

The Cultural Basis of the Violence against Woman

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Abstract

People are born into an existing culture and are shaped by it, whether they realize it or not. The fact that people socializing in the same cultural environment have similar values, norms and behavior patterns results from this feature of the culture. While there are quite distinguishable differences between the cultures of different societies in the world, when it comes to violence against women, the distinctiveness of cultures disappears and societies show great similarities with each other. This is due to the fact that men's perspectives on women are similar around the World. The elimination of the violence primarily depends on men to change their perspective on women; to accept that women are human beings in the true sense of the word to accept that they have a dignity and this honor is at least as valuable as their own and to perform their relations with women on this acceptance. For a world without violence, both formal and informal education institutions have great responsibilities. The problem of violence can be solved by starting a total education campaign in the media, schools and religious institutions, especially in the family. The cultural basis of violence against women is tried to be revealed in this study. With this aim, the hints of the culture that feed violence are traced in proverbs and creation myths collected from different parts of the world.

Keywords: Culture, Violence, Woman, Education.

Introduction

The issue of violence against women, which confronts us as a universal problem, is primarily a problem related to men's perspectives on women. Men devalue women by coding them with almost all the negative adjectives such as stupid, foolish, ungrateful, dishonest, liar, indecent, unreliable, disloyal, gossipy, hypocrite, devil, witch, and snake, and therefore, they pave the way for all kind of violence. This negative perspective, which can often be observed in male-female relationships, reveals itself mostly in folkloric elements such as "Myths, legends, epics, folk tales, anecdotes, idioms, proverbs, curses and slang words, ... names and nicknames, ... folk poetry." (Aydın, 2009). It is possible to reach important information about societies by analyzing each of these elements from sociological, psychological, historical and philosophical perspectives, which are transferred from generation to generation through oral and written sources. From this point of view, proverbs and myths are used while trying to understand the negative perspective towards women, and the culture that feeds violence in this study.

There are proverbs, aphorisms and popular sayings that stem from human experience, wisdom and power of analogy in every language of the world. Proverbs are short expressions that reflect the beliefs, moral values, truths, social and cultural principles of a community. These expressions are the "voice of the people" and reflect the "spirit" of the society (Dickson and Mbosowo, 2014; Kerschen, 2000). The importance of proverbs is rooted in the fact that they were "spoken based on long trials and observations and became public property." In other words, proverbs are significant because they reflect a "society's perspective on life" and they are the carrier elements of culture (TDK, 2014; Özkan & Gündoğdu, 2011; as cited in Kalaycı Kırlioğlu, Akarçay & Kırlioğlu, 2016).

Cervantes (as cited in Schipper, 2006) made a very assertive sentence while giving his point of view towards proverbs from the language of Don Quixote: “In my opinion, Sancho, there is no proverb that is not true, as they are all observations based on experience itself, the Mother of all Sciences.”

The myths that Eliade (as cited in Gündüz, 2018) defined as “a sacred story telling about an event that happened in mythological time” are also important sources of information that reveal the perspectives of societies on events. Mythology, which emerges as a dramatic and striking story, is largely the expression of the religious experiences of the communities that lived in the early periods of human history. The beginning, end, values of the society are among the myth topics. Myths are forms of expression that represent imaginary and descriptive story patterns so as to provide the perception of reality and the transfer of religious and metaphysical ideas (Arpaguş, 2014). Schipper (1985) emphasizes that he examined the creation myths from all over Africa, and most of these myths reveal a negative women image. Who actually made up the myths is a separate subject but the women are seen the source of all the evil as reflected in the myths.

Culture

In daily language, people say “cultured person” or “multi-cultured” to someone who is interested in art, literature, music, and has aesthetic tastes for “more beautiful things” or they say “it has a live culture” when they talk about a city where activities that are of interest to the upper part of the society are carried out intensively. Such uses of the concept of culture are sociologically incomplete and open the door to misunderstandings slightly. In its sociological sense, culture contains fine arts and refined tastes of intellectuals, and it also embraces all objects and ideas in a society, including curses, ice cream cones, and music. Sociologists accept both a portrait drawn by an important artist and an ordinary graffiti as elements of culture. From this point of view, it is clear that every human being is “cultured”, whether a Harvard University graduate or an illiterate living in a primitive society. Similarly, a tribe that carries out its agricultural activities entirely with muscle power is as cultured as a group of people

using technological tools (Schaefer, 2013; Tischler, 2011). Culture embodies not only art, music, opera, literature, as some believe, but also the values and rules that guide our lives, our thoughts about good and evil, and even our language. In other words, it covers everything learned by people in society. The thoughts, behaviors and emotions of people can be better understood by examining their culture. When sociologists talk about culture, they do not only talk about the tastes of a part of the society. Because only a small part of the population is knowledgeable and interested in the above-mentioned areas, but all members of a society have culture (Hebding & Glick, 1992; Thio, 1989).

