

**SUBSCRIBING TO OR SUBVERTING
GENDER IDEOLOGY: A SEMIOTIC
ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MEMES**

BY

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**Subscribing to or Subverting Gender Ideology: A Semiotic
Analysis of Social Media Memes**

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Candidate of Master of Philosophy at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis Subscribing to or Subverting Gender Ideology: A Semiotic Analysis of Social Media Memes submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in the future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Subscribing to or Subverting Gender Ideology: A Semiotic Analysis of Social Media Memes

Memes a byproduct of social media platforms have the power to (re)frame the perspectives of individuals through their linguistic and visual elements. It has the agency to pave the way for social change becoming one of the most potent and viable sources of disseminating information across the globe. The present study investigates the role of social media memes in subscribing to and subverting dominant gender ideology. It tends to highlight the semiotic modes implicitly employed in memes to reinforce traditional gender roles and societal expectations. The study's theoretical framework is based on Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) theory of semiotics. Semiotic analysis is a crucial tool for uncovering deeper meanings within images, shedding light on the gender ideologies portrayed across social media. Using a purposive sampling technique, the research study has examined 50 memes extracted from two prominent social media platforms; 25 memes were sourced from Twitter while the remaining 25 were sourced from Reddit. The study finds that some of the memes through their subtle use of linguistic and visual modes reinforce the traditional perspectives of patriarchy while other memes overtly call for subversion of the dominant gender ideologies. Moreover, the research study has also unveiled some thought-provoking facts, the discussion of subversion of gender roles revolves around the female gender while the male gender is expected to subscribe to the traditional norms, and the adjectives associated with both genders carry different connotations. In simple words, this research study explored how semiotic modes are employed in memes to engage with gender ideology serving as a potent tool of persuasion and influence, promoting adherence to or challenging traditional gender norms.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COVID	Corona Virus Disease
GFL	Gender Fair Language
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband Fawad Amin, my mother, my father, and my best friend Mahnoor for their endless support, continuous encouragement and motivation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter provides an overview of the study. It begins with the introduction about the research work followed by the statement of the problem. The research questions and research objectives are then formulated within this chapter. The theoretical framework of the study is also discussed explaining the methodology. In the end, significance, delimitation and organization of the study have been described.

1.1 Introduction

Social media has gained massive importance for being a widely used medium of communication. It gives an insight into the belief system, ideologies, and values that a society holds. However, it serves to be a source of spreading information and entertainment. One such aspect of entertainment is ‘Memes’ that have become momentous in the twenty-first century. Lately, memes have become a fast-paced medium of communication among internet users, especially among the young generation who often use memes to convey messages, opinions, and views. The term meme is not a recently coined term as it was introduced by Dawkins in 1976. Memes have been defined “as a way to metaphorically project bio-evolutionary principles upon the processes of cultural and social development” (Fomin, 2019, p. 327). Memes can be defined as a collection of verbal and non-verbal signs that are copied, appropriated, and spread instantly across the internet by its users. As Shifman (2013) aptly points out, these internet memes may spread in their original form but are often appropriated by their users.

Generally, memes are used for communication as people of a particular culture can relate to the situation presented. Memes reflect ideology, views, opinions, in short, what is going on in society, with a taste of humor and puns. Memes are usually images superimposed with text and captions that spread rapidly across internet users (Brideau & Berret, 2014). Memes construct and shape the thought processes of masses in a manner similar to that of the genetic makeup of human beings. Moreover, the intent behind sharing memes is to convey a message in a lighter tone. However, memes have underlying ideologies that can significantly influence innocent minds. The ideologies underlying a meme are registered subconsciously in the minds of people using them.

Salam (2021) states that since adolescence is a time of identity formation, these memes act as a pervasive and influential socializing agent, instilling ethics and values in young internet users following problematic cultural prejudice, stereotypes, and gender discrimination. The youth using the internet are so overwhelmed with the idea of social media that they exercise minimal care in whether the message delivered is right or wrong, true or false. The age of adolescence is characterized by the formation of identity, thoughts, values, and morals. This becomes even more concerning when in today's age; teenagers spend most of their time using social media platforms to read, post, share, and spread these memes. Since they get exposed to all sorts of information on the internet, it is important to educate teenagers about the prospects and consequences of social media usage.

With the advent of technology and easy access to social media platforms, people can share ideas, thoughts, and beliefs across cultures. This sharing trend is a cause of the construction of identities through digital platforms and hence becomes of serious concern to female identities. Many people believed in "cyberutopia" (Mahfouz, 2021, p. 102) platform where everyone has freedom of expression and equal representation. Keeping this in mind, the feminists attempted to raise their voices for equal status and rights through social media, where it is easier to engage users due to constant sharing and resharing. However, as a reaction to feminism, it has been seen that misogynistic trends have re-emerged most visibly in the forms of memes partly as reactive psychology.

The term misogyny has been derived from the Greek word "*mī̄sogunīā*" which means hatred against women that gets reflected and highlighted in different forms. Srivastava, Chaudry, Bhat, and Sahu (2017) opine that misogyny has been expressed in various forms such as male privilege, patriarchy, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, belittling of women, violence against women, and sexual objectification. Almost every woman has experienced misogyny in one form or the other. "Expressions of misogyny previously unthinkable in the public sphere now appear on popular social media platforms" (Nagle, 2005, p. 6). Gender memes that appear on social media are either subverting or subscribing to dominant gender ideology. Drakett, Rickett, Day & Milnes (2018) highlight that social media platforms are reframing sexism and harassment as acceptable, by sharing and resharing these concepts under the veil of humor and pun through memes as revealed by feminist researchers. Gender representation, patriarchy, feminism, and sexism are areas that have been highly researched; however, misogyny has

not been dealt with in isolation. Moreover, the spread of misogyny through memes has not been explored in detail yet.

There are no two opinions about the current status of women in the world. Their struggle to attain equal representation in society cannot be negated. It's through the constant turmoil of years after women have started finding their voices in the chaos around them. However, the counter-narrative often shushes this feeble voice. Manne (2020) defines misogyny as a social system where women face hostility and hatred merely for the reason that they are women in a patriarchal world. The gender that is a social construct is strengthened through social media memes. Gender memes are either in favor of patriarchy or against the patriarchy. However, the underlying ideologies of these memes are being subconsciously accepted by innocent minds under the veil of humor. The current research focuses on this counter-narrative that has stereotyped women in the world of digital media too. Memes are not content consumed solely for entertainment but rather a promising tool that can be used and is being used in favor of a patriarchal system. Unfortunately, the misogyny that has long been embedded in the cultural and social fabric has now started making its way through the fun content. Therefore, the researcher attempts to closely examine how memes amplify and intensify this misogyny.

It further discusses how digital platforms are a new tool for generating new techniques for controlling and disciplining women. For instance, memes often depict women as the main power agent. They are often referred to as the ultimate president of a normal household without whose consent, matters cannot be sorted. However, in reality, they stand at the periphery and are expected to act subservient to men. Their intellectual pulse can never match up to a man's competency level. The issue with this current trend is the way it is harming young minds and turning them into the same chauvinist generation with whom women tried fighting all these past years for their freedom. As the growing trend of misogynistic memes has reached alarming levels, it motivated the researcher to further look into the subject matter of memes i.e., misogyny and the projection of dominant gender ideologies.

Media, particularly through the medium of social media memes plays a significant role in establishing, influencing, and promoting gender roles and societal stereotypes. The feminist film scholar Mulvey (1975) argues that visual media positions spectators from a masculine perspective and frames images of women through the lens of the male gaze. This gaze has been observed in social media memes, which have become a tool for

persuasion and influencing the audience's interpretation. Previously, it was believed that the broad spectrum of social media would eradicate and reduce the fears of marginalized groups including, the female gender. However, memes on social media play an integral role in reinforcing and policing patriarchal norms and practices (Vickery & Everbach, 2019). Further, the use of memes as a communicative tool has led to the resurgence of the traditional notions of patriarchy, making gender dynamics more prominent and naturalized. This increased visibility and prominence has many benefits but it also comes with many risks and potential dangers (ibid.). This resurgence has reintroduced the concept of patriarchal notions, misogyny, and subordination, underscoring the critical need to scrutinize these social media memes in their dual capacity to subscribe to and subvert gender ideologies. Within this context, the research study aims to highlight the potential of social media memes. By delving into the intricacies of semiotic modes i.e. linguistics and visuals, employed in meme creation, this study aims to provide insights into how social media memes influence the perceptions and establishes a discourse surrounding gender dynamic and influence the perspectives of individuals, in the digital realm.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The issue of misogyny is rarely discussed under gender representation, feminism, sexism, and other patriarchal notions which create a significant gap regarding awareness of the subject. This research focuses on the spread of misogyny under the guise of humor through memes on social media. The study intends to explore whether the memes are subscribing to or subverting the dominant gender ideologies. It further aims to highlight whether memes are responsible for the subconscious acceptance and naturalization of misogynistic concepts. Memes are continuously and silently damaging the image and reputation of women, who are still fighting for their basic rights, in a patriarchal society. Additionally, the subconscious acceptance of gender-biased roles through these memes is problematic. This research aims at highlighting the problem of misogyny on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Reddit. This study will also address the problem of lack of awareness on the subject matter of misogyny which can be problematic for the younger generations if it remains unaddressed.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What type of semiotic modes are employed for gender representation in social media memes?
2. How far do social media memes subscribe to or subvert traditional gender ideologies?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To examine semiotic modes employed for gender representation in misogynistic memes
2. To analyze how far social media memes subscribe to or subvert traditional gender ideologies

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), proposed the theory of social semiotics that comprises two levels of analysis i.e. textual analysis and visual (images) analysis. In textual analysis, there is a representation of ideas present within a multimodal text. The use of larger, capital, and bold letters draws the attention of readers/audience toward a certain subject or ideology. Another important component of textual analysis is the lexical cohesion found in certain texts like the use and repetition of adjectives in advertisements. The use of adjectives highlights the properties of a certain object or idea being the center of the semiotic analysis. Vocabulary is another important tool that is often called a map of a culture's preoccupations (Fowler, 1985). Vocabulary carries positive and negative affective meanings that pertinently highlight the ideologies reflected in the usage of a particular word. The memes are subjected to textual analysis to emphasize the role that the textual components play in both subscribing to and subverting the dominant gender ideology. The memes are scrutinized for the capitalization pattern, vocabulary, word choice, and adjectives used to describe the male and female genders. Moreover, a connection is established between the textual elements and ideologies it emphasizes and reflects, with special attention to the representation of both genders in the memes. The second level of analysis in a multimodal text is the visual (images) analysis, in which different modes are combined to convey desired meanings. Five components of visual analysis are predominantly used to analyze a multimodal text.

1.5.1 Placement of Signs

The sign's placement is very important, as it grabs readers' attention. The relative importance of a sign can be judged by its placement in an image. The positioning of women and other related signs in images are examined thoroughly.

1.5.2 Framing

Framing is defined as the more the elements of the spatial composition are connected; the more they are presented as belonging together as a single unit of information. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 203)," the absence of framing stresses group identity", which in a way highlights marginal or peripheral hold. The size of different signs in an image and their inter-relationship convey the ideological stance of the creator and propagator of images. The aspect of framing is analyzed from a perspective of how ideologies are being projected and shaped.

1.5.3 Social Distance

It refers to different relations between the represented participants and viewers of the images. It reveals the proxemics of participants and highlights power relations and their inclination towards a particular ideology.

1.5.4 Power and Angle

An image is taken either from a low angle or a high angle. Low angles generally signify superiority, exaltation, and triumph; on the contrary, high angles flatten the individual and make him/her inferior, which highlights the power dynamics. If the picture is at eye level, then the point of view is one of equality and no power difference is involved.

1.5.5 Colors

Colors are sociologically and historically associated with particular emotions that produce specific reactions in particular contexts. Using proper color seems to be the quickest way to create a mood without saying a word. Most of us have a clear understanding of colors which makes it easier to interpret the ideas (sexism, stereotypes, etc.) projected in an image.

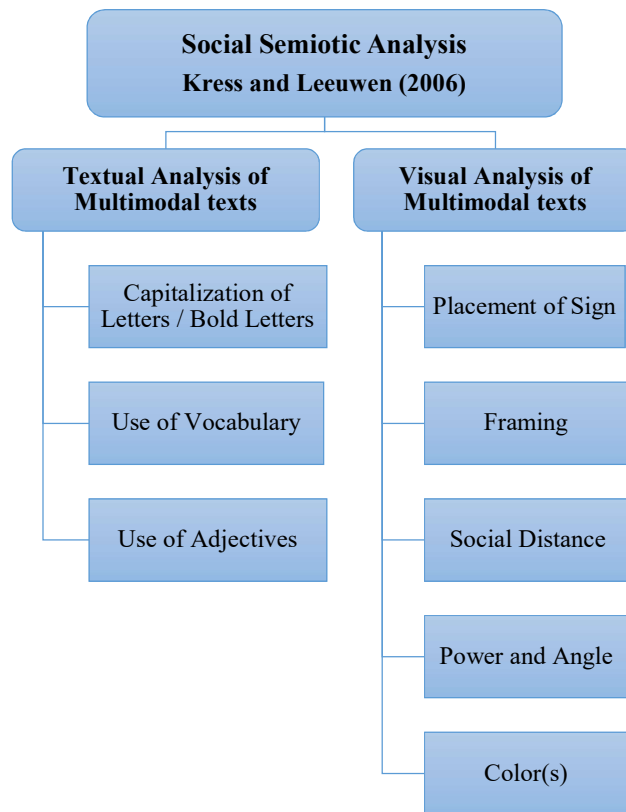


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research study discusses an important topic of contemporary society, which is the influence and impact of social media memes. It deals majorly with memes reflecting gender ideologies and stereotypes. Memes are a significant part of online communication and their impact and influence on social and cultural norms cannot be underestimated. This research study highlights how different semiotic modes are combined to adhere to or challenge the patriarchal culture. It further aims at cultivating a responsible meme culture, particularly concerning gender ideologies and norms on social media platforms accessible worldwide. Furthermore, the research study aims to empower individuals to develop a critical perspective when encountering memes that reflect problematic concepts of patriarchy and misogyny, eventually leading to subscription or subversion of traditional gender roles and expectations. Additionally, the research study aims to provide guidance and assistance to the younger generation, helping them to identify and comprehend the ways in which misogyny and stereotypical gender roles are propagated through memes on various social media platforms.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

This research study is delimited to gender memes that are subverting to or subscribing to gender ideology. The research study does not incorporate memes based on religion, culture, ethnicity, education, and other such memes. Moreover, the researcher has analyzed only 50 memes; 25 from Twitter and 25 from Reddit.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter gives a brief introduction to the study. It is further divided into several parts, to highlight the aims and objectives of the research. Moreover, it sheds light on the increase in usage of social media applications, where a major part of it is dedicated to posting, sharing, and resharing memes that require critical analysis.

The second chapter consists of an overview of related literature. It presents a critical analysis of the previous research conducted in the same domain (gender) related to memes, advertisements, textbooks, and media platforms.

The third chapter discusses the research design, the sample taken for the study, and the method of data analysis.

The fourth chapter includes a thorough discussion and critical analysis of the selected data while referring to the theoretical framework of the study.

The fifth chapter concludes the research study, highlights major findings, and thus, suggests new areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the significant key terms essential to the present study. It offers an insight into the gender-sex discussion asserting that gender is a societal construction implying prescribed roles for both sexes i.e. male and female - which are reinforced through various semiotic modes and mediums. The chapter delves into areas such as gender ideology, gender stereotyping, and reinforcement of gender-specific roles through different mediums such as language usage in the mainstream, on social media platforms, and in textbooks.

This research study probes into the role of media including print media, mainstream media, and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit in the manifestation and reinforcement of gender roles. This exploration draws upon the work of various scholars and researchers in the same domain. This chapter provides a concise commentary on how different research revealed the semiotic modes playing an active part in either subscribing to or subverting gender ideology and patriarchal roles.

Additionally, the chapter provides an overview of the related literature and research, situating the present study in a broader scholarly conversation. Furthermore, the chapter discusses how the theory of semiotics helps in unveiling sociocultural gender ideologies embedded in the social fabric of memes across social media. The chapter concludes with a critical overview of the related studies, aiming to identify the research gap that the present study seeks to address.

2.1 Gender and Sex

Glover and Kaplan (2000) view gender as one of the “busiest and restless terms” in the history of the English language. According to them, it is a term that crops up everywhere; a word that is constantly in a state of transit, often providing new and surprising inflections of meanings. Eckert and Ginet (1992) define gender as a dynamic verb. According to them the term “gender” refers to the practices, traits, activities, and values people of a society conform to or are identified as males and females. The behavioral practices and norms of a society are labeled as “gendered” where they enter in some important way into gendering people and their relations. Hamlin (2020) defines

gender as a social construct (that) is deeply tied to the production of feminine and masculine narratives. Society dictates and regulates our thoughts, ideas, language, actions, behaviors, and other psychological aspects. People often use the terms “sex” and “gender” interchangeably, however, the words are not synonymous or equivalent. Sex is a biological construct that is assigned to the child, depending on his/her genitals at the time of birth, with gender being presumed at the time. However, gender is a social construct reflected in how we communicate and channel our thoughts, ideas, and preferences. It is a powerful force that structures our social lives and one cannot deny the social reality of male and female categories. This is exactly where women of the subcontinent get under the umbrella of being excluded for years. Whether it’s societal or cultural, corporate or academic, the narrative has foreshadowed the role and voice of women. These categories are not simply descriptive rather they are narrative statements that draw a line around who is excluded and included (Butler, 1990). The tide has been in a state of transitioning from no representation at all to making room for that representation but it will take another lifetime to see a stark difference. This research study aims to identify how visual and textual modes are used in the realm of social media to build the narrative around the power dynamics and marginalization of genders.

In agreement with Butler’s point of view, Scott (1998) maintains that “gender is a social category imposed on a sexed body”. Therefore, it won’t be wrong to say that gender and sex are interrelated not because one is natural (sex) and the other (gender) is its manifestation in the social system. Instead, both are inescapable cultural categories that refer to ways of describing and understanding human bodies and human relationships, our relationship with ourselves and others (Glover & Kaplan, 2000). Gender and its related topics have long captivated the attention of social rights activists and scholars alike, who are inquisitive about the juxtaposition of social identities, social roles, and power. Scholars in gender studies, social sciences, literature, and linguistics are fascinated by the myriad ways in which gender is responsible for shaping our thought processes, points of view, language choices, and cultural preferences. They explore issues such as gender role construction and propagation, the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of identity like culture, religion, and society, and the socioeconomic and political struggles for gender equality. Through their research, they shed light on the ways in which gender inequality is perpetuated and challenges the traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. They bring forward to the table the discussion about how to

eliminate gender specificity and gender biasedness which are deeply engraved in our minds and language. By investigating and digging deeper into the inflectional meaning the words “gender” and “sex” carry, the scholars seek to create an equitable and inclusive society for people of all genders.

However, society keeps on reinforcing traditional ideologies and maintaining dominant gender norms. These ideologies are sustained through a range of mechanisms, such as literature, social practices, mainstream media, and other diverse forms of media. In recent years, media including social media platforms has emerged as a powerful force for representing and reinforcing socioeconomic, political, religious, and gender-based ideologies, often in subtle ways. Media plays a multifaceted role in this contemporary world, serving not only as a source of information and entertainment but also as a platform for humor in difficult times. As such, it offers a broad canvas for the portrayal of social issues in a more nuanced and engaging way. Yet, the use of media as a vehicle for reinforcing gender stereotypes and biases cannot be overlooked. From advertisements to TV shows, from sitcoms to dramas, gender roles, and expectations are reinforced in a subtle but pervasive style, sustaining the dominant gender ideology. Despite being capable of integrating positive changes in society, it can be used to strengthen the existing harmful and rigid ideologies and binaries. Thus, this research study takes on the responsibility to recognize and discuss the ways in which the media is influencing our understanding of gender and the roles associated with gender in society.

2.2 Gender and Feminism

Feminism is a socio-political movement that started back in the late 19th century and early 20th century but women have been silently challenging patriarchal oppression for generations. Throughout history, women have experienced oppression, subjugation, and submission to the margins of society. Consequently, misogyny started to spring up and women’s position in every sphere of life was compromised, even in literature and language. One illustrative example of how language perpetuates gender biases is the use of the masculine pronoun as a convention of language to refer to both sexes. For many feminists, this very convention perpetuates the “habit of seeing” that uses the male experiences as the standard and completely blinds the reader to women’s viewpoint (Tyson, 2006, p.84). Another example of the damaging effect that this “habit of seeing” is found in the world of medicine. The drugs prescribed for both sexes were tested only on male subjects. As a result, women experienced adverse side effects while using the same

medication that had little to no impact on their male counterparts. The feminist movements undermine the importance of challenging these norms and promoting an equitable and inclusive society, where women's voices are heard, acknowledged, and valued.

The literary works of the 1960s were written by a male author and from a male perspective which eliminated the female perspectives and voices. Therefore, the works of a female writer were not a part of the literary canon. Women in the previous centuries used male pseudonyms to publish their literary works. This shows women's stature in society and sadly depicts the unsafe and insecure environment where their voices are nothing less than a feeble murmur. Historically, women's role was narrowly defined by the male gender, emphasizing their subservience and the societal expectation that they primarily exist for the pleasure of men. For centuries, the new generations were programmed with the patriarchal mindset, and the cycle was repeated with trivial amendments. Over time, these patriarchal norms became deeply woven into the fabric of the society which seems not to get vanished anytime soon. Our cultural, political, social, and ideological mindsets have deeply absorbed these roles and are still lingering. Despite the progress, some individuals continue to uphold and promote traditional gender roles, further entrenching the patriarchal system. The impact of this reinforcement is profound, affecting not only the perpetuation of the patriarchal norms but also the psyche of women to an extent where their constant submission has made them completely numb to the derogatory behavior of society. It seems as if women have accepted being treated as subordinates and submit to the patriarchy.

As noted by Vickery and Everbach (2019), "Despite being half of the population women are still being trivialized, stereotyped, and condemned in mass media portrayals which contributes to their continued marginalization in society" (p.07). This conventional and marginalized representation of women in media of all forms is neutralizing the efforts of feminists for gender equality and women's rights. This representation perpetuates harmful stereotypes presenting women as objects judged by their appearance, and as passive members of society who lack power and authority. Consequently, it contributes to the normalization of violence, shaming, and abuse against women, including online abuse (Wood, 2015). The gender-specific ideology has been reiterated at different times and through different mediums, in the previous eras in such a way that our minds are deeply engraved with women submitting to the man's world.

Scholars are of the opinion that we have internalized norms and values of the man-dominant world in such a way, that sometimes we may not even realize while promoting gender-specific roles. In short, the culture privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles. These traditional gender roles cast men as strong, rational, protective, and decisive while women are cast as emotional, weak, nurturing, and submissive. To ascertain the level of this differentiation, one needs to rethink the vocabulary that always is referred to when men and women are at work in a society. The American singer, Taylor Swift while giving an interview on CBS Sunday Morning very aptly points out the difference in vocabulary when referring to the male and female gender. She mentions that when a man does something, it's strategic and part of the plan whereas when a woman does the same thing, it's calculated. A man is allowed to react, on the contrary, women can only overreact. When a man does something, he is confident but if the woman does it she is smug. She further says that a man can take a stand for himself but when a woman does the same she is throwing tantrums (Smith,2019). These subtle differences in language while referring to the genders amplify the deeply ingrained biases that persist in our society.

Patriarchy is sexist, which means it promotes the belief that women are innately inferior to men. This belief in the inborn inferiority of women is based on the differences between the genital organs. Feminists don't deny the biological differences between men and women but they disagree that such differences make men naturally superior to women. They are of the view that it's not about physical differences rather it is all about cerebral opportunities. A woman pursuing a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) field should be and must be equal in opportunities to a man in the same field. Women are underrepresented in scientific fields because of the social roles created by the patriarchal world. Huang, Gates, Sinatra, and Barabasi's research highlights that academia is losing its female students at a high rate at every stage of their career due to family responsibilities and the societal roles she has to play (2020). Feminism distinguishes between the word sex and gender. The former refers to the biological construction, while the latter refers to the cultural programming as feminine or masculine. This further implies that women are not born feminine and men are not born masculine. It is the surrounding society that constructs gender and dictates gender-specified roles. It is rather the society that corrupts the blank slates and instead fills them with the filth of inferiority and superiority. The patriarchal society has put women on the

periphery and has always looked upon them as inferior beings and not worthy. It continually exerts forces that undermine women's self-confidence and assertiveness and then questions the absence of these qualities as proof that women are naturally submissive.

Patriarchal gender roles, while inherently detrimental to the female gender, also have destructive consequences for the male gender. These rigid roles dictate that men must conform to societal expectations such as being strong and unemotional which is fatal to their well-being. Men are not permitted to fail at anything they try because failure in any domain implies their failure in manliness. The specified roles have made them think that there are no second chances for them when it comes to their career. They have to be financially independent and, in a position, to support the expenses of a household. This unnecessary pressure takes a toll on them and makes it equally difficult for them. The unattended traumas, the unanswered questions, and an urge to be at their best at all times cause them a number of mental and physical pressures. Vickery and Everbach (2019) maintain that men are also harassed online, but their ideas are under attack and not their existence. However, women are vilified for voicing their opinions on online social platforms. The research study further highlights how patriarchal gender roles affect both men and women negatively, albeit in different ways.

Our world was occupied by males from the very beginning. They were supposed to be the bread earners and providers of the family whereas the females of the family had to take care, nourish, and nurture. Women were subordinate and answerable to males until they raised their voices against this oppression and subjugation. Slowly and steadily they started realizing that their intellectual ability was equal to their quality of being just a nurturer. They started their struggle by making a seat at the table where there was none for them. They had to bear the pain of the realization that their life was considered nothing but just a mere presence at home where they were playing and shifting roles of being a daughter, wife, and mother. They were awake and questioning their identity and who they were as individuals apart from these roles in which they transitioned back and forth. Their gradual struggle resulted in what we call today as Feminism. All this gave rise to the feminist movements in history marked by the first, second, and third waves of feminism.

