

What Is Feminism?

Blithering Genius

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1 Introduction

Feminists like to define feminism as “a movement for the political, social, and economic equality of the sexes”. That definition is very misleading. It does not describe what feminists believe or what they do. Feminism is much more complex than that definition suggests.

In this essay, I will describe feminism in terms of its form and function. I will describe the ideology of feminism and show that it is dishonest and impractical. I will also explain the function of feminism: what it does and why.

Although feminism can be thought of as a political movement or as an ideology, it is more useful to think of it as a disease. Feminism is a memetic disease that propagates from host to host. It uses infected hosts to spread itself.

This way of thinking involves a role reversal. We normally think of ideas as serving our purposes, not vice versa. We think of ideas as tools that we use to understand reality and act effectively in the world. We don't normally think of ourselves as being tools of ideas.

2 Memes

In *The Selfish Gene*, Richard Dawkins coined the term "meme" as an analogy to "gene". A meme is a replicating idea or behavior pattern that propagates from mind to mind and is selected for its ability to do so. Human beings learn new ideas and behaviors from others by communication or imitation. Culture is a "meme pool" of ideas and behaviors that are shared by many individuals. Memes compete, metaphorically, for minds. Memes that are good at propagating spread to a lot of minds.

Richard Dawkins introduced the concept of a meme and also the idea of a memetic disease or parasite. Some memes might act like diseases or parasites by using host minds to spread themselves at the expense of the host. Dawkins suggested that religion might be a memetic disease. In that, I think he was mistaken, or mostly mistaken. There are memetic diseases, however. There are memes that propagate at the expense of the host.

To evaluate whether a meme is bad for the host, we must define "bad".

The biological purpose of an organism is to reproduce. Thus, anything that prevents or reduces reproduction is biologically bad for the host. Parasites and diseases use the body of their host to reproduce, at the biological expense of the host.

That is not how we normally think of "good" and "bad", of course. In ordinary life, we assume that people know what is good or bad for them (in most cases). So, an individual's own values define "good" and "bad" from her perspective. In this context, however, we can't make that ordinary assumption. We can't take the host's values for granted. Values are memes, and the most effective way to control a host is to take over her value system.

Thus, for the purpose of evaluating memes as beneficial or harmful to a host, I will use the biological purpose of the host as the measure of value. Any meme that is detrimental to reproduction will be considered to be harmful to the host.

Dawkins suggested that religions are memetic diseases. Let's consider that possibility. Is religion bad for the host?

Generally speaking, no. Religions usually promote reproduction, and are thus biologically beneficial. The reason why religion is usually beneficial can be explained by its method of propagation. Religion usually propagates from parents to children. It propagates down lines of genetic descent. Most religions promote reproduction because that is how they propagate themselves. The memetic interests of the religion are aligned with the genetic interests of the host. Thus, most religions have evolved to benefit the host.

Mememes that mostly propagate from parents to children I call "traditions". Mememes that usually propagate in other ways I call "fashions".

Traditions are passed from parents to children, usually when the children are young. Traditions usually promote reproduction, because that is how they propagate. Fashions propagate between people who are not necessarily closely related. It is easier for a meme to propagate from parents to children than between unrelated people who interact occasionally. For that reason, fashions have to be more persuasive than traditions in order to propagate.

Both traditions and fashions are selected for their ability to propagate, but because they propagate in different ways they are selected for different properties. Traditions are selected mainly for their contribution to the host's reproductive fitness. Fashions are selected for their ability to propagate from one mind to another by persuasion.

I am not suggesting that all fashions are harmful to the host. Most fashions are persuasive because they are true or useful to the host. However, fashions can be selected to propagate at the expense of the host, in the same way that a disease germ or parasite does.

Feminism is an example of a harmful fashion. It suppresses reproduction in the host. It propagates mainly from unrelated adults to teenagers and young adults. It propagates because people find it persuasive, although (as I will show) not rationally persuasive. Feminism propagates by plugging into human psychology in a certain way. It uses its human host to propagate itself and then discards the host as a dried-up husk — the proverbial cat lady.

The primary target of the feminist meme is the female mind. Feminism plugs primarily into the female mind, and then uses women to control the male mind. By doing so, it not only uses women, it also uses men and society for its own purposes. That is what makes feminism such an effective meme.

3 Men, Women, And The Social Contract

Men pursue sex and women pursue power. That is a generalization, of course, but it captures the essence of the difference between men and women.

