

Evaluating the Evolution of Patriarchy in India and the West

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Abstract

Through this paper I wish to highlight the earnest contribution that self-narratives have made in the study of Patriarchal institutions. The organization of Patriarchy requires the appropriation of identities at various levels. Its sustenance depends on how widely these appropriated identities are made viable at various sites of culture such as cinema, arts and literature. The co-opting of these sites results in signifying the gendered binary upon which Patriarchy rests. It was long held that modernity was an exclusive product of the historical processes in industrial Europe of the 18th century. Such a proposition allowed institutions like Patriarchy to sustain within colonized societies like India as an anti-thesis of modernity. Self-narratives constitute an unsung part of literature. Patriarchal representation in Indian cinema has been studied before but Cinema centering on self-narrativist accounts is seldom recognized separately. However their value is immeasurable in learning about people and their societies. This paper views Patriarchy as a cross-cultural institution that permeates national and loosely bound historical boundaries. The paper makes two major arguments: One modernization does not end up in the society evolving out of Patriarchal institution. Two, it may end up creating newer domains of Patriarchy as has been witnessed in the Indian scenario. The paper follows a historical method of analysis.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Self-Narratives, Cinema, India, West

The word 'Gender' evokes an interrogative response in India. It does so because Gender is a political category and despite its inevitability and timeless presence, Politics is construed as bad. This is a cultural cleavage. At The cost of provoking disbelief, I wish to state thus that Gender is insufficient for the politics it attempts. I say this to explain a very serious and fairly pervasive flaw in our imagination of not just Gender but most political categories. Identity as a point of departure can never hold a solidifying ground for a feminist political movement. (Butler: 1992). Within feminism, it seems that there is some political necessity to speak as a woman and for women and it is a fairly incontestable necessity. Therefore given the manner in which representational politics operates in India and elsewhere, it is pertinent to make claims in the name of women to effect legislative change and demonstrations. Ideally speaking, woman is only one political constituency within the larger category of Gender.

But as soon as the constituency is invoked describing the category for which feminism speaks an internal debate invariably begins over what the descriptive content of that term will be. Obvious questions figuring in this debate are: Can diverse experiences in diverse settings be mapped and more importantly represented by a universalizing category? What about cross-cultural women? What about non-child bearing women? And how about the women of the third world? What about the 'other' within women? How do we confront with factionalisation resulting from unifying categories? There is no readily available answer to these questions. But no attempt at finding enduring answers can succeed without looking into the construction of gender roles both historically and theoretically.

While this is a project on which a lot has been written before, my attempt in this paper is to probe the above questions in light of a few selected popular Bollywood movies. The choice of movies was based on popularity and contemporaneity.

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The critique of a subject is not a negation or repudiation of the subject, but rather, a way of interrogating its construction as a pre-given or foundational premise. And this is what I wish to do with this short research paper.

Scheme of Discourse

I am going to argue that in order to reconstitute the very matrix of power by which we are constituted we need to question the subject and the power both. For, if the subject is constituted by power that power does not cease at the moment the subject is constituted, because the subject is never fully constituted but is subjected and produced time and again. To chasten the discourse, I will be using representations of the subject and power in popular Indian cinema and examples of patriarchal over reach in both Indian and non-Indian societies. Since the subject in our case i.e. women is sociologically mutative, we will have to seek at more real representation of women subjected to power.

Explaining Patriarchy: Women's Studies or Gender Studies?

Ann Oakley was one of the first to argue that gender is not dependent on biology: sex is anatomical in origin, while gender is acquired through a process of acculturation. More recently, Judith Butler has critiqued the sex/gender split postulated by Oakley and others as unnecessarily reductive, 'effecting a false stabilization in the interests of heterosexual construction' (Butler: 2006) Butler points to cross-dressing as an activity which foregrounds the fictitiousness of gender, and which suggests the possibility of a wider concept of gender identity which does not work to normalize the male/female dualism.

Elaine Showalter publicly proclaimed her allegiance to gender, rather than women's, studies in 1989, when she published a book entitled *Speaking of Gender*. She argued that the time for Gynocriticism—the study of female texts and experience—had passed, and that feminists should now 'read male texts, not as documents of sexism and misogyny, but as inscriptions of gender and "renditions of sexual difference"'. According to Showalter's definition, therefore, gender studies would involve analyzing masculinity, like femininity, as a construct. In *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Post feminist" Age* Tania Modleski (Modleski: 1991) claims that this approach may be problematic, since it implicitly assumes that inequality between the genders is no longer an issue. The once exhilarating proposition that there is no essential female nature has been elaborated to a point where it has become difficult to make any political claims on behalf of a group called 'women'. And in a country like India where social reform cannot be achieved without participating in politics of representation, this becomes a major problem.

