

# Sandra lee bartky, foucault, femininity and the modernization of patriarchal essa...

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



## **Video Analysis in the light of**

### Introduction

The theme of the music video, Lilly Allen's, 'Hard out There' is all about the typical behavior of women and thinking of men about the general womanhood features. When it comes to women, thinking of men is all about their sexual appeal. If a woman is very appealing in appearance, men get overwhelmed by her thoughts and take her on for a single time partner rather than being with them for a lifetime. Appealing women lose their attraction earlier than desired as they ought to interact with men more in order to create a demand for themselves. However, for becoming overwhelmed for the woman, a man needs to be successful and financially strong. Both genders have complete sets of expectations while making any kind of relationship. The references of 'sluts' and 'bitches' too frequently in the song, indirectly refer to the financial well being of men who can afford such women. Foucault has actually 'objectified' Femininity in his research work and almost all major themes of his theory can be applied to the song under discussion for having an idea of the practical importance of his work (Azlyrics. com, 2014).

### **Significance of Identity**

Political inclination and self realization highly affects the behavior of people. When men are stable and strong, they start imposing their ways and the natural power in them. When women are attractive and appealing, they place choices like. Even in the song video under discussion, the singer is shown going through Liposuction sort of treatment for achieving ideal looks

for the upcoming events.

At the time of birth, gender is male or female; however, masculinity and femininity develop gradually with the passage of time. It entirely depends upon the environment, demographics and surroundings that how a personality develops. The singer shows herself unmarried and repeats the theme that if she discusses her sex life, she will be regarded a prostitute. The reason is, there is trend to look at women just as a source of amusement and women are bound to behave more like sexual objects, rather than human beings. These special features, they develop with experience, influences and personal approach towards attracting the world (Fuggle, 2009).

### **The power, identity**

Identification is all about the self esteem and self realization. Some women are seen very confident and in a very stable mental condition. They know how to tackle situations and prove to possess good leadership qualities. Their way of handling every issue is very outstanding and impressive due to which they maintain a good position in the society. On the other hand, several women stay at home and their inclination is more towards the household and routine general activities that relate to family upbringing and caring for the home itself. The behavior of both types of women is entirely different from each other because they have entirely different roles and priorities in life (Fuggle, 2009). In Allen's words, some tend to be in ' Studios', rather than in ' Kitchens'. So, this is the choice of identification in the society they want to develop that controls the whereabouts of women.

## **Influencing Factors**

Various factors influence femininity. These influences intend to make a woman what she was not at the time of birth. The personality is raised and composed by the effects of the surroundings that are largely controlled by men. All females have different time in their life when dressing, physical adornments, gestures and postures, majorly reflect sexism. The feelings of being obsessed with sexist thoughts are created due to various influential factors. Some of them are as follows:

## **Impacts of Politics**

Political influences leave high impacts because of the inherent appeal of freedom and liberty, in most of the states of modern and postmodern world. Political stability is considered as the strength and power among both genders so; the behavior of men and women is widely modified under political influences (Fuggle, 2009). Liberalism and Freedom of expression are the defining constructs of the political theories of modern and postmodern world. These systems promise women the liberty and freedom of making decisions and choices about their life. Allen's video is evident of the liberty women enjoy in today's developed states.

## **Subculture**

There are various cultures all around the world having different ethics, values and appearance. Some cultures find no issues in exposing and making sexual assortments whereas some cultures work on the decency and respect of men and women. According to the modern American culture approach, femininity is more focused upon the gestures, posture and

appearing more skinny in the public places with full confidence. The laws of the land provide full protection to women and the culture provides full support for choosing the lifestyle(Moore, 2005).

Social class difference also plays key role in defining feminist behavior because only the highest social classes tend to set and follow latest trends to the core. However, these trends just spread like a jungle fire in the societies which are very much conscious of social status. The elite class has been shown in the video and the lyrics explain their lifestyle and perception of women. Since, these trends appear as signs of modernity; all other social classes follow them as per their capability. Socially active people have more interactions; hence they get attracted more frequently. They have higher rank of possibilities as compared to the people staying in their specific surroundings. So, social activism plays a key role in grooming of an ideal female (Moore, 2005).

