

Patriarchy and its Enduring Challenge to Feminism in the Modern Age

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to answer the momentous query whether modernity is gendered masculine or feminine. Despite modernity's stinging criticism of Descartes' Cartesian split, the male/female binary opposition seems to be invincible. This paper vindicates that modernity is gendered masculine despite women's attempts to alter the shoreline of male dominance and transcend gender binaries. With the advent of modernity, the ossified patriarchal system proved difficult to fade away. The paper evinces the factors that affected gender identity in the modern age. These factors also helped preserve and shore up the traditional patriarchal ideologies.

Keywords: *Modernity ; Gender ; Misogyny ; Patriarchy ; Quee, Feminism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Twentieth century historical and socio-political conditions have many implications for gender relations. The modern age is marked by a hot debate about gender and sexuality. Herzog states that "the twentieth century [...] was not only a century of extraordinary brutality. It can also be usefully thought of as 'the century of sex.'" (2009, p.6). So, the overwhelming problem of gender and sex weighs heavily upon the modern individual. The critic Mullin, in turn, remarks that the issue of gender and sexuality becomes a major concern in the modern times. In her words, "during the first decades of the twentieth century, the nature of sexuality, marriage, and motherhood was fiercely debated." (2006, p.140). Much of the critical debates, in the modern age, revolve around the binary opposition male/female. For many men, Manichean thinking proves difficult to reconsider when it comes to the problem of

women and their ranking in the spectrum of humanity.

Modernity is, theoretically, a damning reaction to Cartesian and Descartesian dualism. It attempts to deconstruct binaries, which have always been central to the Western thought. In this regard, McFarlane writes: "Barriers between subject and object, between the Cartesian *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, between man the observer and nature the observed were progressively demolished." (1976, p.83-84). So, modernity aspires to reconcile opposites and make polarities merge. However, and despite its stubborn aversion to Cartesian philosophy, modernity, as this paper evinces, remains patriarchal. The modern age was marked by gender conflicts in which men tried to ossify the patriarchal system, and women made herculean efforts to accord women a privileged place and rescue them from the socio-historical and political dustbin.

2. The Gender of Modernity:

In fact, a multitude of factors affected the traditional gender roles. These factors can be summarized as follows:

2.1. The First World War:

Though patriarchy is not new in the West, a variety of factors, in the twentieth century, have complicated and embittered male-female relations. The war, for instance, has left indelible traces on the individual's psychological make-up, gender roles, and social relations. In his discussion of the factors, which have influenced modern masculinity, Mosse states that "[m]ovements such as the decadence at the turn of the century, the First World War, and the new political movements in its aftermath are some of the events that left their mark on the normative definition of masculinity" (1996, p.12). So, the war has disrupted the long established traditional values and conceptions of gender identity. Correspondingly, Sherry posits that the war was "[g]lobal in scope, shattering in its impact on national traditions as well as class structures and gender identities." (2005, p.113). The war had a profound influence on the traditional social structure. It results in a disruption of the smooth functioning of the patriarchal system. The situation of women has changed during and after the tide of change brought about by the First World War. The latter helped women attain more rights and privileges, and it enabled them to find new opportunities for certain kinds of public roles. Men, who felt that masculinity is a safeguard against modernity, aspired to return to the traditional fabric of society, where women were incarcerated in the private sphere. In his study of the effects of the War on the traditional gender roles, Herzog writes:

Examining critically convulsive and potentially transformative impacts of

wars on gender roles and relations, as well as the often tenacious hold of pre-war conceptualizations of gender or the force of postwar attempts to restore 'traditional' gender arrangements, appeared to offer an exceptionally valuable opportunity to theorise more effectively the complex interplay of change and continuity that marked women's lives. Precisely because wars threw gender relations into disarray and thereby exposed the constructedness and contingency of gender roles more generally (2009, p.1-2).

So, the War has tergiversated gender roles by disrupting the binary thinking, which has long conceived the woman as the 'Other of the One'. It helped women break free from the ties of the patriarchal stereotypes. Hence, gender identity becomes more precarious and start to be perceived as a construct rather than innate. The War, despite its detrimental aftermaths, has triggered waves, which defended women's rights. In this regard, Mullin states: "If male modernist sensibilities were dominated and shaped by the Great War, then many of their female counterparts found an alternative formative experience through the suffrage campaigns in Britain and the United States and through an affiliated interest in feminist issues" (2006, p.140). In other words, the war had a positive effect on men because it has aroused and bolstered their masculine sensibilities. But, at the same time, it enticed the feminist movement, which aspired to exert a radical change that would grant women a decent place in an unfair and rigid patriarchal society. Though the feminist movement was a throwback to the end of the nineteenth century, it is the First World War, which pushed it step forward. A proponent of this view, Mosse, points out that "[t]he passive image of woman in society and politics, in general, tended to remain constant until well after the First World

War, in spite of the various movements for women's rights that agitated for an end to women's exclusion from public life"(1996, p.12). The First World War made women assume a masculine role. It required their entrance in large numbers into the economic and other public spheres of life. Hence, women challenge the patriarchal view, which expects women to perform largely domestic functions.

Despite the arguments, which try to vindicate the positive effects of the War on procuring women more rights, it is still incessantly conceived as a masculine experience, which is inextricably confined to men. Mullin assumes that the First World War ascertains the masculinity of Modernity simply because the war is a male experience. In her words,

since the Great War [...] is both crucial to the development of modernism and a cultural phenomenon that was largely, though not entirely male. WOMEN did not fight in the trenches. They did not, with a few exceptions, experience the ubiquitous closeness of death. They were not traumatized in the same way by the experience of machine warfare as shell shock"(2006, p.139).

