

Daniela Peckova Watanabe

The overall purpose of the text *Woman as Other* by Simone de Beauvoir is to question the idea of duality between genders. In 1949, it was an avant-garde approach to sexuality. The French were always known for being more sexually liberated; especially at that school of thought, a time that we see many big French Literature names hanging out at the Parisian cafes. Beauvoir who had an affair with Jean-Paul Sartre, questions why there must be duality in culture, the good and the bad, sun-moon, day-night, man-women. Her insight is groundbreaking, we can have both feminine and masculine qualities in one individual, we don't necessarily need to oppose and be a single thing. We have masculine and feminine energies in us, no matter our sexual orientation, what Beauvoir questions is the cultural approach as if the masculine was in some way superior to the feminine.

The author makes her point by referring to women as subordinated to men throughout history, as not something that occurred but something that always like that. She compares to other socially disadvantaged and oppressed people throughout history like the Jews for example; these groups of people had references of other times with better conditions but that women were not even a minority group, or a unit and have always been under the rules of the strongest gender.

Beauvoir conceptualizes men as the ruling gender that subjugates women throughout history and women as incidental, lacking the unit to claim sovereignty, she compares women to the proletariat, subjugated by a group of ruling men. She also mentions at the end the necessity of forming a couple to be considered whole. That rule is mostly still current as if for women to be complete they need to form a couple or need to bear a child. That type of thought has been

imprinted in us for so long that even if we don't believe in that rules; gays, asexuals, and infertile end up suffering tremendously at times trying to fit in a model that is not for everyone. The truth is some women can't or don't want to be mothers, some men don't want to have any type of relationship and they still should be considered whole.

I personally think that if we got back to tribal times we have more references of women seen as sacred portals to the Earth. I agree with the author that we became disconnected when we started to create too many cultural oppositions when we don't see ourselves in others, it is where conflicts arise; the author says "in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility toward every other consciousness; the subject can be posed only in being opposed ". That's the reason why we have so many wars and greed. We have come so far since the time this text was written. It's true there is so much to be fixed in terms of equality and so many nations suffered retrocession, as Afghanistan for example. But in America, it's an unprecedented time of social, cultural, and gender justice powered by the internet, we had more happen towards equality in the last 50 years than in the previous hundreds of years.