

Philosophy 3334 Spring 2020

Reading questions #13

Due Tues, April 28 (by 11:59pm) uploaded to Blackboard [though anytime later is perfectly fine]

1) Read Donald Symons "The Evolution of Human Sexuality: Sexual Choice" (Chapter 6 of his 1979 book *The Evolution of Human Sexuality*). Symons points out that when seeking a sexual partner, of course men care about beauty and about status and women care about beauty and about status, but Symons claims that women care relatively more about status. What does he mean by status here? Does thinking about evolution give you any reason to think that men and women would be different in this regard? Why?

Symons cites a 1951 study that claims that in fact in human women do care more about status than men do. But this could be an artifact of women's relative lack of social power. But Symons predicts that if women achieved equal political and social power with men, this asymmetry would still exist. What do you think? Do you think women in the US in the 21<sup>st</sup> century still care more about status than men do? Whether you said yes or no, why do you think this is true?

2) Watch David Buss's TED talk "Sexual conflict in human mating" on youtube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu4Uki8VyLc>

Buss shows the results of survey data that show that men, on average, report a higher number for "ideal number of sex partners desired." Are the numbers he reports surprising to you at all? Or is this what you expected to see? On surveys like this it is very common for people to not answer truthfully for various reasons. Do you think that is playing a big role here? Or do you think that the results of the survey are basically reflecting real differences in desires here?