

Contextualizing Gender
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Lecture - 07
Gender and Race Consciousness II

Good morning, dear friends. Today we would look at Black Feminism and Womanism, and also how these two strains of thought lead to intersectionality. And understanding of these various strains of feminist theory helps us to contextualize the development of the idea of gender as we understand it today.

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Black Feminism and Womanism

- Black feminist consciousness, as Evelyn M. Simien remarks, is the recognition that African American women are “status deprived because they face discrimination on the basis of race and gender. Having to bear the burdens of prejudice that challenge people of color, in addition to the various forms of subjugation that hinder women, African American women are disadvantaged doubly in the social, economic, and political structure of the United States”.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1300/J014v26n02_04
- Black feminists have articulated interlocking systems of oppression: sexism, racism, and class-discrimination within the all-encompassing structures of “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (bell hooks).




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Black feminist consciousness, recognizes that African American women are status deprived, because they face discrimination on the basis of race and gender. The quote of Evelyn M. Simien also underscores this idea. Black feminist has articulated interlocking systems of oppression.

They have talked about sexism, racism and class discrimination within the all-encompassing structures of as bell hooks has suggested “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy”. So, it is within this over encompassing structure that they look at the interlocking systems of exploitation and oppression.

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- Black women were involved earlier in suffrage and anti-slavery societies which gave rise to the first wave of the feminist movement in the US.
- Anna J. Cooper's work, *A Voice from the South By a Black Woman of the South* (1892) can be cited here. Cooper often spoke and wrote of the double enslavement of Black women -- of race and gender.
- Later they would put a great deal of energy into the Black Women's Club Movement within African American communities.
- In 1920, when the women's suffrage was finally enacted, white women gave up on supporting anti-lynching positions to gain the South's political allegiance. The traditional norms of racism superseded sisterhood.
- By the mid-20th century the struggle for social justice in the form of the Civil Rights Movement, gave primacy to race.
 - Black women continued the double struggle against race and gender oppression.
- A Black feminist lens was adopted primarily in 1960s, when women were excluded from the leadership roles in Civil Rights Movement; and mainstream feminism focused on issues which largely accommodated middle-class White women.





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Black women were involved in different movements which ultimately resulted in the rise of the feminist movement and its first phase in the USA. They were associated with suffrage as well as anti-slavery societies. We can refer to the work of Anna J. Cooper also in this context. However, by 1920s when the white women finally, got their right to vote they stopped supporting anti lynching positions in order to gain certain political allegiance in the South. And we find that the traditional norms of racism supported the concept of sisterhood. By the mid-20th century, the struggle for social justice in the form of civil rights movement had started significantly, but then it also gave primacy to race and at the same time refused to give leadership positions to women.

Black women had continued their struggle against the double oppression of race and gender. The black feminist lens was adopted primarily in 1960s when they felt that they feel doubly excluded from the Civil Rights Movement because of the primacy of race and also because they were denied their due share, and also from the mainstream feminism because they felt that it largely accommodated the demands of the middle-class white women.

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- Alice Walker coined the term "Womanism" to describe the requirements of a Black Feminist Movement.
- First used in her short story, "Coming Apart "(1979), and later in *In Search of our Mothers' Gardens : Womanist Prose* (1983), the term refers to "African- American feminism or the feminism of women of color."
- Walker explains, "I just like to have words that describe things correctly. Now to me ' black feminist' does not do that. I need a word that is organic that really comes out of the culture that really expresses the spirit that we see in black women."
- The term has expanded in meaning since then.



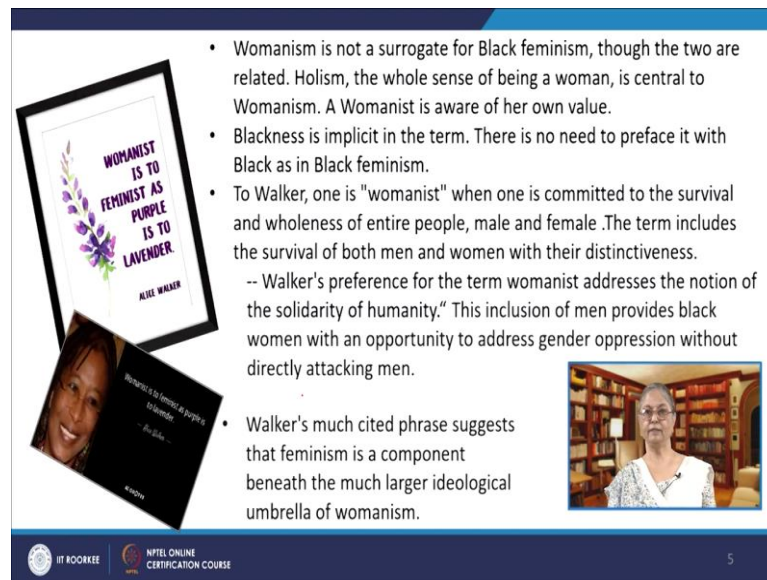
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Alice Walker later on coined the term “Womanism”, to describe the requirements of the Black Feminist Movement. She had used this term for the first time in her short story “Coming Apart”, and later in her book *In Search of our Mothers Gardens: Womanist Prose*.

The term refers to African-American feminism or the feminism of women of color and she explains I quote, “I just like to have words that describe things correctly. Now to me ‘Black feminist’ does not do that. I need a word that is organic, that really comes out of the culture that really expresses the spirit that we see in black women” unquote. The term has of course, expanded in meaning since then.

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WOMANIST IS TO FEMINIST AS PURPLE IS TO LAVENDER
ALICE WALKER

- Womanism is not a surrogate for Black feminism, though the two are related. Holism, the whole sense of being a woman, is central to Womanism. A Womanist is aware of her own value.
- Blackness is implicit in the term. There is no need to preface it with Black as in Black feminism.
- To Walker, one is "womanist" when one is committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. The term includes the survival of both men and women with their distinctiveness.
-- Walker's preference for the term womanist addresses the notion of the solidarity of humanity." This inclusion of men provides black women with an opportunity to address gender oppression without directly attacking men.
- Walker's much cited phrase suggests that feminism is a component beneath the much larger ideological umbrella of womanism.

