MASCULINE STEREOTYPES AND ITS GRAVITY: A STUDY OF PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY IN PAT BARKER'S *THE WOMEN OF TROY* AND *THE SILENCE OF THE GIRLS.*

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ABSTRACT:

In this research paper, the researcher is going to explore the stereotypical characteristics of patriarchal society, which always promotes illusions that affect all genders. Even though it looks beneficial to the male community, it is harmful to the male community itself. Each human has some characteristic behaviours, but this patriarchal construction divides the genders by some yardsticks and rules over them. Society exaggerates these characteristics, collects them as a set, and uses them to suppress other genders. A patriarchal society establishes that women are inferior to the male community. Numerous religious books actively promote patriarchism. Male children often feel compelled to conform to patriarchal norms, which can lead to a loss of personal identity. Patriarchal society not only fosters patriarchal mindsets, but its ideologies also manipulate females, leading them to endorse them.

KEYWORDS: Patriarchy, Emotional Suppression, Masculine Stereotypes, Gender Inequality, Toxic Masculinity.

Patriarchal society is always in the position of dominating the other gender through social structures. These patriarchal societies were developed due to the rules they created, male-centred language, and manipulative narratives that helped them dominate. In the novel *The Silence of the Girls,* one can see a sense of machismo and pride in most of the male characters. In society, which holds the belief that men are superior to all other genders, this concept has been occupied in their minds from an early age. Small boys are supposed to carry weapons and protect their fellow people, while females are hidden in the city's fortress. In the novel *The Silence of the Girls* "My youngest brother—fourteen years old, barely able to lift my father's sword—I saw him die. I saw the flash of the upraised spear; I saw my brother lying on the ground, wriggling like a stuck pig" (Barker, 13), which patriarchal society promotes. A male must protect females, even if he is a male child. He must have the responsibility to save women.

This patriarchal concept was developed because of the social narratives of the male community, which always glorify the male as a dominant gender as well as project him as a

saviour and protector of the female community. A female must be submissive to her protector. In most myths and stories, a villain kidnaps the heroine, prompting the hero to eliminate the villain and defend her. Most of the female characters are portrayed as very fragile. Archetypally, all the main characters and saviours are male, from English literature Faerie Queene by Spencer to global literature. Even in the literature itself, one can find a patriarchal touch.

Create rules and regulations through narrative. In most moral stories, the narrative guides how women and men should be, but women are their primary target; they give more ideal qualities to women for psychological control. Writers' ideal wishes are inculcated in the women's characters, glorifying fictional characters as role models for real women. Like the Kannagi character from Manimegalai, Penelope from *The Odyssey* by Homer, Sita from the *Ramayana* by Valmiki, Dido from *The Aeneid* by Virgil, and many others.

The researcher has studied the effects of social constructions on both males and females. Which exploits their lives in indirect ways. Common people generalise concepts like males are stronger' and 'females are weak'. Social narratives spread among the common people. It says men are strong. It seems positive for the male community, but it does not. In this novel, one can see small boys having to shield their women from infiltrating soldiers who attempt to enter protective chambers and lose their precious lives.

> "A couple of boys—ten or eleven years old, too young to fight—occupied the top of the stairs and pretended to drive back the invaders. The women kept looking at each other, dry-mouthed, not talking much, as outside the shouts and cries grew louder and a great hammering on the gates began. Women with sons envied those with daughters because girls would be allowed to live. Boys, if anywhere near fighting age, were routinely slaughtered." (Barker, Silence 4)

These are designed by patriarchal society to keep women and children safe during wartime. These small boys must be between the ages of ten and twelve. They can barely lift swords, but society labels them as men, and their job is to protect women and children. It's becoming their primary duty. They were brainwashed to fight for their country and protect the royal bloodline. If there is equality, women will also participate in that war; maybe they will win over Sparta. But here, patriarchal society failed in the war because of discrimination. Women are hiding in towers while their men are dying in the war fields. If they fight together, they may have a high chance of winning over their enemies, but patriarchal male society sees rules as more precious than partners. Females are not as physically strong as males, but one must not consider them as a second sex. Females and males must be partners; they must get the job done easily when they do the work together. However, patriarchal societies volunteer themselves to protect women in war and other situations too. This type of patriarchal construction may lead to digging their own grave.

