

## **Sperm are from Men Eggs are from Women**

The Real Reason Men and Women are Different

Joe Quirk

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Looking at this just now, I realize it is intended as a parody of sorts on “Women are from Venus, Men are from Mars.”

Viannah recommended this book to us. Viann read it sometime last year.

Now I understand what the debate between science and religion is. It's not about evolution per se, it's a debate about how we came to be the way we are. Quirk argues not only from natural selection but from sexual selection that what we are is both a product of behaviors that had the best chance of surviving offspring, but also features that were most attractive to the opposite sex in order to produce offspring in the first place. Sometimes these features even mean wasteful displays, a show of surplus energy, attractive to a potential offspring-rearing partner.

In chapter after chapter the author argues that we are who we are because that's what our parents and their parents chose in mates and that this propagates because we all survived to reproduce.

Quirk makes a big deal about not having credentials to make all these claims. He apparently goes to cocktail parties with people who do have credentials and enjoys arguing with them. He also does his own research, like visiting a gay beach and observing behaviors there, at risk of becoming involved! Nonetheless, the book has about ten pages of references for those who want to follow up on these research claims, this followed by a “Useless Index” and “People Who Deserve Acknowledgement but not Payment.”

Humans are big brained animals and as such spend a significant portion of their time in child rearing, not just a year or two or four like litters in some species, but about a third of their whole life. Most people have only one “litter” of a relatively small number of children. Not only are these children expensive (in terms of energy) to bring to term in a womb, thus making females picky about mating, but they are seriously expensive well beyond that to bring to successful adulthood and reproduction of their own. This explains the trend toward nurturing, captive fathers. Their offspring tend to survive better.

The table of contents tells a lot of the story: “Darwinism: Survival of the Sexiest,” self explanatory; “Why Your Clitoris is Hard to Find,” has to do with womb bearer selectivity and

nurturing, patient mates; “Why Your Penis is Easy to Find,” has to do with males not really having much to lose in mating, at least not to first order.

Why would the sex drive be so strong? Because those with strong sex drive tend to reproduce and those with less tend not to. It’s hard to imagine that there wouldn’t be an identifiable trend toward high sex drive in just a few generations, much less thousands. None of this answers my fundamental questions, why does anything bother to exist at all and why does anything care about survival or procreation at all, but, within the constraints of the givens that we have a bunch of stuff here and a bunch of living beings that desire to survive and have children that survive, it explains quite well how we are the way we are.

“The Catfight Gene” and “The Jerk Gene” explain how otherwise undesirable behaviors get propagated. There is, Quirk claims, a subconscious desire, which propagates through natural selection, to make stronger immune systems by mating with people of complementary ones, we pick up on who these complimentary people are and are attracted to them, that is, the postman, the pool man, etc.

What about morality? Sex is dangerous. The consequences are pretty expensive no matter what they are, not just to the couple but to society at large. Such a huge sex drive leads to destructive conflict, just look all over the natural kingdom. Quirk spends a few sentences on this somewhere. Society makes rules to keep people safe in the presence of all this danger.

“How Kindness Became Sexy,” “Why Women Are Coy, Men Clueless,” “Dying for Sex,” “When Your Wife Sleeps with Your Brother, and You’re Okay with That,” all of these known-to-exist issues are explained in terms of surviving offspring who will have similar traits due to genetics and rearing. Sometimes it’s in terms of resources (that is, natural selection), sometimes in terms of just who wants to pick up who for whatever reason.

One helpful quip from Quirk goes something like, “Get over it ladies, he only has enough blood to use his brain or his penis, don’t expect him to do both at the same time.”

A survey of the reproductive landscape would not be complete without a treatment of homosexuality. My own theory (not Quirks) is essentially that such a strong drive is likely to find expression beyond, perhaps far beyond, it’s useful or intended purpose. This combined with diversity, all individuals being “deviant” in their own unique set of ways from the “norms,” explains homosexuality in the population as we observe it. (The distinction between diversity and “sin” is not as clear to me as it is to some, nor is this distinction constant across history.)

Quirk makes what I think is a weak argument that homosexual aunts and uncles are so nurturing that they promote tribal survival beyond their own innate behavior’s inability to reproduce. More interesting to me were his examples from nature where considerable homosexuality is occurring but is suppressed in reporting by conservative naturalists who refer to such behaviors as merely “aggressive” or “hazing.” When penetrations and ejaculations are routinely happening

in tribes of primates, that's certainly "aggressive hazing!" This tends to reinforce my own theory from the last paragraph. Further, unprincipled or a-moral animals spraying their copious sperm everywhere is Quirk's opening premise of the entire book. He claims to speak there from personal experience.

He also discusses sexual development in the womb, that differentiation is not early, and that various baths of hormones during development cause traits and even physical properties that we associate with masculine or feminine to appear in both sexes. This addresses transsexuality and other dimensions of physical and personality diversity usually ignored or downplayed by morality texts.

Quirk is an entertaining, clearly irreverent author. Sometimes he speaks from his own experience, often from observation or even research. He doesn't really attack religious faith directly. One suspects that it is irrelevant to him except as a detractor from his own theories (or maybe as a pickup venue). At one point, for example, he is talking about men being afraid of menstruation and going off to write rules about it (clearly referring to Mosaic Law). I'm sure an extension of this thought could be and has been made to show that adherence to religion promotes tribal survival (inter-religious conflict neglected in this discussion as second order). Indeed, I believe this myself. So, one can see the tension, why some recoil to young earth creationism when presented with the idea that who and what they are is just a result of thousands, perhaps millions of generations of sexual and natural selection. In a lot of ways this well matches what we observe and in a lot of ways that some tenets of faith as handed down do not.

Of course, what we observe is not all there is....