

Feminist Writings
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The Second Sex - Part 3

So, hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled 'Feminist Writing'. So, we are looking at Simone de Beauvoir's text, 'The Second Sex' where we are looking at studying the introduction specifically. So we will just take off from where we ended last time. Beauvoir talks about how there are other situations where certain groups are marginalized, discriminated, harassed, exploited but then they have been able to move on from there and retaliate with proper organizational potential, organizational strategies, etc.

She is enquiring why that never happened with women; so how is it that women have always been subjugated and exploited by men and unlike the blacks, unlike the colonial natives, they have never been able to retaliate as an organized force. And she is sort of looking at the reasons which may have informed this inability to a certain extent. So we will just move on from that section and we will see what she talks about in terms of the reasons that may have gone into this lack of retaliation.

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they have taken nothing, they have only received.¹

The reason for this is that women lack concrete means for organizing themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative unit. They have no past, no history, no religion of their own; and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat. They are not even promiscuously herded together in the way that creates community feeling among the American Negroes, the ghetto Jews, the workers of Saint-Denis, or the factory hands of Renault. They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing to certain men — fathers or husbands — more firmly than they are to other women. If they belong to the bourgeoisie, they feel solidarity with men of that class, not with proletarian women; if they are white, their allegiance is to white men, not to Negro

¹ With rare exceptions, perhaps, like certain matriarchal rulers, queens, and the like. — Tr.
² See Part II, chap. v.



So this is page 18 which should be on your screen. Where Beauvoir says "The reason for this is that women lack concrete means for organizing themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative unit." So the whole point of being able to stand as an organizing

unit is something which has happened historically in other human situations such as imperialism, racism, etc.

Ethnic violence where, you know, certain groups are organized together and retaliated against the oppressor but it hasn't happened historically for women and that is something Beauvoir is not just lamenting but also pointing out for us. "They have no past, no history, no religion of their own and they have no solidarity, no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat."

So, the other demography that she has said already is how the proletariat had stood up against Abruzzo or stood up against Tsarists fascism in the case of Russia. Tsarist control, Tsarist terrorism and how the Bolshevik party in Russia was formed as a retaliation against the Tsars. But she is saying, Beauvoir, quite interestingly, that you know, in all these situations; they have had something in common.

Common religion, common language, some common units, some common institutions which helped solidify or consolidate the retaliation to a large extent. But there is no such organized religion, there is no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat. "They are not even promiscuously herded together in a way that creates community feeling among the American Negroes, the ghetto Jews, the workers of Saint Denis or the factory hands of Renault."

So, she has given examples of different demographics, so people are put together, almost violently, ghettoed together, the word ghetto obviously carries a lot of political connotations, where people are put together, made to live together in units and in situations which aren't really desirable.

But out of that undesirable situation there was a desired production of solidarity which happens and you know, that is something which never happened with women because they have never been put together in such conditions and they always co-inhabited spaces with men and been marginalized by men in those co-inhabited spaces.

And this is exactly what she says, "They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing to certain men - fathers or husbands - more firmly than they are to other women." So the very existence of women is premised around men so there is no possibility of producing solidarity.

So unlike the ghettos, unlike the Renault factory workers, any factory workers for that matter, where people co-inhabit certain space and then through that act of co-inhabitation, co-inhabiting the particular space that produce a sense of solidarity which can then inform retaliation, rebellion, any such activity.

However, that never happened with women because they always find themselves co-inhabiting spaces with men and their fathers, husbands or brothers and in that process they have never been able to produce a solidarity space, a homo-social space of solidarity which would then be used as a retaliation or rebellion.

"If they belong to the bourgeois, they feel solidarity with the men of their class, not with proletarian women. If they're white, their allegiance is a white woman, not a Negro woman." So there are different sub-divisions which need to be pointed out and this is very important for feminist writings because what Beauvoir telling is, quite clearly and quite compellingly, that there are all these different sub-categories of identification which are glossed over.

