

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: ISSUES OF SURVEILLANCE DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

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In sociology the concept of 'body' first came to prominence in the 1980s in the writings of Hirst and Wooley (1982). The sociological literature on body is located at the very centre of nature/culture and biology/society dualisms. The concept of body in the twentieth century was taken up in a radical way in the backdrop of the totalitarian societies, fascism, National Socialism and the concept of mindless body. The current sociological literature on body cannot be explained with reference purely to its emergence as a social problem or social symbol. Whereas previously the notion of body was used to be given meanings by national governments, there is now a concern in recent years on the part of women to reclaim their bodies, and from people in general to adopt a reflexive orientation towards their embodied identities. Sociologists were more attracted to the analyses of social constructionism as an umbrella term for those views that suggest that body is shaped, constrained and even invented by society. Five major influences have informed views of body as socially constructed: anthropology of Mary Douglas, historians of the body, Michel Foucault, symbolic interactionist Erving Goffman, technologically focused contributions from actor network theory. Foucault usually categorized as post structuralist was concerned about how bodies are controlled and invested with power. Goffman was interested in the body's actions within social relations.

For Foucault body is not only given meaning by discourse but it is wholly constituted by discourse. It vanishes as a biological entity and becomes an infinitely impressionable and highly unstable socially constructed product. The study analyses the transition from traditional to

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modern societies. This transition involves a change in target, object and scope of discourse. The first change was transition to modernity. Subjects were no longer formed by discourses that directly constituted as the body as flesh but increasingly by discourse that indirectly controlled the body by constructing it as 'mindful'. It is controlled less by force and more by surveillance and stimulation. The second shift came when the governments displayed growing concern with power over life instead of death. The third and final transition to modernity was accompanied by changes within the scope of discourse. Government attention shifted from a concern with controlling relatively anonymous individual bodies to regulating the population. Taken together the shifts restructured the relationship between embodied individuals and large-scale systems of power. First it increased government control, and then changed the means of control. In modern societies with its shifts, emerged increasing invasive apparatus of power: these exercise a far more restrictive social and psychological control than henceforth possible. Power now seems to transform the minds of those individuals who might be tempted to resist it, not merely to punish their bodies.

In reflection, women's behaviour is less restricted now than it was before. She has more mobility and less confined to domestic space. She enjoys what previous generations would have been an unimaginable sexual liberty. Divorce, access to paid work outside the home, increasing secularization of modern life has loosened the hold over her of the traditional family. Power in these institutions was wielded by individuals known to her. Husbands and fathers enforced patriarchal authority in family. Now there are no formal individuals to wield power. Power is invested on no one and is invested in everyone. This peculiarly modern disciplining power is invisible but active. The female body now enters a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down, and rearranges it. The disciplining techniques through which 'docile bodies' of women are constructed aim at a regulation that is perpetual and exhaustive— regulation of the body's contours, its appetite, posture, gestures and general attitude in space and its appearance of its visible parts. The production of 'women' and 'men' as separate and unequal categories operates by converting average into absolute differences. Statements such as men are stronger than women ignore the many women who are stronger than men. So, social categories that focus on body and negate biology are central to the ideological construction of differences between women and men. She is under surveillance in ways that he is not and whatever else she may

become, she is importantly a body designed to please or to excite. As women begin to realize an unprecedented political, economic and sexual self-determination, they fall ever more completely under the dominating gaze of patriarchy.

BODY AND VIOLENCE

The more civilizing processes socialize the body, the more the body becomes a location for and expression of codes of behaviour that people find hard to resist. Similarly, the more civilizing processes rationalize the body, the greater capacity people have to control their bodies and the greater the demands they face to do so. The female body or women's identification with their bodies and its physical manifestations result in suppression and denial of rights to emotional, mental, psychological and physical spaces. This demarcation is mutually exclusive categories of mind and body results in loss of 'personhood', loss of control over their bodies and violation of bodily integrity. Women live in constant threat of violence, are discriminated against and exploited; they are denied the right to spatial mobility, right to make informed choices over their bodies and sexuality. Bodily integrity includes women's intrinsic right to have control and autonomy over their bodies. This includes, the right to live free from fear of violence, spatial mobility and ability to make decisions regarding where they can go, who they go with, how they travel, the time of travel etc.