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Womanism is not a surrogate for Black feminism, though we find that these two concepts are related. Holism, the whole sense of being a woman, is central to womanism. A womanist is aware of her own value as well as of her own femininity. Blackness is implicit in the term. There is no need to preface it with black as is done in Black feminism.


To walker one is womanist, when one is committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male as well as female. The term includes the survival of both men and women in their distinctiveness. Walker's preference for the term womanist addresses the notion of the solidarity of humanity.

This inclusion of men provides black women with an opportunity to address gender oppression without directly attacking men. A phrase by Walker is much cited "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender". This phrase suggests that feminism is a component beneath the much larger ideological umbrella of womanism and not the other way round.

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- Pertinent to quote Laura Gilman, who comments that universal understandings about women's physical or metaphysical nature are incorrect:
- There is no fixed, universalizing biological essence
- Similarly, there are no sociocultural patterns of conduct/activities/structures of feeling that bind all women together as a group.
- Whether celebrating women's biological traits or social attributes in order to compensate for racist and patriarchal representations, or simply deconstructing the mind/nature dichotomy in order to dismantle Western binary thought that marginalized women in the first place, feminists had mistakenly reproduced stereotypical femininity.

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230109926_1



Gillman refutes postmodern feminist approaches that dismantle identity while advancing a material account of social identity, emerging from within spatial-temporal relations

<https://www.betterworldbooks.com/product/detail/9780230623163?hagto=US&rcode=USD>




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It would be pertinent to quote Laura Gilman at this stage. Gilman comments that universal understandings about women's physical or metaphysical nature are incorrect. There are no fixed, universalizing biological essence behind the idea of femininity or masculinity per se. Similarly, there are no socio-cultural patterns of conduct or activity or structures of feeling that bind all women together as a group.

So, whether we celebrate women's biological traits or social attributes in order to compensate for racist and patriarchal representations, or in order to simply deconstruct the dichotomy of mind and nature in order to dismantle the Western binary concepts that have marginalized women in the first place. So, feminist have mistakenly reproduced stereotypical femininity. Gilman has refuted postmodern feminist approaches that is dismantle identity and she advances a material account of social identity emerging from within special temporal relations.

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- Womanist theory/womanism considers that femininity and culture are equally significant in women's lives. Femininity can not be separated from culture, of which it is a part.
- Womanism supports the idea that culture of a woman is the lens through which femininity exists. Culture is not an element of her femininity
- It is the focal point of intersection as opposed to class or some other characteristic.
- As such, a woman's blackness is not a component of her feminism. Instead, her blackness is the lens through which she understands her femininity.
- Audre Lorde, "Black feminism is not white feminism in blackface."



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Womanist theory or womanism considers that femininity and culture are equally significant in the life of a woman. Femininity cannot be separated from culture, of which it is a part. So, womanism supports the idea that culture of a woman is the lens through which femininity exists. Culture is not an element of her femininity.

It is a focal point of intersection as opposed to class or some other characteristic. As such, according to Walker a woman's blackness is not a component of her feminism. Instead, her blackness is the lens through which she understands her femininity. Audre Lorde had commented correctly that "Black feminism is not a white feminism in blackface."

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- Ula Y. Taylor in her essay "Making Waves: The Theory and Practice of Black Feminism,"* summarizes the four elements of womanism, as Walker has pointed out, as following :
- Firstly, it includes "a Black feminist or a feminist of color."
 - The womanish girl exhibits willful, courageous, and outrageous behavior that is considered to be beyond the scope of societal norms.
 - In black folk expression when mothers say to daughters "you acting womanish," they mean that their (daughter's) behaviour is audacious, courageous, responsible or wilful and acting grownups. This expression is the same as "you trying to be grown."
- Secondly, it is one who "appreciates and prefers women's culture."
 - A woman who loves other women sexually/non- sexually. She appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility and women's strength. She is not a separatist, but traditionally Universalist.
 - This aspect later on led to contestations over lesbianism, especially critics like Emilie Townes who supported a spiritual angle to womanism.

* <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00064246.1998.1143091>>



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At this stage, I would like to refer to an essay by Ula Taylor. The essay is titled "Making waves: The Theory and Practice of Black Feminism". She has summarized four elements of womanism, as had been initially pointed out by Walker. First day Walker had suggested that womanism includes "a Black feminist or a feminist of color."


A womanish girl exhibits a willful, courageous and outrageous behavior that is considered to be beyond the scope of societal norms. The black folk expression is womanish. Often, we find that mothers admonish their daughters when they feel that the behavior of their daughter is rather audacious, courageous or rather willful and the daughters are acting as grownups.

The expression is the same as you are trying to be grown. So, in the same manner the womanish girl exhibits, a behavior which is beyond the scope of societal norms. Secondly, it is one who appreciates and prefers women's culture. A woman who loves other women sexually and or non-sexually.

She appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility and their strength also. She is traditionally a universalist not a separatist. It is this aspect which had led to ideological contestations, particularly over the concept of lesbianism. Critics like Emilie Townes who had supported a spiritual angle to womanism, did not admit to this idea as being a part of a womanist ideology.

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- Thirdly, it is "love" of culture and "self."
 - A woman who loves music, loves dance, loves the moon, loves the spirit, loves love, loves struggle, loves the folk and loves herself. Regardless.
- Finally, Walker's the most routinized section of this quadruple expression and the color-coded theoretical parallel -- "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender."-- is simply useful as a literary device in Taylor's opinion.
- *However*, this also means that womanism denotes different things. Both purple and lavender have many things in common but even then they are different.
- Purple as a colour could also be regarded as a multifaceted erotic symbol, a sign of indomitable female spirit and an encoding of joyous vitality of the female spirit.
- The dominant motif of womanism is sisterhood, inherent in advancement. Walker's concept of womanism stresses the sense of solidarity and sharing, the sense of community that brings about a blossoming in self and society.



