Dominance & Purity

An examination of the situation surrounding economic and dating success for men and women in the modern age

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Introduction

I have noticed there are a lot of misconceptions, ignorance of scientific literature, and poorly thought-out hate surrounding the differences between men and women. It is my belief that we would benefit greatly from people having an improved understanding of ourselves and the situation in which we reside, as such insights would allow everyone to move forward in a more productive and universally beneficial direction.

Online there are many people making very outlandish claims that, from an opposing perspective, may seem absolutely unreasonable. These are however often built on truth, and by being based on fundamental facts we can get into a difficult situation where some people will dismis the whole of the outlandish claim, but in doing so and not acknowledging the reality that underlies it, alienate everyone who is aware of that underlying reality. It is for this reason that I feel it is so necessary to try and look at what is true or reasonable and what is not. This document obviously can't do this for every single claim ever made, but I hope to have it cover some of the major ones.

I am primarily creating this document as a perpetual reference to point back to. So that rather than rehashing information or arguments to each individual person who doesn't understand it I, or others, can direct them here to the section related to whatever is being discussed. Hopefully providing them with a coherent explanation of the situation thus simplifying the process and avoiding some of the more emotional or poorly thought out argumentation that can come when discussing controversial topics such as those contained within.

I would also stress that while I draw on a fair deal of scientific research to back many of my claims and try my best to lay out logical explanations for the points I am making, this in and of itself is not a scientific paper.

I am simply trying to bring together the best science I can find and, combined with a rational examination of the information I have, provide explanations for controversial phenomena we see in our culture. This document is also not static, it is a living representation of the best information I have access to, and I intend to change and update it as new information comes to my attention.

With that in mind, I encourage you, the reader, to inform me of any reliable science that may support points I have made but have not already sufficiently supported with research findings., or may refute some points I made via contradictory scientific evidence or logic. I am not perfect and it is entirely possible I have overlooked something and don't mind anyone pointing this out.

I welcome all coherent and well thought out arguments for or against the content of this document and if I find something sufficiently convincing I would be happy to incorporate it into this work, in an effort to continually improve this document's validity.

There are also likely sizable topics within the domains of dating and economics that I do not cover. I intend for this to be a look at some of the places where the most misunderstandings come from so there may be several areas that are very important but I felt we had general consensus on, or at least less misunderstandings about the fundamentals in that area, that I did not include. The absence of something from this document doesn't necessarily mean it is unimportant, just that I was either unaware of it, or did not personally feel the need to focus on it.

With all that in mind I welcome you to Dominance & Purity, and bid you, with an open mind, to delve in.

Section 1: Romantic Relationships

"we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the light into the peace and safety of a new dark age"

- H.P. Lovecraft

(1.1) Intimate Interpersonal Romantic Relationships

Humans are social creatures, and human connection is something that for many is absolutely essential. The lack of this connection and associated loneliness can have deadly consequences leading to increased suicidality (Stravynski, & Boyer, R., 2001) and all-cause mortality, especially for men (Wang, et al., 2020) in those unfortunate enough to not have it. I would go so far as to say intimate connections are core to the human experience, which is why I think it is so essential we examine what's going on between the sexes within this domain. I want to touch on a few broad topics, the first of which is what are some of the basic differences between what men and women truly look for in partners.

(1.2) Partner Preferences by Gender

Here are some of the most notable differences in things men and women want in potential long-term partners. This is in no way an exhaustive list, it instead focuses on factors that appear to be consistent cross-culturally and repeatedly in many studies on the topic while being relevant to the problems I wish to discuss later. The goal is to find some of the most basic underlying ideals with which people choose mates, especially where the outcomes cannot be explained purely by societal context.

Women

- Socioeconomic Status [economic prospects and social status]
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993)
    - (Fisman, et al., 2006)
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)

Women (cont.)

- Intelligence [education level]
    - (Fisman, et al., 2006)
    - (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, A., & Ariely, D., 2010)
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)
- Maturity [same age or older]
    - (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, A., & Ariely, D., 2010)
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)
- Kindness [and generosity, towards their potential partner]
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)
- Height [taller]
    - (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, A., & Ariely, D., 2010)
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)
    - (Tao., 2020)

Men

- Attractiveness [physical beauty]
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993)
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)
- Faithfulness [romantic exclusivity]
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993)
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)
- Purity [low promiscuity]
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993)
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)
- Youth [same age or younger]
    - (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, A., & Ariely, D., 2010)
    - (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019)

Now before we get into some of the myths and problems that arise surrounding these, I want to give you a potential explanation for why I believe we may see these traits emerge in humans. It's one thing to have information stated to you, but I think truly understanding the *why* behind it is equally as valuable. I intend to focus primarily on economic prospects for women, and physical attractiveness for men, as both seem to outweigh many other potential traits in importance when selecting a partner (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, A., & Ariely, D., 2010).

(1.3) Cavemen: Selecting A Partner

Let's imagine we go back in time, not that long ago, to a point before advanced civilizations had emerged. We have two people, Olng the caveman and Miol the cavewoman, and they live in a tribal human society. We shall first look at Miol's circumstances regarding finding a mate. Without the invention of birth control, any relationship Miol gets into will likely result in her getting pregnant. Further, without modern medical and societal assistance, this is likely to be a rather arduous process before, during, and after the pregnancy. She will need both a readily available source of food, something she will likely struggle to get access to herself due to physical restrictions as the pregnancy progresses, and protection. The ancient world obviously has a few hazards such as predatory animals and threats from other tribes people that are very serious concerns without the incredible safety we enjoy in the modern world. So for Miol to have any chance at actually surviving pregnancy and being able to raise the child, she needs someone to provide an adequate amount of resources and protection.

So we then must ask how Miol knows which men will be able to do that and which men wouldn't. One possibility could be if she sees a man who regularly has a lot of resources in the form of food or perhaps better quality weapons. This may be an indication of the man's future ability, and physical capacity, to acquire more resources when needed. Another way may be to evaluate how highly regarded the man is in the society, for if he has high social status he is likely important to the tribe, and his ability to provide resources as the people most well regarded could reasonably be some of the best or most integral hunters and even if they are not necessarily the best individual the sway they have with the tribe may provide the same benefits. And finally, Miol could just look at the man himself, does he physically appear to be capable of providing for someone else. This is where I believe height/size and age play a role, for to be larger not only means the person is likely more physically fit, it also means they have historically had access to the resources required for them to grow that big, and being slightly older means he has survived longer and likely has more experience than a younger possible equally fit caveman.

The last caveat to this is the man must also be kind and generous enough to actually share these resources with Miol and her child or all the other traits are meaningless. Now if Miol can either select for these characteristics or she could not, and the results will determine how likely her genes are passed on. This isn't as black and white as it sounds since some traits may be selected for more or less strongly and even nonoptimal selection, as long as it allows for propagation, is acceptable. The logic is as follows, if Miol selects for these traits she will be more likely to survive and pass on her genes, allowing them to remain in the gene pool and eventually be passed down to modern-day people. If she doesn't select for these beneficial traits she may be less likely to pass on her genes, and even if she does her ancestors will also be less likely, over time decreasing the chance we see those traits in the modern day if they even survive that far at all.

We can apply a similar line of thought to Olng the caveman. In a partner, he requires someone who can have and subsequently take care of a child, and must search out these traits if his genes are to live on. So signs of health and fertility, perhaps in the way of a hip-to-waist ratio, something like the symmetry of facial features, or just features generally linked with youth, are likely to be selected for. It's also not hard to imagine if Olng didn't select for features like this and instead found cavewomen who were either infertile or sickly attractive the likelihood that he would be able to have a child with them and that the cavewoman would live through ancient childbirth and the period after where she would be necessary for nursing the child would decrease. And as seen before with Miol anything less likely to assist with the continuation of the species is, over time, discarded. With purity and faithfulness you can imagine Olng and another caveman, let's call him C, are selecting mates. Olng cares very much about if his potential partner has a history of frequent sexual relations, and he hates the idea of his partner being romantically engaged with anyone while he is with them. Caveman C on the other hand has no such qualms, he doesn't care if his potential partner has slept with the entire village nor does he care what she does when she is with him.

Again without contraception many of these sexual engagements will end with a high chance of pregnancy so if the partner does get pregnant and both Olng and C invest resources in raising the child, Olng can be relatively sure that he is supporting his child and his genes will be passed on. C on the other hand, because his partner may be sleeping with several other men, can have no such certainty. There is a reasonable likelihood that C is investing resources to help promote the continuation of some other caveman's genes and not his own meaning his will likely not get the chance to be passed down. C is what some in the modern age might refer to as a cuck, that's what the C stands for, and this is also why I think we have social stigmas around men who let others have sex with their partner.

(1.4) Disclaimer About Preferences

Now I would like to stress that as I describe these phenomena I am attempting to transfer information, not about what should be, but what is. I see these things as similar to the desire for sweet foods. Most people I have encountered love sweets, and it was of great benefit to our ancestors, but not all continuously gorge themselves on confections despite this love. It is possible, in my opinion, to deviate from the base desires of evolution. It is not to say these are fixed or the ultimate list of what people want in partners but to show natural underlying proclivities people have to certain tendencies. And it also seems to be true that we are often unaware of our own desires at this level of clarity. For instance a big part of physical attractiveness in women is signs of fertility, however for many men, including myself, are not necessarily interested in having children and couldn't care less about if our partner could bear children or not. However, we still likely find women with signs of fertility like specific physical traits attractive regardless as it's biologically hardwired in. I believe a similar thing happens in women, most women likely don't outwardly think "he has money so he's attractive" but more likely it's something of an aura or feeling about the person, almost as if they just happen to also be desirable (for no particular reason) and have resources. So in any individual person these desires may not be forthrightly apparent however when we look at society as a whole these traits then become easily observable.

(1.5) Myth: The Value Of Chastity

"Who gave thee thy wisdom? what stories
That stung thee, what visions that smote?"

\- A. C. Swinburne

It may be intuitive to make the jump from men's desire for purity and strong dislike of promiscuity in long term relationships to the desire to have a virgin mate. This, however, doesn't seem to be true. While men do overall value it to a higher level than women it varies drastically by culture, with some cultures not caring at all, indicating it is likely more of a societal construct (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993; Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019).