So when it comes to white women, they only associate or affiliate themselves with other white women or white men and they never even think about black women or non-white women or Asian women, for that matter. Similarly, when it comes to the bourgeois women, they always affiliate themselves with the bourgeois men or the bourgeois women, not with the proletariat.

So, the whole idea of segregating yourself from the other section is something which has informed this inability to form solidarity in all the women. So, if they are white, their allegiance is with white men; if they are bourgeois, their allegiance is with bourgeois men, not with proletariat women.

So all these different sub-divisions are very important for Feminism or for that matter, any study of identity, because when you talk about Feminism with a capital F, we seem to assume that as a universal category, however, even if we do that for the sake of convenience, what is also important for us to understand and remember is the fact that Feminism with a capital F often runs the risk of reification.

It glosses over sub-divisions, it glosses over certain other kinds of Feminisms which work in very different ways so it ends up being a very universal grand narrative controlled by a white woman, in a white metropolis and that obviously does not cater service to the entire cause

and urgency of Feminist movements across the world and different other parts of the world. So, and that is something which Beauvoir is very clearly pointing out.

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women. The proletariat can propose to massacre the ruling class, and a sufficiently fanatical Jew or Negro might dream of getting sole possession of the atomic bomb and making humanity wholly Jewish or black; but woman cannot even dream of exterminating the males. The bond that unites her to her oppressors is not comparable to any other. The division of the sexes is a biological fact, not an event in human history. Male and female stand opposed within a primordial *Mitsein*, and woman has not broken it. The couple is a fundamental unity with its two halves riveted together, and the cleavage of society along the line of sex is impossible. Here is to be found the basic trait of woman: she is the Other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another.

One could suppose that this reciprocity might have facilitated the liberation of woman. When Hercules sat at the feet of Omphale and helped with her spinning, his desire for her held him captive; but why did she fail to gain a lasting power? To revenge herself on Jason, Medea killed their children; and this grim legend would seem to suggest that she may have obtained a formidable influence over him through his love for



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So she's giving a great extreme example over here and she says that hypothetically the proletariats can massacre the ruling class, they can all come together and have an armed rebellion, violent rebellion which would produce a massacre or decimation of the ruling class and if there's a fanatic Jew or a black person then they can fanatically possess the atomic bomb and do away with entire humanity and make entire humanity Jewish or black but women cannot even dream of exterminating the males.

And this is now the idea of biological kinship that Beauvoir is pointing out that a woman cannot do away with men, in the same way the proletariat, at least hypothetically, do away with the bourgeois or the black, or at least hypothetically, do away with the whites but the kinship that man and woman have is obviously something organic and biological in relation so that doing away with extermination, even as a possibility, even as an imaginative possibility, is not available to women.

So "the bond that unites her to her oppressors is not comparable to any other." That's the whole point that the bond the women share with men who happen to be their oppressor is

very different from the relationship the bourgeois has with the proletariat, the blacks have with the oppressive whites. There's no organic bond.

There is no biological bond as such but in a case of a woman, there is a very palpable, organically biological bond and that bond obviously does waive in the impossibility of extermination, even hypothetically, retaliation even hypothetically. So it's not even comparable to any others.

"The division of the sexes is a biological fact, not an event in human history. Male and female stand opposed within a primordial *Mitsein*, and woman has not broken it." So '*Mitsein*' is this human conditional solidarity, human conditional organic unity and males and females stand opposed within a primordial *Mitsein* so that's always in a primordial conditional solidarity and humanity and the woman has not broken it.

"The couple is a fundamental unity with its two halves riveted together, and the cleavage of society along the line of sex is impossible. Here is to be found the basic trait of woman: she is the Other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another."

And that is a very compelling argument that Beauvoir just offered us that she is the other, the woman in the same way as the black is the other, in the same way as the Jew is the other and the same way as a proletariat is the other. However, she's the other in part of her totality in which the components are necessary to each other.

So she is the other inside the system in which the two components, the other and the self, are necessary to each other. Right. So the system would completely collapse if the other is to be done away with or if the self is to be done and self, over here in this case, is assumed to be male.

