

Reading Response

The Gender of Violence

Kimmel starts this chapter off by presenting us two critical questions that really set the mood for the rest of the reading; “Does one suffer or does one seek revenge? Get mad or get even?” This question is tough to answer, because it is all in the emotional mindset of the individual. But you could also say that the United States is preoccupied by violence. What exactly does this mean? Well what is news worthy and what can the media really emphasize now-a-days? That’s right, violence, and statistics show that men are responsible for approximate (overall) 90% of violent acts in this WORLD. Kimmel next presents us with some astounding statistics, “Men constitute 99 percent of all persons arrested for rape, 88 percent of those arrested for murder, 92 percent of those arrested for robbery...” you get the picture. This all emphasizes how serious the gender gap in violence is, But why is that?

Well, two major theories to violence stick out to me first hand, the first one being biology. The biology theory suggests that testosterone drives male aggression the aggression in turn increases violence in male culture. And it really is true that violence has a direct correlation with hormones, but I don’t necessarily think that that is the case. Personally I think that people need to have self control over themselves in every situation. I have testosterone, probably just as much as some murderers and rapists, but somehow I refrain from those violent acts... that is self control and that is the problem not biology. The second theory is evolution. This theory consists of the belief that men compete and fight with each other to create dominance and therefore have their choice of female partners. Now this sounds completely off but this makes more sense in my head than the other theory. With this form of reasoning for violence there is at least a clear purpose, for “the prize” which in this case is a woman; and throughout history this has been the case. The most powerful men got the girls.

Unfortunately there are flaws in both of those theories so still nothing is certain. The main flaw with the biological theory is that “it is true that testosterone is associated with aggression, but it does not cause aggression, it only facilitates in aggression that is already present.” Studies have shown that in athletic competition testosterone levels actually increase after the winner is declared and not while competition is ongoing. So why do we need testosterone to create aggression afterwards? Let’s take a murderer in mind for a second, he will actually get more testosterone in his system after he has killed... So we can definitely blame testosterone on his murderous behavior... NO! Wrong!

The main flaw of the evolutionary theory is that of other cultures. In some culture men are actually less aggressive than females, and men do not compete with each other. So why are men still 99% of violent acts? If the testosterone (which is already proven wrong) plays a role then why are men passive in some cultures? Females have testosterone too, but their balance is way low as compared to a male counterpart. Culturally, is masculinity important? Is asserting dominance important? Some say yes and some say no, the ones (the cultures) that say yes will naturally have a higher violence rate because they as a society are more aggressive. And those who say no will naturally have a lower violence rate because they are more passive and have less aggression.

“Does one suffer or does one seek revenge? Get mad or get even?” Though the answers are still uncertain from the reading, we can narrow certain factors down like biology and evolution if we simply think critically.