

Roots – a Tangled History
a dark story about gender & power, Identity & history

The Keeper of the Forest

How much do men and women know about what the other gender does?

Are you a woman? If so, maybe you know quite a lot. Because you are dependent on what men do.

Are you a man? If so, maybe you know less. And are you even curious?

Are you interested in what women do and what they are capable of?

When I say that women are subordinate to men, you say "Not me, I have no power".

You say "I'm not the one who created this system".

That's what men have been saying for generations.

Could it be that men and others in power take the system so much for granted that they aren't aware of the advantages that this gives them?

Could it be that men find it difficult to see the advantages they enjoy?

Focusing instead on the great responsibility they believe society places on them?

Why do men rarely notice the skills and talents of women?

Why do women who make progress in traditionally male areas appear exceptional?

Why are women who succeed in spite of everything seen as proof that the system is fair?

Why do men believe that the position they hold is theirs because they are more suitable?

Did you know that men perceive even small reductions in their own advantages as a major threat?

That a small shift in the unequal relationship between women and men feels like a major loss? Did you know that a man usually doesn't even notice all of the benefits the system gives him?

The Child, Act 1

A girl is playing with two dolls

Shall we play?

OK.

Oh dear, oh dear.

What's the matter?

I was sad because my husband's dead. My husband's dead! How will I manage now? How will I afford food and look after my children?

Oh, I don't know, you'll just have to be a poor widow. A poor widow?

Yes, you'll have to start working or something.

No, we can't work, you know very well we can't!

Hm, that's true.

Well, we just have to be married.

OK

So we can't manage.

OK

No, we can't. So now I've died.

Wait! No! Don't die! You can be a maid, like me. Look.

A maid? No way! Don't you know that you can HIT maids?

A nun then?

Nun?

Yes, they're nice to women in the church. No one can hit you there.

So I can do whatever I want?

No, silly, not whatever you want. You must obey your husband, obviously.

I see.

And not get divorced or anything.

Ah. In that case I think I'll be a widow.

The Owls, Act 1

- Every man must accept his responsibility.
- hmm
- The father is the Pillar of society.
- hmm
- And when we say "every man", of course we mean the Athenian.
- hmm
- "Every man" only includes those born in Athens whose parents were also born in Athens.
- hmm, of course
- and "every man" only includes those who are men and free.
- hmm
- not slaves, not women, not foreigners
- hmm
- The father is the one who guarantees order and controls the chaos
- hmm, exactly
- that's why it's extremely important that a family always has a father of the house
- hmm
- in the worst case scenario, a boy may assume responsibility for his mother and sisters, but there MUST be a father of the house
- hmm
- hmm, about the girls?
- yes, what about them?
- what about selling the girls instead of doing as many do, putting them out to die?
- hmm, good idea
- make sure they do something useful
- have children
- marry them off
- the age of fourteen would be suitable
- hmm

The State Apparatus

Welcome to the State Apparatus's automatic voice response service.

If you want to bypass God, the pope and go straight to the father of the country, PRESS 0.

Main menu:

Do you want to

Learn more about the State apparatus as a power-related institution or function in society and its purpose in disciplining citizens? PRESS 1

Do you want to

Find out more about the Inviolability of the Home Act? PRESS 5

The Inviolability of the Church Act? PRESS 10

The Inviolability of the District Court Act? PRESS 20

The Inviolability of Women Act? PRESS 6

Do you want to

Find out more about the laws of the Kingdom of Sweden and its practising bodies? PRESS 2

The individual sections? PRESS 21

Legal practice? PRESS 22

Police? PRESS 23

Courts? PRESS 24

Prisons? PRESS 25

Do you want to

Find out more about sentencing? PRESS 26

Corporal punishment? PRESS 27

Learned legality? PRESS 28

Do you want to

Find out more about school? PRESS 3

Language teaching? PRESS 31

Discipline? PRESS 32

Gymnastics? PRESS 33

Main menu:

Do you want to

Learn more about the State apparatus as a power-related institution or function in society and its purpose in disciplining citizens? PRESS 1

Do you want to

Find out more about the Church? PRESS 4

Confession? PRESS 41

Sin? PRESS 42

A fair life? PRESS 43

Morals? PRESS 44

Virtue? PRESS 45

Do you want to

*Find out more about
healthcare and medicine? PRESS 5*

The military? PRESS 6

Work? PRESS 7

You have made a choice that is not permitted.

The State Apparatus cannot handle your choice.

Please replace the handset and start again from the beginning.