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Thirdly, it is “love” of culture and “self”. A woman who loves music, dance, loves the moon, loves the spirit, the folks and loves herself. Walker’s most routinized section of this quadruple expression and the color coded theoretical parallel that “womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender”, according to Taylor is simply a literary device. However, according to the opinion of several critics this also means that womanism denotes different things.

Both purple and lavender have many things are in common, but even then, they are different. Purple as a color can also be regarded as a multifaceted erotic symbol, a sign of indomitable female spirit as well as an encoding of joyous vitality of the female spirit. The dominant motif of womanism is sisterhood, which is inherent in advancement. So, Walker’s concept of womanism, stresses the sense of solidarity and sharing, the sense of community that brings about a blossoming in self and society.

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What is Womanism

- This video explains the concept of Womanism and the circumstances under which the term came into existence.

Source: Kat Blaque <<https://youtu.be/XWpOkSCOI>>

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In this video we find that the concept of womanism and the circumstances under which the term came into existence has been explained. Are you a feminist or a womanist, a question a lot of black women will inevitably ask themselves while they are exploring feminism? Is womanism just feminism rebranded or is there a little bit more to it than that. Well, in this video I will be explaining and exploring what is womanism? Womanism is a term coined by Alice Walker who famously wrote the novel *The Color Purple*. The term first appeared in her book *In Search of Our Mother's Garden*, womanist prose published in 1983. She created womanism to censor black women in a feminist movement that largely benefited middle class white women. While black women also benefited from the feminist movement. Their contributions were not acknowledged and thus womanism was created, because white women are often seen as the standard victims of sexism, feminism tends to be very white and rarely considers how black women specifically deal with being black and female.

This often means black women participating in larger feminist movements, tend to feel as though they have to choose between fighting against racism or sexism. Often because of the erasure of black women within the feminist movement, black women participating in feminism, sometimes feel like they have to fight against the racism among feminist who do not see the need to include critiques of white supremacy and their fight against gender depression.

These feminists are referred to as white feminists. Not necessarily because they are white, but because their feminism really only seeks to serve white women, while actively overlooking black women and that is been consistent through the history of feminism where black women were often asked to stand in the back of the line while white women asked for their rights first. And considered the goals of black women to be antagonistic to their own. Alice Walker defines a womanist as a black feminist or feminist of color. A woman who loves other women sexually or non-sexually. And sometimes individual men sexually or non-sexually. She is committed to the survival and wholeness of all people. Male and female. She is not a separatist except periodically for her own health. She loves music, dance. The moon. The spirit. And loves love. And food and roundness. She loves struggle, her people and most of all. She loves herself. It is important to know that while womanism is about loving and appreciating black women and critiquing the classes and racist aspects of white feminism. It is also about supporting and empowering black men who are often integral parts of a black woman's life and family. When it comes to differentiating between womanism and feminism. Alice Walker says, Womanism is to feminism as purple is the lavender. Meaning that there are only slight differences between being a womanist and being a black feminist. Womanist largely do support the larger feminist movement and their ultimate goals, but have carved out their own space to specifically censor black women. Whereas, black feminists tend to do the same, but seek to work within the existing feminist movement and structure.

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- Nonetheless, Walker provides a basis for other scholars to shape the concept for analysis by implying that womanism has a greater *scope* and *intensity* than black feminism. She has given literary, critical and philosophical recognition to black women's intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual wholeness.
- She also stresses the need to create a global community where all members of society are encouraged to survive.
- The quality of being 'Universalist' gives black women more strength and the power to prove that they are worthwhile.
- Womanist theory fuses "race, sex, and class oppression as forming one struggle.
- It flows from a "both/and worldview, a consciousness that allows for the resolution of seeming contradictions not through an either/or negation but through the interaction and wholeness" (Elsa B. Brown, "Womanist Consciousness").
- This factor attracted several African-American women.



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It can be said that the womanist theory fuses race, sex and class oppression as forming one single struggle. Walker has provided a basis for other scholars to shape the concept for analysis by implying that womanism has a greater scope as well as intensity in comparison to black feminism.

She has also given literary critical as well as philosophical recognition to black women's intellectual, spiritual and emotional wholeness. The quality of being 'Universalist' gives black women more strength and power to prove that they are worthwhile, despite several criticism they had to face.

She also stresses the need to create a global community where all members of society are encouraged to survive. It has been commented on that the theory of womanism, tries to avoid the "both and worldview; that is either/ or negation rather focuses on interaction and wholeness", and it is this aspect of womanism which has attracted several African-American women despite having several commonalities with the idea of black feminism.

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- However, Womanism may not be as relational to feminism as Alice Walker implies. Rose Brewer in her article "Black Feminism and Womanism" cites Maparyan (2012), a scholar of Womanist thought, who suggests that there has been a metaphysical architecture of Womanism, "as a form of spiritualized politics." Its distinct logic has often been swallowed into Black feminism.
- Maparyan argues that Womanism reemerged in 2000s on its own terms. Its first period of usage was around 1990s when Alice Walker first termed it. However, there is a period which predates Walker. She cites the work of Womanist critics Clenora Hudson-Weems and Katie Cannon.
- Hudson-Weems coined the term "Africana Womanism" in the late 1980s. She contends that women of African descent have always been Africana womanists by their very nature, dating back to Africana women in antiquity, even before the coinage of the word itself.



*https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781119314967.ch67__of_ch1_jucln_in__pmd_1GV4Ghw2wtH8aOK8Nn7F-NGC1Qkyj78Uz80A-1635257877-0.gq8ZGc9M4pgj-n8uQz1

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Despite several commonalities, womanism perhaps is not as relational to feminism as Walker has implied. Rose Brewer has written a very interesting article "Black Feminism and Womanism." In this article brewer has quoted Maparyan, a scholar of womanist thought, who suggested that there has been a metaphysical architecture of womanism as a form of spiritualized politics and its distinct logic has often been swallowed into black feminism. Maparyan argues that womanism initially started around 1990s when Alice

Walker had first coined the term, but in the beginning of the 21st century around the 2000 it has reemerged. There is a period also which has predated Walker.