So, with few exceptions, men are the combatants and the most concerned ones with the War, which has rendered them physically and psychologically maimed. However, their disfiguration and death are seen as heroic and glorious. The War confirmed the traditional attributes of masculinity, which include courage, strength, and aggression. Though it bolstered women's emancipation, this ray of hope was partly shattered immediately after the War. When the War ended, many women, who joined the industrial labour force, were forced out of their jobs. Hence, they returned to their subordinate and secondary state. The War has also strengthened male-male relationships

due to the prevailing male misperception that it is solely a masculine experience. According to Mullin, "War, and the male bonding it produced, was both an almost exclusively masculine experience and integral to modernism" (2006, p.139). In War settings, not just male intimacy but also an outpouring homoerotic desire was rampant during this historical event. Many elegiac poems were composed, at that time, about dead comrades. In his lamentation of the traumatic and grievous demise of men in the war, Ezra Pound writes: "There died a myriad,/ And of the best, among them,/For an old bitch gone in the teeth, /For a botched civilization"(1920, p.13). With the death of many men, in the carnage of war, the society seemed to be castrated of its masculine power. So, masculine friendship intensified and the idealized male friendship was celebrated. Male friendship, during the War, was meant to support and sustain soldiers and to appease their horrific suffering. It was also a response to a frightening and detested society, which became dominated by women. Male bonding might be viewed as a way of rejecting female power and authority. It is an attempt, by men, to form and consolidate a male community. Confluent with men's aspirations to restore and preserve masculinity, nationalism emerged to combat the perilous effects of the War. In this respect, Mosse maintains: "Nationalism [is] a movement which began and evolved parallel to modern masculinity [...] it was modern society itself that diffused the ideal of masculinity"(1996, p.7). Nationalism is celebrated and embraced by male Modernists in order to assert and restore patriarchy, which seems to be in crisis. To this effect, Kane remarks that nationalism supports the binary opposition inherent in the ideology of gender. He notices that

with the decline of the patriarchy and the crisis of masculinity around the last turn of century, many men looked to

the nation as the savior of their threatened masculinity and idealized the nation above all as a homosocial community of men whose fears and confusions about their own masculine identity, might be projected onto all territories outside the borders of that idealized masculine nation”(Kane, 1999, p.vi).

Since he enjoys full citizenship, man is, traditionally, thought to be the embodiment of national identity. The nation itself is always gendered masculine. One reason why the modern man turns to nationalism is that it is associated with masculine virility and bellicosity. Nationalism constructs the view of men as heroic warriors and the saviors of the nation. Contrariwise, women are seen as peacemakers, who are incapable of violence. Nationalism is believed to reinforce homosocial communities because it augments the sense of a common identity. Therefore, it guarantees the maintenance of patriarchal structures.

The male body, which is a signifier of man’s overbearing virility and his overweening masculinity, was terribly inflicted during the War. In this respect, Garden-Coyne points out that “[m]asculine honour was deeply disturbed by modern war: malingering, shell shock, venereal blindness, disfigurement, self-inflicted injuries, desertion and cowardice were seen as exposing the weakness of men’s bodies and minds.”(2009, p.165). Thus, masculinity was seriously challenged by the war. This painful experience resulted in smashed bodies, poor health, and physical maiming. Hence, it weakened men’s masculine authority and made them lose confidence in their masculine identity. Consequently, women assumed a more powerful role. Masculinity, in a nutshell, was reckoned in crisis in the modern age.

The War, to some extent, failed to accord men their traditional masculine valour due to its use of the technological advancements that modernity brought about. This made men look backward, and it triggered their will to return to a vigorous and fertile past. Blau Duplessis contends that the “aftermath of the failures of political power represented by World War I involved a turn back to traditional gender values in which men were men”(2001, p.39). Traditionally, men used to vindicate their masculinity in the war by using their muscles. But the use of the latest scientific and technological means vitiated men’s virility and eclipsed their physical vulnerability. Thus, the devastating War resulted in an interest in classicism in order to heal and restore a virile body shattered by the ravages of the War. According to Garden-Coyne,

the revival of classicism was connected to the need to reconstitute the body fragmented by war, replacing weakness with strength, destruction with restoration, and disability with physical perfection. The body could be beautiful through structured forms; given solid arms, heads, and legs. Sexuality could be found in the austere, the monumental, or the linear. Platonic geometry and ideal types were applied to the body in art as in life (2009, p.38).

In other words, the War resulted in an ingrained interest in self-image and an obsessive concern with corporeality. It augures a yearning for classicism and its healthy body, which became terribly injured by the War. The appeal of classicism to male Modernists does not solely emanate from an urgent need to rehabilitate the male body, but also from a fervid desire to strengthen masculinity and propel manhood. After the First World War, the fabric of the society was torn. Henceforth, men

thought that in order to mend its wounds; there must be an urgent return to the traditional patriarchy and to classicism when masculinity was in its heyday. In addition to its destabilization of the traditional masculine values, the War made women fierce competitors to men. They launched a kind of gender war to achieve equality with men in the social stratum.

2. 2. Liberalism and Democracy:

In addition to the First World War, liberalism and democracy destabilize conventional gender ideologies and spark heated conflicts in gender relations. Modernity is marked by human and artistic emancipation, which is fostered by the announcement of God's death. This metaphorical demise deconstructs any centre or external authority; hence, the modern individual attains more freedom. Women, who have long been imprisoned and oppressed by the patriarchal system, have won the battle for democracy and liberty, which galvanise them to voice their concerns. As a result, men, especially those who seek to preserve the patriarchal tradition, become trenchant critics of the liberal principles of freedom and equality, which they condemn as threatening to the traditional values. In this regard, North writes: "In classical political theory, freedom was a social concept, the freedom to participate in the community. Modern, liberal conceptions of freedom are in contrast subjective and personal. Freedom means the absence of external constraints"(1991, p.2). Liberty is criticized with anger and force, because it threatens to throw away all the values of the past. It emanates from the toppling of morality, which has led to the society's lapse into amoral hedonism. Cooper, who shares the same view, states: "To be free [...] means the creative destruction of the vestiges of the past that limited the possibilities and potential for unlimited change and self-development"(2004,

p.7-8). Freedom, in the modernist context, is very problematic because, in its denial of external restraints, which vex men with authority, it enables women to move from the periphery and servility. Liberalism is a rebellion against a conservative society, which has long disempowered women and repressed their voice. Though the First World War was the spark that ignited women's desire for freedom and liberation, their position started to change in the nineteenth century due to the upwellings of liberalism, which aspired to make all people equal. In this regard, Potter observes that

[c]hanges in women's political position in the nineteenth century were intrinsically connected to two kinds of liberal arguments: first, to a liberal egalitarianism which argued that all persons should be accorded the same moral status, and which denied the relevance to the legal and political order of differences among human beings; second, the argument that liberty involves an entitlement to take part in the collective decision making of government (Potter, 2006, p.134).