Individuals who have not got out of their own cultural environment and have not interacted with different cultures cannot easily realize the effects of culture on them, just like fish that are not aware of the existence of water although they live in that water. These people, who live unaware of the impact of culture, often act with *cultural conditioning*. In fact even in some behaviors that have very serious consequences, these people do not ask questions such as “Am I doing it right or am I doing it wrong?” This cultural conditioning can turn into a *cultural blindness*. As a matter of fact, a behavior that should be called murder when viewed from the perspective of universal moral principles, but instead, it is not called as a murder and it is carried out cooperatively and with a sense of duty. “In the Callineros, a primitive tribe in California, a father is deemed an unnecessary burden to his sons when he is too weak to go into the woods to fetch a load of wood and to fill an acorn basket. Then they lay the old man on his back on the ground and put a stick over his throat. One of the sons sits on either end of the pole, and they press the father’s throat and kill the old man. In another primitive tribe, the Vaters, it is considered a shameful stigma for the children of an aged head of household not to bury their father alive. Eskimos also leave their useless old people to nature so that they are torn by predators. A child in Fidji, while burying his mother alive in the ground, says, ‘It is out of my love for her that I act like this.’ No one comes to help them while doing this sacred duty. The one who died is their mother, the ones who buries are her children, and it is their mission is to kill her. The

people of Guana bury a large part of their newborn girls alive.” (Yavuzer, 1990).

The enslavement and sexual exploitation of girls in some parts of Ghana is a typical example of how tradition can blind people. According to the tradition in these regions, living or dead, the family has to present one of their virgin daughters to the village shrine in order to seek the forgiveness of the gods, because of a crime or mistake committed by any member of the family, living or dead. The girl presented to the tomb is called *trochosy*, which means slave to the gods. Girls can be presented to the shrine as *trochosy* even at very young ages. In fact, according to a *trochosy*, she was delivered to the tomb by his father, who attributed the mysterious deaths that started to be seen in the family when she was only eight years old, to the unpaid debts of his grandfather. A spiritual bond is formed between these girls, who are dedicated to the gods with a special ritual, and the shrine. After the ritual, the girls are given a dress symbolizing their *trochosy* status. Outsiders are no longer allowed to have sexual intercourse with them. Since, it is believed that the family of the person who has sexual intercourse with *trochosy* will incur the wrath of the gods, if a man has such an affair, the man’s family must give their virgin daughters to the shrine. A simple ritual is enough for the person to clean who had sexual intercourse with her, while the *trochosy* is forced to stay in the shrine. *Trochosy* works long hours without any payment in the field belongs to the shrine in addition to fulfill the responsibilities of some rituals and households. Moreover, the expenses of eating, drinking and other needs are covered by the family. “The shrine priest (tronua) completes the marriage of the girl with the gods by having sexual intercourse with the *trochosy*, who has reached puberty. The girls, who are born from this intercourse, also have some responsibilities towards the shrine.” After serving the shrine for a few years, *trochosy* could be released from slavery with a special ceremony, provided that her family pays for it. Although there is no obstacle in front of her getting married after her freedom, it is not easy to find a convenient husband. Worse, if she dies during her slavery, her family has to deliver another of their daughters to the tomb instead (Ertürk, 2015).

During the socialization, the individual learns not only the language of the society he/she lives in, but also the values and gender-appropriate behavior norms. The individual’s attachment to the society primarily depends on living a life, in line with these values and norms. Otherwise, some kinds of sanctions such as shame, contempt, humiliation or even exclusion can be confronted. Considering the proverbs compiled from different societies and cultures of the world, it is seen that men have quite negative perspectives on women and they have similar thoughts when it comes to the violence against women. In these proverbs, it is also seen that men who apply to violence in order to solve the problems they have with their wives is quite normal, even it is also emphasized that violence against women is one glory of the masculinity.

The Reflection of the Perspective on Women on Proverbs and Myths

The Idea that Women should be Beaten

Considering the proverbs, the woman is the half-child, half-adult, but definitely half-wit type who must be intimidated from the first night, or whose disobedience and rebellion are inevitable. In the mentality that codes women as such, the beating is defended and even encouraged as a method that should be applied from time to time in order to discipline or subdue by intimidating.

There are many proverbs that offer beating as the unique way of ensuring the woman’s obedience. Considering the language used in these proverbs, it is seen that the woman is defined as a subhuman being and devalued as much as possible. The expectations from the women coded as insufficient in terms of mental level are kept extremely low, in accordance with this coding. Since it is not thought that women may have intellectual needs like men, no steps are taken to meet these needs; it is considered sufficient for her to cook, keep the house tidy, take care of the children and, above all, please her husband. The result is a self-fulfilling prophecy, and indeed, a rather low-intellectual type emerges. But the sad thing is that, the truth is missed where this emerging situation is not related to the ontology of women but to the sociology of society. It should not be forgotten that it even if it is not possible to change

an ontological situation, it is possible to change a sociological situation. Moreover, to invest in the intellectual equipment of women, who make up half of the society, by going through a mentality change, also benefits men, who make up the other half of the society. However, the belief that backwardness and insufficiency are immanent to the woman ontology prevents such step.

When we examine the following, it appears that the marriage between a man and a woman is not a fidelity contract that binds both parties and is expected to last a lifetime, but a bondage contract in which the woman loses all her rights. Indeed, it is imbued that in order to get the bride, who has just stepped up to the marriage, out of the imagination world in which she plunged under the influence of romance to face the facts as soon as possible, the groom should be quick to find an excuse to intimidate his wife, if he cannot find, he should make it up, and so that he will initiate a process in which it becomes clear who is the master and who is the slave.

The idea that women should be intimidated on the first night in order to establish authority exists in many countries. According to a young Iranian woman who participated in a television program, her mother advised her brother to slit the throat of a cat on the wedding night so that he could intimidate the bride into subordination. Thus, the bride will understand who is the head of the family and will be an obedient wife forever. The same logic applies to a Russian and a Japanese proverb-respectively- as follows: “The husband hit a toad, looking menacingly at his wife.”, “... on the first day of marriage correct your wife.” (Schipper, 2006).