The sexual dimorphism between men and women begins with the dimorphism between the sex cells and sexual organs, but it does not end there. That difference led, by natural selection, to other differences.

To have a child, the minimum contribution of a man is a single ejaculation. The minimum contribution of a woman is to carry a child for 9 months, and in most cases, to look after the child for 10 or more years. The huge difference in the minimum parental investment led to different reproductive strategies. The male has to fight or work for sex, to make up for the low cost of his minimum investment. The female, on the other hand, normally doesn't have to invest any effort in getting sex. Instead, she tries to maximize the male contribution to herself and her offspring. She wants to sell her reproductive services at the highest possible price, while the male wants to get them at the lowest possible price.

The sexes evolved a division of labor that I call the "sexual contract". Men and women evolved to do different kinds of work. Men are physically stronger than women. They are better at fighting and heavy labor. Women get pregnant and have to care for children. Their bodies are shaped to do that job. To succeed at life, men and women need each other. Women need men to survive. Men need women to reproduce.

The sexual contract is an exchange of labor between a man and a woman. The woman does

reproductive work for the man by having his children. In return, the man protects and supports the woman and her children. Human existence has always depended on cooperation between the sexes.

The sexual contract is between individuals, not collectives. It is a deal between a man and a woman, not between all men and all women. Paternal investment only works as a reproductive strategy if the male can identify his own children with a fairly high level of certainty. There is no biological incentive for a man to take care of a woman that he hasn't had sex with, or to take care of children that aren't his.

Until the invention of paternity tests, the only way a man could identify his own children was if they were the children of a woman who was sexually faithful to him. That is why we evolved emotions that bond specific individuals together. That is also why we developed cultural norms of female chastity and sexual fidelity. And that is why almost every culture had a socially enforceable marriage contract that imposed female monogamy. Many cultures allowed a man to have multiple wives, but very few allowed a woman to have multiple husbands. The reason for this asymmetry is that women can easily identify their own children, but men can't.

The purpose of marriage was to guarantee paternity, and thus to give men a psychological and biological incentive to invest in their own children. The function of marriage is not to oppress women, it is to assign fathers to children.

The different reproductive strategies of men and women generate both conflict and cooperation. Human sexual emotions evolved to bring about the sexual contract, but also to get the most out of it and to cheat on it in some cases. Evolution selects for whatever leads to reproductive fitness at an individual level. Our emotions evolved to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of sexual relationships. The male wants to get as much sex as possible for the least amount of protection and support. The female wants to get as much protection and support as possible in exchange for sex.

Men want the most bang for their buck. Women want the most buck for their bang.

Even though our emotions evolved to bring about cooperation, the sexual contract is a compromise between the conflicting interests of male and female individuals. Human nature has the potential for both sexual cooperation and sexual conflict.

4 Feminist Ideology

Now I will describe the ideology of feminism and how it relates to the sexual contract.

4.1 Feminist Goals And Claims

Feminism repudiates the sexual contract. Feminism claims that the sexual contract is exploitation of women by men. Feminism either denies that women need men to survive, or it claims that women have an intrinsic right to the protection and support of men. Feminism tends to waffle back and forth between these two views, depending on which is most convenient.

The point is not to be rational or honest. The point is to advocate for women at the expense of men. It could be said, with very little exaggeration, that feminism demands that women have all the rights and men bear all the responsibilities.

Feminism appeals to the female desire for power. It promises to empower women by “liberating” them from the “oppressive” sexual contract. It promises power without sex, the ultimate free lunch, at the expense of men.

Feminism does not demand true equality of outcomes between the sexes. That would never appeal to women. Women don’t want to be 50% of janitors, 50% of garbage collectors, 50% of construction workers, 50% of workplace fatalities, 50% of wartime casualties, etc. Feminism doesn’t demand that women do 50% of the dirty and dangerous jobs, or shoulder 50% of the responsibilities of society. Instead, feminism demands that 50% of CEOs and elected politicians be women. It demands that women make the same amount of money, on average, as men, regardless of the work they do.

Feminism supports its claim of oppression by cherry-picking data and interpretations. The fact that fewer than 50% of CEOs are women is considered to be proof that women are oppressed. The fact that fewer than 50% of homeless people are women is not considered to be proof that women are privileged. Feminism selects facts to fit its narrative, not vice versa. The feminist claim of oppression is not an attempt to honestly describe reality. It is a justification for transferring power from men to women.