Many male Modernists and thinkers rant against these changes, which enable women to attain more freedom. Frederick Nietzsche, for instance, pours scorn on women and their attempts to shake free from their traditional minor role. He writes:

Woman wishes to be independent, and therefore she begins to enlighten men about 'woman as she is' - THIS is one of the worst developments of the general UGLIFYING of Europe. For what must these clumsy attempts of feminine scientificity and self-exposure bring to light! Woman has so much cause for shame; in woman there is so much pedantry, superficiality, schoolmasterliness, petty presumption,

unbridledness, and indiscretion concealed (2002, p.233).

Even Nietzsche, who wages a war against logocentrism that has prevailed in Western thought, views women's attainment of freedom as inane and as one of the worst changes modernity has brought about. Male Modernists express their vitriolic criticism of democracy and liberalism, which have stretched women's rights and freedom. They help them to be involved in politics and culture, which are threatened to become feminine. Politics and culture are still viewed as manly territories that must be kept immune from the taints of the feminine. For men, women's entrance to these public spheres would result in a botched and moribund civilization. Thus, movements against freedom tend to favour and defend man's authority and hegemony. Berman posits that

[s]o many demagogues and demagogic movements have won power and mass adoration by relieving the peoples they rule of the burden of freedom [...] Many movements in this model actually celebrate modern technology, communications and techniques of mass mobilization, and use them to crush modern freedom. Some of these movements have won ardent support from great modernists: Ezra Pound, Heidegger, [and] Céline (1988, p.11-12).

Many movements show a vehement hostility to freedom. Those movements, which are reactionary to liberalism, have a pessimistic vision of modernity and the freedom it attempts to spread. They gain support from many glaring figures of Modernism. Male Modernists' negative attitude to democracy and liberty, which are rooted in romanticism, stem from their repulsion for women, who have gained more freedom and become

partners in political decision-making. Potter who holds the same view writes: "When these writers attacked romanticism, democracy, and legalism, they were also partly attacking women's recent attainment of political, social, and cultural freedom"(2006, p.134). Men revile democracy because it allows women to achieve things, which conflict with the traditional patriarchal norms. This freedom, from the restraints of the patriarchal customs and traditions, enables women to have a share in the public life, and it ensures heaven on earth for them. If the modern age has brought about the ideal of equality, the latter was meant to be confined to man. Felski, who shares the same view, states that "the modern brought with it an ideal of equality grounded in fraternity that effectively excluded women from many forms of political life"(1995, p.14). The modern man, certainly, reveres democracy and freedom, but these ideals, according to him, should be restricted to men. The latter aspire to keep women under their authority and control and to prevent them from leading an independent life of their own.

2. 3. Capitalism:

Very much like the First World War, democracy and liberty, capitalism puts the traditional masculine and feminine values into radical question. It is one of the most important factors, which have reshaped modern gender relations. According to Cooper, "Modernism, to put it bluntly, *is*, and always has been, the culture of capitalism"(2004, p.24). Indeed, human relationships have undergone fragmentation due to the rising capitalism. The latter has resulted in alienation and loneliness. Though it brings about more democracy and liberty, and inspite of its

tendency to deconstruct the myth of dualism, the modern age, with its technological advancements and capitalist system, has rendered the individual a mere commodity. In this respect, Cooper observes that

[t]he self [...] has become a commodified psychological artefact, the finished product of a process of personal self-fabrication. The succession of selves as the developmental process moves from one phase to another begins to resemble, ever more extravagantly, the production of commodities in the factory (2004, p.50).

So, individuals, in a capitalist system, undergo a process of reification; they are treated not as subjects but rather as material objects. Perhaps one of the most detrimental effects of capitalism, which dehumanizes the subject, is its fostering of alienation between man and woman. As an instance, capitalism pushes men to emigrate from the countryside to the city, abandoning family responsibility for the sake of earning money. In fact, capitalism prefers quantities to qualities, and it gives more importance to accumulating money than to human relations.

Women have reacted to this despicable capitalism. They opine that capitalism has fostered a misogynistic attitude that has long been rife in the West. In her vigorous and unrelenting condemnation of the capitalist mode of life, Felski states that probably "the most common economic metaphor which has been used to describe women's position

within capitalist society is that of commodity" (1995, p. 63). The critic Goodspeed-Chadwick, whose view consorts with that of Felski, assumes that women are conceptualized as commodities by men in the modern age. She writes: "With an economy that is still gendered as a result of a sexual division of labor in the early twentieth century, it is little wonder that those with money (primarily men) desire that which cannot be bought against the owner's will bodies, particularly women's bodies"(Goodspeed-Chadwick, 2004, p.118). So, woman, under the reign of the patriarchal system, is seen as a commodity, or as a property, which is not dissimilar from any other material object to be possessed, controlled, and exchanged. Thus, feminists vent their bottled up anger at capitalism, which they view as a means of preserving and reinforcing the patriarchal system.

Capitalism, like patriarchy, is foregrounded in hierarchical structures of power. Thus, gender antagonism, in the modern times, can be viewed as another version of class struggle that is created by the capitalist system. The latter helps exploit and marginalize women whose domestic role is often replaced by the industrial products. While some capitalists deny women high-paying jobs, others prefer to employ women in order to give them low wages. Thus, women's economic situation in a capitalist system is dire. They also suffer from gender inequality at work, and at home, they complain of not being paid for their labour there.

Despite women's constant snipping attacks on capitalism, the latter is seen by modern men as a factor which improves women's life conditions and gives them a new outlet for self-expression. In his response to Judith Butler's sharp accusation of capitalism as a patriarchal system, Cooper denies that capitalism bears any relation to patriarchy. In his view, "[c]apitalism is not gender-specific at all. Capitalism arose in a society which was patriarchal already (and class divided and racist as well) for quite different sociohistorical reasons" (2004, p.15). In his commentary on Rita Felski's book *The Gender of Modernity*, which postulates that capitalism intensifies the oppositional relation between man and woman, Cooper foregrounds capitalism as a factor, which undermines hierarchical dualism that is inherent in gender ideology. He defends the view that

[r]ather than being one more medium for the negation of women in patriarchy, it is capitalism itself that finally opened the social space for women to undergo that process of individual and collective self-consciousness that has, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, utterly changed their position in the advanced capitalist economies (Cooper, 2004, p.17).

