

Introduction to Cultural Studies
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Lecture – 44
Bell Hooks - Understanding Patriarchy - V

So, hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled introduction to cultural studies, we were looking at bell hooks essay, understanding patriarchy, we have already had a series of lectures on this essay, I am just summarize quickly what you have covered so far and then move on with these text, so we see how one of the qualities of this particular essay is this exponentiality and directness.

So, it often will lies on anecdotal evidence, exponential evidence and obviously, there is very rich discursive framework as well which this essay still draws on and one of the very interesting and complex things which this essay does is it moves away from this very binaristic understanding of bad man and victim women and talks about how patriarchy has a system; patriarchy has system to make discursive exponential system.

It can affect men as well as women more often it can affect men in worse ways and it can affect women and again Hooks moves away from this understanding of patriarchy as you know some definite ownership that men have a women or some kind of a privilege system that only privileges man or women, so it is a very interesting model that she offers and she obviously is decrying and it is quite critical of that brand of feminism which make men; which look at men as enemies of feminism.

So, again this is a more complex and more holistic understanding of patriarchy one which needs attention especially in a course like this okay, so she talks about how the what patriarchy was used by feminists quite rightly, so to replace words such as male chauvinism and sexism because patriarchy the way hooks defines and describes that you know it has the root of all the problems affecting gender behaviour, affecting gender discrimination etc.

So, the patriarchy becomes a system; consolidated system which is consolidated by men as well as women and then we also saw instances or how Hooks say is you know it is not successfully true that family is run by a women only when the father figure is conspicuously absent you know ((02:19)) those families end up being less patriarchal than other families more often than there be more patriarchal.

So, again the question is not really about biological determinism, it is on really about whether someone's biologically male, a biologically female, it is about a question of appropriation to what extent are you appropriating the system of patriarchy to what extent are you enacting the system of patriarchy you know how to ((02:44)) systematizing it in terms of a consolidated behaviour okay.

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It is no accident that feminists began to use the word "patriarchy" to replace the more commonly used "male chauvinism" and "sexism." These courageous voices wanted men and women to become more aware of the way patriarchy affects us all. In popular culture the word itself was hardly used during the heyday of contemporary feminism. Antimale activists were no more eager than their sexist male counterparts to emphasize the system of patriarchy and the way it works. For to do so would have automatically exposed the notion that men were all-powerful and women powerless, that all men were oppressive and women always and only victims. By placing

So, this is a section on your screen and where hook says, it is no accident that feminists began to use the word patriarchy, so I am just revising a little bit what you have already done and then I move on with this the main lecture where she says that it is no accident that feminists began to use the word patriarchy to replace the more commonly used male chauvinism and sexism, so the words male chauvinism and sexism were replaced by patriarchy.

Because patriarchy was a loaded word with more loaded connotations, these courageous voices wanted men and women to become more aware of the way patriarchy affects us all, so again the

question of effect becomes very important and the question of how men and women get affected equally by patriarchy becomes very important and obviously, Hooks is quite critical and she says in one of the essays that she had written not in any form.

An essay called Men; Comrades in struggles. so again the whole question is should be as inclusive as possible taking men as comrades and struggle against patriarchy where she had said about clearly, that separatist ideology encourages women to ignore the negative impact of sexism on male personhood, so you know it is not a question of transferring blame, it is not a question of ownership of victimhood, it is not a question of you know localized in victimhood and women and localized in oppression on men.

If you retain that frame, if you retain that structure then obviously, patriarchy cannot be dismantled, a patriarchal can only be dismantled when men and women take a more collaborative approach and this collaborative culture, this collaborative critical idiom is something that hooks is advocating in her brand of feminism okay, so that is something that we have seen already and that is something that we keep coming back to you throughout this essay okay.

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Patriarchy demands of men that they become and remain emotional cripples. Since it is a system that denies men full access to their freedom of will, it is difficult for any man of any class to rebel against patriarchy, to be disloyal to the patriarchal parent, be that parent female or male.