### **Sexual Empowerment and Mixed Media Messages:**

Media has been serving as the greatest source of inspiration and role model. Media has portrayed women in the light of the trends being supported in the society. Moreover, all of the major movements use media as a platform for spreading their message, and for gaining more support and supporters. Same is true for Feminism and the related trends regarding Femininity. The celebrities and other related entities like fashion brands, political parties and human rights activists use digital media for spreading their newly developed theories and messages. As a result, the movements gain momentum rapidly and trends change at an exceptional pace (Moore, 2005).

Allen's song has showed great adherence to the Femininity of the day and has criticized it in a very bold manner. The singer is proud to be a part of the postmodern, liberal society but, at the same time, she has reservations over the perception of a female in this world. She very boldly says due to the demands of modern society, she cannot live a life of a classical female just because she cannot live an isolated life from the society where all of the men do not appreciate that version of women.

In the song, later on, Allen's lyrics say that men of the day like faces that are very well adored and have been beautified using all of the latest techniques.

In his words:

A women's face must be made up, that is to say, made over, and so must her body; she is ten pounds overweighther complexion dewier, her eyes more mysterious. (Bartky 1998)

Moreover, the singer sings that all other body parts of women should be in accordance with the requirement of the men. She also describes how all of the body parts should look and move; going in details of consorts. At the end, the main theme of the song says that ' It's Hard out there' and the word ' bitch' echoes as well. These words describe both types of treatment women actually face; humiliation and disgrace in the disguise of modernity and advancements.

## **Sex vs. Gender**

Femininity is more associated with sex. Females are considered as the mark of sexism so men mostly get attracted towards more sexually appealing women. This approach generates great impacts on their behavior and

changes females into terms of inspiration and attraction.

There are significant gender differences in gesture, posture, movement and general bodily comportment; women are far more restricted than men in their manner of movement and their spatiality. (Bartky 1998)

The influences of such drives are psychologically used to diagnose the sexuality and mental illness of a person. This is the major factor in recognizing the behaviors and mental state. Earlier, a man was labeled as the sign of power and strength whereas in this industrial society the women are never treated in that manner. Modernization has changed the concepts of people because sexism is now considered as the major influential tool for almost all major activities of life (Moore, 2005).

## **Conclusion**

Foucault came up with his theory of Femininity, describing all of the major factors defining typical women of the day. He made at least, a dozen major and sub constructs to give his theory a comprehensive finish. Allen's song, 'It Hard out there' can be regarded as the major application of his theory. The song uses various constructs of this theory to describe life of typical woman of the day and her major aspirations as well as shortcomings. The song opens in a studio, where the singer starts by saying that she can be found in Studios and pubs, not in the kitchen because she has to care more about her physical appearance than the responsibilities and duties. In other words, she is saying that path to her man's heart does not go through kitchen; rather it's her physical appearance which has importance in her man's eyes.

Later on, while moving ahead in the song, she describes other major

attributes in her physical appearance, appeal and personality which can win her good men. But, the song ends at a striking reality saying that such women are regarded as 'sluts' or 'bitches' in the society. Even though, all of them do not have such lifestyle, preference and activities. So, Foucault's theory describes whole of the situation in the greater context. Using his theory for analysis of this song reveals that all children are born void of the features of behavioral sexism. Femininity develops in response to the cultural, political, fashion trends in the society. Since all of the developed nations of the state follow liberalist political and cultural norms, women enjoy full liberty and legal support for choosing their lifestyle. However, this unchecked liberty, eventually leads most of them to a path that snatches all of the inherent respect and grace of women.

## References

Azlyrics. com,. (2014). LILY ALLEN LYRICS - Hard Out Here. Azlyrics. com.

Retrieved 14 December 2014, from <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/lilyallen/hardouthere.html>

Fuggle, S. (2009). Foucault Beyond Foucault: Power and its Intensifications

Since 1984. *French Studies*, 63(2), 234-235. doi: 10. 1093/fs/knn203

Moore, L. (2005). Women in a Widening Frame: (Cross-)Cultural Projection,

Spectatorship, and Iranian Cinema. *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, And*

*Media Studies*, 20(2 59), 1-33. doi: 10. 1215/02705346-20-2\_59-1