Although feminism denies the reality of biological sex differences, it implicitly depends on them. Biological sex differences cause the sex differences in outcomes that feminism uses (selectively) as evidence of oppression. Feminists will sometimes claim the superiority of female nature over male nature: that women are kinder, gentler, don’t cause wars, and even have some special intuition that is superior to male logic and rational thought.

Again, feminism cherry-picks facts and interpretations to promote a view of female moral superiority, either as victims of oppression or as intrinsically superior to men. Women are either helpless damsels in distress or magical beings of infinite wisdom and power, depending on which view is more convenient.

4.2 The Sexual Contract

Feminism also implicitly appeals to the sexual contract, while explicitly rejecting it. Feminism’s demand for a transfer of power from men to women is analogous to the transfer of energy from men to women that takes place within the sexual contract.

In the sexual contract, men do work for women in return for reproductive services. Feminism repudiates only one side of the sexual contract. Feminism claims that men have a moral obligation to protect and support women without receiving any compensation. Instead of exchanging reproductive labor for the services of men, women should receive those services for free.

Traditionally, women were protected and supported by men and society because they would get pregnant and bear children. Feminism demands that women continue to receive special treatment even if they do not get pregnant and bear children.

Feminism depends on the subconscious view that women are intrinsically more worthy of care and support than men, and that the responsibilities of society fall more upon men than women. This view is not only traditional, it is biological. In the sexual contract, a man protects and supports a woman because she will bear him children. He is compensated biologically by her bearing his children and taking care of them. For that reason, men are more emotionally willing to protect

and support women than vice versa, and this has become a cultural expectation over millennia. Feminism takes advantage of that biological and cultural norm.

4.3 Feminism And Society

Society has traditionally accepted greater responsibility for the welfare of women than men, because women were expected to forgo career for family, and thus were the economic dependents of men. Caring for widows and orphans was a role that society (the patriarchy) accepted, because of the different roles of men and women, and because society was primarily an organization of men who chose to collectivize some of the risks and responsibilities of protecting and supporting their women and children.

In return for this privilege, women were required by society to be sexually responsible: to abstain from sex outside marriage. Traditional sex roles and sexual morality ensured that fathers were responsible for their children, and also that fathers knew who their children were. The extra care and protection that society afforded to women was conditional on traditional sex roles and sexual morality.

Feminism demands that society continue to provide women with extra care and protection, but it rejects the responsibilities that went along with those social benefits.

Feminism only rejects half of the sexual contract: the responsibilities that it imposes on women, not the responsibilities that it imposes on men. Feminism still demands that men protect and support women, but they must do it without sexual compensation. Men are now expected to protect and support women collectively, through the agency of the state. Feminism demands the collectivization of the role of men: that the responsibilities of individual men be transferred to society. Society is conceived of as masculine. It is the big father/husband figure that must protect women and provide for them, regardless of what they do. Society is presented as having almost unlimited agency and unlimited moral responsibility to women.

On the other hand, feminism demands the complete sexual freedom of women. Feminism demands the collectivization of one side of the sexual contract and the elimination of the other. Women must have complete control over sex and reproduction, which is usually phrased as “having control over their own bodies”. Women should be free to have sex whenever and with whomever they choose.

Feminism demands that society protect women even in the bedroom. Any suggestion that women should exercise caution about whom they bring home is rejected by feminism as “victim-blaming”. The responsibility for preventing rape is assigned entirely to men and society. Feminism demands that we “teach men not to rape”, while expanding the definition of rape as much as possible. The implicit goal is to free women from any and all sexual responsibilities.

The “no means no” slogan of 1980s feminism has been replaced by a demand for affirmative consent that is almost impossible to satisfy. When it is not satisfied, it is always the man, not the woman, who is portrayed as the “rapist”. This view implicitly depends on biological sex differences: that men play the active and aggressive role in pursuing sex, while women play a more passive role.

4.4 Feminism And Rights

Feminism denigrates motherhood and the family. Feminism's attitude toward motherhood is ambivalent at best and antagonistic at worst. Like most left-wing ideologies, feminism prioritizes economics over other aspects of life. Most feminists view motherhood as something that should be avoided or minimized. Feminism advocates for women to have full and free access to birth control and abortion. Feminism encourages women to choose career over family. Feminism also promotes the collectivization of responsibility for children. Feminism advocates for state-subsidized childcare and parental leave, to equalize men and women in the workforce. Feminism demands that having children not affect a woman's career, even though it obviously affects her ability to do work. Feminism does not insist that women completely forgo motherhood — only that they have plenty of other options.