Cooper's view is cogent because capitalism is one of the major factors that have granted women more rights and opened for them a door towards a very promising future. Instead of being a means of oppression and deprivation which asserts

and consolidates patriarchy, capitalism helps women attain more rights, like freedom. The capitalist system's need for the work force, for instance, helps women take part in the public life after being tucked away in houses for a long time. Hence, it has shaken and weakened the patriarchal system. As they participate in production, women have attained more power. Thus, patriarchy starts to wither with the rise of capitalism, since those who have money have authority and liberty. According to Cooper, when "women began to be perceived by commercial enterprises as *producers and customers*, rather than as mere domestic chattels (the patriarchal inheritance from precapitalist society), patriarchy was doomed" (2004, p.17). Because they have entered the factories and take part in production, women challenge the patriarchal stereotype of women as voracious and passive consumers. In respect to the issue of gender, as has been shown, capitalism has many defenders and detractors. While it has empowered women, in some cases, it has also disempowered them. Indeed, it can be seen as a product of patriarchy as well as a means of its reinforcement.

2. 4. Scientific and Technological

Advancements:

Among the factors, which have also pushed for change in gender relations, in the modern age, are the scientific and technological advancements. Medicine, for instance, has ended the traditional role of women as midwives, and it has helped them to reduce birth rates. The machine has also substituted women's servile and servitude in the house. However, Felski, who probes the effect of science on gender ideologies, faults

technology for precipitating a more negative attitude towards women. She opines that

woman in the age of technological reproduction is deprived of her aura; the effects of industry and technology thus help to demystify the myth of femininity as a last remaining site of redemptive nature. In this sense modernity serves to denaturalize and thus to destabilize the notion of an essential, God-given femaleness. Yet this figure of woman as machine can also be read as the reaffirmation of a patriarchal desire for technological mastery over woman, expressed in the fantasy of a compliant female automaton and in the dream of creation without the mother through processes of artificial reproduction (1995, p. 20).

Due to the effects of technology, women have lost their authentic and natural femininity. They come to be viewed by men as productive machines, and even their role, as procreative mothers, is thought of being replaced by some modern technological means. Scientificity, which comes to characterize modernity, is widely regarded as masculine, because the polarity rationality/irrationality is respectively gendered male/female. According to Raynaud, man "wants to be strength, rationality, and transcendence, whereas woman is weakness, irrationality, and immanence" (2004, p.142). Women, in the modern age, are still considered as weak-minded. Hence, science is the domain of man, who is deemed the only rational and intellectual creature.

Cartesian dualism makes a stark distinction between the body's primitive instincts and the mind's rationality. Likewise, modernity, which comes out of the enlightenment, prioritizes rationality and reason. Modern scientific developments bring

about the belief that human beings might rise above science. Thus, all what is emotional and associated with women must be discarded. To this effect, Sheehan writes: "The Cartesian division [...] though putatively gender-neutral, acquires gender coordinates: male and female, the rational mind and the irrational, unruly body. Assuming the mantle of reason therefore depends on an overcoming of the feminine"(2004, p.105) Similar to Sheehan, Raynaud believes that man is always inclined to privilege the mind, which he considers as the main attribute of masculinity. On the other hand, he deprecates the body which he views as the defining aspect of women. Raynaud advances that "Man reproduces the body/mind separation that he creates in himself in his relationship with women, just as he tends to picture himself as pure mind, so he sees woman as unrestrained flesh"(2004, p.142).

The patriarchal tradition has conceived woman as a mere corporeal entity, while it identifies the spiritual life with man. Kane states that woman "belonged to the material world; the spiritual world belonged to man" (1999, p.89). Woman, in a patriarchal society, is not just defined in terms of materiality. She is also seen as the negative pole of the positive one, which is man. In his discussion of the image of woman in the West, Kane posits that in "the system of dualist opposition set up in such a patriarchal culture woman is not just the opposite of man but is aligned with all those qualities threatening masculine power and control, thus with the 'unlimited', the 'irrational', as well as 'anarchy' and 'chaos'"(1999, p.88). Examples of the negative qualities, which are always attributed to women, are: chaos, evil, sin, materiality, unlimited sexuality, sensuality, irrationality, savagery, degeneration, and violence.

2. 5. Secularism:

Another factor that also accelerates change in gender relations in the 20th century is secularism. The absence of religion, in the modern age, is repellent to men who reckon Christianity patriarchal. Raynaud, who endorses the view that Christianity is a masculine religion, maintains that

all man's dreams and aspirations are united in the desire to create a disembodied entity, a pure mind, a god. Christianity even brings off a *tour de force* in personifying its god, and then doing away in his body in full view of everybody. This blood-soaked body, nailed to the cross, is moreover such an apt symbol of the body sacrificed by man in his race for power that it is the image on which present day Judeo-Christian patriarchy has been built (Raymond, 2004, p.142).

So, Jesus' sacrifice of his body on the cross is seen as a sacrifice of the feminine side because the body is always associated with women. This annihilation of the flesh is meant to transcend femininity, which hinders progress and spiritual advancement. In the same vein, Lawrence believes that the ascent of the soul requires that one tears himself away from women. He states that it "is a man's own religious soul that drives him on, beyond woman, to his supreme activity. For his highest, man is responsible to God alone. He may not pause to remember that he has a life to lose, or a wife and children to leave" (2004, p.129). Thus, to achieve supremacy, man has to dispense with the feminine, who impedes his ideal quest and his upward spiritual journey. Because liberalism, which is a blow to men, comes partly as a result of secularism, there emerges a deeply felt need to return to the authority of Christianity to keep dominion over women. In this regard, Horn writes:

Given the catastrophic social and psychological reverberations of the Great War, the only true solution to this generalized crisis, in the eyes of Catholic believers, was the reversal of the process of secularization in the Western world. Secularization, a corollary of liberalism, had to be combated by a resurgent church (2008, p.54).