So, this should be on your screen where Hooks start talking about how patriarchy demands of men, so this is a section on your screen which should be read in some details now, where Hook

says patriarchy demands of men that they become and remain emotional cripples, since it is a system that denies men full access to their freedom of will, it is difficult for any man of any class to rebel against patriarchy to be disloyal to the patriarchal parent to be that parent female or male.

So, in a way as it already mentioned I may have already mentioned that we can find some resonances of this being enacted at an exponential level and (()) (05:22) shooting an elephant where the whole idea of going against patriarchal system which is obviously part of the imperial system becomes a very, very difficult task and always ends up being a slave to patriarchy, he ends up being a slave to the imperial logic, to the imperial realm and I cannot rebelled against it.

So, in a patriotic demand some men that they face their emotions they do away with the emotions and so in a way that cripples them emotionally okay.

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The man who has been my primary bond for more than twelve years was traumatized by the patriarchal dynamics in his family of origin. When I met him he was in his twenties. While his formative years had been spent in the company of a violent, alcoholic dad, his circumstances changed when he was twelve and he began to live alone with his mother. In the early years of our relationship he talked openly

So and this is an example that hooks offers over here you know and she offers again only key things about this essay has in found was black skin white marks as everybody have mentioned that it keeps drawing on anecdotal evidence that keeps drawing on personal examples and therein lies the directness, the immediacy of this particular essay at an exponential immediate level. So, this is section that hooks talks about a real case study if you will of a person that she saw for his hand and the person that she was intimate with how patriarchy operated on the person.

And how over the changes that she observed in that person over course of time, so this is what she says over here, the man who has been my primary bond for more than 12 years was traumatized by the patriarchal dynamics in his family of origin, so this should be on the screen when I met him he was in his 20's while his formative years had been spent in a company of a violent, alcoholic dad, his circumstances changed when he was 12 and he began to live alone with his mother.

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about his hostility and rage toward his abusing dad. He was not interested in forgiving him or understanding the circumstances that had shaped and influenced his dad's life, either in his childhood or in his working life as a military man.

In the early years of our relationship he was extremely critical of male domination of women and children. Although he did not use the word "patriarchy," he understood its meaning and he opposed it. His gentle, quiet manner often led folks to ignore him, counting him among the weak and the powerless. By the age of thir

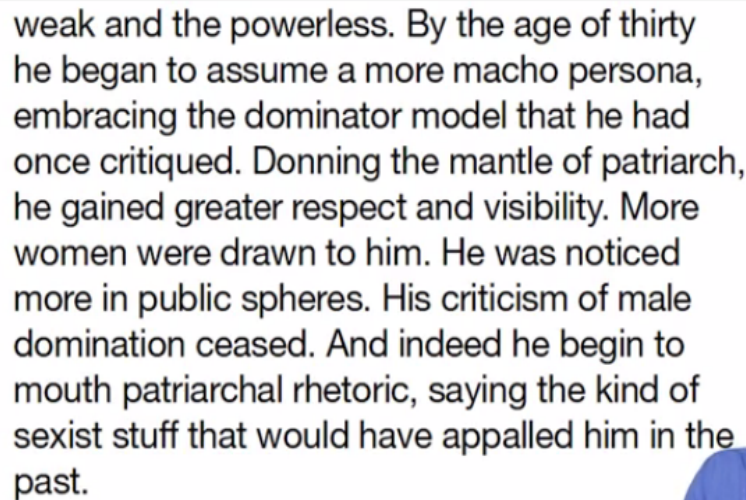


In the early years of a relationship, he talked openly about his hostility and rage towards his abusing dad, he was not interested in forgiving him or understanding the circumstances that had shaped and influenced his dad's life either in his childhood or in his working life as a military man, so it is a very interesting example, so we are talking about a person who grew up in a certain abusive family where the father was abusive an alcoholic and violent.

And then he obviously, he ended up hating the father, he ended up not forgiving the father but then he was not interested in questioning and looking at the background of his father, the childhood of his father the fact that his father happened to be a military man, the father happened to have may have had a difficult childhood, I mean these are questions that went; no, no unquestioned and one bothered about these questions alone.