To be exact, the movements of Feminism started with different agendas in different parts of the world around the 18th century. However, French feminists focused

strongly on the philosophical dimensions of women's issues. It focused on the socio-economic and psychoanalytical experience of women in a man's world. Tyson (2006) is of the view that the word women has the same implications as the word other. He further mentions that a woman is not a person in her own right but is a man's Other.... she is alien in the man's world (p. 96). Bozorgimoghaddam and Moeen's (2014) research on the novel "The Great Gatsby" highlight this particular viewpoint, where males are considered superior to the female counterpart. In their opinion, the novel created a world that belongs to males and the women belong to a male.

In the age of booming technology where there is easy access to media, there are higher chances of women getting bullied online. The entire debate of gender and social media becomes even more concerning in the present time where feminism has raged the chauvinistic men. The women who have always been considered subservient and kept at the periphery have further moved to the edges because of the sarcastic humor directed to them in disguise of insult and inferiority with which they have fought all these past years.

2.3 Gender and Media

Gender and media are complex and intricate aspects of contemporary society, that influence how society perceives and understands gender roles and identities. Traditional media forms like TV, films, and commercials, have long been scrutinized for their portrayal of gender often subscribing to dominant gender ideology. However, the emergence of digital and social media platforms such as Twitter, Reddit, Instagram, and Facebook have provided new avenues for research and discussion on the gender discourse allowing marginalized groups to challenge the prevalent narratives. Scholars and researchers have looked into different aspects of media that adhere to or challenge gender stereotypes. This body of scholarly knowledge has shed light on the ways in which media can impact our comprehension and understanding of gender. These studies highlight the complex role of media in shaping and reshaping societal perspectives and emphasize the critical engagement with media discourse to promote an equitable and inclusive representation of gender.

Nasir, Safiullah, and Hussan (2018) thoroughly examined the relationship between gender representations and commercials aired on traditional media i.e. Television. Researchers studied Pakistani commercials to highlight the gender-binary narrative communicated through them. Using the theory of semiotics as outlined by Dyer

in “Advertising as Communication”, the scholars emphasized the role commercials play in constructing, (re)presenting, and building a secondary narrative about gender and underlying power dynamics. The study aligns with the perspective of Roy (1998) who emphasizes that commercials not only provide an insight into the product and the cultural background of the human subjects involved rather it also shed light upon the gender roles and paradigm of their authority. The commercials aired on popular Pakistani channels subscribe to the dominant gender ideology. While some commercials may portray women as having freedom of expression they still tend to subscribe to prevailing gender norms and ideology. Women are often depicted in stereotypical roles such as caretakers, housewives, or working mothers. These images fortify the idea that women are inferior to men and should be relegated to domestic and subservient roles whereas; the males are portrayed as strong, independent, dominant, and authoritative. These gendered images and depiction of societal roles are highly pervasive and is continuously reinforced. While media can serve as a tool for challenging existing ideologies, it is important to identify the ways in which it can also propagate harmful gender ideologies.

Shifman (2007) opines that humor has found a significant source of its construction and circulation in the form of the internet, generally humor about femininity and masculinity. Another way in which humor carries highly vindictive messages is in cartoons. Cartoons have long been recognized as a powerful medium for entertainingly conveying thought-provoking messages. However, it can be used to comment on and expose societal injustices, gender discrimination, and other issues in society. Rivas-Carmona (2014) analyzed cartoons published online in digital editions of newspapers and on web platforms from 2011 to 2014. After conducting a thorough study, she concluded, that the selected cartoon corpus relies heavily on non-linguistic elements such as visual metaphors, which conform to the norms of patriarchy. Non-verbal clues are more effective in conveying messages because they are more universally understood and can be interpreted by a wider audience.

Media has long been criticized for portraying women using a traditional and patriarchal approach. This traditional approach often involves reinforcing gender roles, depicting women as caregivers, nurturers, homemakers, or objects of heterosexual pleasure (Vickery & Everbach, 2019). This portrayal of women can have a negative impact on society, especially on adolescents. Kumari and Joshi (2015) investigated the perception of adolescents regarding the stereotypical representation of women in media.

Their researchers used a purposive sampling technique to gather responses from 100 students, equally split by gender and highlighted that digital and print media often perpetuate harmful stereotypes. These portrayals depict women primarily as objects of sexual desire, lacking authority and power, and submissive to male dominance. This perpetuation of traditional gender roles in media is wrapped in the fabric of patriarchy. Moreover, the traditional representation of women in media can be incredibly damaging, particularly to the self-esteem and self-perception of young girls. The stereotypical image of women propagated by the media has an impact not only on how women are perceived by society but also influences how women view themselves. The narrow portrayal imposes a heteronormative masculine perspective on how women should define themselves and their roles in society. Furthermore, this stereotypical representation contributes to the normalization of violence, shaming, and abuse against women in all spaces (Wood, 2015). These stereotypes not only limit women's opportunities but also propagate harmful power dynamics and gender ideologies. Addressing and challenging these harmful stereotypes is essential for promoting gender equality and empowering women to define themselves beyond the restricted traditional gender norms.

Shaw and Yuen (2011) investigated the role of media in resisting and reinforcement of gender ideology through plays. They specifically chose two types of plays; unstructured play, guided and influenced by children; and structured play, including media-related activities, which are largely influenced by adults. Their findings indicated that during unstructured plays children tend to resist and break the stereotypical gender roles, displaying a degree of flexibility and creativity in the play. However, in the structured plays directed by adults, there was a greater tendency to adhere to gender-biased roles reinforcing prevailing gender norms and societal expectations. The research study aligns with empiricists' belief that essentially views children as a blank slate whose thoughts and behaviors are shaped and modeled by society. It further underscores how society plays a role in directing and influencing the thought processes and behaviors of young individuals, potentially reinforcing the established gender norms and stereotypes.

Media play a significant role in constructing and perpetuating traditional gender roles, despite some recent strides toward more inclusive representation of women. Extensive research in the realm of gender and mainstream media has consistently concluded that the majority of the content on media aligns with and subscribes to dominant gender ideologies. This research study focuses on how gender is constructed

and how traditional gender roles are fortified through memes on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit. Memes have become a ubiquitous form of communication in these digital spaces, making them a prime subject for examination. The research study seeks to dissect how gender ideologies are perpetuated and conveyed through social media memes. By examining the existing gender ideologies prevalent in social media memes, the study aims to identify how elements such as colors, positioning of signs, and language of memes serve to amplify and intensify gender differences. Further, the study delves into the ways in which digital platforms employ subtle techniques to control the voices and narratives of the female gender; all encapsulated with these seemingly light-hearted and short messages i.e. memes.

2.4 Gender and Sports

The importance of print media cannot be underestimated as it continues to be a valuable and accessible source of information, education, and entertainment. Images and text of the print media not only strengthen our belief systems but also provide insight into sociocultural values. Hall (1997) argues that print media text shares cultural meanings through visual and linguistic signs. Representation of various aspects of cultural and societal knowledge can be propagated through linguistic and visual modes only, further cultivating a culturally situated meaning and perspective. Whiteside and McDaniels (2013) carried out extensive research on how male and female genders are framed in sports media coverage specifically within the arena of a basketball match reported in around 121 newspapers. Traditionally, basketball was perceived as a rough, physically demanding sport associated with masculinity. Consequently, sports media journalists and professionals often framed female athletes for their femininity over athleticism. However, the researchers observed a notable shift in these newspapers where female athletes were appreciated for their athleticism rather than their physical appearance. The researchers opine that these newspapers provided their readers with the opportunity to view female athletes as physically capable and strong, challenging the normative understanding of gender-specific roles. Furthermore, the representation of females in these newspapers subverts the dominant gender ideology, signaling a gradual recognition of women based on their actions and achievements within the sports arena rather than their physical attributes.

Litchfield and Kavanagh (2018) analyzed two Twitter pages representing Team Great Britain and the Australian Olympic Team for representation of gender using a third-

wave feminist lens. Their research highlighted that the female gender is discussed based on their performances in sports rather than on their sexuality. Sports media and social media spaces are not subscribing to the dominant gender culture, once established. They are challenging the norms and are also presenting and promoting women through a respectful and informative lens. In the realm of sports news, the efforts of female players are being recognized and appreciated. The writers are more concerned with the actions of female athletes in the match as compared to their feminine figure. This appreciation of female athletes encourages other women to step forward and participate in breaking the stereotypical gender roles and subverting the dominant gender culture.

2.5 Gender and Language

Gender and language are closely knitted and the way we use language can have a significant impact on how we perceive gender roles and identities. Gendered pronouns and words associated with gendered practices and etiquettes can encourage and emphasize the existing societal norms and roles. For example, the use of gendered pronouns “he” and “she” can strengthen the gender binaries, particularly when compared to a gender-neutral language. Similarly, the adjectives used to describe gendered behavior can limit the freedom of expression for both genders. Wasserman and Weseley (2009) analyzed the impact of grammatical gender, considering three languages, English, French, and Spanish. Using the experimental method of research, they revealed that the French and Spanish languages possessing a grammatical gender promote sexist attitudes on a greater scale as compared to the English language, which employs a more gender-neutral approach in its linguistic structure. Additionally, the researcher stated that the female gender is more affected by the grammatically gendered language as compared to the male gender. In essence, this research underscores the intricate relationship between language and gender, highlighting the potential of language to shape and perpetuate societal norms and stereotypes. It emphasizes the promotion of a more inclusive and gender-neutral language to extenuate the linguistic structures that may contribute to gender bias and inequality.

The notion that languages with grammatical gender are more vulnerable to promoting gender stereotypes and discrimination is a commonly held belief. Scholars argue that languages with no grammatical gender can help reduce or sustain gender stereotyping and discrimination. Sczensy, Formanowicz, and Moser (2016) reviewed gender-fair language (GFL) through an experimental study design. They reviewed

theoretical and empirical work on the role of GFL in sustaining and reducing gender stereotypes. The comprehensive and exhaustive study suggested that GFL has the potential to reduce gender stereotyping and discrimination. However, the experimental study was conducted in a controlled environment, thus making it difficult to generalize GFL and its impact on everyday use. The researchers are of the view that a deliberate effort such as education and policy-making is required to homogenize the use of GFL in everyday conversation and writing. In this way, GFL can contribute significantly to eradicating gender-based discrimination and violence.

Schools and textbooks are the most effective sites to establish or diminish an existing ideology especially because children possess naïve and impressionable minds that readily absorb contemporary ideologies. Khan, Sultana, Bughio, and Naz (2014) explored the role of visuals in preserving, propagating, reinforcing, and perpetuating troublesome ideologies and existing sociocultural roles, particularly concerning gender. Their research focused on examining how Pakistani school textbooks use words and labels to construct and reinforce gender ideologies that are detrimental to women's existence. The researchers analyzed 42 textbooks in English, Urdu, and Pashto, which were taught to students in grades 1 through 10 in both private and state-owned schools. The findings unveiled deeply ingrained gender biases embedded in the language used within these textbooks. Women were consistently portrayed as subservient, weak, fragile, delicate, and lacking agency, while men were depicted as strong, heroic, courageous, and intelligent. Women are relegated to secondary and supportive roles, and their presence is limited, with many female characters focused solely on winning a man's affection. The researchers argue that this limited portrayal of women hinders their development and empowerment, as they are not presented progressively. Additionally, the language used in textbooks fortifies the idea that the world is predominantly occupied by men with women having a limited role to play. This subdued representation of the female gender in school textbooks also plays a vital role in normalizing gender differences. Reading the same story again and again, girls are being trained subconsciously to accept that they are subservient to the masculine gender. The research highlighted how language and simple content of the textbook can inculcate harmful gender biases and stereotypes, underscoring the urgent need for reform of educational materials to promote an equitable representation of genders.

In a similar endeavor aimed at uncovering, and revealing the deeply embedded gender ideologies within the language of school textbooks, Taylor (2003) proposes an exercise based on the content analysis method. Children's storybooks and school textbooks often contain subtly embedded gender biases that need to be recognized and brought to light. By doing so, students can freely express their thoughts and beliefs instead of perpetuating traditional gender stereotypes. Taylor's (2003) approach involved using a coding frame based on traditional gender roles, assigning students the task of conducting an in-depth analysis of the children's books. The researcher then utilized students' comments to highlight the major findings and discussion points. During class discussion, it became evident that the storybooks analyzed reflected males doing all the important work whereas the females were relegated to secondary and subservient roles. The research study's conclusion underscored the potential of content analysis exercises to empower students to recognize the gender biases and stereotypes in children's literature. Such exercises are instrumental in addressing and challenging the existing gender discriminations and biases, fostering a more inclusive educational environment.

The intricate relationship between language and gender plays a significant role in shaping our perceptions and understandings of societal expectations. Language, with its power, can reflect, reinforce, and challenge the prevalent gender stereotypes. Therefore, recognizing the potential influence of language on our interpretations and ideologies about gender is a crucial step toward promoting gender inclusivity and equality. However, language in textbooks and print media is different as compared to the language of social media. While the language of textbooks and print can be subjected to scrutiny and regulation, the informal and dynamic nature of social media language often allows a broader range of linguistic expression. The relation between language and gender in the context of social media presents its complexities and considerations.

2.6 Gender and Social Media

Gender and social media share a multifaceted relationship, shaping, reflecting, adhering to, and challenging societal norms, perceptions, identities, and gender roles in subtle ways. Social media provides a space for individuals of all genders to share their experiences, perspectives, and stories. It has become a powerful tool for marginalized groups to raise their voices. However, the language employed on these platforms plays a significant role in shaping and influencing the perceptions of the individuals using social media. One significant development is the recognition of gender pronouns in users'

profiles, allowing them to express their genders more accurately. Nevertheless, it is imperative to be cautious about language usage on social media as it serves as a governing and principal element in shaping the perspectives of those who engage with it.

A study conducted by Datta, Tschantz, and Datta (2015) revealed that Google serves fewer advertisements for high-paying jobs to users profiled as female. This raises concerns that historical gender-based disparities are being replicated in new digital realms through more advanced techniques. Previously, women used male pseudonyms to publish their literary works and now, they are using male pseudonyms to avoid harassment and maintain their freedom of speech and thought. Google and other platforms entertain male profiles with high-paying and tough jobs whereas women are served with easy-going and less-earning jobs. Another study (Reddy & Knight, 2016) disseminates that textual inputs on social media can give away attributes like gender, age, and location. According to their study, women tend to use more acronyms and punctuation in their social media writings as compared to males. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can identify profiles as male and female gender based on the captions used and usage of acronyms and punctuation, hence can further serve advertisements accordingly.

Memes serve as an important and intriguing aspect of social media, embodying socio-cultural phenomena and serving as a unique form of communication in the age of digitalization and technological advancements. They have rapidly gained popularity and have become a prevalent means of expressing ideas, emotions, and belief systems in a light-hearted manner. Memes are images, videos, and GIFs that are accompanied by concise captions or phrases, often employing humor, irony, satire, or sarcasm to convey a particular message. These short multimodal messages are in the limelight due to the constant sharing and resharing of these messages. They reflect the culture, identity, attitudes values, and morals of the society to which the participants of the internet can relate. Grundling (2017) considers memes as speech acts used by internet users to communicate with each other. According to her memes are made with specific semiotic resources to facilitate the communication process between the meme creator and his audience. The research study further underscores the deliberate and strategic nature of meme creation, where the creators use a combination of visual and textual modes to convey a unified message.

Muktupāvelain (2018) presents a fascinating perspective in her article, by establishing memes as a genre of contemporary folklore. She draws a parallel between

folklore and memes highlighting their commonality in being shared and retold within two different yet similar realms of society. Discussing Dawkin's concept of meme and its similarity with genes Muktopāvelain (2018) opines, "...the term meme, as a parallel with gene, denotes elementary particle of cultural information (idea, behavior or artifact), which exists in a particular sociocultural environment and which spreads through imitation and copying within a culture or among different cultures..." (p.5). By framing memes as a genre of contemporary folklore, the research study highlights their significance as cultural expressions that not only entertain but also provide valuable insights into the belief systems and ideologies of a particular society. Prokofeva and Shcheglova (2020), maintain that memes are speech genres specific to internet communication. These small images are connected with short sentences and phrases in such a way that the audience can understand and relate to them. Memes are also appropriated according to the cultures, situations, or contexts in which the communication is taking place. The research study establishes that the genre of memes is exhaustively dominated by the idea of having fun. However, some critics think that this idea of having fun is not only restricted to humor rather it has a lot more to shed light upon. Memes are a means of cultural expression, complex and intricate discussions, and engaging with contemporary discourse.

Sulaacha's (2020) research probes into how multimodal discourse analysis can help decipher the meaning of memes, which are visual images accompanied by captions. Using a qualitative approach, she analyzed memes posted on 9gag's Instagram page. The researcher concluded that there is a strong relationship between the image and its caption, making it easier for the readers to extract what the maker of the meme wants to convey. This highlights the importance of analyzing both textual modes when decoding the layered meanings within a meme. Khan, Khan Q., and Hussain (2020) provided a feminist critique of gender-related jokes produced and negotiated on Facebook keeping in mind Pakistani society. Their study delves into how gender ideology and power dynamics are constructed, (re)produced, and propagated within the domain of Facebook. The study comprised 200 jokes in three languages (English, Urdu, and Punjabi) that were collected over a period of six months. Following an exhaustive analysis, the researchers concluded that women are more targeted and ridiculed in the social sphere. These jokes veiled as humor effectively perpetuate conventional stereotypes about gender, reinforcing prevailing notions about gender roles especially pertaining to females.

Gbadegesin (2019) studied nineteen “Correct Bro” and “Correct Bae” Facebook memes. The researcher investigated the role of “otherness” created through memes that underlie gender identities. The study revealed that both genders carry a negative perspective of each other, however, the male perspective about females is quite strong. The male gender subscribes to the patriarchal perspectives where the women are considered illogical, irrational, dependent weak, and unrealistic. Whereas, the female gender considers the male gender lacking socially and emotionally. The research study undermined how memes on social media serve as a lens through which gender identities are explored and often reinforced.

Hussain, Azim, Bhatti, and Gulfam (2021) studied the linguistic and social impact of sexist hate speech produced and shared through gender-discriminatory pictorial memes on Facebook. For their study, they analyzed five memes along with the comments produced underneath. Their research study employed a conceptual framework that encompassed three essential components: communicative technique, communicative process, and communicative strategy. Their findings revealed that the female gender is predominantly targeted through hate speech on social networking sites. Additionally, the male gender often considered themselves superior, experienced, and intelligent thus, contributing to the propagation of hate speech and subscribing to dominant gender ideology. Sayani (2013) analyzed two popular memes originally posted through 9gag.com (a social networking site), but subsequently shared via Facebook and Twitter. These two memes are the “Poker Face” meme and the “Okay” meme. Using Saussure’s theory of semiotics the researcher identified the signifier and signified of each meme. Further, he investigated the function of these memes when posted on 9gag.com. After a careful examination, the researcher concluded that the “Poker face” meme suggests a flat or no specific emotion at all whereas the “okay” meme suggests a sad, tired, or forced to accept something, the type of emotion. These studies illuminate the ways in which memes can contribute significantly in the realm of social media, often reflecting and perpetuating gender stereotypes and hate speech.

Andreasen (2021) embarked on a study aimed at investigating the portrayal of female victims of rape and sexual violence within Internet memes related to the #MeToo movement. The #MeToo movement which gained prominence in 2017, has had a significant impact on the conversation revolving around sexual assault and harassment. It encouraged the individuals and victims of sexual harassment to speak and share their

stories, intending to bring attention to the prevalence of such issues and hold the perpetrators responsible for their actions. This movement had a significant contribution to channeling the discussion around previously taboo subjects. Despite the movement's aim, some individuals resorted to victim-blaming tactics through the creation and dissemination of memes on social media platforms. The research study employed the discourse analysis method, to examine memes sourced from 3 social media sites; Reddit, 9Gag, and Imgur. The findings revealed a disturbing trend in the portrayal of victims of sexual assault and harassment within these memes. Victims were often discussed in terms of their physical appearance and sexual agency, with two distinct labels emerging: "rapeable" and "unrapeable". This categorization led to the perpetuation of harmful gender stereotypes, reducing the victims to dehumanized and degrading terms. Additionally, the research study highlighted how sexual violence was diffused within the seemingly humorous space of memes. This normalization and acceptance of sexual violence within such content raised questions about the impact of online discourse on societal attitudes, perceptions, and practices.

In a recent study, Lomotey (2020) analyzed jokes in memes and news posted in the form of videos, pictures, and text during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study explored how gendered stereotypes were propagated and circulated under the guise of humor. It further discusses how subtly gender stereotypes are promoted and enhanced through the lens of humor. Lomotey used Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, to analyze random memes circulated through WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook from March 2020 to June 2020. The study found that despite memes being a way of comic relief during the unpredictable pandemic, they discretely reinforced negative stereotypes and gender ideologies. Gendered stereotypes were propagated through jokes, while they were meant to be humorous they perpetuated and enhanced subtle gender stereotypes. The study highlights the need for more responsible and nuanced discourse around gender issues, even in seemingly lighthearted contexts like memes. It is crucial to recognize the ways in which language and cultural attitudes shape our understanding of gender and how humor can be used to promote harmful stereotypes.

According to Salam (2021), "Memes spread misogyny.... under the veil of benign humor". The youth spend many hours scrolling social media platforms, spreading and communicating messages through memes. The semiotic modes employed in the memes to generate a coherent meaning can encourage casual sexism and instill tolerance and

naturalization of such perspectives. Therefore, the research study aims to highlight the underlying ideologies projected through the textual and visual modes employed in the meme. Shahid, Abbas, and Irfan (2021) attempted to analyze the visual and linguistic modes used to represent women on Pakistani Facebook meme pages. They collected data from six such pages and using multimodal critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework, they inferred that women are portrayed in a negative light. Moreover, visual and linguistic vocabulary is used to reinforce stereotypical viewpoints.

Moreno-Almeida and Gerbaudo (2021) researched how Moroccan Facebook meme pages are contributing to the adaptation of Far-Right ideologies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). After carefully analyzing the meme pages, they concluded that a common culture of memes exists with a renewed form of Far-right characterized by its savvy use of digital media. With the increasing interest in the internet and social media cultures, memes have always occupied center stage. These memes can be in the form of video clips, gifs, or images accompanied by captions. However, the underlying ideologies of these memes are overlooked by the audience but they subconsciously get registered in their minds. Brantner, Lobinger, and Stehling (2019) researched how memes against sexism resonated in mainstream media.

Octavita and Zaimar (2018) researched how memes are used to fat-shame women on Brillo Net, an Indonesian digital content website focusing on the millennial audience. Their analysis delved into the semiotic aspects of memes examining the sign, object, and their interpretation by the audience. They differentiate between the elements of object and interpreters as, “the element of the object is the meaning of the signs that exist in the meme of women who have large bodies, while the interpreters are the attitudes and thought patterns of creators” (p.42). Their analysis suggests that description of women body in memes is regulated by stereotypes of women, patriarchal culture and gender roles. According to Huntington (2013) “memes are a form of representational discourse that subverts dominant media messages to create and convey new messages” (p.01). He draws a parallel between the constructionist approach to representation and the study of memes as visual rhetoric. The functioning of memes in media can be expanded if studied as visual rhetoric. Wiggins published the book “The Discursive Power of Memes in Digital Culture” in 2019. The book discusses memes as a new genre of making meanings and the rapidity with which memes are produced, posted, shared, and reshared foregrounds their importance. These researches underscore the need for a detailed

scrutiny of the impact and influence of memes in digital culture. meme as a form of visual rhetoric can both subscribe to and subvert gender ideologies, making them a valuable paradigm of research.

Lesmana (2021) argues in her article that the issue of patriarchal ideology is perplexing when it comes to Arabia. However, many memes on the internet provide insight into the Arabic patriarchal culture, yet to understand the system one needs to have background knowledge of the Arabic culture. The researcher adopted a qualitative method to analyze the meaning created by the components of a meme. After a thorough analysis, she concluded that memes are a useful way of highlighting patriarchal issues yet there are some connotative signs and phrases that the audience needs to be familiar with, to extract the meaning.

In the realm of gender and digital media, the study of memes has emerged as a critical area of exploration due to its pervasive presence and influence on the audience's mind and thought processes. The visually engaging and humorous nature of memes has made them a dominant mode of communication in the digital age. This research study aims to scrutinize the semiotic modes employed within the memes, recognizing their potential to either subscribe to or subvert dominant gender ideology. Previous research illuminated the intricacies of language, gender, humor, and memes, emphasizing the role they play in shaping and influencing gender stereotypes. Drawing from the insights of scholars Khan, Khan Q., and Hussain (2020), Gbadegesin (2019), and Lomotely (2020) it is evident that memes serve as a potential source for challenging and reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes. This research study further aims to highlight how digital media both reflects and shapes our perceptions of gender ultimately contributing to the broader conversation on gender inclusivity and equality in the digital age.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter delineates the methodological stance of the study to investigate the representation of gender ideology in social media memes. The chapter comprises an overall research design which is followed by the method of data collection, population, sampling, theoretical underpinning of the study, and the data analysis procedure.

3.1 Research Design

The research design chosen for this study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research design emphasizes and comprehends the implicit meanings, experiences, and perspectives conveyed through memes on various social media platforms. Specifically, this research study falls under the exploratory and descriptive paradigm of research, intending to uncover the portrayal of gender in social media memes. The primary objective of the research study was to scrutinize semiotic modes employed in social media memes that promote prevailing stereotypical gender norms. Moreover, the study aimed to analyze the extent to which semiotic modes are utilized in memes and the role they play in either subverting or subscribing to dominant gender ideology.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

The data for this research was collected between September 2022 to March 2023 from two social media platforms; Twitter and Reddit. These platforms were chosen due to their potential to exhibit diverse opinions, ideologies, perspectives, and cultures, making them a reliable source of information. The data primarily consisted of memes related to gender, patriarchy, and power dynamics between male and female genders. On Twitter, the data collection focused on using keywords like gender roles, patriarchy, and girls vs. boys as well as relevant hashtags like #misogyny, #patriarchy #genderroles, and #women. By employing these search parameters, the researcher aimed to identify memes and captions that explored such topics.

