

Involuntarily Celibate: Clever Rhetorical Trick

November 2020: I read this essay and added commentary for Episode 417 of the Everything Voluntary podcast.

I heard the phrase “involuntarily celibate” recently as a way of describing oneself. It was on the context of a man who had a grievance against women for not sleeping with him. Considering the ins and outs of this phrase was a near total mind fuck. That doesn’t happen very often these days, so I absolutely must tell you all about it!

Obviously this person is not choosing to be celibate. As he puts it, his celibacy is completely involuntary. The women he’s encountered, and I suppose propositioned, have made it clear that he’s not worth their while. And since that’s an injustice, Mr. Involuntarily Celibate is a *victim*.

What a clever rhetorical trick! I must admit he had me feeling sympathy for his plight. That poor, poor man can’t find any woman on the face of the earth to sleep with him. I’m sure he’s tried convincing a prostitute for an agreeable sum of his hard earned money, all to no avail. What is wrong with people? Why won’t they sleep with this man?!

And then it occurred to me just how often this rhetorical trick is employed. Here are a few examples of grievances of this nature:

Involuntarily poor: since other people won’t give me money or trade with me for my labor, I’m poor, but not of my choosing!

Involuntarily sick: since other people won’t treat my illness, and I don’t know how, I’m sick all the time, but not of my choosing!

Involuntarily lonely: since other people won’t spend time with me, I’m a loner, but not of my choosing!

Just writing these has me feeling sympathy for these poor, poor *victims* of circumstance. Why should anyone be poor in our world of material abundance? Why should anyone be sick in our world of medical abundance? Why should anyone be lonely in our world of social abundance? That anybody is poor, sick, or lonely in our world of abundance is a manifest injustice that must be corrected by any means possible!

And those means must be political and legal in nature. There’s simply no other way to help the poor, the sick, and the lonely than by passing laws designed to correct these injustices. Universal Basic Income will fix the problem of being involuntarily poor. Universal Healthcare will fix the problem of being involuntarily sick. Making it illegal to live alone will

force loners together, and their loneliness will evaporate.

And what about involuntary celibacy? Universal Sexcare, I suppose, is the answer to this most serious of problems. Nobody should be without sex. Everyone must pay their fair share to funding the Administration of Universal Sexcare so that everyone has a sexual partner when they need it. Such is good and noble in our world of abundance.

When rhetorical tricks lead to government policy, hold on to your wallets.