It is for this reason I feel it is less applicable to our current discussion and view it more as a potential indicator of purity for a man in the same way a woman might see a nice car or fancy watch and use it as an indicator for wealth and status of the potential mate. Useful in some situations but not necessarily in others and in no way a human universal.

(1.6) What about ___

There are of course tons of other things people consider when choosing a partner. As an example, I have heard repeatedly that how funny someone is can play a big role in their desirability. And there are phenomena that can influence partner selection like how women heavily favor members of their own race, while men seem to care much less (Fisman, et al., 2006). However I obviously can't cover everything, this isn't meant to be an exhaustive list and not everything is relevant to the discussion I am trying to have. Also please note that just because something isn't listed for one gender doesn't mean it isn't a factor. For example, men do prefer shorter women, but it's to a notably smaller extent than women preferring taller partners, and men's preference for height appears to be more of a societal construct while women's preference for height appears to have a more evolutionary/biological base (Tao., 2020). So because the effect is smaller and based on culture I feel it doesn't have a place in the list. This is additionally true for those things that are very similar or shared across genders. As you will see as we get further in, they just don't have a place here. This isn't a comprehensive guide as to what people desire but rather uses some key differences in desire to explain similar disparities within our society.

(1.7) Myth: Societal Circumstances Explain Female Socioeconomic Preference

What about cases where men generally earn more or are higher status than women as an aspect of the society in which they live? If women only have higher status partners to choose from, say because men were arbitrarily paid more, then we may theoretically see women selecting partners of higher socioeconomic status not out of any innate desire but rather as a product of the environmental conditions in which they find themselves. This is a valid concern, the question of how we can be sure the reason women pick partners the way they do is because of an evolutionary drive as described previously is a natural one. Thankfully we have evidence on this. If it was only a product of the environment then in situations where women do attain higher levels of income and status, say in more egalitarian countries, we should then see a proportional decrease in hypergamy, with women taking on a more masculine role of dating down the socioeconomic hierarchy to a lower status partner. This is not what happens however, in cases where women attain higher incomes they still maintain their economic requirements for men (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993). And in the cases, where a woman with a high level of educational attainment marries a man with a lower education level, we see something even more intriguing. In these cases women had a *greater* tendency to be with partners with higher income than themselves (Qian., 2017). This could indicate that when the higher status of men in a relationship is not fulfilled in one aspect it could need to be compensated for in another.

So we can then clearly see that women's requirement for high socioeconomic status in partners is not an aberration of women's status within the society they reside, but rather appears to be a deeper desire that transcends the specific context in which the woman finds herself.

(1.8) What about hookups?

"Wert thou pure and a maiden, Dolores,
When desire took thee first by the throat?"
- A. C. Swinburne

Not all romantic relationships last for a long time, some are brief, flings of passion rather than life long connections. Their are a few key differences in these cases:

- Men are notably more interested in short term relationships than women and have lower standards for women in these situations (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993)
- Women generally want a lot of the same things in a short term partner as a long term partner, with some small changes such as desiring more physically strong men, indicating they use it as a way to judge potential long term partners (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993)
- While men strongly dislike promiscuity in the long term, for brief encounters men actually desire higher promiscuity (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993)

(1.9) Cavemen: Short Term Fun

We can briefly understand this from the caveman context, if Olng the caveman finds a cavewoman willing to participate in some sort of short term fun without any intention of longer term commitment, then perhaps the cavewoman gets pregnant. As long as Olng eventually finds a cavewomen who he does commit to a longer term union with, protecting and providing for the women and offspring to ensure their survival, it doesn't really matter what happens with the cavewoman who he had a short term engagement with. If that cavewoman can find another caveman, let's say C, to take care of her, or survive by herself then the child lives and Olng's genes get passed along even more and if not no big deal Olng still has the cavewomen he committed to ensure he has surviving children.

This isn't quite true for Miol the cavewoman. If she has any sort of relationship, short or long, she is likely to get pregnant and has to face the struggles associated with this. So in many cases, a short term relationship is just worse for Miol in terms of the survival of the children. Without the extra continual supplementation of resources, the likelihood of death or malnutrition of Miol or her child increases and the prospects of the child living and eventually passing along their genes likewise decrease.

(1.10) Myth: The Opposite Gender Has An Immoral Mate Selection

I have seen several problematic ideas cropping up from a lack of understanding of data on mate preferences. On the men's side, there are ideas that "All women are gold diggers only after men's money" understandably stemming from seeing women pick exclusively wealthy partners and judge rather harshly based on status. And this is reasonable, if you saw some group of people basing a large number of their decisions seemingly on monetary value, greed could be the conclusion you make. In the same vein, most people tend to have high opinions of themselves.

For men this may manifest as the idea that they are nobler in their selection of a partner, caring much less about how wealthy they are and rather judging them based on "who they as a person" and what traits they possess regardless of social status. And again we can see the logic here, the fantasy tale of a charming prince falling in love with an unassuming peasant girl is a pleasant one and does paint the men in a very good light.

We can see a nearly identical situation pop up with women. Ideas such as "All men just objectify women and are only after women's bodies" is one I see all too frequently. And again from a female perspective, this makes complete sense. Seeing a bunch of men pick partners based in large part on physical appearance rather than what the woman has accomplished or is capable of could easily lead to the misconception that men only want sex. And there is of course truth around men being more interested in women's bodies but it's not the whole truth. On the flip side some women may feel more noble in their selection of a partner, caring much less about arbitrary physical attributes and rather judging them more for "who they are as a person" and what traits they possess regardless of appearance. And this is reasonable, caring about what people have on the inside, be it kindness, intelligence, or ambition, over physicality, is in my opinion quite commendable and it does paint women in a very good light.

As you can see however these are two sides to the same coin, two halves of a greater whole. Both are somewhat correct but they fail to see the other side, not necessarily through any fault of their own but just because they view the world from their own perspective, with their own desires, and it is quite difficult to put yourself in another person's headspace. You can imagine the problems that would arise if instead of valuing different things everyone wanted the same traits. Imagine a world where both men and women valued socioeconomic status and desired a partner with higher status than themselves. No one could ever form a relationship with anyone they found desirable as anyone they did like would be of higher status and thus not be interested in them.

We would have an endless chain of lonely people all striving to gain the affection of someone fated to never reciprocate it. It is only by having half of the people willing to date down socioeconomic hierarchies that relationships and love can form. We can see this dynamic for many of the things men and women desire, for instance, tall men and short women liking each other or more mature men and younger women liking each other (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, A., & Ariely, D., 2010). I will likely touch on this at several points throughout this but in many ways, men and women are perfect matches for each other, both starkly different in many aspects but unique complimentary in their existence.

(1.11) Do These Preferences Reveal Themselves In Real World Scenarios

Something to think about when discussing this is, while all the data is nice and explanations reasonable, do people *really* select partners based on this stuff? After all, while some women clearly seem won over by a nice suit and fancy car, or some men by an especially transfixing figure, plenty of people you may meet in daily life also care a bit more about how kind the other person is or what mutual interests they have. And you would have a good point. First I would just remind you that this isn't an all-encompassing list of what people desire. Second I would say that there is some evidence pointing towards the idea that these preferences may be reigned in, at least to some extent, through real-world interaction. For instance, when a speed dating situation was set up where people got to very briefly meet someone of the opposite sex and then determine if they would be interested in seeing them again in the future, it was found that attractiveness and income had no discernible effect on if people wanted to hang out again (Eastwick, & Finkel, E. J., 2008). These results, however, seem to contradict another speed dating experiment that did find links between the income of the neighborhood a man came from and how desirable women found him (Fisman, et al., 2006). And there is robust evidence to show that many of these preferences, such as those for age or socioeconomic status, do clearly show up in actual partner choice (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019). So a reasonable conclusion may be that in-person contact could have a somewhat mitigating effect on evolved preferences. However, it's unlikely to be able to completely override them. This is still great news, assuming the primary way we meet each other is in person.

(1.12) Introduction To The Modern Dating Scene

"The lilies and languors of virtue
For the raptures and roses of vice"
-A.C. Swinburne

By a fair margin, the most common way for heterosexual people to meet is online and the disparity appears to be increasing over time (Rosenfeld, Thomas, R. J., & Hausen, S., 2019). Historically speaking this is a quite novel concept and with the rapid increase in things like dating apps, and frequent changes within those dating apps themselves, our dating landscape is changing quite significantly from what it has been historically.

Let's take a logical look at how dating apps work. They are, after all, companies looking to earn a profit, and earn they do. Match Group, the company that owns some common dating platforms such as Tinder, Hinge, Match, and OkCupid, capturing over 50% of the dating app market, generates $3.2B from 15.9M paying individuals (Match Group, Inc., n.d.). I will assume you're familiar with the basic concept of how these apps work, you make a profile, swipe, or like other people's profiles that are displayed, and if someone else also swipes or likes you then you "match" and are then allowed to then text and potentially form a relationship. So for now let's first think about the problem of connecting people in successful relationships. Imagine an app that is very good at its purported purpose, quickly pairing people who would work well together and leading them to have a long-lasting and loving connection. Well, now that they have a relationship they have no need to use the application further as it has served its purpose. This is great for those people, however, it's not particularly profitable for the company as it just lost potential customers. Perhaps the company could charge some upfront fee to use the service to outweigh the cost of lost customers, and perhaps that would be economical, but that's not what most of these apps do. Instead, they opt for subscription services, benefiting more the longer a user is on the app and subscribed. Now one may assume they discovered this was the most profitable method, but even in the case where it was an arbitrary decision, they now have an incentive to keep people on the apps and in a state where they desire the features that the subscriptions generally imply they will give you a better chance to get matches.

(1.13) Disparities in success

The outcomes on these apps are what you may expect. Women using the apps appear to receive a staggeringly disproportionate number of matches compared to men, receiving over 17 times the number of matches (Tyson, et al., 2016). And we can also see that in the ongoing trends for sexlessness (at least before the pandemic which obviously caused large disruption in the data) that things aren't going great for men. We find that the rates of sexlessness in men (no sex within the last year) can be estimated at just under 31%, whereas for women it was closer to 19%, and both rates are increasing (Ueda, Mercer, C. H., Ghaznavi, C., & Herbenick, D., 2020). These metrics aren't perfect but they form a proxy for how things are going, and I think part of these results is due to the negative influence of tech and dating apps on actual dating.