Feminism advocates for reproductive rights for women but not for men. In Western societies, a woman has the right to an abortion and to give up a child for adoption. A man, on the other hand, does not have the right to refuse the responsibility of paying for a child that he conceives. In many countries, men can be held responsible for children their wives conceived with other men, and they have no legal recourse to sue for paternity fraud. A woman can legally trick a man into conceiving a child, and she can also legally trick a man into supporting a child that he did not conceive. The responsibility for ensuring paternity has been removed from women, but the responsibility of paternity has not been removed from men. Feminism ignores this legal inequality between men and women, because it favors women.

Feminism is not logically consistent, but it is functionally consistent in the following way. It is always pro-female and/or anti-male. Feminists never advocate for men's rights or women's responsibilities. Feminism always promotes transferring responsibilities from women to men, and transferring rights from men to women.

Feminism is a left-wing ideology and it is usually associated with leftist economic policies. It proposes that we collectivize production and protection (the types of labor that women need from men). At the same time, it proposes complete sexual and reproductive freedom for women: sexual liberation. Feminism combines economic collectivism with sexual individualism.

Since the male and female sex drives differ, this effectively gives women control over reproduction and sexuality. Men, on the other hand, are expected to continue working even if they can't exchange their labor for reproductive services from women through the sexual contract.

Feminism tacitly assumes that sexual liberation will have no negative economic, social or sexual consequences. Like communism, it promises a utopia that will never be delivered.

Feminism is not a functional substitute for the sexual contract. It isn't balanced. It offers men nothing in exchange for their labor, and so it can never function as the basis for cooperation between the sexes.

Feminism is neither realistic nor pragmatic. If feminist ideology was fully actualized, society would collapse. Feminism is not a solution to any problem faced by human beings. It is a selfish meme that exists only to propagate itself, and it has been shaped for that purpose.

5 How Feminism Propagates

Now I will try to explain how feminism propagates itself.

5.1 Why Feminism Appeals To Women

Feminism appeals to women because it provides them with a justification for claiming more rights and fewer responsibilities. This plugs into the human tendency to self-promote and self-advocate. As individuals, we naturally seek to minimize our responsibilities and maximize our rights within society. Feminism gives women a claim to moral superiority and moral credit: that they are oppressed victims, and that they are owed something by society and men. Many women use feminist ideology to advocate for their own perceived interests.

Feminism imposes a group conflict model on male-female relations. Feminism is an exploitation ideology. It claims that one class of people is exploited by another, and that power should be transferred from the exploiter class to the exploited class. Feminism interprets individual conflicts between men and women as part of a larger class conflict.

People find group conflict models persuasive because they fit a familiar pattern. We are social animals and we have been fighting one another in groups for at least a hundred thousand years, and probably for millions of years. (Our close cousins, the chimpanzees, also engage in group conflict.) Culturally and perhaps biologically, we are wired to perceive group conflicts.

Although the male and female collectives are not organized groups, it is easy to perceive them in that way. Sexuality generates plenty of individual conflicts, and feminism encourages women to view these conflicts as part of a collective problem that requires a collective solution.

5.2 Portraying Conflict Between Men And Women

Since the potential for conflict is built into human emotions, social and sexual utopias are impossible.

In sexual relationships, the interests of individual men and women often come into conflict. Such conflicts can be resolved by compromise. To create a compromise, both sides must accept the interests of the other side as valid. Instead of demanding altruism from the other side, they must be willing to cooperate. They have to give something to get something back.

Feminism promotes conflict between the sexes by interpreting compromise and cooperation as the exploitation of women by men. Feminism teaches women to be uncompromising in relationships, or at least very demanding. It interprets personal sexual conflicts as part of a larger struggle between men and women, in which women are naturally and historically the underdogs.

This view is false. Men and women compete as individuals, not as collectives. However, this view can be persuasive for two reasons. One is that people easily commit the fallacy of composition and attribute properties of individuals to collectives. The other is that it plays to the natural bias toward self-aggrandizing views of reality.

Feminism encourages women to politicize their personal problems, however petty. If a woman is fat or unattractive, that is not her problem; it is due to society's oppressive beauty standards. The personal problems of women are portrayed as social problems caused by systemic oppression.

