III

Strategic Flexibility in Mating Intelligence

Chapter 4

Intelligent Priorities: Adaptive Long- and Short-Term Mate Preferences

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SEX SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN SHORT-TERM MATES

Given that reproduction is at the heart of natural selection, mating decisions are of central adaptive significance. Human mating requires successful navigation of various adaptive issues (e.g., Buss & Schmitt, 1993), and, thus, selection likely has given rise to components of human intelligence that solve issues directly related to mating. There are many such issues, some of which are addressed in various sections of this book. In this chapter, I examine the problem of selecting partners for both long- and short-term relationships.

Men Care About Looks and Women Care About Status in Long-Term Mates

Studies conducted over several decades have consistently found that when considering long-term romantic (e.g., marriage) partners, men place higher importance on physical attractiveness than women do, and women value social status more than men do (e.g., Buss, 1989; Buss & Barnes, 1986; Harrison & Saeed, 1977; Hill, 1945; McGinnis, 1958; Sprecher, Sullivan, & Hatfield, 1994; Wiederman, 1993). The difference in preferences has been attributed by evolutionary psychologists to the different adaptive problems that men and women face in long-term partner selection. Because

ancestral women tended to vary in their reproductive capacity, men likely evolved an attraction toward physical features that reveal sexual maturity and youth (Symons, 1979). As women age beyond their mid-20s, fertility drops, and decreases in estrogen cause noticeable changes in appearance. Lips become thinner and less colorful, hair loses luster and softness, skin wrinkles, muscle tone decreases, breasts and buttocks lose shape, and the waist expands. Thus, men are drawn to physical features such as full lips, soft hair, smooth skin, colorful cheeks, good muscle tone, a low waist-to-hip ratio, and secondary sexual characteristics including breasts and buttocks (e.g., Cant, 1981; Johnston & Franklin, 1993; Manning, Scutt, Whitehouse, & Leinster, 1997; Singh, 1993; Symons, 1979, 1995). The multibillion-dollar cosmetics industry and the rapidly expanding cosmetic-surgery market reveal modern women's underlying awareness of decreasing mate value and the benefits of visually reversing the aging process.

In contrast to female fertility, male fertility presents less of an adaptive problem, as it declines more gradually over the lifespan, with many men capable of siring children into their 60s and 70s. However, modern and primitive men across all societies vary in their ability to generate resources (e.g., Betzig, 1986). Because ancestral men who were higher in status had better access to resources for offspring, women may have evolved to value social status in long-term mates (e.g., Buss & Schmitt, 1993).

But What About Other Desirable Characteristics?

Given that many characteristics may be important in maintaining long-term relationships (e.g., Barkow, 1989; Buss, 1989; Jensen-Campbell, Graziano, & West, 1995), a satisfying explanation of the mate-search process should take into account how physical attractiveness and status are regarded in relation to other desired traits. Do women pursue status and do men pursue physical attractiveness *at the exclusion of* other traits? Or, do women prefer status and do men prefer physical attractiveness equally *alongside* traits such as personality, creativity, or kindness? Relatedly, are traits other than attractiveness (to males) and status (to females) even more important? The desired traits that show the largest sex differences may not be the most-desired traits overall.

One clue can be found from a careful examination of the literature, which reveals that physical attractiveness and status are commonly rated as modest in importance, and are even ranked at the *bottom* of many trait lists designed to tap mating preferences. For example, a compilation of six mate-preference studies revealed the relative importance of 14 traits (Powers, 1971). "Good financial prospect" received an average rank of 9.5 from women (where 1 is most-important and 14 is least-important), versus 13.1 from men, and "favorable social status" received an average of 11.5

from women, versus 12.8 from men. "Good looks" received a mean rank of 12.0 from men, versus 13.3 from women. Thus, there are reliable sex differences in preferences for beauty and status, but their overall importance is very low. Similarly, when participants from 37 cultures rated the importance of various characteristics in potential marriage partners, predicted sex differences were found for the value of good looks, good financial prospect, and ambition-industriousness, yet neither sex considered them very important in an absolute sense (Buss, 1989). Thus, one might surmise that neither sex may be looking too hard for physical attractiveness or status in their partners, but, rather, that men desire status *even less* than women do, and women desire physical attractiveness *even less* than men do.

