be a nurturer, a caregiver, a caretaker whereas the man, the male child is supposed to go out and rule the world, you know with great ambitions, with great political

(Refer Slide Time: 12:45)

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 boy should not express feelings. I was taught



public ambitions, so you see it is also a special quality of patriarchy.

Women are supposed to stay indoors. Women are supposed to be inside the house, protecting the house, taking care of the house whereas the man should step out and do things in the real world outside. So this way, clearly mapped in a special, in special way.

My brother was taught that it was his role to be served; to provide; and to be strong; to think, strategize, and plan; and to refuse or caretake, to refuse to caretake or nurture others. So it is a complete binary as you can see.

So the brother was taught just the opposite thing. So it was his job to be served, so he expects to be served. He expects to be waited upon, and the woman should serve him. The woman should take care of him whereas he should be strong.

So it is his job to be strong, to strategize, to make plans, etc and refuse to caretake or nurture others. So the nurturing ability, nurturing quality is given to women alone whereas the men are supposed to be, you know strong rulers, strong strategists who do things outside the home. So woman takes care of home by nurturing, whereas man takes care of the world outside by strategizing.

So you can see again that very need special division, special mapping at work. I was taught that it was not proper for a female to be violent, it was unnatural. So again look at the constructive quality of naturalness and unnaturalness over here.

But however the whole point is you conceal the constructive quality, to make it look as natural as possible so the moment you deviate from that kind of quality you are very quickly classified as unnatural, as something that is not legitimized, something that is not sanctioned, right.

So if you are a woman who is not a caretaking woman, not a nurturing woman then you are unnatural woman. If a woman who strategizes, who wants to go out in the world and do real things, then obviously you are being unnatural as a woman.

So again there is a very neat functional mapping, a special mapping, ontological mapping at work over here. 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. So again you can see there is a refrained quality over here, albeit in appropriate settings, albeit in appropriate settings. So settings obviously is the space.

So again the spatial quality of patriarchy is very, very important. It is very spatial in quality. It is located, is determined by the space, inhabiting at a given point of time. So it is, it is a great virtue for a boy to be violent, to be able to articulate violence, the violent vocabulary, violent language, violent behavior in certain spaces.

And if you are able, if you have the ability to acquire that skill to be violent, that skill to perform violence linguistically in an embodied way, etc, then obviously you are quite agency in certain settings.

So agency becomes a very important factor in this essay and throughout the course find that is one of terms which will keep revisiting in terms of looking at relationships between agency and identity, specially gendered identity. And how the two are also, organically and ontologically related to each other.

But here we have an instance where a male child from the very inception is taught some things, is indoctrinated into certain things. Those certain things include a teaching, that you know that it is Ok, it is good thing, it is a prestigious thing for a man to be violent and certain appropriate settings, not at home, not against your parents, that will be a disobedience, that will be looked down upon.

But in the real world outside world, other men, other boys of your age are trying to bully you, it is your job to stand up and be violent. Because then you will be considered someone who is agentic in quality.

So, for a boy enjoying violence, this was a good thing. So again we are looking at how even ludic performances, playful, ludic is playful, playful performances become a discursive in quality. So we have boys who enjoy violence as forms of entertainment whereas girls were supposed to enjoy entertainment in the forms of entertainment which are nurturing in quality.

So girls are supposed to play with dolls and kitchenware whereas boys were given guns and different kinds of, you know gadgets in order to train them into violence, in order to make it some kind of proxy activity for the violence in the real world. So that is something that is clearly mapped out all this essay.

What else? He was taught that a boy should not express feelings. I was taught
(Refer Slide Time: 17:24)

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 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



that girls could and should express feelings, or at least some of them. So you know again, level of emotions, level of feelings we have, as a very clear binary, a very clear mapping out in operation. So boys were taught not to express feelings.

So again we have this very old stereotype or a strong silent type. So boys, again equations between strong, strength and silence, right. So if you are silent in a face of adversary, if you handle adversary silently, stoically without expressing emotions they you are obviously characterized as a strong male.

