

# Reading Patriarchal Texts: Textual Moments in the History of Political Thought

The history of political thought is replete with patriarchal texts that have shaped our understanding of power, authority, and citizenship. These texts have often excluded or marginalized the voices of women and other marginalized groups, perpetuating a patriarchal status quo that has had far-reaching consequences for society.



## Patriarchal Moments: Reading Patriarchal Texts (Textual Moments in the History of Political Thought)

by Gaby Mahlberg

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In this article, we will explore the concept of patriarchal texts and their role in shaping political thought throughout history. We will examine specific textual moments that have influenced political ideologies and practices, arguing that these texts have contributed to the perpetuation of patriarchal structures and the marginalization of women and other marginalized groups.

We will begin by defining patriarchal texts and discussing the ways in which they have been used to justify and maintain male dominance. We will then examine three specific textual moments in the history of political thought that have had a profound impact on our understanding of gender and politics: the writings of Aristotle, the Bible, and John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*.

Finally, we will call for a critical reading of patriarchal texts and a re-examination of the ways in which they have shaped our understanding of power, authority, and citizenship. We will argue that it is only by challenging these texts and their underlying assumptions that we can create a more just and equitable society for all.

## **Defining Patriarchal Texts**

Patriarchal texts are texts that promote or perpetuate a patriarchal ideology. This ideology is based on the belief that men are superior to women and that women should be subordinate to men. Patriarchal texts often justify this belief by appealing to biology, religion, or tradition.

Patriarchal texts can take many different forms, including religious texts, political treatises, and works of literature. Some of the most influential patriarchal texts in Western history include the Bible, Aristotle's *Politics*, and John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*.

## **The Role of Patriarchal Texts in Shaping Political Thought**

Patriarchal texts have played a major role in shaping political thought throughout history. These texts have often been used to justify the exclusion of women from political life and to legitimize the authority of men over women.

For example, Aristotle's *Politics* argues that women are naturally inferior to men and that they should therefore be excluded from the political sphere. This argument has been used by many subsequent political thinkers to justify the exclusion of women from politics.

Similarly, the Bible has been used to justify the subordination of women to men. In the Bible, women are often portrayed as being inferior to men and as being subject to their authority.

These are just two examples of how patriarchal texts have been used to shape political thought. These texts have had a profound impact on our understanding of gender and politics, and they continue to influence political thought and practice today.

### **Three Textual Moments in the History of Political Thought**

In this section, we will examine three specific textual moments in the history of political thought that have had a profound impact on our understanding of gender and politics. These moments are:

1. The writings of Aristotle
2. The Bible
3. John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*

Each of these moments represents a significant turning point in the history of political thought, and each has had a lasting impact on our understanding of gender and politics.

#### **The Writings of Aristotle**

Aristotle was a Greek philosopher who lived in the 4th century BC. He is considered one of the most influential philosophers in Western history, and his writings on politics have had a profound impact on political thought ever since.

In his book *Politics*, Aristotle argues that women are naturally inferior to men and that they should therefore be excluded from the political sphere. He bases this argument on a number of factors, including the biological differences between men and women and the different roles that men and women play in society.

Aristotle's argument has been used by many subsequent political thinkers to justify the exclusion of women from politics. It has also been used to justify the subordination of women to men in other areas of life, such as the family and the workplace.

## **The Bible**

The Bible is the holy book of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. It is one of the most influential texts in Western history, and it has had a profound impact on political thought.

The Bible contains a number of passages that can be interpreted as supporting patriarchal values. For example, in the book of Genesis, women are portrayed as being created from the rib of Adam, which is seen as a symbol of their inferiority to men.

The Bible has been used by many political thinkers to justify the subordination of women to men. It has also been used to justify the exclusion of women from political life.

## **John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government***

John Locke was an English philosopher who lived in the 17th century. He is considered one of the most important figures in the history of political thought, and his writings on government have had a profound impact on political thought ever since.

In his book *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke argues that all men are created equal and that they have certain natural rights, including the right to life, liberty, and property.

Locke's theory of natural rights has been used by many subsequent political thinkers to justify the rights of citizens. It has also been used to justify the exclusion of women from political life.

In this article, we have explored the concept of patriarchal texts and their role in shaping political thought throughout history. We have examined specific textual moments that have influenced political ideologies and practices, arguing that these texts have contributed to the perpetuation of patriarchal structures and the marginalization of women and other marginalized groups.

We have argued that it is important to critically read patriarchal texts and to re-examine the ways in which they have shaped our understanding of power, authority, and citizenship. It is only by challenging these texts and their underlying assumptions that we can create a more just and equitable society for all.

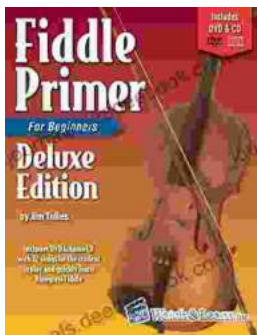
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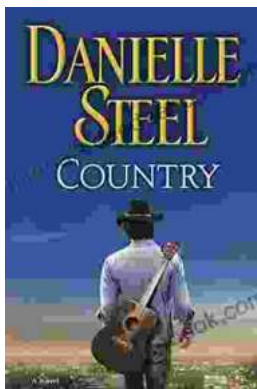
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