In the novel *The Silence of the Girls*, one can find these kinds of issues. Male folk from the troy volunteer themselves and protect female citizens of the troy. Females are considered a weaker sex because of patriarchal social constructions, which brainwash their minds as well. Here, some males in this novel treat females not as partners but as loot and slaves. They refuse to give equal treatment. They never treat women as humans. In this novel, Achilles always uses Briseis as an object and calls her 'it' when he mentions her. This makes her upset. Patriarchal mindset: always look at women as commodities. They want women for pleasure, reproduction

purposes, status purposes if she is beautiful or if she has royal bloodlines, to have fun with her, and other evil purposes. So, they lost women's true love.

> "Diomedes crossed the line and, laughing in triumph, reined his horses in. Face streaked with dirt from the track, he jumped down and walked across the yard to greet Achilles, who pointed to Iphis as the prize. Diomedes tilted Iphis's head from side to side, exactly as Achilles had done to me, then nodded, satisfied, and turned to embrace Achilles." (Barker, Silence 237)

After the death of Patroclus, funeral games are conducted. It is a custom of the Troy people. In the game, whoever wins can take the property of the dead person. Like that, here, funeral games are conducted. Diomedes wins the race and gets some prizes like a jug, armour, a dog, a horse, and a woman. They consider women to be objects rather than human beings. The same thing happens in the other novel by the same writer, The Women of Troy, "Blindfolded. They were spinning her around the circle, each man sending her careering off into the arms of the next. She didn't scream or cry for help; probably she knew by now that nobody would come". (Barker, Women, 25)

Here, soldiers are making fun of that woman. Sadistic nature towards fellow humans They don't fear for her. "Women were not considered a threat" (Barker, Women 42) because they believe women cannot do any harm to them. At the same time, doesn't attempt to flee because she perceives herself as weak because of patriarchal society's influence. Because of this attitude, patriarchal males do not get emotional support from the women they bring to their house. Briseis wants to escape from the Achilles rather than stay with him and give support to him. Patriarchal influence affects the lives of Briseis as well as Achilles at the end of the novel. Even though he is a great warrior, nobody gives him emotional support. He feels alone when he is alone.

> Men who subscribe to these ideals. In some ways, the very premise of hegemonic masculinity is based on the idea of isolation because it's about being autonomous and not showing a lot of emotion. It's hard to develop friendships living this way. (Pohl)

'Pride' is a single word, but it has a whole new meaning for each gender because of patriarchal manipulations. This is evident in the novel The Women of Troy. "He began talking, rather, about the part he'd played in the fall of Troy." (37) Two men talk about the war and the fall of Troy as their source of pride. They are very happy to be a part of the massive destruction. Briseis takes great pride in being a mother and giving birth to a son. "I was glowing with pride at the thought of bearing Achilles's son." (Barker, Women, 57) Indirectly, it says women's primary job is to give birth and nurture the young ones, which is the pride of women, while men's pride is bravery, destruction, and defence. This shows a patriarchal male society that differentiates between two genders.

Women's opinions are not heard; that's not a problem because they can do whatever they want, but the problem is that they need permission from men. Males build many developments because they have exposure, and they discover many things because of survival pressure. Males consistently provide a safe haven for women, thereby inadvertently trapping them in dangerous situations where they cannot develop. They become preoccupied with children and hospitality. It might be out of love, because hunting and war are dangerous places.

It contains high chances of death, so the male community does not allow them to participate in the death or live game, but their concern kills their freedom indirectly, and at the same time, it backfires on the male community.