Similarly, Redditt was used as another valuable source of data. The researcher targeted specific words like misogyny, gender, and boys vs. girls, and also explored subreddits like r/memesgender and r/patriarchymemes. Subreddits are online communities where individuals share their experiences and opinions on various topics;

however, every subreddit has a specific topic. By focusing on these subreddits, the research study intended to gather memes specifically related to gender, patriarchy, misogyny, men, and women.

The selected memes were scrutinized using a social semiotic approach, rooted in Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of social semiotics. The theoretical framework enabled the researcher to delve into how meaning is created, communicated, and interpreted in memes, with a specific focus on textual and visual elements. By investigating the intricate interplay between visual and textual aspects of the memes, this research study aimed to shed light on the strategies employed to either conform to or challenge the prevailing gender ideologies.

Through this approach, valuable insights were gained into how memes serve as a medium of expression and communication. It also highlighted the intricate relationship between visual and linguistic elements to create a unified meaning. The application of the social semiotic lens facilitated the identification and examination of the various modes employed in the creation of memes with particular attention to how they subscribe or subvert to dominant gender ideology.

3.3 Research Population

The population of the study comprises memes collected through continuous observations conducted on two prominent social media platforms, i.e. Twitter and Reddit. The primary objective of the research study is to examine how semiotic modes are employed to perpetuate gender stereotypes and reinforce traditional gender roles through memes. Moreover, it explores the subconscious acceptance of misogyny manifested in memes on various social media platforms. The primary focus of the research study centers on gender-related memes shared on the aforementioned social media platforms.

3.4 Research Sample

Using the purposive sampling technique, the researcher has attempted to analyze social media memes that largely reflect gender ideologies. This method involved a deliberate and purpose-driven approach to select memes that aligned with the research objectives and could provide relevant insights into the subject matter. Given the abundance of memes that are humorously reinforcing sociocultural and patriarchal notions, analyzing all of them in the given timeframe has proven to be impractical.

Therefore, the research study focused on analyzing a total of 50 memes with, 25 memes collected from Twitter and the remaining 25 from Reddit.

3.5 Theoretical Framework (Method of Data Analysis)

The researcher aims to scrutinize the multimodal text, a process that encompasses the utilization of multiple modes to generate meanings. These modes are meaning-making resources that are deeply ingrained in their social, cultural, and historical contexts. It is crucial to highlight that modes are interdependent in a communicative event working together to generate meanings. To examine the semiotic modes employed in memes, the researcher has adopted a semiotic approach.

The selected memes have been analyzed on two levels; textual and visual. In textual analysis, the focus of the researcher is on elements of language, like capitalization, vocabulary, and adjectives used. While the visual analysis focuses on the positioning of signs, framing, social distance, power, angle, and colors used. These modes are central to the craft of creating memes that leave an impression on the reader's mind. Importantly, these modes operating in the background influence and manipulate the interpretation and impact of the message being conveyed.

3.5.1 Textual Analysis

The textual analysis focuses on how language is used to captivate the attention of the viewers. It further sheds light on how different features of languages are used to convey the intended meanings. The researcher focuses on the following features of language while decoding the in-depth meaning conveyed through the meme.

3.5.1.1 Capitalization / Bold Letters

It is a textual element that can be creatively used to enhance humor, put emphasis, or project a specific idea through the meme. The deliberate use of capital letters can add a comedic effect, sarcasm, or emphasize certain words or phrases to create an impact. Further, capitalization in memes is used to indicate strong emotions and feelings. This unconventional capitalization and intentional misspelling of words (such as MoNDaY or YikEEs) in the mimetic culture of social media creates a distinctive and humorous effect that captivates the viewer's attention.

3.5.1.2 Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to specific words, phrases, and catchphrases used within the context of memes. The vocabulary used in memes is often fueled by the ongoing trends of social media, popular culture, or jokes within specific communities. The vocabulary of the memes has an impact on the readers' minds. Through the meme culture, certain words or phrases become widely associated with particular groups (such as Gen Z or Millennials) or individuals. These terms, words, or phrases can range from humorous slang, abbreviations, or references to popular culture, memes from the past, or iconic moments. The use of such vocabulary helps create a shared language among social media users.

The research study focuses on how vocabulary in memes is used to shape our ideas about masculine and feminine gender. The wordplay, puns, or clever use of language used to create a comedic effect in memes reflects how individuals are represented. In short, vocabulary in memes plays a vital role in establishing the tone of a meme and connecting with the intended audience. Moreover, vocabulary carries positive and negative affective meanings that pertinently highlight the ideologies reflected in the usage of the words and phrases.

3.5.1.3 Use of Adjectives

Adjectives are used to describe the traits and quality of a noun. In memes, adjectives are used to describe, exaggerate, express, and communicate feelings, and emotions associated with a particular group. It helps to create humor or convey specific emotions through the limited space of memes. Adjectives play an active role in setting the tone, establishing a mood, and enhancing the overall impact of the memes. In addition, adjectives in memes can be employed to intensify or exaggerate certain qualities for an amusing effect. For example, using adjectives like “epic”, “hilarious”, and “mind-blowing” can magnify the impact of the memes.

Furthermore, adjectives can be used to describe specific features or attributes related to the content of memes. The research focuses on what adjectives are used to represent the male and the female gender. Adjectives are responsible for adding depth and context to the content of memes, allowing for a more nuanced and expressive message. It can also be used sarcastically and ironically to convey a particular viewpoint. The

researcher aims to highlight the adjectives used to represent the male and female gender, allowing them to subvert or subscribe to dominant gender ideology.

3.5.2 Visual Analysis

The visual analysis of memes involves examining the visual elements and placement of signs within the meme to gain a deeper understanding of the message communicated and its cultural significance. In a multimodal text like memes, visual analysis refers to the analysis of visual modes combined to convey the desired meaning. This level of analysis comprises five components, which are discussed in the following section:

3.5.2.1 Placement of Signs

The placement of signs is a very crucial aspect of analyzing a meme. Signs refer to various visual elements such as the positioning of participants, texts, symbols, or images that carry meaning within the meme. It plays a significant role in shaping the meme's message and the viewer's interpretation of the message. Further, it highlights the relative importance of signs with other signs. For instance, small or less prominent signs suggest a subordinate role or limited existence.

3.5.2.2 Framing

Framing, in visual analysis, refers to the visual connection and presentation of signs and elements within the memes signifying their belongingness and that they should be interpreted together. In short, it refers to the borders and boundaries between the signs in the memes. Framing also brings to light the relationship between the signs involved in the meaning-making process.

3.5.2.3 Social Distance

In visual analysis, the concept of social distance refers to the psychological or emotional connection between the participants within the meme. It involves analysis of the proxemics of the participants and signifies the power relation conveyed by the image. The analysis of social distance allows the researcher to gain valuable insights into the emotional impact transferred to the viewers by the visual signs involved. It helps in understanding how visual elements influence the thoughts and ideologies of the viewers.

3.5.2.4 Power and Angle

Power refers to perceived authority, control, and dominance as conveyed through the signs in an image or meme. In a meme, power is highlighted by the size, placement, and gestures of the participants. The large size of elements covers a large space and conveys a sense of power and dominance in comparison to smaller objects within the same visual context. Additionally, the angle at which the subjects are captured and depicted influences viewers' interpretation and understanding of a message conveyed. Low-angle pictures reflect the superiority and power of the subject whereas high-angle pictures signify inferiority and subordination. The researcher's detailed examination of power dynamics and angles in memes aims to highlight the hierarchies and social dynamics reflected in memes. Further, it helps in comprehending how these verbal cues are responsible for influencing and manipulating viewers' emotional responses and interpretation of the meme.

3.5.2.5 Colors

Colors play a significant role in memes, by contributing to the humor, meaning, and overall visual appeal of the meme. However, colors often carry symbolic meanings that are historically or contextually situated in every culture. For instance, white is the color of peace, purity, and elegance, and red is the color of passion, love, and anger. The analysis of colors in memes serves to reveal the emotional and symbolic dimensions inherent in the visual components. It also contributes to a deeper understanding of how colors can exert a powerful impact and influence the readers' interpretations.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The previous chapter provided methodological steps that have been incorporated to analyze the data. This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the memes gathered from Twitter and Reddit in light of the principles drawn from the theory of semiotics. This chapter is divided into two sections; the first section presents an analysis of memes associated with gender collected from Twitter while the second section presents an analysis of the memes taken from Reddit. The memes are analyzed on two levels; textual and visual analysis as mentioned in the method of data analysis.

4.1 Manifestation of Gender in Memes (Twitter)

This section of the chapter presents an extensive analysis of the memes extracted from Twitter. The meme revolves around the theme of gender, patriarchy, subscription, and subversion of the prevalent gender norms. Each meme is analyzed on two distinct levels; Textual and Visual level.

4.1.1 Meme No. 01



Figure No. 2: Meme No. 01 (Twitter)

This meme from Twitter adopts an aggressive approach towards women advocating for equal rights in society. It portrays a girl sitting in the corner in a vulnerable and petrified state. While the man's entire image is not revealed yet his left hand with a clenched fist becomes the focal point of the meme, highlighting dominance and control.

Further, the text on the upper and lower borders helps the reader to understand the message, possibly reinforcing the power structure depicted in the meme. The meme

appears to convey a strong message about the challenges and resistance faced by women when they demand equality.

The meme is subjected to analysis on two levels; textual and visual, as mentioned in the theoretical framework of the study.

4.1.1.1 Textual Analysis

The meme's text is an important sign as it provides context and guides the viewer's perception and understanding of the meme. The meme features a single sentence strategically divided to emphasize the primary message and enhance the patriarchal notion of submission. Notably, all the words in the sentence are consistently capitalized, while the phrase AND LEFTS are written in a larger font size to capture the reader's mind and attention. Through this capitalization and font manipulation, the meme effectively highlights and reinforces the prevailing power structures within the patriarchal society. Furthermore, the clever wordplay employed in the meme aligns perfectly with its overarching themes. By utilizing homonyms, the meme encapsulates two distinct mindsets. The word "right" denotes legal and moral freedom to do something that privileged women are often denied in patriarchal cultures.

4.1.1.2 Visual Analysis

The meme cleverly utilizes visual signs to adhere to the dominant gender culture by portraying the woman as helpless and submitting to the male. Her placement in the corner is a strong sign that conveys a sense of fear, and subjugation to male dominance and power. While the full image of the man remains concealed, the tightly clenched fist suggests aggression, control, and dominance. This partial representation invites viewers to speculate on man's identity and intentions, adding to the impact of the meme. However, combined with other signs, the meme subscribes to dominant gender ideology. The proximity between the male and female figures suggests a relationship or power dynamic between them, with the central positioning of the clenched fist calling attention to the male dominance and the prevailing power structure in the patriarchal world.

Framing is another important aspect of visual analysis, encompassing boundaries and borders that highlight the visual space within the meme. The size, shape, and placement of elements within the frame serve to direct the viewer's attention and influence the interpretation of the overall message. The strategic placement of the woman in the corner and the man's clenched fist within the frame serves to highlight their

significance and reinforce the themes of vulnerability and male dominance. Notably, the larger size of the man's clenched fist signifies dominance whereas the more petite frame around the woman evokes an intimidating atmosphere, underscoring the power imbalance between them. Moreover, the empty and minimalistic background brings attention to the vulnerability and marginalization of women in a patriarchal society. By leaving the background empty, the focus remains squarely on the central characters, amplifying the overall impact of the meme.

Further, the body language, angle, and colors used have a lot to add to the overall theme and message of the meme. The passive posture of the woman sitting in the corner suggests a lack of authority and power whereas the strong and assertive gesture of the male figure suggests control and dominance. This is further supported by the camera angle through which this particular scene is captured. For instance, the low-angle shot highlighting the man's clenched fist reinforces his sense of power and control; on the contrary, the high-angle shot looking down at the woman may evoke a sense of her vulnerability and subordination. These carefully chosen angles intensify the emotional impact of the meme and further, emphasize the power dynamics depicted. In addition to body language, power, and angle, colors also play a significant role in contributing to the overall message and tone of the meme. The contrasting colors of the male and female figures highlight the power imbalance between the genders in a patriarchal society. The use of contrasting colors in the meme makes a very strong statement about the inequalities and oppression women face in the patriarchal setup.

4.1.2 Meme No. 02

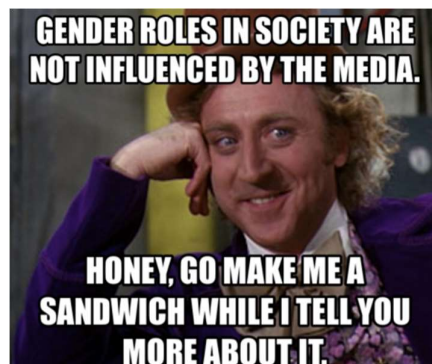


Figure No. 3: Meme No. 02 (Twitter)

This condescending Wonka meme based on the 1971 Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory film, is often used to express satire and arrogance towards someone or

something. This meme emerged as a popular internet meme usually used to convey sarcasm and a patronizing attitude. The specific meme under study delves into the topic of gender and highlights the dominant gender ideology. The meme has been analyzed at two levels, keeping in view the theoretical framework.

4.1.2.1 Textual Analysis

In this meme, the text is written entirely in bold letters and is center-aligned emphasizing the message it conveys, further reinforcing the traditional notions of gender roles and societal expectations. The use of bold fonts makes the text stand out and center alignment aims to draw attention to the content of the meme and thus, influence the reader's perception of the meme's content. The meme employs a paradoxical structure, presenting two contrasting statements. Fowler (1985) defines vocabulary as a map of a culture's preoccupation, pertinently reflecting the ideologies and perspectives of the culture. In the context of the meme, the vocabulary of the first statement is general and suggestive, resonating with a broader audience.

However, the second takes a more specific and imperative tone, challenging the reader's initial perception of the meme. The direct and instructive tone of the second statement disrupts readers' perception, leading to a thought-provoking effect. The combination of paradox with the intentional formatting of the meme creates a humorous and thought-provoking experience for the audience. The overall tone of the meme perpetuates stereotypes and reinforces a dominant gender ideology. The irony lies in the use of a character from a movie, which is also a form of media, to claim that gender roles are not influenced by media. This contradiction within the meme's content can be seen as satirical, highlighting the absurdity of the statement being made. The strong and definitive viewpoint projected through the meme's content undermines its credibility by using a media platform to convey the message.

4.1.2.2 Visual Analysis

The visual signs in the meme are crucial to the analysis when deciphering the meaning and impact of the message being conveyed. In this particular meme, there are two important signs; the text and the character Willy Wonka. The text is placed on the top and bottom border in bold to grab the attention of the reader. Further, it is center-aligned to ensure that it becomes the central focus of the visual composition of the meme. With this intentional placement of the text, the creator of the meme wants the audience to pay

close attention to the message being conveyed. The use of Willy Wonka's character for delivering the statements is pivotal in understanding the meme's message and overall tone. The character is known for his sarcasm and arrogant behavior toward other characters in the movie, which aligns with the meme's intention to convey a patronizing attitude. The slight smirk on his face further enhances the message and adds a little humor to the meme. The signs and their careful placement create a power structure within the image. The placement of Willy Wonka's character in the center of the meme gives him a central and significant position. This positioning is symbolic of his character's authoritative nature within the movie, where he holds a position of power and control. With the strategic placement of the text and the character, the meme reinforces the power dynamics present in the content.

Moreover, the limited representation of women, with the sole presence being the word "Honey" contributes to the power imbalance of gender representation in the meme. The absence of a female sign reinforces the idea of gender disparity and highlights how memes can be used to perpetuate and reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes. In this case, the meme appears to suggest that the masculine gender, represented by Willy Wonka, holds a dominant and authoritative position while the feminine gender is reduced to a simplistic and patronizing term (Honey).

The frame, angle, and colors used within the image resonate with the overall theme of the meme. The placement of Willy Wonka's character, in a central and large frame, reflects dominance, authority, and power whereas, the absence of any female figure further emphasizes unequal representation and power imbalance within the meme's context. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.203) mention, that "the absence of framing stresses group identity" which foregrounds marginal or peripheral holds. This representation of the male and female gender accentuates the dominant gender ideology, further enhancing the misogynistic approach of the meme. Similarly, the solid gestures and confident body language reinforce the power and authority he holds, adding to the condescending and patronizing tone of the meme. Another important visual element in the meme is the angle at which it is shot. The meme's eye-level shot engages viewers directly, inviting them to participate in the discussion and influencing their interpretation of the content. This approach makes the meme more relatable and impactful for the audience. Adding to the visual appeal and meaning of the meme is the purple color of

Willy Wonka’s suit suggestive of royalty, power, and authority, further enhancing the dominant portrayal of the character.

4.1.3 Meme No. 03



Figure No. 4: Meme No. 03 (Twitter)

The meme showcases four scenarios where both mom and dad are engaging in identical actions, yet they are described using contrasting adjectives. Interestingly, the adjectives attributed to the mother carry negative connotations. The first scenario shows the parents dropping off their child, likely at school. The second scenario features taking the child on a walk. The third scenario displays the parents playing with their child in the park. The fourth and last scenario of the meme suggests that the parents are bringing in fast food.

4.1.3.1 Textual Analysis

A meme's text is a crucial aspect of its analysis as it encapsulates the message being conveyed. The use of capitalization for all the noun phrases and an informal font style in this specific meme emphasizes and calls attention to these common adjectives used for parents in our society. The meme creator has intentionally used capitalized and informal font styles to represent the adjectives, foreshadowing the gender stereotypes. The adjectives used are very specific and common highlighting the double standards prevalent in the society regarding parenting roles. The father is attributed with adjectives that have positive connotations like, “involved dad”, “present dad”, and “fun dad. These adjectives highlight the father’s active and enjoyable role, suggesting that he manages to make time for his children despite his busy schedule. On the contrary, the adjectives used for the mother portray negative connotations reflecting a contrasting perception. The

adjectives used are “working mom”, “inattentive mom”, “Run-of the-mill mom”, and “lazy mom”. All these adjectives perpetuate stereotypes and discourage the actions of the mother.

Dye, Milin, Futrel, and Ramscar (2017) assert that “adjectives may act to systematically delimit the space of nouns”, implying a limited and restricted role. This further highlights the use of adjectives with negative connotations for describing the limited and restricted role of the female gender. However, the stark contrast between the positive adjectives for the father and the negative ones for the mother highlights the unequal treatment and double standards that exist in society’s perception of parenting roles. By using juxtaposition, the meme maker may be aiming to call attention to and criticize the practice of labeling parents contrastingly based on gender. The meme questions and criticizes the double standards of society for using contrasting adjectives for the parents based on their gender.

4.1.3.2 Visual Analysis

The signs are strategically positioned to convey a gender-biased narrative concerning parental responsibilities. The physical proximity between the signs in all four scenarios in each of four scenarios establishes an emotional connection between them, further supported by the presence of the terms Mom and Dad in the title of each scenario. Moreover, the signs are strategically positioned to present a critique of the adjectives used to build gender-biased narratives concerning parental roles and responsibilities. The meme creator has skillfully arranged four small frames within a larger frame, creating a sense of significance and emphasis on the discussion within a confined, focused, and intimate atmosphere. To accentuate the adjectives used for parents based on their gender, the creator has intentionally placed elements such as the text in the center, accompanied by an arrow pointing towards the respective parent. This arrangement brings to attention the adjectives associated with each parent, reinforcing the gender-based focus of the meme. The smaller frames present contrasting situations where both parents can be seen involved in the same activity but are attributed different adjectives. Moreover, the minimalistic background of the meme further enhances the message being conveyed through the meme.

The scale at which the signs are presented gives an insight into the social distance between the participants, thereby illuminating the existing power differentials between

parents and children. The visual depiction reinforces the notion that the parents are central figures with greater control and authority while the child is depicted as subordinate and less influential. Furthermore, the meme is captured in an eye-angle shot, creating a sense of relatability and establishing a connection between the participants and the audience of the meme.

However, both parents' posture and body language play a significant role in conveying their roles and involvement in scenarios 3 and 4. In scenario 3 the parents are actively engaged in making their child swing. The father's confident stance at a distance while pushing the swing showcases his active participation whereas the mother's passive posture, holding the string of the swing indicates her involvement in a supporting role. In scenario 4, the parents bring in fast food for their children. The father's decisive body language suggests that he has decided to bring fast food for the child, leaving the child with no alternative option. This posture highlights a display of authority and control of the father. On the other hand, the mother's indecisive body language suggests hesitation about her decision to bring fast food. It further indicates that she might have conflicting thoughts regarding food choices. These non-verbal cues specifically in scenario 4, illustrate the parental power dynamics and how certain decisions may be driven more dominantly by one parent while the other parent assumes a less decisive role. These subtle expressions within the meme enrich its commentary on gender-based stereotypes and parental responsibilities.

4.1.4 Meme No. 04



Figure No. 5: Meme No. 04 (Twitter)

The meme depicts a commentary on the gender-based barriers and challenges that individuals may face in the corporate sector. By showing three male and three female participants, the meme creator highlights an equal representation of both genders engaging in the economic and corporate sectors. Yet, there is a stark contrast in the paths

of male and female genders that highlight the hurdles and obstacles a woman may face while establishing a career.

4.1.4.1 Textual Analysis

The creator has intentionally incorporated the word “Meritocracia” from the Spanish vocabulary. Meritocracia, in the Spanish language, functions as a noun referring to the system in which individuals are selected and promoted to powerful and influential positions based on their performances and capabilities. The placement of the term in the top left corner and in bold is suggestive of the cultural diversity and inclusivity of the overall message. Despite being from the Spanish language the word “Meritocracia” is easy to understand and comprehend. The term is creatively used by the meme creator to engage a broader audience and reinforce the message of cultural diversity. Overall, the term effectively captures attention and serves as an introduction to the meme’s thought-provoking message about the corporate sector and gender disparities.

4.1.4.2 Visual Analysis

The meme incorporates three female figures to the left corner and three male figures to the right all lined up at the starting point of the merit selection race. This visual representation highlights equal opportunities for both males and females in the professional world. The equal number of male and female figures in the race suggests the significance of gender diversity and inclusivity in the cooperate sector. The starting line represents the beginning of an individual’s career and professional journey. However, the paths after the start of the journey are filled with household chores for the females while the males have a clear path with their eyes on the goal to achieve. This stark contrast in the path of merit-based selection highlights the challenges and obstacles that women face in their professional journeys. The placement of objects like washing machines, dishwashers, and iron stands alludes to the additional household responsibilities and expectations that women are required to balance along with their careers. This becomes a potential hindrance in the course of their professional journey and growth. On the contrary, the clear path and focused gaze of the male figures enable them the opportunity of professional growth and opportunities. This visual depiction reflects the patriarchal responsibilities and expectations of the female gender whereas the men have complete freedom to focus and invest in their abilities to establish a professional career.

The strong dedication and determination are reflected in the body language of the male figures further emphasizes their assertiveness and goal-oriented approach. On the other hand, the passive body language of the female figures indicates a sense of acceptance of the unequal status in the merit selection race. Their gestures suggest a lack of confidence and realization that they may face hindrances and obstacles like household chores in their journey. The sad and contemplating facial expressions of the females in the meme can signify the realization of gender-based challenges and obstacles they may face within the cooperate sector. The questioning looks on their face reflects they have to fulfill societal expectations which hinders their professional growth. The significant difference in the body language of male and female figures reinforces the meme’s theme about gender disparity and unequal opportunities. Additionally, the deliberate use of contrasting colors for male and female figures enhances the tension between both genders. The shades of blue and grey dresses for male figures convey a sense of neutrality and professionalism, while the green, blue, and red dresses worn by the female figures symbolize their diverse identities and experiences. The use of contrasting colors by the creator intensifies the difference in the treatment of both genders in corporate sector. The meme effectively stimulates discussions about the importance of dismantling gender-based biases and promoting equal opportunities and a fair work environment for both genders.

4.1.5 Meme No. 05

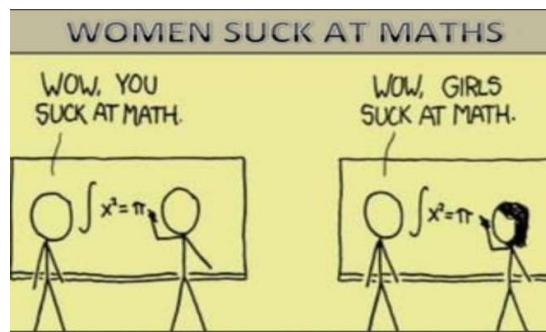


Figure No. 6: Meme No. 05 (Twitter)

The meme depicts four stick figures with three boys and one girl, engaged in solving a mathematical equation. The boy and girl with a marker or chalk in their hand are seen attempting to solve the mathematical equation written on the board. However, what catches the attention of the readers is the title statement “WOMEN SUCK AT MATHS” in uppercase letters.

4.1.5.1 Textual Analysis

The meme features three opinionated sentences reinforcing the common stereotype that girls are not good at skilled at solving mathematical equations. It further projects the thoughts of the male figures depicted while the girl remains silent, amplifying the patriarchal notions. The mathematical equation on the board is identical, and both the boy and girl are not shown attempting to solve it. However, the exclamatory title and subtitle exhibit distinct word choices. When the boy fails, the language refers specifically to him, but when the girl struggles, the vocabulary is more generalized. The title is further reinforcing the notion that women are not proficient in Maths and other technical subjects. The title and subtitle are written in uppercase letters and are center-aligned concerning the respective frames. The intentional use of uppercase letters and center alignment suggests that the creator wants the audience to focus on the message being conveyed. The use of the generic subject pronoun “you” for highlighting the boy’s failure to attempt the equation does not highlight gender specificity. In contrast, the failure of the girl student is referred to by using common nouns like “girls” and “women”. The meme presents a commentary reflecting gender-biased notions in the field of academia and education.