I would like to quote to convey one of my male student’s relevant parts of the answer to a question I asked to my undergraduate students as a term paper years ago. When I read the relevant part of this student’s homework, I remember saying, “A mentality can only be explained so briefly and concisely, but also so beautifully.” I quote it without any changes: “Women are more inclined to evil by her nature. Indeed, while man has one soul (a kind of spirit that pushes people to do bad deeds), women have nine souls. When this is the case, it is so difficult to suppress the woman. For this reason, our ancestors took some precautions in order not to leave

women unattended in the family and society. Beating prevails among these precautions. This beating did not appear suddenly, but our ancestors also found a method for this job according to their experiences and minds.”

Influenced by the tradition, it is not realistic to wait the man, who codes woman like this, to establish a healthy relationship with the woman. Since, according to this perspective, the woman is a being that burns with the fire of lust, does not consider any moral criteria to extinguish this fire, and constantly wags its tail to seduce men. This being, whose rope is certain to deviate when left loose, is almost the representative of the devil on earth, even herself. The woman, who is almost the source of all the evil, should not be left alone for even one moment, like a child who, when left alone, is more likely to harm herself and those around her, should be kept under surveillance and inspection constantly, and in the slightest mistake, all kinds of violence should be applied against her with no pity. This mentality which believes that the only way of disciplining and making obedient *the woman, who should not be left without stick on her back, and without child on her belly*, is through the beating, cannot think that the woman also has an honor; moreover, this honor is at least as valuable as his own honor, and the beating is an extremely humiliating and derogatory thing. The reflection of this inconsideration on the proverbs of many societies, that they have no geographical and cultural connection to each other, shows that the men perspective on beating woman is almost same around the world. In these proverbs, beating woman is seen as an ordinary daily routine like eating, drinking and sleeping, moreover, it is advocated and even encouraged as a necessary practice for a woman to be deeply attached to her husband. Also, it is presented as a significant sign of the masculinity.

Some of these proverbs are as follows (Schipper, 2006):

Beat your wife regularly; if you don’t know why, she will know why (West Africa).

The man who cannot slaughter his sheep or beat his wife [when she deserves it], it is better for him to die than to live (An Arabic proverb from the Maghreb).

To keep your wife on the rails, beat her – and if she goes off the rails, beat her (Spanish, Puerto Rico).

If the wolf decides on eating the lamb, even if he is at the upstream, he says to the lamb “Why are you blurring my water?” Similarly, whether his wife is on the right road or not is not important for a man who is decided to beat his wife. She deserves the beating as she is a woman, and the man gives her what she deserves.

Women, like gongs, should be beaten regularly (English, USA).

A bad woman and a good woman both need the rod (Spanish, Argentina).

Good horses and bad horses need the spurs, good women and bad women need the whip (Many variants in both Europe and the Americas).

Do not spare a bullock or a wife (Burmese).

Caulk a new boat; beat a new wife (Khiongha).

Clubbing produces virtuous wives (Chinese).

A woman who is beaten is going to be a better wife (Korean).

The nails of a cart and the head of a woman, they only work when they are hit hard (Rajasthani).

For who beats up his wife, God improves the food (Russian).

A nut, a stockfish, and a young wife should be beaten, in order to be good (Polish).

A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the harder you beat them, the better they be (English, UK/USA).

In these proverbs, which are understood to be the product of a collective mind that has not had its share of humanity and lost its endband, how the women feel in the face of the beating is not taken into account, while beatings are being praised. However, beating is an extremely humiliating thing. Moreover, the beating does not push the person to change in the desired direction, but also causes the formation of some very destructive emotions such as grudge, hatred, anger and revenge, and the relationship to receive an incurable wound. It is not easy for a woman exposed to violence by her husband, to forget what has happened and to be connected to his husband with love afterwards. Those who have been exposed to violence by their parents, teachers or other people as a child know that the pain it creates in our soul continues for a lifetime, although the pain caused by the beating in our body disappears over

time. Every time the victim of violence encounters the perpetrator, the pain in his/her soul resurfaces.

If you really love your wife you have to beat her (Tigrinya, Eritrea).

Where there are no punches, there is no affection (Spanish, Mexico; Quechua/Spanish, Bolivia/Argentina).

Love well; whip well (English, USA).

Now the marriage is going to begin, as the neglected wife said, when she was flogged with thorns (Hausa).

If your lover hits you, it's only comfort (Romanian).

To be beaten by your lover is like eating a raisin (Arabic).

Women, like dogs: the more you beat them, the more they love you (Spanish, Argentina).

The idea that beatings produce love, whether directed at animals or people, has nothing to do with reality. A man may intimidate his wife; however, he cannot enable his wife's love connection to himself by beating. Even if the woman who is exposed to the violence of her husband lives under the same roof with her husband, it is inevitable that a great emotional distance will occur between them. This distance is too large to be measured. Since, a tool that can measure the emotional distance between two people who hate each other has not been developed yet. Even living under the same roof under these conditions has turned into a great pain her husband's sexual demands will cause the woman to become completely enraged. Even if she responds to her husband's sexual demands, she will do it with a feeling, which is a mixture of repulsing and hate, and she will close her soul to the end, even if she opens her body. Moreover, every sexual intercourse with her husband will cause to a sense of being ravished. Thus, sexuality will cease to be an act of pleasure for women and will turn into an act that is tolerated and a purely biological relief for men. However, sexuality is meaningful and valuable if psychological relaxation accompanies biological relaxation. And this only depends on the fact that sexuality is based on love. While a loveless sexuality alienates the woman from her own body, it will make the man biologically comfortable, but will make him tenser psychologically.