This absolves women of responsibility for their personal problems. If your personal problems are due to men and/or society (which is implicitly male) then (a) you aren't to blame for them, and (b) someone else is. This directs energy away from solving personal problems and toward "political action", which is usually just the promotion of feminist ideology.

This is a vicious cycle. By denying her agency, the feminist makes her personal problems worse, which then creates an even greater need for feminism as an excuse for failure. Feminism does not help women fix their personal problems. It uses those problems to propagate itself.

Of course, feminism does not encourage men to politicize their personal problems, or even to admit them. The personal problems of men are portrayed as due to their own agency, and thus as their individual responsibility. This plugs into the biological and cultural norm of greater male self-reliance and agency. Men are expected to be more responsible for their own welfare than women, for reasons I explained above. Men are less willing to admit their personal problems and failures, let alone politicize them.

5.3 Feminism And Identity

Feminism also plugs into the human need to define an identity in relation to others. Feminism becomes an important part of the identity of many women and even some men.

We evolved to live in small groups, and so most people find modern society somewhat alienating. Ideologies such as feminism give people a group identity. A group identity gives people a feeling of belonging and it can also compensate for feelings of personal inferiority.

Feminists view themselves as part of a community of good people fighting against evil. “Us versus them” and “good versus evil” dichotomies are easy to understand and emotionally compelling. Feminism provides feminists with a group identity and a moral narrative.

Feminism offers women a substitute for the traditional female role: they can role-play as damsels in distress. Women want to be damsels in distress, and men want to be heroes who rescue distressed damsels. This is built into our biology and culture. The modern world, however, offers men and women few opportunities to play those roles. The modern world is very safe and comfortable. Women no longer need men, as individuals, to survive. Ironically, this creates a psychological need for artificial female problems and male solutions to them. Women want to play the role of damsel in distress, and men want to play the role of the self-sacrificing hero. Feminism offers both the opportunity to do so.

5.4 Feminism And Ignorance

Feminism depends on ignorance. It ignores the dependence of women on men for survival, it ignores the sexual power of women, and it also ignores its own dependence on modern civilization.

In the modern world, women do not need men, as individuals, to survive, but men still need women, as individuals, to reproduce.

Of course, women still depend on men as a collective to maintain civilization. Without the work of men, modern civilization would collapse in a few days. But modern civilization is so stable, safe and comfortable that women no longer perceive men as necessary or valuable. What women used to get from men through the sexual contract, they now can get through the market or the state. A woman can purchase all the necessities of life (and more) by working 8 hours a day in a comfortable and safe environment. If she can't work, due to single motherhood or a disability, the welfare state will take care of her. Almost everything that women naturally want can be attained through the market or the state.

Women's emotions evolved to maximize the price they get in exchange for reproductive services, so they value their sexuality highly. In an environment where women don't need individual men to survive, most men seem unattractive. Modern civilization gives women a lot more purchasing power in the sexual market than men.

Feminism ignores the sexual power of women. Men have greater physical power, but women have a compensating type of power: sexual power. The stronger male desire for sex gives women sexual power over men. Modern civilization takes away (collectivizes) the power of men, but not the power of women. In this environment, women are more powerful than men. This makes feminism more persuasive, because it makes the sexual contract seem unfair. Female sexuality is much too valuable and important to be given away to a useless, inferior "beta" male. Because women have come to view protection and support as their moral right and society's moral obligation, it seems unfair that they should have to pay for those things, especially with their extremely valuable pussies.

Feminism would disappear instantly in the absence of modern civilization. If life was once again dangerous and uncomfortable, men would seem much more attractive to women, and traditional sex roles would seem like a fair exchange. Ironically, feminism can only exist in a comfortable and safe environment created by men.

5.5 Feminism Is Irrational

Feminism does not appeal to rational thought. It does not come knocking on the front door of the mind. It sneaks in through the back door: the subconscious.

Feminism does not engage in discussion or debate about its core premises, because that would be counterproductive. The core beliefs of feminism are placed off limits to debate and discussion in various ways. One is by tying them to identity. When a belief is part of your identity, you perceive an attack on that belief as an attack on you. Feminism portrays opposing views as physical violence directed at women. Disagreeing with a feminist is "attacking" her. People with opposing views are "misogynists". Arguing with a feminist is a catch-22. If you win the argument, then you are an evil misogynist. If you win, you lose, and if you lose, you lose.