And that is an important thing for hooks, in the early years of our relationship, he was extremely critical of male domination of women and children although, he did not use the word patriarchy, he understood its meaning and he opposed it, his gentle quiet manner often led folks to ignore him counting him among the weak and the powerless.

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weak and the powerless. By the age of thirty he began to assume a more macho persona, embracing the dominator model that he had once critiqued. Donning the mantle of patriarch, he gained greater respect and visibility. More women were drawn to him. He was noticed more in public spheres. His criticism of male domination ceased. And indeed he began to mouth patriarchal rhetoric, saying the kind of sexist stuff that would have appalled him in the past.

So, again the question of peer pressure, the question of collective gaze comes into being quite interestingly, so when he is not living up to the patriarchal principles he ends up being mocked at he ends up being jeered up, he ends up being ridiculed and all, so considered adequate enough to be patriarchal, so by the age of 30, he began to assume a more macho persona, embracing the dominant; dominator model that he had once critiqued.

So, again what hooks is offering over here is the shifts in one person, the changes in one person, the exponential changes in one person, so here is a person a male grew up in a abuse of setting with an alcoholic father, a violent father and that kind of a traumatic childhood left scars in his mind and he ended up hating male violence, he ended up hating male domination and he was very sensitive meek gentle person.

But then he was ridiculed by his male peers, he was sort of mocked out by his male peers and he was considered inadequate by his male peers and so after point of time when he reached the age 30, he began to appropriate a more macho persona, a manly; quote on quote manly persona and

that was a very visible and conspicuous change that hooks seems to notice and describe over here.

So, he appropriated that he donned the same dominated model that he had once critiqued as a child as an early as a young man, donning the mantle of patriarch, he gained greater respect and visibility, more women were drawn to him, he was noticed more in public space, his criticism of male domination ceased and indeed it began to mouth patriarchal rhetoric saying the kind of sexist stuff that he would have appalled him in the past.

So, where is appropriation, I mean look at the different orders of appropriation over here, there is a ((09:51)) order, there is a linguistic order, he begins to speak in a particular language which is sexist, sometimes abusive, sometimes violent, the violence and sexism obviously directed against women but interestingly and almost perversely this is what makes him popular among women, more women are drawn to him and it becomes more visible in the public space.

So, again a question of public's pair becomes very important, the public space becomes very important and as we know, we have really spent some time talking about private and public space especially when we looked at Hannah Arendt, Leotol etc. so the question of public appearance, the question of public presence becomes very important.

And if you are in the public presence you know then more often and all he basically, appropriate it helps you if you appropriate the dominant discursive model and the dominant discursive model over here is therefore for a man to be a very alpha male and violent and abusive and you know patriarchal and that dominant discursive model becomes a convenient appropriation for him because then he becomes popular he rises in a popularity ladder and you know more people taking more seriously etc.

And he ends up saying he ends up mouth in a same patriarchal logic, the same patriarchal rhetoric he ends up saying things which appalled him in the past okay.

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These changes in his thinking and behavior were triggered by his desire to be accepted and affirmed in a patriarchal workplace and rationalized by his desire to get ahead. His story is not unusual. Boys brutalized and victimized by patriarchy more often than not become patriarchal, embodying the abusive patriarchal masculinity that they once clearly recognized as evil. Few men brutally abused as boys in the name of patriarchal maleness courageously resist the brainwashing and remain true to themselves. Most males conform to patriarchy in one way or another.

So, these changes in his thinking and behaviour were triggered by his desire to be accepted and affirmed in a patriarchal work place and rationalized by his desire to get ahead. His story is not unusual, boys brutalised and victimized by patriarchy more often than not become patriarchal embodying the abuse of patriarchal masculinity that they once clearly recognized as evil. Few men brutally abused his boys in the name of patriarchal maleness courageously resists the brainwashing and remain true to themselves.

Most males confirm to patriarchy in one way or another, so the question of conforming becomes very important and hook says very interestingly that how boys who end, who grew up in patriarchal houses, boys who grew up often brutalized and traumatized by patriarchal principles you know, they grow to this different process of transition, so they may start off by hating patriarchy, they may start of being appalled by patriarchy and then increasingly they become more, more patriarchal themselves.