Patriarchy: Evolutionary Analysis

This school is consistent with the conclusions of many feminists (e.g., Lerner 1986; MacKinnon 1987) that sexual control and sexual coercion lie at the core of patriarchy- and it explains why this is so. The evolutionary analysis of Patriarchy suggests that six factors influenced the evolution of human gender inequality:

1. A reduction in female allies
2. Elaboration of male-male alliances
3. Increased male control over resources
4. Increased hierarchy formation among men
5. Female strategies that reinforce male control over females
6. The evolution of language and its power to create ideology.

However this should not be used to force the opinion that men are programmed to dominate and women are

programmed to subordinate. To counter this evidence one need not look too far, and variances in tribal societies offer deep insight. Among the great tribal traditions of Amazon, the Yanomamo tribe, witness lethal fighting between man and woman, violent coercion of women are commonplace. At the other extreme, among the Aka pygmies, violence between men, and between men and women is very rare. (Smuts: 1995)

Patriarchy is a system promoting and nourishing the core value of control and domination in almost every human area of existence. But to understand the system and analyzing its parts is not enough, just like a game of monopoly is difficult to explain by just one of its elements say the Dice even if it is the most important element. Thus it is wrong to equate patriarchy with men alone.

Since Gender oppression is by definition a system of inequality organized around gender categories, we can no more avoid being involved in it than we can avoid being female or male. All men and women are therefore involved in this oppressive system and none of us can control whether we participate. It is important to point out that patriarchy is something larger than individuals who participate in it. If a society is oppressive then people who live and grow up in it will tend to accept identify with and participate in it as normal and unremarkable life. That’s the path of least resistance in any system. It’s hard not to follow patriarchy given how we depend on society and its rewards and punishments that hinge on going along with the status quo.

We tend to see ‘sexism’ as a result of poor socialization where men learn to act dominant and masculine and women learn to act subordinate. While there is some truth to this, it doesn’t work as an explanation to patterns like gender oppression. It’s no better than trying to explain predatory capitalism simply as profit motive without looking into the ‘why’ of profit motive? Systemic paths of least resistance provide powerful reasons for people to go along with status quo. Therefore change often gets limited to either the most oppressed because they have little to lose or the most privileged who can afford to attend workshops and enter therapy etc. To conclude this argument, one must understand that patriarchy being a system reminiscent of capitalism and a game of monopoly can’t be challenged at its individual limits. These individual elements do make up the whole but change in them has to be ignored if we want real change. (Kirk, Ray: 2009). Further Patriarchy has great adaptive value and is subtly ensconced in various walks of life.

Patriarchy in the West

The origin of Patriarchy in West dates back to Biblical times but since ontological considerations is not part of our concern for this course I am evading the mention of historical construction of

Patriarchy in the West. Language, an essential part of civilization mirrors social reality sometimes, in startling ways. Consider the following words commonly used to malign a woman’s image in Contemporary world.

Crone	Old woman whose life experience gave her insight, wisdom, respect and the power to enrich people’s lives
Witch	Wise woman healer, knower of herbs and midwife
Bitch	Artemis-Diana, goddess of the hunt most often associated with the Dogs who accompanied her
Virgin	Unattached un-acclaimed woman, therefore autonomous and independent..

Notice how each of the above words has been transformed from a positive cultural image of female power independence and dignity to an insult or shadow of its former self so that few words remain to identify women in ways both positive and powerful. This is patriarchy at work in language. (Spender: 1980)

To see the world through patriarchal eyes is to believe that women and men are profoundly different in their

basic natures, that hierarchy is the only alternative to chaos.