Feminism sometimes pretends to be empirical and scientific, but it only accepts data and interpretations that support its views. Feminism uses advocacy research: the social construction of "facts" that fit a preconceived narrative. Sometimes feminists just blatantly lie. Feminism often uses false statistics and interpretations, such as the "1 in 5" rape statistic, which it places beyond logical or empirical falsification. Those who question a rape accusation or rape statistic are labeled as "rape apologists", as if they are enabling rape by wanting accurate knowledge of reality. Feminism often takes a term, such as "rape", and expands its denotation while attempting to retain its connotations. Drunk consensual sex might be labeled "rape" by feminists and included in "rape" statistics, even though most people would not consider it to be rape. Unlike science, feminism uses vague, emotionally charged terms that tend to cloud reason and prevent rational discussion.

Instead of engaging rationally with opposing views, feminism labels them as "oppression" and demands that they be excluded from consideration. Feminism promotes censorship of opposing views. It also demands that children and young adults be indoctrinated with feminist ideology, in the name of "social justice". Feminism uses censorship and indoctrination to defend and propagate itself.

When censorship isn't possible, feminists will use other rhetorical tactics to shut down debate. One

such tactic is selective skepticism, aka “tactical nihilism”: the selective use of philosophical critiques of knowledge to reject specific knowledge claims. When feminists are backed into an intellectual corner, they try to escape by going up: by taking the argument to another level of discourse. They use the postmodernist trick of denying truth or rationality whenever it is convenient to do so. This is another type of cherry-picking fallacy. Feminists use general critiques of knowledge selectively against opposing beliefs, but exempt their own beliefs from such critiques. Likewise, feminists use relativism selectively: to give themselves permission to believe whatever they want, but deny their opponents the same “right” to define the truth. This tactic fits the general pattern of claiming all rights for themselves and placing all responsibilities on others.

5.6 Feminism Does Not State Its Assumptions

Feminism does not state its underlying assumptions, because that would expose them to criticism. Instead, it presupposes them. For example, “End Rape Culture Now!” presupposes that rape is caused by a cultural acceptance of rape, and that it is the responsibility of society (and men) to change the culture. If those presuppositions were clearly stated, they could easily be criticized.

This is a very effective way to propagate ideas. By packing them into the presuppositions of other statements, feminism propagates its core premises without exposing them to criticism or even to conscious awareness. We normally presuppose beliefs that are generally accepted as true. By placing its core premises into the presuppositions of its rhetoric, feminism implies that they are not only true, but are obviously true and should be taken for granted.

I should clarify that when I say something like “Feminism does X” I am being metaphorical. Feminism is just a system of ideas and behavior patterns. By itself, it does nothing. It consists only of information. Those ideas and behavior patterns propagate from one person to another via communication and imitation. Feminism causes feminists (the infected hosts) to do certain things, which then promote the spread of feminism. When I say that feminism does something, I mean that it causes its hosts to do that thing.

The core premises of feminism are learned and propagated subconsciously. Feminists don’t have a conscious understanding of what they are doing. They have just learned certain ideas and patterns of behavior. For example, feminists might employ philosophical skepticism as a rhetorical device, but they aren’t interested in philosophical critiques of knowledge. They have just learned to use certain simplified versions of philosophical arguments to confuse people and shut down debate.

Essentially, feminists have learned to repeat certain simple ideas and use certain rhetorical devices in certain situations. Their ideas were not acquired rationally and cannot be used rationally. You cannot have a rational discussion with a feminist about feminism. They have just learned a few interaction patterns. If those fail, they will simply end the discussion. This approach is very effective. Most people aren’t careful thinkers. They default to emotional, intuitive problem solving. The meme spreads from one such person to another.

5.7 Feminism Has Evolved

Feminism has been effective at capturing not only individual minds, but also institutions. Feminism promotes the view that women are oppressed and need various forms of political and social action to remedy their disadvantages. Protecting and supporting women is naturally viewed as a vital function of both society and masculinity. People in positions of power (mostly men) can signal their virtue by adopting feminist ideas and policies. By appealing to elites, feminism has managed to

infect the major institutions of Western society: the academy, the media, the childhood education system, big corporations, and government bureaucracies. It now has the means of large-scale indoctrination and censorship.