And in order to substantiate this idea, she quotes the work which has taken place even before Walker. She cites the work of womanist critics Clenora Hudson Weems and Katie Cannon. Hudson-Weems had coined the term “Africana Womanism” in the late 1980s. She had suggested that women of African descent have always been Africana womanists by their very nature. They date back to Africana women in antiquity even before the coinage of the word itself.

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- Katie Cannon is credited with founding womanist theology and ethics as a field. Her book *Black Womanist Ethics* (1988) is considered as a pioneering work in this field.
- While Womanism was pioneered by women of African descent, Maparyan does not limit it to Africana feminism. She calls it self-authored, divinely inspired knowledge. It has a distinct internal logic of black political organizing, but challenges the unquestioned dominance of black men in those formations.
- Taylor comments that despite the contention that “womanism is more encompassing, black feminism and womanism would seem to be nearly interchangeable empowerment theories”.

BLACK WOMANIST ETHICS
KATIE G. CANNON

Gift of Time, Alice Walker, and Womanist Ethics

RAISING HER VOICE: African American Women Journalists Who Changed America

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Another critic who has been referred to by a Maparyan here, is Katie Cannon, who is credited with founding the idea of womanist theology and ethics in a book which was published in 1988. While womanist was pioneered by women of African descent, Maparyan does not limit it to Africana feminism. She suggests that it is self-authored, as well as divinely inspired knowledge which has a distinct internal logic of black political organizing.

But it also challenges the unquestioned dominance of black men in these formations. Taylor however, comments that despite the contention that “womanism is more encompassing, black feminism and womanism would seem to be merely interchangeable empowerment theories.”

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Commonalities

- They acknowledge that the activism of black women should be based on their cultural heritage which rejects docility. It should enable Black women to resist oppression.
- They encourage black women to value and love self, regardless of outsiders' perceptions.
- They recognize black women's responsible commitment to creating a whole community void of dominance.
- Despite the similarities between these paradigms, many womanists continue to disclaim black feminism.



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In order to prove this point Taylor looks at commonalities between these two theoretical instances. Both theories acknowledge that the activism of black women should be based on their cultural heritage, a cultural heritage which rejects docility. It must empower Black women to resist their oppression.

They also encourage black women to value and love their own self, irrespective of the critique of other people, the society in general. They recognize the responsible commitment a black woman has towards creating a whole community which should be free of any type of dominance. Despite the similarities between these two theoretical paradigms, many womanists continue to disclaim black feminism.

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- Both womanism and black feminism recognize a distinct women's culture. Perhaps womanism allows black women a "femininity" denied under "feminism."
- Prior to the modern civil rights movement, enslaved black women were written about by historians as if they were androgynous. Sojourner Truth's feminism acknowledged that slavery denied black women "feminine" qualities, and in particular their right to be mothers. By the second wave, white feminists located their oppression in "female" roles, and several activists connected exterior "female" attire to their oppression.
- But for many black women, attire and the home were not the principal sites of their oppression. In fact, the denial of black women's "femininity" has been the main vehicle used to exploit their labor power and womanhood. (Ula Y. Taylor, " Making Waves: The Theory and Practice of Black Feminism"*)

*<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00064246.1998.11430912>



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Perhaps both black feminism as well as womanism recognize a distinct women's culture, but womanism allows black women to have a femininity, which had been denied under feminism. Prior to the modern civil rights movement, enslaved black women were written about by historians as if they were androgynous. Sojourner Truth's feminism acknowledged that slavery denied black women "feminine" qualities, and in particular their right to be mothers.

By the second wave, white feminists located their oppression in female roles, and several activists connected exterior female attire to their oppression that is criticism of women's attire, high heel shoes etc, but for many black women their dress or their home were not the principal sites of their oppression. The denial of black women's femininity had been the main vehicle which has been used to exploit their labor power as well as womanhood.

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Work, Family and Black Women's Oppression

- One of the core themes in U.S. Black feminist thought is analysing Black women's work, especially Black women's labour market victimization as "mules" (Hurstun, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pg 16).
 - As dehumanized objects, *mules* are living machines and can be treated as part of the scenery. Fully human women are less easily exploited.
- Their paid work is organized within intersecting oppressions of race, class, and gender. Their overrepresentation in less paid service work is read as a continuity of their racial segregation and slavery.
 - Within Black feminist-influenced scholarship, African-American women are often presented as constrained but empowered figures, even in extremely difficult labour market settings (Terborg-Penn 1985).
- Historical underpinnings of slavery and racism can be seen in the present day status of African-American women.



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It is from this point onward that we look at several aspects of the oppression of a black woman under the systems of slavery. The ramifications of which can be seen even in the contemporary societies. One of the core themes in American Black feminist thought, is to analyze black women's work, especially their labor market victimization as mules.

The controlling image of mules has been a legacy of the slavery days. Mules were dehumanized objects, they were living machines and therefore, could be treated as part of the scenery. A fully human women, a white woman for example, during the days of slavery was less easily exploited. The paid work of black women is still organized within the intersecting oppressions of race, class and gender.

Their overrepresentation in lesser paid work is still a continued reality and it is a ramification of their racial segregation and slavery. However, within black feminist influence scholarship, we find that African American women are often presented as being constrained, but is still empowered figures, who are able to have certain dignity even in extremely difficult labour market settings. So, we can say that the historical underpinnings of slavery and racism can be seen in the present-day financial status of African American women.