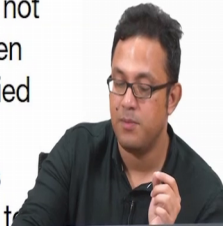
So equation between strength and silence is very handy and very, very convenient, very conventional and consistently articulated in different historical times whereas for a woman she is encouraged to express her feelings. I mean she, if you do not express your feelings as a woman, then obviously you are an unfeeling woman, and that again very quickly becomes unnatural, right.

So we can see how natural, the quality of being natural is discursively determined. However, you know this discursive quality is naturalized to different kinds of articulations, different iterations, different practices, different rituals etc.

When I responded with rage at being denied a boy, sorry, when I responded with rage at being denied a toy, I was taught as a girl in a patriarchal household that rage was not

(Refer Slide Time: 18:48)

appropriate settings). 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 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 household that his ability to express rage was good but that he had to learn the best setting to



an appropriate feminine feeling, that it should be not only not be expressed but be eradicated.

So rage becomes a male feeling. It becomes prerogative of the male. So you can see how even emotions which you think are non-discursive in quality, emotions which you think are purely organic, purely visceral or purely embodied in quality are actually discursively determined.

So again we are looking at the relationship between the inside and the outside, this something which I kept telling, I will keep telling throughout this course, that a large part of looking at gender, looking at representations of gender is look at the loop between the inside and the outside.

What is inside you as a human being, yourself, your neural self, your thinking self, you know your visceral self and how that this viscosity, how that behavior, neural behavior is actually determined by some of the characters around you, by external environment around you.

Again we look here at the loop between the inside and the outside which is constant and consistent. So rage which is a very visceral feeling, a very visceral emotion, very visceral articulation, is also discursively determined, in the sense that boys are taught that rage is a good thing. It is a good thing to be angry as a boy, as a male.

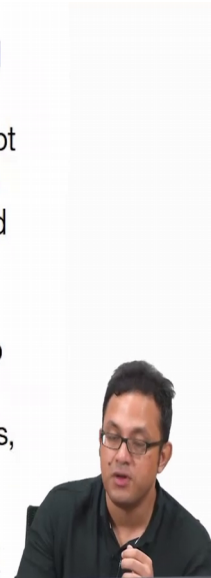
However, the converse happens with woman. So whenever a female expresses her rage at being denied a toy and she is very quickly told that the rage should be eradicated, not

expressed. Not only it should not be expressed, but it should be eradicated, done away with completely. So it is inappropriate for a girl to express rage, to be angry, because anger is the prerogative of the male and not for woman.

When my brother responded with rage at being denied a toy, he was taught as a boy in a patriarchal household

(Refer Slide Time: 20:31)

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 household that his ability to express rage was good but that he had to learn the best setting to unleash his hostility. It was not good for him to use his 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 to violence would help him protect



that his ability to express rage was good but that he had to learn the best setting to unleash his hostility.

Again the setting becomes important. The space becomes important. So to unleash your rage you need to have the appropriate setting, the appropriate space, so again you are looking at the relationship between performativity and spatiality.

So certain performances which are embodied, certain performances, which are strategic in quality, they iterate something, they express something, it depends on the space in which the performances take place.

So again we even look at the language, the sentences are just used taking place, right. These, these events are taking place. So again we are looking at a relationship between the event, the functioning of the event, the anthology of the event and the space which accommodates the event, right.

So these emotions take place somewhere, should take place in certain settings, so settings become very important category in gender, especially in relation to identity and agency. So you find more often than not, when it comes to male expressions, when it comes to male agency the public space becomes very important as a setting,

Whereas when it comes to woman, woman's agency, woman's identity, more often than not we find the representations in very crude, regressive discourses is the interior, the interior of the house, interior of room, the inside, not the public space but private space that is the space that is inhabited by the woman, the kitchen, the bedroom, the drawing room etc.

So the home, interiors of the home, that is where the woman is located in a very, very regressive, patriarchal, rhetorical, a very regressive patriarchal discourse. And sometimes it does not happen to be very regressive. It can appear to be liberal, it can appear to be quite progressive, but you find, you know both structures are replicated in more sophisticated ways, more concealed ways, more covert ways, Ok.