In Indian context, the women's body is a space where culturally coded and socially sanctioned norms of the desirable woman are inscribed. The rules of presentation of bodily self in everyday life are clearly defined and they are socialized into conformity from a very early age. The identification of women with their bodies becomes the root cause of their oppression in a patriarchal culture. A woman is primarily identified with her bodily functions, seen as a vehicle of male sexual satisfaction and its natural corollary, child bearing, rearing and nurturing. Her entire life, her roles, her position and status in society are defined by these bodily functions.

In a deeply ingrained system of patriarchy a woman's identity and role continues to be defined through her subordinated relationship to men. Virginity and chastity are virtues which are entrenched as part of the socialization pattern of girls. The expectation of bravery or 'macho' behaviour in men gets interpreted and accepted right to inflict violence on their part as opposed to acceptance of violence on the part of women who are expected to be only chaste, but also

obedient and good. Hence women's body is continuously made fit and mould to societal expectations with severe denial of right, her bodily integrity constantly violated.

The issue of violence against women has remained a key issue in the Indian women's movement. Throughout the 1980s Indian society witnessed numerous struggles by women's organizations on issue of dowry, rape, custodial rape, abduction of women, sati, female infanticide, sexual harassment, representation of women in media, trafficking and prostitution. In 2005, the Lok Sabha passed the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Bill to protect women from domestic, physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic violence. The bill is a result of decade long campaign by women's groups, social and legal bodies and non-governmental organizations. The bill was subsequently passed into law.

FEMALE BODY AND MALE GAZE

What granted men the power, and more important, the authority to thus view women as object? The power they wielded in real life— as fathers, husbands, male boss— and the access they enjoy to education and the learning of the creative arts. In this sense, the male gaze may be said to represent the visceral, emotional and psychological expression of male authority, the crucial node in the complex network of relationships which characterize patriarchal society. Women, socially powerless and lacking the means to express themselves, consented to be these objects, thus submitting themselves to beauty rules in whose making they had played almost no role. Fixed in a range of roles and ideals which served as veritable mirrors in which they were asked to view themselves, women learned to recognize and accept these various beauty norms as their own. Women imagine their bodies possessing universal value. The male gaze triumphed precisely by establishing itself as a way of seeing and framing that is natural to the human eye. This ideal is both contemporary and historical. It is powerful and appealing because it aligns traditional feminine attributes to a modern purpose, while emphasizing that though women today are prone to show off their bodies, they are none the less, what women have always been— homemaker.

The creation of such ideals and normative pattern is seldom a one way process. Women consent to be objects, in fact, seek out this object status. Feminists argue that the ideal of beauty has to be

viewed as a construction, a myth imposed on women. They claim that this myth serves a particular purpose in patriarchal society. For one, it divides women into the pleasing and the plain. In a context where so called plain looks are considered value less and worse, a disadvantage for women, all women aspire to remake themselves. Those who cannot live up to the norm are afflicted with a sense of inadequacy, guilt and jealousy, and most of all, a corrosive anxiety that they would meet with male disapproval and indifference. The beauty ideal impinges on female identity in another fundamental way. It enables women to delight intensely in their becoming objects of the male gaze. That is, women assume their object status with pleasure, as if it became them. The question of their desire, their subjectivity is in this way resolved within the terms of pleasure and power contained in the male gaze. Thus in instances, women even claim that they can best realize themselves through an active and defiant cultivation of their bodily good looks. Sometimes women have experienced freedom and have claimed to enjoy a space of their own in the appreciations of a male gaze. Women have historically utilized their beauty to attain positions of authority and power. Yet, both the freedom and power thus cultivated by women are severely circumscribed for they are to be enjoyed only for a very short time. For beauty is feted, praised and adored as long as flush of youth remains. As a woman ages, she is not considered fit enough to represent the beauty whims of the season.