4.1.5.2 Visual Analysis

In the meme’s context, the strategic positioning of the signs indicates a deliberate attempt to construct a generalized narrative about the female gender and their performance in technical subjects. Notably, both scenarios only present the thoughts of the male characters, promoting and reinforcing a gender-biased perspective. The meme depicts two similar scenarios involving different characters. In scenario A, two boys, trying to solve an equation, and they are placed nearby indicating a possible teacher-student interaction. The same arrangement is shown in scenario B, where a boy and a girl are trying to solve the same mathematical equation. The prominent positioning of the signs against the dull yellow background calls readers' attention to the main message of the meme. Furthermore, the framing of scenarios is intriguing, as there is no distinct separation between the frames, but the spacing between the signs and the board implies two different frames being used. In scenario A, the stick figures representing the boys are of the same size, suggesting a balanced representation. On the other hand, in scenario B, the size of the female stick figure is smaller as compared to the male stick figure, implying an unequal power dynamic and gender domination. These subtle and embedded

visual cues in memes help the readers to decode the underlying concepts of misogyny and gender discrimination.

Further, it highlights how stereotypes and gender biases are naturalized and made acceptable through visual cues. The creator of the meme has made intentional use of negative space so that the focus remains on the subjects of the meme. Moreover, the message is reinforced with a title statement presented in upper case letters against a grey background. The use of an eye-level angle in projecting the message of the meme enhances relatability and establishes a connection between the audience and the subjects of the meme. In addition, the colors used in the meme suggest a conservative and traditional mindset. These are further reflective of the gender-biased ideology that males and females are often exposed to from a very young age. The visual elements used in this particular meme play a significant role in perpetuating and subscribing to the norms of the dominant gender culture related to the capabilities of both genders in academic fields.

4.1.6 Meme No. 06



Figure No. 7: Meme No. 06 (Twitter)

The meme represents society's perception of a married woman as an established and complete individual, while it portrays a girl who is a supporter of feminism, potentially being judged based on her choices. The left frame shows a woman happy and content with her husband and four children, symbolizing societal approval of traditional roles. In contrast, the right frame presents a woman who is having a glass of champagne and a pizza slice but she is visibly concerned about the college debt, possibly indicating that her choices are being questioned. The meme highlights how societal labels can be influenced by the choices a woman makes.

4.1.6.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme through its word choice and adjectives used conforms to the traditional patriarchal norms. The positive adjectives used to label the married woman with four kids uplift and motivate, implying that getting married and having children are highly valued and praised in society. The use of such positive vocabulary and word choice influences women's decisions and encourages conformity to traditional patriarchal roles. Further, the tone and word choice of the titles play a significant role in shaping the perception and influencing the reader's interpretation of the meme.

On the other hand, the term "victim" used to describe the woman who stands in support of feminism, carries a negative connotation, suggesting powerlessness and misfortune. This label belittles her stance and attempts to make her choice of supporting feminism illegal and unacceptable. In simple words, the meme very aptly presents a stark contrast in the tone and vocabulary between the two titles further emphasizing the different perceptions society has towards women based on their life choices. Moreover, the capitalization pattern in the meme's title sentences, where the first letter of each word, article, and conjunction is capitalized, implies that women are awarded these titles based on the choices they make. It further draws attention to the fact that women are judged and labeled for the choices and decisions they make, reinforcing the idea that women's identities and ideologies are influenced by societal norms and expectations. Overall, the meme illustrates how language, tone, and word choice can influence perceptions and attitudes toward women. These subtle hints in the textual language of the meme shape and reinforce the traditional societal norms and expectations of women.

4.1.6.2 Visual Analysis

The meme has two frames each labeled differently. The first frame shows a woman who is married and has four children. In contrast, the second frame depicts a woman along with her cat and college debt, suggesting that she may be single, or unmarried. The meme illustrates how women are judged and labeled for the different paths and life choices they make. The proximity between the subjects in the first frame suggests a familial relationship. The woman is seen holding the hand of her husband highlighting her dependence and subordinate role in the relationship. Moreover, the other sign like children and the toys in their hand contributes to reinforcing gender-biased roles. The presence of three boys and one girl, suggests a traditional family structure that may

perpetuate gender stereotypes regarding gender roles and responsibilities. The positioning of the toddler boy in the hands of the father while the other three siblings (including the girl) are placed at the bottom of the frame may imply a division based on caregiving. Further, the placement of the girl between the two brothers may imply a perceived need to be protected. The visual cues of the boys holding a book and a cruise ship while the girl is holding a doll reinforce the traditional gender stereotypes related to education and family roles. The father's body language and dress play a pivotal role in reinforcing the perceived notion of being the provider of the family. In a patriarchal setting, the role dictated to fathers is to provide financial security for their families. The father's confident and strong body language suggests that he is a reliable provider. Additionally, his formal attire suggests that he engages in the workforce, further reinforcing the stereotype that a father must provide. However, the passive gestures of the wife clinging to her husband's hand in the meme suggest a subordinate and dependent role. This portrayal perpetuates traditional gender norms where women are often depicted as being submissive, reliant on their husbands, and taking a supporting role. This visual portrayal of the husband-wife relationship suggests that the male is the dominant figure in the relationship and is the one in control, whereas the females have a submissive and dependent role.

In contrast, the second frame depicts a woman holding a glass of champagne and a slice of pizza, and a chain of college debt in her foot, implying independence, and control over her life decisions. This rebellious portrayal challenges the traditional gender norms set by the patriarchal culture. The central framing of the girl further emphasizes her agency and autonomy suggesting that she is in control of her life choices even if they diverge from societal norms. This is reflective of feminism and individual empowerment that the girl supports. However, the meme also hints at the potential consequences of deviation from the societal conventions of patriarchy. The visual representation that she is alone in the frame due to her non-conformity and support of feminism suggests that challenging traditional roles can lead to isolation and judgment by society.

Further, in the first frame, the woman's passive body language indicates her dependence and submission, reinforcing the traditional gender roles where women are often shown as being passive and reliant on others, particularly their husbands. This portrayal further intensifies a woman's societal expectations and roles to fit in. In contrast, the woman in the second frame exhibits a confident body posture with one leg on the table, suggesting a sense of control and agency over her life decisions and is having a

confident body posture suggesting control over her life. This assertive gesture challenges the traditional roles assigned to women in patriarchal cultures. However, the girl labeled as a “victim” of feminism is depicted as sad whereas the woman dependent on her husband is portrayed as happy and content in her life. This visual contrast further reinforces the idea that compliance with traditional gender roles leads to a happy and fulfilling life while deviating from these set roles and societal expectations can lead to negative consequences and unhappiness.

The eye-level picturization of the meme further creates a sense of relatability and establishes a connection between the audience and subjects, making it more engaging and impactful. Moreover, the color choices in the meme also play a significant role in conveying the themes and messages. The light grey gown worn by the woman in the first frame complements the theme of dependence and submission, reinforcing the traditional roles assigned to her. The formal suiting of the father adds to the perception of him as the provider and head of the family. The colors of the first frame are harmonious thus enhancing the overall appeal of the first picture. On the other hand, the girl supporting feminism is depicted in contrasting colors such as a black off-shoulder top, blue jeans, and a skin-colored jacket. These colors draw the audience’s attention and create a visual contrast, reflecting the tensions and conflicting opinions of the girl and society. The use of contrasting colors can represent the defiance and boldness of the girl in challenging societal norms. The overall impact of the meme is communicated effectively through such subtle visual cues complemented by textual cues.

4.1.7 Meme No. 07



Figure No. 8: Meme No. 07 (Twitter)

The meme presents a progressive mindset and how upbringing influences values and gender ideologies. The presence of a big red cross, cutting the traditional role

assigned to the female in a household suggests a rejection of the traditional gender-specific roles. The meme discusses the notion that a child adapts ideologies and values from the surrounding environment. It further emphasizes the importance of early exposure to progressive and non-traditional ideologies, which shape the child's perspective and mindset as they grow. The meme illustrates two different upbringings. In the first scene, the female is seen teaching the little girl how to bake. This scene complies with the traditional roles often associated with domesticity further portraying it as an educational and empowering experience. On the other hand, the second scenario with a shadow of a confident young girl suggests an environment where she has been raised to stand upright and self-assured. The shadow is followed by a girl in a black cooperate suit walking confidently toward the White House, defying the traditional norms and roles.

4.1.7.1 Textual Analysis

The meme includes a complete sentence, "A woman's place is in the house" as its focal point. The sentence very well encapsulates the traditional perspective of gender that assigns women domestic roles, emphasizing their responsibilities within the household. In previous years, the phrase has been used to reinforce traditional gender roles and limit women to the domestic sphere. However, by cutting off the last word i.e. "house" with a prominent red line and replacing it with the phrase WHITE HOUSE in red upper case and bold letters underneath, the meme captures the reader's attention. This replacement subverts the traditional role associated with the sentence. Instead of limiting the women's roles to the domestic sphere, the meme with its text offers a potential shift towards an empowered and influential role. The term "White House" is used in a metaphorical sense in the meme, referring broadly to political leadership and public engagement. The red and bold formatting of the term "WHITE HOUSE" draws attention to this replacement, underscoring the contrast between the traditional gender roles and the potential of women to play a pivotal role in public and political spheres. The juxtaposition of the term White House in red uppercase letters can be interpreted as moving away from the set gender roles of the patriarchy. The use of capital letters by the creator captures the reader's attention and influences the interpretation and meaning conveyed by the meme.

4.1.7.2 Visual Analysis

The meme presents two distinct scenarios to explore the theme of upbringing and reinforcement of traditional gender roles. Through intriguing visuals, it draws attention

and prompts contemplation. In the first scenario, the bold red cross over the subjects involved in a domestic activity negates the reinforcement of traditional fixated gender roles, suggesting rebelliousness of the established norms. In contrast, the second scenario portrays a girl confidently dressed in a dark grey formal office suit, symbolizing a progressive mindset that encourages women to embrace professional and leadership roles.

Further, the signs in the first scenario are placed in close proximity, suggesting a mother-daughter relationship while in the second scenario; there is only one prominent subject with her shadow cast on the wall. The shadow serves as the metaphorical representation of her early years and upbringing. The shadow implies that the upbringing she received in her formative years has a significant influence on her future, career, and ideological perspectives. Additionally, the red cross over the first scenario indicates that it's about time to challenge the gender-specific roles, that restrict women to the household chores and nurturing activities. Further, the subjects are placed against a minimalistic background to focus on the main theme of the meme.

The frame of the meme suggests that women must proactively assert and take a stand for their rights and identity. In the first scenario, the woman is depicted as the one teaching; her central position can be interpreted as the active role she plays in shaping perspectives and ideologies. Contrastingly, the second frame features only one subject with a shadow on the wall, suggesting a strong, confident individual embarking on her journey of personal growth and empowerment. The absence of other signs suggests the need for initiative and willpower to challenge the prevailing norms. By using juxtaposition, the meme creator seems to suggest that women's empowerment does not only involve abolishing or challenging patriarchal notions but also standing independently. The meme emphasizes the fact that upbringing in the formative years has a solid and long-lasting impact on children's minds and ideologies. This is reflected in the body language and posture of the subjects involved. In the first scene, the passive posture of the mother is copied by the child, which further emphasizes a passive role. On the other hand, in the second scenario, the upright and confident body language of the girl in shadow is reflected by the lady in the dark grey suit. Moreover, the colors used complement the theme of the meme. The use of red color for the cross and cutting the last word of the sentence signifies the courage and strength required to abolish gender-specific roles. Similarly, the dark grey color of the lady's suit, in the second scenario reflects her practical and authoritative personality. Overall, the meme promotes the

subversion of dominant gender ideology that starts from upbringing in the formative years. The meme powerfully communicates the message that nurturing a progressive mind during early childhood is crucial for defying and challenging the prevailing societal norms, ultimately promoting an inclusive society.

4.1.8 Meme No. 08



Figure No. 9: Meme No. 08 (Twitter)

The meme depicts a situation where a specific location is struck by a natural disaster such as a flood. The six men are shown half-naked with their backs toward the audience. On the left side, a girl is clinging to the step at the back door of the Hilux car. The men are shown pushing the car, likely in an attempt to navigate through the flood-ravaged location.

4.1.8.1 Textual Analysis

The meme features a single sentence divided into two parts. The first part appears in the header while the second half appears in the footer, both centrally aligned. The meme avoids specific capitalization, yet the center alignment in the header and footer captures the reader's attention. The meme's plain language style suggests a situation commonly witnessed. Additionally, the meme employs ordinary vocabulary to convey its message and provide commentary from a certain standpoint. Notably, the word "Feminism" has a first capital letter, suggesting that the meme entails a discussion concerning feminism. It implies a discussion revolving around the end of feminism whenever a disaster strikes, where females are given privilege.

4.1.8.2 Visual Analysis

The meme presents a situation where the signs are involved in pushing a car through the floodwaters. These signs comprise six males and one female. The males are

portrayed as actively involved in the act of pushing the car while the female is shown clinging to the left back door. The physical proximity of the male figures implies a connection that reflects their viewpoints on feminism. The arrangement of males in a linear formation along the car's rear end enhances a sense of organization and coherence, reinforcing the concept of men aligning collectively against feminism. The predominant presence of male figures in the frame suggests a central and dominant role, in contrast to the passive role assigned to the female figure clinging to the left side. The meme implies that in a situation like a flood, women tend to take a backstage role and are content with passive participation. The placement of text in the header and footer sets the mood of the meme. The lack of direct eye contact between the audience and the subjects creates a lack of disinterest, hinting that the creator firmly supports the point of view presented by the text of the meme and does not invite a contradictory viewpoint. It is further supported by the body language and posture of the males in the meme. The expression on the female figure's face conveys fear, while her passive posture hints at the lack of authority and influence. Moreover, the eye-level shot of the meme bridges a connection between the viewers and the subjects. The message conveyed by the meme raises the question of the females' role at the time of a disaster.

4.1.9 Meme No. 09

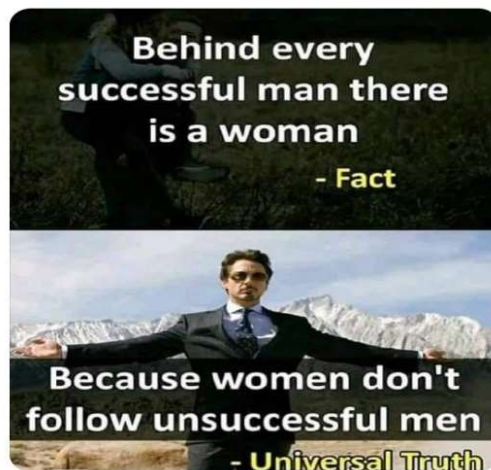


Figure No. 10: Meme No. 09 (Twitter)

The meme depicts two scenarios that draw a contrast between a factual situation and a universal truth. These scenarios establish a connection between a man's success and the role women play within that context. In the first scenario, the background illustrates the female clinging to the back of the male figure; however, the background is

overshadowed by the highlighted quote. While in the second scenario, features a prominent individual standing alone against a backdrop of snow-capped mountains. Notably, the quote is highlighted in such a way that it avoids obstructing the man's face.

4.1.9.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme is divided into two parts; the first part is labeled as a "Fact" while the second part is labeled as a "Universal Truth". The stark contrast in the ideas conveyed through the text of the meme highlights the role of women in men's success. The selective capitalization in the text such as the first letter of the words "Behind", "Because", "Facts", "Universal" and "Truth" and the grammatical deviation by starting the second part with "Because" appears to be deliberate choices to set a distinct tone and emphasize the core message of the meme. Moreover, the vocabulary used is simple and engaging, thus conveying the idea in a subtle tone. It further highlights the central theme and draws attention to the meme's content. The first part labeled as fact highlights women in a supporting role. In addition, the adjective "successful" used to describe the man in the first part reflects a traditional patriarchal narrative, where men are often seen as the primary achievers of success and women as supporters. The subtle choice of words in the first part reinforces the prevailing patriarchal narrative in society. Similarly, the second part labeled as Universal Truth portrays women as opportunistic. It implies that women are primarily interested in finding a wealthy and successful partner rather than focusing on their careers. The text of the meme highlights the layers of meaning a meme can deliver. On one hand, the meme utilizes juxta-positioning to create a contrast that underlines the women's role in men's success. On the other hand, the meme draws upon gender-biased stereotypes and is also perpetuating them. The meme appears to be presenting a contrast between the fact and the universal truth but at the same time, it is subscribing to the gender-biased narrative of patriarchal ideology. Further, the use of the terms fact and universal truth is also symbolic, as they add an element of objectivity and authority to the statements discussed in the meme. This labeling in the meme conveys the idea that these are universally accepted notions, further reinforcing and influencing the reader's interpretation without giving room for critical thinking.

4.1.9.2 Visual Analysis

The visual of the memes provides significant insight into the reinforcement of prevailing gender roles in a subtle manner. The use of black highlight overshadows the

subjects in the first section, reflecting the idea of overshadowing women's contributions and roles in the traditional patriarchal narrative. The positioning of signs, with the woman clinging to the back of the man, visually reinforces the supportive and submissive role of women in society. The proximity between the subject hints at the implied relationship as husband and wife further aligns with the gender roles depicted. Moreover, the framing and the placement of the subject with the frame complement the overall theme and also convey the power dynamics. The prominent positioning of the male depicts his authoritative and dominant role while the position of the woman suggests a dependent and submissive role. This positioning aligns with the prevailing gender norms set by the patriarchy. The intentional use of visual hierarchy fortifies the societal norms that place men in a dominant and powerful position, while women are relegated to a supportive role. Likewise, the placement of the subjects in the background and overshadowing by the black highlight indicate an unequal distribution of attention and importance. This technique visually mirrors how women's contributions historically have been overlooked and overshadowed in many contexts.

In contrast, the second scenario which represents supposedly a "Universal Truth" perpetuates a stereotype that depicts women as opportunistic and materialistically driven when seeking a partner. This reinforces the negative image of women and undermines the complexity of individuals' motivations and aspirations. The central positioning of the stylish and confident Hollywood actor seems to contradict the adjective i.e. unsuccessful used to describe him. Moreover, the quote is highlighted strategically to avoid obstructing the face of the man in the second frame, further emphasizing his appearance. The bright background of the second frame suggests a realization by men about women's motives to get married. The absence of women in the second frame aligns with the Universal Truth being portrayed, implying that men are consciously achieving success due to the understanding of the supposed materialistic tendencies of women. Further, the low-angle projection implies a dominant and authoritative role of the males. It further accentuates the perception of the males as the symbol of power, authority, and control. This perspective aligns with the traditional gender roles perpetuated through the meme. The text and visuals of the meme subscribe to the dominant gender ideology which places men in the central role while the women are placed in a supporting role.

4.1.10 Meme No. 10



Figure No. 11: Meme No. 10 (Twitter)

The meme shows a woman holding a rifle, while the man stands confidently behind. The woman can be seen aiming at something, preferably an animal. Hunting in the past was a male-dominated activity in which females had no participation. The text at the bottom states, "Peaceful does not mean weak" in upper case letters.

4.1.10.1 Textual Analysis

The meme features a title sentence written at the bottom, in uppercase letters. The font size of the subject "Peaceful" is slightly larger than the predicate, implying a societal role expected from women in the past. The continuous capitalization throughout the text further amplifies the core message propagated through the meme. Interestingly, the intentional use of the term "Peaceful", which serves as an adjective to describe women, reflects societal presumption linked to the female gender. The term "peaceful" holds a positive connotation while also aligning with the notion of being free from a state of turmoil and conflict. In the past, the adjectives "peaceful" and "weak" were frequently attributed to women, reflecting the prevalent societal norms. Moreover, these adjectives hold negative connotations and reinforce the expectation for women to assume a submissive and non-confrontational role. These adjectives further deepen the perception of women's subservience, limiting their capabilities to challenge decisions made by men. However, the use of "not" in the meme's text sheds light on the intricate paradox presented in the meme. Crucially, the selection of adjectives "peaceful" and "weak" to describe women draws attention to the intriguing paradox. Previously, women were often perceived as fragile and were expected to adhere to a peaceful disposition. However, the meme creator aims to highlight the contradiction in this inherent perception. Moreover,

the meme's language is simple yet impactful, adeptly conveying a powerful message. The juxtaposition and interplay between "peaceful" and "weak" serve to shed light on the intricate paradox. This allows the meme to effectively communicate the message highlighting that possessing qualities of peace and obedience does not imply a lack of strength. The meme further engages readers' cognitive faculties and influences their interpretation of the underlying meanings

4.1.10.2 Visual Analysis

The meme depicts a woman who is holding a rifle, while a man stands behind her, clutching the magazine probably of the same rifle. The backdrop of the scene is a desolate and barren landscape. The imagery captures a powerful dynamic, symbolizing a reversal of traditional gender roles and complementing the meme's text. The placement of signs i.e. the man and woman are deliberately close, implying an active interaction between the two individuals. Notably, the prominent positioning of the women at the center of the meme suggests a departure from traditional gender roles. This arrangement asserts her as the focal point and conveys the idea that with the support of men, one can defy the long-held traditional norms. The supportive role of the man in the meme expresses the confidence he has in the woman's ability to hold the rifle. The meme through its visual conveys a powerful message and calls for the empowerment of the female gender and reimagining the power dynamics between the genders. This is further supported by the framing techniques employed in the meme. The strategic use of negative space to direct focus on the subject of the meme effectively highlights the paradox presented in the text. This technique draws attention to the central theme while maintaining a sense of visual balance. Moreover, the placement of the text at the bottom of the frame seamlessly integrates with the visual content, enhancing the overall impact. The lack of eye contact between the subjects in the meme hints at a sense of purpose. The woman holding the rifle and the man engaged in a supportive role appear to be directing their attention toward something specific. However, the lack of eye contact with the viewer, contributes to a sense of detachment, suggesting a focused determination. Additionally, the body language of the man being confident about the woman holding the rifle reflects his progressive ideology about gender roles. Similarly, the confident posture of the woman dressed in a blue and white tunic frock is a visual representation of her inner strength. Her attire and body posture deviate from the traditional notions of patriarchy, further emphasizing her empowerment and agency. The low-angle shot of the scene presents the

woman as a central and powerful character in her story, showcasing her strength and determination. However, the slightly large hold of the power by the man, suggested by his positioning behind her, hints at the complexity of the power dynamics even in a progressive context. Overall, the message of the meme is effectively communicated through the visuals and text of the meme. The meme subverts and challenges the dominant gender ideologies, reshaping the power dynamics between the genders. The meme serves as a thought-provoking commentary on societal norms based on gender.

4.1.11 Meme No. 11



Figure No. 12: Meme No. 11 (Twitter)

The meme presents an advertisement of the Schlitz Brewing Company from the 1950s. The meme reinforces the general notion of woman's inability to do the only task assigned to them, which is to cook for their husband. The woman is dressed in a household dress with an apron tied to her waist whereas the man is very well dressed.

4.1.11.1 Textual Analysis

The meme uses a sarcastic and offensive statement to highlight the traditional gender roles depicted in 1950s advertisements. The tagline of the meme, "Don't worry darling, you didn't burn the beer!" seems to mock the idea that the wife's only significant responsibility was cooking and serving her husband, even going so far as to suggest that making beer isn't a crucial task. The tone of the meme appears to be condescending, implying that women's roles are limited to household chores and their efforts are valuable and recognized only in terms of pleasing their husbands. The use of the word "darling" suggests an affectionate relationship but at the same time it is patronizing, highlighting the power dynamics in the patriarchal world. The choice of vocabulary and adjectives aimed to highlight the absurdity and unfairness of the traditional gender roles perpetuated

by such advertisements. Moreover, the text of the meme subscribes to dominant gender ideology, perpetuating prevalent gender stereotypes.

4.1.11.2 Visual Analysis

The meme presents signs placed close to each other suggesting a husband-wife relationship, further highlighting the interaction between them. The text hints at the husband's forgiving and accommodating nature. The subjects are placed at the center of the kitchen, where the crying female holds tissue paper and a frying pan, while the male smiles and points at the table. This implies that the man wants to comfort his wife for not cooking the food properly. Further the clever framing of the advertisement comments on the clumsy nature of the wife and the proper nature of the husband. The left side of the frame presents a messy kitchen with a burning pan, smoke, and a leaking stove while the right side of the frame reflects calmness. This further emphasizes the gender-biased roles and responsibilities assigned to both genders. Moreover, the large-scale presentation of the male indicates the controlling and authoritative role assigned to him being the head of the family. Additionally, the color choice adds valuable information to the interpretation of the main theme presented. The female is dressed in a color that complements the setting suggesting that she belongs to the kitchen. In contrast, the man wears a monochrome suit that highlights his alien nature and guest appearance in the kitchen. Overall, the elements of visuals and text create a mocking atmosphere. The visual elements imply that the woman is incapable of the basic household tasks while the man is portrayed as the ultimate provider of the household. The low-angle projection of the meme highlights the dominant status and power of the male member of the family.

4.1.12 Meme No. 12



Figure No. 13: Meme No. 12 (Twitter)

The first scene (on the top left corner of the picture) begins with a young daughter seeking her father's permission to use tools, like a hammer and a screwdriver, highlighting the traditional gender norms that restrict certain roles. A parental disagreement is presented in the second scenario, with the mother expressing her doubt while the father remains confident in the daughter's ability. The following scenario depicts both parents observing their daughter working in the background, with the father pondering upon who knows how it will end. The final scenario showcases a teenage daughter informing her father that she has fixed the roof, symbolizing her acquired competence and challenging unconventional gender roles. The meme subverts gender ideologies and presents a smooth transition breaking the barriers of patriarchy that restrict the female gender.

4.1.12.1 Textual Analysis

The meme's simple language highlights a casual family conversation, where the mother's vocabulary seems discouraging while the father's vocabulary is encouraging, emphasizing the progressive thinking of the father. Capitalization is primarily used conventionally for the start of sentences and for emphasizing the subjective pronoun "I" as well as the onomatopoeic words "SMASH", "BANG" and "CRASH", signifying the girl's work in the third scenario. The text of the meme thoughtfully poses the question "Who knows how will it end?" The question prompts reflection on the necessity of affording opportunities for females to prove themselves and challenge assumptions about their capabilities. The mother's doubt in the second scene underscores the unfortunate tendency of females to doubt their daughters' capabilities, blocking their way to success. The meme effectively emphasizes the importance of empowerment breaking gender stereotypes and providing equal chances for everyone to succeed. The use of the second person pronoun "Your" directed towards the father, in the very first scene subtly reinforces the stereotype that tools and technical tasks belong to the male gender. This reflects the perpetuation of traditional gender roles. Moreover, the conclusive statement of the mother shows her mind to be influenced by patriarchal ideals where women are discouraged from taking on technical challenges, thus perpetuating limiting gender expectations. The meme adeptly highlights the hidden meanings and the way they influence the perception of gender-appropriated roles within a family context. Overall, the confidence of the father in his daughter's capabilities indicates the support required for women's empowerment and the breaking of gender-biased stereotypes.