It is at the root of all psychological ills troubling men. Nevertheless there is no mass concern for the plight of men. In “*Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*”, Susan Faludi includes very little discussion of patriarchy: Ask feminists to diagnose men’s problems and you will often get a very clear explanation: men are in crisis because women are properly challenging male dominance. (Faludi: 1999) Women are asking men to share the public reins and men can’t bear it. Ask antifeminists and you will get a diagnosis that is, in one respect, similar. Men are troubled, many conservative pundits say, because women have gone far beyond their demands for equal treatment and are now trying to take power and control away from men. This is the equitable effect of modernity, and has led to men becoming increasingly insecure. The underlying message: men cannot be men, only eunuchs, if they are not in control. Both the feminist and antifeminist views are rooted in a peculiarly modern American perception that to be a man means to be at the controls, and at all times, to feel in control. (Hooks: 2010)

Patriarchy and Post-Modernism

Classical philosophy, the Scriptures and the early Church all pronounced upon women, in almost exclusively masculine voices. Aristotelian philosophy deemed women to be ‘inferior men’, and this was Corroborated by the interpretation of the creation of Eve as ‘posterioret inferior’ (last and lesser). It was around 1500 that woman started speaking from their own voices. This is called Querellesdes Femmes. (The woman question) (Gamble Sarah 2001)

Let us consider the limits of Epistemology before describing the relation between Gender relations and Post-modernism. I want to illustrate this with an ancient South American tale. A devout Brazilian tribe in a remote forest was facing severe drought and resulting starvation. Searching for relief they all once climbed a hillock trying to implore their Gods. While they waited for a good omen to strike, a relief plane appeared from the southern horizon. They watched in awe as the soundless, tiny speck grew to a roaring giant above their heads. As the plane dropped packages of food and tools, the natives bowed in subservience to their savior. With solemn faith the tribe erected a crude replica of their new God and conducted an annual ceremony to their totem, year after year in expecting the Reappearance of a similar cargo. (Bell Hooks: 2010)

It would not be unfair if we said that a social scientist’s faith in method is similar to that of the credulous tribesmen. The “cargo cult” in anthropology refers to a non flinching faith that following of proper rituals will yield an expected but unrelated result. This emphasis on epistemology in academic discipline results in mistrust across disciplines and missed opportunities for creative thinking within them.

Extent

The post-modernist claim in explaining patriarchy follows the above assertion to a very large

The postmodernist critics have made a valuable intervention by saying that there are potential dangers in theorizing gender in equality at an abstract and general level. Both Marxist and liberal feminisms do not factor for historical change in their respective theories. Drawing from deconstruction of Derrida (1976) discourse analysis of Foucault (1981) and the postmodernism of Lyotard (1978) they criticize the unity of 'women' in feminist analyses. Such an abstraction where all women are considered a homogenous whole is a result of the social context of power relations according to postmodernists and post-structuralists. The existing grand theories of patriarchy have problems in dealing with historical and cultural variation because they utilize a simple base-superstructure model of causal relations. It can be solved by going beyond. There are six main structures which make up a system of patriarchy: paid work, housework, sexuality, culture, violence, and the state. The interrelationships between them create different forms of patriarchy. (Wallaby: 1990)

The distinction between Western feminist re-presentation of women in the thirdworld, and Western feminist self-presentation is a distinction of the same order as that made by some Marxists between the "maintenance" function of the housewife and the real "productive" role of wage labor, or The characterization by developmentalists of the third world as being engaged in the lesser production of "raw materials" in contrast to the "real" productive activity of the First World.

Women are taken as a unified "Powerless" group prior to the analysis in question. Thus, it is then merely a matter of specifying the context after the fact. "Women" are now placed in the context of the family, or in the workplace, or within religious networks, almost as if these systems existed outside the relations of women with other women, and women with men. The Problem with this analytic strategy is that it assumes men and women are already constituted as sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the arena of social relations (Mohanty Russo et al: 1991)

Western Representation of Patriarchy in Third World: A Case of Insufficient Imagination?

In much of the writings of the west on third world experience of Gender, women are defined as a unified, oppressed and dependent lot. So, for authors like Beverly Lindsay's who in her conclusion to the book *Comparative Perspectives of Third World Women: The Impact of Race, Sex and Class* states that third world women constitute an identifiable group purely on the basis of shared dependencies; there is no difference between black African and Vietnamese women since they are bound by victimhood of race, sex, and class. (Beverly: 1980) Most of these representations of third world women like *Women of Africa: Roots of Oppression*, by Maria Rosa Cutrufelli do not consider the Levi-Straussian formulation, as exchange itself is not constitutive of the subordination of women; women are not subordinate because of the fact of exchange, but because of the modes of exchange instituted, and the values attached to these modes. (Levi Strauss: 1978)

