Women’s Roles in the Renaissance and Today Comparative Essay

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Historical Transformation of Women’s Roles

If we compare the role of the woman during the Renaissance period to the role of women in modern time, then this comparison could be very helpful to understand that how do women have travel through the journey of enlightenment. The women in the period of Renaissance was not having any considerable place in the man dominant society whereas in the modern time there is hardly any disciplines where women are not working alongside the men.

If we look at the women of the Renaissance period the major thing that can be seen is that the women of that time had no political rights and they were treated as a subject their men (Haselkorn). However, in the modern time, women have equal political rights to men, they have rights to vote for their chosen candidate, and they are free to take their decision. Now women are competing in elections for power (Dahlerup).

In the Renaissance time, the most common duty of the women of all classes was started and ended up with the tag of a housewife. However, their extra duties were not limited as some of them had to work with their husbands in fields, but they never get relaxation from their housewife duties (Warner). In the modern, time the duties of woman are somehow similar as a house wife, but now women have more rights in the business sector as well as in other industries. However, still men are preferred for a job as compare to the women, but as compare to the past, the position of women is very strong.

Class, Work, and Female Dependency

Furthermore, if we look at the women of the middle class in Renaissance time, then it can also be seen that they had to help their husbands in work such as the wife of merchants help their husband at the shop (Clark). However, in the present time, women hold full right to do the job along with her husband, and it is completely based on their mutual understanding whether women should work or not (Watts).

More interestingly, the women in renaissance time who belonged to the elite class were also limited to their house boundaries as they stayed at home and got themselves engage in activities like

cooking, sewing, etc. (Haselkorn). Now in modern time women are in every discipline and working along with men such as women are doctors, they are in forces, women are running a business, and they are working as manager or leader, and even some women are leading companies where men are working under them (ProQuest).

Women of the Renaissance period were completely dependent on their men, and the women that were not married were not allowed to live independently. Young girls lived with their parents or other relatives, and if a girl had no one in her family, then she often lived in a Convent. The concept of a young girl is completely different in modern society such as the girl that usually cross teenage started to work at different places, and they do not depend on their males as they are free as compare to the women in renaissance time (Addabbo and Owens).

Marriage, Sexuality, and Social Status

In the Renaissance period, the role of the woman was according to their age as well as on their marital and social status. A young girl was commonly known as the virgin who was used for the girl who did not engage in physical relation. In the old days, the girls were only allowed to lose their virginity after their marriage (Houston). In case if in Renaissance period a girl loses her virginity before married she was cursed and disrespected because people were strongly attached to their religion and so virginity was considered as a root of Christianity. In this aspect, we can see that things have completely changed as the Face of Global Sex report has claimed that average girls lose their virginity at the age of 17 (Joe). In the modern time, the concept of virginity has lost importance because now girls that usually reached the age of adulthood, they have no or little restriction to get involve in a sexual relationship. Subsequently, according to Coman and Scarlat claimed that the women of the modern time are comparatively stronger than the women in the time of renaissance because they have more options to raise their voices as they have more rights (Coman and Scarlat).

One more thing that was considerable in the Renaissance period was that the father of the bride was responsible for making the expected husband about the virginity of the bride because during this period virginity was taken as a concept of honor (Eales). Therefore, if a girl lost her virginity before marriage, then it was not merely disrespectful for the girl but all the family. In modern time there is no such concept usually girl chose her life partner, and there is no concept to assure about the virginity of the girl before marriage because now most of the woman in Europe lose their virginity at an average age of 17 (Addabbo and Owens).

While talking about the women of early England the Eales Jacqueline has said that one of the dark sides of the renaissance time was that the women were considered responsible even if they were raped because with this act, a girl is no more remains a virgin. Subsequently, the girl that lose her virginity before marriage was used to punish and the nature and severity of the punishment was dependent on the social status such as the if the girl belongs to a high-class family then she had to bear more punishment as compare to a girl belong to comparatively lower class (Eales).