The Gender Glade

Lesson 1

Natural! What is natural?

Imagine that you want to argue for or against homosexuality. You can use animals! Talk about what is natural, or what is animal...

Look, animals do that, oh no it's animal!

Look, animals do that, ah that's natural!

You can use the world of animals as it suits you!

Biology is not an objective science.

Did you think it was?

All science is shaped to fit in with our age. Our society.

Imagine you're a researcher and discover something that isn't in tune with your society's view of the world, might it then be dangerous for you to speak about your discovery?

Lesson 2

What is gender exactly? How do we determine a person's gender?

And how many genders are there?

Humans have sex chromosomes, XX for females and XY for males.

But XX and XY are no guarantee of possessing a female or a male body respectively.

There are individuals with XX chromosomes who are men and with XY who are women.

The clitoris and the penis are made from the same tissue. How they then develop from this tissue is a moving scale. A large clitoris and a small penis can be confusingly similar.

The border between man and woman is actually a moving scale. And we're all somewhere on that scale.

And those who happen to be in the middle of the scale are interpreted as being "intersexual". That is people whose sexual organs cannot be clearly categorised as female or male. Instead of viewing this as a variation of gender, the person is examined and corrected to belong to one or the other... as it is still society's perception that there are only two alternatives...

Lesson 3

It was actually the general perception a long time ago that sex determination was a sliding scale. Instead of the two-sex model they had the one-sex model.

The man was indeed considered to be the norm, created in God's image.

But! There was no difference in species or anything that was necessarily congenital.

The perception of there being TWO genders, and only two, originated in the 19th century.

This is when men started to define women as "the others".

For men to be able to position themselves at the top of the system, they turned to biology for support.

It became important to prove the inferiority of women in purely biological terms, so they were forced to separate women completely from men. To make them into a different being.

Lesson 4

We can see how contemporary attitudes influence our view of biology by considering Darwin's theory of evolution.

Which was developed during the Victorian era.

The view of women then was that they were weak, fragile and passive.

It has subsequently been proven that, for example, female apes are anything but passive about the partner with which they choose to mate. And female birds, for example, are not at all monogamous.

Isn't it strange that we know so little about the diversity of nature?

No! Because this diversity questions our western attitudes about gender and sexuality!

You think you know:

That male and female are opposites and that heterosexuality is the only natural state.

But in reality:

Sex, sex determination and sex changes are all ever-changing.

During the course of evolution, genders have been selected and changed, just like all other traits.

Yet we still live in a society that describes the biological sex differences as fixed and defined.

So now I ask you: Have YOU been tricked?

The Child, Act 2

A girl is playing with two dolls

Shall we play?

Play, no how stupid is that, I'd rather go out.

Go out? Are you mad? A woman's place is in the home, you know that.
But in the past women used to go out, actually.
Yes, but in the past people were uneducated.
Maybe, but I want to go out and get a job.
A job? You can't.
Yes I can.
Neh. Because you haven't got an education.
OK, let me get an education then.
Neh. Because that's not possible for us. Because we're not considered full adults.
What? Oh, that makes me so angry! Oh, we must do something!
Neh. We can't.
Oh, why?
Because we don't have the right to vote.
Well I want the right to vote then!
Hang on? How would that work? You're not even counted as a full adult.
Oooh!
What's the matter? Come on, let's do a bit of embroidery. Or would you rather crochet?
Oooh, I can't breathe.
Hello?

The Owls, Act 2

- Gentlemen, now it's time, the day has come.
- hmm
- It's time for us now to formulate the history of ourselves, to record these centuries of development so that future generations can read about us.
- Bravo!
- Any suggestions?
- Gentlemen, allow me to present: Heroes and Kings
- hmm
- Great deeds and honour
- hmm
- Nation, tradition, myth
- hmm hmm
- Art, philosophy, literature, the great thinkers!
- It's all there!
- Amazing!
- We've really covered everything!
- hmm, eh, there's no mention of women, should we consider that a problem, do you think?
- hmm, eh, I don't think so
- hmm, "women", that doesn't sound particularly great
- "Women", is that home and household, or what? hmm
- Hardly worth talking about, is it?
- Do they really fit into this context?
- Are they magnificent enough? hmm, are they?
- After all, this is the recording of history we're talking about, gentlemen, I'd say that women are NOT worth including
- well said, hmm
- And if we don't include women, it will also be as though they never existed!
- Yes

- Quite right!
- That's excellent!
- Just leave women out!
- Out of the history books with them!
- Out with them!
- hmmhmmhmm
- Gentlemen – we - have created HISTORY.