4.1.12.2 Visual Analysis

The creator has used visual cues to convey the theme and cartoon figures to represent the members of the family. The daughter appears to be submissive and reliant on her father's authority, in the first scenario, while the father takes a central role in the second scenario, with the mother in a more passive position. This representation highlights the distribution of roles based on gender in a patriarchal setup. However, the conversation between parents in the second and third scenarios reflects the traditional mindset, with the father's confidence contrasting the wife's doubt about their daughter's abilities, as a result, the daughter is allowed to use the tools. This small conversation between the parents portrays how traditional gender roles and power dynamics influence decision-making within a family context. Moreover, the expression of the parents and the daughter complements the theme of the meme. The father's confident gestures and body language convey a sense of power and authority while the passive posture and placement towards the edge of the frame are suggestive of her marginalized role. The eye-level representation of all the scenarios creates a sense of relatability between the viewers and the subject, thus establishing a connection and manipulating the viewer's mind.

Additionally, the deliberate use of negative space by the creator directs the attention of the viewers to the subjects and the main theme of the meme. The subtle shift in the background colors, transitioning from conservative greys to serene blue, mirrors the transition from traditional norms to a more inclusive perspective. The calmness of blue is also reflected in the father's smile upon seeing his daughter's achievement. The meme effectively challenges and subverts dominant gender ideology by showcasing the daughter's ability to perform a technical task and the father's supportive roles in breaking the stereotypes. Further, the meme suggests that changes in societal norms and gender-biased roles begin within a family context, thus emphasizing the importance of altering the power dynamics.

4.1.13 Meme No. 13



Figure No. 14: Meme No. 13 (Twitter)

The meme depicts a scene where two women are tied against a pillar, engaged in a conversation. The woman on the right questions the other woman's situation to which she replies by saying that she confronted a male with the statement, "Not you". This dialogue between the two women reflects a moment of resistance against patriarchal control and influence.

4.1.13.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme comprises two dialogues, the vocabulary of which is very simple on the surface level. However, the in-depth analysis of the dialogues highlights the hidden meanings. The question by the lady on the right side is often used in casual language to inquire about the reasons for being in a particular situation. It is a colloquial expression that can be used in many contexts. The visuals and the question are in stark contrast with each other, which seems to suggest that it is common for the ladies to be tied to a pillar like the one shown. The question prompts the response that the second woman defied the traditional norms and rejected the man to define her. The second-person pronoun "He" used by the woman on the left points subtly alludes to the male-dominated society, further emphasizing the authority and power of the male gender.

4.1.13.2 Visual Analysis

The visuals of the meme depict a situation where two females are bound to a pillar, with their backs towards each other. The close positioning of the women points at the conversation going on between them, reinforced by the text with the frame. The

central placement of the pillar serves as a symbol of power, and authority, and also punishment drawing attention to its significance within the scene. In the previous eras, the culprits were tied to poles, with arrows pointing toward them as a punishment to signify their transgressions. However, in the context of the meme, the pillar is used as a visual metaphor for the constraints, restrictions, and societal pressures that are imposed on individuals based on their genders. Moreover, the depiction of women with their backs turned towards each other can be interpreted as a representation of their marginalized roles and lack of agency in defending themselves. The visual cues and their arrangement within the frame build a narrative of the power dynamics, and challenges faced by females when they confront the authority and restrictive norms. Their marginal and isolated role in society is depicted by their placement towards the edges. The meme employs a mocking approach to portray females who raise their voices against male domination and authority. Through the depiction of punishment, the meme highlights the belittling of women for challenging patriarchal norms. Moreover, the sad and contemplating expression of the women suggests self-contemplation over their perceived crimes and the punishment they received. The black-and-white representation of the meme's visual hints about the orthodox and conservative mindsets of society. The creator has strategically used the negative space to emphasize the main elements of the meme, enhancing their impact on viewers' minds. Furthermore, the low-angle shot of the meme employed to depict the subjects foregrounds the irony of their dominance juxtaposed against the fact they faced repercussions for merely confronting the male authority. This reinforces the absurdity of the power dynamics at play. The meme appears to make a commentary on the societal backlash for challenging the prevalent gender-based norms.

4.1.14 Meme No. 14



Figure No. 15: Meme No. 14 (Twitter)

The meme captures a familiar domestic scenario at the house entrance, where a guest has arrived highlighting the social interaction. The woman in a pink shirt is seen feeding her kids, employing the traditional role of caregiver and nurturer, while the man stands at the door.

4.1.14.1 Textual Analysis

The text at the top and bottom of the frame projects the ideas of the guest. She was invited to dinner by her colleague (the lady in pink) for dinner; however, when she reached there she observed her friend involved in the traditional household chores while the man was relaxing at home after work. The only capital letters are the first letters of the words at the beginning of the sentence and the salutation, implying an emphasis on the message being communicated. The conventional use of grammatical style to present the guest's ideas mirrors her amazement and perhaps her disbelief at the gender dynamic she encountered at her colleague's home. The capitalized salutation conveys a sense of politeness, yet her unfiltered response to the situation is emphasized by placing it at the center at the top and bottom of the frame. Moreover, using simple vocabulary to narrate her observation of the girl in pink creates a sense of relatability. The vocabulary of the girl reflects her amazement at the situation, where her colleague was multi-tasking to fulfill societal expectations and roles. Further, the girl in green is describing her first experience with a job and is not accustomed to societal roles. The girl in pink is multi-tasking to confine to the patriarchal gender roles assigned to her. This juxtaposition reflects the prevalence of traditional gender roles, even when they are pursuing their careers.

4.1.14.2 Visual Analysis

The meme presents a scenario where a girl in green is visiting her colleague's home for dinner. However, she is amazed to find her colleague conforming to the patriarchal roles while her colleague's husband is the one who receives her. The placement of signs in the scenario hints at the possible relationships and roles being played by the individuals. The placement of the girl in pink alongside the children in the dining area strongly implies a motherly role, which is reinforced by her care and the role of nurturer towards the kids. This placement effectively highlights the societal expectations of women as primary caregivers in a traditional patriarchal setup. The man opening the door is probably the husband of the lady in pink, as confirmed by the traditional act of greeting the guests. The central focus of the meme is on the girl in green,

who is the guest and narrator of the meme. Her placement at the entrance of the door suggests her recent arrival at her colleague's home. Furthermore, the white background of the frame directs the viewer's attention and allows them to focus on the subjects presented, creating a more focused and intimate atmosphere. The placement of the mother near the children highlights their bonding while the noticeable physical distance between the father and the children signifies a potential feeling of detachment. The eye contact between the ladies in the meme hints at the interaction between them, reinforcing their active participation in the scene. In contrast, the absence of eye contact between the lady in green and her colleague's husband implies a lack of engagement on her part toward him. Moreover, the busy and crowded environment depicted in the meme creates a sense of social proximity and interaction. This atmosphere aligns with the visual elements of the meme, creating a connected meaning. For instance, the confident gestures of the male in the meme signify his acceptance and comfort with the traditional gender-biased roles. Conversely, the passive posture of the lady in pink highlights her submissive role and lack of power within the dynamics of the household. The traditional gender roles are further emphasized by the colors used for the active subjects in the meme. The pink color is traditionally associated with femininity, kindness, and love which are reflected in the actions of the motherly figure. The color choice effectively reinforces the character's roles as a nurturer and caregiver, as she tends to engage in maternal duties. It also symbolizes societal expectations, urging them to fulfill gender-biased roles. The green color worn by the narrator aligns with its symbolism of new beginnings and growth. This color choice not only reflects her as someone starting her first job, symbolizing her personal growth but also her first interaction with the traditional roles depicted in the scene. Her amazement and facial expression reveal her unfamiliarity with gender dynamics. In contrast, the white color of the man's shirt carries connotations of neutrality and points to his minimal involvement in the scenario. The color used in the meme enhances the communication of underlying themes related to gender roles. The meme effectively presents a dual narrative where on one hand it subverts traditional gender roles by mentioning working women.

On the other hand, the lady in pink passively subverts traditional gender roles, as the lady in green refers to her as a colleague while actively subscribing to traditional gender roles, thus conforming to the dominant gender ideology. This passive subversion is significant as it invites discussions about how women navigate the complexities of contemporary life while still grappling with the deeply embedded gender norms.

4.1.15 Meme No. 15



Figure No. 16: Meme No. 15 (Twitter)

The meme depicts a corporate office setting with four individuals present: two girls and two boys. The central character of the meme is Debra who shares her thoughts with her colleagues. A boy can be seen sitting at the opposite desk to Debra, suggesting some sort of interaction while a girl stands in the background covering her face implying uneasiness upon hearing Debra's comment. Additionally, another male figure is stepping out of the cabin, possibly implying a position of authority.

4.1.15.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme highlights a dialogue between the central character Debra and her boss, reflecting a twisted view of submission to patriarchy. Using a simple vocabulary, her words encapsulate a commentary on the complex dynamics of patriarchal norms. This further leads to highlighting the dual nature of gender norms, both in broader society and the corporate sector. Her word choice implies a progressive thought process; while women rebelled against patriarchy in society, the presence of these dynamics still exists in the corporate sector. Debra's choice of words is interesting as it grabs the viewer's attention. Her remark about being glad not to be "locked away from the world" carries subtle connotations, indicating a subversion of the traditional norms. The contrast between Debra's situation and that of the housewives entails that patriarchal gender roles have often kept women confined to domestic work and have limited their exposure to the outside world and societal interactions. The adjectival phrase she uses to describe housewives carries negative connotations and a judgmental tone. Her choice of words is

reflective of her perspective on the limited freedom the housewives have in a patriarchal setup. The phrase “homemaking slave to some husband” is strong and highlights the historical reality of women under traditional patriarchal norms. Women under patriarchy are often relegated and expected to fulfill domestic duties with very little agency and authority. This choice of language reinforces the submissive and unassertive roles women are expected to play.

Interestingly, the meme takes a turn when the character’s boss (male) informs her that her 15-minute break is over; symbolizing the power dynamics in the corporate sector resonates with the power dynamics of patriarchy. However, the in-depth analysis of the statement foregrounds the underlying power structures that are not as progressive as they appear to be. The meme raises a thought-provoking question through its text, emphasizing the parallel between housewives and women in the cooperate sector. The meme suggests that just as housewives are engaged in domestic activities to please men, women in the corporate sector often find themselves being accountable to male bosses. The meme’s text efficiently reflects and subscribes to the notion of women being subjugated in both domestic and corporate contexts.

4.1.15.2 Visual Analysis

The strategic placement of the subjects in the meme reflects the power dynamics existing in the cooperate sector which aligns with the traditional notions and patriarchal expectations. The placement of characters in a workplace setting and close to each other hints at the professional relationship they hold. The central character Debra is placed on a large scale at the left side of the frame, thus drawing attention to her role as the initiator of the conversation. Despite having a dominant visual presence, Debra plays a subordinate role and lacks authority as compared to the man coming out of the cabin. This placement reflects the power imbalance in a professional context, highlighting that the male holds more power and authority, aligning with the gender disparities.

Furthermore, the placement of the characters on a large scale against a minimal office background creates an intimate and focused atmosphere. Debra establishes a connection with the viewers of the meme by maintaining eye contact, which further creates a sense of relatability between the viewers and the subjects of the meme. Further, the gestures of the individuals involved add another layer of meaning to the overall composition of the meme. Debra is confident about her point of view and this is reflected

in her body language and facial expression. Moreover, the self-assured gesture of the man coming out of the cabin indicates the authority and control of power. The meme effectively subverts the dominant gender ideology, yet it highlights the complexities and prevalence of gender biases in both the domestic and corporate sectors.

4.1.16 Meme No. 16



Figure No. 17: Meme No. 16 (Twitter)

The meme presents a contrast in language and perception between men and women who don't conform to traditional gender roles. In this meme, there is a self-assured man disguised as a woman grabbing the attention of viewers. The meme tends to highlight the adjectives attributed to men and women when they challenge traditional gender notions. It aims to highlight the double standards and biases that exist in society when it comes to gender expression and nonconformity.

4.1.16.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme is written in upper-case letters and is placed at the top and bottom edges of the meme. The consistent capitalization of letters in the text of the meme emphasizes the message further underlining the absurdity of how society often treats non-conformity to traditional gender roles. The uppercase letters contribute to the visual cues of the meme, making the text stand out and reinforcing the main theme of the meme. It aligns with the meme's aim to highlight the double standards of society and biases related to gender expression. The strategic placement and use of uppercase letters by the creator stress the double standards and injustices of society. Dye, Milin, Futrel, and Ramscar (2017) highlight that adjectives can serve as predictive and discriminative functions. In the context of the meme under discussion, the adjectives "EMPOWERED" and

“LOSERS” perform a discriminative function, subtly reinforcing gender disparity. The adjectives carry positive and negative connotations respectively, emphasizing the inconsistency and unfairness in how society perceives and labels non-conforming behavior based on gender. The contrasting adjectives used for representing male and female genders undermine the societal attitudes and prejudices that prevail when it comes to gender roles and expectations. We often talk about “EMPOWERED” women, stepping out of their domestic responsibilities and roles, but when the men of our society break the assigned stereotypical roles they are called “LOSER” for not being able to put up with societal practices. In short, the meme effectively serves as a commentary on how language can reinforce and perpetuate gender stereotypes.

4.1.16.2 Visual Analysis

The central positioning of an individual who appears to challenge traditional gender roles by dressing in a way that confuses the viewers draws attention to the theme of double standards and biases related to gender expression and nonconformity to patriarchal norms. By placing the individual in a central frame and making him dominate the visual space, the creator aims to create a strong visual impact. This person highlights the inconsistency and double standards of society when it comes to acceptance of nonconforming behaviors related to gender roles. Moreover, the peach color of the individual shirt radiates energy, playfulness, and encouragement. This color choice resonates with the positive adjective associated with women for their non-conformity with traditional gender roles, further stressing the contrast between the treatment of male and female gender in similar situations.

4.1.17 Meme No. 17



Figure No. 18: Meme No. 17 (Twitter)

This meme portrays a potentially disturbing and misogynistic message. The meme presents a confident male expressing the idea that women should not be objectified, as objects are useful and have value. The perspective indirectly suggests that objectifying women might be justifiable.

4.1.17.1 Textual Analysis

The meme features two sentences, with the first written at the top and the second written at the bottom. The intentional placement of the sentences serves to reinforce a narrative that amplifies the misogynistic views. The meme delves into the problematic attitude of some members of the masculine gender, which devalues and objectifies women. The message of the meme can be interpreted as a form of misogyny, where prejudice and discrimination against women are based on their feminine gender. The use of consistent capitalization for both the sentences presented in the meme caters to influence the viewer's interpretation of the message. Moreover, the vocabulary used to represent the female gender is demeaning and degrading. The consistent capitalization further creates a tone of emphasis and seriousness, underlining the gravity of the prevalent misogynistic views. The word choice reflects the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes and gender biases. It further provokes feminist and humanist groups to raise their voices against such idiotic statements. It is of great significance for individuals and groups to actively challenge forms of media that perpetuate stereotypical and misogynistic viewpoints regarding gender.

4.1.17.2 Visual Analysis

The meme effectively communicates misogyny and the perpetuation of traditional gender roles. The visual space is dominated by a man present on the left side of the frame, drawing attention to the misogynistic content of the meme. This positioning underscores the focus on the man's perspective. The minimal background of the meme directs the viewer's focus to the thoughts represented in the text and its implications. Further, the absence of a female sign reinforces the misogynistic views, reflecting the harmful attitudes perpetuated by the meme. The prominent positioning of the male and the absence of the female gender creates a sense of male dominance and authority with the females being marginalized and oppressed.

Furthermore, the man in the meme makes direct eye contact with the viewers to build a connection and propose his misogynistic viewpoint. However, his confident body

language and hand gesture hints at the fact that he does not want to indulge in a discussion. He is self-assured about his thoughts and viewpoints. He devalues and degrades women by saying that objects are still useful and of value, unlike women who don't have any value. His dress is reflective of his education and professional growth but his views highlight the need for further education that can open his mind. The intentional use of a black-and-white background by the creator reflects the orthodox and traditional mindset of the main subject. Collectively, the visual and textual symbols reflect a problematic and misogynistic mindset, which further subscribes to patriarchal ideologies.

4.1.18 Meme No. 18



Figure No. 19: Meme No. 18 (Twitter)

The meme cleverly presents irony in feminist rhetoric by presenting a contrasting scenario. In the first part of the meme, the girl is asked to make the dinner to which she humorously responds with a poster from a feminist march, saying “GRAB’EM BY THE PATRIARCHY”. The juxtaposition of the feminist slogan within the context of cooking presents a subversion of the prevalent gender roles. In the second part of the meme, the boy suggests a role reversal, asking the girl to mow the lawn while he makes dinner. Unexpectedly, the girl retorts, “Sorry, that’s a Man’s Job”, subscribing to the dominant gender ideology. The meme playfully highlights the irony presented in feminist rhetoric when it comes to doing the work traditionally assigned to the male gender. The meme sparks on reflection on the intricacy of gender dynamics and the potential contradictions within the feminist statements.

4.1.18.1 Textual Analysis

The meme presents a stark contrast between the feminist rhetoric and its practical consideration by highlighting a discussion about the casual household chores between two individuals. The pronoun “me” represents the male, further implying that the meme represents a male-influenced perspective. The dialogues of the male are written in plain black and classic font style, echoing the traditional communication style. However, the female retorts are designed strategically and in a captivating manner to grab the attention of the viewers. In the initial scenario, a slogan from the feminist march is used to answer the male, while in the second scenario; a classic girl meme from the 80s is used to highlight the reply. The slogan of the feminist march uses uppercase letters to make the poster stand out and influence the visual impact. The intentional placement of the feminist slogan with the mundane discussion of household chores invites contemplation on its significance in daily life. Additionally, in the second scenario, the strategic capitalization of the first letter of the words “Sorry”, and a “Man’s Job”, mocks the feminist rhetoric. Feminist rhetoric talks about equality and subversion of gender roles; however, the meme accentuates the unsuitability and inappropriateness by revealing its practical contradictions. The slightly large font size of the term “Man’s Job” grabs the attention of the viewers, becoming significant in highlighting the satire in feminist statements. The textual elements in the meme effectively present the contrast between feminist rhetoric and its practical application in daily life.

4.1.18.2 Visual Analysis

The only visual elements in the meme presented above are the female comebacks to the man’s question and suggestion, which seems to suggest an exaggerated perspective of the feminist slogans. The first retort, featuring a feminist slogan conveys a sense of gender role subversion and challenges the patriarchy. The placement of signs in the first pictures hints at the interaction and social gathering for the feminist march. The crowded background makes it difficult for the viewers to identify the person holding the slogan. However, the presence of only one slogan in the pictures captivates the viewers’ focus on the message being conveyed. Moreover, the use of vibrant, bubble-like writing, serves to amplify the message’s impact, symbolizing defiance of patriarchal gender norms. The central placement of the slogan influences the viewer’s interpretation and invites contemplation of gender-biased roles.

In contrast, the second picture depicts a woman involved in domestic chores, holding frozen items probably taking them to the refrigerator. She is seen all dressed up, unlike the casually dressed protestor from the feminist march. The eye angle shot of both pictures creates a sense of relatability and establishes a connection between the viewers and the subjects depicted. The visual elements combined with the textual elements present a satirical commentary on the practical application of the principles of feminism. The meme highlights the dual nature of feminist ideologies and principles, further suggesting that woman manipulate these principles according to their convenience.

4.1.19 Meme No. 19



Figure No. 20: Meme No. 19 (Twitter)

The meme depicts a scenario in which two individuals are off for a drive. The meme's title reinforces the stereotype that women talk excessively, further highlighting it as a reason for accidents. The new seat belt covers the lady's mouth symbolizing an attempt to silence her and prevent her from talking. It is important to highlight that such stereotypes perpetuate harmful biases.

4.1.19.1 Textual Analysis

The meme's title employs simple language using catchy vocabulary to attract viewers. While there is no specific capitalization pattern used, the black and bold font style highlights the core message of the meme. The title is gender biased, perpetuating the patriarchal stereotype that women often talk excessively. The text of the meme efficiently conceals the man's inability to multitask – specifically to focus on his driving while simultaneously listening to the lady. The meme reinforces gender stereotypes and perpetuates negative biases related to gender. The connection between accidents and the talkative nature of the female gender presented in the meme hints at the exaggeration and

simplification of a complex issue. This type of message conveyed through memes can contribute to harmful beliefs and attitudes that undermine the individuality and capabilities of both genders.

4.1.19.2 Visual Analysis

The proximity of the individuals in the car hints at the possible relationship between them; husband and wife. The placement of these characters against a plain grey background channels the viewers' attention to the main subject of the meme. Moreover, the placement of the title sentence in the center and at the top of the frame influences the viewer's interpretation and ensures that it leaves a lasting impression on their minds. The confident gaze of the man hints at the 'pride' in his innovative design for seat belts to reduce accidents while the woman's eyes convey a sense of shock and amazement. The placement of the man in the driving seat holding the steering wheel suggests the perceived dominance and authority. Further, no resistance shown by the lady in the image indicates her submissive and subordinate role. The purposeful use of eye-level shots minimized the power differential, engaging viewers more effectively. Moreover, the white color of the man's attire hints at minimalism, and simplicity while the blue color of the woman's dress typically symbolizes inspiration and freedom, contrasting ironically with her silenced mouth, symbolized by the tied seatbelt. This contradiction in color usage reflects the satirical message of the meme. These visual cues perfectly blend with the title's exaggerated text, emphasizing the perpetuation of gender biases and stereotypes.

4.1.20 Meme No. 20



Figure No. 21: Meme No. 20 (Twitter)

The meme depicts a series of scenarios showcasing the woman involved in domestic tasks like cooking and cleaning all while lost in contemplation. Her thoughts presented through the text revolve around the concept of gender equality, juxtaposed with her undaunted decision to avoid participating in WWII. Through this representation, the meme creates an ironic and thought-provoking contrast between functional equality and the mundane context of household chores.

4.1.20.1 Textual Analysis

The simple and engaging vocabulary of the meme influences the reader's interpretation creating a powerful impact. The use of distinct font sizes and style by the creator, adds depth to the interpretation process. The text placed above the images is written in smaller font size, implying a typical contemplation, and fostering a relatable and introspective tone. Contrastingly, the text at the bottom of the images employs a different font style and a large font size, amplifying the impact of the contemplation. This intentional formatting of the text alludes to the exclamatory and decisive nature of the woman's stance concerning participation in wars. The clear presentation of the words further emphasizes her decisiveness, contributing to the overall message and adding depth to the commentary on gender roles posed in the meme. Moreover, the use of the word 'drafted' in the text above the images, captures the reader's attention, manipulating their views regarding feminism and their slogans for equality. This usage challenges preconceived notions and plays with the viewer's perspectives on gender roles.

The text at the bottom ironically subscribes to patriarchal norms by highlighting the concept of a perfect housewife. The adjective 'perfect' undermines the idea of suitability within a specific context. This use of the adjective, spoken by the woman herself emphasizes the prevalent appropriateness of conforming to traditional gender roles, even in the context of wars. This effectively highlights the dual nature of the woman's perspective, revealing a potential contradiction in her stance on equality. The meme cleverly divulges the hypocrisy that can arise when gender roles intersect with various contexts, such as a war. The contrast presented in the ideas of the meme hints at the appropriation of feminist principles by females according to their benefit.

4.1.20.2 Visual Analysis

The images presented in the meme align with the text placed at the bottom of the frame, creating a cohesive narrative. The depiction of the women engaged in household

chores such as cleaning, cooking, and organization, is in contradiction with her thoughts about gender equality, emphasizing the complex feminist ideals. The central positioning of the woman in all the frames suggests that her thought process forms the thematic core of the meme. This visual depiction efficiently highlights the meme's focus on her contemplation and the interplay between equality and gender roles. She embodies the concept of the 'perfect housewife' by being involved in the traditional gender roles assigned to her. The visual of the meme subscribes to dominant gender ideology, reinforcing conventional gender roles while considering gender equality. Moreover, the lack of eye contact between the viewers and the woman in the images indicates her absorption in the contemplation process, amplifying the overall mood of introspection and reinforcing the theme.

4.1.21 Meme No. 21

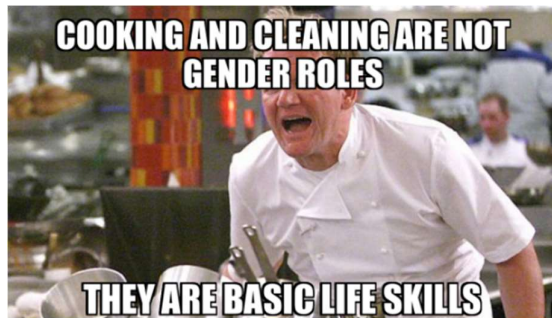


Figure No. 22: Meme No. 21 (Twitter)

The meme depicts a scene from a cooking show, with the famous chef Gordon Ramsay in the middle, yelling cooking and cleaning are not gender roles they are basic life skills.

4.1.21.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme comprises a sentence split into two parts, emphasizing the overall message of the meme, written at the top and bottom of the central frame. The first part of the sentence written at the top alludes to traditional perspectives of household chores, where these tasks were considered to be the tasks of the female gender. However, the use of negation reflects the progressive mindset of the creator. The second part of the sentence, centrally aligned at the bottom, reframes these household skills as the necessities of life regardless of gender. This reframing promotes a more inclusive pattern. The creator has intentionally used continuous capitalization to reflect his point of view.

This stylistic choice influences readers' interpretation of the core message of the meme. Moreover, the simple vocabulary used to convey the message captures readers' minds and initiates a thought-provoking schema.