For example, as is well known, Iranian middle class women veiled themselves during the 1979 revolution to indicate solidarity with their veiled working class sisters, while in contemporary Iran, Mandatory Islamic Laws dictate that all Iranian Women wear veils. (Cutrufelli: 1983) While in both these instances, similar reasons might be offered for the veil (opposition to the Shah and Western Cultural colonization in the first case, and the true Islamisation of Iran in the second), the concrete meanings attached to Iranian Women wearing the veil are clearly different in both historical contexts. In the first case, wearing the veil is both an oppositional and revolutionary gesture on the part of Iranian Middle class women; in the second case it is a coercive institutional mandate. Only through such context-specific differentiated analysis does feminist theorizing and practice acquire significance. (Tabari: 1980)

This discursive analysis of reality structured by divisions-two mutually and exhaustive groups the victims and oppressors makes the analysis of specific historical differences impossible. Here the sociological is substituted by the biological in order to achieve a unity. We must realize that woman's place in a society is determined not by the product of things she does but the meaning that is attached to these things. For example the distinction between the act of mothering and the value attached/acquired

by mothering in various societies due to existing complex interactions needs to be made. (Tabari, Ibid)

It is time to move beyond Marx who found it possible to say: “*They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented*”. (Said: 1978)

Concepts like reproduction, the sexual division of labor, the family, marriage, household, patriarchy, etc., are often used without their specification in local cultural and historical contexts. While it is possible to state that there is a rise in female-headed households in the U.S. and in Latin America, this rise cannot be discussed as a universal indicator of women's independence, nor can it be discussed as a universal indicator of women's impoverishment. The meaning and explanation for the rise obviously varies according to the socio-historical context.

Universalism of categorization is also attempted by an arithmetic logic. According to this logic, more the number of women who wear the veil more universal is the sexual segregation and control of women. Similarly a large number of incoherent fragmented examples from different countries also apparently add up to a universal fact. Thus Rape, forced prostitution, polygamy, genital mutilation, pornography, the beating of girls and women, purdah (segregation of women) are all violations of basic Human rights. (Dearden: 1975)

Patriarchy in India: Evolution

The construction of Indian masculinity begins in the ancient times and three texts if not traditions stand out in the way they deal with maleness. These are Kamasutra, Manusmrti, and Mrchakattika. The obvious connection between the three lies in placing their male subjects at the fulcrum of societal progress both materially and physically. While all literature is political, Kalidas in his treatment of the masculine in Shakuntala and Kumarsambhava cannot be exonerated from having to share credit in constructing Indian masculinity so to speak.

The invasions over India made an indelible impact over how masculinity was to be perceived in future. Coming from the Judeo-Christian backgrounds, the Mughals and other invaders found it inappropriate that Indians ‘roamed around’ bare-backed or topless men and women despite the warm climate India was home to. In order to conform to the new regimes’ fancy of appropriateness, Indians now started “covering up”. This covering up was not just of the body though. It entailed forgetting all those traditions which were now regarded as unholy or medieval. These included the Devdasi system, nude sculpturing schools of art etc,

The British brought with them a colonial rationale of masculinity in India. In fact not being manly enough was used as an argument of colonial rule. The early Indian nationalists’ effeminate Bengali intellectuals simply inverted this argument by giving evidence of Indian masculinity and also reforming some social institutions such as Sati etc, The likes of Raja Ram Mohun Roy were chief among them. (Chatterjee: 1989)

Another associated response to the British onslaught on Indian masculinity came from Swami Vivekananda whose photographic pose was to assert Indian maleness over everything else. However, to say that Vivekananda was the leader of a masculinity will be a little cobwebbed and childish like many foreign authors such as Perry Anderson and Indians like Sanjay Srivastav have done. Post-independent Indian masculinity survives and thrives both in traditional as well as modern spaces. Hence celebrating manhood through *Karva Chauth* is as problematic as Shah Rukh Khan promoting Fair and Handsome.

