

An Ode to Misogyny:

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After reading Hegel's view of women and men and their roles in society in *The Ethical World: Lato Human and Divine: Man and Woman*, I thought to create a "modest proposal" that would critique his view and compare it to how society views them today. For the majority of human history, women were rarely seen as equal to men, and only recently, in this long history, were they given equal rights in America. Around the world today many women still do not share the same rights as other members of humankind and my modest proposal intends to challenge the ideas that make people believe that women are not equal. Many of my peers suggested that I write a disclaimer stating the purpose of my "modest proposal." They're worried my obvious satire could be taken as serious, but their worries should be dispelled once they actually read it. I am afraid of being taken as serious though, either I am horrible at satire and sarcasm or everyone is just dumb. I lie all the time, but even now and then some people believe me. Does that reflect on my ability to produce convincing satires or their ability to understand satire? The purpose of this paper is to expose people who think like Hegel and believe that women and men have specific roles in society. But art itself is subjective and your interpretation may differ from another, but this is no doubt, art.

Nothing compares to the glory of America in the 1950s. During this time, the United States of America was at its peak. The 1950s saw a stark increase in the American economy. A report by the Institute for Economics & Peace, released in 2011, shows that in the 1950s America saw a significantly lower unemployment rate and a higher GDP than the years leading up to it (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2011). At this time America had just gotten out of World War 2 and the economy was continuing to flourish after the production and selling of war

supplies. Another example of the zenith of America is how much its citizens could trust their government. According to the Pew Research Center, between 1958 and 1964, 70-80% of America's population had complete faith that the government had its citizen's best interest in mind. American citizens were able to trust their government which made their life more comfortable. Combined with the increase of wealth in most American families it can be said that at this time America was thriving and politicians today ask how we can mimic the success of the 1950s. These politicians should look to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics to find their answer. Although these lectures were written well before the 1950s, they express ideas that complement 1950s society and more specifically the role of the two genders that encompass this world. America today has swayed away from these traditional ideas and this is why our great country has begun to not be as prosperous. Nowadays, women have abandoned their original positions and taken on roles in the workplace and in politics. This is the same for men who were meant to dominate these positions, yet they've taken on other work. I propose a return to these ideas that Hegel presents and immediate actions by the powers that be in order to ensure the prosper of our great nation.

Gender is a very topical issue in today's society and for the purposes of this essay, I will only refer to the only two: Man and Woman. Hegel begins the section titled "The Ethical World: Lato Human and Divine: Man and Woman" by stating that the concept of being conscious is divided into two parts: Human Law and Divine Law. (Hegel et al., 1993). Human Law is a spirit with a basis in individuality and itself in respect to others. Hegel, later on, equates this to the gender of man. It is their job to deal with the government which Hegel describes as "the certainty of itself as a single individuality..." Hegel states that government, laws, and politics are man's domain and later on claims that the aforementioned Divine Law is the domain of women. A

domain that “is a force exerted against the independence of the individual” (Hegel et al., 1993). In this Hegel describes how men and women are at odds with each other based on these roles. These genders belong to their own spheres and this was everpresent in the 1950s. Women and Men know their places in society back then, they continued to follow the set realms for them. Whether unintentionally or not, Women remained with issues of Divine Law and Men remained with the dealings of Human Law. A return to these values is most necessary as now the lines between the Divine and Human world have been blurred. But just how should these two genders act in order to ensure this success?

Women’s place in society is a controversial issue to discuss. The proceeding principles are for the greater good of all of society. The most important and helpful aspect to today’s society that Hegel presents is a woman’s place in her family. Hegel identifies the many relationships women take part in. Hegel states that the relationship between brother and sister “foreshadows most completely the nature of ethical life” (Hegel et al., 1993). As women have no sexual want for their brothers such in the relationship of a husband and wife nor do they have a devotion to him as in the relationship of mother and child, they have no relation to their brothers do their innate concern for the “law of the family” as Hegel describes it. Hegel uses it to derive the conclusion that “[the] feminine life is attached to these household divinities..” Hegel shows that there is no natural way to view the relationship between sister and brother, so it represents a divine connection and her ultimate role in society. Women are meant to deal with the issues of the household. They are the “preserver of the divine law” and their efforts in this realm keep the world secure. Another important concept Hegel states are the responsibility a woman has. Hegel states that “a woman’s relationships are not based on a reference to this particular husband, this particular child, but to a husband, to children in general,-not to feeling, but to the universal”

(Hegel et al., 1993). Hegel asserts that women have a divine purpose that represents their universal status. Women are inherently involved with children and husbands and this negates their own feelings. These two aspects are what are required for women in order to restore society to a prosperous time.

Men have different responsibilities in society. As mentioned before, men deal with Human Law, and Hegel goes more into this later on in his book. Hegel states that the qualities of man allow it to form a government. Hegel states “the certainty of itself as a single individuality is that spirit in the form of government” (Hegel et al., 1993). Men are individual and this allows them to acknowledge individuals and create laws that can create them. In fact, Hegel follows this by stating that the nature of man is “seen in its authoritative validity...” (Hegel et al., 1993). Men were created in order to control, it is their nature. This is why they are the most inept in government and needed in these positions. This is also why Hegel states that men are only “real and substantial” when they are citizens in society (Hegel et al., 1993). Men belong in the society of citizens and laws are reduced when they cross over to the world of the divine. Men should strive to act like this in society today.

Whatever your stance on women and men in society it is unarguable that society has deteriorated since the days these traditional roles were present. Women should return to a domestic lifestyle where they belong, in kitchens and nurseries. Her life is meant to surround the divine law and her actions revolve around her family. Men should take on the roles of politicians, judges, and workers alike. They are weakened when they try and imitate the responsibilities of women and are meant to be in the workforce. Look to Hegel’s thoughts and opinions in order to prove society. His words show a world that not only ameliorates our world but strengthens our future as members of the human race.

Bibliography

Hegel, G. W. F., Bosanquet, B., & Inwood, M. J. (1993). Introductory lectures on aesthetics. London: Penguin Books.