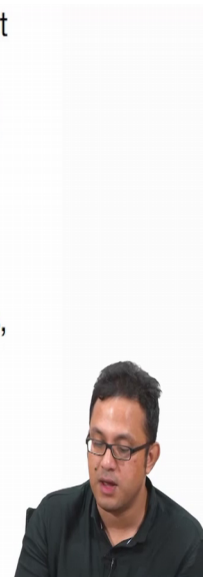
So it is not good

(Refer Slide Time: 22:30)

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 household that his ability to express rage was good but that he had to learn the best setting to unleash his hostility. It was not good for him to use his 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 to violence would help him protect home and nation.

We lived in farm country, isolated from other people. Our sense of gender roles was learned

for him to use his rage to oppose the wishes of his parents, but later, when he grew up, he was taught that rage was permitted and allowing rage to provoke him to violence would help him protect home and nation.



So again look at the two categories in the end, home and nation. These become the units for protection, units which produce, you know, this kind of behavior, units which encourage this kind of behavior, units which require this kind of behavior.

So home and nation are both units which need to be protected, promoted and produced all and over again so both are different forms of grand narratives. So home becomes a grand narrative which has a set of values, a set of prestige, a set of qualities which must be conformed to in hegemonic discourse.

And likewise for the nation too, it requires certain qualities which must be conformed to. So home and nation become very important categories which are to be protected.

So as you can see there is a relative quality about violence over here. It is very, very relativised. So for a woman to be violent is absolutely, you know discouraged, as something that she looked down upon, something which is, you know, told the woman not to do in terms of talking her out of it, and teaching her not to behave in that way, must be eradicated, must not be expressed but also eradicated completely, done away with completely

Whereas with the man he is encouraged to be angry, he is encouraged to express rage in certain settings, in certain situations and that what is taught to him from a very earlier age, is that if you are angry, if you unleash your hostility in appropriate settings, not against parents, not against people who matter to you inside your home, but if you unleash the hostility in the public space, in a suitably public space then you are on your way to protecting and promoting your home and your nation.

So this is very much part of a masculinist rhetoric of protection, the masculinist virtue of protection. You make a virtue for protecting and of course, when you say you are protecting your home and nation, you find more often than not, the people you have protected become the females.

So you essentially as a male, it is your holy mission, your divine duty and these metaphysical qualities, these virtue qualities are very quickly ingested into this performances. It becomes

metaphysical duty, your divine duty to protect your home which is feminized in quality; you protect your nation which also is feminized in quality more often than not.

So the nation becomes mother which needs protection from the son, the muscular strong son and likewise home also becomes a female space which needs to be protected against any kind of external attack and so it is the job of the male, grown able male to be able to protect these two categories which are conveniently gender, conveniently feminised in quality, Ok.

So and then there are more anecdotal

(Refer Slide Time: 25:23)

keep the secrets of patriarchy, thereby protecting the rule of the father. This rule of silence is upheld when the culture refuses everyone easy access even to the word "patriarchy." Most children do not learn what to call this system of institutionalized gender roles, so rarely do we name it in everyday speech. This silence promotes denial. And how can we organize to challenge and change a system that cannot be named?

It is no accident that feminists began to use the word "patriarchy" to replace the more commonly used "male chauvanism" and "sexism." These courageous voices wanted men and women to



references which Hooks is offering over here, you know to collaborate what she is saying. And this is something that she says about her childhood,

(Refer Slide Time: 25:31)

but later, when he grew up, he was taught that rage was permitted and that allowing rage to provoke him to violence would help him protect home and nation.

We lived in farm country, isolated from other people. Our sense of gender roles was learned from our parents, from the ways we saw them behave. My brother and I remember our confusion about gender. In reality I was stronger and more violent than my brother, which we learned quickly was bad. And he was a gentle, peaceful boy, which we learned was really bad. Although we were often confused, we knew



about her growing up years.

We lived in farm country, isolated from other people. Our sense of gender roles was learned from our parents; from the ways we saw them behave. My brother and I remember our confusion about gender. In reality I was stronger and more violent than my brother, which we learned quickly was bad.