Tradeoffs

However, prior studies tended to ask participants to rate desired characteristics one at a time, as if spouses could be selected from a mail-order catalog with customized, modular features. However, in long-term mating, both sexes are choosy, and this mutual mate choice means that everyone faces trade-offs. One's own mate value is always limited, so one cannot attract a committed partner who is at the maximum on every desired trait. Because actual potential mates possess bundles of desired traits, with different levels of each trait, and because those with higher trait levels are in greater demand, the selection of a high level of one trait often requires trading off against another trait. Thus, previous methods may have concealed the trade-offs normally made when selecting mates. In particular, subjects in previous studies could ignore their own mate-value limitations and act unrealistically choosy about every desired trait.

To date, some studies have tapped into mate-choice tradeoffs. Regan (1998) asked participants for acceptable percentile ranges on each of several characteristics. Cunningham, Druen, and Barbee (1997) offered choices of three different mates and found that windfall wealth was not as important as physical attractiveness or a desirable personality for both dating and marriage. Though this study provided an initial test of tradeoffs, it offered only two states on each of three variables, and wealth obtained through luck does not signify status or resourcefulness as traditionally construed (e.g., lottery winners are not as respected as wealthy neurosurgeons). More recently, Fletcher, Tither, O'Loughlin, Friesen, and Overall (2004) offered participants choices between pairs of mates who were high on three factor-analyzed dimensions. For long-term mates, men preferred a partner who was higher on attractiveness/vitality, whereas women preferred status/resources and warmth/trustworthiness over attractiveness.

Priorities and Marginal Value

Though helpful in illuminating the tradeoffs inherent in mate choice, these studies did not investigate how traits are *prioritized* (Li, Bailey, Kenrick, & Linsenmeier, 2002). Surprisingly, this limitation even applies to surveys in which traits are ranked (e.g., Buss & Barnes, 1986, Study 2). For instance, consider the relative value of oxygen, water, and food. If one considers the amount of time, money, and effort typically spent pursuing these items, food may look the most valuable and oxygen the least valuable. Similarly, if asked to choose among high levels of each, one would likely forego excess oxygen in favor of extra food or water. However, a person will survive the least amount of time if deprived of oxygen, and drowning is much more aversive than thirst or hunger. Thus, a more complete account of the relative importance of these items should consider tradeoffs from the ground up: when deprived of all three, oxygen is most essential. Once a person has enough oxygen to breathe, attention then turns to water or food. All three are important, but they differ in their prioritization (Li & Kenrick, 2006).

To uncover priorities in mate preferences, it is helpful to apply a microeconomic framework (Li et al., 2002; Li & Kenrick, 2006). Microeconomics concerns the structure of individual consumer preferences and their aggregate effects on the relative prices of different goods and services. Here, there is an emphasis on costs and benefits as well as a distinction between *necessities* and *luxuries*. Necessities are goods or activities that receive initial priority, but *diminishing marginal returns* occur when the benefits that accrue from such items decrease as more units are obtained. For example, enough oxygen to breathe is a lot better than no oxygen, but extra ("marginal") oxygen is not much better than enough. Thus, oxygen has diminishing marginal returns. As marginal returns diminish for necessities, preferences shift toward other items (luxuries), which then offer greater marginal benefits. Relative to oxygen, food is a luxury. But then relative to food, a Maldives beach vacation is a luxury. Thus, when consumers have very little income, a large proportion of their expenditures tend to be on economic necessities such as electricity, rent, and basic food. However, as more of these are acquired, the benefits associated with acquiring even more of these items decrease. Thus, a smaller proportion of additional income will go toward these types of items, and a greater proportion gets spent on luxuries, including vacations and private education.

The fundamental concept of decreasing marginal benefits underlies not only consumer behavior, but more generally, how living organisms adaptively allocate effort across their alternatives. For example, in behavioral ecology, the marginal value theorem (Charnov, 1976) is used to explain animals' foraging patterns (e.g., Krebs & Davies, 1993). A forager stays at a particular patch of food until the value of moving on to the next

patch outweighs the value of the current patch, which diminishes with further consumption.

From an evolutionary perspective, marginal value should be relevant to the mate-selection process. For men, mating with a non-fertile mate would be a reproductive dead end. Thus, when mating choices are constrained, men should prioritize fertility. To the extent that an ancestral woman's fertility was related to her observable physical features (Symons, 1979), men may have evolved to strongly desire at least a moderate level of physical attractiveness and apparent youthfulness in order to have a reasonable probability of fertility (Li et al., 2002). Indeed, an ancestral woman who is considered moderately attractive is likely able to reproduce (e.g., Singh & Young, 1995). Though more attractiveness is desirable, additional attractiveness is increasingly more difficult to obtain (given mutual mate choice and one's own limited mate value) and provides fewer additional benefits in terms of higher fertility. Thus, as greater attractiveness is obtained and its marginal value decreases, the relative value of other traits should increase, and other traits should be weighted more heavily as choices expand. In other words, trying to obtain an extremely attractive woman with little else to offer is likely less reproductively profitable than finding one who is moderately attractive and also has other positive traits, such as kindness. Nevertheless, looking first for kindness in a female mate makes less sense, because a kind but infertile mate is less reproductively viable than a fertile but selfish mate (Li et al., 2002).

