

Woke singletons wouldn't dream of dating someone with opposing political views — but where's the fun in that?

# Josh Glancy

## in America



**D**ating has evolved at such an electric pace over the past few years it can be difficult to keep up. In fact the English language itself, for all its famed versatility, is struggling to maintain pace with all the strange ways people are finding to hook up with and dump one another.

A new one I came across recently is “wokefishing”, which is when someone — usually but not necessarily a bloke — pretends to be more politically progressive than they are, to lure do-gooders under the sheets.

As you might expect given the present political climate, wokefishing — coined by a writer at *Vice* — is having a bit of a moment. It's a successor to “dogfishing”, which is pretending to have a cute mutt to attract romantic attention; except now these so-called thirst trappers have exchanged their labradoodles for a customised pandemic mask and a #RhodesMustFall hashtag.

There's a kind of grim humour in imagining someone who thinks they are going to bed with lefty Peter Tatchell then waking up alongside

right-wing Peter Thiel, but underlying this fad is a deeper and rather troubling trend: people simply don't want to have sex across the political divide any more.

In the old days it used to be only diehard Labour conference dorks who would wear the “Never kissed a Tory” T-shirt. Now, though, through a combination of polarisation and social

media, politics is subsuming our personal lives, and so bipartisan shagging has become a dying art.

It is, of course, much worse in America. A 2016 poll by the dating app Coffee Meets Bagel found that 70 per cent of Democrats said politics was having an impact on their dating lives, with 43 per cent of Republicans echoing this sentiment.

Those with premium Bumble and Hinge accounts can now filter out people who have opposing political views. Being single and a Republican in left-leaning Washington is so dire that apps have been set up that enable conservatives to find each other, because they kept getting snubbed. One of them, Donald Daters, promises to “make America date again”.

In a 2018 paper about love and ideology, the psychologists Stephanie Mallinas, Jarret Crawford and Shana Cole explained the two familiar sentiments that drive this phobia: pride and prejudice.

“Attitudinal dissimilarity is a particularly strong interpersonal repellant,” they wrote. “Individuals derive personal worth from their attitudes, and consequently dislike when those attitudes are challenged.”

So there you have it. Our self-esteem and identity are so wrapped up in our political views that we can't bear to be around those who might contradict us.

This is all rather depressing. For while it does make sense to date and marry people who share your values, which are often reflected in political

views, sex and love are far deeper and stranger than just which square you mark on a ballot paper. Party politics is a poor snapshot of the human soul.

And whatever happened to opposites attract? One of the most illuminating affairs from my own adolescence (and there weren't many) was with a born-again Calvinist from Iowa, whom I met on a Spanish exchange in Granada. She taught me all sorts of things about assault rifles and predestination that I'd never have learnt from simply dating nice girls in suburban London.

Fraternising exclusively with those who reflect your political views makes for a comfortable but dull existence. So go out, shag a Tory, bang a Brexiteer, perhaps even tup a Trump supporter. You'll surely learn something new about humanity. And if not, it will at least beat the indignity of getting wokefished ■  
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## JOSH SAYS

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**Watch** *Mr Jones* (Amazon). Soviet depredations, journalistic bravery and cold steppes



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