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I'll start with the positive appreciation. What I liked about this book is its frank plea for an acknowledgement of sexual difference, and of the fact that many differences between the minds and behaviors of women and of men are not just social constructions, but have a biological basis. This is something that many academics, especially if they have a feminist orientation, are unwilling to concede. Many feminists and social scientists consider psychosexual differences between women and men as almost solely resulting from culture and socialization. If they address biological findings at all, it is almost always to criticize them, not to try to learn from them. I think this is a sorry situation, for it is clear that we are evolved biological beings. If we want to understand the human mind and human behavior, we will need the biological and evolutionary sciences as much as we need the social sciences. This is one of the most difficult tasks awaiting scientists today: to try to understand the interaction between so-called nature and nurture. Nature and nurture are misleading terms, however, because they make it sound as if there are two neatly separate domains meeting and interacting, one being nature and the other being something completely else. It is much more complicated than that. Everything we are and do is the result of a close intertwining of the workings of genes, hormones, neural structures, socialization, cultural influences, life experiences, situational variables and much more. Culture does not stand apart from biology. Our ability to learn from others, to construct cultures and to be influenced by them is part of our evolved biological heritage and, more importantly, it is not random. There is such a thing as human nature, involving species-typical emotions, cognitions, needs, motivations, and abilities, with the context influencing the extent to which they will be able to develop and express themselves. In spite of the differences among people and among cultures, people and cultures are remarkably similar all over the world. The same goes for men and women all over the world: they show some remarkable average differences in temperaments, personalities, interests and abilities. The biological and evolutionary sciences can explain why this should be so. Although the specifics of gender are influenced by cultural factors, gender is not just a social construction, and I agree with you that feminists should start acknowledging this. First, because science should be about incorporating *all* the findings, and not just those that appeal to us ideologically. And second, because by wrongly considering gender to be a social construction we run the risk of not taking the wishes and needs of both sexes seriously. Women in particular are sometimes being pushed in directions which may not fit their inclinations. The majority of women are just not as career oriented and status seeking as the majority of men, for instance. The unequal representation of the sexes in politics and many other professions is partly the result of self-selection: women's and men's priorities tend to differ. Partly, however, and this is something you do not address, it is also the result of our society still being very much structured on the basis of male standards, despite its avowed ideal of gender neutrality. Working hours in politics, for instance, are very family unfriendly. So an acknowledgment of inherent gender differences would lead me to interpret the ideal of gender neutral individuals as both unreachable and as probably doing injustice to both sexes, but it would not lead me to a defense of the status quo. I would argue for structural changes that would make society less male-standardized.

But you might say that, in principle, I was on your side when starting to read the book: we must stop denying sexual difference and start appreciating the ways in which it might enrich our world. The style and content of the book, however, have suddenly made me better understand the feminist suspicion of an acknowledgement of inherent gender difference. It can so easily be misused, especially by manly men. I suppose the book is very manly in its boldness, its lack of self-doubt, and its hierarchical thinking. I have not counted the times you used the words superior and inferior with regard to human beings, but they were many. Just a few examples: "a defense of manliness requires that a man look a woman in the eye and tell her that she is inferior in certain important respects" (164) and "nature supplies the human species with superior individuals who by nature take pride in their superiority"

(205). These superior individuals are, to you, the most manly men. I find it rather astonishing how you can make such assertions as if they were objective facts and not, as they are, your own highly subjective evaluations, which are highly dubious besides. This is just one example of what I find to be one of the big problems with this book: its very lack of reasoned argument. Let me offer you another quote, when you're talking approvingly about Socrates: "One should always follow the logos, the argument, and not try to bend it to suit one's purposes" (223). I find that this is exactly what you are *not* doing in this book. You're bending a lot to your own purposes. I think much of the book is sophistry, an instance of subtly - or not so subtly - deceptive reasoning and argumentation. You start from often highly inaccurate accounts of particular theories and theorists, inaccurate in ways that are very convenient to you. Then you go on to draw all kinds of inferences that do not logically follow from these premises, which were flawed anyway. All this is served in a sauce of associative thinking combined with the naturalistic fallacy: you seem to assume that nature shows us how we should live, as if this weren't a highly problematical proposition that has received a lot of attention in the philosophical literature. There's few scientific rigor to be found here. I know that you don't like scientific methodology, but to me this book attests to the importance of sticking to it, or at least sticking to adequate knowledge and fair representation of what you are criticizing, to clear definitions, to internal consistency and careful, logical thinking, and to underpinning your assertions with valid arguments. As my specialties are Darwinism and feminism, I'll focus upon the ways you represent these.