(1.14) The Paradox Of Choice

One of the big tricks that dating apps use to keep people on them is providing choice. When people are provided a larger number of choices they appear to be less satisfied with any single choice they make (Oulasvirta, Hukkinen, J., & Schwartz, B., 2009). Apps provide endless choices with their swiping mechanics allowing their users to see more potential mates in a few minutes than our ancestors would have likely seen in their entire lives. We now have to compare a smothering number of people, trying to find which one is the "best". And we also have to worry, not just about the people we have already seen, but also about the people just a swipe or two away. This mechanism almost acts like gambling, inserting the idea that the "one" could just be right around the corner if only you could keep swiping. And further, even if you do eventually end up matching with someone and push past these ideas to get into a relationship, you may not end up being happy with your partner in the long run. This is a phenomenon that has been studied many times and from what I can see nearly all studies point to a single conclusion. Increasing the number of choices for people often leads to less satisfaction with the choice those people made (Iyengar, & Lepper, M. R., 2000). By being exposed to an endless series of mate choices it is not hard to see why subsequent satisfaction with those choices decreases. So what happens then? People using the apps continue using, even if they find relative success in their endeavors, due to the novel psychological effect of having such an astronomical number of perceived choices.

(1.15) Myth: Women have no issues with relationships

When talking about this it may be compelling to conclude that because women have so many options laid before them they must have it easy. Especially when you add that a woman's desirability as a partner appears to be largely based on appearances compared to socioeconomic success for men (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993). And I would agree that being considered attractive as a woman is easier than attaining the heights of economic success as a man. I think there's a fair argument to be had there and it's reasonable to say in this domain women do have it easier. However, there is a different set of issues that women have to face, as you are hopefully picking up on with the issues surrounding choosing a partner, that the perceived ease of desirability does not fully capture.

(1.16) Gold Bar Analogy

Imagine a fantastical scenario where the following three things are true:

1. You have a large bar of solid gold
2. You may never work to earn money
3. Over time your bar of gold will disintegrate

Now you have been given a pretty valuable blessing, a bar of solid gold, extraordinarily valuable in fact. But without ever being able to work you do need to rely on that bar to survive. It shouldn't be exceptionally difficult because of the value of the gold, however in order to access that value you must sell it. Immediately once you have the bar of gold merchants begin offering you money for it. You now have a bit of a problem, you want to get as much money for the bar as you can, so you need to discern which of the merchants is honestly offering you the best (or even a sufficiently good) deal for it. However, there are tons of merchants constantly hounding you and the longer you take investigating these offers the more this bar will disintegrate, thus lowering the amount you could actually get for it. This in turn could cause you to lose the interest of some of the more affluent potential buyers who were genuinely interested in paying a good price for it. I assume you can see the struggle here, how do you know how long you should wait before you accept an exchange?

This is how I view part of the female experience as it relates to romantic relationships. Girls are to a large extent born with value, possessing the traits that potential suitors would desire by default. These things, mentioned at the beginning of this work, such as purity, attractiveness, and youth are all attributes women already have, a gold bar if you will. Compared to things like economic success or social status that men must earn or create, initially being nearly worthless from a desirability perspective but slowly building themselves into a desirable partner.

But starting with this value has problems, if you are desired for things like physical looks or youth, while this situation in early life may be comparatively easy these things fade, there is a timer, the bar of gold will disintegrate. So there is this perpetual pressure that must be faced. And in the case of purity you can imagine having multiple short-term engagements as shaving small pieces off the bar of gold. At first, it will likely have no effect, who would notice a little off the bottom? But as this goes on and is combined with the natural disintegration, many of the things potential partners would find valuable slowly fade away.

These issues are compounded by the fact that women do start with desirability, rather than having to earn it. You can perhaps imagine children born to rich families and how they can sometimes act. You can see them do things like excessive drugs or partying while going to a high-end university, fully paid for by their family, and wonder how anyone could squander such a wonderful opportunity. Many people not having those benefits would die to have even a fraction of what those children are so brazenly throwing away. I think in many ways men can feel the same way when looking at women and how they act towards their situation. When you are treated especially well, and receive an abundance of affection (even an overabundance in some cases), for the majority of your life it is natural to assume it will continue and to take it for granted.

I think it's exceptionally hard if you're in one of these situations to realize it and this can have negative consequences down the line. Women's biggest obstacle in this regard appears to be themselves, getting over the sense of entitlement and exaggerated preferences that comes with their situation to allow oneself to have a fulfilling relationship isn't a particularly effortless task.

I will also mention that this is obviously an imperfect analogy as women, especially in the modern world, don't have to rely on the extra value they have and can also just as easily follow the path men must follow by default. However from what I can tell most women still to some extent follow this format as its almost impossible to be given that level of privilege and not have it affect you.

This last part is more just what I have seen from men and women and their experiences so you can take it with a grain of salt but it appears to me that this imbalance in desirability in relationships isn't permanent. As men work and as they strive for higher levels of success in our society they appear to become more desirable as partners, a shocker I know. However, there seems to presently be a point where the average desirability of men and women converge and flip, going from women being more desirable overall to men being on average more desirable. This, from what I can tell, seems to be somewhere around 30, at which point it seems to, in general, start getting harder for women who still haven't found a partner to find one as they now have to compete not only with other women like them but also all the younger women in their earlier 20s for men who are now more desirable due to having finally built themselves up enough. And while I have seen some making claims to the effect of "It serves these women right for wasting the plethora of opportunities offered to them" I think that more sympathy is in order. Because while yes they may have had opportunities previously that they squandered, as a culture we don't tell young women that it is honestly quite important to sort this stuff out sooner rather than later. And even if we did, all the evidence in these women's worlds would be saying otherwise. For men, while it may be difficult, the path forward is somewhat clear, it's as straight of a line as one could hope for when it comes to planning anything in the modern world, even if it's difficult and successful at the end is far from guaranteed, there's only one way to go, up.

(1.17) The 'Cock Carousel'

"What milk fed thee first at what bosom?

What sins gave thee suck?"

- A. C. Swinburne

I have seen and heard across various parts of the internet a somewhat comical rendition of what dating apps have become that I think bears looking into as from what I have seen it is fairly common in some circles. The concept goes something like "Dating apps are like a carousel of fuckboys/assholes cocks that women can ride, funded by all the other lonely men hoping for a chance to one day join in". Now this, like many more over-the-top ideas, is based on some truth. As mentioned earlier women see a sizably greater amount of success on these apps (Tyson, et al., 2016). And lots of men using the apps are likely lonely and attempting to form genuine connections while not receiving much attention while women do seem to have a nearly endless supply of options. I can also see where the fuckboy/asshole part comes from, given that we assume that the terms fuckboy or asshole are just being used to refer to a man who is of low quality and generally only interested in using the women he meets for his own gain or pleasure. I believe we can get close to an actual psychological definition of an asshole.

(1.18) Myth: Women Don't Date Assholes

The first step in deconstructing this is defining what an asshole is. We all probably have slightly different but general characteristics would be a willingness to manipulate or use others for their own benefit while not caring about people they may hurt as they view themselves as more important, just generally not a great person. Assuming that's a reasonable enough definition we can see that women do show a preference for men who display characteristics of narcissism (self-importance), psychopathy (lack of empathy), and machiavellianism (incenserity\manipulativeness), especially in the short-term (Carter, Campbell, A. C., & Muncer, S., 2014). Now exactly why is not exactly clear but a reasonable theory may be that people who have these traits are better at presenting themselves as desirable.

If you have a very high opinion of yourself, don't care what others think, and are willing to manipulate others it's not that far of a jump to imagine you would be able to present yourself as a man possessing traits women would typically want and extracting benefit from them. And there does seem to be evidence for psychopaths mimicking desirable personality traits in an attempt to be more desirable to women (Brazil, et al., 2023). Now this won't work forever as the women being used will, hopefully, eventually realize that the man isn't anything like what he portrayed and is quite deceitful. So what happens then, well the man would likely move on to his next victim. Now normally you can imagine within some group word would quite quickly spread about this man and most of the people would shun him, thus he would lose access to the few women he would have been able to reach in the first place. However with modern dating apps, this dynamic changes a little bit, now potential mates are semi-anonymous, that is, you have likely never seen nor heard of the people before they appear on your screen as a profile of a potential partner. Additionally, with how widespread these apps are, the pool of potential partners is nearly limitless. This, to me, seems like a narcissistic psychopath's greatest fantasy, an unlimited supply of victims oblivious to their previous actions. So in theory, and I would like to stress that while the base of this is anchored in science I have built a fair bit of assumptions and logical conclusions on top of it, we may see these types of people with psychopathic tendencies have a greater influence on these apps. Because they have to keep moving from target to target a disproportionate number of women are likely exposed to this otherwise relatively small pool of manipulative men. This would have two major effects in my opinion:

- Women assume that men are worse and more manipulative/willing to use women than they are due to each women's observable sample of men containing a higher number of people with psychopathic traits only looking to use them.
- Men assume women are *only* interested in "assholes", or to put it better that what women want in the end is someone who has these manipulative characteristics, as from their perspective women are repeatedly choosing these men over other less psychopathic and genuinely caring men.

It's hard to tell exactly to what extent this is all happening. Firstly because while men having psychopathic or machiavellian traits do report having significantly more sexual partners, the inherently deceptive nature that is associated with these traits makes it hard to use this as a solid metric of success (Carter, Campbell, A. C., & Muncer, S., 2014). Further, while I have seen/heard a fair bit of both men and women pointing fingers at each other seemingly due to the actions of these people, I can't be sure of how pervasive the ideas are. So I give this to you a little less as a broad cultural commentary and more as a new way of seeing what others may be going through/experiencing and why they may have views that outwardly appear quite hateful and destructive.

Ok so back to the "cock carousel". Hopefully, now you see where the concept comes from and have an appreciation for some of the truth behind it. It's obviously a bit over the top and is, in my view, not accurate in part because it assumes women are the willing and somewhat beneficial participants in this endeavor which doesn't seem to be the case.

(1.19) Hijacking Female Psychology

"What bud was the shell of a blossom

That all men may smell to and pluck?"

