

Feminism or Masculinism? Neither...

Bryan Caplan offered a non-argumentative definition of feminism in a February article. Therein he wrote:

What would a non-argumentative definition of feminism look like? Ideally, feminists, non-feminists, and anti-feminists could all endorse it. If that's asking too much, all these groups should at least be able to accept the proposed definition as a rough approximation of the position they affirm or deny. My preferred candidate:

feminism: the view that society generally treats men more fairly than women

What's good about my definition?

First, the definition doesn't include everyone who thinks that our society treats women unfairly to some degree. In the real world, of course, every member of every group experiences unfairness on occasion.

Second, a large majority of self-identified feminists hold the view I ascribe to them. Indeed, if someone said, "I'm a feminist, but I think society generally treats women more fairly than men," most listeners would simply be confused.

Third, a large majority of self-identified non-feminists disbelieve the view I ascribe to feminists. If you think, "Society treats both genders equally well," or "Society treats women more fairly than men," you're highly unlikely to see yourself as a feminist.

I really, really, really like this definition of feminism. I think it fits very well with my overall experience with feminists from various "waves". According to this definition, you correctly identify as or are identified as a "feminist" if you believe that society generally treats men more fairly than women.

Am I a feminist? No, I do not believe so. If I'm not a feminist, does that mean I'm a masculinist? Well, let us offer the same non-argumentative definition of feminism, but replace it with masculinism:

masculinism: the view that society generally treats women more fairly than men

That's certainly something to think about, but no, I do not believe that I fit that definition. I suppose it would be most accurate to say that I am neither a feminist, nor a masculinist. What I am is somebody who believes that both men and women are treated unfairly, in different ways.

Men were/are drafted into military service to be used as cannon fodder, biased against in a custody battle or domestic violence dispute, treated as a pedophile if they associate with children, portrayed as bumbling and foolish fathers in popular media, told to "man up" instead of receive real help for mental and psychological issues, expected to work the most dangerous jobs, have their need for physical touch viewed as sexual only, routinely have their genitals mutilated, assumed to be weak or incompetent if they choose to be a stay-at-home dad, *et cetera*.

Women are constantly told they are victims, were/are considered property of their fathers and husbands, considered slutty if they show a desire for sex, presumed incompetent at many tasks commonly performed by men, required to wear top clothing (and cover up while breastfeeding), weren't/aren't allowed to vote in democratic government elections, often told they should prioritize the well-being of their husband and children over their own, have their insecurities over their bodies encouraged, communally pressured to bear children, *et cetera*.

In light of the many and varied types of unfairness that both men and women endure today and have endured throughout history, I can't say that one gender has been treated more unfairly than the other. Both are and have been treated like shit for the benefit of others.

But maybe we can agree that the one group of people that is and has been treated the most unfairly... *is children*.

Is there a word for the view that society generally treats adults more fairly than children? I can't find one, but here's a related word: *childism*. Chantel Quick wrote about this last September:

*Racism, classism, ableism, nationalism are all things so many of us want to understandably speak out on and bring awareness to, but hardly anyone wants to acknowledge where all the -isms begin, and that is **childism: a systemic belief and prejudice against***

children on the ground of a belief that they are property and can (or even should) be controlled, enslaved, or removed to serve adult needs.

In addition to the two open-ended lists above on how men and women are treated unfairly, children in general must also endure such routine injustices as having their bodily autonomy violated, their curiosity punished, their passions and interests disregarded, their need for expression and emotional release disrespected, their desire to work, earn money, and learn responsibility made illegal, forced to eat when they aren't hungry, forced to participate in activities they dislike, forced to associate with people they hate or fear, *et cetera*. The list could go on, and on, and on...

Goddamnit we humans sure have treated other humans like shit, especially our young. What the fuck is wrong with us? In any event, I've resolved to engage in childism no longer, and my children couldn't be happier. Same goes for treating other men and women unfairly. Please consider doing likewise.