4.1.21.2 Visual Analysis

The meme depicts a scene from the cooking show involving Gordon Ramsey, the renowned chef. His placement at the center of the frame suggests a dominating and authoritative role. This central positioning aligns and reflects his real-life persona and emphasizes his significance in the culinary world. The intentionally cluttered and blurred background foregrounds Ramsay and the core message of the meme. Moreover, the large-scale presentation of the chef suggests a role of dominance and control. The chef's direct eye contact with the viewers channels engagement and establishes a connection, drawing viewers' attention to the meme's narrative. Further, his confident body language and gestures harmonize with the main message of the meme. His stance and expression add another depth to his portrayal of dominance and authority, reinforcing the theme being conveyed. His yelling expression can be interpreted as reinforcement of the meme's core message. This yelling signifies the constant struggle against the prevalent traditional gender roles, highlighting the rebellion against such practices. The white color of Ramsey's costume aligns with the traditional and iconic chef's uniform. This uniform symbolizes professionalism, authority, and cleanliness. This is further reflective of the idea presented through the text that cleanliness and cooking are basic skills for survival, not gender roles. Through the portrayal of the renowned chef Gordon Ramsey, the meme creator subverts the prevalent traditional gender norms, which identify cooking and cleanliness as gender roles.

4.1.22 Meme No. 22



Figure No. 23: Meme No. 22 (Twitter)

The character Joker raises a thought-provoking question that highlights the contrasting reactions within contemporary society, involving gender roles. While society accepts the task assigned to men without questioning, the mere assertion that cleaning and cooking are women's responsibilities instigates a strong and intense reaction.

4.1.22.1 Textual Analysis

The intentional split of a sentence into two parts and their placement at the top and bottom of the frame projects two different perspectives. The continuous capitalization in both parts of the sentences emphasizes the theme and message of the meme. The first part of the sentence placed at the top of the frame captures readers' attention by using the idiomatic phrase "no one bats an eye" implying a general lack of concern. The appealing and captivating vocabulary indicates the seriousness in the tone of the narrator and engages the reader's mind. The second part of the sentence placed at the bottom of the frame introduces a contrasting situation, where everyone raises concern when girls are asked to do something that was previously dictated by the patriarchy. This highlights the meme's main theme of gender biases and societal expectations highlighting the shift in reactions towards the challenging individual based on their gender. The text of the meme effectively conveys a contradictory attitude of the society concerning subversion of gender roles. When society defines something as a man's job everyone seems to be okay with it but when society defines anything for women a layer of anger and chaos starts to spread within the society.

4.1.22.2 Visual Analysis

The visuals of the meme feature the famous and iconic character Joker, raising the question of varying reactions people exhibit regarding the reinforcement of gender roles. The choice to use Joker's character to foreground the disparities is apt due to his ability to embody complex and contradictory themes. The placement of Joker as the single and central character in the meme indicates his dominance of the visual space and highlights his control over the situation depicted. Moreover, the use of negative space around the image of Joker focuses the attention of the reader on the main theme presented in the meme. The lack of eye contact between viewers and Joker creates a sense of detachment and disinterest in the discussion. Joker embodies the themes of unpredictability, chaos, wit, and intelligence, which makes him the perfect candidate to reflect the situation. Additionally, his baffled expression aligns with the text of the meme, creating a unified

meaning. His expression combined with his strong and assertive body language indicates a sense of power and unpredictability. The contrasting colors of the Joker create a sense of tension and conflict that resonates in the text of the meme. The visual cues employed in the meme complement the tensions and conflicts indicated by the complex vocabulary.

4.1.23 Meme No. 23

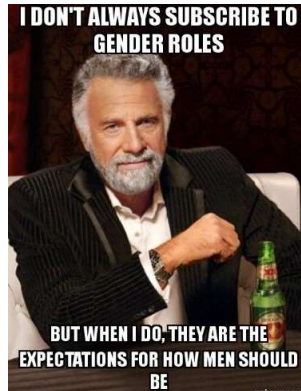


Figure No. 24: Meme No. 23 (Twitter)

The meme features a man who expresses an ironic and thought-provoking opinion about how people subscribe to gender roles assigned to men. While contemporary society has been making efforts to subvert traditional gender norms assigned to the female gender, societal expectations from male gender are reinforced through various mediums.

4.1.23.1 Textual Analysis

The intentional split in the text of the meme highlights the discrepancy between the subversion and subscription to gender roles, emphasizing the ironic nature of the situation. The continuous capitalization throughout the text of the meme highlights the key commentary and the unpopular opinion, making sure the core message is loud and clear. By using a simple vocabulary, the creator captivates the readers' focus and attention, further influencing their interpretation. The meme presents hypocritical nature of the contemporary world where we subscribe to gender roles and expectations assigned to the male gender. The use of capitalization patterns and the word choice of text; channel the readers' thoughts and influence their interpretation of the meme's main message.

4.1.23.2 Visual Analysis

The meme features a man significantly positioned in the central frame, reflecting his dominant and authoritative personality, in the context of the meme. The use of

negative space within the frame directs the readers' attention to the core message of the meme. Moreover, the direct eye contact he establishes with the viewers creates a sense of engagement and interaction. This makes the meme more relatable and enhances the impact of the core message. His strong and confident body language indicates a position of control and power, which is reinforced through his dress. He is wearing a white shirt paired with a classic black striped coat suggesting a dominant and authoritative role. The visual cues combined with the textual cues align with the meme's commentary on the paradoxical nature of adhering to gender roles related to the male gender while advocating for a change in roles assigned to the female gender.

4.1.24 Meme No. 24



Figure No. 25: Meme No. 24 (Twitter)

The meme depicts an individual shedding light on the double standards of the female gender. The text of the meme underlines the contrast between the efforts of women to subvert the traditional patriarchal roles while paradoxically subscribing to gender roles, in contexts related to the male gender.

4.1.24.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme is strategically divided into two parts. The first section at the top of the frame emphasizes the need to defy the traditional gender roles assigned to the female gender. In contrast, the second section placed at the bottom of the frame stresses their submission to patriarchal gender roles, in the context of the masculine gender. The pronoun "You" used in the second part refers to the male gender, implying that this observation is from a male's perspective. Additionally, the continuous capitalization throughout the text further accentuates the core message of the meme, foregrounding the

hypocrisy of the female gender. The intentional use of simple yet impactful vocabulary captures readers' attention, encouraging them to engage with and contemplate the subject matter at hand. The clever and strategic combination of language and structures calls for thought-provoking discussions on the complexities of gender roles and expectations.

4.1.24.2 Visual Analysis

The meme portrays a man who is significantly positioned in the center frame, reflecting his power and dominant role, within the narrative communicated. This central placement further reinforces the male perspective he presents throughout the text. Additionally, the use of negative space by the creator effectively channels the reader's attention toward the key theme being addressed in the meme. His strong body language and weird facial expression create a sense of irony and contradiction. This combination of his facial expression and body language alludes to the theme of hypocrisy in the gender roles that females might abide by when it comes to tasks traditionally assigned to males. The visual and textual cues of the meme align in a unified manner conveying a coherent theme that is enhanced by its overall aesthetic appeal. The intentional choice of using eye-level shots in the meme creates a sense of directly engaging the thoughts and influencing the viewer's perceptions.

4.1.25 Meme No. 25



Figure No. 26: Meme No. 25 (Twitter)

The meme portrays a female individual carrying a bag supposedly containing electrical supplies. Further, it incorporates two sentences, strategically placed to emphasize on the subversion of gender roles and societal expectations through setting examples.

4.1.25.1 Textual Analysis

The meme comprises two sentences written in upper case and in bold letters, strategically placed and centrally aligned at the top and bottom of the frame, reinforcing the key theme of the meme. This tactical arrangement serves to strengthen the theme and manipulate the reader's interpretation of the message. The continuous capitalization used throughout the meme plays a significant role in accentuating the key elements of the theme presented. The meme creator introduces a stereotype in the sentence written on the top, merely to defy it in the second sentence. Electrical fittings and other technical works were previously assigned to the male gender based on their understanding of the technicalities involved. However, now the female gender takes center stage by subverting and challenging the preconceived notions about gender roles. The intentional use of a casual yet specific vocabulary engages the viewer and provokes his thoughts. With clever usage of language and vocabulary, the meme serves to challenge and subvert the dominant gender roles prescribed by the patriarchy.

4.1.25.2 Visual Analysis

The meme portrays a scenario, where a female individual is holding a bag in one hand and pointing toward it with the other hand. Her placement in the center of the frame suggests a dominant and central role, within the meme. Moreover, with a minimalistic background, the creator directs viewers' attention toward the key elements of the meme. The female character's assumed eye contact from beneath her sunglasses forms a captivating visual cue, establishing a connection with the viewer and influencing their perceptions. Further, this eye contact serves as an invitation for viewers to reflect on and challenge gender roles and societal expectations. This is reinforced by the strong and assertive body language of the female character, further emphasizing the subversion of dominant gender roles. The scenario depicted in the meme effectively through the visual and textual cues underscores the underlying theme of defying prevalent traditional gender roles and expectations.

4.1.26 Conclusion

In conclusion, the detailed examination of Twitter memes revealed a multifaceted landscape of gender ideologies. A major share of these memes subscribed to gender ideology and aligned with the prevalent traditional gender roles, while some memes raised mind-boggling questions and concerns, through their visual and textual cues.

Notably, a few of them are subverting gender ideology. The analysis highlighted that the contemporary world both adheres to dominant gender ideology and concurrently challenges traditional beliefs. Moreover, the analysis of memes foregrounds the polarity of society's attitude towards distinct genders. Through the memes, it is highlighted that subversion of dominant gender ideology revolves around the female gender whereas the males are expected to adhere to the societal norms and expectations of the patriarchy.

4.2 Manifestation of Gender in Memes (Reddit)

This section of the chapter presents an extensive analysis of the memes extracted from Reddit. The meme revolves around the theme of gender, patriarchy, subscription, and subversion of the prevalent gender norms. Each meme is analyzed on two distinct levels; Textual and Visual level.

4.2.1 Meme No. 01

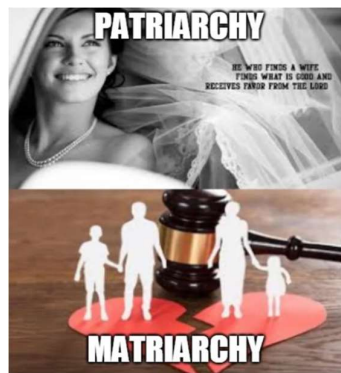


Figure No. 27: Meme No. 01 (Reddit)

The meme portrays a contrast between patriarchy and matriarchy, with two different family dynamics and power structures. In the patriarchal frame, the woman is shown fulfilling the traditional gender roles. The fact that she is smiling suggests that she is hopeful for her future, which further reflects the idea that conforming to gender-specific roles assigned by society leads to a happy and contented life. The second frame presents a matriarchal scenario, where the family is divided by the court's decision indicated by the hammer. The matriarchal scenario suggests a shift in the power dynamics, where women are in prominent roles.

4.2.1.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme comprises two main headings PATRIARCHY and MATRIARCHY both in uppercase letters and center-aligned. The headings aim to

portray a comparison between the two power structures and family dynamics, associated with each system. The patriarchal frame contains a Biblical proverb (18:22) that is capitalized and right-aligned. The proverb states, “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the lord”. In the context of the meme, the proverb reinforces the traditional perspective that getting married is beneficial and a positive aspect of life. The consistent capitalization of headings in both frames and the bold and large font style of the nouns play significant roles in emphasizing the concept of patriarchy and matriarchy and call attention to the discussion. This capitalization of the heading suggests that they are the central themes of the meme. Moreover, it reinforces the idea that the meme intends to compare and contrast the key characteristics of both power structures i.e. patriarchy and matriarchy. The intentional capitalization and use of bold and large font styles all work effectively together to make the theme of the meme more engaging and impactful.

4.2.1.2 Visual Analysis

The visual cues in the meme complement the textual cues effectively, powerfully asserting that the patriarchal notion of marriage is beneficial whereas a matriarchal setting can lead to chaos and disturbance. In the patriarchal frame, the bride is depicted as the prominent subject and sign. This depiction reinforces the traditional notion of marriage as a means to achieve contentment and happiness. Further, the alignment of the bride as the prominent sign along with the Biblical quote in the patriarchal frame, implies that a woman’s happiness and contentment are tied to being “found” and asked for marriage by a man. The women are subjected to a passive role in the act of marriage which aligns with the traditional patriarchal beliefs where women are often seen as objects to be pursued and chosen by men for marriage. Further, the colors used also carry symbolic meanings; white color symbolizes innocence, purity, and obedience whereas the black color used to write the Biblical quote represents tradition and conservatism. The color choices align with the societal norms that often expect women to adhere to traditional gender roles and power dynamics. The bride is seen smiling and she appears to be hopeful about her marriage which can be interpreted as her compliance to the societal expectations and fulfillment of the roles assigned to her. The bride’s smile further reflects her willingness to embrace societal roles and demonstrate her acceptance of patriarchal norms. The black and white colors used in the patriarchal frame, and the body language of the bride smiling and hopeful about her marriage further strengthen the conforming nature of the

patriarchal system. This visual representation in the meme subscribes to the dominant gender ideology, where women are often depicted as passive subjects and expected to conform to societal roles and expectations.

In contrast, in the matriarchal frame, the presence of four human subjects standing on a divided heart implies an equal and collaborative relationship among the family members. The signs are strategically positioned to build strong narrative carrying negative connotations about the matriarchy and influence the reader's interpretation of the meme. It implies that when a female is in charge of the power and the family head, it leads to family fragmentation. The placement of an equal number of subjects on the broken heart pieces suggests an equal and collaborative power distribution. The signs are placed on the edges suggesting isolation and separation. Moreover, the minimal background of the matriarchal frame brings to focus the actual theme of the meme, whereas the cluttered background in the patriarchal frame makes it difficult to read the quote. All these signs combined project the idea that patriarchy leads to a stable family structure whereas matriarchy leads to segregation of the family members. This meme subscribes to the dominant gender ideology that places men at the forefront and emphasizes traditional gender ideology. The stark contrast developed in the meme further reinforces the idea that traditional gender-specific roles and power dynamics are necessary for family harmony.

4.2.2 Meme No. 02



Figure No. 28: Meme No. 02 (Reddit)

The meme effectively channels the reader's focus and attention to a thought-provoking question using a cartoon figure. The question raised in the meme highlights the portrayal of women when they exhibit qualities of confidence and power.

4.2.2.1 Textual Analysis

The centrally aligned text of the meme is written in a simple font style, and a small font size at the bottom of the frame, captivating the attention of the viewers. The strong question raised by the meme hints at the portrayal of women in a negative light when they are self-assured and independent. The casual vocabulary and word choice of the meme create a sense of relatability and invite the audience to critically examine the association of strong and powerful women with witches. Moreover, the adjectives used to describe the noun witches have a positive connotation, yet the word itself carries a negative connotation. This contrasting vocabulary highlights the disparity between the actual attributes (confident and powerful) being described and the societal perceptions associated with the term “witches”. The question posed in the meme is the stereotypical association between the positive adjective “confident and powerful” with the noun “witches” carrying a negative connotation. The adjectives confident and powerful were previously associated with the male gender while the female gender was attributed with superficial adjectives describing their physical appearances.

4.2.2.2 Visual Analysis

The visual signs in the meme are crucial to the analysis when deciphering the meaning and impact of the message being conveyed. In this particular meme, there are two important signs; the text and the cartoon character representing a witch. The question raised by the meme is placed in the center and at the bottom of the frame, underscoring the main theme. The central placement of the witch suggests a dominant and authoritative role. Moreover, her prominent positioning in the frame captures the reader’s attention and influences their understanding of the meme. The minimal background in the frame directs the reader’s attention to the thought-provoking question raised by the meme. Additionally, direct eye contact established between the viewers and the cartoon character creates a sense of engagement and connection. The strong and assertive body language complimented with a confused expression, foregrounds the disparity established between the adjectives and the connotations they carry. Additionally, the depiction of the subject at eye level creates a sense of equality and relatability minimizing the power differentials. The witch image is used to reinforce gender inequality and marginalize women who push back against our patriarchal society (Rosen 2017, p.21). The color of the cartoon’s dress hints at strength, and confidence, reflecting the power and authoritative role of the

character. The meme using visual cues highlights the stereotypical perception of confident and powerful women.

4.2.3 Meme No. 03

When you are a feminist and
somebody tries to insult you by telling
you "with these ideas no man will ever
want to marry you"



Figure No. 29: Meme No. 03 (Reddit)

The meme depicts an intriguing and interesting situation where feminists often face a common challenge within the patriarchal society. It appears to highlight those patriarchal societal expectations and norms dictate that women's primary role is to get married often with being subservient to the male. The statement that "with these ideas, no man will ever want to marry you" indicates that the male gender perceives the women who challenge their dominating role and are self-assured, as threatening and undesirable.

4.2.3.1 Textual Analysis

The meme presents a common challenge that feminists within a patriarchal society often face, reinforcing the stereotypical notion of marriage. The text in the first part of the meme is presented against a plain white background, creating the tone and setting for the discussion. The simple vocabulary makes the meme engaging and points at the stereotype that liberated women often hear. Moreover, the casual word choice creates a humorous twist within the meme. The clause presented in inverted commas in the first part hints at the dilemma or reinforcement of the stereotype, indicating that the qualities of an upright and strong woman are not appreciated by men in the patriarchal society. Contrastingly, the capitalized text "YOU HAVE NO POWER HERE" placed at the bottom of the frame against the picture of Albus Dumbledore hints at the declaration of power and agency. Albus Dumbledore's character is known for his wisdom, authority, and strength. The use of his character to present the capitalized text emphasizes the message that the women are

asserting their power and rejecting limitations imposed on them. This further implies that women have no say in the domain of marriage, in a traditional patriarchal society. This juxtaposition of the meme highlights a clash between societal expectations and women's empowerment.

4.2.3.2 Visual Analysis

The deliberate placement of the text against a plain background in the first part of the meme effectively contrasts with the powerful character image in the second part. This contrast serves to emphasize the clash between societal expectations and feminist women. The text in the second part is placed against the character of Albus Dumbledore who is known for his strength, authority, and wisdom in popular culture. Moreover, his authoritative role and dominant personality are fortified by his central positioning within the frame. The asymmetrical framing of the meme sets the stage for a satirical commentary on the ideas of feminism within the patriarchy. The meme reinforces the marginalized and peripheral role assigned to women in patriarchy, as it does not contain a female figure. The only reference to the female gender is the word Feminist. Additionally, the direct eye contact between the subject and the audience of the meme establishes a connection and conveys a sense of relatability. Similarly, the prominent positioning of a male character to present the satirical comment on the feminist draws attention to the main theme and dominates the visual space. Furthermore, the laughing expression of the subject highlights the irony of the situation. It highlights the absurdity of the stereotype that feminists are weak and submissive, particularly in the context of marital relationships within the patriarchal culture.

4.2.4 Meme No. 04

When my wife asks if she can go out with her girlfriends



Figure No. 30: Meme No. 04 (Reddit)

The meme presents a commentary on the dominant and authoritative role assigned to men in the context of marriage and relationships. The man's relaxed posture in contrast to the classroom setting highlights male dominance not only in relationships but also in broader social contexts.

4.2.4.1 Textual Analysis

The simple vocabulary and word choice create a connection between the audience and the subject of the meme, further engaging the audience with the core message of the meme. It further ensures the relatability and comprehensible nature of the core message by a broader audience. The text placed at the top establishes the context and sets the scene for the commentary. This introductory text can influence the understanding and interpretation of the viewers. Moreover, the use of first-person pronouns by the man depicted in the meme reinforces his authoritative and dominating role. This choice of language indicates a sense of entitlement, and superiority aligning with the meme's commentary on prevalent gender dynamics.

4.2.4.2 Visual Analysis

The placement of the text at the top, as in the header provides the topic of discussion for the audience. It further establishes the meme's context, revolving around the power dynamics within marriage. The main subject is a man placed at the center of the frame, indicating his dominant and authoritative role in the context of marriage. However, the situational context depicts the classroom setting, reflecting the dominance and authoritative positioning of the male gender in broader social contexts. Moreover, the minimal background of the meme directs the viewer's attention to the main theme highlighted. The lack of eye contact between the male subject and viewers creates a lack of interest and fosters the feeling of detachment, further implying the realization of the superiority and entitlement of the male gender. This superiority is reinforced by the prominent positioning of the subject and his assertive body posture. The visual imagery of the man being at ease and relaxed suggests a sense of comfort and control, reflecting the prevalent power dynamics in marriages. However, the visual contrast between the relaxed body posture and the formal setting of the classroom may emphasize the theme of male dominance and power not solely in relationships but also broader societal contexts. The meme through its visual and textual cues subscribes to the dominant gender ideology and

reinforces the power dynamics that give man a position of power and authority in marriage.

4.2.5 Meme No. 05



Figure No. 31: Meme No. 05 (Reddit)

The meme depicts two cartoon characters, Cindy Vortex (girl) and Jimmy Neutron (boy). In the meme, Neutron is excited after someone calls him “based” which likely means he’s happy about being authentic. On the other hand, Vortex is shown as unhappy because she has received the same compliment for the twentieth time in the day. This meme sheds light on the adjectives used to describe both genders and their reaction towards it.

4.2.5.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme describes two individuals; a girl and a boy. The girl is awarded the same compliment multiple times a day, emphasizing the female’s requirement for validation. While the adjective “based” is attributed to the male gender, highlighting their authenticity. Both the adjectives used reflect positive connotations however, their implications are different. The adjective “based” undermines genuine, unapologetically themselves and having a strong sense of individuality. In contrast, the adjective “pretty” used to describe the girl indicates her attractive and aesthetically pleasing personality. Both adjectives subscribe to the traditional notions and attributes used to define gender. It further implies that girls are regarded for their physical attractiveness while boys are valued for their unusual or controversial beliefs by juxtaposing the terms "pretty" and "based". Interestingly, the meme presents a contrast between the frequency of the compliment received by the girl and the infrequent

acknowledgment that a boy receives. This contrast highlights that the compliments and adjectives directed toward boys are potentially more meaningful.

4.2.5.2 Visual Analysis

The placement of the subjects in two distinct frames serves as a visual metaphor for the contrasting responses of the genders when receiving compliments. The boy's direct eye contact with the audience expresses his happiness and delightful smile, displaying his openness and appreciation. While the girl's lack of eye contact conveys a feeling of detachment and disinterestedness. Additionally, the background plays a pivotal role in undermining the meme's content and message. The boy's reaction occurs in a bathroom, implying a private space where he can genuinely express himself. On the other hand, the girl is depicted standing in an open space that reflects societal consciousness and the perceived need for validation underscoring the gender-specific roles and expectations. The intentional difference in frame sizes influences the audience's interpretation of the message conveyed. The smaller frame surrounding the girl creates a remote and isolated atmosphere, undermining her disinterest. In contrast, the large frame surrounding the boy conveys a sense of intimacy and focus, further accentuating his engagement with the audience. This is further supported by the social distance between both genders. The female is depicted in a medium shot that conveys formality or remoteness. While a close-up of the boy gives the viewer a sense of closeness or connection. The angle at which the characters are depicted is different in both frames. The high-angle shot of the girl hints at the subordinate role and the societal need for validation within a patriarchal setting. In contrast, the boy is presented from a low angle, emphasizing his superiority and powerful position. Further, the color of the boy's shirt is red, signifying the passion and an urge for individuality; however, the color of the girl's dress is not visible which implies her marginalized role. The meme subscribes to the prevalent dominant gender ideology by employing visual and textual cues. It supports the notion that male and female expectations and standards for behavior and appearance are different. It also reinforces the idea that girls always have a societal need for validation while boys genuinely represent themselves and do not care about societal expectations.

4.2.6 Meme No. 06



Figure No. 32: Meme No. 06 (Reddit)

The meme presents two scenarios using the same context. The first scenario shows an exchange of information between two girls who just met. The second scenario presents a meeting between two boys, having a discussion and bidding farewell to each other. The title of both scenarios suggests that the meetings are happening between two strangers.

4.2.6.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme hints at a casual conversation between the girls and the boys who met each other for the first time. The females are depicted using slang like "Insta" and "aww", implying an informal social interaction between them. It further suggests that women are more obsessed with social media. In contrast, the guys speak in an old-fashioned, formal manner, using phrases like "till fate may reunite us again" and "farewell". The girls speak in brief, straightforward words, which suggest a seamless flow of information. The boys speak in lengthy, intricate phrases, which suggest a lengthy, slow farewell. The conversation between the girls is suggestive of their interest in building social relationships while the conversation between the stranger boys is inclined to let go of the interaction. The continuous capitalization used to highlight the conversation between both groups of strangers creates emphasis on the core message of the meme. Moreover, the casual vocabulary and references to the social media platform indicate its relevance in modern times. This further accentuates the stereotype that women trust strangers easily and exchange information in the first meeting. While boys have a

good conversation, they don't exchange any social information, emphasizing their lack of interest in socialization.

4.2.6.2 Visual Analysis

The deliberate use of direct eye contact between participants of both genders establishes a sense of connection and interaction between them. This serves to emphasize the contrasting communicative pattern used within each gender group, further highlighting the dynamics between the participants of both genders. The gestures and facial expression of the girls hints at the involvement of the girls in the conversation. In contrast, the plain facial expression of the boys creates a sense of disinterestedness and detachment from the strangers. The meme effectively engages the audience by concealing the background and directing the viewer's focus and attention to the message being conveyed. The stark contrast between the communicative styles underscores the behavior of both genders when meeting a stranger from the same gender. It reinforces the idea that women tend to socialize more as compared to the male gender. The meme utilizes semiotic modes to subscribe to dominant gender ideology.

4.2.7 Meme No. 07



Figure No. 33: Meme No. 07 (Reddit)

The meme depicts a young girl who is yelling to smash the patriarchy, yet humorously noting that she requires assistance from her father to do so. The meme presents a satirical comment on how the young ones are involved in using strong terminologies highlighted on the internet while having no idea about the concept and background information.

