



Subjugation And Germination Of Women In Media And Literature.

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Introduction:

‘We all use stereotypes, all the time, without knowing it. We have met the enemy of equality, and the enemy is Us’. –Paul (1998)

Feminine does not just deal with eradicating gender equality rather it starves what pertains to a woman. A stereotype is a widely accepted judgment or bias regarding a person or group even though it is overly simplified. Stereotypes about gender can cause unequal and unfair treatment because of a person's gender. Society has marked a pole to analyse the gender stereotypes in personal traits, domestic behaviors, occupations, physical appearance etc. The society has molded such criteria for Gender roles are the way people act, what they do and say, to express being a girl or a boy, a woman or a man.

As a feminine woman, you have the ability to play with the world through your senses. She can find the extraordinary in very small things, and this is captivating to the masculine. The masculine energy is great at structure and rigidity. The feminine in all of us is a master at movement and play. Many women today have a difficult time with receptivity. It's ironic, because we want more from men, but we have hard time in taking in their care.

Gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences and role of the individuals or groups. Such gender assumptions recognize the danger of stereotyping, traditionally the female stereotypic role is to marry and have children. Women are forced to a nutshell called family. The male stereotypic role is to be the financial provider. These sorts of stereotypes can prove harmful; they can stifle individual expression and creativity as well as hinder personal and professional growth.



Emerging as a powerful sociopolitical force beginning in the 1960's, the feminist movement or women's liberation movement has lobbied for the rights of women and minorities. Feminists have fought hard to challenge and redefine traditional stereotypical gender roles.

Subjugation of Women in Media:

'Women are the equals of Men, whoever honors them is honorable, whoever disdains them is worthy of disdaining'. For the past decades media has brought forth the subjugation of women and representations of the different genders. Media ranges from newspapers, magazines, comic strips, CDs and music videos. These representations can influence the general public's perception of the different genders. Advertisements and pictures in magazines carry significant messages about cultural norms and values, but also norms of gendered relations for both men and women.

Newspapers and magazines tend to focus on the women and their activities in the society whether it is good or bad. Their generosity is exposed in bringing out the negative aspects of a woman. Rest of very few pages the newspapers and the magazines contrast and compare the situation what is faced by women in her daily life situation. E.g.: A woman who has an illegal relationship with someone else, women elopes with the neighbor. Won't the editors and the news writers feel what would be the necessity of giving such things in newspapers? The readers are quite interested in such gossiping news.

Today's magazines focus on the construction of womanhood such as house cleaning tips, recipes, tips for children and parenting, beauty tips. Magazine appears women as a sex object, and women are considered as body images. Popular magazines have their name which relates to female. It is filled up with image of women models and cine stars. The gaze is frequently found in today's magazines. It is to assume that the sex of the viewer is male and perpetuates the feeling that women are seen only as object to men.

The exploitation of women in the mass media is the use of portrayal of women in television to increase the appeal of media or a product to the detriment of, or without regard to the interest of women portrayed. Sexual objectification is most often criticized as aspect of the



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use of women in mass media. From the mid 1940s, women were portrayed as housewives. TV didn't portray the reality by 1960 that 40 per cent of women worked outside the home. Furthermore, female characters often didn't have jobs, especially if they were wives and mothers, and were not the dominant characters or the decision makers. Women are shown as passive, weak, ineffectual, victimized, supportive and laughable.

For the past several years reality television has dominated mainstream television has dominated mainstream television programming, providing relatively inexpensive entertainment. Reality shows depicts another side of female and male stereotypes. However, shows are starting to break through this glass ceiling as women, becoming the main character and leading lady. E.g.: Coffee with DD. Other such shows of the present scenario used the model of equal but different genders like newsreaders, anchors, hosters etc., Cartoons display an irresistible and inaccessible representation of femininity, especially for young girls. As with TV shows, most cartoons main characters are male, who are also the main decision-makers and portrayed following stereotypes seen in television programs characters. E.g. Scooby Doo, Dora Bui.

It is unusual to see woman in high-level professional role, and when shown in a high-level professional role, when shown in the same advertisements as men they are usually associated with a subordinate or supportive role. These depictions of women can have a very negative impression on women as many of the ads shown are of altered and created a false sense of beauty. As a society women are still far away from equality in the media. Women are still used as "sex objects" in advertisements which is just perpetuating the stereotypes.

Typecast and germination of women in literature:

"People are incapable of stereotyping you; you stereotype yourself because you're the one who accepts roles that put you in this rut or in this stereotype".

-Eva Mendes

The predominance of male authors have been seen throughout the eras in literature. The majority of published writers were men and the portrayal of women in literature was inevitably one sided. In the ancient, the majority writers were male. Women writers have affected past



literature from 1600s up until present day. In 1600, Shakespeare women are seen as manipulative, cunning, weak, evil with their own agenda. The era was misogynist. In 1700s Mary Astell was the first English feminist who guides to educate women on equality. In 1800s men are heroes and saviors, women are damsels in distress. Jane Austen, Louisa Mary Alcott brought out women as strong independent and protagonist. In early 90s Virginia Woolf jot down the strong women with opinions and decisions and the difficulty they face with male society. The scenario of the present female stereotypes predict women as whore, cunning, work only for her personal gain, beauty, coy, femme fatale.

“The best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little tool”.

These stereotypes are well known to the society through the works of literature that emerges and fixed particularly about the variation in gender. By applying theories they could be analysed. Gender schema theory was first developed by Sandra Bem in 1981. According to gender schema theory, once children have formed a basic gender identity they start to develop gender schemas. Gender schemas are based on children's interactions and observation of others, the environment and the culture. This theory is formed as a result of the children's observation of how society defines what it means to be male and female in his or her culture.

The society which consists of dominating men was aggressive and they lead women down. Environment factors such as stress or trauma are known to prompt both depression and substance abuse. It indicate that people in the artistic profession are more likely to have mental illness. A retrospective study shows that female writers tend to have some type of mental illness. The link between creativity and mental illness is frequently referred to as “The Sylvia Plath Effect”. Plath is the first entry on our list of writers who suffered from mental illness.

‘ A man's face is his autobiography. A women's face is her work of fiction.’

Correlation studies show that both those in the creative arts and those with depressive disorder spend an inordinate amount of time contemplating their own distress. At one extreme point, Leo Tolstoy even considered himself a moral failure because he lacked the courage to commit suicide. Virginia Woolf had her first bout with depression at the age of 15, battling it



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throughout her life. A more specific connection between Woolf's experiences with mental illness and her creative work can be found in her criticism of medical establishments in *Mrs Dalloway*, which may reflect her own ineffectual treatments during 1920s.

Conclusion:

The footprints have clearly shown the abuse and the sufferings of women in the patriarchal society. This stereotype which was laid by the society has lead women into suppression and depression. With new female stereotype emerging as strong, independent and smart in literature such as Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling makes a shift in the stereotype. This is a evident that society is moving forward from traditional sexism.

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