With the absence of religious restraints, which results in sexual freedom and uncontrolled sexual indulgence, the modern world turns into a squalid panorama of futility and anarchy. Sexual vulgarity and promiscuity emanate from the break with the Victorian tradition, which was highly reserved and conservative. The death of God, and hence, the absence of an external authority, results in immorality and the garbage of the time. Thus, male Modernists long for a return to the past with its rawness, ethical values and traditions. They see Christianity as a means to solidify masculinity and patriarchy. Kane, who views Christianity as homosocial, posits that "Christianity, one might suggest, while completely suppressing any sexual aspect of relations between men, emphasized and held as sacred spiritual, indeed Platonic, love between men in a religion of pure brotherly love and adoration of father figure" (1999, p.6). Christianity is believed to foster the bonds of intimacy among men. In spite of the religious crisis, which is in tandem with the modern age, male Modernists cleave to mysticism. Their mystical sensibility is meant to fortify masculinity which is always associated with the spiritual life.

2. 6. The Influence of Modern Thinkers and Critics:

In addition to the aforementioned factors, which have influenced gender roles, in the modern times, many great thinkers have promoted many patriarchal ideas and

assumptions. Freud, one of the forerunners of the modern thought, is a misogynist, who vilifies women assuming that they are the inveterate enemies of civilization. As he puts it,

women [...] come into opposition to civilization and display their retarding and restraining influence [...] Women represent the interests of the family and sexual life. The work of civilization has increasingly become the business of men, it confronts them with ever more difficult tasks and compels them to carry out instinctual sublimations of which women are little capable (1962, 50).

So, while men make history and found civilizations, women's role is restricted to the domestic and private sphere. Because they are physically and emotionally frail, they can only be wives and mothers.

The philosopher Nietzsche, one of the forerunners of Modern civilization and a staunch critic of logocentrism, epitomizes Western misogyny. His books are replete with vitriolic criticism of the feminine. According to him "[c]omparing man and woman generally, one may say that woman would not have the genius for adornment, if she had not the instinct for the SECONDARY role" (2002, p. 107). For Nietzsche, the woman has a minor importance in comparison to man. He pronounces harshly that

a man who has depth of spirit as well as of desires, and has also the depth of benevolence which is capable of severity and harshness, and easily confounded with them, can only think of woman [...] he must conceive of her as a possession, as confinable property, as a being predestined for service and accomplishing her mission therein (Nietzsche, 2002, p. 207).

So, woman is regarded as a mere commodity, a property whose function is to serve man and procure him pleasure. Nietzsche's intense and abysmal hatred for women is evident in his relegation of women to the position of animals. In his words, "Woman is not yet capable of friendship: women are still cats, and birds, Or, at best cows."²² For Nietzsche, women have a biologically determined role, that of mothers and caretakers. When Zarathustra is asked by an old woman about his view of women, he replies: "A man should be raised for war and woman for the recreation of a warrior: everything else is folly" (2006, p. 48). For Nietzsche, woman is a mere procreative machine whose role is to bear soldiers, supermen who will build a civilization. Nietzsche goes further to deny women the quality of truth. In his malicious words, the woman "does not want truth-what does woman care for truth? From the very first, nothing is more foreign, more repugnant, or more hostile to woman than truth-her great art is falsehood, her chief concern is appearance and beauty"(Nietzsche, 2002, p. 203). In Nietzsche's view, woman does not even have the right to education, because when "a woman has scholarly inclination there is generally something wrong about her sexuality"(2002, p.107). Nietzsche thinks that women's learning is proof of their deviancy. This belief collides head on with the traditional patriarchal stereotype which considers women as inherently weak-minded. In his philosophy, the woman is a non-thinking creature. He gives the example of women's "[s]tupidity in the kitchen [...]. Woman does not understand what food means, and she insists on being cook! If woman had been a thinking creature, she should, certainly, as cook for thousands of years, have discovered the most important physiological facts, and should likewise have

got possession of the healing art!" (Nietzsche, 2002, p. 204).

The relegation of women and their equation with nature also has a throwback to Charles Darwin who has an animus towards women. Darwin's evolutionary theory propagates the view that men are more evolved than women, and that they are intellectually and physically superior to them. According to Darwin, a lot of female traits are "characteristics of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization"(1896, p.569-564). Darwin's ideas had a major impact on people's attitudes towards women, and they had influenced many scientists. Many misogynists endorse Darwin's view of women as savage creatures who need to be tamed and civilized.

Like Nietzsche, Freud, and Darwin, many critics and thinkers conceive modernity as essentially masculine and patriarchal. The critic Suárez, for example, views modernity, from its beginning, as a male phenomenon. His argument is that the characteristics and aspects of modernity like

scientific rationality, instrumental reason, the public sphere, and corporate capitalism were, for the most part, provinces of male activity. And equally masculine have been emblematic modern social and cultural types: the *flâneur*, the man of the crowd, the dandy, the aestheticist, avant-garde debunker [...] the public side of Western modernity [...] relegated (and still continues to do so) women and disenfranchised minorities to the private realms of the home and interpersonal relations, and to the margins of sociality and visibility (Suárez, 1997, p.14).

Felski also notices that the project of modernity is by and large masculine. To support her claim, she draws attention to the fact that modernity becomes

identified with [...] rationalization, alienation and differentiation that are seen as distinctively masculine. By contrast, femininity is equated with either a primitive or condition of underdevelopment or an edenic state of non alienated plenitude [...] femininity is typically positioned outside of the trajectory of historical development (Felski, 2007, p.234).

The critic Wolff, in turn, argues that modernity is masculine. She states two main reasons:

First, the institutions were run by men, for men (owners, industrialists, managers, financiers), and they were dominated by men in their operation of hierarchical structure. Second, the development of the factory, and, later, the bureaucracy coincides with that process [...] of the 'separation of spheres', and the increasing restriction of women to the 'private' sphere of the home and the suburb [...] The public sphere, then, despite the presence of some women in certain contained areas of it, was a masculine domain. And in so far as the experience of 'the modern' occurred mainly in the public sphere, it was primarily men's experience (Wolff, 2007, p.200).