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- They were enslaved and humbled like their men; but unlike them they were forced into sexual roles that threatened to undermine their sense of worth, also turning the experience of motherhood into a trauma.
- African American slave mothers were put in a contradictory and irreconcilable position, as their parental role was forcibly subordinated to the economic interest of slaveholders. These mothers and their children were not seen as human beings. Families were separated and destroyed.
- Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987)– in which infanticide is viewed as liberation - remains to be the most poignant fictional testimony to the despair generations of such mothers faced.
- Similarly poignant is portrayal of women in *12 Years a Slave* - a 2013 film.
 - Based on the memoir written by Solomon Northup, which reveals what happened after Solomon – a free black man living in New York in pre-Civil War America – was kidnapped and sold into slavery.




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African American women were enslaved and humbled like their men: but unlike them they were forced into sexual roles that threatened to undermine their sense of worth, also turning the experience of motherhood into a trauma. Slave mothers were put in a contradictory and irreconcilable position, as their paternal role was forcibly subordinated to the economic interest of slave holders.

These mothers as well as their children were not seen as human beings. Families were separated and destroyed. In this connection we can refer to Toni Morrison's famous novel *Beloved*, which views infanticide as a form of liberation and it remains one of the most poignant fictional testimony to the despair, generations of such mother had faced.


Similarly, poignant is the portrayal of a women in a 2013 film, *12 Years a Slave*. This film *12 Years a Slave* is based on the memoir which is written by Solomon Northup. It reveals what happened after Solomon; a free black man living in New York has been treacherously sold into slavery.

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Eliza and Platt

- Eliza Berry was the mother of Randall and Emily. She was cruelly separated from her children when she was sold to William Ford in Louisiana.
- She never recovered from the emotional devastation of losing her children, mourning them the rest of her life and dying without ever seeing them.




Source: Summit Entertainment. <<https://youtu.be/WokRnHTAAk>>

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So, the film focuses on the protagonist Solomon, but it also has certain women slaves. The clipping which we are using here displays, how Eliza and Platt are being sold into slavery to separate slave owners. Eliza Berry was the mother of two children. She was cruelly separated from her children when she was sold to a slave owner in Louisiana. And was consequently separated from her children. She never recovered from the emotional devastation of losing her children, mourning them till the last days of her life and dying without ever seeing them.

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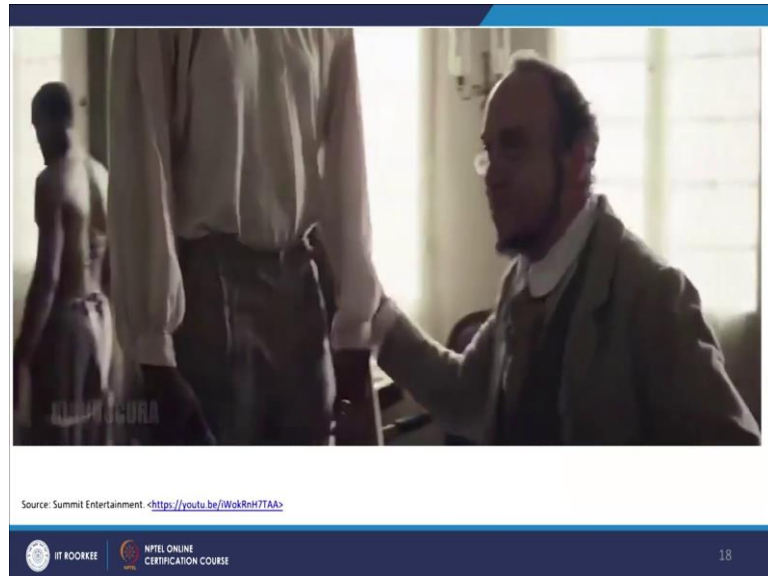
Source: Summit Entertainment. <<https://youtu.be/WokRnHTAAk>>

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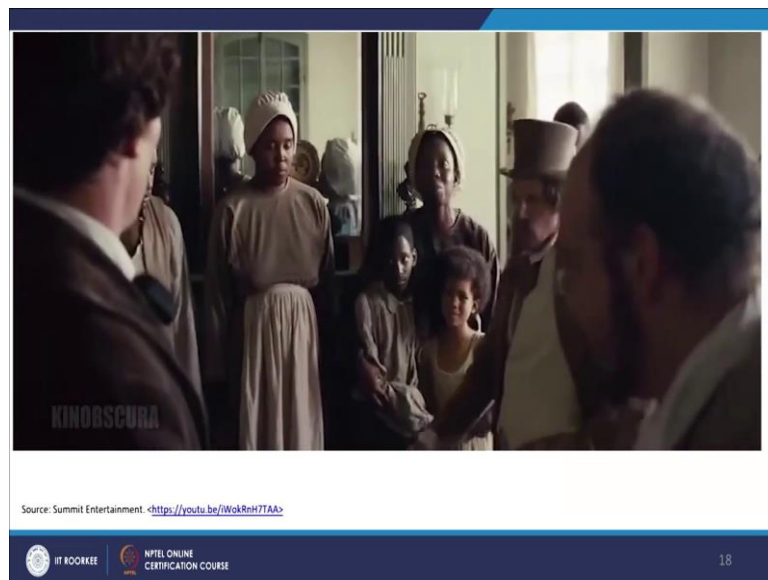
Mister Ford, splendid seeing you sir, what catches your fancy, this lounge is very brawny yeah.

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How much are the ones Platt and Eliza?

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Yes, a 1000 for Platt, oh this is a Negro of considerable talent I assure you. 700 for Eliza, my fairest price.

You would accept a note.

Please sir.

Of course, (Refer Time: 23:47).

Do not divide my family, do not take me unless you take my children.

Eliza quiet.

You will have the most faithful slave in me.