Women and steaks, the more you beat them, the better they'll be (German).

Wring a wife's and a hen's neck, if you want them good (Europe and both Americas).

If you don't thrash your wife, she might think she's already a widow (Armenian).

As it is seen, the man's mentality that has produced this proverb is able to extract a sacrifice story from a primitive method such as the beating. The man mentioned in this story is presented as a hero of sacrifice who applies to the beating with extremely supreme feelings, although he never wanted to, just so that his wife would not feel a widow and be humbled.

The Belief that Women are Short of Minds

The other issue we come across in the proverbs is the belief that women are short of mind; even they do not have a mind. Considering the proverbs compiled from different societies and culture of the world, it is seen that these qualities of women are underestimated or the idea that they are innately brainless, that is, they are lack of the qualities that will enable them to participate in mental activities or become artists, by referring to the qualities such as "brain", "understanding", "sense", "wisdom", "intelligence", "knowledge" (Schipper, 2006).

Beauty you've got, my daughter, and intelligence I will buy for you (Ladino, Morocco).

A woman has the shape of an angel, the heart of a snake, and the brains of an ass (German).

In these kinds of proverbs, it is emphasized that woman brain does not work on the one side, and it is seen that the woman is identified with the evil.

Woman's intelligence is a child's intelligence (West Africa).

Women have only half a brain (Arabic).

More beauty than a peacock, but the intelligence of a block of wood (Mongolian).

A doll's head and an empty brain (Polish).

A head of hair and no brain inside (Mongolian).

Women have long hair and a short mind (Swedish).

The wisest of women still is the greatest of fools (Dutch/Yiddish).

It is not appropriate to counsel a woman on subjects that require wisdom, as the woman is

an insane creature. However, if a man makes the mistake of asking his wife for advice, he can only make up for this big mistake by doing the opposite of what his wife said or by ignoring what was said.

Consult your wife and do the opposite (Arabic).

Ask your wife's advice and do the opposite (Ladino-Jewish, Iraq).

Praise the advice of a woman but don't act on it (Italian).

It is not possible for a sane person to listen his wife's advice. Since, "He who listens to a woman's advice is a fool." (Tamil proverb). Man should act with the knowledge that woman's advice results in evil (Icelandic), asking woman's opinion is internecene (Persian), and the one who listens to his wife will lose his job (Kurdish-Jewish). Women should only be allowed to ask questions and these questions should be answered by the men (Arabic). The belief that if a woman guides a society, that society will be dragged into a catastrophe is reflected on a proverb as: "If a cow leads the herd, all the cattle will fall into the pool." (Venda). (Schipper, 2006).

The Idea that Woman is Unreliable

Below are some proverbs that reinforce the idea that women are unreliable (Schipper, 1985, 1991, 2006):

Never trust a woman, even after she has given you seven sons (Japanese).

A horse, a wife and a sword, these three are unfaithful (Kashmiri).

Who ever saw a horse, a woman, or a sword faithful? (Persian).

Never trust a horse or a woman (Turkish).

You can trust your brother, your father, your mother, but never your wife (Yoruba, Benin).

Love your wife but do not trust her (Wolof, Senegal).

All women are unfaithful; it's only the excessively unfaithful that people call harlot. (Yoruba, Nigeria).

A woman, a Miri [a tribe of northeast India], a parakeet and a crow: these four you cannot trust. (Assam, India)

The rivers, the women or the horned animals should not be trusted (Bangladesh).

Of course, managing a marriage in a healthy way depends primarily on loyal spouses towards each

other. Within this regard, it can be said that loyalty is one of the key concepts of marriage, even there will be nothing left when we remove the loyalty. However, it is wrong to assess disloyalty as a woman trait. Since, there are also men having the same trait such as some disloyal woman. Therefore, disloyalty is not a female ontological flaw, but a moral weakness for both parties.

The Idea that Woman is Devil and Evil by Nature

The idea that women are the devil is one of the most frequently treated themes about women. We encounter this theme all over the world and it is tried to be placed in minds with various narratives. In the world of adults, in which women are partly included since childhood, witnessing that the words woman and devil are mentioned together, albeit half jokingly, half seriously, spoils the boy's perception of woman. Encountering a similar situation in written materials after learning to read and write, results in the reinforcing this idea for him, and he becomes a carrier of this distorted perception knowingly or unknowingly. The myth that Schipper (2006) listened years ago from a Sudanese refugee woman living in Congo emphasizes that the creation of woman is different from that of man and that the essence of woman is the devil. "God sends the archangel Gabriel from heaven down to the earth to take the rib from sleeping Adam's body. Flying back to heaven, Gabriel meets the Devil on his way. The Devil says: 'Hi, Gabriel, how are you?' Gabriel answers politely and hurries on to heaven. The Devil has not failed to notice the curious object in Gabriel's hand: he gets closer and flies along with the archangel. 'What's that?' he asks curiously. 'None of your business,' replies Gabriel curtly. The Devil insists, but the archangel keeps quiet. Then, with a sudden move, the Devil snatches the rib from Gabriel who immediately goes after the Devil. The Devil escapes from Gabriel's grip and makes off as quickly as he can, but Gabriel does not want to return to God empty-handed, and resolutely holds onto his enemy. For a long time, they fly and wrestle, wrestle and fly, before the Devil succeeds in struggling free. On they fly, silently, one after the other. The Devil tries to give Gabriel the slip, but the archangel is determined not to let go. Finally, Gabriel catches up

and succeeds in grabbing the Devil's tail. Of course the Devil tries his best to struggle free again, but Gabriel holds no less firmly on, until, all of a sudden, the Devil's tail breaks off. Since the archangel did not succeed in getting Adam's rib back, it is this part of the Devil's body he brought to God in heaven, and this is what the first woman has been made of ..." A similar story is also famous in East Europe countries (Schipper, 2015).