— A. C. Swinburne

Dating apps also seem to prey on women's natural psychology. While more choice can have negative effects on decisions some effects of choice seem to be different based on gender. The difference is in the standards men and women have for a mate. Even if they may be more dissatisfied after, when they are presented with a larger number of choices men appear to be relatively consistent in the standards they hold for the opposite sex, while for women, as the number of choices increases so does the standards they have for men (Fisman, et al., 2006). Now in normal circumstances, this would work fine, women wanting the best partners in their tribe\friend group, work\school, or village\town wouldn't cause any big issues.

There's a limited number of possible options, and everyone does have their own personal preferences so finding someone who is at the top of attractiveness from the eyes of a single woman within the group isn't exceptionally difficult and allows many more relationships to form. However when we turn our attention to dating apps we can see the exact opposite is true, now you don't just see the people in your immediate vicinity and daily life but also everyone in nearby towns\cities, state\province, or even your entire country. So then we have this problem of comparing all potential partners not to a reasonable set of standards but to the ideal most desirable possible partner (ideal in dating app standards, not necessarily in what would honestly make a great partner).

So what's the result of this? From my perception, it seems this causes more women who use apps to stay on apps, at least for a time. This is necessary for these apps as it appears, in general, more men use dating apps than women (McClain, C., & Gelles-Watnick, R., 2023). If the apps promoted long-term partnerships their supply of women would quickly dwindle and they would have no carrot to dangle in an attempt to extract profit from men.

(1.20) Myth: All Incels Are Men

You may have heard the term incel, which is just people who can't get romantic/emotional intimacy and blame the opposite sex for it. This has been unsurprisingly mostly linked with men as they generally have a much more difficult time compared to women in the realm of relationships and thus since the bar is so much higher for men some fall short and then blame women specifically, rather than a broader social problem which I have hopefully shown thus far is a more fair way of looking at it. This phenomenon is unfortunate but altogether unsurprising given the circumstances. However, the spiraling of female standards to unrealistic levels as I just discussed can have a similar effect on women that may be less expected. By raising their expectations so high that they can never be reached (and then reinforcing that these standards are good). Some women can get into a mentality of expecting a man of unattainable perfection will magically fall into their lap, and that the fact this isn't happening shows how terrible all men truly are.

Posted by u/[deleted] 2 years ago

594

Just a quick reminder: never ask a guy out.

`REMINDER 👑`

Unfortunately I see this on other subs all the time - a girl is into a guy and she's wondering if she should ask him out. I literally feel embarrassed for the girl whenever I read posts like that. Of course all the out of shape, balding low T clowns rush to tell her that it's so "sexy" when a woman makes the first move and blah blah. Ugh. Disgusting.

This is a reminder for FDS members: never, ever ask a guy out. If you meet a cute guy and have the most amazing chemistry and can't stop thinking about him BUT he doesn't ask you out...**move on**. Never ever ask yourself if you should just be a little more forward, if you should just take the leap etc. **If he wanted to he would.**

Men and libfems will tell you how modern and empowering and amazing it is to take the first step but that's all bullshit.

This kind of thing is, in my experience, much rarer than male incels since at the end of the day most of these women do legitimately have a large number of wonderful men who would be interested if the women were open to it, so it is more self-inflicted agony at the extreme. Of course, they are not fully to blame as they are to an extent victims of the modern social situation just like their male counterparts, in part from things like dating apps intentionally preying on this phenomenon, and in part from a misaligned cultural movement over-encouraging it.

(1.21) Women's Dating Black Magic

"Pleasure to me is wonder—the unexplored, the unexpected, the thing that is hidden and the changeless thing that lurks behind superficial mutability."
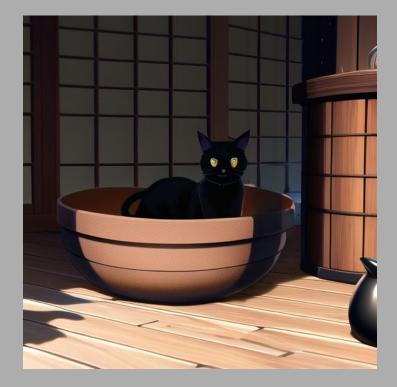
- H.P. Lovecraft

I have painted a somewhat grim picture with some of the information here and want to break it up with what I consider to be a bit of black magic for women in dating. From what I have seen in the modern dating and social scene there seems to be an increased hesitancy of men to approach women for a multitude of reasons, be it fears of being seen as creepy, worries of accusations of harassment stemming from some of the modern cancel culture, or just anxiety from many previous experiences of rejection. This opens an opportunity for some more industrious women. I encourage women to try asking out men they are interested in. Make the first move and you will likely be able to get someone notably more desirable than you otherwise would have. I say this because the alternative is waiting for a guy to ask you out, hoping that the man that happens to fall into your lap also happens to be a great person. And if we think a little bit about this, who are the men who approach and ask women out?

- It could be a kind and well meaning man interested in forming a genuine connection. However this man likely has empathy, he likely views you as a person and cares about how you feel as another living, breathing, human being. He is also likely aware that many women receive several unwanted advances and doesn't want to add to the problem. However, he is also aware that as a guy he is generally expected to make the first move and so he will likely try to build up confidence and approach in the least weird way possible.

- Alternatively, it could be a man with more dark triad (psychopathy, narcissism, machiavellianism) traits. This man may not have as much or any empathy for you as a person, caring very little if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, and may instead view you as a means to an end. Now it's even possible he initially presents himself as exceedingly charming, even more so than the genuine guy, using manipulative tactics tested on all the women before you to say exactly what he thinks you want to hear. If he is rejected it also doesn't matter, in his mind it's not a failing on his part nor a reflection of his value, you are the problem. And so he simply moves on to the next woman, far faster than someone who viewed you as a person would likely ever be able to do.

Obviously, these are caricatures of people and there is much more nuance in actual social situations of men approaching women but I think the core concept can still be gotten across here. If you sit and wait, not only will you be more likely to be approached by someone who isn't a good partner, but these people may in fact appear to be better partners on the surface. Much of this issue can be sidestepped by instead allowing *you* to select who to approach and what traits in the man prompt this approach.

I must, however, advise caution to the incredibly small minority of women who may take this advice for there is a danger. I mentioned that most men will say yes, and this is true even if they aren't necessarily interested in a long term relationship with you. As I have stated and will continue to bring up, men are generally more interested in short term things like hookups and have lower standards for them (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993). This means you must be relatively certain before you engage, that the guy you are aiming for is truly someone you believe will be a good partner and isn't *significantly* out of your league or you risk setting yourself up to be used. Don't worry too much about the latter, you'd be surprised who is interested since, as you have already learned, men and women value different things when evaluating potential partners) Despite its dangers however It is my belief that this powerful technique can serve you well in your romantic endeavors.

(1.22) Myth: Mate Value Is Personal Value

I have thus far used terms like value and desirability almost interchangeably. I hope it has been clear from the context that I have been talking about the perceived quality of one person as a potential partner compared to all other people. These things can sometimes get conflated with someone's value as a human being and statements such as "Men shouldn't be valued just for their money" or "Women shouldn't be valued only for their looks" pop up arguing that there's more to people than just the simple characteristics I outline here. They are of course correct, it is quite important to understand that someone can be incredibly valuable, as a friend, family member, or part of society, regardless of their desirability from the opposite sex. I think because relationships are such a fundamental part of our nature as humans we can sometimes make factors relating to them all-consuming. It's good to keep a separation between your value as an intelligent, conscious, and empathetic creature and your perceived value from potential partners and do the same for others.

(1.23) Myth: Friendzoning Only Affects Men

Friendzoning is, broadly speaking, the experience of unrequited love. Where one person, usually a male, develops feelings for another person, usually a female, who "isn't interested in pursuing anything more serious" with that man. Let's look at this from the man's perspective in a general case, there will of course be outliers but. He likely has a friend who he cares about and probably considers her very beautiful, sweet/kind, enjoyable to talk to, etc., and wants to pursue her. He likely goes out of his way to be kind to her, compliments her, spends extra time with her, perhaps takes her to nice places or buys her nice things, or maybe has conversations that are deeper and more emotionally intimate than he would with others. Overall if you were to describe the relationship between this man and woman it could be framed as the beginning of two people falling in love. And as these people grow closer eventually one of them, usually the man, initiates the conversation about actually becoming a couple, and in response, rejection. The woman isn't interested, she doesn't reciprocate the feelings.

- Perhaps she views the guy as not desirable enough compared to other options she has.
- Perhaps she doesn't view his exceptional treatment of her as actually being that exceptional and as a result the idea that he has feelings comes as a complete shock, like going from 0 to 100 relationship-wise. I think it's reasonable to assume there are likely several men interested in some women at the same time, all of which are likely trying to do similar acts of kindness to gain affection. In this way, the actions of the one single man don't seem that out of place because, from the perception of the woman that's just how nice men act, it's the norm, not the exception.
- Perhaps there's a chance she is a bit manipulative and fosters feelings of closeness in men, "leading them on", to gain special treatment from them, say in the form of gifts, without any intention to ever reciprocate.

In my experience, this is a predominantly male issue and I believe there are a couple of reasons for that relating to how men and women make friends. A meta-analysis on friendships shows that men and women are for the most part fairly similar in what they want in friends, both valuing things like trust, honesty, and commitment, however, there are two key differences between them (Hall., 2011). The first is that men value what the analysis calls agency, encompassing things like resources, physical attractiveness, and social connections of the potential friend, more than women do. The second is that women value what the analysis calls communion, intimacy, and the ability to share personal things about oneself with a potential friend, more than men do. This appears to point to male friendships being more function-fulfilling, based on reciprocal utility, whereas female friendships lean more towards being emotionally fulfilling and supportive. This could lead to men feeling much closer to a woman when an emotional connection is formed between them whereas for women this is just what you would do with a close friend and it has no romantic implications.

(1.24) Cavemen: Mammoth Step On Friend

Imagine you Olng the caveman going out hunting with the other men of his tribe. They decide they want a lot of food and target a mammoth. In the heat of glorious battle, one of the cavemen gets stepped on and dies. Olng had to have some mutual connection with the other hunters to allow them to work together, but if Olng cared too much about everyone and was too attached, the repeated deaths of comrades (or enemy tribesmen for that matter), may hinder his ability to continuously go out and perform as a high-level hunter. It is reasonable to expect getting into a group to achieve a common purpose would be easy for Olng, but developing a more emotionally intimate relationship with members of this group may be hard. This is, in my opinion, an admittedly very simplistic explanation for a possible evolutionary basis as to why men in the modern age may find it harder to make intimate connections with male friends and place a higher value on those connections that are created with women. Not to say it can't happen, but rather we may have some vestigial psychological systems pushing us in these directions.