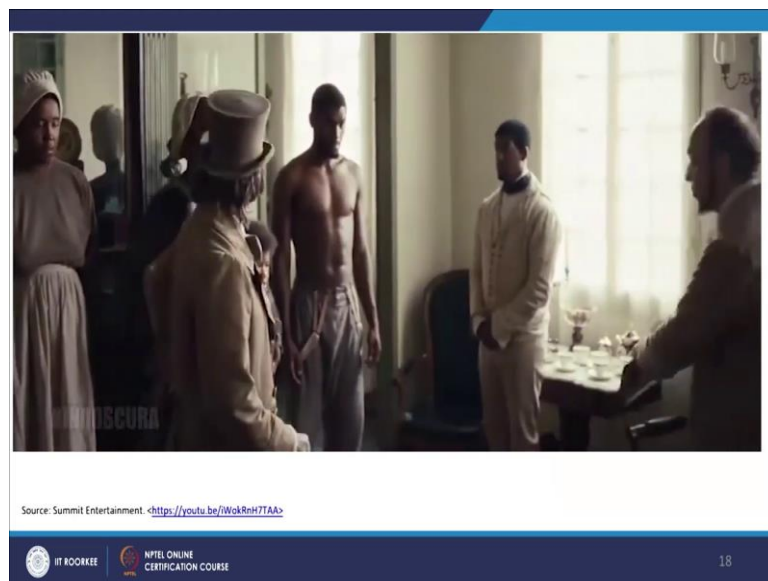
(Refer Time: 23:54).

The most faithful slave has ever lived, but I have begged you do not separate us.

Your price for the boy?

Yes, the boy.

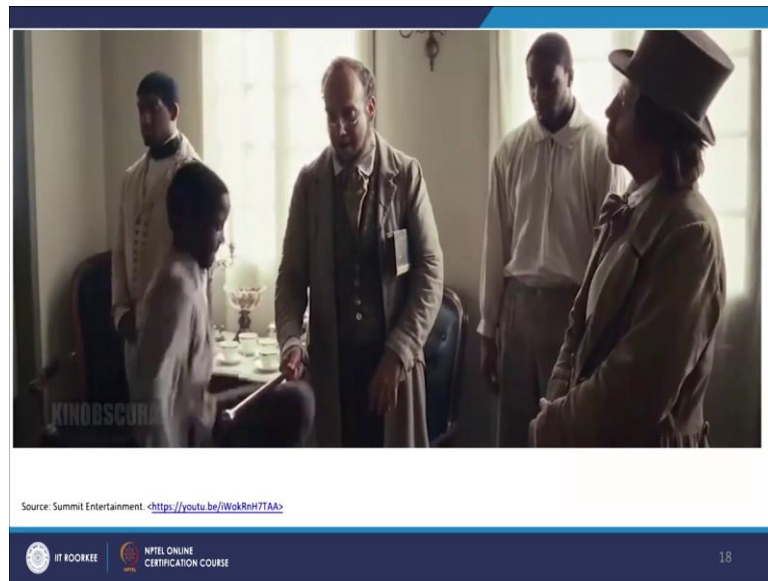
(Refer Slide Time: 23:58)



Please.

Stop it. I will give you something to cry about, Randall come forward, come.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:03)



Now, you see how fit this boy is like ripe fruit. May I take your stick a moment, observe this Randall, jump, jump, jump, run, run, run, very good, higher, you see this very likely. He will grow into a fine beast, 600 for the boy fair and final.

Done.

Superb a moment please Mister Ford.

Please.

Eliza.

How much for the little girl?

If you have no use for her, one so young will bring you no profit.

No no no no I cannot tell the girl, no there is heaps.

Please.

And piles of money to be made from her.

Please sir.

She is a beauty one of the regular bloods (Refer Time: 24:46) thick lip, bullet headed, cotton pick (Refer Time: 24:48) is here.

Child man.

Please.

For God's sake you are not sentimental at the least.

My sentimentality extends the length of a coin. Now do you take the (Refer Time: 25:01).

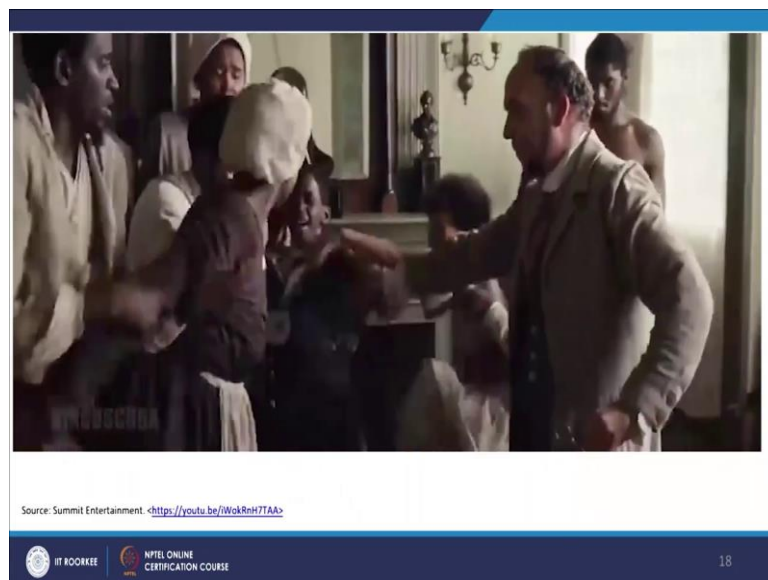
Oh god.

Mr. Forder do you pass on them on.

Please please.

I will take the ones Platt and Eliza.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:12)



Sold Eliza and Platt.

No, I would not (Refer Time: 25:11).


(Refer Time: 25:12).

Do not take them from me, please (Refer Time: 25:16).

(Refer Slide Time: 25:22)

Slave Narratives: Slave narratives comprise one of the most influential traditions in American literature, shaping the form and themes of some of the most celebrated and controversial writing, both in fiction and in autobiography, in the history of the United States.

- From 1760 to the end of the Civil War in the United States, approximately 100 autobiographies of fugitive or former slaves appeared. After slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865, at least 50 former slaves wrote or dictated book-length accounts of their lives.
 - The first slave narrative to become an international best-seller was the two-volume *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano; or, Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (1789), which traces Equiano's career from boyhood in West Africa, through the dreadful transatlantic Middle Passage, to eventual freedom and economic success as a British citizen.