Besides, the experience of freedom and power, even during the short enchanted moment that it lasts, comes with a price. The body has to be tutored, disciplined and manipulated in accordance with norms that may or may not afford oneself health or comfort. Finally a woman feels empowered and free by transforming herself into an object. In the process, she fails to see that she is really not making a choice but merely working a pre-given and limited role to advantage. The male gaze images women as objects of both pleasure and use. Men desire women as lovers, wives, mothers of their children, whores, aesthetic objects, ideals. These desires elicit and demand different sorts of female bodies. Generally, though in most cultures, the beauty ideal translates itself into two distinctive yet paired types: the wife and the concubine, the lover and the vamp, the good woman and the bad woman. That is, female beauty is granted to two markets: the licit and the illicit. Licit beauty is tame, regular, passive, illicit beauty, is wild, sensuous, seductive and aggressive. The one is meant for domestic conjugal use, pleasure and significance, linked to marriage and motherhood. The other is in fact a public beauty- indicating sexual

availability- a dangerous female power and bearing the marks of the forbidden. What awaits women if she cannot attain wifhood and motherhood? The anxieties of women are compounded by the fact that they cannot view themselves; experience themselves, without being reminded of the ultimate destinies which await their bodies. Besides, they are haunted, troubled and compelled to adhere to those functions and destinies allocated to them by the threat of dishonor. They dare not think intimate, significant thoughts about their needs and desires, for fear of becoming those 'other' women who are always what they are not. Thus, the desire to please and be pleasing and the anxieties which accompany this desire persuade women, in fact, enable them actively to seek out romance, marriage and child bearing as much desired vocations.

Is male gaze common to all women? The lives of poor, laboring women revolve around work and survival. For many of them, their bodies are instruments of work. It is not that working class, lower caste women do not delight in colour, texture, in the aesthetic. But looking beautiful is always an indulgence, an act of luxury they reserve for themselves when they have extra time and money. Though they do make themselves up into figures that seek to elicit approval from men, there is also a certain self-defining quality to their desire to look pretty. They are expected to love, marry and bear children and suffer great sorrow if this destiny veers away from them.

WOMEN'S BODY, MALE GAZE, POWER AND SURVEILLANCE

Foucault's approach is characterized by a substantive preoccupation with the 'history of bodies' (Shilling, 2012:78). However, Foucault locates this substantive concern within an epistemological view of the body that assumes it exists in and is produced by discourse. Discourse, constitutes the link between daily practices and the organization and exercise of power (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982), a link illustrated in Foucault's studies of disciplinary systems and the history of sexuality. These studies analyze the transition from traditional to modern societies by exploring how individuals have historically been connected variously to institutions and produced as embodied subjects. This transition involved a change in the target, the object and the scope of discourse that altered profoundly the construction of bodies. Foucault's work has been used to undermine the sex-gender distinction, to argue that biology is socially constructed, and to explore how power exercised through bodies produces gendered forms of identity (Brown and Adams, 1979; Morris and Patton, 1979; Diamond and Queenby,

1988; Sawicki, 1991; Heyes, 2007). These Foucauldian analyzes build on a tradition of feminist work that views biology as a manifestation of the social (Wittig, 1982; Delphy, 1984). There is however a fundamental tension in Foucault's approach preventing it from overcoming sociology's dual approach to the body. On the one hand, it displays a substantive concern with the body as a real, permanently available product of constructing discourses, as when examining the corporeal effects of scientific thought and disciplinary technologies. Here, the body is always already discursively constructed; irrespective of time or place, the body is equally accessible as a site receiving meaning from, and being constructed by, external forces. Somewhat ironically, given the emphasis Foucault places the historical discontinuity, this portrays the body as a trans-historical and cross-cultural unified phenomenon: there is no recognition that different aspects of human embodiment are variably open to construction depending upon scientific historical circumstances. It also makes questionable the claims of those who argue that Foucault allows us to historicize the body (Weeks, 1992). Foucault's epistemological view of the body means that it disappears as a material, biological phenomenon. The physical body can be grasped by the Foucauldian approach as its existence is deferred permanently behind the grids of meaning imposed by discourse or technologies of the self. Discourses do not just reveal corporeality but create it, a causal determination which has been rejected by material feminists and an increasing number of other scholars keen to hang on to a sense of our biological being (e.g. Alaimo and Hekman, 2008). Foucault's bodies do not enjoy prolonged visibility as corporeal entities. Bodies are produced, but their own powers of production are limited to those invested in them by discourse. The body is dissolved as a causal phenomenon into the determining power of discourse and it becomes difficult to conceive of it as an active material component of social action.