Similarly, insofar as higher-status males could have better provisioned and protected their offspring in the evolutionary past (e.g., Buss, 2003), women may have evolved to prioritize male status before being concerned about other mate characteristics. A man with moderate status can likely generate a moderate but steady flow of resources and is reproductively a much better bet than a destitute loser. However, due to decreasing marginal value, a very high-status male may offer only a little improvement over a mid-status male in terms of offspring survival probabilities. Thus, it makes sense for women to first verify that a man has sufficient status/resources, and then to seek positive levels of other characteristics.

Testing the Tradeoffs in Long-Term Partners

To examine mate selection priorities, my colleagues and I devised a budget-allocation method and a mate-screening paradigm (Li et al., 2002). Under the budget-allocation method, men and women had three possible budgets of "mate dollars" with which they can "buy" different levels of different traits in a hypothetical long-term mate. For example, a woman with very high mate value, who is desired by many males, could be viewed as having many "mate dollars" to spend on selecting an ideal husband; a woman with very low mate value would have a much tighter budget. Whereas the high budget allowed subjects to "buy" high values on

many desired traits, the low budget was very restrictive. Under the constraints of the low budget, men tended to spend the highest proportion of their budget on physical attractiveness, and women spent the highest proportion of their budget on status and resource-related characteristics (e.g., earning potential). As budgets increased, spending decreased on these traits but increased on others, such as creativity and intelligence. Put another way, both sexes tended to desire well-rounded mates when given the freedom to make such choices. But when push came to shove and choices were highly constrained, men prioritized some minimal level of physical attractiveness and women prioritized some minimal level of status. Both sexes also prioritized kindness.

In a mate-screening paradigm, subjects reveal their mate preferences not by allocating limited budgets across different desired traits for a single ideal mate, but by prioritizing the order in which they find out information about the different traits of potential mates. Heterosexual male and female subjects saw a sequence of potential mates portrayed on a computer screen—not in pictorial form, but in terms of numerical rankings on several desired traits (Li et al., 2002). These opposite-sex targets supposedly comprised a random subset of 100 individuals who were interviewed on a diverse campus street. Each of the 100 individuals were allegedly rated for their physical attractiveness, social status level, creativity, kindness, and liveliness. For each characteristic, those in the top third for their sex were categorized as 'above average' on that characteristic, those in the middle third for their sex were categorized 'average', and those in the bottom third were 'below average'. Participants had to decide whether each target was acceptable for a long-term relationship. For each opposite-sex target, buttons inscribed with each of the five characteristics (e.g. physical attractiveness) appeared alongside his or her name. Participants could find out a target's standing (above average, average, or below average) on each of the 5 characteristics by clicking the appropriate button, but were also told to uncover as little information as possible in order to make a reasonable decision one way or another. In effect, they were told to prioritize their information gathering. In this mate-screening paradigm, men most often inquired first about a potential long-term partner's physical attractiveness, and women most often inquired first about social level. For both sexes, kindness was a close second.

Further analyses involving hierarchical regression indicated that for both sexes, each of the five characteristics significantly affected the acceptability of opposite-sex targets for long-term relationships. This result is consistent with the idea that many characteristics are important for long-term relationships.

Also, when men were considering potential mates, the impact of physical attractiveness on the acceptability of a mate displayed a standard diminishing-marginal-returns pattern, whereby going from below average

to average on physical attractiveness increased women's acceptability significantly more than going from average to above average did. Stated another way, being below average on physical attractiveness hurt a woman's desirability more than being above average on physical attractiveness helped. For women considering male marriage partners, the same diminishing-marginal-returns pattern was found for social status—going from below average social status to average increased men's acceptability more than going from average to above average did. No other traits displayed this diminishing-marginal-returns pattern. Thus, two different types of studies (budget-allocation and mate-screening) indicated that men tend to prioritize at least moderate physical attractiveness, and women prioritize at least moderate social status. Once these priorities are met, other traits are highly valued and are ideally sought after if given the opportunity to do so.