Overall I think that the issue of friendzoning is one primarily of dissonance between the interpretation of what various aspects of a potential relationship imply. Friendzoning as I have described it here, however, is primarily a male issue. Women face another version of it I will henceforth refer to as fuckzoning.

(1.25) Fuckzoning

Fuckzoning is, broadly speaking, a situation where one person, usually a woman, is having sexual relations with another person, usually a male, but the other person "isn't interested in pursuing anything more serious" with the relationship. If you have been paying attention you probably already know why this disparity exists, it's because of different levels of desire for short-term relationships. Not only are men more interested in short-term relationships but they also appear to have lower standards for partners in these situations (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 1993). I have seen lots of women in this kind of situation, where they have a desire for a more committed relationship but seem to be stuck more or less as fuckbuddies. Let's try to look at this from the female perspective. This woman likely has a guy who they like a fair bit. Maybe this guy is smart, kind, charming, etc. and at some point, he asks her out. They start hanging out more, doing stuff together, and eventually it progresses to sex, and then, nothing. Stagnation. And again if you were to describe the relationship up to that point it would seem as though it was progressing wonderfully and would be the start of a loving partnership.

- Perhaps the woman just isn't desirable enough for a committed relationship in the eyes of the guy and only managed to get this far due to his lowered short-term standards. This could be a very real and distressing problem, imagine finding someone who seems to be way out of your league, but then they like you and are interested in you. And then the subsequent despair as you realize they don't view you as desirable enough to commit to and are only interested in something short-term.

- Perhaps the guy just isn't ready for greater commitment, it's understandable that some people may just want to have something more casual at some point in their life and it's not always clear, even to them, what they are ready for.
- Perhaps the man is a bit manipulative and is just using the woman for his own pleasure, "leading her on'' with implications he may be interested in something more serious to get access to her but without any intention of ever committing.

Regardless of the reason however it's understandable that many women would come out feeling used for their bodies. It's an unfortunate situation that is caused again by a mismatch of expectations and desires between partners. Now unfortunately I don't have a good solution for either friendzoning or fuckzoning beyond just moving on and trying again (which I get isn't that helpful). I'm sure for some there are early indicators but I don't think most people, including myself, could tell with any amount of certainty while within the situation. The more likely outcome would just be becoming paranoid and distrusting genuine people while not weeding out those not interested to any meaningful extent. I think the value here comes from just acknowledging both sides of the situation and fostering compassion for people on the other side because seeing the hardship of others can lead to more compassion for everyone.

(1.26) Myth: Nice Guys And Pick Me Girls

From what I have seen, these ideas come up relatively commonly and are over/incorrectly used in most cases. First the concept of nice guys. This is the idea that there is a cohort of men who claim to be kind and loving people, are single, and can't get a relationship, and when they approach and are rejected by women reveal their "true" colors. Here is an example of the kind of thing I'm talking about.

Now obviously this is somewhat over the top and I think that's why the idea of nice guys spread, like any other shocking thing it intrigues us and so it's what we pay attention to. No one is spreading viral images of regular respectful conversations, so we have an availability heuristic problem where we see way more of the few negative interactions and then conclude that it is therefore much more common than it actually is. You can also see from much of the previously discussed data that a lot of men find it hard to get a relationship in part due to the combination of biology and current society. I think it is a reasonable claim that many of these men are in fact legitimately kind people and, if not aware of the circumstances surrounding their situation, could be quite confused by why despite them being wonderful people it's so hard to create a relationship. So they initially appear the exact same as the "nice guys" by expressing that they are kind, and despite that still can't get into a relationship.

Then people seem to dismiss them by incorrectly classifying them as secretly horrible people and putting the blame of their situation entirely on them. Unsurprisingly I have seen this most in online communities, where it's easier to hate others without having to empathetically interact with the person they are hurting.

The other concept is that of "pick me" girls. The idea behind this is that some women who want male validation or approval and to do this may agree/go along with anything guys say or put down other women. Sometimes the term is also associated with concepts like "internalized misogyny" and claims the women are brainwashed. However, it seems in reality to be used primarily when women just show support for men and/or empathy in discussions of men's issues.

The label seems to be more a tool to try to put down any women who aren't part of the niche group pushing ideas that men are all terrible and the "patriarchy" is the ultimate evil putting down all women. I think that the term is rarely if ever, used productively. And is far more likely to be a low-effort attempt to discredit someone who doesn't share their one-sided worldview, giving them a negative label so they do not have to acknowledge any truth there may be in what the accused pick-me girls are saying.

Now obviously there are scenarios where both these stereotypes are true, but from what I can see it's the minority of uses where this is the case. In reality, it appears to me that the labels are usually used on people who are in no way accurately described by them and it is for this reason that I usually disregard the terms when they pop up and rather assume the opposite, which generally seems to end up being the case as situations surrounding the terms unfold.

Potential Solutions

I have laid out lots of problems in this document, but I am also of the opinion that when you point out problems you should generally also be willing to discuss potential solutions, otherwise it's just complaining about problems without making progress. Before we get into any legitimate solutions however I want to address some solutions that may be stumbled upon when pondering the information I have provided that will not work for a variety of reasons to pre-empt the pushing of some nice sounding but ineffective ideas.

(1.27) Bad Solution: Arranged Marriage

Now after seeing all these problems with relationships, one might conclude that a possible solution is arranged marriage. And on the surface, it does promise to solve some of the issues we are facing. For instance, it could be argued that having parents or other people handle the finding and matching of a suitable partner could circumvent many of the issues regarding the extreme choice provided by dating apps. Similarly, it could eliminate many of the less logical standards people have for the opposite gender as, in theory, the people making the decision of who to partner together could take a more logical look at what things would make the people compatible and likely to have a successful relationship. And since we are proposing this as a hypothetical solution we could also say we format it in a way such that both the parents or matchmaker and the person being matched must agree to some extent on the potential partner to eliminate the possibility of someone getting matched with a partner they find completely undesirable.

Some data points that are often referenced in support of this such as arranged marriages having significantly lower divorce rates than marriages of choice, I couldn't find a reliable source for these claims, however. Even in the case that we give them the benefit of the doubt there are common rebuttals such as pointing out divorce could be stigmatized in the places where arranged marriages are common so it could lead to people staying in marriages they are less satisfied with and would leave if there wasn't as much stigma around that. This makes a lot of sense and is probably true to an extent, however, there are some opposing problems.

For instance, there is evidence that love and satisfaction with their marriages are the same in both arranged and choice marriages (Myers, Madathil, J., & Tingle, L. R., 2005). So the idea that people are trapped in marriages in which they are unhappy, and just can't escape, might not be the most accurate description.

Another similar argument against them would be that perhaps in an arranged marriage, because it is not based on love/passion, there won't be as much of a connection between them and it won't be a fulfilling relationship. However, this doesn't seem to be the case, while initially at the time of marriage, there is expectadly less connection this changes by a significant amount over time and it appears these people build very loving and fulfilling connections (Epstein, Pandit, M., & Thakar, M., 2013). And this follows my understanding of love, it's something that my opinion is created rather than found. It's not to say that people can't suddenly fall in love at first sight, but generally what seems to precipitate relationships is simply proximity. People who work together or otherwise spend time together seem to fall in love, I think it's more of just something that happens to people, assuming each of them are kind humans. I think it's much more helpful to imagine relationships as people building something beautiful together and I suspect these beliefs could lead to stronger, more resilient relationships (and if it does this would also explain why people with these beliefs may have lower divorce rates if that is true).

So then if arranged marriages aren't as bad as we might initially imagine why am I saying this is a bad solution? And it's simply because for a solution to be good, it can't just work, it also has to be accepted. I don't think that in any way there could be broad acceptance of arranged marriages in the west due to our fiercely individualistic and choice-oriented mentality. The idea of getting people to willingly give up choice is difficult, especially with how impactful to someone's life marriage is untenable for most. This includes me, I would be hesitant to give up the freedom to choose a partner to someone else or some third-party system. It is because of this that I feel we need to come up with a different less extreme solution that doesn't require such significant cultural shifts to produce a positive outcome.

(1.28) Bad Solution: "Just lower/ignore your standards"

It may be tempting to say why don't we just ignore all these old constructs of value and date purely on what will make us happy. Why don't women stop being so demanding that the economic prospects and status of their partners are better than their own and why don't men stop being so obsessed over women's bodies? It's not that simple however as we have biological constraints shackled upon us by millions of years of evolution. These aren't the type of things you can just one day decide to ignore. A great example of this is our insatiable love of sugar, an evolutionary boon but in our modern society something hurdling us to obesity and an early grave.

A companion to this is the idea of lowering our standards, which is met with, in many cases, utter disgust and rejection. This just isn't an option anyone seems to want no matter where they are coming from, and even in the cases where these standards can be shown to be completely irrational or even harming the very people who have them. And like it or not we need a solution that people will accept for it to be of any use.

It is for this reason I would like to propose a slightly different interpretation, not lower standards but rather changing them to better suit ourselves. Caring more about what will result in positive outcomes for us. I will give one of my beloved analogies to help explain.
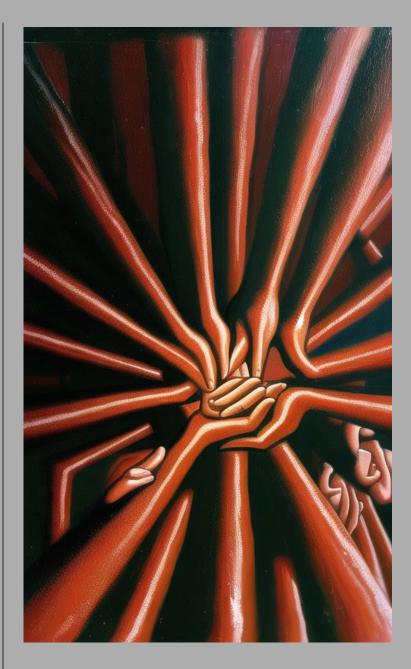
(1.29) Faux Gold Idol Analogy

Imagine you and I are walking down the street when we encounter a man with a small table that has a variation of the shell game setup, you know the one where you have to keep track of a ball under multiple shells/cups and then at the end guess the correct one. Let's say I choose to partake in the game and win and as a result, I am given a choice, I can either receive a $100 bill or a golden idol (which is clearly just a plastic figurine painted gold). I suggest I should take the golden idol as that much gold would carry astronomical value.