And end up being the same patriarchal father figure that they once hated once upon a time, so most males conform to patriarchy in one way or the another, so again this is where one can use Butler very, very interestingly because he is not something which is innately biological, the entire patriarchal principle is something that you need to appropriate, it is something you need to conform to and again there is a coded quality about patriarchy, the code is in language the code is in dress, code is a public social behaviour etc.

So this coded quality becomes very important and the question of appropriation becomes all the more important when it comes to this particular coded quality, so you appropriate in codes you can form into certain codes and this question of conformity and nonconformity becomes the key question the mute question when it comes to patriarchy and patriarchal performance, okay.

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Indeed, radical feminist critique of patriarchy has practically been silenced in our culture. It has become a subcultural discourse available only to well-educated elites. Even in those circles, using the word "patriarchy" is regarded as passé. Often in my lectures when I use the phrase "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy" to describe our nation's political system, audiences laugh. No one has ever explained why accurately naming this system is funny. The laughter is itself a weapon of patriarchal terrorism. It functions as a disclaimer, discounting the significance of what is being named. It suggests that the words themselves are problematic and not the system

And then hooks goes on to say indeed radical feminist critique of patriarchy has practically been silenced in our culture, it has become a subcultural discourse available only to well-educated elites. Even in those circles using the word patriarchy is regarded as passé, often in my lectures when I use the phrase imperialists white supremacist capitalist patriarchy to describe our nation's political system, audiences laugh.

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laugh. No one has ever explained why accurately naming this system is funny. The laughter is itself a weapon of patriarchal terrorism. It functions as a disclaimer, discounting the significance of what is being named. It suggests that the words themselves are problematic and not the system they describe. I interpret this laughter as the audience's way of showing discomfort with being asked to ally themselves with an antipatriarchal disobedient critique. This laughter reminds me that if I dare to challenge patriarchy openly, I risk not being taken seriously.

Citizens in this nation fear challenging patriarchy even as they lack overt awareness

And not the system they describe, interpret this laughter as the audience's way of showing discomfort with being ask to ally themselves with an anti-patriarchal disobedient critique. This laughter reminds me that if I dare to challenge patriarchy openly, I risk not been taken seriously, so even at the purely linguistic level when you mention a certain term and you laughed at and this is psychoanalytical as well that hooks is saying that you know when I get a laughter response from audiences when I use a term such as imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.

People are saying I am using rhetoric, people just saying that I am using a lot of loaded terms without meaning anything and the (()) (14:13) mocked that kind of expression but this mocked here is laughter may be interpreted as a discomfort and what this discomfort for; this discomfort is you know for the expectation to ally themselves against patriarchy right that is a very uncomfortable position to take to ally yourself against patriarchy and therein lies lots of discomfort, therein lies the problem that hooks say which is quite clearly over here.

So, even at the linguistic level even at the level of linguistic expressions, language expressions articulations, one might find a complete conformity and nonconformity to patriarchy and different patriarchal principles in operation okay.

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that they are fearful, so deeply embedded in our collective unconscious are the rules of patriarchy. I often tell audiences that if we were to go door-to-door asking if we should end male violence against women, most people would give their unequivocal support. Then if you told them we can only stop male violence against women by ending male domination, by eradicating patriarchy, they would begin to hesitate, to change their position. Despite the many gains of contemporary feminist movement—greater equality for women in the workforce, more tolerance for the relinquishing of rigid gender roles—patriarchy as a system remains intact and

So, citizens in this nation fear challenging patriarchy even as they lack overt awareness that they are fearful, so deeply embedded in our collective unconscious are the rules of patriarchy, so like all grand narratives this has to be a degree of embeddedness about patriarchy, so like I said in the very beginning of this particular uptakes, it is hard to find a grand narrative which is also patriarchal by default.