Gendered Customs and Social Consequences

According to the Edgar one of the sad facts of the Renaissance time was that if a woman was raped and lost her virginity then no male accept them for marital relation even her family male abandoned any relation with her and in the result of it such women committed suicide or others became involved in prostitution because it was the only option for them to survive. This thing also has changed among the women of modern life because now there is nothing or rarely cases can be seen about honor (Edgar).

In the old time, there was some customer that made the life of a woman more difficult. One of them was the concept of dowry. According to this concept, the women that got married had to bring some household goods to her husband. However, this concept was also used to remove the link to the girl from the property of his father because it was believed that when a father gave dowry to his daughter, then he has given her part from the property (Coman and Scarlat).

It was also a trouble making thing because poor women were also expected to come up with some household goods and due to this many women had to wait for a long time for their marriage. However, in the modern time, there is nothing like this and after the elimination of such customs girls and their parent got great relied and marriages become easy for a modern woman as compare to the women in renaissance time (ProQuest).

Property Rights, Education, and Modern Empowerment

One another considerable aspect of the renaissance is that the women had no right to take the land or any other property left by their parents as a male had the right of the property ownership from their parents. In the modern time, this inequality has greatly reduced because now female kin also receive a portion of land and other property left by their parents (Addabbo and Owens).

Before, marriage women were expected to learn household work such as weaving, to spin, to embroil, to cook, etc. Moreover, some parents also encourage their young girls to manage servants, look after financial matters and to take of the family members. Usually, parents take a decision about the marriage of a girl, and they used to choose a boy for her, and they were expected to accept their decision with obedience and silence. Now in modern life, the life of a girl spend in study, and there are few girls that now learn household things and most of the girl's stat to do work at their adult age. Moreover, in modern times, parent rarely choose a life partner for their children because most of the time women themselves chose their life partner, and they have no restriction over it (Coman and Scarlat).

Overall, through this writing attempt, it is concluded that the role of women in the Renaissance period

is completely different from the role of the women in the present time because the women in the Renaissance period were not strong enough as compare to the modern women. In the old time, women were completely dependent on their men. Women of the old time had no or little rights. Inequality was at its peak in the Renaissance period such as the women were not allowed to vote; they were used as a subject to their men. Moreover, in business sector, women had to face inequality as they were not offered the job. Overall, it can be seen that from the time of Renaissance to the present time women have traveled from darkness to enlightenment. Now gender inequality still exists, but as compare to the past it is very rare because now women are working in every sector along with men. Moreover, women role has greatly changed because now women have more power and there are better policies and laws that protect their powers. Subsequently, women in the modern time have more freedom as in the old time; they were even not allowed to go alone but now young girl living alone far from their parents.

Annotated Bibliography

Addabbo, Tindara, Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, and Alastair Owens. Gender inequalities, households and the production of well-being in modern Europe. Routledge, 2016.

In this book, the writer has talked about the gender inequalities that still exist in modern Europe. The had shed lights on it by stating that still, we have not completely come out of our past when women had to face a hard time in men dominant society.

Roper, Lyndal. Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Religion, and Sexuality in Early Modern Europe. Routledge, 2013.

In this book, the writer has shed lights on the fact that as compare to the Renaissance period, in modern Europe the religious practices, as well as sexuality related norms and values, has completely changed. Now here is no or little importance given to the religious teaching about sexual relations.

Clark, Alice. The working life of women in the seventeenth century. Routledge, 2013.

In this book the writer, Clark has given a glimpse into the life of working women in the Renaissance time. The writer has explained that the life of the working was very hard as she had to do the hard job because due to the gender inequality women were not able to do a good job. Therefore, women had to compromise over low paid job, and they had to work harder.

Father, Amanda. “The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe, ed. Allyson M. Poska.” Jane Couchman and Katherine A. McIver (2016): 183-184

In this journal article, the writer has made a comparison of the gender relationship in early modern Europe as compare to the past time. It is good because this book gives deep information regarding the changing that takes place with the passage of time in relationship building between opposite genders.

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