You however point out that the $100 bill would be a better choice as the idol isn't real and if I truly wanted one I could just use a small portion of the money to buy it and still have some left over. My response is, predictably, an exacerbated frustration that you want me to lower my standards down from a solid gold idol to just an, in comparison, measly $100 bill. That's a ridiculous proposition in my mind and one I would never accept, however, we, from an outsider's perspective, can see that the $100 bill would be a far better option and get us everything we would have received by choosing the gold idol and more.

This is something that I see a lot when it comes to relationships and have definitely felt it myself, the attachment to unhelpful metrics of value. I have an intuition however that at least for some it may be possible to re-frame the decision of choosing the money over the plastic idol not as lowering standards down from a gold idol but rather raising standards up from a false one. This, if we could pull it off, would allow us to completely re-frame the overcoming of the problems tech imposes in relationships using a lot of the rhetoric of not settling and the sense I think many have of not wanting to accept a lesser outcome. Unfortunately, this is just hypothesizing by me so the actual practicality of this solution is still untested, while it's a nice idea to get people to prioritize something like levels of warmth and trustworthiness, which do appear to have some predictive power in relationship success (Valentine, Li, N. P., Meltzer, A. L., & Tsai, M.-H., 2020) over something more arbitrary like height. I don't know how difficult it would be to foster this change in someone, but I hope this gives a look into one direction of possible hope for solving some of these issues.

(1.30) Not So Bad Solution: IRL Dating Instead Of Virtual Connections

One possible option that I am thinking about exploring is the utility of in-person dating options. As we discussed a little bit earlier, there is a possibility that some of the preferences in partners could be subdued, to an extent, with actual in-person interactions between potential partners. And to add to this the necessarily limited pool of people that come with in-person dating could help the problems that come with extreme quantity of choice the online dating scene brings. So it appears there may be a chance to promote healthier connections and, depending on how it's set up, perhaps try to allow people to select partners based on something that better predicts positive relationship outcomes. I intend to try to set up an experiment doing something like this, using some speed dating style setup and utilizing as much scientific literature as I can as to what makes people compatible to try to allow people to form relationships. While this is a difficult solution to implement at scale since it isn't virtual I also think it's possible that some kind of dating app that mimicked this, restricting options to a few people within a very close radius and allowing initial communication only through video call could achieve positive results. If the in-person trials go well I think I may set my sights on developing an app next.

Section 2: Economic Success And Male Outperformance

"we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the light into the peace and safety of a new dark age"

- H.P. Lovecraft

(2.1) Gender Differences In Cognitive Ability and Risk Taking

Cognitive capacity is a topic that can be highly controversial depending on who you talk to. However, I feel it is still an essential part of understanding the differences between men and women in our world. In general the mean, or average, capacity for most cognitive tasks is roughly equivalent between genders (Lohman, & Lakin, J. M., 2009; Deary, et al., 2003). However, there are some small disparities such as women being better at some verbal or writing tasks and men being better at some quantitative or spatial tasks (Lohman, & Lakin, J. M., 2009). The biggest difference however comes from variability, where men's cognitive ability seems to vary to a far greater degree than women's resulting in men being overrepresented at the extreme ends of the cognitive spectrum (Lakin., 2013; Lohman, & Lakin, J. M., 2009; Arden, & Plomin, R., 2006; Deary, et al., 2003). I am going to, from this point onward, use the term intelligence to represent general cognitive ability, which is as good a definition as we can have for it given our current measurement capabilities. What the research then seems to show then, is that while men and women have on average the same levels of intelligence, the vast majority of people on the far ends of the distribution, that is the most and least intelligent humans, are men.

We then look at risk taking behavior and find that men are notably less risk-averse than women, engaging in high stakes activities more often (Cross, Copping, L. T., & Campbell, A., 2011). And if we think back to historical contexts this isn't that surprising of a finding.

(2.2) Cavemen: Me Hunt Big Kitty

Imagine a cavemen tribe, consisting of six cavewomen and six cavemen living in a dark little cave on the side of a mountain. Now there's going to be some risk involved here, for instance hunting something, say a sabertooth tiger (I know cavemen probably weren't the ones doing the hunting but just pretend). Some cavemen or cavewomen have to be brave (and stupid) enough to decide to go on the hunt. It's dangerous, and there's a good chance of getting hurt, but if they're successful they become a hero to the tribe for bringing back a giant cat for dinner. Now someone has to face that danger, the question is who. There are some obvious points here, since men are generally stronger than women and women have to deal with the tribulations of childbirth and early care of newborns, they do seem to be a reasonable choice. However, I think there is another equally impactful reasoning we can apply. Imagine if the cavewomen went out hunting and during the hunt, the three of them got injured and later died. Now we have three cavewomen and six cavemen, what has happened to the tribe's capacity to continue existence? I would argue it has at best halved, as having half the cavewomen means half the cavebabies and thus it will be much harder for the tribe to continue with new generations. However, what happens if the cavemen are the ones who go out and get similarly injured? Well now with three cavemen and six cavewomen, the reproductive capacity hasn't changed a meaningful amount. Because of differences in biology, each cavemen can just have cavebabies with two cavewomen and the cavetribe can therefore continue its cave-sistence without too much difficulty (at least compared to the alternative).

(2.3) Extremes of success and failure

Because of the variance in intelligence and increased risk-taking, it is not surprising men thus occupy a greater proportion of both the highest levels of success and the lowest levels of failure, at least in some domains. For instance, intelligence does appear to predict, to an extent, career success (Sternberg, Grigorenko, E. L., & Bundy, D. A.,2001). You can, for simplicity, imagine it like any game of chance where betting is allowed. If you make riskier bets, most of the time you will lose your money, but a very small percentage of the time you will generate astronomical returns. Layer on top of this the overrepresentation of men at the extremes of intelligence and it's not hard to see why a select few hyper-intelligent and incredibly lucky men succeed disproportionately and a small minority of very unintelligent and unlucky men fail catastrophically. An anecdotal example of this is crypto-currency, an extremely risky venture that appears to follow the previous format. It seems to be dominated by men (Faverio, M. & Massarat, N., 2018) sometimes dubbed "crypto-bros". This difference in investment seems to come primarily, from what I can tell, due to its inherent risk. Thus this may explain why the vast majority of people we see who lose money on crypto, and the vast majority of the tiny selection of people who got out with millions, are both men.

This sort of dynamic is exemplified positively by the fact that the majority of S&P 500 CEOs are men (DeSilver, Drew., 2018). And negatively by the following unfortunate facts. The majority of people currently in prison are men [93.2% male] (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2023). The majority of people who commit suicide, are men [3.5:1 male-to-female ratio in high-income countries] (Chang, Yip, P. S. F., & Chen, Y.-Y., 2019). And the majority of homeless people are, you guessed it, men [>60% male] (The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2020). As you can see, men consistently occupy the extremes of our society. This seems at least in part due to biological/evolutionary differences in men and women, although I will note for something like prison statistics they may also be influenced by society's perception that physical harm, something that is easily viewable and measurable, is worse than psychological harm that is much more difficult to see.

We know that for instance, when convicted of the exact same crime, men face 63% longer prison sentences, and additionally women are more likely to avoid any actual incarceration in the first place for crimes (Starr, 2015). However I don't believe that this fully explains the disparity we see in prisons, there are a variety of biological factors such as the previously discussed risk-taking behavior that could play into it. Another factor that could affect this is the fact that men are generally more physically aggressive than women, and while women choose to instead pursue forms of indirect aggression such as "social manipulation with the intention to harm the target person psychologically and/or socially" (Björkqvist, 2018). So even if there is a large societal factor it is still men's biological proclivity to resolve conflicts physically that land them with society's ire.

Ignoring the negative outcomes for men when talking about these issues of equalizing things between genders, as I find many do, is dishonest and does not fairly represent the situation. Oftentimes what happens is the success of the highest performing men is compared with the average women while ignoring the cost of this performance men pay to achieve that.

(2.4) Womens Hidden Advantage

"It is good to be a cynic — it is better to be a contented cat — and it is best not to exist at all"

- H.P. Lovecraft

Imagine any hyper-successful man, someone who is at the top of whatever industry or career they are in. They likely had to work incredibly hard to get to where they are, and there is evidence that they face a great deal of stressors, notably impacting their personal health, within their work (Liu, et al., 2021). However, next to them you will likely find a woman, usually a wife/life partner. This woman lives in the same mansion, eats the same food, wears the same quality of clothes, drives in the same cars, goes on the same vacations, and receives a majority of the same benefits the man does, just with far less effort.

Men are more willing to date down the socioeconomic hierarchy than women, caring less about income or signs thereof than their female counterparts (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019). Because we have more men than women willing to engage in partnerships where they are sharing their resources with a less wealthy partner, this opens up the option for some more clever women to circumvent the struggles of wealth attainment men usually have to go through. Instead, they can find a man who has already attained or has a high chance of attaining a very high socioeconomic status. They can then gain many of the same benefits the man does. So when you look at a competitive economic landscape and, understandably, wonder where all the ambitious, intelligent, hardworking women are for surely all the most competent people can't just be men you would be correct.

Despite the reasons previously stated about why we likely see significant male out-performance, it still doesn't, in my opinion, fully explain all of the reasons why we see fewer women at the highest levels of attainment. The final reason is that women *are* attaining these levels, they *are* getting most of the benefits these positions provide. They are just going about it in a smarter, more efficient, way by leveraging the natural privileges they receive as women. You can imagine the way these women are represented in statistics however, even if they do have successful jobs/careers, they appear as another instance of women under-performing men and gaining less benefit from their economic pursuits. This can then feed into heightened ideas that women aren't performing as well as men in the economy because we can't properly measure the success of these women, they are essentially invisible to our current statistics.

(2.5) Myth: Marrying Up Is All Positives

While women have an option of "marrying up" that many men do not, they don't necessarily get all the benefits. I would like to touch on what I would consider the three main things women seem to sacrifice by choosing to marry a much higher achieving individual compared to fighting in the job market for that success.