So for a female child to be more violent, to be stronger than a male child was a very undesirable thing because that is something which is not part of the hegemonic narrative.

So the female child should be meek, to be submissive, to be delicate whereas the male child is encouraged to be a strong, to be muscular, to be playful, to be more assertive etc. because you know, the male child is supposedly closer to acquiring agency.

An agency can be acquired only through strength, only through articulations, only through assertions but to a female child to be violent and to be assertive is something which is a problematic thing in a very patriarchal household, in a very patriarchal discourse such as this.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:35)

...in a rural setting, isolated from other people. Our sense of gender roles was learned from our parents, from the ways we saw them behave. My brother and I remember our confusion about gender. In reality I was stronger and more violent than my brother, which we learned quickly was bad. And he was a gentle, peaceful boy, which we learned was really bad. Although we were often confused, we knew one fact for certain: we could not be and act the way we wanted to, doing what we felt like. It was clear to us that our behavior had to follow a predetermined, gendered script. We both learned the word "patriarchy" in our adult life, when we



He was a gentle, peaceful, he was a gentle, peaceful boy, which we learned was really bad. So for a boy to be gentle and peaceful in that kind of a setting was really undesirable, something which was really dangerous in many ways because a boy should be very quickly able to articulate violence, articulate agency through very violent language, through very assertive discourses, assertive vocabulary.

Although we were often confused, we knew one fact for certain: that we could not be and act the way we wanted to, doing what we felt like. It was clear to us that our behavior had to follow a

(Refer Slide Time: 27:10)

...confusion about gender. In reality I was stronger and more violent than my brother, which we learned quickly was bad. And he was a gentle, peaceful boy, which we learned was really bad. Although we were often confused, we knew one fact for certain: we could not be and act the way we wanted to, doing what we felt like. It was clear to us that our behavior had to follow a predetermined, gendered script. We both learned the word "patriarchy" in our adult life, when we learned that the script that had determined what we should be, the identities we should make, was based on patriarchal values and beliefs about gender.



predetermined, gendered script.

We both learned the word patriarchy in our adult life, when we learned that the script that had determined what we should be, the identities we should make, was based on patriarchal values and beliefs about gender.

So the word script is very important over here. So what she is saying essentially is that we are born into a system which already had a script for us. So we become actors in a script. We become passive agents performing and enacting and containing that particular script.

So word script is important because it, it connotes a written quality, there is a written quality about script, is written somewhere.

And that, you know is constantly being written and rewritten and consolidated and revised etc. but then you know we are supposed to, as male and female children, Hooks says quite clearly here, we are supposed to follow that particular script, to follow that particular pattern or behavior and then she says quite clearly that it was very, you know, obvious to us at a very early age that we cannot act in the way we wanted to be.

So what we are seeing over here is an eradication of true agency, the, you know real agency what it really, in terms of what we really what to do as human self, that is done away with, that is been completely eradicated, dismissed summarily.

What we have instead is a compulsion to be conformed, certain scripted kinds of behavior, scripted kinds of knowledge systems, knowledge networks. So we have to follow a certain predetermined gendered script and the script is very, very gendered in qualities. There is a certain script for male child, another script for female child and they are very, very different from each other.

We both learned the word patriarchy in our adult life. So only after we became adults, only after we became, it was much late in (())(29:00) actually learn the word patriarchy

But you know looking back at what we were learning at very a young age, we now realize, Hooks says quite clearly, we now realize that what we are imbibing, conforming, consuming

by patriarchal codes of conduct which was, which were taught to us at a very early age, and was made to indoctrinate us to those kinds of parameters.

So, I was always more interested in challenging patriarchy than my brother because, a

(Refer Slide Time: 29:26)

the word “patriarchy” in our adult life, when we learned that the script that had determined what we should be, the identities we should make, was based on patriarchal values and beliefs about gender.

I was always more interested in challenging patriarchy than my brother was because it was the system that was always leaving me out of things that I wanted to be part of. In our family life of the fifties, marbles were a boy’s game. My brother had inherited his marbles from men in the family; he had a tin box to keep them in. All sizes and shapes, marvelously colored, they were to me the most beautiful objects. We played



it was the system that was always leaving me out of things that I wanted to be part of.