And if you talk about any grand narrative nation, religion and anything this is always a grand patriarchal embeddedness that so marks that qualifies the grand narrative in the first place, so you know the roots are so deep, it is so deeply embedded at a subliminal, subconscious level that we are not even aware of patriarchal construct or the constructed quality of patriarchy it is just something.

So, embedded in our system that is almost biological in quality, it is almost like a metabolic activity, it is almost like a metabolic expectation, metabolic response loop okay. So, I often tell audiences that if we were to go door-to-door asking if we should end male violence against women, most people would give their unequivocal support, so you know if this a question of for instance, we would go on interviewing people asking them if you know violence against women should be stopped then almost unequivocally people will say, yes.

It is an evil thing, it is a disgust, it is a disturbing thing, it is the violent thing, abusive thing and it must be stopped at all costs, then if you told them we can only stop male violence against women by ending male domination by eradicating patriarchy, they would begin to hesitate to change their position.

So, if you rephrase it, if we asked to rephrase it with a root problem with a root problem with the root condition of male violence which is patriarchy if we ask such question that does not mean as a natural extension that we should end patriarchy, we should address the problem, we should address male violence only by addressing patriarchy.

Then the answers responses to be more ambivalent and more equivocal, so therein lies the problem and you know people refuse to this is a collective denial that hooks talked about earlier which we saw already in one of the early lectures, the collective denial against the existence of the existence of patriarchy that people do not realize, it is actually patriarchy which is causing I know violence against women.

So, the very quick fire, the very quick heal solution to violence against women is punishment at an individual level you know all kinds of punishment, capital punishment, imprisonment etc. but if you really want to eradicate violence against women the root problem is patriarchy, we need to address that problem but therein lies a denial, therein lies a refusal, therein lies a rejection, so people are more hesitant to address a question of patriarchy.

They are more; much more easy the much more effortless when it comes to punishing the male victim, the individual male victim either by hanging the person or by executing the person. But if the question is whether we should stop patriarchy, whether we should address patriarchy has a problem therein lies the hesitation of people, I mean they are more reluctant, they are more hesitant to address the question of patriarchy more complex way.

So despite the many gains of contemporary feminist movement greater equality for women in the workforce more tolerance for the relinquishing of rigid gender roles.

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by ending male domination, by eradicating patriarchy, they would begin to hesitate, to change their position. Despite the many gains of contemporary feminist movement—greater equality for women in the workforce, more tolerance for the relinquishing of rigid gender roles—patriarchy as a system remains intact, and many people continue to believe that it is needed if humans are to survive as a species. This belief seems ironic, given that patriarchal methods of organizing nations, especially the insistence on violence as a means of social control, has actually led to the slaughter of millions of people on the planet.



Patriarchy as a system remains intact and many people continue to believe that it is needed if humans are to survive as a species, so not only has patriarchy being intact not only has patriarchy been consolidated, it is also it seems to have a utility function in the collective imaginary or people when they decided you know, needed for the human species to survive, so the capitalist patriarchal principles are requirements.

So, in a way the same kind of a pseudo logic which informed the civilizing mission of imperialism, the imperialism needed to civilize, so like I said is this pseudo logic is something which informed imperialism as well where people say it was a civilizing mission, it was meant, it was designed to elevate you know emancipate the lower species, the colonized people what was the required civilization obviously, required being relinquished from the in fade of status etc.

So that kind of pseudo logic operates in patriarchy as well where people say you know this is required for the human species to survive from this particular planet, so this is always logic which can be created to consolidate to corroborate any grand narrative you know patriarchy being a classic case in point okay. So, this believes seems ironic given that a patriarchal methods of organising nations especially the insistence on violence as a means of social control has actually led to the slaughter of millions of people on the planet.

So, this whole entire argument is perverse; paradoxically perverse where you know people argue that patriarchy or this entire capitalist expansionist imperialist patriarchal principles that required for the preservation of this planet that is actually nonsense because we have seen how millions of people have been slaughtered in the name of patriarchy driven by; the violence driven by patriarchal desire for expansion for consolidation for control patriarchal greed.