Patriarchal societies not only harm the female community but also the male community. All are manipulated by stereotypical society; even the male community is not an exception. "emotional narratives of popular culture and are enacted performatively in rituals of courtship and marriage. They provide conceptual models for organising power relations in spheres that have nothing to do with the family, for example, politics and business." (6 wiki), patriarchal society gives a proper justification or cultural practice to support the manipulations of patriarchal ideologies. One who, under the manipulations, confidently believes it without any resistance. The female community shares this belief and trains their children's accordingly, so it passes on from generation to generation. Mothers have become an indirect spokesperson for patriarchal society. Showing emotions like crying, fearing, and others is weak in patriarchal society. In the novel, "These are brave men, the pick of the Greek army, but the man who tells you he's not afraid of fire is either a liar or a fool" (Barker, Women 7). Afraid or fear of death is considered a feminine quality to them, so they hide the natural human instinct. Like that Some of these teachers and parents are inculcating a patriarchal mindset in young minds these days as well. These end up in a great disaster. They eventually lost their real identity, and they feel submissive among the other children.

"Feeling shame about seeming vulnerable or expressing "unmasculine" emotions like fear, sadness, or worry" (team) Patriarchal society wants men to not express their emotions to society. It asserts that emotions such as crying, pity, kindness, and others are exclusive to women. It may look simple, but it destroy men's mental health. The study also found that embracing "masculine norms that are harmful to men themselves and society in general" (Kirby)

Most of the stories in myth or in religious books and movies revolve around the same patriarchal manipulations around the world. These types of narratives enhance the pride of the male community. Most of the time in this novel, men are portrayed as androcracy. They are the creators of the rules and regulations. "Males, especially fathers, have the central roles of political leadership, moral authority, and control of property." (Wiki androcracy 8). Because of their physical power as well as their political positions, they easily control others with their political power. "we were conditioned to obey" (Barker, silence 54) women has to obey male without any rebel this is what society say in this novel too.

The dark side of patriarchal constructions, which affect the male community in indirect ways, is that patriarchal society leads the male community to a stereotypical environment that always promotes bravery, violence, aggressive behaviours, insensibility, anger, not trying to understand others' emotions, and "aggressively competing and dominating others" (Hess), which suppresses others through the power structures with whole domination. Masculine qualities like dominance, self-reliance, and competitiveness could be harmful to men and those around them.

Characteristics include passiveness, politeness, sensitivity, cooperation, empathy, and submissiveness, among others. These established characteristics suggest that they are exclusive to women, in contrast to the stereotypes associated with men. Taking all responsibility over other genders and establishing men as superior among all. Patriarchal societies inculcate these

ideas into the male community through social structures such as traditions, culture, and religions. In the book, one can see that women are considered harmless and fragile creatures. Even in many religious books, the male dominance lines are visible.

Men and women share both masculine and feminine qualities. Humans are manipulated like women must have only so-called feminine qualities like kindness, virtue, and other ideas, while men must have only bravery, no fear, no emotions, and other ideas. These ideas destroy the human character. They fake their own real behaviour. According to Judit Buttler, every woman and male have two characteristics mixed with each other, and time and situation make them visible.

Toxic masculinity is an uncivilised human behaviour that is passed from generation to generation. It is a pre-historic defence mechanism. Without bravery and other stuff, people will perish in the wild. So, people adopted toxic masculine ideas. This civilised world does not need that many prehistoric characters. while civilised society needs more emotional bonding as well as intelligence, kindness, and other moral characters. A civilised society requires harmony and peace. These characters are feminine in patriarchal society and have a more moral attitude, so they hesitate to hurt other people. They are also so kind and have a lot of empathy. These charterers create new bodies and civilisations without waging war. The toxic masculine character gives more importance to strength, fighting, killing, and other deeds, which is slightly relatable to the animal because of the low use of knowledge. Humans have strong instincts to safeguard their food, establish boundaries, defend themselves, and maintain control over their group. This becomes a problem in day-to-day life.