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At this point I would also like to refer to slave narratives which comprise one of the most influential traditions in American literature, shaping the form and themes of some of the most celebrated and also controversial writing, both in fiction and an autobiography, in the history of the USA. From 1760s to the end of the Civil War in the US, approximately 100 autobiographies of fugitives or former slaves had appeared. After slavery was abolished in 1865, at least 50 former slaves wrote or dictated book-length accounts of their lives.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:05)

- With the rise of the abolition movement in the early 19th century came a demand for hard-hitting eyewitness accounts of the harsh realities of slavery in the United States.
 - The American slave narrative centres on the narrator's rite of passage from slavery in the South to freedom in the North.
 - Slavery is documented as a condition of extreme deprivation, necessitating increasingly forceful resistance.
 - After a harrowing and suspenseful escape, the slave's attainment of freedom is signalled not simply by reaching the "free states" of the North but by taking a new name and dedication to antislavery activism.

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself (1845), often considered the epitome of the slave narrative, links the quest for freedom to the pursuit of literacy, thereby creating a lasting ideal of the African American hero committed to intellectual as well as physical freedom. Revising and expanding his original life story, Douglass wrote *My Bondage and My Freedom* in 1855, to recount his continuing struggle for freedom against Northern racism.



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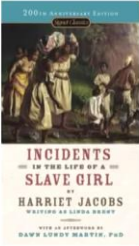
With the rise of the abolition movement in the early 19th century a growing demand was felt for hard hitting eyewitness accounts of the harsh realities of slavery. The American slave narratives centre on the narrative's rite of passage from slavery in the South to freedom in the North.

Slavery is documented as a condition of extreme deprivation, necessitating increasingly forceful resistance. And after a harrowing and suspenseful escape, the slave's attainment of freedom is signaled not only by reaching the free states, but also by taking a new name and a dedication to anti-slavery movements.


The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave, Written by Himself which was published in 1845 is often considered to be the epitome of the slave narratives. It also creates a lasting ideal of an African American hero who is committed to intellectual as well as physical freedom as he wants to pursue literacy. However, a couple of years afterwards in 1855, Douglass also wrote another book *My Bondage and My Freedom*, to recount his continuing struggle for freedom against Northern racism.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:33)

- In the wake of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, American slave narratives contributed to the mounting national debate over slavery.
- The most widely read and hotly disputed American novel of the 19th century, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), was profoundly influenced by its author's reading of slave narratives, to which she owed many graphic incidents and models for some of her most memorable characters.



- In 1861 Harriet Jacobs, the first African American female slave to author her narrative, published *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, which depicted her resistance to her master's sexual exploitation and her ultimate achievement of freedom for herself and her two children.




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The most widely read and hotly disputed American novel of the 19th century, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was also profoundly influenced by the slave narratives. Harriet Beecher Stowe had been influenced by her reading of these narratives and she also owed several graphic incidents and models for some of these memorable characters.

Most of these slave narratives were written and published by men. In 1861, it was Harriet Jacobs who became the first African American female slave to author her narrative, depicting her resistance to her master's sexual exploitation and also her ultimate achievement of freedom for herself and for her two children.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:23)

- Consistent denial of essential resources to African-American women has resulted in their exclusion and manipulation. They were exploited as economic resource during slavery and also faced violence as women.
- Derisory or absent incomes for many blacks is the a main issue of their social life even now. This has created many frustrations among the black community, has repercussions on the management of their own family and results in what is called the matriarchal poor family.
- Gloria Naylor (1950-2016), a prominent novelist has underscored the gendered exploitation of women in her novels, underscoring the significance of economic stability for Black women.
- *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), *Linden Hills* (1985) and *Mama Day* (1988) may be particularly mentioned in this context.



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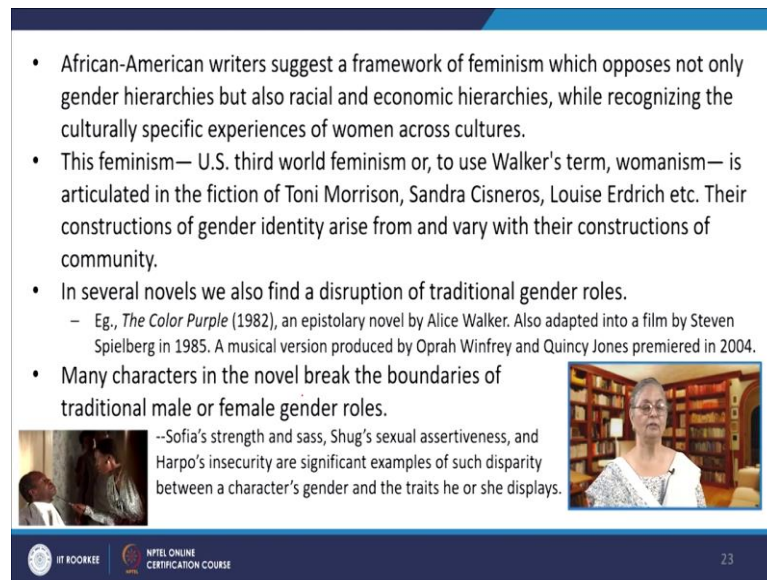
During the slavery African American women were exploited as economic resources and they also faced violence as a woman. This consistent denial of essential resources has resulted in their exclusion and manipulation. Derisory or absent incomes for many blacks has become a main issue of their social life even now.

This has created several frustrations within the community, and also has repercussions on the management of the families and results in what is normally called as matriarchal poor family. A prominent American novelist Gloria Naylor has underscored the gendered exploitation of women in her novels, highlighting the significance of economic stability for Black women in novels, like of *The Women Brewster Place*, *Linden Hills* and *Mama Day*.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:24)

- African-American writers suggest a framework of feminism which opposes not only gender hierarchies but also racial and economic hierarchies, while recognizing the culturally specific experiences of women across cultures.
- This feminism— U.S. third world feminism or, to use Walker's term, womanism— is articulated in the fiction of Toni Morrison, Sandra Cisneros, Louise Erdrich etc. Their constructions of gender identity arise from and vary with their constructions of community.
- In several novels we also find a disruption of traditional gender roles.
 - Eg., *The Color Purple* (1982), an epistolary novel by Alice Walker. Also adapted into a film by Steven Spielberg in 1985. A musical version produced by Oprah Winfrey and Quincy Jones premiered in 2004.
- Many characters in the novel break the boundaries of traditional male or female gender roles.