4.2.7.1 Textual Analysis

The meme's text is an important sign as it provides context and guides the viewer's perception and understanding of the meme. The words chosen and their strategic placement in the meme evoke specific emotions and influence the reader's perception of the meme. The meme features a single exclamatory clause strategically placed in a way that incorporates the message and the humorous and satirical turn. Notably, all the words in the clause are consistently capitalized, while the phrase DADDY is written in a larger font size to capture the reader's mind and attention. Through this capitalization and font manipulation, the meme effectively highlights and reinforces the prevailing power structures within the patriarchal society. The deliberate placement of the phrase DADDY in the center and bottom of the frame creates a comical pun within the context of the meme. Further the use of the phrase "SMASH THE PATRIARCHY" alludes to the digital culture, challenging the prevalent social gender norms and roles. The specific word choice complemented with incorrect grammar foregrounds its relatable theme within the context of the meme. Furthermore, the clever wordplay employed in the meme aligns perfectly with its overarching themes. The meme subscribes to dominant gender ideology by its clever usage and strategic placement of the phrase, Daddy, notably reinforcing that the girl needs the assistance of her father in smashing the patriarchy.

4.2.7.2 Visual Analysis

The meme utilizes visual cues to convey a unified meaning. The prominent positioning of the girl in the middle of the frame captivates the audience's focus and attention, conveying a sense of power and authority. The minimal background underscores the central theme of the meme, diverting attention to the focal message. The direct eye contact of the girl with the audience establishes a connection and creates a sense of relatability. The central positioning of her character conveys her significance, drawing attention and dominating the visual space. The girl's confident and assertive body posture and yelling expression further accentuate her powerful stance. Moreover, the red color of her tunic hints at her aggression and frustration with the patriarchy and the prevalence of gender norms. However, the lower center placement of the reference to her dad's role reinforces traditional gender roles, subtly emphasizing the prevailing gender norms and ideologies.

4.2.8 Meme No. 08



Figure No. 34: Meme No. 08 (Reddit)

The meme presents two people playing the Uno card game. The card in the left frame presents two choices: either accept that women are right or draw 25 more cards. The second image presents a man drawing 25 cards, implying enduring the penalty of drawing extra cards is more beneficial than accepting that a woman is right.

4.2.8.1 Textual Analysis

The meme uses a casual and colloquial vocabulary, highlighting the playfulness and humorous nature of the meme. The text printed on the Uno card suggests that the female gender is right however, the text added using a marker, adds an amusing twist to the game giving a choice to the other player. The slang vocabulary and grammatically wrong sentence and spelling gives the meme a lighthearted and informal tone. The language suggests that the Uno player is reluctant to concede their partner's point of view and would rather take a loss than do so. This implies that the male gender is reluctant to accept that the female gender is right and worthy of respect. The meme subtly reinforces a gender stereotype where it's suggested that the male gender might be hesitant to accept the female gender's correctness or acknowledge their perspective.

4.2.8.2 Visual Analysis

The placement of the Uno card in the center of the left frame emphasizes its significance in the game. In contrast, the right frame depicts a man who chooses the second option added with a marker. The close-up shot of the Uno card creates a sense of connection, drawing attention to the main content of the meme. Conversely, the individual holding the card is presented in a long shot, emphasizing his supporting role in the game. Moreover, the angle of the frame also plays a significant role in manipulating

the viewer's interpretation. The eye-angle shot of the Uno card creates a sense of relatability with the viewers and establishes a connection. The meme reinforces gender stereotypes using different semiotic modes. It further communicates the idea that the male gender is stubborn and does not acknowledge their partner's perspectives.

4.2.9 Meme No. 09

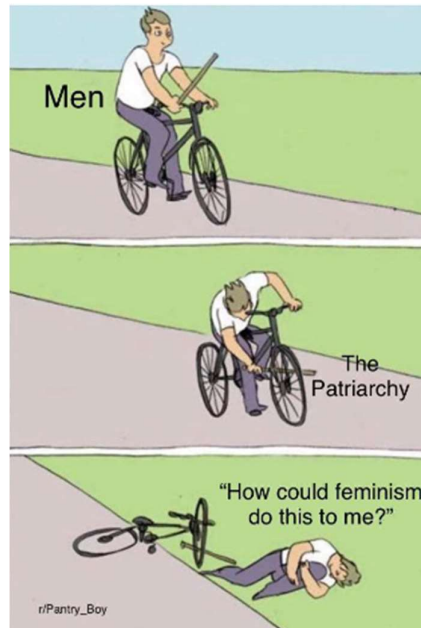


Figure No. 35: Meme No. 09 (Reddit)

The meme presents a contrast between concepts of patriarchy and feminism, using three different scenarios to highlight the core message. The first scenario shows a man riding his bicycle while holding a stick, reflecting his capabilities and freedom. It portrays a positive image of the strengths and attributes that are often associated with men. The second scenario labeled “The Patriarchy” hints at the societal expectations associated with the male gender. Here, the male is seen to be involved in the act of fixing a problem while still riding the bicycle. In contrast to the first two scenarios, the third scenario highlights the critical aspect of the meme. It suggests that feminism is being blamed for the conditions created by patriarchy.

4.2.9.1 Textual Analysis

The three scenarios depicted by the meme are tagged as “Men”, “the Patriarchy” and “How could feminism do this to me?” respectively. In the first scenario, “Men” hints at the freedom and the ability of the man to ride a bicycle while holding a stick in one

hand, symbolizing his skill and flexibility. The second scenario, “The Patriarchy” specifically highlights the societal pressures and expectations of the male gender. The visual representation of solving a problem while riding a bicycle highlights the notion of multitasking i.e. excelling in various roles simultaneously even if those roles are contradictory. His act of placing the stick between the moving bicycle wheels illustrates that such expectations can lead to a fall. In contrast, the third scenario, “How could Feminism do this to me?” presents a humorous and satirical twist. The second scenario very clearly shows that the man falls off the bicycle due to his stupidity in placing the stick in the moving wheels of the bicycle and ironically blames Feminism for his fall. There is no particular capitalization pattern highlighted but the first letter of the abstract nouns, Patriarchy and Feminism draws attention to the main theme while highlighting the contrast between the two. Moreover, the vocabulary used in the meme is simple and engaging. The question raised in the third scenario, "How could feminism do this to me?" conveys the man's bewilderment at the feminist movement. The feminist movement promotes gender equality for both men and women. However, another angle to look at this meme is that the rise of feminism and awareness of women’s rights has led to the fall of patriarchy. The text suggests that the guy holds feminism accountable for his deeds and results. Additionally, the meme suggests that the man rejects and does not understand the concept of feminism.

4.2.9.2 Visual Analysis

The visuals of the meme present a chain of events where the only subject in question is the man. There is no placement of a female figure; the only reference to the female gender is the word Feminism. Moreover, the sequence of actions in the meme sets the tone for creating a stark contrast between concepts of patriarchy and feminism. The absence of direct eye contact between the subject and the viewer hints at the character’s disinterest in acknowledging certain realities and changes. The asymmetrical framing of the scenes adds visual interest to the meme’s message while setting the humorous and satirical mood of the meme. The medium shot used to depict the individual in the first and third panels gives him an air of neutrality or detachment. The low angle of the first two scenarios reflects the supremacy of the male gender in Patriarchy. The qualities and abilities of the male gender highlighted in the first two scenarios allude to the traditional patriarchal roles and societal expectations. However, the change in camera angle in the third scenario indicates the fall of patriarchal cultures and traditional roles, further

implying a steady hold of feminism. Moreover, the green background of the meme symbolizes harmony, nature, and growth contradicting the central themes potentially serving as a clever irony that adds depth to the message of the meme. The meme subscribes to traditional gender roles simultaneously conveying the reluctance of men to adapt to ideas of feminism. It highlights the absurdity of holding feminism responsible for men's own decisions and results.

4.2.10 Meme No. 10

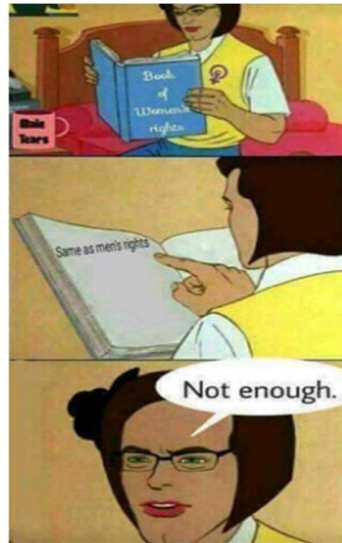


Figure No. 36: Meme No. 10 (Reddit)

The meme presents a male character dressed as a female holding a book titled "*Book of Women's Rights*". The text on the book defines women's rights as "same as men's rights", setting the stage for a discussion on gender equality. However, the character's reactions to the text of the book indicate that the current efforts are still not enough. This further implies that just publishing a book does not make a difference, practical implication is what makes the difference.

4.2.10.1 Textual Analysis

The male character in the meme is holding a book titled "*Book of Women's Rights*", emphasizing the importance of educating about women's rights. Similarly, the text in the next few pages suggests "same as men's rights", alluding to the patriarchal notions where men and women were treated differently. The title "*Book of Women's Rights*" in the meme is a symbolic representation of the focus on women's rights and the necessity of creating awareness of gender equality. The title encapsulates the essence and

the main theme of the meme. The simple word choice and vocabulary make the meme engaging and cater to the understanding of the audience. Moreover, the phrase "Not enough." used in the third frame undermines the disappointment of the character over the current efforts to achieve an equal status falling short of the broader goals. The meme further accentuates that the subject of women's rights is more nuanced or multifaceted. It also suggests that more attention is needed for practical implications and awareness of women's rights.

4.2.10.2 Visual Analysis

The meme depicts a male character dressed as a female, strengthening his expression of confusion in the third frame. The central position of the book draws attention and conveys the importance of the book title. The title efficiently engages the reader's mind and manipulates his understanding of the meme's core message. However, the revelation of the character's gender and his expression in the third frame hints at the disappointment over the current efforts to achieve an equal status. Moreover, it can be interpreted as only the bookish words and texts are not enough to recognize women's rights; some practical implementation is also required. Moreover, the first and third picture is depicted from an eye-level shot, creating a sense of relatability and establishing a connection with the viewers. However, the camera angle of the second frame suggests the vulnerability and a subordinate role, implying that women still have to fight for having same rights as men. The meme utilizes visual and textual cues to subvert to dominant gender ideology and challenge prevalent gender stereotypes.

4.2.11 Meme No. 11



Figure No. 37: Meme No. 11 (Reddit)

The meme highlights the difference between the drawings of girls and boys in art class, reinforcing the traditional aspects of the patriarchal society. The girls drawing highlight their love for classic painting highlighting the doubled-faced individuals. While the boys drawing projects chaos and conflict.

4.2.11.1 Textual Analysis

The text uses title sentences to highlight the difference in the artwork of girls and boys. The text itself perpetuates the gender difference. This comparison between the genders creates a generalized notion about girls being good at arts. Capitalization, punctuation, and font are also used in the text to highlight specific title phrases. The sentences' ends and the speaker's tone are indicated by the punctuation. The use of uppercase denotes the speaker's regular or informal demeanor. The font suggests that the speaker is writing in a formal or straightforward style.

4.2.11.2 Visual Analysis

The girl's drawing presents a dual-face individual inviting deep introspections and contemplations on her identity as an individual. The drawing is reflective of the internal and external tensions and conflicts that women often face during their lives. The drawing implies seriousness and uses artistic impressions to depict and communicate the hardships and challenges experienced by the girls, further underscoring the girl's ability to produce an evocative art piece, their suffering; further emphasizing the ability of girls to produce such an art piece. The subject of art has always been associated with the female gender, which is reflective of their skills and abilities. However, the second image highlights the use of drawing and contrasting colors by the boys to show a battleground. Moreover, the sketch of the mobile in the center alludes to the technological and digital culture. The contrasting colors used in the boys drawing convey the tensions, conflicts, and chaos of a battleground, undermining the stereotype that boys need to go for battles and wars. Further, the eye-level projection of the girl's drawing captivates the reader's mind and influences their perception of the art while a high-angle projection of the boy's drawing implies a sense of vulnerability in a state of war. Overall, the visuals of the meme subscribe to the dominant gender ideology, reinforcing the conventional gender norms and expectations. It reinforces the association of the female gender with artistic pursuits and the male gender with themes of war and battles.

4.2.12 Meme No. 12



Figure No. 38: Meme No. 12 (Reddit)

The meme depicts a family posing for a family portrait. Notably, the hands of the female members are tied and their mouths are covered with tape. Moreover, the board held by the father in the frame presents the title for the commentary i.e. “Peace on Earth”, reemphasized by placing it at the bottom of the frame.

4.2.12.1 Textual Analysis

The meme projects a satirical comment through precise text and a specific structure. The phrase “finally...” is rendered in uppercase letters followed by an ellipsis, effectively captivating the viewer’s focus and attention. The anticipation of the viewers is answered by the text placed at the bottom of the frame, underscoring the central theme of the message. The intentional capitalization of the message written on the board held by the father creates a visual metaphor, enhancing the meme’s context; and drawing attention to the core message of the meme highlighted at the bottom of the frame. The intentional capitalization of the letters draws attention to the visual metaphor presented within the context of the meme. Moreover, the use of the word “Finally...” creates a sense of excitement and suspense thus effectively capturing the viewer’s focus and attention. The simple vocabulary and word choice of the meme create a sense of relatability and establish a connection with a broad spectrum of audiences.

4.2.12.2 Visual Analysis

The meme presents a critique of the societal construct of presenting a harmonious family unit while ignoring the unequal power dynamics that might exist within the family.

The placement of the signs in close proximity presents a harmonious family unit while the bounded females and taped mouths of the female figures highlight the subjugation and suppression of gender within the family dynamic. The meme with its visual projects the idea that peace can prevail in a family when the females are silenced and oppressed. The visual representation of tied hands and taped mouths serves as a powerful metaphor for the limitations and restrictions women face in a family. Moreover, the small boy giving a thumbs up at the back reinforces the idea that the male gender has a powerful and dominating role despite their age and size. The prominent positioning of the male figure holding the board evokes a sense of dominance and authority. The direct eye contact between the subjects and the audience creates a sense of relatability. Moreover, the eye contact complemented by a smirk on the male figure's face indicates a sense of achievement and accomplishment, implying the fulfillment of the goal to create peace on Earth. However, the eye contact that the female figures establish with the viewers presents the other side of the coin, suggesting the viewers contemplate and reflect on the visual metaphor highlighted in the frame. Additionally, the harmonious color scheme enhances the visual appeal of the meme, creating a sense of unity within the family. However, the green tape that covers the mouths grabs the viewer's attention to the core theme highlighted in the meme's context. This disruption of the color scheme conveys the tension and conflicts, reflecting the power dynamics existing within the family. The meme subscribes to dominant gender ideology, simultaneously inviting the viewers to reflect and raise their voices against such misogynistic representations.

4.2.13 Meme No. 13



Figure No. 39: Meme No. 13 (Reddit)

The meme presents a contrast between our imagination and our realities. The meme seems to offer insights into the male perspectives. The woman on the left has a

powerful physical appearance holding a shield and a sword, while the woman on the right is supposedly a woman of intellectual strength.

4.2.13.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme presents a comparison between the wishes and realities of life. The meme presents an insight into the male perspectives. The title sentences of both frames are symbolic of the visual representations within the frame. The title of the frame on the left is “The powerful women we want” presenting the ideal powerful and strong woman. In contrast, the right frame titled “The powerful women we get” depicts a woman from real life whose serious expression indicates her intellectual abilities. The titles are not written according to the rules of grammar and punctuation suggesting an informal and casual style of language used in memes. Moreover, the repetition of the adjective “powerful” to describe both the women in respective frames undermines the contrast between the imaginative and real-life portrayal of strength in women.

4.2.13.2 Visual Analysis

The central placement of both women in the respective frames conveys a sense of dominance and power. However, the idealistic woman presented in the left frame has an attractive body language, enhanced by the sword and shield in her hand. The male perspective highlighted in the left frame suggests that they want a female who is active, fun, and energetic physically. The contrasting image of the woman in the right frame hints at her intellectual strength and open-mindedness. The low-angle projection of the ideal woman in the left frame conveys a sense of authority and power. This projection further implies that playfulness and physically energetic female is desired by most men. Conversely, the real woman on the right appears to be studious, intellectual, and mentally strong, implying that she won't take men's orders to define her. The eye contact between the woman in the right frame and the audience creates a sense of relatability and captures the reader's attention. This highlights the demand for equality and awareness of women's individuality. Moreover, the colors used in both the frames complement the titles represented. The contrasting colors used to paint the imaginative and ideal woman reflect energy, passion, and strength. The dull and pastel colors used to project the reality hint at the boring and straightforward nature of women. The meme uses visual cues to promote prevalent gender stereotypes, implying that strong, courageous, and heroic women are desired while mentally strong and assertive women are not heroic and courageous;

suggesting that there is no difference or gap between powerful women's aspirations and realities.

4.2.14 Meme No. 14



Figure No. 40: Meme No. 14 (Reddit)

The meme humorously features Gru the character from “Despicable Me” in the role of a father figure, explaining the principles of feminism. The meme showcases four distinct scenarios, illustrating the ideas of feminists in dismantling patriarchal norms. The meme majorly deals with the theme of changing surnames. It showcases the character Gru teaching the aim of feminism.

4.2.14.1 Textual Analysis

The meme depicts four statements in four distinct scenarios, using a simple and easy-to-understand vocabulary, to engage a broader audience in the discussion. The discussion presented in the meme revolves around the aims of feminism to get rid of the patriarchal subjugation and notions imposed on the female gender, as outlined in the first scenario. In the subsequent scenarios, the discussion surrounds the topic of surnames. Traditionally, women have been known by their father’s surnames before marriage and after marriage by their husband’s surnames, a practice that has obscured and concealed individual identities. Moreover, in the third scenario, the meme presents a logical solution suggesting the use of the mother’s name as a surname; however, this is not embraced universally by feminists. In the final scene, it alludes to the proposition proposed by patriarchy that they should be known by their grandfather's name. This indirect approach presents a subtle way to reinforce patriarchal notions by initiating a conversation about recognition of the female individual’s identity only to conclude with a reference to the patriarchal stance. The vocabulary of the meme is engaging and thought-provoking, calling for attention and revisiting feminist ideals.

4.2.14.2 Visual Analysis

The meme includes two signs that dominate the visual space in all four scenarios, the character Gru and the board representing the text of the meme. The only presence of a male character establishes his sense of authority and power, further underscoring the male perspective on feminism and its aims. The absence of a female figure from the frame hints at the peripheral and marginalized hold of women in a patriarchal society. The minimal background directs the audience's focus and attention to the central theme and text of the meme. The direct eye contact between the character and the audience in the first three scenarios establishes a connection and creates a sense of engagement. However, his eye contact with the viewers breaks in the fourth scenario, emphasizing the change in the discussion. His baffled and confusing expression creates a satirical comment on the approach of feminists towards the issue of surnames. Moreover, the confident gestures and body language of the character convey a sense of power and authority. The eye-level projection of the scenarios makes the meme relatable and minimizes the power differentials between the audience and the character. The patriarchal notions are reinforced by the male perspective highlighted in the meme. The black color of Gru's suit conveys a sense of power and authority as black symbolizes dominance

4.2.15 Meme No. 15



Figure No. 41: Meme No. 15 (Reddit)

The meme depicts a scenario set in Reddit's office during a meeting. The boss dressed in a brown suit asks his employees about the kind of meme they should make and

share on the occasion of Women's Day. He receives different opinions from his employees highlighted in the dialogue box. One of them presents an idea to focus positively on women on Women's Day rather than criticizing men. However, the boss's reaction to this statement is severe and he throws the employee out of the window.

4.2.15.1 Textual Analysis

The meme's text presents a discussion about the memes for celebrating Women's Day. The boss asks for suggestions from his team about the meme, in a simple and engaging vocabulary. The word choice is simple yet specific, emphasizing the formal discussion. The responses from his employees captivate the reader's attention and influence their perception of Reddit and the kind of memes shared on social media platforms. One of the employees presents a negative approach: criticizing the Google Doodle, a search engine used by Google to celebrate various events and days. This perspective spreads negativity rather than addressing the issue constructively. The girl sitting beside him reinforces the idea of criticizing another platform for its support of Women's Day. Contrasting these opinions, the third employee presents a logical answer to the question posed at the start by the boss. He suggests celebrating women's achievements and success indirectly suggesting that Google's actions are relevant, further suggesting that we should talk about men on Men's Day. The meme effectively employs simple language and vocabulary thus, making the meme interesting and engaging.

4.2.15.2 Visual Analysis

The contextual placement of the signs indicates the interaction between the subjects depicted in the meme. The representation of the male figure at the head of the table hints at his dominating and authoritative role, implying that he is the boss. Further, the placement of other individuals at the sides of the table indicates their equal status in the job. Moreover, the presence of one female and four male figures in the meme conveys the unequal power dynamics in the workplace. Moreover, the eye-level projection of the discussion creates a sense of relatability and influences the viewer's perceptions and interpretation. The close-up image of the boss and the third employee presents the opposite viewpoints, creating a sense of engagement. However, the severe reaction of the boss to the employee's suggestion alludes to the boss's traditional mindset. His rigid thoughts about patriarchy restrict him from celebrating women's achievements and successes in various fields. The meme uses visual and textual strategies for not

acknowledging women and subscribing to gender stereotypes. It implies that when it comes to creating memes for Women's Day, meme creators are frequently stupid or disrespectful.

4.2.16 Meme No. 16

Girls when they see a red
plane: OMG its so pretty

Boys:



Figure No. 42: Meme No. 16 (Reddit)

The meme highlights a situation from a game presenting a boy flying a plane and also attacking his enemy. The text in black written at the top sets the mood for discussion. While the words written at the top right corner of the frame are lyrics of a song transcribed as follows,

“... Born a soldier from the horseback to the skies
That's where the legend will arise
And he's flying
Higher, the king of the sky
He's flying too fast and he's flying too high
Higher, an eye for an eye
The legend will never die...”

4.2.16.1 Textual Analysis

The language of the meme presents a contrast between the thought processes of both genders upon seeing a red plane. The text uses a casual and plain vocabulary to highlight the reaction of girls toward a red plane, accentuating their excitement. This highlights the shallow and naive character often associated with the female gender,

implying that girls are concerned about looks. Conversely, the lyrics are written in the top right corner of the frame creating the feeling of sacrifice and fighting for the country. The traditional roles are reinforced with the use of such vocabulary and lyrics, to highlight the difference in thoughts of the genders. Moreover, the continuous capitalization of the lyrics amplifies the central theme of the meme. It presents a commentary on societal stereotypes and gender expectations. The meme through its language subscribes to the prevalent traditional gender norms, further accentuating the attributes associated with both genders.

4.2.16.2 Visual Analysis

The prominent positioning of the plane dominates the visual space emphasizing the content of the meme. The only subject presented in the meme is an individual dressed in a pilot's uniform, implying a war is going on. The blurry and fuzzy text presented in the right corner makes it difficult for the audience to read, yet it captivates the audience's attention. In contrast, the thoughts of the girl are represented in plain black font style, using intensifiers, implying their reaction to the plane is only about its appearance. The eye-level shot of the picture creates a sense of engagement and reflects a feeling of patriotism and involvement. Moreover, the red colors that dominate the visual space highlight passion, anger, and revenge, emphasizing the context of a war. The meme subtly uses visual cues to reinforce traditional gender notions and perspectives, suggesting a superficial and naïve character of the female gender. While the male gender is represented as patriotic, brave, courageous, and legendary. The meme uses visual and textual cues to ridicule prevalent gender stereotypes.

4.2.17 Meme No. 17



Figure No. 43: Meme No. 17 (Reddit)

The meme depicts a male individual recalling his interaction with a woman. The way he defines her is by projecting concepts of misogyny. The male acknowledges her strengths but also objectifies her by emphasizing her physical appearance specifically referring to her heavy breasts.

4.2.17.1 Textual Analysis

The meme utilizes one sentence written at the bottom of the image, capturing the reader's attention and focus. The vocabulary and word choice of the sentence in the meme draws attention to the misogynistic views of the male gender. The easy vocabulary caters to the understanding of a broader audience, manipulating their perceptions of the meme's core message. Moreover, the adjectives used to describe the female grab the attention of the researcher. The creator defines the female in context as a strong and resilient woman. These adjectives carry positive connotations emphasizing the subversion of patriarchal notions. However, the sentence takes a turn by objectifying a woman by referring to her physical appearance embodying a misogynistic belief and ideology. The reference and description of her breasts as nice and heavy question the first part in which the male was seen appreciating the strength of the female. The contrasting presentation of affirmative adjectives and a focus on physical appearance perpetuates harmful stereotypes. With its vocabulary and adjectives, the meme effectively subscribes to the dominant gender ideology.

4.2.17.2 Visual Analysis

The prominent positioning of the male in the center of the frame draws attention and conveys its significance and dominant role. The large size of his frame serves to amplify his authoritative demeanor, portraying him as authoritative and influential. The intentional use of minimal background by the creator channels the viewer's attention to the core message of the meme. Moreover, the dominance of visual space is conveyed by his prominent positioning and a close-up shot, conveying a sense of power and authority. The absence of a female figure in the frame highlights the marginalized and peripheral hold of the female in a patriarchal society. The strong and assertive body language complemented with a smirk that reflects his astonishment and amazement at the woman's heavy breasts conveys a sense of power and authority. Additionally, the projection of the scene at an eye-level angle creates a sense of relatability and builds a connection between the viewers and the subject. Furthermore, the blue color shirt of the main highlights its

association with the male gender, reflecting a traditional ideology. The meme through its textual and visual cues promotes and perpetuates harmful stereotypes that give the males authority and a position of control, further strengthening the unequal power dynamics.

4.2.18 Meme No. 18



Figure No. 44: Meme No. 18 (Reddit)

The meme's text conveys a strong and powerful message through its text and visuals. It shows a woman in the background while the text takes the front stage, emphasizing the core message conveyed.