Interestingly, kindness was also highly prioritized by both sexes. Kindness may be indicative of one's willingness to share (Jensen-Campbell, Graziano, & West, 1995) and to look out for the interests of others (Li et al., 2002). A man's actual resource flow to a woman and her offspring can be viewed as the product of his ability to procure the resources (status) and his willingness to share its benefits (kindness). Similarly, a woman's effective reproductive value may depend not only on her underlying fertility, but also on her willingness to share her reproductive resources with a partner (i.e. to have sex). Thus, 'kindness' may be equally valued by both sexes, but may mean quite different things to each sex—females may consider a male's kindness to be his willingness to share attention and investment without demanding too much sex, whereas males may consider a female's kindness to be her willingness to have sex without demanding too much attention or investment. In addition, conflicts of interest occur between the sexes in many areas, especially those surrounding mating and parenting (see Buss, 2003). Thus, kindness also may be highly valued to ensure that one's partner holds one's interests at least as high as his or her own.

Short-Term Partners

For short-term mates (e.g., one-night stands), the adaptive problems are different. Because of the shorter time horizon, resources are less relevant. Instead, according to Strategic Pluralism Theory (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000), because pregnancy was always a possibility, women engaging in short-term mating may have had an adaptive need to identify partners with desirable heritable characteristics. According to this "good genes" theory (Thornhill & Gangestad, 1993), healthy genes and a strong immune system allow an individual to resist pathogens encountered during development. Susceptibility to pathogens can result in developmental

instability, which results in deviations from bilateral facial and bodily symmetry. Because testosterone compromises the immune system, those men who simultaneously exhibit testosterone-rich features and a high degree of symmetry effectively advertise having genes that are resistant to local pathogens. Consistent with this idea, men who are considered physically attractive by women exhibit more facial masculinity (e.g., Johnston, Hagel, Franklin, Fink, & Grammer, 2001; Penton-Voak et al., 1999), muscularity (Frederick & Haselton, 2005), and bilateral symmetry (e.g., Scheib, Gangestad, & Thornhill, 1999; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1994). Symmetrical and masculine men have more sexual partners, are more desirable as affair partners (Gangestad & Thornhill, 1997b; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1994), and are especially preferred by women around the time of ovulation (e.g., Gangestad & Thornhill, 1998; Johnston et al., 2001; Penton-Voak et al., 1999). Though women find symmetrical men to be more attractive, women do not seem to be consciously aware of their focus on symmetry in the mate-selection process (Scheib et al., 1999). Rather, symmetry is correlated with masculinity and muscularity, which women consciously recognize as physically attractive. In ancestral environments, women who mated with men they found physically attractive during times of high fertility (near ovulation) may have accrued reproductive benefits by passing on good genes to offspring (Møller & Thornhill, 1998; Waynforth, 1998).

For men pursuing short-term sexual relationships, the issue of partner fertility is even more important than for men pursuing long-term relationships. So, men likely evolved to favor physical attractiveness and youthfulness especially in short-term partners. Indeed, studies have found that both sexes value physical attractiveness more in short-term mates than in long-term ones (e.g., Buunk et al., 2002; Fletcher et al., 2004; Regan, 1998; Regan & Berscheid, 1997).

Consistent with these theories, the reproductive benefits of short-term mating would be largely eliminated if a female was infertile or a male had undesirable heritable characteristics. Deficiencies along other dimensions (e.g., kindness, status) may not be as reproductively critical. To clear the key adaptive hurdles of infertility or poor gene quality, it makes sense for individuals considering a short-term partner to prioritize physical attractiveness as a necessity. That is, obtaining some baseline level of physical attractiveness should take precedence over obtaining other characteristics. However, once a moderate amount of physical attractiveness has been acquired, its relative value may decrease, and the reproductive benefits of further physical attractiveness may be outweighed by having positive levels of other traits.

To examine short-term mating priorities, we ran the budget-allocation and mate-screening programs on men and women considering one-night stands and affair partners (Li & Kenrick, 2006). When given an opportunity to purchase levels of various characteristics, both sexes tended to allocate the highest proportion of their constrained low mating

budget to physical attractiveness. Men weighted physical attractiveness in their choices even more than women did, and more than men did for long-term mates. As budgets increased, however, both sexes allocated less of their mating budget toward physical attractiveness, and a greater proportion toward other traits, including creativity.

When screening short-term mates, both sexes inquired first about the physical attractiveness of opposite-sex targets before being concerned about creativity, social level, kindness, or liveliness. Once again, hierarchical regression showed that all traits influenced whether a target was acceptable as a short-term partner (except that women didn't care about creativity when screening short-term male mates). Physical attractiveness again showed the diminishing-marginal-returns pattern: for both sexes, an opposite-sex target going from below average to average on physical attractiveness increased the target's acceptability as a short-term partner more than if the target went from average to above average in attractiveness. That is, being below average on physical attractiveness hurt a target's acceptability more than being above average helped.