But if you do away with the male, if the other retaliates against the self in a way that it does away with the itself, the entire system of totality would collapse, would be decimated and that's something which is obviously undesirable and unimaginable in most situations except dystopian settings.

So this is something Beauvoir is pointing out very clearly. So what is interesting is to see how Beauvoir makes analogies with other systems of oppression, other systems of exploitation.

For instance, whites exploiting the blacks, imperialists exploiting the natives, the bourgeois exploiting the proletariat, etc.

However, she makes a very important distinction in the sense that, that same kind of exploitation operates obviously in male-female relationships, perhaps in more nefarious, more covert terms, however, while retaliation is possible in a case of the bourgeois and proletariat, while retaliation is possible with the Bolshevik party in Russia against the Tsars, while retaliation is possible in the case of blacks against whites.

Retaliation is impossible to the same extent when it comes to the woman against man because woman and man, although they are self and the other, the projected is the other, woman, they are a part of a totality of existence in which they are organic components to each other so in that sense retaliation or absolute retaliation is impossible.

In the sense it is possible is just hypothetically with Jews, with blacks and other oppressed humanity. Okay. So that's a very important distinction that offered us and it's very important for us to remember it as we move on. Okay. Now she gives some examples of some classical literature of reciprocity and organicity, etc. which we can do away with little bit and then move on to the paragraph after this where she's saying.

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One could suppose that this reciprocity might have facilitated the liberation of woman. When Hercules sat at the feet of Omphale and helped with her spinning, his desire for her held him captive; but why did she fail to gain a lasting power? To revenge herself on Jason, Medea killed their children; and this grim legend would seem to suggest that she might have obtained a formidable influence over him through his love for his offspring. In *Lysistrata* Aristophanes gaily depicts a band of women who joined forces to gain social ends through the sexual needs of their men; but this is only a play. In the legend of the Sabine women, the latter soon abandoned their plan of remaining sterile to punish their ravishers. In truth woman has not been socially emancipated through man's need — sexual desire and the desire for offspring — which makes the male dependent for satisfaction upon the female.

Master and slave, also, are united by a reciprocal need, in this case economic, which does not liberate the slave. In the relation of master to slave the master does not make a point of the need that he has for the other; he has in his grasp the power of satisfying this need through



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through his own action; whereas the slave, in his dependent condition, his hope and fear, is quite conscious of the need he has for his master.

Even if the need is at bottom equally urgent for both, it always works in favor of the oppressor and against the oppressed. That is why the liberation of the working class, for example, has been slow." So Beauvoir is saying that even in the case of master-slave relationship there's always a reciprocal need; the master needs the slave, the slave needs a master, but of course even the need is at bottom equally urgent for both the need of what works in favor of the oppressor, against the oppressed.

That is why liberation of the working class has been slow. So it is based on a reciprocal need and less to do with a need altogether, that liberation in a total sense will not happen. "Now, woman has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality." So historically, two sexes - male and female, never shared the wall in equality.

"And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as a man's, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage. Even when her rights are legally recognized in the abstract, long-standing custom prevents their full expression in the mores.

"So even when the rights of women are present in letter, are present in script, they are not really followed in spirit because of a long tradition of discrimination, a long tradition of marginalization that women have faced over centuries of human history. So even if there are animals where written laws are there as a template form but that is just a written law and left out and that spirit is almost never carried out in real life.

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be said to make up two castes; other things being equal, the former hold the better jobs, get higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than their new competitors. In industry and politics men have a great many more positions and they monopolize the most important posts. In addition to all this, they enjoy a traditional prestige that the education of children tends in every way to support, for the present enshrines the past — and in the past all history has been made by men. At the present time, when women are beginning to take part in the affairs of the world, it is still a world that belongs to men — they have no doubt of it at all and women have scarcely any. To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal — this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste. Man-the-sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justification of her existence; thus she can evade once both economic risk and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence

"In the economic sphere men and women can almost be said to make up two castes; and it is interesting that Beauvoir uses the word caste over here. Among other things being equal, the former hold the better jobs, get higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than their new competitors."