First critique. You discuss and evaluate Darwinism and feminism by discussing Darwin and by discussing some feminists who were influential in the 1970s or earlier. Darwin lived more than 100 years ago. He had it right on many accounts, but not on all, and his work is mostly referred to today from a historical perspective, not to prove one's point. Evolutionary biology today is so much more refined and developed than Darwin's work could have been, given the historical circumstances. So it is a mystery to me why you should evaluate Darwinism by evaluating Darwin. More than this, you give an incorrect representation of his theory, *and* you present this incorrect representation as representative of Darwinism today, which is doubly wrong. More specifically, you say that Darwin and Darwinists think that evolution works for the good of the species, and then you go on to say that "the theory does not see that manly men want to protect themselves and theirs, that manly aggression does not want to survive by adaptation, that it is essentially defensive. Darwin's theory tries to connect the individual with the ultimate collectivity, the species, while ignoring the bonds of friendship, family, and politics that are in between" (46). Now all this is so muddled that I hardly know where to begin. For starters, Darwin did not think that evolution works for the good of the species. He proposed that it works on the level of individuals, and he only used group selection as a last resort, because he could not explain the self-sacrificial behavior of social insects, such as ants and bees. The idea of group selection was popular in the first half of the 20th century, but has been abandoned by evolutionary biologists ever since the 1960s. Second, you mix up the evolutionary causes of why some motivations evolved with these motivations themselves. We need not be aware that our need for friendship or for a loving relationship has been retained in the course of evolution because it helped our ancestors to survive and reproduce, in order for this need to manifest itself. We just have this need for friendship and love, full stop. So a phrase like "manly aggression does not want to survive by adaptation" just doesn't make any sense. And it is not true that Darwin ignored the bonds of friendship, family and politics. I could go on and on. Describing the process of co-evolution between, for instance, parasites and their hosts, as "a postmodern point" being made by the scientists describing it (251), because there is no real progress, is another instance of muddled thinking. You cannot just write off a scientific finding as postmodern because you do not like it. Criticizing evolutionary theory on the grounds that "manliness as a true, chosen virtue is not required" (87), attests to a similar error in reasoning: you judge the validity of a scientific theory by non-scientific standards, such as your personal preferences or moral standards. If this is a manly way of thinking and writing, we'd better get rid of it.

The same goes for your representation of feminism. You make a straw man or straw woman out of it, by giving us a biased account of a few second-wave feminists, depicting them as irresponsible, anti-family and sex-crazed Marxists or existentialists, and then saying: this is the only feminism there is

(240). It isn't. Liberal feminism has had a considerable social and legal impact in western society, but you just deny it exists. Betty Friedan, depicted by you as allied with existentialism, was a liberal feminist, and she pointed out the need for women to have jobs *and* children. Liberal feminism is probably the predominant kind of feminism today, but there are many other kinds. There is also difference feminism, for instance, which demands more respect for typically female qualities. You ignore all of these.

On another note, to me you do not really make clear why exactly manliness is so important. You seem to assert that it is needed in order to have a stable society, e.g. because it is connected to the ability to govern a nation. And as our liberal democracies don't value manliness enough, problems may arise. But aren't democracies the most stable societies of all? So where's the problem then? You refer to Tocqueville (235) who said that democracy leads to similarity and conformity in people. But there is, as far as I can see, no indication that Tocqueville was right. I'd say that people have never been more able to express their individuality as in modern democracies. Also, you say that it is hard to transform men against their inclinations (239), something I agree with, but then how does it follow that we can now be living in a society where unemployed manliness abounds? Isn't it a feature of manliness that it wants to assert itself, and if it doesn't do so, then maybe it wasn't real manliness?

Finally, your definition of manliness shifts so often that it remains unclear to me what it is exactly. You say it is a term of praise reserved for the few very best (38), but you also say that manliness is 50% good and 50% bad. The bulk of your book, however, hardly touches upon the bad half, presenting manliness foremost as something heroic and good, except in its excesses. But when having a closer look at some of the things manliness entails, I find it hard to see why we should value it so much: conflict seeking, arrogance, aggressiveness, intolerance, stubbornness, a need for dominance, and a lack of nuance and subtlety - this can be very dangerous indeed, especially if it is accompanied by the - apparently manly - sense that one is out for justice. The combination of arrogance, seeking risk and conflict, being insistent and intolerant, desiring to prove a point, wanting to defend your honor, being confident that you know your job and that you can succeed, and the tendency to look down upon those who do not have your qualities - isn't this what tyranny is about? And how many women have been murdered in the name of honor, murdered by men who were sure that they were taking responsibility and only doing what was the manly and right thing to do, namely defending their honor or the honor of their family? How many men get murdered because of it? Most murders of men by men are the result of quarrels which may seem trivial but which are ultimately about not wanting to lose face. You describe manliness as 'a quality of the soul' (22), which tends to be found in its purest form in literature or poetry, but in reality it is a collection of many attributes, which do not necessarily go together, nor do they necessarily have any connection with morality. One can be confident and assertive, but a moral coward at the same time - or vice versa. By acknowledging this lack of coherence briefly and then going on to talk about manliness as if it were this one quality, you offer an inconsistent and confusing picture of manliness. On one page (25) you even mention priests and nerds as versions of manliness, whereas on another (232) you describe professionals as unmanly because "a professional is formed by uniform education and judged by objective criteria, not tested by manly deeds." Another quote: "Politicians who do what they think right are manly; those who do what you think right are unmanly" (232-3). The impression one gets is that qualities such as empathy, the ability to listen to others and to doubt one's own judgment are not something to strive for, but effeminate aberrations.

In short, this plea for manliness was not convincing to me at all. In fact, it obtained the opposite of what it is trying to achieve: exactly in its defense of manliness it showed me the importance of trying to curtail many aspects of manliness.