

Similarities in beauvoir and kaufman's arguments critical thinking sample

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



The two books by Michael Kaufman and Beauvoir compare. In the book "The construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence" Michael Kaufman highlights the fact that the act of violence exists in many things at once. He compares the violence to a ritual action in social relations of power. In essence, there is the dominant and the weaker, the powerful and the powerless, the active and the passive and finally the masculine and feminine. The argument is similar to what Simone de Beauvoir in his book "The Other Sex" questioned why some violence is regarded as acceptable while others are not. The book likens the male and female masculinity and femininity to electrical poles where masculine represents the positive and the neutral, whereas the women represent the negative characterized by limiting criteria and reciprocity. Women are considered subject to men and as their objects of violence. This is synonymous with what Kaufman book classify as weaker women and stronger man to show the degree of susceptibility to violence.

In the words of Beauvoir, there is common belief that attributing women as subjective and within limits of nature while men are represented by humanity defining the female being. It points out that humanity is male and man gives definition to a woman, not in herself but in relative to him. This portrays a kind of conflict that afflicts the definition of women in respect to men. By asserting that a man can define and think of himself without the female, the book regards the female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities and inessential. Thus, it becomes a subject of mans actions as the "other" and, therefore, vulnerable to violence. This is similar to what Herbert Marcuse called surplus repression in Kaufman's literature. This is where

violence is transmuted into a form of emotionally gratifying activity for the perpetrators. The same way men want to define women in their terms is the same way they want to use them as sex objects second to them. Therefore the two books describe how men define women in as second to them.

According to Beauvoir the ability of the " One" to impose rules and persecute the " Other" is likened to the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger in reference to the scattering of the Jews, introduction of slavery in America and the conquest of the imperialist. It is likened to the Master and the slave who are united by the reciprocal need and in spite of the urgency of the needs to both parties the Master's will always prevail first. This inferiority in the women context is conflict in itself.

Likewise, Kaufman questions the way society handles male violence against women. Violence has been acclaimed as a way of solving problems and conflicts. This is manifested in the life of human beings where the relation with the environment is compromised in order to attain economic progress. Beauvoir defines women as an imperfect man with lack of qualities and violence is a sure way to correct those defects. This is replicated in activities such as rape which carries an attitude of conquering women and having the man's way.

According to Kaufman, violence against women originates from encoded and institutionalized features in the physical structures and socioeconomic relations that treat both genders differently in terms of capabilities.

According to Beauvoir, male violence seems to originate from genetic and hormonal factors which make men more prone and aggressive to violence in comparison with women. Thus, the two essays describe women as less

aggressive and less likely to perpetuate violent adventures than men.

The two essays recognize different forms of violence termed as psychological, social, gender based and self. Psychological violence is built upon the increasing need for civilization. Kaufman continues to explain that the basis of individual knowledge of gender in terms of the male masculinity and the female femininity is founded on the malleability of human desires and prolonged human childhood and power attachments to parental roles. Similarly, Beauvoir terms masculinity as characterized by power and active repression while femininity is defined by passivity and oppression.

References

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