So, it is a commonality everywhere, if you look at any industry or any working industry, we find that men always tend to get more salary than women, men always tend to get better positions than women; for sometimes equal jobs they get paid more, they get more privileges, etc.

So they obviously, they have more opportunity for growth compared to their new competitors and by new competitors Beauvoir obviously means women who entered the workforce, the work field, much later, let us say post first World War to be more precise. "In industry and politics men have a great many more positions and they monopolize the most important posts."

So there is obviously a male monopoly in politics and in industry, in other work forces and we find that common across the world. In most political situations you will find that most nation heads are male. There are women nation heads but that becomes big news because it is such a rarity. On most occasions, most of the nations are controlled by men and most of the important offices in politics are controlled by men as well. Okay.

So "In addition to all this, they enjoy a traditional prestige that the education of children tend in every way to support, for the present enshrines the past – and in the past all history has been made by men." Because history has been made by men. History has been controlled by men.

The knowledge of history is controlled by men so obviously the education system which is informed by the history is designed to favor the male child, it is designed to favor the upbringing of the male child in a way that gives him more opportunities of growth, of fulfillment, of progress, of development compared to the female child because history, as a knowledge system, as a knowledge narrative, is controlled by the males, historically speaking.

"At the present time, when women are beginning to take part in the affairs of the world, it is still a world that belongs to men" so it is still controlled by men even when women are beginning to partake of it, even when women are beginning to enjoy certain positions of privilege, it still belongs to men, overall." – they have no doubt of it at all and women have scarcely any.

To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal – this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste." So if you renounce the entire thing, if you say I'm not going to be a party to the deal that would be abandonment because the whole tacit deal is that the woman should always be the Other.

The tacit deal, the unspelled out deal, even within a workforce, is that the woman should always be the marginalized, the less privileged and if you question it, if you renounce it, you just renounce the system altogether and then you're on the risk of losing whatever you have. All the advantages conferred upon them by the alliance with the superior class.

So if you 'are a loyal ally to a particular agreement then you get privileges; that if you play the rules at home, play the game according to the rules set by men then obviously you do get certain benefits and privileges which are conferred on them. However, if you decide to rebel, if you decide to renounce it completely then you run the risk of completely decimating the system and getting out of the system and being pushed out of the system altogether.

So as a woman you more or less, more often than not, you are expected to conform to the rules set by men and in your conformity lies an impossibility of success or an impossibility of privilege, for that matter. So, "man-the-sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justification of her existence; thus she can evade at once both economic risk and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in which ends and aims must be contrived without assistance.

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be said to make up two castes; other things being equal, the former hold the better jobs, get higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than their new competitors. In industry and politics men have a great many more positions and they monopolize the most important posts. In addition to all this, they enjoy a traditional prestige that the education of children tends in every way to support, for the present enshrines the past — and in the past all history has been made by men. At the present time, when women are beginning to take part in the affairs of the world, it is still a world that belongs to men — they have no doubt of it at all and women have scarcely any. To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal — this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste. Man-the-sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justification of her existence; thus she can evade at once both economic risk and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in which ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence



ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forgo liberty and become a thing. This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it – passive, lost, ruined – becomes henceforth the creature of another's will, frustrated in his transcendence and deprived of every value. But it is an easy road; on it one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence. When man makes of woman the *Other*, he may, then, expect her to manifest deep-seated tendencies towards complicity. Thus, woman may fail to lay claim to the status of subject because she lacks definite resources, because she feels the necessary bond that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity, and because she is often very well pleased with her role as the *Other*.

But it will be asked at once: how did all this begin? It is easy to see that the duality of the sexes, like any duality, gives rise to conflict. And doubtless the winner will assume the status of absolute. But why should man have won from the start? It seems possible that women could have won the victory; or that the outcome of the conflict might never have been decided. How is it that this world has always belonged to the men?