The proverbs also make a serious contribution to the tradition that defends woman is identified with devil (Schipper, 1985, 1991, 2006, 2015):

When God shut up Satan in hell, He created woman to replace Satan on earth (Malay).

If the Devil were to be born again, he would surely be born female (Spanish proverb from Puerto Rico).

Women are the Devil's friends (Arabic).

Like the scorpion, woman is a relative of the devil (Uruguay).

Women are the snares of the Devil (Arabic, Somalia).

Women come from the Devil (Arabic).

Take woman for what she is: a sister of the Devil (Benin).

Women know more than the devil (Italian).

You can understand 99 tricks of a woman, but even the devil could not solve the 100th (German).

A woman is required to defeat the devil (English, England).

Even the devil himself does not have the mischief of the women (Spanish, El Salvador).

The woman does what the devil cannot (Portugese, Brasil).

The woman is the source of all evil (Fon, Benin).

If the devil borns again, it will certainly born as a woman (Spanish, Porto Rico).

Even a small woman surpasses the Devil in artifice (A German proverb that also has varieties in Europe language).

When Satan is likely to fail, he sends a woman (Hebrew).

Love your wife, but do not trust her (Wolof, Senegal).

Beat your wife regularly. If you do not know why, she will know why (West Africa).

The intelligence of a woman is the intelligence of a child (Hebrew).

Woman is a man's Satan (German).

The ones, who express the idea that woman is the devil, aim to early warn the man to be aware of that evil that may come from the woman. According to the ones who have this idea, the problem is great and the subject is serious, even though some silly men are not aware of it. The one, with whom they go to bed, is a snake shaped like a human, and it is not clear what she will do. It is a great mistake to trust her and to be deceived by her smile and sweet language. The woman is a being that should never be trusted, defective by nature and has low moral level. She cannot be good, even though she wants it. Since, her dough is kneaded with evil. Therefore, men need to keep their eyes open. After all, *water sleeps, but enemy never rests*. Indeed, demonizing the woman and then being vigilant against the evils that may come from her, harms men as much as women. Since, this mood brings a level of skepticism at the level of paranoia and poisons the man's relationship with his wife. After all, while there is an option to continue the marriage happily and peacefully, men make life a prison for both their wives and themselves.

In addition to the myths telling that women are made of devil, there are also myths that express they are made of other livings. According to a myth told in some countries such as Greece, Slovenia and Australia, "God puts the rib on the ground for one minute while stitching up Adam's wound, and a dog or a cat skips off with the rib after smelling the fresh meat. God follows the animal and catches it from its tail, and pulls the tail off. That vulgar tail turns into the first woman subsequently. In another, the snake steals the rib, God pulls its legs off to punish it, and he creates Eve from those legs." (Schipper, 2015).

In another myth, it is emphasized that the woman was created by the man. "When God was about to create Eve, he said: 'I will create her by man's chaste part, not by his head lest she will be arrogant; not by his eye lest she will have bedroom eyes, not by his ear lest she will eavesdrop; not by his back lest she will be arrogant; not by his mouth lest she will be gossiper; not by his heart lest she will incline toward jealousy; not by his hand lest she will be meddlesome; not by his foot lest she will be gadabout. And God said to

every limb and organ that he had shaped 'Be chaste! Be chaste!' Despite the enormous precautions that had been taken, the woman still has all the flaws that God tried to eliminate." (Schipper, 2015).

Notice that the woman chose to have whatever traits God did not want, thus, she is portrayed as a being who has gone beyond the purpose of creation and has rendered God's efforts in vain, and it is almost as if a message is being tried to be given: "O men! Don't bother at all. The woman is a dead duck who has no possibility of getting better. Since, even the God could not rehabilitate her, even though he wanted so much." The emphasis on women's unchasteness cannot be overlooked.

In the myth told by the Sudanese female refugee living in Congo, while it is emphasized that the woman was not created by the man's foot lest "she will be gadabout", it is stated that the woman was created by the man's toes, according to a myth that belongs to the Fands, an ethnical community living in Gabon. According to another Fang myth, God created the man, and the man created the woman by a piece of wood (Schipper, 1985). A story told in Belorussia is like this: At first, God creates the Adam with a tale. However, when it is understood that he will look like an animal, God cuts Adam's tail, putting him to sleep and puts the cut off part of the tail next to Adam. This piece turns into Eve over time (Schipper, 2015).

If you pay attention to, in all of these myths, it is emphasized that both women were created from a separate essence from men and that men were created first and then women. In the Saramo myth in Tanzania, it is stated that the woman was created "by accident". This myth, which describes the woman as a "crippled man", is as follows: "Long ago there were no women. There were only two men who continued their existence by eating honey. One day one of the man climbed on a tree on which the bees made honey. While he was trying to cut the honeycombs filled with honey with an ax, the sharp end of the ax fell on the other man, who was sleeping on his back on the floor, and cut off his genitals. The man on the tree went down after a while and he saw his friend covered in blood. 'What is this?' he asked. His friend told him that the ax cut him. A bleeding wound stayed behind and since then, women has

been losing their blood like that (Schipper, 1985).