Men gained a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige, and the right to command. They also gain a material dividend. In the rich capitalist countries, men's average incomes are approximately double women's average incomes. Men are vastly more likely to control major block of capital as chief executive of a major corporation or as direct owner. Men are likely more to hold state power. Social struggle follows from the politics of masculinity cannot concern only questions of personal life and identity. A structure of inequality on this scale, involving massive disposition of social resources is hard to imagine without violence. It is overwhelmingly, the

dominant gender who holds and uses the means of violence. Men are armed far more often than women. Indeed under many gender regimes women have been forbidden to bear or use arms. Patriarchal definition of femininity may amount to cultural disarmament quite as effective as any physical kind of violence. Domestic violence cases often find abused women, physically able to look after themselves, who have accepted the abusers' definition of themselves as incompetent and helpless (Russell, 1982; Connell, 1985; Ptacek, 1988; Smith, 1989). Two patterns follow from this: one, many members of the privileged group use violence to sustain their dominance. Intimidation of women ranges across spectrum, from the whistling in the street to office harassment, to rape and domestic assault to murder. Physical attacks are commonly accompanied by verbal abuse of women. Second, violence becomes important in gender politics among men. Most episodes of major violence are transactions among men. Terror is used as a means of drawing boundaries and making exclusions for example heterosexual violence against gay men. Violence can become a way of claiming or asserting masculinity in group struggles. Violence can be used to enforce a reactionary gender politics. Violence is a part of system domination but it is at the same time a measure of its imperfection. A thoroughly legitimate hierarchy would have less need to intimidate. The scale of contemporary violence points to crisis tendencies in gender order.

Conclusion

Globalization promises to remove backwardness through a worldwide exchange of information and skills in order to establish a truly cosmopolitan culture. There is an underlying belief that mutual cooperation and concern for social justice is automatically cared for under this system. In actual practice since the global order is based on unequal power relations these promises are not achieved. Globalization affects the weaker nations and the weak among them. Due to the existing difference between women's and men's access to knowledge, skills, responsibilities and concerns and control over resources they are affected widely by the global process. In many developing countries since women in the agricultural sector have none they continue to bear the brunt of gender and class inequalities, experience increasing marginalization and pauperization. There is also an increase in the violence against women in these areas. The rhetoric of globalization promises to remove backwardness through a world-wide exchange of information and establish a cosmopolitan culture but in actual practice since the world is based on unequal

power relations these concerns are put on hold and lead to displacement and marginalization. Hence we need a holistic approach to development and empowerment—an approach which is based on equality, love and respect and starts from the family rather than an approach which is based on power and privilege of men and boys and weakness and subservience prescribed for women and girls. Today there is an irreversibility of the reform process. The logic of global economy as well as India's interests dictates that India becomes proactive in its liberalization policies. India must liberalize not because it has no choice but because it is the best choice. India must liberalize because that way alone can it become a rich and prosperous nation and that way alone is there any hope of conquering poverty. The granting of land rights to women, rectifying the discriminatory inheritance laws, labour market legislations and laws to protect common access to property will go a long way in altering the social conditioning of gender. It is said that women have entered in a new phase where they are ought to gain more freedom.