Indeed, along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forgo liberty and become a thing." So, becoming a thing, of course, is becoming non-human, becoming unrecognized as a human, forgo liberty and become a thing. If you forgo liberty, if you forgo agency in a proper sense of the word, you become a commodity inside a male system of domination.

So that's the ethical dilemma sometimes which comes if you review your negotiations as a woman in a manly workforce, in a manly field of work where you are always running the risk of becoming a commodity, always running the risk of becoming an agencyless entity, an agencyless human being, for that matter. Okay.

"This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it – passive, lost, ruined – becomes henceforth the creature of another's will." Another's will, so you just become a puppet in another's will." So, you just become a puppet in another's will. Frustrated in his transcendence and deprived of every value. But it is an easy road; on it one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence."

So, it is very important problem that Beauvoir is telling of because on one hand what you have is powerfication as if walking out of two roads. So on one road you use lose your agency, you lose your liberty, you just become a commodity, you play the game according to the rules set by men; you forgo liberty, you forgo true agency but then if you follow the road it does have privileges, it does confer you privileges for obeying the grand narrative, for being loyal to the grand narrative and you get rewarded for loyalty, etc.

However, if you take the other road, which is the road of agency, true agency, true liberation, true free spirit and refusal to conform to the male domination system then that becomes a very strenuous journey, a very stressful journey. Why stressful? Because the other is one who avoids strain involving in taking authentic existence, so that other road will involve taking an authentic existence and obviously authenticity and agency are very acquired things, especially for a woman.

If you are authentically agentic in quality, you have acquired it with a lot of hard work and so the road that is taken, the conformation road that is taken, will you relieve you of the stress of agency, of authenticity. You are just supposed to follow and conform to the rules set by men but if you take the other road of authenticity and agency, that is the more stressful road because you have to completely and constantly and consistently, rebel and reject and refuse and retaliate and retort against the rules set by men.

So see, spatial map that Beauvoir points out for us. Okay. So the easy road is the conformation road because if one takes it, one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence. So "when man makes of woman the Other, he may, then, expect to manifest deep-seated tendencies towards complicity."

So this is a very important phrase "deep-seated tendencies towards complicity" so what does that mean? It means you internalize the superiority of men, you internalize, you don't just subscribe, you don't just believe in it, you internalize it, just stop questioning it. So if you internalize something, if you interpolate it into something then that means you start conforming to it unquestionably, you start consuming it unquestionably, you become a consumer.

Not just a colluder, you become a consumer. You internalize it almost as if you are breathing in oxygen; it is a part of your system, it is a part of your biological system, that belief of man's superiority becomes part of your biological system. So tendencies towards complicity, deep-seated tendencies towards complicity.

"Thus, woman may fail to lay claim to the status of subject because she lacks definite resources, because she feels the necessary bond that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity, and because she is often very well pleased with her role as the Other." So this is a very important argument Beauvoir is making when she says that there are pleasures as well, there are advantages as well if you become the Other, if you are happy to be the Other.

If you comply and conform to a possibility of becoming an Other because there are privileges, there are rewards, there are perks, given to you by men, given to you by your oppressor. If you make your oppressor happy, if you comply with the rules of the oppressor. So she is often very pleased with her role as the Other.

So it is not really othering, is not necessarily dis-pleasurable thing, it is not something which will harass you all the time, it is not something which will abandon you all the time so if you follow the rules, if you follow the game and according to rules of the men then men will reward you for your compliance, men will reward you for conforming into that and that reward can also produce pleasures.

Well of course these are inauthentic pleasures. These are pleasures which are completely non-agentic in quality, you are just being rewarded for being a loyal servant and that's about it. "But it will be asked at once: how did all this begin?" so now Beauvoir is trying to historicize this oppression, this system of domination - how did this all begin?

"It is easy to see that the duality of the sexes, like any duality, gives rise to conflict. And doubtless the winner will assume the status of absolute. But why should man have won from the start?" So what was the inception point; what was the starting point for this kind of oppression, of this kind of a system? "It seems possible that women could have won the victory; or that the outcome of the conflict might never have been decided.

