
A Comparison Between Michel Foucault And Michael Kimmel Masculinity Theory

Manhood is something that the world struggles with. Being defined and seen from different points of view. Is it masculinity that is the problem or is it those trying to define it? Foucault and Kimmel may have two different points of views and may be from different time periods, but the similarities of the two are rather dire and noticeable.

Through Society's Eyes

Foucault's article describes the views and perspectives of masculinity through society's eyes. Foucault said, "They were taught the art of power relations." They referring to men. This meaning they were taught the difference between domination and relationality. Domination is how you exert your power over someone else, whereas relationality is the connection between two people and how they view each other. These two fall hand in hand because they both deal with the communications of more than one person. Foucault clearly defines masculinity in his article.

Kimmel also describes the point of view on masculinity through the eyes of those around men. Michael said, "We think of manhood as a thing, a quality that one either has or doesn't have." Meaning one has strength, courage, and sexual potency. Showing a high degree of skill and flair. Kimmels article summarizes the traits and qualities of the idealistic man.

Kimmel and Foucault's article take the classical social theory and the social enemy to the test. Kimmel having said, "It is the notion of manhood- rooted in the sphere of production, the public arena, the masculinity grounded not in land ownership or in the artisanal republican virtue but in the successful participation in the market place.... Defining notion of American Manhood." This meaning that a man is to not be afraid. That he is to not be afraid to fight. Foucault said, "The social enemy was transformed into a deviant, who brought with him the multiple danger of disorder crime and madness." This meaning that the one given as the enemy, strayed away from acceptable standards. That the enemy, being the man is now seen as someone not afraid. Both articles took two different subjects, in different words, making them seamlessly the same.

Consequences

Masculinity is described with aggression, competition, strength, etc. Although there are many different ways to describe masculinity, and that all masculinities aren't created equally as said by Kimmel, he finds new ways and different points of view of the word. After large amounts of research, One definition stood out. "Hegemonic" Masculinity, the image of masculinity of those men hold power, which has become the standard psychological evaluations, sociological research, and self-help and advice literature for teaching young men to become "real men. (Connell, 1987)." Kimmel found a definition of Masculinity, although all definitions are not the same, they are all tied into one.

Foucault's article take delinquency and how it should be handled in different views. He said, "...

Panoptic society of which incarnation is the omnipresent armature, the delinquent is not outside the law; he is from the outset, in the law, at the very heart of the law, or at least in the midst of those mechanisms that transfer the individual imperceptibly from the discipline to the law, from deviation to transfer offense. Although it is true that prison punished delinquency, delinquency is for the most part produced in and by the incarceration which, ultimately, prison perpetuates in its turn." Meaning that the one doing the wrong not only gets punished, but is within the law. Which means that no one person is above the law. Although, masculinity is not said, it plays a huge role. Being able to give an individual consequences, no matter the situation and serving right by the law, is a big part. Prison being an untaught consequence, the one doing the wrong is nothing more than an "institutional product."

History of Masculinity

Kimmel and Foucault take the history and the present of masculinity into consideration. Foucault said,

"With the new economy of power, the carceral system, which is its basic instrument, permitted the emergence of the new form of "law": a mixture of legality and nature, prescription and constitution, the norm. This had a whole series of effects: the internal dislocation of the judicial power or at least its functioning; an increasing difficulty in judging, as if one were ashamed to pass sentence; a furious desire on the part of the judges to assess, diagnose, recognize the normal and abnormal and claim the honour of curing or rehabilitating. In view of this, it is useless to believe in the good or bad consciences of judges, or even of their unconscious."

Meaning that although the the new economies power was relevant, it was just a base to what was going on behind the scenes, with what we could not see in other words. There was an increase in difficulty in the verdicts given. Even though it being difficult, Kimmel found a way to change the views and points of the cultural differences.

Kimmel said,

"To argue that cultural definitions of gender identity are historically specific goes only so far; we have to specify exactly what those models were. In my historical inquiry into the development of these models of manhood I chart the fate of two models of manhood at the turn of the 19th century..." Kimmel then went on to say, "... Two models of manhood prevailed. The Genteel Patriarch derived his identity from landownership. Supervising his estate, he was refined elegant, and given to casual sensuousness." He continued later on with, "By contrast, the Heroic Artisan embodied the physical strength and republican virtue that Jefferson observed in the yeoman farmer, independent urban craftsman, or shopkeeper."

Kimmel and Foucault took to different points of view on the same subject and gave them a purpose. Both examples struggling to find the meaning or purpose of what is being said, found a common ground. Although being different, both struggled to find a common interest. Masculinity is seen differently, not only by society, but by time period. But, they have their similarities. Strength, anxiousness, driven, etc. No matter the time period, masculinity is a struggle, in which both articles have proven that.

Kimmel and Foucault, having two different mindsets, have taught that masculinity is not a trait

and it is not genetic. It is self-taught and it is complicated. Although having nothing in common with each other, they have both proven that two different points of views can be the same. If broken down correctly and with the right words, two differences are brought together as one.

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