In the novel, one can also see the narratives that say Achilles hair is unexpectedly very soft, which is like a woman's hair. "Unexpectedly soft, almost like a woman's hair." (Barker, Women, 12) Hair is common to all people, but here the author mentions soft hair like that of a woman. While the author speaks about male hands being so rough, like iron, "Men's hands and faces seemed to be made of the same hard, unyielding metal as their sword." (Barker, Women, 18) Man is strong, but narratives and manipulation suggest that men must save women. She needs a man to protect her. However, many people gathered and built many great things, as well as protecting their families from wild animals.

Men gather socially and work as a team because their solo strength is not enough to protect and build, so they gather and do that work. But in the case of female, men do not allow them to gather up to do welfare jobs. If they unite, they can protect themselves from wild animals and other stuff. In the name of protecting, novel characters place their women in safe premises by locking or controlling over an encloser. The book depicts numerous instances where men treat   like property and subject them to inhumane torture. In the novel, Cassandra is the princess of Troy and the daughter of Hecuba and Priam. Apollo cursed her for rejecting his sexual advances. Her life becomes miserable. "in all social structures, including judicial institutions. It has also instilled victim-blaming attitudes and misogynistic views in cases of rape. In this regard, women who deviate from the attributes of an 'ideal woman' are often blamed for causing their own victimisation." (Hamid) Women must be ideal in all narratives. Males glorify the ideal woman in the stories. Female dress and female character are questioned and blamed when men rape has happened. Like that, here Cassandra became a victim, but she got her punishment, while males who did bad things were not considered as a criminal. Females are blamed when males commit crimes against female bodies.

This woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. He raised himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard *it,* being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest, *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, with the woman standing in the middle. (John 8:4-9).

In one incident in the *Holy Bible*, a gang of members chases unchaste women for prostitutes while no one can find the man who did with her. Males easily escape from patriarchal society, while females are trapped. These people caught enchased want to punish her while they are not chaste. Even though they sinned, they want to insist women follow rules. Females are questioned and blamed for the whole cause. One can find patriarchal social norms in the Bible as well as in Greek mythologies.

Both The *Women of Troy* and *The Silence of the Girls by* Patricia May Barker show how harmful patriarchal ideals were to both men and women in ancient societies. Patriarchal beliefs also hurt men by forcing them to follow strict, often harmful gender norms. Boys are pushed into warrior and guardian roles too soon, which takes away their youth and individuality in a tragic way. This relationship is clearly shown in *The Silence of the Girls,* where young boys are forced to fight, often with fatal results. This shows how patriarchal expectations take away their innocence and humanity.

In the same way, women in these stories are shown to be weak and less important than men, and their worth is tied to their jobs as mothers and carers. Stories and religious texts from different cultures support these patriarchal ideas, saying that men should protect women and women should obey men. Women are limited to passive roles because society thinks they need to be protected from harm. This keeps them from fully participating in society, even in war, where their presence could change the result. The books also show how women are treated as things, like property or war spoils, which makes them less human and reinforces male control. This kind of behaviour not only puts women down, but it also makes it harder for men to build real, helpful ties with them. Achilles' treatment of Briseis as an object instead of a partner shows how patriarchal views keep men from making emotional connections and getting support, which makes them feel alone and causes them to suffer emotionally.

Patriarchal societies also force harmful stereotypes on men, telling them they need to be brave, strong, and dominating while hiding their feelings and empathy. In addition to making men more likely to have mental health problems and heart disease, this poisonous masculinity makes the world a more hostile and insensitive place to live. Patriarchal structures hurt both men and women by locking them into their roles and preventing them from fully expressing their humanity. Patriarchal societies create unfair and painful situations by spreading false ideas about how men are better than women. These books argue that gender roles should be rethought, and that men and women should be seen as equal partners who can help and support each other. This kind of change is the only way to break the circle of harm and make society fairer and kinder to everyone.

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