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ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forgo liberty and become a thing. This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it — passive, lost, ruined — becomes henceforth the creature of another's will, frustrated in his transcendence and deprived of every value. But it is an easy road; on it one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence. When man makes of woman the *Other*, he may, then, expect her to manifest deep-seated tendencies towards complicity. Thus, woman may fail to lay claim to the status of subject because she lacks definite resources, because she feels the necessary bond that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity, and because she is often very well pleased with her role as the *Other*.

But it will be asked at once: how did all this begin? It is easy to see that the duality of the sexes, like any duality, gives rise to conflict. And doubtless the winner will assume the status of absolute. But why should man have won from the start? It seems possible that women could have won the victory; or that the outcome of the conflict might never have been decided. How is it that this world has always belonged to the men?



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But it will be asked at once: how did all this begin? It is easy to see that the duality of the sexes, like any duality, gives rise to conflict. And doubtless the winner will assume the status of absolute. But why should man have won from the start? It seems possible that women could have won the victory; or that the outcome of the conflict might never have been decided. How is it that this world has always belonged to the men and that things have begun to change only recently? Is this change a good thing? Will it bring about an equal sharing of the world between men and women?

These questions are not new, and they have often been answered. The very fact that woman is *the Other* tends to cast suspicion upon justifications that men have been able to provide for it. These



How is it that this world has always belonged to the men and that things have begun to change only recently? Is this change a good thing? Will it bring about an equal sharing of the world between men and women?" so these are questions which are historical, which are existential, which are philosophical in quality where Beauvoir is saying, how did this happen?

How did this world belong to men in the first place? What were the historical material processes which informed this decision, which informed this bias, this phallogocentric bias? How that women were always marginalized and men are always controlling the world, men are always controlling the future of the world in terms of rules and regulations, etc.

And she says that it seems possible that women could have won the victory, it is possible that maybe women could have won the victory and it would have been a woman's world so what went wrong? or that the outcome of the conflict might never have been decided. So if there was a conflict between a man and a woman, it's perfectly possible that the outcome of the conflict was never decided so how was it decided to be in favor of the men, what happened?

So how is it the world has always belonged to the men and things have begun to change only recently? Is this change a good thing? Will it bring about an equal sharing of the world between men and women? So these are certain questions, questions about the future, questions for the past, questions about the present that de Beauvoir was placing in front of us.

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These questions are not new, and they have often been answered. But the very fact that woman is *the Other* tends to cast suspicion upon all the justifications that men have ever been able to provide for it. These have all too evidently been dictated by men's interest. A little-known feminist

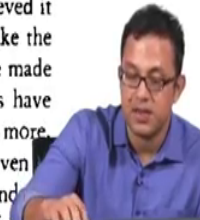
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of the seventeenth century, Poulain de la Barre, put it this way: 'All that has been written about women by men should be suspect, for the men are at once judge and party to the lawsuit.' Everywhere, at all times, the males have displayed their satisfaction in feeling that they are the lords of creation. 'Blessed be God . . . that He did not make me a woman,' say the Jews in their morning prayers, while their wives pray on a note of resignation: 'Blessed be the Lord, who created me according to His will.' The first among the blessings for which Plato thanked the gods was that he had been created free, not enslaved; the second, a man, not a woman. But the males could not enjoy this privilege fully unless they believed it to be founded on the absolute and the eternal; they sought to make the fact of their supremacy into a right. 'Being men, those who have made and compiled the laws have favoured their own sex, and jurists have elevated these laws into principles', to quote Poulain de la Barre once more.

Legislators, priests, philosophers, writers, and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of woman is willed in heaven and



"These questions are not new, and they have often been answered. But the very fact that woman is the Other tends to cast suspicion upon all the justifications that men have ever been able to provide for it. These have all too evidently been dictated by men's interest. A little-known feminist of the seventeenth century, Poulain de la Barre, put it this way: 'All that has been written about women by men should be suspect, for the men are at once judge and party to the lawsuit.'