So you know she very quickly figured out that this was system meant to facilitate the brother, facilitate the male child and was denying her certain things, denying her certain privileges, certain access to certain kinds of activities which she liked, which she coveted. So you know, again very quickly we are seeing denial of access.

Access becomes a very important factor in gender. So you do not have access to certain privileges, simply because you happen to be a female, simply because you happen to be of a certain gender, those access, you know, those access points are very, very heteronormative quality as you will see very quickly as we move on in this course

And access comes through privilege, access comes through agency, access as equitable agency you know you can only acquire agency through your access to certain privileges. So she very quickly figures out that she is denied certain privileges, she is denied certain access of privileges simply because she happens to be a female

And that is something that she is rebelling against, she is resentful, far off, because she figures out you know, you know because she happens to be a woman, I do not have certain things, certain toys, certain activities which are very easily and unquestionably given to my brother simply because he happens to be a male child.

So obviously she was more rebellious, she was more subversive, she was more of a problem to patriarchy than her brother because for the brother, he was getting all privileges unquestioned. So he really would not have to revolt, or speak out or articulate his resentment or his confusion because more often than not, that puts him, that stands him in very good stead in terms of privilege.

In our family life of the fifties, marbles were a boy's game. And now

(Refer Slide Time: 31:12)

about gender.

I was always more interested in challenging patriarchy than my brother was because it was the system that was always leaving me out of things that I wanted to be part of. In our family life of the fifties, marbles were a boy's game. My brother had inherited his marbles from men in the family; he had a tin box to keep them in. All sizes and shapes, marvelously colored, they were to my eye the most beautiful objects. We played together with them, often with me aggressively



we have an interesting metaphor, again something which is quickly becoming a metaphor, marbles and she says, I mean the description which comes, follows, it tells in great detail, right that marbles were certain activities, certain ludic activities, l u d i c ludic, playful activities which were, you know exclusively meant for men, exclusively meant for male children and not for woman.

But she says very clearly, not only did she like playing marbles, she was very good at it, she was better at playing marbles than her brother, but then of course the whole point became great problematic and she was denied the marbles.

And then we have a very graphic description of the phallogocentric father, the authoritative father coming at home you know beating her up physically, corporally abusing her.

So it almost becomes an example of child abuse in a very disturbing kind of way where the father figure comes and asserts his authority, his control over the female child by beating her physically and then might confining her to her room. And that becomes a very graphic description, a very uncertain description for us, readers.

So, my brother had inherited his marbles from men in the family. So it almost like a legacy, a masculine legacy, a male legacy handed down through generations. So he had been inherited the brother, inherited the marbles from his father who in turn may have inherited from his father and this went on like that forever. So, so for the men in the family it is part of the masculinist legacy that he has inherited.

He had a tin box to keep them in. All sizes and shapes, marvelously colored, they were to my eye the most beautiful objects. So the marbles became the most beautiful objects to, you know the female child who wished, who desired to play with those marbles.

We played together with them, often with me aggressively clinging to the marble

(Refer Slide Time: 33:02)

clinging to the marble I liked best, refusing to share. When Dad was at work, our stay-at-home mom was quite content to see us playing marbles together. Yet Dad, looking at our play from a patriarchal perspective, was disturbed by what he saw. His daughter, aggressive and competitive, was a better player than his son. His son was passive; the boy did not really seem to care who won and was willing to give over marbles on demand. Dad decided that this play had to end, that both my brother and I needed to learn a lesson about appropriate gender roles.

One evening my brother was given permission

There is nothing about this experience that wounded grown homes and you the same under to reinforce our of patriarchy. In family therapy were created in their parents which patriarchy



I liked best. So you know she often at times find herself clinging to the marble that she liked best, had a sense of possession about the marbles, refusing to share.

When Dad was at work, our stay-at home mom was quite content to see us playing marbles together. So the mother did not really bother so much because that was her work and mother to sit at home. Yet Dad, looking at our play from a patriarchal perspective, was disturbed by what he saw.