In the modern age, masculinity becomes a signifier of order and a bulwark against the chaos and decadence of modernity. Manhood, at that time, is viewed as an ideal and a symbol of personal and national regeneration. According to Mosse, manliness "was supposed to safeguard the existing order against the perils of modernity"(1996, p.1).

Though history has evinced that the Western world is patriarchal, the modern age has intensified masculinity because modernity threatened the decline of the West. In the modern times, man becomes immensely anxious about his masculinity and the patriarchal system, which are challenged. But despite being a serious psychological problem that strains their nerves, masculine anxiety helps preserve the patriarchal system. Breitenberg posits that "anxiety is an inevitable product of patriarchy at the same time as it contributes to the reproduction of patriarchy"(1996, p.27). Thus, masculine anxiety, despite being viewed as a defect in manhood, is also positively employed by men. It helps them reproduce and perpetuate the patriarchal system. Men's anxiety about the weakness and the fading away of patriarchy pushes them to strive in order to maintain it.

Gender binarism, in the modern age, is evinced in the great divide male Modernists make between high culture and mass culture. They elevate high culture as the prestigious and legitimate one, while they denigrate mass culture in spite of being the preferred taste of the majority. This differentiation is coded in explicitly gendered terms. Since the 19th century, a throng of critics have gendered mass culture as feminine and high or authentic culture as masculine. As Huyssen observes,

the 19th and early 20th centuries conjured up the threat of the masses [...] and lamented the concomitant decline of culture and civilization (which mass culture was invariably accused of causing) [...] In the age of nascent socialism *and* the first major women's movement in Europe, the masses knocking at the gate were also women, knocking at the gate of a male-dominated culture. It is indeed striking

to observe how the political, psychological, and aesthetic discourse around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, while high culture, whether traditional or modern, clearly remains the privileged realm of male activities (Huyssen, 1986, p.47).

The great chasm between high culture, which is masculine and mass culture, which is dismissed as feminine and sentimental, is emblematic of gender antagonism that permeates modernist discourse. The feeling of aversion to the masses, according to Huyssen, is due to a profound fear from women, who might induce a crisis or dissolution of masculine identity. He says: "The fear of the masses in this age of declining liberalism is always also a fear of woman, a fear of nature out of control, a fear of the unconscious, of sexuality, of the loss of identity and stable ego boundaries in the mass"(Huyssen, 1986, p.52). The anti-popular aspects of Modernism, which many men repudiate, are seen as a defense against mass culture, which is associated with women. High culture is the culture of a coterie of the intellectual elites who consider mass culture as a threat to high forms of culture. Male Modernists seek to dissociate art from popular culture because the former is unique.

Since they are associated with mass culture, women are largely viewed as consumers. In this respect, Felski states: "Women's emotionality, passivity, and susceptibility to persuasion renders them ideal subjects of an ideology of consumption that pervades a society predicated on the commercialization of pleasure"(1995, p. 62). In the age of capitalism, consumer culture starts to bloom; consequently, men become afraid of effeminacy because of commodification. In this

regard, Felski points out, "Not only does woman remain the archetypal consumer, but an overt anxiety comes to the fore that men are in turn being feminized by the castrating effects of an ever more pervasive commodification"(1995,p.62). Male Modernists, in their fierce criticism of modern materialism and its vulgarity, spell out their assaults on women who become representatives of the consumer culture. They associate themselves with self-restraint in order to be differentiated from the gluttonous consuming women. Since mass culture threatens to erode tradition, many male Modernists advocate a return to the traditional values in order to prevent the destruction of high culture. In the course of his analysis of high culture, in the modern age, Cooper remarks that critics hold two views vis-a-vis this issue. Some of them, like Hugh Kenner, C.K. Stead, and Christopher Butler, believe that artists, as exceptional people, should differentiate themselves from the masses. But leftists and liberals, like Terry Eagleton, John Carey, and John R. Harrison, consider high culture as a class prejudice (Cooper, 2004,p. 3). So, some critics come to view modernists' rejection and distance from the masses as a plausible reaction in regard to their high status as intellectual elites. Other critics have interpreted this negative and repulsive stance vis-à-vis mass culture as a prejudice, or as an aspect of class struggle, which aims at maintaining hierarchies. Indeed, the gendering of mass culture as feminine has been rife until the decline of Modernism. The binary opposition high culture/mass culture loses its power with the advent of Postmodernism, which calls for the deconstruction of all binary oppositions.

2. 7. The Rise of the New Woman:

After having an overview of masculinity, in the modern age, it is worthwhile

to take a brief look at the situation of women during the same era. The Victorian age was marked by women's utter remoteness from the public sphere. Women, at that time, were inextricably bound up with houses and were obliged to remain hidden in their private sphere far away from all institutions. They were rarely permitted to cross the boundaries of domesticity to become involved in the essentially masculine preserve of public life. With the advent of the modern age, women try to free themselves from the ties of the Victorian values and codes which seem incarcerating and outmoded. Women, who resist remaining at the periphery, express their bitter indictment of the Victorian mode of behaviour and start to dispense with the traditional way of life. They hope that the 20th century will close the door on the old traditional system. Indeed, the emergence of the so-called New Woman in the beginning of the 20th century and her rejection of the traditional gender divisions, which in turn pressures society to redefine femininity, becomes a major threat to the patriarchal norm of the status quo. The New Woman strives to rise above her traditionally assigned and subservient role and achieve recognition as something closer to an equal with the men of the time. In her definition of the term 'New Woman', Felski states that the term "is coined in 1894 which rapidly acquired popular currency as a label for the energetic and independent woman struggling against the Victorian norms of femininity" (1995, p. 146). Women try to escape their painful femaleness, because to be a woman is conceived as a handicap. Therefore, they start to reconstruct their role and to rid themselves of the traditional one, which put them on the fringe of the society. In her description of the nature of the 'New woman', Dekoven writes:

Shifts in gender relations at the turn of the century were a key factor in the emergence of modernism. The period

from 1880 to 1920, within which Modernism emerged and rose to preeminence as the dominant art form in the West [...] was also the heyday of the first wave of feminism, consolidated in the woman suffrage movement. The protagonist of this movement was known as the 'New Woman': independent, educated, (relatively) sexually liberated, oriented more toward productive life in the public sphere than toward reproductive life in the home (2005, p.174).