So, this is a very interesting allusion to a 17th century feminist Poulain de la Barre, who puts it this way that everything that has been written about women, have been written by men so that should be suspected, that should be put under a scanner, a suspicious scanner because

men playing the judge as well as the jury, at once judge and party to the lawsuit so it is obviously a very unequal, a very bias kind of a narrative.

"Everywhere, at all times, the males have displayed their satisfaction in feeling that they are the lords of creation. 'Blessed be God ... that He did not make me a woman,' say the Jews in their morning prayers, while their wives pray on a note of resignation: 'Blessed be the Lord, who created me according to His will.'

So you find that almost all religions, almost all religious rhetoric is very-very phallogocentric in quality, male centric in quality. So phallogocentric is a combination of phallogocentric and logo centric. Phallo [meaning] male, logo [meaning] logic so male logic, put together. So most religious rhetoric is very male in quality, the God, in almost religions, happen to be men and the language is very male.

And you will find that the Jewish prayers that Beauvoir is setting over here; one of the prayers that the Jews do in the morning is that blessed be God that He did not make me a woman so the men, the Jewish male are thanking the God for making them men and not women because as we know most ancient philosophies looked at women as a form of absence, as a form of incompleteness, as a form of lack compared to the fulfilled creation of man.

So man was the, or, the male was the right angle, the vertical angle compared to which everything else was angular in quality. That mathematical analogy, the geometric analogy, the religious analogy; Beauvoir has supplied us quite a bit. So, "the first among the blessings for which Plato thanked the gods was that he had been created free, not enslaved; the second, a man, not a woman."

So even Plato invoked when he prayed to God, the first was that "I'm thankful to the God for making me a free citizen and not a slave," and secondly, "for making me a male and not a woman." "But the males could not enjoy this privilege fully unless they believed it to be founded on the absolute and the eternal; they sought to make the fact of their supremacy into a right."

So this is a very important point that Beauvoir is making that how does a belief system, how does an irrational belief system become justified to different kinds of instruments of

education - science, technology, mathematics, philosophy, politics, etc. which are all geared to us making some kind of a law, some kind of a truism for the matter.

So males could not enjoy the privilege fully unless believed it, to be founded on the absolute and eternal; they sought to make it the fact of their supremacy into a right. So, a fact of supremacy or rather the desire of supremacy was converted into a right by the men and how did this right come into being?

The rights come into being, came into being rather, through different discursive systems, through different discursive investments including education, religion, language, culture, social practices, war, of course and politics. So all these different discursive systems, all these different discursive apparatus combine together to produce this into or convert this belief in supremacy into a right; into an irrefutable right, something which can't be refuted. Okay.

'Being men, those who have made and compiled the laws have favored their own sex, and jurists have elevated these laws into principles', to quote Poulain de la Barre once more." So the laws have been converted into the principles; the laws made by men have been compiled and converted into principles which are irrefutable in quality.

And of course, once it makes them irrefutable through scientific systems, mathematical systems; of course we all know by now how science, mathematics, logic, this can be very biased in quality, this can have an agenda, a covert agenda in quality in terms of making something supreme, compared to the other, in terms of making something elevated compared with the other.

Once we know that then we realize that this is all a very discursive phenomenon. So being men, those who have those who have made and compiled the laws of favored their own sex, and jurists have elevated these laws into principles; so the conversion of laws into principles which are universal in quality has been the biggest success story for the men, for the males in human history and that is something which is, I suppose, true for almost any grand narrative.

If you manage to convert a grand narrative into a principle which at least appears to be universal in quality, then of course the grand narrative has a major success. It becomes a major thing which is consumed and internalized innately by everyone. So internalization is a very important factor, is a very important activity which feminism questions and unpacks all the time.

Because you internalize belief systems, you internalize ideologies, you internalize irrational narratives and by internalizing it and by being and being bombarded of it by different discursive apparatus, church, religion, education, language, culture, law, etc., medicine then you begin to believe in it in a way which is irrefutable in quality. So, I will stop with this point today and will continue this text in the next lectures. Thank you for your attention.