Feminism has encouraged women to go into the work force, and this has helped to propagate feminism. Women who go into the workforce do not usually become plumbers, carpenters, scientists or engineers. They tend to go into areas such as education, media, government, large corporations and academia. Women are indoctrinated with feminism in school, and then they choose careers that enable them to propagate feminism. Also, women who choose career over family see greater value in feminism as a justification for their lifestyle and as a way to demand more benefits from society. This feedback loop reinforces feminism in the institutions.

Feminism is part of a system of other leftist ideological views. This memetic system has been effective at capturing the minds and institutions of the West. The academy and the media have grown increasingly leftist and feminist over time. Instead of fulfilling their nominal functions of seeking and propagating truth, they have become propagators of leftist ideology. Government bureaucracies and the childhood education system are also highly infested with leftists, and so are many large private corporations. Increasingly, big corporations play the role of “daddy” to women and feminists, like the government. In the West, the ideology of the establishment has become highly leftist, even though it is not yet fully communist or socialist. Leftist ideologies are good at providing a moral justification for the existence of institutional power.

Feminism is still evolving. Over the years, feminism has evolved to become better at propagating itself. There was an earlier version of feminism that really did aim to eliminate differences between the sexes. This earlier form of feminism was equally misguided, but less deceptive. It promoted women working but also men being more involved in child-raising. It promoted women asking men out and paying for dates, at least half of the time. This earlier form of feminism died out and was replaced by the current form of feminism, known as “third wave” feminism.

New (third wave) feminism was more effective at propagating because, instead of trying to eliminate sex roles, it promoted new sex roles that fit the psychology of men and women in the modern environment. Instead of encouraging women to be more like men, it encouraged women to adopt a different female role: the helpless victim of male agency.

6 How Feminism Harms Its Hosts

Is feminism harmful to its hosts? In most cases, yes. It is difficult to get statistics on the fertility of feminists, but feminism coincides with low fertility in developed societies, and observation suggests that feminists have low average fertility.

Feminism teaches women to view the role of wife and mother as a form of oppression, and to put careers and sexual liberation ahead of reproduction. Feminism does not explicitly tell women not to reproduce (why would it?), but it has the effect of reducing reproduction in the infected hosts. The low fertility of modern societies is not just due to feminism. It is also a result of birth control and other aspects of modernity. However, feminism both enables low fertility and is enabled by it. Feminism encourages women to have fewer children in various ways: by promoting sexual liberation, by promoting career over family, and by promoting birth control and abortion.

Feminism is also enabled by low fertility, because low fertility makes it possible for women to go into the workforce. Women in the workforce then propagate feminism in various ways. Women in

the workforce also find feminism more compelling, because they can use it to advocate for their interests and to justify their life choices. Feminism demands that working women receive more jobs, better pay, and social services such as childcare. By advocating for working women, feminism is implicitly advocating against stay-at-home mothers, because the jobs and wealth transferred to working women must come from somewhere.

Feminism insists that women not be evaluated by their sex appeal or reproductive success. Feminism rejects beauty “standards” as arbitrary and oppressive, because they are ideals that most women fail to attain. This ignores the underlying biological reason for norms of female beauty: that female beauty indicates fertility, or in other words, reproductive potential.

Feminism rejects feminine ideals that are rooted in tradition and biology, such as the chaste virgin, the loyal wife, and the loving mother. Feminism replaces them with anti-ideals: the slut, the career woman, the single mother, and the childless woman.

Feminism validates the choices of women who reject marriage and motherhood. This makes it easier for many women to opt out of reproduction, especially when they are young and high on their sexual power. They discover the emptiness of the feminist life when they reach their thirties, but by then it is too late to do anything about it. Feminism then provides them with a post facto justification for their life choices.

7 The Creation And Evolution Of Feminism

Feminism is a creation of modern civilization. If life were still a struggle to survive, women would view men as saviors, not oppressors. If women were still having five or more children, traditional sex roles would be inevitable. Feminism can only exist in the environment created by modern civilization.

The industrial revolution freed most people from lives of hard, physical labor. Technology and fossil fuels created abundance as economic growth outpaced population growth. That abundance made it possible for almost every child to live to adulthood. Modernity has, at least temporarily, eliminated the problem of survival in the West and other developed societies.

Then came the sexual revolution. Birth control technologies, such as the birth control pill, have decoupled sex from reproduction. Easy and effective birth control allowed people to have sex without reproducing. Birth control gave us a new type of agency: control over reproduction.

These developments were seen by most people as unqualified goods. The industrial and sexual revolutions gave people more power and freedom, but they also created some new problems.