The Child, Act 3

A girl is playing with two dolls

Hey

Ssh! This is a lesson.

Oh, I don't care.

What?

History, what use is that to me? In the factory, or what?

Education is important

For boys, yes

Ssh!

Hey

Oh be quiet

Have you seen what it says here, "Men are superior to women, both physically and mentally"?

Yes

But that's crazy. Are we meant to believe that?

I don't know

But that's what it says in our books

I know

But it's wrong

But what can we do?

I don't want to read these books, I'm not even in them, there are no women, have you considered that?

Yes, but what can we do?

We're women, we exist

Yes!

We want to do things!

Yes!

Go to university!

Yes!

Provide for ourselves!

Yes!

Decide!

Yes, yes, yes!

Give me that lousy history book and I'll tear it apart!

(They tear it apart)

The Owls, Act 3

- Gentlemen, we now know, as our friend Copernicus has taught us, that the earth is not the centre of the universe.
- hmm
- We are subject to the laws of nature, of science.
- hmm, absolutely.
- It is men who support the world, not God.
- hmmhmm, absolutely right.
- The new human being is rational. And us men. Act fairly and diligently.
- hmm
- We explain the world
- hmm
- develop it
- hmm
- As Linné did for the plant kingdom and Darwin for the animal kingdom, we shall systematise mankind
- umm
- Let's begin. Men are superior to women, we've already established that
- hmm
- But we need additional categorisation for everything to work as it should. Gentlemen, certain types of men display striking similarities with women in terms of lower intelligence and physical inferiority
- hmm
- We should classify the human races in a hierarchy, based on quality
- hmm, of course
- The superior races must be given the right to restrain the inferior ones
- hmm
- The lower races that cannot be governed, in those cases it may be a matter of annihilation
- hmmhmm bravo
- The Government is our freedom! Long live the Government!
- hurrahhurrahurrah
- hmmhmm!liberty! Hmmhmmequality! Hmmhmmfraternity!

The Tangled Web

Man:

Women are somewhat weaker than men, yet not different beings. So there is no direct obstacle to a woman possessing power in a leading position or being a warrior. With the same education as men, women can also do jobs that have been reserved for men. Women can be brought up and trained for all professions.

Man:

A woman is a stunted form of human being, whose development halted between man and child.

Woman:

I wish they'd dare to provide the same education to a girl and a boy, of the same age and with the same intelligence and physique. They'd soon see how the girl outshone the boy.

Woman:

If the doctrine of the gender's equality were only said to be based on theory, we must also remind ourselves that the opposite doctrine is not based on theory either.

Man:

Women have a weaker body. Because of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood, women cannot think and speak politically.

Man:

Women cannot control themselves.

Woman:

Men are governed by their instincts.

Man:

Women are governed by their emotions.

Woman:

Men are more emotional than women.

Man:

Women behave more like children than adults.

Man:

Women have a higher moral standing than men, and women have an obligation to guide men along the right path.

Man:

Women can analyse and put forward arguments, but they cannot do it independently.

Woman:

There is no reason to delegate work on the basis of gender.

Woman:

The only difference between women and men that can be proven is muscle strength, and other alleged differences are often fabricated on very vague grounds and without any evidence whatsoever.

Man:

Essentially, men are superior to women. But many women are in various respects superior to various men.

Man:

You can be whatever you want, as long as you want to be a woman!

Woman:

You aren't born a woman, you become one.

Woman:

The right to be a full member of society must be a human right!

Women cannot defend themselves against oppression, as oppression is institutionalised through marriage.

Woman:

Feminism is the radical notion that women are people.

Woman:

Why don't men support feminism? Where are they? Where are the men?

Woman:

Because men feel accused as they themselves cannot see that they are part of a repressive structure.

Man:

Guys are better than girls, after all. That's what statistics show us! Girls have to show what they can do, be better, sharpen their ideas, otherwise we'll keep thinking of them as second best.

Woman:

Women are perceived as a minority, although they are actually in the majority – they are not a minority: women are marginalised! The focus of historiography on the history of men means that women are perceived as vague, as ghosts, in a past filled with men. Female artists have been pushed into the background, sometimes you can catch a glimpse of them while you're looking for something else.

Woman:

The "I'm a man – who's going to fight for me?" argument often results in the subordination of women in society being rendered invisible in the discussion: a power strategy to return the focus to men.

Man:

Yes, but who's going to fight for men, then?