The New Woman opposes the stereotypes assigned to her gender. Hence, women who were immured in a domestic sphere, and who used to meekly submit to the patriarchal codes of behavior, have become more assertive. The New Woman, according to Felski, becomes a symbol of freedom. In her words, "in the early twentieth century the figure of the New Woman was to become a resonant symbol of emancipation, whose modernity signaled not an endorsement of an existing present but rather a bold imagining of an alternative future"(Felski, 1995, p. 14). So, modernity is marked by the construction of a new womanhood that aspires for a better future devoid of man's authority and hegemony. Women no longer adhere to the traditional rules which are dictated by men. They have gained more rights, which were previously restricted to men. These rights include marital autonomy, property ownership, education, voting, employment,...etc.

Due to the social and political upheavals of the modern age, the polarity male/female, seemingly, undergoes deconstruction. DeKoven points out that

[t]he downfall of the old order, linked to the radical remaking of culture, was to be the downfall of class, gender, and racial [...] privilege; revolution was to be

in the direction of egalitarian leveling on all those fronts. This utter change was embodied in the social-political sphere in the various left-wing revolutionary movements-anarchism, consumerism, socialism, and feminism (1991, p.20).

Capitalism and the First World War, in particular, have transformed the traditional woman into a New Woman who attempts to efface gender and to deconstruct the binary male/female. This type of woman, who is not tied to the weight of the oppressive past, has made arduous efforts to include women in the public sphere. According to the feminist critic Blau Duplessis, the "new woman, entering historical time (with social agitation and political claims) was the opposite of the mythic and archetypal woman who was often to be proposed by male modernists as a solution to the problems of sexuality, of emasculated men, and so on"(2001, p.43). The New woman comes as a shock which assails men's sensibilities. She defiles and blemishes the long-established view of the redeeming feminine. Thus, the nature of femininity begs for reconsideration. Among the social developments, in the modern age, is women's attainment of more freedom and liberty. The improvement of women's conditions is evident in their attainment of the right to vote in 1918. Potter states that between 1909-1914, "[w]omen's enfranchisement, in particular, became a central political and intellectual issue, and pro-suffragists [...] employed a liberal discourse of rights and equality to argue their case. In the process, they tended to presuppose a highly legalistic and rational account of liberty and female subjectivity"(Potter, 2006, p.12). Mullin contends that feminism, in the modern age, achieves many victories;

The period 1980 to 1930 was simultaneously a time of increasing

feminist agitation, as women in various countries entered higher education and the work place in unprecedented numbers, campaigned for the vote, and placed issues of sexuality and gender firmly on the political agenda. Literary culture was highly conscious of the rise of this 'New Woman'-educated, emancipated, independent, outspoken, feminist-and the crisis in sexual politics that she personified (2006, p.136).

As the feminist movement proliferated in the modern age, women entered the public sphere in huge numbers. They become competitors to men, because they joined the workforce in significant numbers. Since they can support themselves financially, they become more independent and self-sufficient. In her discussion of the utter change of women's conditions in the modern age, Ardis states that the sociological phenomena that characterized the turn of the twentieth century include "middle-class women's entrance into both the labor force and the public sphere"(2003, p.5). So, women are no longer excluded from the social and political life. They have gained many advantages including freedom and self-expression. Feminists even reject the notion of woman as feminine. Duplessis points out that "[t]ransitional Men writing poetry attempt to depict women as naturally feminine, while versions of New Women poets torque, or criticize, or reject the link of the feminine with women"(2001, p.43). Given the fact that Modernism and feminism are concomitant with each other, one might opine that Modernism, which is perceived as a masculine movement, is a reaction and a rejection of feminism.

2. 8. Queer Modernity:

In the modern age, there is a sense that gender identity, particularly masculine identity, is in crisis. The new social and political

structures have altered the traditional definition of masculine identity. The First World War, for instance, has shaken masculine identity in many ways. Its use of technology undermines the traditional masculine heroism and the masculine ideal of self-sacrifice. It vitiates man's masculine role of being a soldier and a protector. Due to the First World War, men's physical and emotional health deteriorate. Among the major factors, which enhance the crisis of masculinity, is the feminist movement which weakens men's authority in the economic and political life. Women's triumph results in men's feeling of disempowerment, impotence, and castration. Another factor, which exacerbates a fear of the erosion of the solid boundaries between masculinity and femininity, is the absence of religion which used to reinforce the traditional roles of men and women. In fact, the requirements of male-sex role have been challenged. These requirements include breadwinning, authority over women, and heterosexuality.

Homosexuality, which challenges the common heterosexual identity, has been given a cardinal importance since the affair of Oscar Wilde, the notorious homosexual of Fin-de-Siècle. At the end of the 19th century, homosexuality was an implicit sub-culture, which was hidden from the public because it was considered as a serious crime. The homosexual, in the Victorian age, was prosecuted. He was a scapegoat since homosexuals were largely viewed as effeminate, and effeminacy was not allowed in the rigid Victorian patriarchal system. With the advent of modernity, the extreme repulsion for homosexuality has declined gradually. Since the moral restraints have vanished, homosexuals become free from the confines of a restrictive society which has no tolerance for homosexuality. But the latter is seen as a serious threat to patriarchy because it is a crisis

in male identity. Man's effeminacy can be explained in terms of a crisis in virility. With the advent of modernity, the crisis of masculinity becomes a remarkable historical event. The critic Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that: "many of the major modes of thought and knowledge in Twentieth Century western culture as a whole are structured-indeed, fractured-by a chronic, new endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition, indicatively male, dating from the end of the ninetieth century"(1990, p.1).