The proverbs are among the most important spreader of the idea that the woman is evil by nature. Considering the proverbs collected from different parts of the world, it is seen that there is almost no evil that the woman is not held responsible for (Schipper, 2006): She is immoral, offensive, indecent, impolite, indecent, treacherous, evil... "Woman 'ruins the family' (Chinese/English, USA); she is 'sixty years' bad harvest in a row' (Japanese); she is 'leprosy to her husband' (Hebrew); she 'sells her husband' (Khiongtha). She is blamed for 'quarrelling endlessly' (Nogay), for 'scorching and choking' the poor man (Hebrew), for not forgiving him his 'drunken fit' (Danish). She behaves like 'an enemy in the house' (Karachay-Balkar), she grills him 'on the stove' (Russian), she does not seem inclined to swallow her husband's advice (English, UK; Somali). She even frightens a man in his sleep." (Hebrew).

From a garment flutters a moth and from a woman her wickedness; better the wickedness of a man than a woman's virtue (Hebrew).

Woman is more wicked than the Devil (Bulgarian).

Sea is the source of salt, woman the source of all evil (widespread in Mediterranean Europe and beyond).

Woman is the source of all evil: only our soul saves us from the harm she does. (Fon)

Daughters and land: root of all evil (Bengali).

In his *The History of the Animals*, Aristoteles draws attention to some immoral traits of women. According to him, the woman is a being that is "malicious, instinctive, dishonorable, grouchy, violent, brazen, deceptive" The immorality of the woman also highlighted in literary texts towards the end of the Middle age. Marbode, a person lived in 11th century, writes that the woman is "the root of evil and the sprout of all vice". While Jean de Meung, who lived in 13th century, says "No, there is no virtuous woman in the world, never." (Sagaert, 2020). Tolstoy says "All disasters, or most of them, are due to the immorality of women." (Dökmen, 2004). Euripides, who is among the participants in the choir of humiliating women, he expresses his thoughts in his book *Hippolyta*, on the subject as

follows: "Go to hell! I'll never have my fill of hating women, not if I'm said to talk without ceasing, for women are also unceasingly wicked." (Holland, 2006). Well, aren't there any good women? Of course there is. Moreover, "There have only been three good women." But "the first walked out the world, the second drowned in the Rhine, the third they are still looking for." (German). (Schipper, 2006, 108).

Considering what has been written about this subject in different periods of history, it is seen that the idea, which is "the woman's immorality does not appear to be due to a temporary inclination, but rather to a woman's sinful nature", is particularly emphasized (Sagaert, 2020). According to this mentality, the reason why some man behave morally obnoxious, is that "they were born from shameless... lascivious, lewd, liars, gluttonous and opinionated women." (Sagaert, 2020). As you can see, we have an exemplary table in which the crime is landed upon woman irrelevantly. The owners of this table do now allow anyone to speak ill of the man, and have any difficulties in solving problems with the method they have developed. However, they cannot notice that this problem-solving way imposes a very heavy and undeserved burden to the woman. In fact, it is an adulthood sign to take responsibility for the behaviors, and it is childish to get out of the way by making someone a scapegoat and putting the responsibility on them. Of course, we should not be anybody's devil but we also should not demonize anyone, and we should not forget that demonizing woman is a great devilry itself.

In terms of showing what kind of mental eclipse the mentality is in, which sees devil when look at the woman, and the tragicomic situation, Roger de Caen's words are very meaningful: "This beautiful female body only comprises a decayedness, if the intestines of the women were open, then we would see what dirt was under that white skin." (Sagaert, 2020). In the letters written with the aim of warning the monks by Vendomelu Geofroy, who became pontiff in 1093, and stayed on this task until his death in 1132, it is seen that he has a very similar perspective: "Physical beauty is only superficial. If the men could see under the surface, the image of of women would made them nauseous... Since we are disgusted with touching saliva or animal dung with the tip of our

fingers, how could we desire to embrace such dirt bag?” (Gültepe, 2008). Since they value people based on what’s inside their guts, what did Roger de Caen and Vendomelu Geofroy expect to see in the man’s intestines, different from the woman’s? I wish they had told us what would happen if the man’s intestines were revealed, thus they would have saved us, the readers, from wondering.

Coding the woman as devil paves the way for all kinds of inhumane acts against her and serves to justify these behaviors. As a matter of fact, the witch hunt barbarity, one of the most disgraceful phenomena of the humanity history, which is resulted in the torture of hundreds of women; death of ten of thousands of women by burning, death of some women by strangulation or execution, is a consequence of this idea. Additionally, the sources (Akin, 2010; Berkowitz, 2017; Sagaert, 2020) claim that this madness did not occur as a sudden reaction, instead, it continued for a long period of 300-350 years.

Even though there are not many people left accusing women of witchcraft, there are many men who has a problematic perspective on woman and perceive the woman as only a sexual object. This sick culture, which identifies woman with evil, thinks that the task of the woman is to satisfy man’s instincts, take hold of many men and results in the occurrence of some types who are sick enough to say, “Rape is a man’s right. If a woman doesn’t want to give it, a man should take it. Women have no right to say no. Women are made to have sex. It’s all they are good for. Some women would rather take a beating, but they always give in; it’s what they are for.” (Scully, 1994), and to think that they have sexual rights on all women. This sick culture is so contagious and has such a derogatory aspect that a 34-year-old man, who threatened a 15-year-old girl walking on the seaside with a knife, abducted her, and then raped her, is able to claim that women desire to be captured before the sexual intercourse, therefore, what he did was not rape, and to defend himself like this. “When you take a woman out, woo her, then she says, ‘no, I’m a nice girl,’ you have to use force. All men do this. She said ‘no’ but it was a societal ‘no,’ she wanted to be coaxed. All women say ‘no’ when they mean ‘yes’ but it’s a societal ‘no’ so they won’t have to feel

responsible later.” (Scully, 1994). These are typical examples of how far this sick culture can push people: the soldier who raped one of the Andalusian women under his protection does not take the responsibility of his own behavior and bills God for creating him as a man (Carr, 2015); the man who interprets the smile of a German woman encountered while walking by the sea as an invitation to intercourse, wants to have a sexual intercourse with the woman, but he stabs her after being rejected (Cüceloğlu, 2005); The murderer, who first raped and then killed a six-year-old girl, tried to show himself innocent by saying “her name was already bad in the village, here we are in prison in vain” (Berktaş, 1998) are typical examples of how far this sick culture can push people.

