

Good critique and revision essay example

[Sociology](#), [Feminism](#)



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Introduction

Critique and revision are concepts which are employed to critically examine text, speech or ideas presented by other people. These concepts have been employed widely in the areas of activism and education. In the feminist movements, for example, various women critiqued men and patriarchy. They also critiqued and revised other feminist thinkers in their effort to make their movement more effective. Patriarchy is the general societal structure where men have exceedingly more power than women in social and financial terms. During the birth of the feminist movement, many women arose against patriarchy and its ills. One of the ways this was done was through writing. Consequently, there was the need to critique and revise some of the previous writings by men or feminist ones by women. This paper presents three examples of revisions and critiques on patriarchy, while identifying whom the author is critiquing or revising; whether it is explicitly or implicitly and on what grounds.

First, Virginia Woolf is a good example of a feminist who wrote numerous articles and books in critiquing and revising both men and women on the subject of patriarchy. Two of her major works are *A Room of One's Own* and

Three Guineas. *A Room of One's Own* is an essay based on Virginia Woolf's lectures at Girton and Newnham colleges on the subject of women and fiction. She interweaves her feminist views against a patriarchal society where a woman is not allowed to have the same amenities and opportunities as a man. The title of her essay is metaphorical because she says that a woman should be provided with a room of her own, just like a man, to highlight the inequalities that exist between men and women (Woolf 37). In this essay, besides speaking against patriarchy, Woolf is critiquing and revising the work Emily and Charlotte Bronte and Jane Austen explicitly. For example, Woolf states that Charlotte Bronte had done hatred in her which made her writing a bit disfigured. Woolf accuses her of outright protest, rather than calm argument and debate. Woolf believes that Charlotte Bronte's hatred made her a bit ignorant and narrow minded in her approach of patriarchy. This had a negative bearing on her feminist ambitions. In addition, she notes that in a largely patriarchal society, masculine topics and values were valued more than female ones in novels. This made writers such as the Brontes sacrifice their personal views on feminism and patriarchy in favor of what readers were more likely to read. Even though such writing was done without anger, it caused Bronte to deviate from her work. However, Woolf congratulates Austen and Emily Bronte for managing to persist and write with integrity and confidence in a society where masculine topics were more marketable and readable than feminine ones.

Secondly, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), by Betty Friedan is another example of a powerful text in feminist movement and anti-patriarchy thinking. The author implicitly critiques and revises the views propagated to

women by the media in books, magazines, advertisements and articles. She uses parody and mimicry in the title of her book as a strategy in which she deliberately assumes the feminine posture and style assigned to women in the 1950s and 60s in print and voice media. Women were expected to maintain their femininity by accepting their role in the home and in taking care of children. She critiques and revises the media because of how they propagated this notion. She alludes specifically to an advertisement in 1960 that appeared in the New York Times, which advertised a child's dress with the words " She too can join the Man-Trap Set." This was one of the many messages in the media which encouraged women to get married, become house wives and to discard any ideas of pursuing a career or other forms of personal development (Friedan 16). Friedman also critiques and revises the women who accepted the lies that were distributed to them in form of news media and magazines. She gives an example of how women refused to take cancer medication and died because they had been told that the side effects of the drugs were unfeminine. She refers to an article in a newspaper encouraged women to embrace their femininity and to maintain a shapely figure. These messages in the media were highly patriarchal in nature. She critiques women for not noticing this fact and for thinking that if they had a problem; it must be as a result of something wrong with them or their marriage.

Thirdly, *The Second Sex*, a book by Simone de Beauvoir is one of the first attempts made by a woman to confront existential and political theory from a feminist perspective. This book examines how women understand themselves, their position in society and their relationships. The most critical

part of her novel is the point where she states that “ One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (Beauvoir 33). She asserts critiques and revises society as a whole for creating the inferiority that exists for women by arguing that there is no financial or biological fate that causes one to be born a woman. This is because one is born a female and then they become a woman. She challenges society’s assignment of inferior roles to women by stating that women and men are born equal. She adds that the gender roles are a societal construct. She provides examples to explain her points. One of the main examples is that in which she states that there are three kinds of women who assume the role assigned by society most vividly. These are the prostitute, the mystic and the narcissist. The prostitute is the object or the exploiter. The narcissist is unable to become a subject and thus becomes her own object. The mystic tries to immerse herself in religion to be identified in God. She chooses to be possessed instead of seeking her own freedom. By providing these examples, Beauvoir provides a critique of women, who entrap themselves in the roles set for them by society, rather than becoming their own selves.

Conclusion

Critique and revision are concepts used in furthering different objectives. They include the critical analysis and commentary based on various texts. Women feminist writers have made use of these concepts many times as they seek to further their feminist agendas. Their critiques and revisions have been aimed at men or women, while speaking out against patriarchy in society. Three examples of such feminists are Virginia Woolf, Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir. These critiques help expose the problems of a

patriarchic society and provide readers with a broadened perspective on the issue.

Work Cited

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