His daughter, aggressive and competitive, was a better player than his son. And that was something which was immediately problematic because, you know to be a better player in a male game for a woman was actually quite problematic in many ways because that showed a, that disturbed the general narrative, that disturbed the patriarchal script which was, you know supposed to be conformed to very closely.

And second, it unsettled the entire gendered forms of behavior which was expected, which was, you know produced in that patriarchal household. His daughter, aggressive and competitive, again these two adjectives are very important because these are male adjectives, male are supposed to be aggressive and competitive in terms of acquiring agency in a real world, in a public space whereas women are not supposed to be aggressive or competitive because they are supposed to be nurturous.

They are not supposed to be winners. They are not supposed to be players. They are supposed to be care givers, to be subservient to men. His son was passive. The boy did not really seem to care who won and was willing to give over marbles on demand.

So the boy was exhibiting unmanly behavior. The boy was exhibiting non-competitive behavior, non-patriarchal behavior and that was a very, a bad sign for the patriarchal father figure. The father observed him so you can see the whole thing; the whole theme becomes quite symbolic in quality. We have the phallogocentric authoritative figure observing an act of play, an act of game.

A game is going on; a play is going on. And that play, that ludic activity, that playful activity in a very micro way, in a very micro space, it is actually subverting the gender categories.

It is subverting the gender stereotype, the stereotypes of gender and that becomes a problem for the observing male figure, the observing male authority who very quickly wishes to, redress it, very quickly wishes to, you know put it back together in a way that is satisfactory from a patriarchal perspective.

Dad decided that this play had to end, that both my brother and I needed to learn a lesson about appropriate gender roles. So you find the word decided over here has a sense of irony as well as finality about it. It was the decision taken by the father figure. And again the whole theme can be read very symbolically as it keeps saying and it is one of the beauties of a very good literary essay.

It was a literary essay, it was anecdotal essay where things can become very symbolic, very quickly. They can really quickly slip into symbols, symbols and reference, symbolic semantics and reference and then come back at the literary level as well. So it is the playing between the literary level and symbolic level is something which makes essay quite complex in quality.

And we have seen in the beginning of a scene which is very symbolic in quality with the father figure decides, and of course word decided over here is quite loaded because what is obvious, what is the power that does not, is completely undemocratic in quality.

The father figure has decided to act in certain way and that is the end of it. And then the decision is followed by the act, an act which is obviously very gruesome abuse, a corporal abuse on the female, recalcitrant, the subversive female child is then abused, punished for being subversive

And then the whole aim is to put her back in her place, so she is beaten physically, she is beaten at a bodily level and she is confined to a small room in order to be taught a lesson, in order to be put back on the track, the patriarchal track and that is a very disturbing, unsettling, depressing scene which is described in graphic details over here.

So, Dad decided that I needed to learn a lesson about appropriate gender roles. So, I stop at this point because this requires a lot of, you know, unpacking the scene which follows over here.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:12)



But sufficing to say that what is happening, what is about to happen over here is that father figure Dad, as you can see, you know the word Dad is written with a capital D, so as opposed the word mom which is written in small m. So you know Dad appears in the middle of sentence is written in capital D and also the idea is to make it symbolic, the idea is to make it some kind of authoritative figure.

So Dad is a symbolic father figure, the patriarchal figure, patriarch which is, which would go to any extent, which would take any measures, you know in order to preserve and protect the patriarchal parameters in the household.

And this game of marbles is very simply, apparently seemingly innocuous game of marbles very quickly becomes discursive in quality, very quickly becomes subversive in quality, political quality and then the whole idea from the Dad's perspective is to put back the status quo, to put back the hierarchy, the desired, the hegemonic hierarchy which required the patriarchy in the household.

So, I stop at this point and then I move on to section where the entire act happens, entire abuse happens. Abuse is designed to dismantle, to teach the female child a lesson, abuse

which is meant to, you know recalibrate the hierarchy and patriarchy in the household, the very patriarchal of the household.

So this would be the section that we would take up in next lecture. So, I stop at this point, and I will see you in the next lecture. Thank you for your attention.