Status and Influence - Imagine two people in a 3-mile race, the first trains for weeks, closely tracks what they eat, and runs the race with a reasonable time. The second gets a bike and wins the race by a large margin. Now I think many would hold the first person in higher regard, because of the extra effort they had to go through to complete the race. But the second person accomplished the exact same thing as the first, and did it faster, working smarter, not harder. This in my opinion mimics the societal outcomes I see when women marry up. While there is some elevation of status they usually don't seem to be as respected as their partners, due to the fact that their partners generally had to go through the work of building up their wealth and status over time.

Power Balance - By marrying up there is also a power imbalance between partners concerning money and status. While this is may seem redundant (it's not marrying *up* if the person you're marrying is socioeconomically *lower* than you) I think it bears mentioning that it is possible in extreme cases this could lead to women feeling trapped in a relationship where they are entirely economically dependant on their partner and as a result do not have much say in the relationship. It's a balancing act since women do report having better quality relationships when men express they are the ones in charge, provided both partners still have a level of say in decision-making they are happy with (Körner, & Schütz, A., 2021). But even with that, I do feel the shifting of power balance in a relationship is a notable caveat to marrying up that needs to also be considered when discussing this as it can come with some negative possibilities.

While there may be more effects, these seem to be the main two things women sacrifice when sidestepping a more standard path to wealth and attainment in life. While the pros appear to still massively outweigh the cons, it's good to just be aware of some of the struggles that may come with this path in life.

(2.6) Paradox Of Higher Female Attainment

I want to just note women are attaining higher levels of income (Payscale, 2023) and higher levels of education, with universities now being dominated by women (Frenette, & Zeman, K., 2007). As they attain higher socioeconomic status that their demands expand as well for higher income partners (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019) and a similar effect appears to be observed with higher education attainment. So we then have a large, and in my opinion overall quite positive, movement encouraging women to strive for higher levels of attainment in careers or education. This then leads them to demand more economically successful partners, requiring men to perform at an ever-increasing level, and at the same time demonizing these men for achieving the higher levels of economic attainment women themselves require. So we get this disconnect between the positive movements opening up employment and education with the negative effects on women's ability to find relationships they are happy with and stress on men to reach an ever-moving bar of success to become desirable.

(2.7) Mountain Climber Analogy

Imagine I am an eccentric billionaire and decide that for my next venture I shall build a cookie and baked goods shop, at the top of a very large mountain. To celebrate its opening I have gathered two groups of people, group A and group B, both containing 10 people randomly selected from the population. For group A I offer a reward of 1 free cookie from the shop if they reach it, at the top of the mountain, before nightfall. For group B I state I will saw off their left arm if they do not reach the top before nightfall (and also they get a free cookie). And then I let them begin climbing. Now if we think about the outcome first of all there is likely some percentage of the population that could not reach the top due to biological limitations (i.e. obesity, age, or other medical conditions) let's say for the sake of argument that this encompass 20% of the population, thus we are left with 8 people in each group that could ever reach the top.

Further, climbing up a mountain all day is a large time sink and so for group A who only get a cookie if they complete it, so it's reasonable to assume that for a large portion of group A the time/effort sink just isn't worth it. They might go for a nice walk around the base of the mountain since they are already there but then they will likely just get in their car and go home, maybe picking up a pack of cookies on the way if they really wanted one. So let's say maybe only 50% of the people in group A even attempt the climb leaving them with only 4 people. Then finally let's say that the actual likelihood of being able to climb up the mountain, a grueling and dangerous process in and of itself, is close to 50% for most people. I now offer you, the listener, the opportunity to fly up to the cookie shop in my private helicopter at dusk to see who made it to the top, without giving you knowledge of the rewards or consequences I gave them starting out. When we land and walk into the shop we would see roughly 2 people from group A and 4 people from group B. Now if you didn't know anything about the nature of the competition you might, very reasonably, assume that the reason more people from group B were there was perhaps the group selection was not random but instead better climbers, or just more physically active people, were selected for group B than A, or perhaps some discriminatory advantage had been given to group B over A. Maybe they had been given better equipment than group A, maybe they got a ride halfway up the mountain, or maybe something more sinister such as sabotage. However we know none of these things are true and the only difference between them, the only thing deciding if one group was more successful, was the potential reward or cost of success or failure.

Now obviously these numbers are made up and we don't have a cookie shop on top of a mountain. This does however demonstrate something I think most people intrinsically understand and is scientifically proven, rewards increase motivation and by extension performance (Zedelius, et al., 2014).

To weave this back into our broader discussion because women have much higher requirements for men in terms of economic performance than men have for women when forming relationships (Buss, & Schmitt, D. P., 2019) we can therefore see that for men's economic success provides both economic rewards and greater ability to attain an intimate romantic relationship. And because of women's comparative lack of an economic requirement for achieving intimacy (and easier alternatives therein) as well as their alternative options for achieving economic success such as marriage that isn't an option for men, both things I have explained in more detail previously, women would thereby be expected to be less motivated to achieve in economic domains as they have less need for the rewards. Thus we have a situation where men have a greater need for the possible reward of higher economic achievement, leading logically to greater motivation and finally achievement within that domain.

(2.8) Myth: Gender Wage Gap

There is a lot of talk about not just levels of achievement but also the compensation at those levels and the apparent disparities therein. Many news outlets publish articles on such topics, making claims such as women make only 83 cents to every dollar a man makes (Iacurci, G., 2022). This would be a quite shocking statistic that many would be justified in being outraged about if it were in any way accurate or an honest depiction of the situation. Thankfully that's not at all the case and is simply a gross misrepresentation of the actual data. When we look at wage statistics we find that when you consider even the most basic factors like what job people work and how many hours they work the gap in wages nearly disappears, going from the previously claimed 83 cents up to 99 cents to every one dollar for men (Payscale, 2023). So it appears that what the previous data was showing was not a gender disparity in earnings but rather simple facts, like if someone works more, they earn more money.

Not the shocking revelation proponents of the more extreme gender wage gap theories would wish you to believe. This is in line with statistics data from the U.S. government showing men, on average, work more hours than women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). Some studies on the topic showed that, for instance in bus and train operators, the gender disparity in earnings was entirely explained by women's decisions to take less overtime on short notice and to take more unpaid time off (Bolotnyy, & Emanuel, N., 2022).

I also don't think it's fair to entirely rule out gender discrimination, perhaps some fraction of the remaining cent of difference in average earnings is in fact due to unfair treatment of women, it's a completely legitimate possibility. This section isn't meant to completely rule out the possibility of this kind of gender pay disparity but rather show that the way it's commonly portrayed is a complete falsehood. Discrimination is not the conclusion we should be immediately jumping to, if we cry gender discrimination with every dishonest or grossly misrepresented statistic that pops up, then when legitimate sexism or discrimination happens it won't be taken as seriously and could end up being dismissed and thrown in with the pile of all the other more disingenuous claims, if we want equality we need to be honest about the actual data we are dealing with.

(2.9) Myth: Modern Equity Is Equality

"There is no better camouflage for someone who is truly dark than compassion"

- Jordan B. Peterson

Equity, or equality of outcomes, is quite an insidious idea. It is the concept that every (positive), measurable metric should have a distribution of people within it directly proportional to their frequency within the general population. So for instance, if some group of people make up 7% of the population they should then make up exactly 7% of all positive measurable outcomes, and any more or less is unquestionable evidence of societal discrimination for or against that group. On the surface, it may seem reasonable enough but once you delve into its implementation you realize that it is diametrically opposed to its alternative, equality of opportunity. People are incredibly different and diverse due to biology and culture, and this diversity necessarily leads to different outcomes within the world. Imagine, for example, the sport of basketball. It is demonstrably dominated by black people, making up far more of the NBA than any other race and being significantly overrepresented compared to their portion of the population (Richard E. L., 2022).

Now it may be because of a racist cabal of black people conspiring against other races to keep them out of the sport, that's one theory. However, I think, as you likely already intuited, that this is not the reason. Rather it is reasonably expected to be some combination of physical characteristics and culture. For instance, we know that black children are generally taller than their non-black peers (Lu, Pearce, A., & Li, L., 2017), and thus would likely excel at sports like basketball where this height, caused in large part by genetics (McEvoy, & Visscher, P. M., 2009), gives them an advantage. It is then not hard to imagine that if they excelled at something when they were younger, especially if there is positive cultural reinforcement from friends or family, they would continue to pursue it and thus make up a greater percentage of the sport without any discrimination ever having to be exacted on others. As a note here I could not find information on the heights of ethnicities at the higher end of the spectrum, i.e. what percentage of people over 6 feet in the US are black. So, despite there obviously being a large cohort of very tall black people in basketball I can't make clear conclusions about the effect of height after they grow up. These potential differences between ethnicities in biology and culture, at least at an early age, along with the outcomes they bring, are what I would refer to as "Diversity" and it is my opinion that this diversity isn't something to be hated or feared but rather celebrated, we are all different in some way and that's a beautiful thing. However, bringing the conversation back to men and women, we see something unfortunate transpiring.

In modern rhetoric what often happens is it will be pointed out that at the highest ends, men outperform women economically and therefore this should be equalized under the name of equity to get it closer to 50/50 by pushing discriminatory reforms to try to meet this number. A particularly brazen display of this can be seen from some Canadian governmental bodies quite literally stating "Preference will be given to Women" within job postings (Government of Manitoba, 2015). However, what is never taken into consideration in these demands is the negative costs men pay as a gender for this higher achievement.

None of these people are demanding more women be locked in prison to meet an arbitrary 50/50 equity quota there. Nor do they ever take into consideration the advantages women have economically and the women who do achieve economic success through other ways such as marrying up, a privilege belonging almost exclusively to women. Instead, they try to make achievement harder for men who already pay a high price and easier for women despite the advantages they already possess. Somewhat ironically these pushes can end up hurting women as well, since when you give a position in any organization based not on competence but on an arbitrary factor such as race, religion, or sex then it brings into question the competence of all women as it's difficult to discern from the outside which women do honestly deserve the positions they receive. By putting blinders on to all but a single metric people try to use equity to push these blatantly sexist demands, causing similar or worse problems to what they were originally trying to fix, while simultaneously trying to present themselves as being in the moral right.