It is required to ask this murderer, who seems to be lack of the ability to control impulses, which is one of the most important indicators of being human, that: How does a six-year-old have a black mark beside her name? What could this girl have done to justify her name with a black mark? If a six-year-old girl has a black mark beside her name, is it that girl’s fault or is it those who put the black mark beside her name? More importantly, where does a man get the right to rape and then kill a six-year-old girl with a black mark beside her name-or whatever age she is?

However, this sick idea is not only limited to some types, it can also occur in people who influence millions with their thoughts and decisions. For instance, an Israeli Judge, in the case of a thirteen-year-old girl who was gang-raped, told a cliché word even an ordinary citizen on the street should stay away from: “There are some girls who enjoy being raped.” (Berkowitz, 2015). Such an irresponsible statement by a person in such an important position causes to attention to shift in a different direction and distracts from the main topic that needs to be discussed. What is more is that this kind of statements may bring along the encouragement of some man whose impulse control is weak and lead them to totally get out of control. However, what needs to be done in such situation is not to discuss if some girls enjoy being raped, but to catch the perpetrators of this action and ensure that they receive the punishment they deserve. “When told in 1945 that some people were angry about Soviet troops raping German women by the millions,” Stalin, who seems to have

the same sickly mental world, mused “What is so awful about [a soldier] having fun with a woman after such horrors?” (Berkowitz, 2015).

The demonized woman is also compared with animals as an in-between being. “She is filthy like a pig, a carrier of disease like a mouse, she doesn’t look aesthetically pleasing like a cow, stupid like a donkey, cunning like a fox...” Rustico Filippi, who lived in 13th century, thinks that the woman is a being which is “old witch”, “disgusting female pig” “stinking from top to bottom”. According to Boccace, the woman is “animal and flawed”; “no animal is this filthy...” In fact, “not even a pig crawling in the mud can reach its filthy level.” The woman described as an ugly and disgusting organism is emphasized as being “dirty, smelly”, “brutal as a goat”, “heavy like a lactating cow”, “a snail”, “a big sow”, “a capricious female mule” and “a dangerous animal” and having “a fox nose”, “ox eyes”, “smashed cat face”, “wolf teeth”, “hair like the feathers of a red cow” in animal stories. Women are portrayed as such beings who are “equipped with tawny owl eyes”, and have “hair like a snake”, “a rough face”, “long rotten teeth”, “a triangular mouth”, “sick lips to kiss malicious ones” with a repellent repulsiveness in satires (Sagaert, 2020).

Along with those who do not like women to be human and who say that she is an animal or worse, there are some who are so kind as (!) not to call them animals directly, although they think that women are closer to animals. According to this perspective, the woman places on the border between man and animal and it is implied that not only women sexuality, but also the femininity itself is close to animality (Federici, 2004). *This being, which is not known whether it is human or not*, can gain some value only if she is an obedient wife and bears children to her husband, provided the children are boys of course. When a woman cannot give birth to a male child (!), she is easily pushed aside and replaced by someone else (Holland, 2006). After all, as a proverb emphasizes, “Women are like shoes, they can always be replaced.” (Rajasthani). (Schipper, 2006). While it is expected that the person will establish an emotional bond even with an item he uses, it is a shame for humanity that he considers his life partner as an abundant object, which is changed when the

time comes, and he overlooks her so easily. Another proverb that seems to come out of the mouth of an emotionless man who looks forward to his wife’s death so he can marry a new woman reflects the same mentality: “When one [of the couple] has to lie down, I lay myself down, and the wife has to serve me; when one has to die, the wife should die, so I can take a new one.” (Bulgarian). (Schipper, 2006)

A myth told by the Binis, a community living in Nigeria, shows similarities to the Christian doctrine defending that people are expelled from heaven because of Eve (woman). According to this myth, in the first periods of human history, nobody had to till the land and work every day to earn their bread. Since, the people were allowed to cut a piece from the sky within reach in order to fill their bellies when they are hungry. However these happy and elated days ended because of a greedy woman and the sky moved away from the earth. However, the sky had warned the people in the beginning that they should never cut off more than their needs from it. The sky stated that as if they plucked too much, they would not be able to finish it all, they would throw away the rest, and “it did not want it to end in a wastebasket.” In the beginning, people paid regard to the warnings of the sky and tried to follow the rules. However, as the time goes by, a gluttonous woman became greedy, and violated the ban by cutting “a piece so huge that neither she nor anyone else on earth can ever finish it.” The woman who remembered the warning of the sky and realized her mistake, although she ate as much as she could of the piece she cut, she gave the remainder to her husband and villagers to eat, they couldn’t finish it, so they had to throw away the leftovers. This situation weighed heavily on the sky as it felt insulted, as a result of the anger, it pulled itself to a height that no one could reach. The human being, who had lived on a velvet until that time, has to sweat blood in order to get food since then (Schipper, 1985, 2006). Considering this myth and similar stories, the emphasize can be seen on the followings: the great calamities that have befallen people have been caused by women; that when a woman takes the initiative, she has the potential to cause trouble for herself and humanity, and has to be kept under constant control as her impulse control is weak.