4.2.18.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme presents a thought-provoking stance on contemporary society, challenging societal norms. By initiating a discussion about women's individuality, the meme cleverly taps into the discussion surrounding gender and identity. The text is placed strategically in the middle of the frame, emphasizing the primary message being communicated. The simple vocabulary defining different characters a woman plays within the patriarchy creates a sense of relatability. This choice makes the message more accessible and comprehensible to a wider audience. The meme very efficiently defies these societal roles by placing a red line over the roles assigned to women and encircling the first two words "she's someone". The meme further challenges traditional gender roles by highlighting the prevailing tendency to define women through their relationships with men. It promotes the idea of seeing women as individuals with their own distinct identities, rather than defining them solely based on societal roles. The meme's commentary using the adjectives to describe women underscores the broader societal context of the meme.

4.2.18.2 Visual Analysis

The placement of the text in the middle of the meme's frame dominates the visual space, drawing attention to the core message of the meme. The woman in the background facing the wall conveys a sense of disappointment and disagreement with her recognition as a mother, daughter, and wife. Additionally, the red line over the traditional roles and the encirclement of the phrase "she's someone" serves as a visual cue suggesting defiance of the prevalent gender roles. The red line symbolizes rejection while the encirclement adds emphasis to the phrase that undermines the importance of recognizing women's individuality. The concealment of the subject face reinforces her presence and subversion of the dominant culture. The placement of text in the very middle at an eye angle establishes a connection and creates a sense of relatability. Moreover, the character's depiction at an eye angle minimizes the power differentials, creating an air of respect and recognition. The strategic and clever use of textual and visual cues challenges the common stereotype of recognizing a woman by her association with the male gender. The meme efficiently challenges gender roles, emphasizing the recognition of women as individuals.

4.2.19 Meme No. 19



Figure No. 45: Meme No. 19 (Reddit)

The meme offers a thought-provoking stance on the feminist culture. It shows cases of the varied responses of feminist women towards the concept of equal rights and equal responsibilities.

4.2.19.1 Textual Analysis

The meme's text captures the responses of the feminists in the proposition highlighted in the frames on the right side. The propositions are "Equal Rights" and "Equal Responsibilities" highlighted against a plain black background. The meme questions the stance of feminism for equal rights, stressing the idea that with rights comes responsibilities. The response of feminists is presented in the frame adjacent to the proposition, highlighted in yellow color. The statement in the frame adjacent to equal responsibilities conveys a sense of excitement. The second statement opposite to the frame presenting "Equal responsibilities" conveys a feeling of disinterestedness. Moreover, the capitalization of the first letter of the phrase in the proposition suggests an emphasis and sets a serious tone for the meme's central message. The simple vocabulary of the meme engages the reader and creates an impact, further influencing the viewers' perceptions and responses. The meme presents feminism in a negative light, convincing the audience to subscribe to traditional notions of patriarchy.

4.2.19.2 Visual Analysis

The discussion in the meme revolves around the four scenarios; two of which highlight the propositions while the other two portray a feminist woman and her response to the proposition. The text in the frame on the right side dominates the visual space of the meme, grabbing the attention of the audience, and further conveying its significance. Similarly, the frame on the left side portrays a woman in the central frame, undermining her significance and power. The minimalistic background of the meme directs the viewer's attention to the central content of the meme. The direct eye contact between the feminist woman and the audience establishes a connection and conveys a sense of relatability, accentuating her assertive and powerful stance. This further subverts the dominant gender ideology; however, the context of the meme suggests otherwise. Her confident body language conveys a sense of power and authority. However, her hand gestures in the second image hint at the initiation of a discussion or can be interpreted as the explanation she is about to give. Additionally, the eye-level depiction of the meme communicates the message, while minimizing the power differentials. Overall, the textual and visual cues employed in the meme project are a negative portrayal of the concept of feminism, subtly reinforcing the traditional patriarchal notions of gender roles.

4.2.20 Meme No. 20

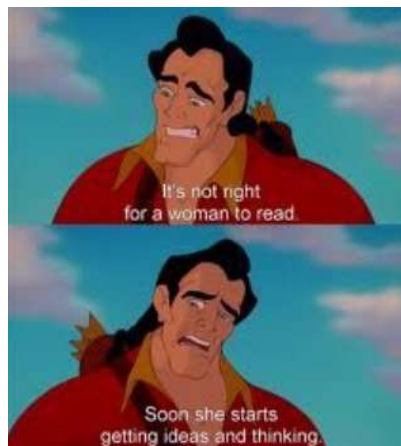


Figure No. 46: Meme No. 20 (Reddit)

The meme portrays a male perspective on the empowerment and education of women. The male character presents his views on the subject; highlighting that with education new ideas and thinking develop.

4.2.20.1 Textual Analysis

The meme's text subscribes to the traditional notions of limiting and restricting female gender. The male perspective highlighted in the meme is against women's empowerment and education, as it will lead to her recognition of self-worth and individuality. The meme's text comprises two sentences presenting a discussion on the topic of education for women. In the first sentence, the male figure advertently puts forth his view about women's education expressing that he is not in favor of allowing women to read. In the second sentence, he explains the reason that women will get new ideas and thinking, implying that they might outscore the male gender. The simple yet impactful vocabulary of the meme engages the audience and calls for attention and focus on the core message communicated. Moreover, the proper use of punctuation and sentence structure highlights the serious tone of the key message.

4.2.20.2 Visual Analysis

The visuals of the meme constitute a single male character, communicating his perspective on women's right to education. His prominent and central placement within the frame exhibits his dominating and authoritative role, conveying his significance. The lack of eye contact between the character and the audience of the meme conveys a lack of interest and a feeling of detachment, further emphasizing that he is not able to relate with

the audience. Additionally, the character is represented to have a strong bodily physique and is observed carrying a quiver, reinforcing societal expectations and gender-based roles. The low-angle depiction of the character conveys his authoritative and powerful role assigned by patriarchy. It further highlights his sense of authority and superiority. Moreover, the absence of a female figure within the frame underscores the peripheral and marginalized role of females in the patriarchal society. The meme utilizes visual and textual cues to subscribe to dominant gender ideology, reinforcing the common gender stereotypes.

4.2.21 Meme No. 21



Figure No. 47: Meme No. 21 (Reddit)

The meme presents a relatable scenario probably set in a school environment. In the first scenario, a teacher is seen placing a notice over the window and conveying a strong message. The message presented in the first scenario might provoke powerful and impactful reactions from the students. The second scenario portrays an elderly man taking down the notice suggesting that the content might upset children if they were to read it.

4.2.21.1 Textual Analysis

The text in the first part of the meme very clearly puts forward the difference between the terms Feminist and Misandrist. Feminist advocates for equality between both genders whereas misandrists are the people who hate men. The text presented in the first part of the meme encapsulates the idea that a person misusing or confusing the term feminist with misandrist is a misogynistic person even if they are not. The meme's text conveys a thought-provoking and mind-boggling statement, expressing the view of a

feminist group. Additionally, in the second scenario a man who takes down the notice, implies that the text may provoke very strong reactions from people on Reddit. The reference to social media platforms alludes to the technological and contemporary society. It further suggests that sometimes people on social media platforms do not realize the problems or complexities of issues raised by misusing a term. The text suggests that there is miscommunication or disagreement between the groups or ideas. It also suggests that feminism and gender equality are issues that require education or understanding.

4.2.21.2 Visual Analysis

The central placement of the teacher placing the notice on the window hints at his dominant and authoritative role. However, in the subsequent scene, he is presented in a smaller frame as compared to the elderly man, emphasizing his subservient and inferior role. The elderly man seems to be a firm believer of patriarchy and he does not approve of feminism and equal rights, implying his misogynistic personality. There is no direct eye contact between the audience and the viewers, drawing attention to the core message of the meme. Moreover, the eye-angle shot of the first frame creates a sense of relatability and engages the audience with its intricate message. The characters in the background are observed to compete for attention with the main subjects outside the window, emphasizing their supporting roles. The meme highlights the confusion between feminists and misandrists through a lighthearted conversation in the meme. It implies that some people have a biased approach towards feminism and often confuse it with the term misandrists, presenting a misogynistic approach.

4.2.22 Meme No. 22



Figure No. 48: Meme No. 22 (Reddit)

The meme presents a satirical comment on women's success post-marriage. The meme undermines Hillary Clinton's achievements and success in her political career. By using offensive and dismissive language the meme devalues her efforts and hard work reducing her achievement to the context of her marriage.

4.2.22.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme is intentionally divided into two parts, highlighting the societal perception of women's success post-marriage. The easy and simple vocabulary employed creates a connection and engages the audience's thoughts and perceptions. Moreover, the adjective "Strong and Independent" to describe the women is placed in the central frame, grabbing the attention and focus of viewers. These adjectives carry positive connotations and such description subverts the traditional notions of the female gender. However, these adjectives are refuted by embedding these qualities in the context of marriage. The second part presents the irony and satirical comment, undermining the efforts of the female gender. By affiliating the strong and independent qualities of women with the context of marriage, the meme effectively highlights the disagreement between societal expectations and the accomplishment of women. Moreover, the noun phrase "the right guy" placed at the bottom used in the second part of the meme's text, undermines the traditional notion of women being opportunistic and materialistic. The text of the meme subverts dominant gender ideology by attributing women with positive adjectives. However, it simultaneously subscribes to and reinforces the patriarchal notion of marriage, consequently undermining and devaluing the women's efforts and hardships.

4.2.22.2 Visual Analysis

The meme presents Hillary Clinton as the prominent subject, dominating the visual space. Her central positioning creates a sense of power and the authoritative hold she has. However, the text of the meme devalues her accomplishments and political success by affiliating with her marriage. Her unconventional and peculiar facial expression in the meme adds a layer of intrigue and suggestion. The direct eye contact between the subject and the audience creates a sense of relatability and establishes a connection. The audience, specifically the married women can relate to the central theme conveyed in the meme. The meme subtly reinforces the stereotypical notion that women achieve success when they marry the right guy and on their own. The pink color of her suit highlights the traditional association of pink with the female gender.

4.2.23 Meme No. 23



Figure No. 49: Meme No. 23 (Reddit)

The meme depicts a dialogue between a male and female individual, reinforcing the misogynistic claim made by the girl. The dialogue revolves around victim blaming and mental health issues but takes a turn when the male introduces the topic of suicides. The girl's response is interesting and intriguing as she engages in the very behavior she appears to oppose – namely, victim blaming.

4.2.23.1 Textual Analysis

The meme text comprises three sentences with two of them spoken by the female and one by the male figure. The female's statement advocating against victim-blaming serves as a declaration of proper behavior. The comment is presented in bold font as compared to the other two dialogues, emphasizing its significance within the context of the meme. The male dialogue highlights suicide as a common practice by men under the age of 30, calling attention to mental health issues. However, the girl's response to this is intriguing, as she paradoxically engages in the very victim-blaming initially she refuted. There is no particular capitalization pattern observed in the meme however, the simple and impactful vocabulary of the meme makes it relatable and engaging. Moreover, it portrays that it's simple to articulate what one should do but putting those words into practice is entirely a different thing.

4.2.23.2 Visual Analysis

The meme depicts an interaction between two individuals a male and a female, presented through the cartoon faces. The prominent positioning of the female figure

articulating against concept of victim blaming in the center of the meme highlights the central theme. The minimal backgrounding of the meme channels the reader's focus and attention to the key elements and core message of the meme. The direct eye contact between the audience of the meme and the depicted subjects creates a sense of relatability, inviting them for a discussion on the topic. However, her strong and assertive body language conveys a sense of power and authority, implying her inclination toward feminism. Moreover, the eye-level projection of the meme creates a sense of engagement and relatability, minimizing the power differentials. In contrast, the depiction of the female figure in a red costume conveys a sense of danger and uncertainty, underscoring the dissonance between her words and actions. The meme subtly subscribes to gender ideology by spotlighting the incongruity between gender roles.

4.2.24 Meme No. 24



Figure No. 50: Meme No. 24 (Reddit)

The meme illustrates a scene that involves an interaction between two child-like dolls, playfully mimicking the gender stereotypes. The male doll is seen in an authoritative role dictating to the girl that she belongs to the house. The meme effectively engages and influences the reader's perception of the meme's core message, which is subscribing to dominant gender ideology.

4.2.24.1 Textual Analysis

The language of the meme comprises the title sentence, setting the mood and tone of the central theme propagated, emphasizing the traditional notions of patriarchy. Wood

(2007) notes that “language reflects and reinforces cultural values, including those about gender” (p.114). The language used in the meme’s title reflects the gender roles and societal expectations established by the patriarchy. However, the text on the yellow flag and the yellow sash of the girl is observed for the consistent capitalization, reinforcing the role of women in the political sphere. The flag’s text and the text on the sash suggest votes for women, emphasizing the political changes and awareness of women. The use of simple vocabulary makes the meme engaging and relatable to a wider audience. Moreover, the use of possessives in the text to highlight women’s place indicates a subscription to patriarchal notions. The meme with its text reinforces and subscribes to dominant gender ideology, further emphasizing the societal role and expectations assigned to the female gender.

4.2.24.2 Visual Analysis

The meme depicts a scene involving two child-like dolls representing gender stereotypes playfully. The prominent positioning of the male doll conveys the significant and authoritative role of the male gender in the patriarchal setting. The physical proximity between the dolls is suggestive of the interaction going between them where the male reinforces the traditional societal roles and expectations. The prominent positioning of the male figure in the center of the frame further accentuates his dominating and authoritative role. Additionally, the minimal background of the meme directs the viewer’s focus and attention to the central theme highlighted in the meme. The direct eye contact between the dolls in the meme conveys a sense of engagement and interaction. However, the lack of eye contact between the viewers and the subjects of the meme indicates their involvement in the conversation. Moreover, the confident and commanding body language of the male doll creates a sense of power and authority. While the passive and submissive body language of the female doll exhibits a subordinate role with a lack of power. Further, the girl wearing the sash and holding the flag is suggestive of her inclination towards subversion of dominant gender ideologies. However, the authority given to the male gender by the patriarchy restricts and confines the women’s functions and activities to the house. The deliberate use of child-like dolls to propagate harmful gender stereotypes amplifies the central theme of the meme. The meme efficiently subscribes to dominant gender ideology.

4.2.25 Meme No. 25



Figure No. 51: Meme No. 25 (Reddit)

The meme presents a girl standing confidently beside a dustbin containing the gender stereotypes prevalent in society. The title of the meme highlights the main objective of the meme, emphasizing the disposal of stereotypical gender roles and expectations.

4.2.25.1 Textual Analysis

The text of the meme comprises the title at the very top in large font size and prominent writing. The central theme presented by the meme is that gender stereotyping is trash and we should move out of the traditional perspectives and notions. However, the text written over the dustbin presents the gender stereotypes associated with both genders. On the dustbin, all the stereotypes are written in white color and uppercase letters, highlighting the gender stereotypes prevalent in our culture. It highlights the adjectives previously associated with both genders; male and female. The stereotypes associated with male gender are being aggressive, men don't cry, men are breadwinners, men are leaders, and many more. Adjectives with positive connotations were associated with the male gender, emphasizing the pressure of societal expectations on the male gender. On the contrary, the adjectives to describe females carried negative connotations and were associated with their physical appearance, highlighting their roles to be confined within the boundaries of the house. The subtle vocabulary used to reinforce gender roles can perpetuate harmful stereotypes, leading to a situation of chaos and conflict. Despite the meme's text highlighting stereotypes, it subverts the prevalent gender norms by placing the stereotypes in a dustbin. Moreover, the title of the meme effectively subverts dominant gender ideology with its simple and catchy vocabulary.

4.2.25.2 Visual Analysis

The meme portrays a feminist girl, positioned prominently beside the trash can containing the prevalent stereotypes. The central placement of the dustbin draws attention underscoring the core message of the meme of refuting the traditional gender roles. The substantial size of the trash can signify the need to dispose of the traditionally acclaimed societal roles and expectations. Moreover, the plain background of the meme directs the audience's attention and focus toward the central theme highlighted through the text of the meme. The direct eye contact between the subject and the audience creates a sense of connection and relatability, inviting contemplation on the subject of subversion of patriarchal notions. The meme carefully invites the audience to raise their voices against the societal expectations and gender roles assigned by the patriarchy. The confident body posture and gesture of the female conveys a sense of power and authority. her bright yellow outfit radiates warmth and energy, emphasizing her bold and commanding personality. The meme effectively challenges the gender-biased stereotype and societal expectations, conveying a strong and powerful statement to dispose of the patriarchal culture.

4.2.26 Conclusion

In summary, the comprehensive examination of Reddit memes revealed diversified intricacies and complexities of gender ideologies. A significant portion of these memes aligns with the conservative and orthodox gender ideology while some memes invite discussion and raise pertinent questions and concerns regarding varied perspectives of gender ideology, through their visual and textual cues. Notably, some memes subscribe to gender ideologies with their obvious textual and visual cues, while others subscribe to gender ideologies using subtle language and semiotic modes. Furthermore, the memes spotlight the polarity in societal attitudes towards both genders.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the major findings, reflection on the research questions, conclusions, and recommendations emanating from this study. This chapter presents a discussion of the significant findings drawn from the study, in light of the research question proposed by the researcher. The main aim of the research study was to reflect on gender representation in memes on two major platforms; Twitter and Reddit. The researcher carefully examined the semiotic modes employed in memes to generate meanings and influence the interpretation of the audience. The semiotic modes were analyzed on two levels; Textual and Visual analysis. The study further investigated whether these memes subscribe to or subvert dominant gender ideologies. In the first half of the chapter, striking and significant findings have been discussed followed by reflections on the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. In the end, recommendations have been forwarded for future researchers who are interested in carrying forward research in the realm of linguistics and gender studies.

5.1 Findings

The extensive analysis of 50 memes extracted from Twitter and Reddit has provided valuable insights into the intricacies of linguistic and visual modes. The memes were subject to analysis through the lens of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of semiotics. The research study aimed at the analysis of the semiotic modes employed in memes to convey meanings. The comprehensive analysis of memes on two different levels provided valuable insights into the complexities and intricacies of the semiotic modes involved in meaning-making processes. The research study aimed to highlight the subtle ways in which memes reinforce gender ideology, misogyny, and biases toward a particular gender. The analysis was carried out on two levels; textual analysis and visual analysis. The textual analysis aimed at revealing the vocabulary, the pattern of capitalization, and the adjectives used to describe both genders, emphasizing the underlying biases within the meme's content. Simultaneously, the visual analysis shed light on the strategic use of the placement of signs, framing, social distance, power and

angle, and the colors used to make the meme more impactful and amplify the message communicated. Overall, this research study undermines the meme's potential as a powerful vehicle of societal commentary and reinforces the notions related to gender. The findings of the present study are as follows;

- 1) Women are typically portrayed as subordinates and involved in household chores and activities while depicted as providers, and decision-makers. This representation often perpetuates stereotypical gender roles and contributes to gender inequality. These multimodal messages often reinforce the traditional gender roles and differences in a funny and celebratory manner.
- 2) The definition of merit is different for both genders. Women are expected to fulfill their societal roles, and household duties along with establishing their careers. This means they often have to balance between their traditional societal roles and career aspirations. On the other hand, men are conditioned to prioritize their careers over their relationships and familial responsibilities. This disparity within the genre of memes perpetuates and reinforces the traditional stereotypical gender biases.
- 3) The adjectives used to describe women carry negative connotations as compared to the adjectives that describe men. Adjectives such as involved, fun, and present are awarded to the fathers while adjectives like inattentive, run-of-the-mill, and working are associated with mothers.
- 4) Conclusion in technical subjects tends to be generalized for the female gender while being specific for the male gender. If a male student fails, the failure is attributed typically to that individual solely. However, in the case of female students, their results often become representative of the entire gender, leading to generalizations and biases.
- 5) Inculcating subversion of gender roles starts at a very early stage in life. Children are exposed to gendered roles and societal expectations through different forms of media, family dynamics, or societal norms. These norms and expectations leave an everlasting impression on the child's mind and thought processes. Thus, if we want to subvert the gendered practices and norms we need to teach them from a young age.

- 6) The discussion of subversion revolves around the female gender while the men are expected to subscribe to the traditional roles assigned to them. Contemporary society delves between subversion and subscription to dominant gender ideologies. This is often influenced by the perceived benefits of subscription and subversion of traditional ideology.
- 7) Confident and powerful women are often called witches. This reflects the societal tendency to marginalize women who challenge the traditional patriarchal notions of gender roles. the term “witches” has historically been used to diminish women’s agency and independence.
- 8) Men often feel entitled and dignified when they exercise authority and dominance over the females. This behavior indicates deeply ingrained gender dynamics, undermining unequal power dynamics.
- 9) The comparison between males and females is made on two different bases. Women are judged for their physical attributes while comparing them with the genuine and self-reliant nature of the male gender. this unequal comparison perpetuates harmful stereotypes.
- 10) Women’s success in politics and other fields after their marriage is often affiliated with their ability to choose the right guy, who can provide them the opportunities and funds. This oversimplification devalues and degrades women’s struggles and efforts, limiting their success.
- 11) Men often blame feminism for the societal pressure crafted by patriarchy. This is a subtle way to subscribe to the dominant gender ideology.

5.2 Discussion

This part of the chapter provides a discussion of the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. It also provides a holistic view of the analysis drawn based on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of semiotics, examining how different signs are combined to communicate a coherent meaning within the context of memes.

5.2.1 Reflection on Question No. 01

The first question of the study delves into the ways semiotic modes are employed for the manifestation of gender in social media memes. The analysis of this question highlighted the visual and textual modes used either to subscribe to or subvert dominant

gender ideology. The textual elements foregrounded the word choice, capitalization patterns, and adjectives used to present the characters of both genders. Conversely, the visual elements subtly revealed the deeply ingrained ideologies.

In simple words, both the textual and visual modes were used in the memes to convey a unified meaning. The textual modes used in the memes involves usage of clever word play, saturated vocabulary and discriminative adjective when defining gender and propagating stereotypical role. Siddiqui, Aleem and Bains (2018) highlight that repeated and frequent use of the textual modes such as the negative and belittling adjectives can lead to internalization and normalization of such traits in the female gender, which leads to contamination of their own self perceptions. Similarly, the visual modes of the meme are crafted in a way that complement the textual modes, which further pushes the female gender to the background. Nonetheless, contemporary society continues to indulge in gender inequalities and discrimination largely due to the propagation of underlying beliefs, stereotypes, and ideologies circulated through various mediums and social media platforms. Among these channels, memes play a significant role in sustaining and promoting these ideologies often transmitting harmful stereotypes through their light-hearted nature of communication.

With the constant sharing and resharing of memes, we contribute to the subconscious absorption of harmful stereotypes effectively naturalizing gender roles. The strategic use of different semiotic modes to propagate the prevailing gender stereotypes via memes attracts the reader's attention and focus. For instance, the first few memes of twitter highlight the clever word play engaging the audience attention to the overall message simultaneously projecting women either in the background or having no presence at all. With a humorous twist and an unconventional approach, the memes raise thought-provoking and mind-boggling questions, all while masking negative stereotypes and societal expectations they perpetuate. Memes shared on platforms like Twitter and Redditt often bring laughter they exist in a spectrum when it comes to their treatment of gender dynamics. Some memes covertly use semiotic modes to adhere to gender stereotypes and perpetuate harmful ideologies, while others overtly challenge the prevalent gender dynamics, working to dismantle these stereotypes and biases.

5.2.2 Reflection on Question No. 02

Social media memes exhibit a diverse range of responses to gender ideologies, spanning from adherence to active subversion. The extensive analysis of the semiotic modes employed in the meme yielded valuable insights into the intricacies and complexities of gender ideologies. Some of the memes advertently subscribed to gender ideologies, covertly employing semiotic modes. Khan, Khan Q., and Hussain (2020) simplify the conversation about memes and gender disparities by highlighting how in today's funny smog world outdated arguments are being rephrased as new light-hearted conversations (memes) on social media. Memes manipulate humor to perpetuate conventional ideas of masculinity and femininity, thus reinforcing the traditional societal expectations and patriarchal norms.

In contrast, a significant number of memes subverted the patriarchal culture, emphasizing the critical analysis of the semiotic modes employed to generate meanings in the context of memes. These memes used satire, paradox, and juxta positioning to expose the absurdity and discrepancies of the rigid gender ideologies and societal expectations. However, it was noted that the discussion of subversion of gender roles revolves around the female gender while the male gender conforms to the existing stereotypical societal roles, which is often influenced by perceived benefits of subscription to the traditional norms and roles.

In a nutshell, social media platforms offer a lot of channels for the continuation and disruption of traditional gender ideologies. Among these channels, memes are more relatable and engage a broader audience with their visual and textual appeal. The light-hearted tone of memes makes them effective and more impactful means of conveying complex ideas, and discussion and influencing perceptions about gender roles and societal expectations.

5.3 Conclusion

The present study examined the representation of gender in memes shared on two popular social media platforms, Twitter and Reddit, with a special focus on subscription and subversion of dominant gender ideology. The findings of the research study demonstrated that memes employ subtle textual and visual modes often reinforcing patriarchal notions of gender roles and societal expectations, even within their humorous and light-hearted contexts. This underscores the subtlety with which these artifacts

perpetuate, reinforce, and challenge the unequal power dynamics and gender stereotypes. The research study aimed to highlight the semiotic modes employed in the memes, encompassing the textual and visual elements that covertly influence the interpretations and perspectives of the audience. Through clever use of vocabulary and imagery, memes engage with the discourse surrounding gender, undermining the power dynamics and challenging the conventional norms. Moreover, these textual and visual modes working in the background serve as a potent tool of persuasion and influence, promoting adherence to or challenging traditional gender norms.

5.4 Recommendations

The present research study focused exclusively on analyzing memes from two specific social media platforms, Twitter and Reddit. The scope of the study was confined to themes of gender, patriarchy, subscription, and subversion of the existing ideologies. It's worth noting that during the study, the researcher encountered memes pertaining to the concept of gender fluidity. This observation suggests a potential avenue for future researchers to explore the manifestation of gender fluidity in memes. Further, a comparative analysis of memes on other social media platforms can be explored and researched for new perspectives and avenues. An investigation of memes on other social media platforms can provide a comprehensive understanding of the role memes play in shaping perceptions and challenging existing gender norms.

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