And it not just that I mean you can talk about something like in a global warming or the entire idea of using of natural resources as a classic case in point of capitalist patriarchy greed where you know you just end up using everything overusing everything, over indulging in everything and as a result to leave this planet and endangered and it does not require a war actually, we all know this particular plant is died in a natural death.

Because the resources being used up you know at a massive exponential rate much more than what has been produced, so that is the classification point of patriarchal principles and operation, see when the natural hazards which have been cause in the moment actually man-made if you think about it deeply, so this entire idea of patriarchy being a before rescuing mission a bit of a preservation system is perversely in logical naturally untrue almost entirely.

Because we have seen historical evidences, historical instances of patriarchal principles, driving violence driving violence which of course millions of men and women to be killed in the name of war, in the name of patriarchy or so ethos of nationalism, religion etc. and there is so many wars still going on in the planet today in the name of religion, in the name of capitalism, in the name of you know ownership on land, ownership on companies, ownership on natural resources.

And all that is part of this patriarchal expansionist imperialist program which is still in operation is very much so either overtly or covertly in this planet okay.

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Until we can collectively acknowledge the damage patriarchy causes and the suffering it creates, we cannot address male pain. We cannot demand for men the right to be whole, to be givers and sustainers of life. Obviously some patriarchal men are reliable and even benevolent caretakers and providers, but still they are imprisoned by a system that undermines their mental health.



So, until we can collectively acknowledge the damage patriarchy causes and the suffering it creates one can address male pain, so again the question of male pain becomes very important for Bell hooks because again see I mean this is one of the really complex things which as it does it talks about patriarchy as an evil thing, it talks about patriarchy has a dangerous enterprise something which is deeply and automatically dangerous.

However, it also looks a patriarchy is not really being controlled by men alone, it looks a patriarchy as something which affects men you know in a very painful way in the same ways affects woman, a woman are often victims of patriarchy but so over men who suffer patriarchy in more psychological ways, so we cannot demand for men to be right on the; men the right to be whole to be givers and sustainers of life.

Obviously, some patriarchal men are reliable even benevolent caretakers and providers but still they are imprisoned by a system that undermines their mental health, so at the very beginning of this essay, we saw how hooks talk about patriarchy as a pathological problem, it is almost a medical problem, it is something which affects people psychologically affects people mentally and she says quite clearly over here.

And there may be instances of patriarchal men who are benevolent, who are giving (()) (22:45) etc. by the same time despite that they are still in prison and that patriarchal prison really a

patriarchal system which imprisons them in terms of undermining their peer process, undermining their you know agency, undermining their natural will, natural propensity etc. so it becomes a mental problem becomes a psychological problem and this psychologization of patriarchy is something that is part of the internalization that is so deeply internalized.

That these benevolent men even in the acts of benevolent they end up being patriarchal even in the acts of giving and being generous and taking care of people they do it from a patriarchal perspective and that is what makes them patriarchal that is actually sad account to hooks because it just reveals as an aberration and mental health, it just reveals the degree of internalization that his men have suffered in the hands of patriarchy okay.

So, we stop at this point in this lecture but you know just to reiterate just summarize quickly, hooks is looking a patriarchy and a system which is obviously affecting people, it affects people psychologically, culturally, discursively, exponentially and patriarchy operates in micro intimate as well as macro cultural levels and it is constant intersection between these 2 levels macro and micro is what makes patriarchy as the dangerous dogmatic system.

And obviously, it does not appear to be a dogmatic system because that is partly grand narrative success, the success is being a grand narrative, it does not appear dogmatic in the first place of the peers as a natural given almost a biological truth, a truism in form and over determined biology and that is something which is part of the success plan of patriarchy, the success story of patriarchy.

And you know Hooks obviously, looks the patriarchy as a mental problem as a psychological problem, she pathologizes it and considered to be an aberration of true health; true mental health and with this particular aberration affects men and women equally and you know the different kinds of suffering but both men woman suffer in the hands of patriarchy and that is what makes this particular essays that accomplished essay in terms of understanding patriarchy.

So, we stop at this point today and we will continue with this text in the next lecture, thank you for your attention.