Woman:

Come on. That's like saying: "Hello! Why do you call yourselves Save the Polar Bears? Seals are having a tough time as well, you know!" Men can damn well take on the responsibility for their own struggle! Should women fight to emancipate their oppressors? That's totally sick!

Man:

It would be good if feminism assumed more responsibility for equal opportunity. Maybe it shouldn't be called feminism – after all, that excludes men. Real feminists say that EVERYONE HAS RIGHTS, not just women.

Woman:

A feminist's basic standpoint is that women are subordinated to men and that this should be changed. It's partly a description and partly a statement that something should be done about it. Without these two elements aren't there, it can't be called feminism.

Woman:

Talking about yourself as a victim (e.g. that I've been sexually harassed, I've been raped) as a woman often generates comments along the lines of "yes, you were raped, you're a feminist and men have their problems to, and you should assume responsibility for that".

Man:

Be quiet, you mustn't talk, that's just awkward, you're ruining everything, we were all happy before you opened your mouth, do you have to talk about something so private?

Man:

You feminists tar everyone with the same brush! I'm not an animal!

Man:

Although men have a stronger sexual urge and we're controlled by our hormones and instincts ...

Man:

Feminism is well on the way to sterilising us normal men and depriving us of any opportunities for evolution.

Woman:

I stand for equality, as feminism is such a charged term and many people misuse it!

Man:

IT'S THE TERM "FEMINISM" THAT CREATES PROBLEMS!

Feminism is selfish by its very nature! It creates a "we" from which I'm excluded as a man!

Woman:

All this yelling. Just an illustration of men's inability to not always be the centre of attention.

Woman:

It's the duty of women to assume responsibility for everyone and to make everyone's case!

Woman:

Feminism has to save everyone, the whole world, the environment and everything... then maybe it can focus a little on women's rights.

Woman:

An overwhelming majority of those who use violence in society are men.

Man:

I mean, you women, you only complain, you write blogs, you demonstrate, you protest, you talk... but you don't do anything to bring about any change! Do something instead!

Woman:

What more do you want me to do?

Gender Power, Act 1

Woman:

Welcome to the world! Darling! You're here at last!

Man:

Can you give your uncle a kiss?

Woman:

You're so clever!

Woman:

You're so lovely!

Woman:

What are you going to be?

Man:

You can be whatever you want!

Man:

So mature for your age!

Woman:

Like a little woman.

Woman:

Let him keep going, he's doing that because he's in love with you.

Man:

I'm sorry, I didn't hear, you spoke so quietly.

Woman:

Why is your voice so shrill? It's so unattractive.

Man:

Pardon, did you say something?

Woman:

Are you going around like that?

Man:

Don't smile like that, it's dangerous to smile at strangers.

Woman:

Do you want problems? Are you asking for problems?

Man:

Don't mention your surname.

Woman:

When you're walking through the park, keys in your hand. Keep flat shoes in your handbag so you can run.

Man:

Don't eat bananas or ice cream in public. A man can view that as an invitation.

Woman:

You don't know who wishes you ill.

Man:

It can be anyone at all.

Woman:

You must always, always be careful.

Gender Power, Act 2

Man:

Have you planned any pregnancy over the next few years?

Can you tell us about your body?

What are your plans for the future?

It's nothing we're concerned about. But we have to know.

All doors are open to you.

We're just waiting for you to catch up. Things seem to move a bit more slowly for you, and that can happen, it may even be purely physical.

You've had every opportunity.
(Haven't you had every opportunity?)

It's your responsibility.
Yes, you're nice. Yes, you're skilled. Yes, you're smart.
But sometimes it takes something else, you know.
A bit of courage. Some balls.

But you've grown up now. Welcome!
Time to take your place.

Woman:

How does your body work?

Are you in a relationship?

What are your plans for your body?

No. We haven't lied to you.

You're overqualified.

You can't force a change.
(Can you force a change?)

You've been able to choose for yourself.
(Haven't you been able to choose for yourself?)

There are certain things you can't say to a little girl.

You've become a woman! Congratulations!

Gender Power, Act 3

*WhoreSlagCuntCharmoutaBitchYoufuckingwhoreSuckmydickI'mgoingtofuckyoul'm going
torapeyouYou'resofuckinguglyYoufatwhoreFatslagFeministcuntDirtywhoreHorrible
fatcowYou'vegotfatthighsDisgustingwhoreWhatareyoudoinghereFuckoffhomeWhatare
youlaughingat?Shutup!diotTartSlagBaboocuntFatarseYou'resofuckingfat*