In the modern age, which is characterized by irrationality and moral deviance, homosexuality and homoeroticism solicit attention to the problem of gender identity, which becomes more precarious and fluid. Modernity results in sexual perversion, deviance, and the queer. In an attempt to define the term queer, which is very hard to pin down, the critic Parsons suggests that it is "a mode of analysis originating in the deconstruction of the heteronormative conception of gender, yet that has come to be associated with the refusal of all normative and universalizing models of identity, emphasizing instead the radical potential of the perverse [...] and the polymorphous"(Parsons, 2009, p.183) Queer gender challenges the traditional conventional heterosexuality, and it evinces the possibility of alternative gender identities. The critic Pundrom asserts the performativity of gender in the modern age. In his view, the "loss of a stable subject is one of the formative elements of the modern, and that instability is most fundamentally realized in the conception that gender is itself a performance"(Pundrom, 2005, p.426). This destabilization of gender boundaries is a thorny issue for recent queer theorists who deny the myth of an essential and pure masculinity or femininity.

In the modern age, man crosses gender boundaries. But this transgression of

the traditional rigid polarity male/female results in liminality and ambivalence. For Felski, the "feminised male deconstructs conventional oppositions between the modern, bourgeois man and the natural, domestic woman: he is male, yet does not represent masculine values of rationality, utility, and progress; feminine, yet profoundly unnatural"(1995, p. 101). As the barriers of gender prove to be crossed, masculinity and femininity become fluid notions. Sexual perversion creates a zone of intersection between maleness and femaleness, and it indicates the instability of gender identity in the context of modernity. According to Felski, "[p]ortrayed as an aberrant and marginal figure, the pervert [...] came to epitomize the unstable and problematic nature of modern sexual identity in general"(1995, p. 180). Perversion is always, stereotypically, associated with men as hysteria is associated with women.

The deconstruction of gender dichotomies emanates from the socio-economic and political shifts in the modern age. Despite his criticism of Judith Butler's theory of the performativity of gender, Cooper contends that this state might occur only in a capitalist society like the United States of America. Under the reign of the capitalist system, gender is no longer perceived as a fixed reality. It is, instead, "a performance, a social hieroglyphic [...] Like a commodity, gender has no stable being at all, simply an exchange-value. It is as fluid, unstable, negotiable as any future on a commodity exchange"(Cooper, 2004, p. 44). So, capitalism results in a confusion and ambiguity of gender identity. The collapse of gender/sexual boundaries gives way to plural gender identities and sexualities. The critic Cole believes that capitalism is one of the factors that have led to homosexuality in the West. He states that: "Capitalism made possible the formation of non-normative sexual identity in the West [...] Homosexuality

is an underexplored register of capitalism's constitutive contradictions"(Cole, 2003, p.10).

In addition to capitalism, the First World War also accounts for homoeroticism and homosexuality. During the War, men kindled male relations which, they hoped, would transport them beyond the traumatic reality of War. Ellis remarks that the War fostered homosocial relations. He writes: "The homosexual tendency appears to have flourished chiefly among warriors and warlike people. During war and separation from women that war involves, the homosexual instinct tends to develop"(Ellis, 1890, p.9). In discussing one of the effects of the First World War, which splinters the individual's self into fragments, Eliot states that the war promoted very strong bonds of fraternity and intimacy among warriors and soldiers. In his words,

[o]f the advantages of administrative and sentimental unity we hardly need to be reminded, after the experience of war; but it is often assumed that the unity of the wartimes should be preserved in time of peace. Among any people engaged in warfare, especially when the war appears, or can be made to appear, purely defensive, we may expect a spontaneous unity of sentiment which is genuine (Eliot, 1948, p.51).

Though it resulted in havoc, the First World War strengthened male-male relationships. This intimacy, which grew as a bulwark against the shock and the trauma of the war, was marked by homoeroticism.

In the same vein, Lamos notes that male Modernists' writings are prompted by an implicit homoerotic desire. She claims that the "writings of canonical male modernists were generated and inflected by homoerotic energies that they largely denied and by

feminine identifications whose proximity to male self-constitution evoked both fantasies of escape from the structures of masculinity and fears of same-sex desire"(Lamos, 2004, p. 6). Poets, who write about homoerotic love, include Robert Graves, Studdent Kennedy, and George Lewis. The fact that homoeroticism was often disguised, sublimated, and repressed, was due to the moral condemnation of homosexuality and the fear of judicial punishment. However, and despite the law against this sexual inversion, many people, especially psychologists, took a sympathetic and tolerant attitude towards homosexuals. They explain their behaviour as a pathological condition. Liberalism also motivates man to burst the restrictive barrier of heterosexual conventions.

Despite its association with effeminacy, homoeroticism which becomes widely spread in the modern age, is viewed as an inkling of the patriarchal system. According to Kane, "[m]ale narcissism and homoeroticism have [...] always been central, if hidden, features of patriarchal culture" (1999, p. vi). Homosocial desire becomes a protective shield to save patriarchy which is seriously threatened by women. Kosofsky Sedgwick, who tries to elucidate the relationship between women and male homosexuality, states that in "any male-dominated society, there is a special relationship between male homosocial (*including* homosexual) desire and the structures for maintaining and transmuting patriarchal power"(Sedgwick, 1985, p.25). Sarah Cole, who holds a similar view, interprets homosexuality as an attempt to escape the feminine. Taking Lawrence's homosexuality, as an example, Cole opines that "Lawrence found in the war an analogue for his previously elusive efforts to organize masculine relations. Lawrence's absorption in male desire has primarily been understood [...] as a refuge from the feared and detested world of dominating

women"(2003, p.227). Thus, homosexuality might be understood as a projection of men's woman-hatred and their desire to live in an exclusively masculine world. This significantly undermines genuinely harmonious male-female relationships.

3. Conclusion:

The problem of gender was a major concern in the modern age that was marked by women's strife to rise above their traditionally assigned and subservient role and free themselves from the ties of the Victorian codes and values that which seem incarcerating and outmoded. In fact, a variety of factors influenced gender identity in the modern times. These factors include the First World War, scientific advancements, liberalism and democracy, and the emergence of the New Woman who fought against inequality and the exclusion from the socio-political life. These factors have shaken the long established patriarchal system, but they also intensified men's desire to reconstruct and solidify masculinity. The relegation of women is intensified by modern thinkers and critics whose ideas propel the erasure of the feminine from culture and the public life. Their representation of the feminine is very negative and stigmatizing. Homoeroticism comes to be seen as an example of the destabilization of male gender identity. However, as the paper evinces, it is a means to forge a homosocial/homosexual community that is likely to defend and protect men against femininity.

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