

Response 4
Due: April 19, 2012

Name: Jon Fraser

Answer these questions **briefly** and in your own words. Please word process your answers – you can just type them into this Word document and print.

Rhoads p. 46-78 “Sex”

1. Briefly explain the evolutionary psychology explanation for the mating preferences of our male and female ancestors. What are the current-day implications of these preferences in terms of numbers of mates and qualities each sex desires in mates?

When selecting a mate, women tend to look for men with more status and assets whereas men look for women with youth and beauty. Men were also more likely to have more mates than women in an attempt to spread their genes more widely. As a result, today men are more likely to seek multiple sexual partners whereas women are more likely to wait to marry a man with more money and power.

2. What is the influence of testosterone on male and female libido?

Men, who possess more testosterone than women, have a greater desire for sex and want sex more often. More evidence to the theory that testosterone is correlated with sex drive is the idea that women with higher levels of testosterone have a higher sex drive than women with lower testosterone levels.

3. Is physical appearance (beauty/strength) in a mate of equal importance to males and females? How would a feminist explain this, and how would an evolutionist explain it?

Men value physical appearance much more than women. This is explained by feminists by saying that men have more traditional views of women while evolutionists explain this by saying that men look towards a more youthful and beautiful woman as more fertile.

4. What is the role of testosterone and estrogen in male/female physical appearance?

Higher levels of testosterone, which is present in men, creates a more rugged, bulky, manly appearance in both men and women.

5. Are resources and status (power) in a mate of equal importance to males and females? Is there an evolutionary explanation for this?

Women value resource and status much more than men. In evolution, men with resource and status were more able to support a woman and her offspring, which made these men more desirable as mates.

Barnett p. 47-69 “That Old Black Magic”

6. Is Barnett's description of the evolutionary psychology (Ultra-Darwin) explanation for our reproductive behaviors/strategies consistent with Rhoads' description?

Yes, Barnett and Rhoads agree on their descriptions of the evolutionary psychology for our reproductive behaviors. Both explain the more traditional explanation of male status and female fertility as desirable traits to the opposite gender. And the male desire to spread genes and move on to other reproductive prospects.

7. What does the research of Eagly and Wood suggest about earliest human societies? Why does this research tend to refute the Ultra-Darwinist theories?

Eagly's and Wood's research suggests that men and women had more equal roles in early human societies when it came to gathering food and creating shelter. Since these communities were mainly foragers, therefore both women and men had to fight to survive and lived a more nomadic life.

8. In one sentence each, summarize the evidence that refutes each of these myths:

Female: Myth of Coyness: In primate communities, it is common for a female in estrus to seek out multiple male mates, hoping to ensure that one will mate with her.

Myth of Monogamy: In early evolutionary times, it was smarter for a woman to depend on multiple males to provide food, shelter, and protection than only one male who was likely to die.

Myth of Low Libido: Many historical societies have been obsessed with male dominance in suppressing the female libido, providing evidence that it is not as low as it was thought.

Male: Myth of Don Juan: Men who are engaged with only one mate have a greater chance of passing on their genes and are healthier and happier than those who move between women.

Myth of Uninterested Father: Many primate fathers carry and look after their offspring just as much, or even more often, than the mothers of the offspring.

Rhoads p. 244-263 "Conclusion"

1. What does Meg think is the effect of contemporary culture on women's expression of their attitudes toward marriage and family? Do you agree or disagree with Meg?

Meg thinks that most women are concerned with balancing a career and a family. Although they desire strongly to provide for a family, many times the working world wins their attention and effort. I agree with Meg that this is a source of conflict for many women, including some women that I know and that there is no true answer to the correct balance between work and family.

2. What do most women want? What makes them happy?

Most women want intimacy with their husband and enjoy sharing stories, ideas, and feelings with him. They're happy the most when men make them feel loved and cared for instead of neglected or needy.

3. What do most men need?

Most men need and even enjoy marriage. Despite the evolutionary desire in most men to pursue casual sexual encounters, marriage tends to make men happier, more caring individuals of society. This also causes men to focus more on work, the community, and family instead of being lazy and careless.

4. What makes women vulnerable in marriage? What makes men vulnerable in marriage?

Women are vulnerable in marriage because they tend to become too attached and needy to their spouse and become offended when he fails to reciprocate these behaviors. Men are vulnerable in marriage when they feel the sense that they are failing to properly provide for and protect their family.

5. List 2-3 points made in pages 256-263 that seem most true (or make the most sense) to you. List 2-3 points that seem the least true (or make the least sense) to you.

I definitely agree with the points made that a conflict exists between men and women and the working world and the home. It's difficult to find a suitable balance for both sides that provides for the family while still maintaining the home. I also found that the idea that men are more supportive of having a working wife but paying for home and child care is true. However, I disagree with the notion that men fail to complete tasks to the level that women expect; there are many things that men may think of details women neglect. I also feel that the author's claim that men want a wife that doesn't worry about work and focuses more on maintaining the home is untrue.

Barnett p. 247-254 "The Road Ahead"

6. Why do women buy into the new gender difference theories? What are the downsides to these new theories?

Women buy into the new gender difference theories because these theories portray women as better than men rather than as subordinate. However, these theories display women as caring and empathizing, making it difficult for them to balance the emotional and economic needs of the family.

7. Describe other reasons why the new gender difference theories are receiving support.

These theories help to explain the gender discrimination and separation of our society, rationalize the way a family can balance work, childcare, and home upkeep, and describe the traditional role reversal that seems to have occurred in many families.

8. What is the real story – what forces are “moving men and women toward being more alike than different?”

The forces of social and economic change are moving men and women closer together. With the task of childbearing and rearing less of a concern thanks to modern medicine, both women and men can spend more time in the workforce or caring for children. More of a determinant in behavior now is income, class, or education.

9. Why is the idea of equality seen as a “change virus”?

Equality is seen as the “change virus” because it spreads like a virus, but only in the visible world. Although a large amount of women still maintain a housewife lifestyle, those independent females who are seen in the public spotlight are the ones inducing this change towards equality because they are simply more visible.

10. What is your reaction to the last three paragraphs of p. 254?

I agree with Barnett for these last few paragraphs of this reading. Although it would be ideal for a society to exist where men and women were seen as equal, and were therefore treated equal in the workplace and the home, it would be next to impossible for such a world to exist. Traditional ideas towards male and female differences gave society a sense of order that could not be upheld without clearly defining the roles of men and women. While it would be nice to live in a world without such clearly cut gender roles, this type of society would be too difficult to create.