In her essay ‘Women and Politics’ Neerja Chowdhary, sees the role of most women in the nationalist movement more as a duty and less as an exercise of a choice to enter the public arena.. (Sabharwal: 1998) However, despite the nature of this struggle, which brought together men and women from different backgrounds, the achievement of independence did not lead to a marked improvement in the political participation and social situation of ordinary women across the country. Chowdhary holds that though Gandhi was all for women’s political participation, he was not comfortable with the idea of them entering the power game. He saw women’s role as cleansing politics rather than starting their own movements. (Sabharwal: *ibid*) The primacy of the family over the individual meant that women’s potential and abilities

honed in the political arena during the nationalist movement were not put to effective use in immediate post-independence India. Due to a separation of political power from social reform most women who joined politics were rehabilitated in communitarian roles of social reform. This kept the higher echelons of politics out of reach for ordinary woman politicians.

In an essay (1986) titled "*Downry: To ensure her Happiness orto Disinherit her?*" Madhu Kishwar argues that dowry is thus 'a transfer of wealth from men of a family to those of another, with women acting as vehicle of transfer (as brides) or as watchdogs (as mother-in-law and sister-in-law), its significance is not primarily economic but political in the sense that it defines a power relation between the man and woman'. (Kishwar: 2016)

It has been argued by some scholars that women's close and necessary relationship with the nationalist movement subsumed their own problems and demands, and limited their political perspectives. Jayawardena argues that even when women's issues were discussed, they covered limited reforms such as the right to vote, education and property, and equality within the legal process. These

Reforms neither had any effect on the daily life of the masses of women, nor did they address the basic question of women's subordination within the family and in society. (Bjorkert: 2006)

Annie Besant asserted that in ancient times Hindu women were educated and moved freely in society. While campaigning for women's education, Besant rejected Western education which she believed would "unsex" women. She believed that Indians should look to their own ideal of womanhood- the Goddess Durga. In one of her speeches supporting women's education, she said the national movement for girl's education must be on national lines; it must accept the general Hindu conceptions of women's place in the national life. India needs nobly trained wives and mothers, wise and tender rulers of the household, educated teachers of the young, helpful counselors of their husbands, Skilled nurses of the sick, rather than girl graduates. (Kumar: 1993) "*Fair field and no favours*" was the preferred slogan of women activists.

The anti-sati women's campaign came in for criticism from those, such as Ashish Nandy (2005) and Patrick Harrigan, who saw "Indian feminists as agents of modernity who were attempting to impose crass market-dominated views of equality and liberty on a society which once gave the 'noble, the self-sacrificing and the spiritual the respect they deserve'", and who defined 'these views of equality and liberty as being drawn from the west, so Indian feminists stood accused of being Westernists, Colonialists, cultural imperialists, and—indirectly—supporters of capitalist ideology'. (Kumar: 1993)

Another feminist contention is that of the oppressive state. But this needs to be reconsidered. In the Roop Kanwar case where a 17 year old burned herself alive on her husband's funeral pyre, the central government didn't come to rescue the girl citing tradition and political compulsions. However it is the state which is the bestower of rights. Therefore while the movements for women's reservations make the state stronger, it cannot be said that the only alternative to this is denouncing of the state. The site of crime became a place for pilgrimage afterwards and people continue to make profits out of it. (Kurian: 1998)

Self-Narratives

"*To write as men write is the aim and be setting sin of women; to write as women is the real task they have to perform*"-G.H. Lewis, *The Lady Novelists*(1852).

At this point, I want to make an objective assertion. Given the variegatedness of the 'woman question' it is improbable to attempt any universal theory that can prove clinching enough for all women from all subjective experiences. In order to near complete understanding of the involved subjectivities, it is self-narratives that we should rely on. The interest in self-narratives by women is not new; however it has rarely been considered an informed tool on explaining Gender relations so far. In my opinion, this is a place women self-narratives not richly deserves and it will be unpardonable to not consider autobiographies as a literary academic work in understanding Gender specially in complex societies like India.

The initially enthusiastic reception of Wollstonecraft's work was blighted—ironically—by her husband's *Memoirs* (1798) of her life. Once readers knew the details of her 'immoral' personal life, they rejected what she had to say in the *Vindication*, which subsequently went out of print until 1844. Few Victorians mention being favorably influenced by her, and many regarded her as a dire warning against uncontrolled emotionalism.³⁰

According to John Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (1972), women are accustomed to being the object of male regard; however, they do not return the gaze in order to transform men in to objects of desire. Instead, they internalize the male point of view to become self-surveyors: in Berger's words, 'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at.