This is further exacerbated by similar pushes in spaces like engineering/tech (which is closer to my heart as a computer scientist) by people who also don't understand the science behind sex differences in interest. For those who don't know, one of the largest/most significant differences between sexes is what men and women are interested in. Simply put, men are more interested in things and women are more interested in people, and these differences can manifest as men going into thing-oriented careers and women pursuing people-oriented careers more often (Su, et al., 2009). And to add to this, not only is it a notable difference in humans but some of our relatives like the Rhesus monkeys also display similar characteristics with male children showing a much higher interest in things than their female counterparts (Hassett, et al., 2008). So we have what appears to be a deep biological difference in interest that then manifests itself as men dominating careers like computer science that are more thing oriented and women dominating careers like nursing that are much more people focused. This is not to say that we shouldn't show men or women in these fields as seeing representation in a domain can be helpful. However, if you are ignorant of the science behind differences, the easy explanation as to why there are disparities in these fields, discrimination, can be enticing.

(2.10) Myth: All "Feminists" Are The Same

These twisted ideas of equity, along with a whole slew of other incredibly hateful and sexist things, are sometimes pushed by people claiming to be feminists in various places across the internet. You can likely see a fair bit of it in echo chambers such as r/TwoXChromosomes on Reddit, or in the remnants of the thankfully now-dead r/FemaleDatingStrategy, where conversations surrounding women's issues descend into a kind of incel-like antagonism. These groups of people attempt to co-opt the identity of feminism, turning the original equality movement, which genuinely did a huge amount of good for both men and women in our society, into something more akin to a female superiority movement. This is part of the reason I think we may see people pushing back against feminism as a whole, despite its historically wonderful reputation, as it's hard to distinguish these bad actors from more classical feminists. I felt it was therefore useful to put in just a little note here to quell some of this growing distaste. From my experience, these people are a small, albeit quite loud, minority of those within the feminist movement (assuming we are considering them within it at all) and not really representative of the ideas most feminists are pushing for or want. I may have a bias in my sample as most of the women I am friends with have at least some university education but from what I have seen most feminists genuinely do want equal opportunity, not preferential treatment. Some even go so far as to fight against additional privileges being placed on them, genuinely striving for equality between the sexes. Now this is just my view and I can fully understand if from what you have seen a more negative view of feminism arises, however, I would highly encourage you to find a sample of women in your daily life and attempt to ascertain what they truly believe in person without the dissonance of the internet landscape.

As a final closing note on the problems with modern equity use, I would like to reiterate that It's okay to be different. It's a wonderful thing that humans are so diverse and unique from each other. This isn't something that needs to be crushed through the iron hand of regulations and social pressure for conformity. It should be celebrated, the fact that we have different passions and talents, different skills and abilities, is a large part of what, in my eyes, makes humanity so special.

Potential Solutions

(2.11) Bad Solution: True Equity

So we already know that equity in its current form is nothing more than a thinly veiled deception to promote further inequality and discrimination. What if we instead used it in an equal way across the board, not just trying to equalize the rewards a few people at the top receive for success but instead equalizing everything, including the costs they pay?

I'm going to warn you now this is probably the worst and most unpleasant of the solutions so just be aware. It's brutal, but that's the point, to demonstrate how untenable and horrid the idea of women paying the costs many men already pay is.

So in service of getting equity in economic success (and other domains), one thing we could do is adjust motivation. Men have a lot more pressure to succeed economically as they have more depending on that success than women. It has been my observation that many women are just as competent as men, but don't feel the need to push themselves to the extremes their male peers do, and could achieve equivalent or more success if they were pushed in the same way men were. There are a couple of basic ways this could be done, we already know suicide rates are much higher in men, and there is also evidence that low socioeconomic status has links to suicidal ideation in men (Pirkis, et al., 2017). So one option would be to take some amount of the lowest performing economic women and execute them, just put a gun to their head and pull the trigger. Then write these deaths off as suicides. This will likely have a motivating effect on some of the female population to achieve higher, and additionally take out of the pool some of the lowest performing people, meaning that the remaining people we measure will likely be doing better economically just by virtue of not measuring the people doing so bad they are no longer in the pool of measurable data points.

And we could do a similar thing with prisons, locking up lower socioeconomic status women for most or all of their lives until the number of people in prisons reaches a point of equity between men and women (or if you prefer there is also the option to release basically all prisoners into the public to get the numbers the same if that's a more appealing way of achieving equity for you). And with homelessness, throwing low-performing women out on the streets and ensuring they stay in that position until homelessness also reaches a point of gender-based equity. We could also attempt to limit, to an extent, interpersonal connection women can get from friends or partners until a certain level of economic success is attained, and also force women to engage in relationships only with partners who have lower socioeconomic status than them until equity is achieved within the economic balance of relationships. And I do think if we did all this stuff we would then begin to see women performing higher economically. It obviously won't erase millions of years of biology nor is it attaining equity in every aspect possible but it would go a long way toward making things more "equitable" while providing a strong motivating force for women to achieve higher.

However, this will clearly never work as the thought of forcing women to bear the costs/weight men often must as a gender isn't something that's palatable for most, myself included. This would also bring with it its own set of problems as, since the biological roots of desirability are still there, it would be much harder for women to find any partner they thought of as attractive since with equity the socioeconomic status discrepancy women often desire is now gone. So all around it would just be catastrophic for our society and the happiness of those within it, hopefully putting the final nail in the coffin of the argument for equity over equality of opportunity.

(2.12) Bad Solution: Demanding Change In Women's Partner Choice

Another slightly less terrible, possible solution is putting all the onus on women and their choice of partners. As discussed one of the main reasons men outperform economically is because of the requirement of said outperformance from women. We could then say, that if women truly wanted to perform at an equal or better level than men economically, all they would have to do is stop demanding men outperform them. Instead exclusively choose partners that are performing worse, date the dude living in his parent's basement working a part-time retail job, and reject the guy who has his own place and is working a nice job with a university degree. If enough women did this and were willing to take on the more masculine role of providing financially for their partner I think you would see a marked shift in the economic achievement of men, who would happily let women take their place. This could also be done with almost any aspect of the female-male dynamic, any trait or behavior you don't want, just strongly select the opposite of it in a partner. While it wouldn't immediately change biology, and evolution would take a while to catch up, I think most women don't realize just how much power they collectively have over men with their mate choice and this kind of approach could have real potential to move the needle.

This line of thinking is flawed, however. It places far too much weight on women to defy their natural psychology that has been built up over millions of years. In many cases, I think women would find the men that they are expected to select if they wish for greater comparative economic success fundamentally undesirable. To put it in perspective for the opposite gender I would say it's similar to if you would say that the solution to male loneliness and the disadvantages men have in that space is for men to just seek out overweight or very old women as partners. It is just so incompatible with biological desires, with what we are as humans, that it isn't feasible for most people. I view it more as hand-waving the issues by proposing an impossible solution.

Saying, well if you can't meet these unreasonable standards then there's no way to change and it's your fault for not wanting it enough when in reality I think there are ways to legitimately improve the situation, and having these evolved standards or behavior is perfectly reasonable.

(2.13) Not So Bad Solution: Changing Expectations Of Female Success

We don't measure success in a way that's particularly helpful in women's case as we use only the metric of career success, without caring about how happy people are or what other major things they have accomplished in their lives. Chief among these is a close romantic connection, which in my opinion rivals in importance most potential career successes. Because economic achievement is a domain nearly all men are forced to compete in by female standards if they want such a relationship and the primary place where men become valuable in the eyes of society, we get a weird scenario where we are measuring success by how much people achieve in a domain where a large part of the reward is already granted to women almost by default (in the case of relationships and value in society). And where it isn't can be achieved through other means by having men do it for women (in the case of economic/monetary gain) because of men's willingness to provide for lower-status partners.

So a better solution would in part be to take into consideration how people succeed in life, adopting a more holistic view of where people currently are in our society. It is hard to measure some of these things, which is likely why career success is such a ubiquitous measurement tool, it's simple and thus easy to propagate. However, even just acknowledging and celebrating when women achieve success in other ways could help.

I think the first step in truly addressing this or any issue is identifying what our goal is, lest we stumble blindly towards ends that do not serve us.

Conclusion

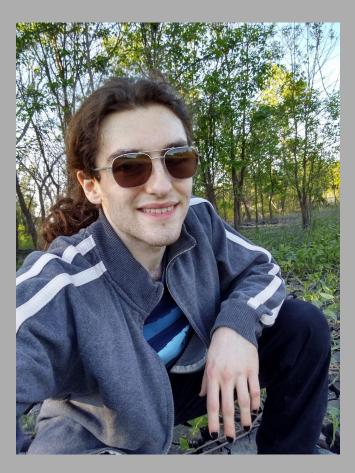*"Being ignorant is not so much a shame, as being unwilling to learn"*

- Benjamin Franklin

Here is a brief and rudimentary overview of a few key takeaways from this work. Men and women are different, right down to their biology, and this leads them to face different challenges in life. Men generally have disproportionate difficulty with relationships compared to women, however, women don't necessarily have it as easy as some of the metrics around success in dating and romantic connection may suggest. In the area of economic success, we see these differences manifest in men outperforming economically compared to women, not due to discrimination but more so due to a necessity as women have other options. Additionally, for women economic success in the way most men achieve it doesn't carry with it as great of rewards, and failure doesn't carry with it as great of costs. The failure to understand this seems to then lead to an unfortunate pushing of sexual discrimination further increasing the already difficult issues men face.

I have gone over quite a large list of different things within this document and undoubtedly some may have been uncomfortable to learn or go against more popular cultural narratives. I would first like to say that if going into this you had drastically differing ideas, or were taken aback by what you learned, then you should be applauded. Expanding your horizons and considering new ideas is incredibly admirable. Holding incorrect assumptions going into this isn't a problem, it's natural, we're all human and can't be 100% right about everything. It was also admittedly the intention of this work to present some of the things that are hardest to hear and most misunderstood within this domain, the truths we would much rather hide away than face.

A problem only comes when people, upon being presented with new information, refuse to acknowledge or accept it as it does not strictly align with their own preconceived notions of how the world works. Now I'm not saying you have to completely change all your world views instantly, that is a daunting task that most are not capable of even if they desire it. Rather I wish for you to simply question if what you thought going into this was entirely accurate. Resist the temptation to so quickly turn to hatred and judgment of others and rather act with just a little more kindness and empathy towards people who may not always receive those things.

Thank you,

Hongrl Shade

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