The message given by this and similar myths is clear: Great disasters happen to people because of women. She is a being that has the potential to cause trouble for both her and humanity, when a woman takes the initiative. At the same time, it must be kept under constant supervision, as her impulse control is weak.

Conclusion

Considering the history of humanity, it is seen that, most of the time, those who seized power put the weak people through the wringer and made their life a prison for them, although there are people who shine like stars and illuminate the path of humanity from time to time. Even though many people have benefited from this cruelty of those in power, women are at the forefront of the most stable beneficiaries. As Guy Bechtel stated, it is not possible to find another community of people in the world who have been exposed to this level of insult for so long. “The tradition of misogyny initiated by Plato has never had a shortage of philosophers in the history of thought” and “even the wisest works written are full of misogyny” has negatively affected the perspective of many men towards women and has turned the history of women into a history of pain, tears and cruelty (Chollet, 2020; Holland, 2006). For this history to progress on a humane ground is primarily depend on that men should change their perspective on women, give up seeing the women as inferior beings and men’s acceptance that women are at least as human as they are. Although such a mental transformation means that men will abandon some of their own comfort, it will be a very right step for humanity.

Also Societies have memories just like individuals do. If an individual remembers an incident today which happened in the past and made him suffer, he suffers again. However, the individual does not have to experience the bad event in the past himself to suffer today. It is enough for a person to suffer if any member of the group to which he or she belongs has experienced a bad event in the past or present. Men have placed such a burden on women’s individual and social memories throughout history that sometimes, some women cannot think clearly due to the anger caused by this burden, and they may see all

men as their enemies, by looking at some men. The feminist movement, which emerged as a reaction to the injustices that women have been subjected to throughout history, struggles to keep this societal memory alive in order not to forget these injustices. The phrase “We are the grandchildren of the witches you couldn’t burn”, which has become one of the most important slogans of feminism, and “Shake! Shake! The witches are back” (Chollet, 2020), sloganized in Italy in the 1970s, are exactly the words spoken in the name of keeping the social memory alive. To put it simply without delving into the subject of feminism, *to where* feminism came is debatable, but from where it came is clear. If men who have held power throughout history, could accept that the fact that the gender of the woman is different from the man does not detract from their humanity, and if they succeed in building their relations with women on this acceptance, human history could have turned in a better direction. Moreover, such extremism as the misogyny that emerged in some feminist groups would not have been a matter.

Considering the mentality reflected on the proverbs and mythological narratives, which are unknown by whom and how they emerged first, it is seen that the perspective of men on women is quite problematic. Many men believe that women are deficient and flawed beings, therefore they need to be educated and disciplined. This belief and some women who internalize this perspective make a serious contribution to the formation and prevalence of a culture of violence. For the children, who are born into a culture which sees the women as the source of all evil, approves, even encourages the application to violence by the men to solve the problems between them and their wives, it is highly likely that they will try to solve the problems they experience with their spouses in the same way, when they grow up and become adults.

As it is known, societies educate their members through formal and informal educational institutions in the socialization process and try to put them into a pattern. However, just as a tight shoe hurts the foot, the culture that fosters and legitimizes violence against women is too narrow for humanity and bleeds the conscience of those who have not lost their humanity. For this reason, people with conscience

need to raise their voices with the awareness that the current culture is created by people and therefore is not a destiny, and they need to fight harder for a new world where both women and men feel safe and no one commits violence against anyone. One of the most effective ways of this struggle is education.

In order to eliminate the culture of violence that tramples human dignity, the transformative power of education should be utilized and a total education campaign should be initiated by evoking all formal and informal education opportunities. This educational campaign should be started from the family, which has the distinction of being the first primary school. Considering the fact that the foundations of personality are largely laid in childhood and values are formed in those years, it is self-evident that parents, who are the teachers of this school, should be very careful. Therefore parents should know the fact that their words and jokes leave a mark on the minds of their children, and their communication with their spouses influence the perception of their children on woman and parents should act accordingly. The worst thing a father can do to his children is to blame his wife for every problem he has with his wife; It is the constant uttering of clichés that have no truth, such as that women are devils, that their minds are low, and that all evil stems from women.

Children are educated by the people who have important place in their lives such as siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, teachers, clergy, and moreover, by the society they live in as a wide, not only by parents. Therefore, attention should be paid to the use of a common language in the family, schools, religious education institutions and the media. Raising awareness of families in order for the aforementioned campaign can achieve its purpose; trying to bring a new consciousness to students through lessons like values education; avoiding all kinds of publications that degrade women in the media, which has turned into one of the most influential platforms of today; in religious institutions, narratives humiliating women, which are quite common in popular religious culture, should be avoided.

Men should primarily acknowledge that neither the masculinity is something to be praised, nor the

femininity is something to be vilified. Since, no one chooses to come into the world as a woman or a man. What make the person valuable are his/her moral behaviors that he/she deliberately prefers, not the traits that he/she did not contribute to in the creation. Regardless of being man or woman, whoever is more moral is valuable. This is why we should update our value scale, and eliminate violence from our lives, which many men apply to as a problem-solving method in their relationships with women. Since, the violence is an enormously primitive problem-solving method. Moreover, a culture of violence created by men does not only make men's relationships with women tense, but also they are also exposed to violence from other men.

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