Feminists writing in the 1990s either began with or engaged more with subjectivity. Dorothy Smith(1999), for instance, insists that social science should abandon the 'pretense' of detached, objective knowledge, while Donna Haraway (1991) provides a critique of and challenge to gendered binaries that position masculinity as objective and femininity as

subjective. Lorraine Code (1995) argues that most knowledge - production is politically invested and that taking subjectivity into account makes us examine political structures within research. (Leather by: 2004) There has been a fundamental shift in methodological thinking where an ethic of involvement has replaced the ethic of objectivity. From this perspective supported by scholars like Dorothy Smith personal experience rather than from a position of detached objectivity is likely to give the author more credentials.

'Autobiographical' writing mediates the space between 'self' and 'life'. One definition suggests that autobiography is an effort to recapture the self. If it requires a 'recapturing', we are clearly assuming that the self is lost. This claim presumes that autobiography directs itself. Thus the place to begin our investigation of autobiography might be at the cross roads of 'writing' and 'selfhood'. There is such a thing as the 'self' and that it is 'knowable'. (Oakley: 1998) This coming-to-knowledge of the self constitutes both the desire that initiates the autobiographical act and the goal toward which it is directed.

One must note though that the use of the word 'recovering' of self is problematic since it literally means to cover the existing. Some of the complexities of the idea of 'stories we make for ourselves' are Apparent in the work of Simone de Beauvoir, who wrote six volumes of autobiography in all.³³In the first she wrote that she wanted her life 'to be a beautiful story', and her autobiography did leave a largely positive and fulfilled account of her life, a life focused on aiming for and achieving literary and intellectual success. However, Mary Evans(1993) encourages us to look closer at these works as well as at others 'writings of de Beauvoir (and others interested in her life) and suggests that the version of her life presented by de Beauvoir represents the fiction, fantasy and motivation of her life, whereas in reality her life was more complex and less flattering. (Maynard: 1994)

Self-Narratives of Indian Women

Apart from the phrases that Showalter has given in 'Feminine, Feminist and Female' my research is also influenced by her articles, 'Towards a Feminist Poetics'(1979) and 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness' (1981).The first is concerned with woman as a reader, which she calls 'Feminist Critique' and this deals with woman as writer which she calls 'gynocritics'. (Evans: 1997)

Tharu and Lalitha (1991) while referring to women's writing in India define the politics of feminist criticism in terms of learning "to read them in a new way to read them not for the moments in which they collude with or reinforce dominant ideologies of gender, class, nation, or empire, but for the gestures of defiance or subversion implicit in them.

Representation of the 'Woman Question' in Cinema: A Sociological Analysis

The common film image, reflected in the attitudes of Indian youth, reinforce specific ideals of both masculinity and femininity. In a recent pilot study of college-aged students, researchers found that 32% of *female* respondents thought that eve-teasing was a way to display masculinity. (Ghosh: 2011) I shall now focus on select Indian movies mainly from Bollywood that have a strong self-narrativist account forming a critical Gender perspective of Patriarchy.

Utsav: Literally meaning celebration, this movie based primarily on a second century Sanskrit Play, Mrichkatika created a stir for its treatment of Eros and Gender. It is a powerful window in to understanding the gender relations of ancient India where prostitutes were not only recognized but also respected. The recognition of a battered identity gave new voice to the women's movement. The jocular discussions as portrayed by Sudraka in his play indicate of a past where contested differences and disagreements were given a breathing space.

Lajja: The blaring message of the movie is very post-modern. Often blamed for its traditional and archaic socialization, India witnesses domestic violence at phenomenal levels. The movie however shows that challenging social structures like family and illiteracy alone will not bring emancipation for women. Satirizing the honour with which women are granted in a traditional society is the pervading theme of the movie. The use of symbolic enunciation is very well captured in scenes such as the very first one. In this scene a red robe symbolizing an adult married woman is shown flying across and is later mutilated by men in uniform indicating the shallowness of law. The robe then travels seven seas across and is meted the same treatment and is depicted as torn over the Statue of Liberty. Manisha Koirala, one of the protagonists in the movie plays the script perfectly. Searching for individual freedom, she travels to the US but is suppressed by the bizarre requests of her husband who denounces her Indian Past as 'irrelevant' and tangential. The paradox of liberty vis-a-vis equality in the gender movement is brilliantly shown in this 2001 movie.