The human emotional system evolved in an environment of scarcity and without birth control technology. Our emotions are not adapted to the modern world. They are adapted to a world in which sex makes babies and most babies die young. Many problems are due to the misfit between our emotions and the modern world.

Essentially, modern civilization divorces our emotions from the fundamental problems that they evolved to solve: survival and reproduction. Modernity leaves the human emotional system with its wheels spinning in the air like a car that has been put up on blocks. The engine still runs, but the emotional drives don’t take the car anywhere, biologically speaking.

In the modern world, every woman has the means of survival around her, in the form of modern civilization. She also has the means of reproduction within her. Men still have the problem of

reproduction to solve, which now appears to them as the problem of getting laid. That problem is open-ended, and it presents men with a difficult challenge. But women have no real problems to solve. Instead of bringing about a paradise on Earth, at least for women, this modern condition causes various pathological behaviors, as the human emotional system spins its wheels without resistance.

Ideologies can harness these powerful emotional drives for their own purposes. They can plug into the human emotional system by defining new, artificial problems and claiming to be the solution to those problems.

Feminism is one such ideology. It plugs into the sexual and social emotions that have been disconnected from reality by modernity. It offers women an artificial substitute for a natural life. Many find that substitute appealing.

Ideologies such as feminism give their believers a sense of meaning and purpose in life by giving them artificial problems to solve. They project an illusion of progress onto the windshield while using the motion of the wheels to propagate themselves.

Feminism is one of the pathologies of the modern world. The industrial and sexual revolutions have created a condition of per capita energy abundance. That energy has to go somewhere. The use of that energy is directed by emotions. Anyone or anything that can control human emotions can use that energy for its own purposes. An environment with an abundance of energy is ecologically unstable. It was inevitable that new forms would arise that could use that energy to reproduce themselves. Feminism is one such form: a memetic disease that thrives in the modern world in the same way that bacteria thrive on a plate of fresh agar jelly.

Some might say that low fertility is good, because the population can't grow forever, and thus feminism is good, because it promotes low fertility.

This essay is about what feminism is, not whether it is good or bad, or what we should do about it. Having said that, I agree that the population can't grow forever, and that we need low fertility to maintain modern civilization. However, I don't think that feminism is the best way to solve the population problem. We should solve that problem rationally, by conscious choice and design, not by allowing a memetic disease to infect us.

Feminism is not a long-term solution to the problem of population growth, any more than smallpox is. Feminism is a disease, although one with non-lethal effects. As such, it will sweep through the human population, as smallpox did, leaving behind a population that is resistant to it. People will evolve resistance to feminism, as they evolved resistance to smallpox. That resistance could be biological, cultural, or both, as it was with smallpox. Feminism is not a viable way of life, any more than smallpox is a viable way of life. It is a disease.

8 Conclusion

The disease model explains the contradictions and hypocrisy of feminism. Feminism pretends to be fighting for women, when in fact it is fighting for itself. That is why feminism blames almost every problem on culture or society (and when it says "society" it means either men or culture).

Take the issue of rape, for example. Feminism rejects any practical advice for women on how to avoid being raped. Instead, feminism proposes fighting "rape culture" and "teaching men not to rape". It does this for two reasons. One is to deny that women have the agency to avoid rape.

The responsibility of preventing rape must be transferred entirely to men and society. This fits the general pattern of denying female agency and responsibility. The second and more important reason is that “fighting rape culture” means propagating feminist ideology.

Feminism views almost every problem as due to wrong-think, and thus the solution to almost every problem is feminism. Even when feminism proposes legal or institutional changes rather than cultural changes, those changes always expand the scope of institutions that are infected with feminism. This behavior makes sense once you understand that feminism exists to propagate itself, not to solve the problems of human beings. Feminism focuses on cultural change because that is how it propagates.

Again, I am not suggesting that feminism is a conscious agent. Feminism is a meme complex: a system of ideas and behavior patterns that evolved to propagate itself. Memes that are good at propagating together become adapted to each other and eventually form a coherent unit of reproduction. Over the years, the feminist meme complex acquired various useful memes and incorporated them into itself. It acquired memes that are good at capturing social institutions, memes that are good at defending ideologies from criticism, and various other ideas and behavior patterns. A system of memes emerged that is self-reinforcing and good at propagating itself from mind to mind. The fit of form to function is not the result of conscious design. It is the result of evolution.