--Sofia's strength and sass, Shug's sexual assertiveness, and Harpo's insecurity are significant examples of such disparity between a character's gender and the traits he or she displays.



So, African American writers suggest a framework of feminism which opposes not only gender hierarchies, but also racial and economic hierarchies. They also recognize the culturally specific experiences of women across cultures. This aspect of feminism, US third world feminism or, to use Walker's term womanism is articulated in the fiction of several African American writers. For example, Toni Morrison, Sandra Cisneros, Louise Erdrich etc.

Their constructions of gender identity arise from and also vary with the construction of community in their work. In several novels we also find a disruption of traditional gender roles. For example, we can refer to *The Color Purple*; an epistolary novel by Alice Walker which has also been adopted into a film by Steven Spielberg, and a musical version has also been produced by Oprah Winfrey.

Many characters in the novel break the boundaries of traditional general rules as male or as female. We can refer to Sofia's strength, Shug's sexual assertiveness, as well as Harpo's insecurity. This context would be further discussed in detail in the next week when we will discuss the idea of gender blurring.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:53)

Bernardine Evaristo

- One of Britain's innovative contemporary writers.
- Born in London and of mixed European and African parentage, Evaristo's background is an essential resource for her fictional writing.
 - Her writing reflects her plural, diasporic heritage, which marks her as both a British and a post-colonial writer.
 - Compared with new generation of British-born, Black writers like Andrea Levy, Jackie Kay and Hanif Kureishi who, in the words of Caryl Phillips, feel 'both of and not of' this country.
- For Evaristo to be 'Black' and 'British' is not a contradiction.
- Her narratives raise crucial questions around what it means to be 'here', producing post-national landscapes in which Britain appears at the crossroads for a series of global movements and migrations.
- Suggests a continuity in terms of womanism.



Source: Athom 123




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We can also refer to the work of Bernardine Evaristo; a more contemporary British writer known for her innovative writing style. Her diasporic and pluralistic heritage is also reflected in her work and she is often compared with the new generation of British born black writers, like Andrea Levy or Jackie Kay, who feel ‘both of and not of’ this country to quote Caryl Phillips. So, for Evaristo to be ‘Black’ and to be ‘British’ is not a contradiction and her themes also suggest a continuity in terms of womanism.


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Girl, Woman, Other

- The novel received the 2019 Booker Prize award alongside Margaret Atwood's *The Testament*.
- A panoramic, polyphonic novel, it follows the lives of 12 different characters living in the UK throughout several decades.
- It tells the stories of a loosely connected group of people, including a young girl, an elderly woman, a non-binary character -- mostly black women in complex mother-daughter relationships -- across 120 years of British history.
- Every character is a descendant of black immigrants who came to the United Kingdom a long time before.
 - Experimental - written partly in prose and partly as a poem or simply a poem in prose, without using initial capital letters in sentences and full-stops apart from the endings of individual (sub)chapters.



Source: Hamish Hamilton



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Her novel *Girl, Woman and Other* has received the 2019 Booker Prize award alongside Margaret Atwood's *The Testament*. This is a panoramic as well as a polyphonic novel following the lives of 12 different characters living in the UK throughout several decades.

These characters are mostly in complex mother and daughter relationship and through them the writer is trying to look at the 120 years of British history. Each of these character is a descendant of black immigrant who had come to the country a long time before.

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Stigma as an Agent of Change

- The female characters in the novel deal with oppression and stigma in several ways.
- They do not subscribe to the role of powerless victims but are critical to the world around them.
 - Jazz, Amma's daughter refuses to accept subordination: "I mean, how on earth can you be a Professor of Modern Life when your terms of reference are all male, and actually all-white (Evaristo 2019, 61).
 - In the oppressed women, there is rage and readiness to fight: "I'm not a victim, don't ever treat me like a victim, my mother didn't raise me to be a victim" (Evaristo 2019, 61).
- They are aware of the need to talk about their subordinate position, name it, and oppose it, especially when it has become a part of them as an internalized self-oppression. Evaristo shows the intertwining of various forms and degrees of oppression and underprivileged status:
 - "...yes but I'm black, Courts, which makes me more oppressed than anyone who isn't, except Waris who is the most oppressed of all ... in five categories: black, Muslim, female, poor, hijabed ..." (Evaristo 2019, 80)




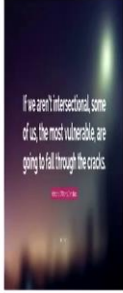
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The female characters in the novel deal with oppression and stigma in several ways in the same manner as has been pointed out by African American writers, but they do not subscribe to the role of powerless victims, but are critical to the world around them. They are also aware of a need to talk about their subordinate position, name it, and also oppose it, particularly when it has become a part of them as internalized self-oppression. She also looked at different degrees and various forms of oppression and underprivileged status through these characters.

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- The continuity of such intertwining bases of oppression leads us to intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.
- An intersectional approach shows the way that people's social identities can overlap, creating compounding experiences of discrimination.
- According to her it offers a lens through which we can see the way "various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other."
- "All inequality is not created equal," she says. "We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts."

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>



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The continuity of such intertwining bases of oppression leads us to intersectionality, a term which had been coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. An intersectional approach shows the way that peoples social identities can overlap and create compounding experiences of discrimination. The concept of intersectionality offers a lens through which we can see the manner in which various forms of inequality, often operate together and exacerbate each other.

To quote Crenshaw, "all equality is not created equal". Further she says, "we tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What is often missing is how some people are subject to all of these in the experience is not just the sum of its parts" unquote. It is this idea of intersectionality which we will carry forward and discuss in the coming module. Thank You.

(Refer Slide Time: 34:04)

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