

Lecture 13 – The Battle of the Sexes

The Abstract: Men and women appear to have different goals and desires when it comes to sexual / romantic relationships? Why is that? In this lecture, I will present the view of Evolutionary Psychology. In brief, the argument is that differences in biology (e.g. who get pregnant) lead to differences in psychology. We will look at the evolutionary explanations for the cliché's about men wanting sex and women wanting commitment.

Lecture Notes:

Chris and Terry are having an argument.

Are there differences between men and women in matters of sex, love, & romance?

The Clarke & Hatfield, (1989) – How did they get this past the IRB?!

Men and women experimenters approached total strangers on a college campus, and said Hi, I've been noticing you around campus, and I find you very attractive

Then they asked one of three questions:

Would you go out on a date with me?

Would you go back to my apartment with me?

Would you have sex with me?

So....what do the data look like?

Where would results like this come from?

Today: An Evolutionary Perspective

Good general sources

Richard Wright: The Moral Animal

Buss, The Evolution of Desire

Pinker, How the Mind Works

Baumeister & Tice D. The Social Dimension of Sex

(Next time: An Economic approach)

The Basic Story:

What is your goal (from an evolutionary point of view)?

How you going to do that?

What does sex do?

You get pregnant...but only if you are a woman

The instant battle.

What does he want?

What does she want?

NOTE: You can make up other stories....and find animals to back them up.

Is there *any* evidence for innate, evolutionary forces in mate selection in humans?

What would that evidence look like?

Example: young healthy people (women, especially) are considered more attractive than old and or sick.

Why isn't that trivial?

Example: What is "attractive"?

Age: Women prefer men who are slightly _____

Men prefer women who are slightly _____

Teenage males?

Fidelity in relationships: Who should cheat?

Guys?

Women?

Spiders (if we have time...otherwise ask me sometime)

Who should care?

Guys?

Women?

A problem? Are women inclined to be unfaithful?

yes...it has an evolutionary advantage

but...

so maybe women should be faithful...it has an evolutionary advantage

maybe they should be uninterested in sex

maybe they should pretend to be uninterested in sex

so...what is the problem?

Civilization meets evolution

For example: effective contraception decouples sex from pregnancy

There are at least two ways to think about this

A list of problems (You supply the examples and/or solutions)

Problem 1: The theory is not well specified enough

Problem 2: The theory does not explain the full range of behavior

Problem 3: Civilization may have changed the rules

Problem 4: The theory says lots about you as a group and little about you as an individual.

Next time: Individuals

"Lovers and madmen have such seething brains
such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
more than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact."

MSND 5:1:4-8