

Le origini del patriarcato moderno: tra Hobbes, Pateman e Lonzi

1. The original contract is a sexual-social pact, but the story of the sexual contract has been repressed. Standard accounts of social contract theory do not discuss the whole story and contemporary contract theorists give no indication that half the agreement is missing. The story of the sexual contract is also about the genesis of political right, and explains why exercise of the right is legitimate – but this story is about political right as *patriarchal right* or sex-right, the power that men exercise over women. The missing half of the story tells how a specifically modern form of patriarchy is established. The new civil society created through the original contract is a patriarchal social order.

(C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*)

2. One reason why political theorists so rarely notice that half the story of the original contract is missing, or that civil society is patriarchal, is that “patriarchy” is usually interpreted patriarchally as paternal rule (the literal meaning of the term). [...] Locke and his fellow contract theorists insisted that paternal and political power were not the same and that contract was the genesis of political right. The contract theorists were victorious on this point. [...]. Patriarchy ceased to be paternal long ago. Modern civil society is not structured by kinship and the power of fathers; in the modern world, women are subordinated to men *as men*, or to men as a fraternity. The original contract takes place after the political defeat of the father and creates modern fraternal patriarchy.

(C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*)

3. The standard commentaries on the classic stories of the original contract do not usually mention that women are *excluded* from the original pact. Men make the original contract.

(C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*)

4. To tell the story of the sexual contract is to show how sexual difference, what it is to be a 'man' or 'woman', and the construction of sexual difference as political difference, is central to civil society. [...]. The appropriate feminist response then seems to be to work for the elimination of all reference to the difference between men and women in political life; so, for example, all laws and policies should be 'gender neutral'. I shall say something about the now ubiquitous terminology of 'gender' in the final chapter. Such a response assumes that 'individuals' can be separated from sexually differentiated bodies. Contract doctrine relies on the same assumption in order to claim that all

examples of contract involving property in the person establish free relations. The problem is that the assumption relies on a political fiction.

(C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*)

5. The standpoint of the generalized other requires us to view each and every individual as a rational being entitled to the same rights and duties we would want to ascribe to ourselves. In assuming this standpoint, we abstract from the individuality and concrete identity of the other. We assume that the other, like ourselves, is a being who has concrete needs, desires, and affects, but what constitutes moral dignity is not what differentiates us from each other, but rather what we, as speaking and acting rational agents, have in common. Our relation to the other is governed by the norms of *formal equality* and *reciprocity*: each is entitled to expect and to assume from us what we can expect and assume from him or her.

(S. Benhabib, *The Generalized and the Concrete Other*)

6. This view conflates the ideas of deliberation and the common good by assuming that deliberation must be deliberation about the common good. Consequently, it limits deliberation to talk framed from the standpoint of a single, all-encompassing “we,” thereby ruling claims of self-interest and group interest out of order. Yet, this works against one of the principal aims of deliberation, namely, helping Participants clarify their interests, even when those interests turn out to conflict. Ruling self-interest and group interest out of order makes it harder for any participant to sort out what is going on. In particular, the less powerful may not find ways to discover that the prevailing sense of “we” does not adequately include them.

(N. Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy*)

7. A new, peculiar form of patriarchy emerges in modernity by virtue of this very same logic. Once the social contract has become the rationale of democratic societies, indeed, their patriarchal dimension can no longer be understood as Aristotle understood it, namely, as a constitutional trait. This kind of patriarchy rather involves a masculine social order that was already there since the beginning, for sure, but has now become, for the first time, a formalistic relationship of domination over society’s overall arrangement: its power depends on the fact that, from a constitutional standpoint, it does not exist.

(L. Rustighi, *Hegel’s Family and the Problem of Modern Patriarchy*)

8. The normative meaning attributed to sexual difference, in other words, is not a presupposition but results from the *a posteriori* gendering of the difference that haunts the logic of the contract as its inherent contradiction, thus presenting itself as the unproblematized subsumption of an empirical relationship of force. We may therefore say that, properly speaking, patriarchy does not *come from* ideology but *results in* ideology, if by this notion we mean, as does Marx, an effect of the social discourse that cannot however be justified through it: put differently, sexism is not something hidden behind the narrative of pure equality, as though it were the unspoken reality underlying the social contract, but is rather the contradictory outcome of its conceptual configuration.

(L. Rustighi, *Hegel's Family and the Problem of Modern Patriarchy*)

9. Per uguaglianza della donna si intende il suo diritto a partecipare alla gestione del potere nella società mediante il riconoscimento che essa possiede capacità uguali a quelle dell'uomo. Ma il chiarimento che l'esperienza femminile più genuina di questi anni ha portato sta in un processo di svalutazione globale del mondo maschile. Ci siamo accorte che, sul piano della gestione del potere, non occorrono delle capacità, ma una particolare forma di alienazione molto efficace. Il porsi della donna non implica una partecipazione al potere maschile, ma una messa in questione del concetto di potere. È per sventare questo possibile attentato della donna che oggi ci viene riconosciuto l'inserimento a titolo di uguaglianza.

(C. Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel*)

10. L'uomo ha lasciato la donna sola di fronte a una legge che le impedisce di abortire: sola, denigrata, indegna della collettività. Domani finirà per lasciarla sola di fronte a una legge che non le impedirà di abortire: sola, gratificata, degna della collettività. [...] Negandole la libertà di aborto l'uomo trasforma il suo sopruso in una colpa della donna. Concedendole tale libertà l'uomo la solleva della propria condanna attirandola in una nuova solidarietà [...]. Sotto questa luce la legalizzazione dell'aborto chiesta al maschio ha un aspetto sinistro [...]. La donna suggellerà attraverso uno sdrammatizzato esercizio della sua utilizzazione la cultura sessuale fallocratica.

(Rivolta Femminile, *Sessualità femminile e aborto*, 1971)