A concern with questions of freedom in the context of domestic violence may appear too many as the quintessential illustration of philosophy's abstract irrelevance: why talk about freedom when the key issue for many such women is survival? But agency and freedom are part of what motivates our horror and concern: after all, what about a woman who is never physically hurt but is emotionally and psychologically abused? What about woman whose partners prevent them from working, seeking outside interests, or even going out of the house without their supervision but do not put their lives in physical jeopardy? Would not such behavior count as a kind of abuse? And is not a key element in our labeling it abusive the fact that a woman's agency, her capacity to make choices and act on them, is being denied? Is not that an important feature of physical abuse as well? So answering why violence occurs, what are the various forms of violence and why violence is in most part inflicted on women is not an easy one.

Women's desires and preferences are not validated and even resisted by individuals in positions of power and authority. In John Stuart Mills (1992) classic liberal account of law, as a barrier to the freedom of some that is legitimate only to the degree that it protects the freedom of others, inequality under the law produces inequality of freedom. In this view there would appear to be a strong case for explaining battered women's situation in terms of negative liberty. Police who do not arrest, attorneys who do not prosecute, judges who are biased, racism laws that do not

acknowledge physical women's differences, too few and inadequately funded shelters and other resources, all present barriers to women's freedom to use state mechanisms afforded men for their protection. But beyond this, choice is constrained and constructed for women on a more subtle level, in what is viewed as choice and what is not. For women victims of domestic violence, returning is viewed as a choice, though paradoxically made by someone, who is not recognized as fully human. The construction of choice in this way is, of course, counter-factual, men's social, economic and physical privileges allow them to make choices and act on them far more than women. Women are afraid, economically dependent, and viewed with prejudice by those from whom they seek help are effectively incapacitated to act on their preferences, and if this happens over a long enough period of time, it may even affect those preferences and construct these women as people who think of themselves as others see them. In the position of the oppressed within patriarchy, then, the construction of women's choices occurs at many levels in women's lives from the most systematic and public to most intimate and personal. A feminist approach allows us to see how even the supposed intra-psychic phenomena are culturally mediated and created.

A feminist conception of freedom requires us to acknowledge how external factors influence and generate inner feelings and motives, as well as how those inner feelings act on and influence the external world. If we are who we are through social relations, and if those social relations send us extremely negative messages it is only human to internalize them, to give them some credence, to accept them as 'truth'. But that is not where the story ends. Vaclav Havel (1987) argues that people who adapt to oppressive conditions help create those conditions. They are objects in a system of control, but at the same time they are its subjects as well. This duality of oppression is the key to understanding battered women's freedom: for if battered women are the most obvious subjects of this system of control, and then they have the power to change it. Women's exercise of agency and freedom requires the help of others; the focus of positive liberty on the potential for others to help one realize one's true self and desires is a concept that is important to retain.

In viewing violence as means for doing masculinity, gender theory provides a basis for linking feminist insights about gender and power with family violence insights about the role of socio-

demographic position in domestic violence. Gender theory proposes that violence is a resource for constructing masculinity, and thus the use of violence will have different meanings for women and men. Additionally gender theory proposes that domestic violence will be affected by social processes that support men's societal dominance, such as cultural support for couplings in which men have greater resources than their female partners.

The body is subjected to a body of knowledge; this is the political technology of the body. A "micro-physics" of power operates; power is a strategy, and we need to decipher it in a system of relations that can be called political anatomy. Power is not a property but a strategy evident in the relations between people. Power relations operate and exist through people. They go right down into society. We need to realize that power and knowledge are related. We should think of the body politic as a series of routes and weapons by which power operates.

A history of the micro-physics of power is an element in the genealogy of the modern soul. Upon the idea of the "soul", concepts of the psyche, personality and consciousness are created, as well as scientific techniques and claims. This is not a substitution of the soul for the real man; now, the soul is the prison of the body. Foucault ends by relating his commitment to modern prisoners, and to writing a history of the present. In a globalized society, where women's position in society is no less vulnerable, using Foucault's approach to view body, disciplining through surveillance and use of power over certain bodies, in this case I argue, women, violence against women becomes a very important area of understanding the process of disciplining used by patriarchy.

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