Cocktail: Despite substantial progress, the ubiquity of social mores remain. This movie reinforced the image of the ideal Indian woman with a shy traditional and selfless heroine juxtaposed to her modern and more liberal friend who ends up being a competitor and eventually a sorry loser. The role played by Deepika is underwhelmed by a Diana, a debutant in Bollywood. The transition of Deepika from a loud party going diva to a homely god-fearing woman and the film's celebration of it points at a defiant tendency in Indian Patriarchy to overcome progressive resistance. This transition can be better termed as domestication of ego. The sphere of tradition is shown to be one that offers stability more than the sphere of modernity and the male protagonist hence chooses the domesticated woman despite having an amorous inclination towards Deepika.

Gulaab Gang: Responses to repression of freedom are many in social milieu. One such response is "an eye for an eye". Based in rural India, the movie centers around a group of local women who organize themselves into a disorderly messianic militia group to confront elitist politicians and wife-beating feudals. The movie was witnessed with great enthusiasm and jeers from men in theatres across India. In a climactic scene, the bandit group fueled by revenge for one of their members, dismembers and mutilates the reproductive organ of a male political scion. The movie exhorts if not incites violence. Autonomy over one's body is a basic right and men seldom realize this. According to the both the storyline and byline of this movie, the flaw exists because men have never faced a similar crisis.

Izzatnagari Ki AsabhyaBetiya: This five-part documentary tries to deconstruct the hierarchy of violence against women in rural India. Patriarchy is not male dominance but the predominant and naturalizing of the gender binary and erasure of biology-sociology distinction. Directed by FTII graduate, Nakul Singh Sawhney the documentary borrows the title from a remark made by one Jai Singh Ahlawat of the Ahlawat Khap. "Those who threaten our traditional code are the educated youngsters, the Harijan officers who want everything to be equal. And our Asabhya betiyan (immoral daughters) who want to live like animals and want our traditions to be quashed so that there are no restrictions on them," Ahlawat says in the film. While vehemently denying that Khap panchayats have any role to play in honour killings, voices like those of Khap ideologue Chander Singh Dalal clearly explain how Khaps perceive these issues. "Marry a Muslim if you must, marry a Christian, marry an old man, or a cripple of lame or even outside the village. But don't marry in the same village and the same gotra" he says.

Conclusion

Firstly, the feminist preoccupation with Gender as the sole or primary category of activism and of oppression is largely responsible for leading some feminists to ignore other categories of oppression, including Caste, Class and community.

Secondly, to imagine patriarchy earnestly, we should stop looking at unifying elements. One cannot understand the whole by just looking at its individual parts.

Thirdly, to assume that Gender oppression can be ameliorated as society modernizes is missing the point. We have seen asymmetric and at times opposite examples of Gender justice in pre-modern and tribal societies.

Fourthly, theorizing Patriarchy aggregately in the third world will result in complicating under-representing the inherent differences of gender experiences because women cultivators of rice are starkly different from women industrial labour of Sri Lanka though being from the Third World.

Fifthly, while state is an agency of violence, one cannot denounce the State's role in effecting political reform and gender equality in a country like India. Therefore the assertion of many western feminists that approaching the state for redressal of rights increases its legitimacy, and is incompatible with the philosophy of women's movement has to be ignored in the Indian context.

Sixthly, gender can't be separated from sexuality and a full estimate of patriarchal institutions requires knowledge of the evolution of Gender roles. I have argued that in India's case the colonial experience played a key role in this evolution. Further the colonial space in India hasn't disappeared completely.

Seventhly, there is a continuum with in criminal and civil law in the way that women's sexuality is constructed, and that where laws are 'uniform' for all communities, as criminal laws are, they are seldom 'gender sensitive', as

the debates on rape and domestic violence reveal. The Shah Bano controversy we are going to discuss is a forceful argument in this direction.

Eighthly, Women, like men, are formed through multiple identities, and to prioritize anyone can perhaps strengthen hierarchies within that identity. Various castes and communities have oppressed women in multiple ways, while some have well have provided a space—sometimes limited—to women, just as law has. The capacity within law to differentiate while homogenizing must be recognized.

Finally, I reckon with a firm deep conviction that self-narrative is a possible game changer in women's/feminist/gender movement.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Research involving human participants and/or animals: This article does not contain any studies with human/animal participants performed by the author. Due and diligent credits have been given to published works wherever they have been cited.

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