These results show that although many characteristics can affect the acceptability of a short-term mate, there is a clear prioritization of physical attractiveness by both men and women. The results also were consistent with men prioritizing fertility and women prioritizing good genes in short-term mating. However, at least two issues should be addressed. First, an alternative underlying motivation for women's short-term mating, according to Sexual Strategies Theory (Buss & Schmitt, 1993), is that by being open to short-term relationships, women can increase their options for long-term ones. They can solicit the interest of many men and use this wider net to evaluate potential long-term mates, or they may be able to turn short-term relationships into long-term ones. If women use short-term mating to assess or attain potential long-term relationships, then they should prioritize the same traits in short-term partners that they prioritize in long-term partners—status/resources and kindness (Li et al., 2002), and treat physical attractiveness as more of a luxury. Though our general results did not support this possibility, cluster analyses indicated that for a minority of women, their short-term choices mirrored their long-term choices, in which social status and kindness were prioritized (Li & Kenrick, 2006). A minority of men also specified short-term mates more like their long-term mates, putting less initial emphasis on physical attractiveness and more on kindness.

Second, how do we know that men prioritize physical attractiveness for fertility, whereas women prioritize it for good genes in short-term mates? Support for this interpretation comes from previous research on physical attractiveness as well as results in our studies. Specifically, the features that men find physically attractive tend to differ in meaningful ways from the ones that women find attractive. When asked what they find physically attractive, women specify features related to muscularity,

strength, fitness, and masculinity (Li & Kenrick, 2006). As mentioned above, testosterone-mediated secondary sexual characteristics such as muscularity and facial masculinity are correlated with symmetry (Gangestad & Thornhill, 1997a; Scheib et al., 1999; Watson & Thornhill, 1994). Women particularly value such features (in addition to the scent of symmetrical men—see Gangestad & Thornhill, 1998) around the time of ovulation (e.g., Johnston et al., 2001; Penton-Voak et al., 1999). As a result, symmetrical and muscular men (but not women) have greater short-term mating success compared with their relatively asymmetrical and nonmuscular peers (e.g., Frederick & Haselton, 2005; Gangestad & Thornhill, 1997a; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1994). In light of these findings, women's prioritization of physical attractiveness in short-term partners is consistent with Strategic Pluralism Theory's assertion that women may be seeking genetic fitness in short-term partners (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000).

Further, evidence tends to support the contention that men prioritize physical attractiveness as a valid cue of fertility. Facial symmetry seems to be less important to men than to women in judgments of opposite-sex attractiveness (Shackelford & Larsen, 1997). Men factor breast symmetry into judgments of attractiveness, health, and desirability for long- and short-term relationships (e.g., Singh, 1994), and, tellingly, breast symmetry has been found to correlate with fertility (Manning et al., 1997; Møller, Soler, & Thornhill, 1995). In our studies, men indicated physical attraction toward features such as breasts and buttocks for both types of mates (Li & Kenrick, 2006), consistent with previous research suggesting that estrogen-influenced secondary sexual characteristics are attractive for purposes of identifying reproductively viable partners (e.g., Manning et al., 1997; Singh & Young, 1995). In other studies, men have indicated a preference toward a low waist-to-hip ratio, which is mediated by women's estrogen levels and is correlated with fertility and reproductive health (e.g., Singh, 1993, 2002; Zaastra et al., 1993). However, few studies have directly compared the current-fertility versus good-genes hypotheses for the same traits across both sexes; male symmetry, attractiveness, and muscularity may also correlate positively with sperm count and motility, and conversely, female breast and buttock size and symmetry are probably heritable, and genetically correlated with other fitness-related heritable traits.

Personalized Priorities

When it is adaptive to do so, psychological mechanisms may evolve to be sensitive to cues about the surrounding ecological and social environment (Tooby & Cosmides, 1990). One input that mate preferences may depend on is a person's own mate value, which profoundly influences which potential mates are likely to reciprocate one's sexual interest. Compared to

those who are ignorant of their own mate value, those who are able to adjust mate preference standards according to their mate value can more readily avoid either having to settle for less rewarding relationships or facing costly rejection from more desirable partners (e.g., Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971; Murstein, 1970). Also, non-equitable relationships (between partners of mismatched mate values) tend to provoke more negative emotions from both sides (Walster, Walster, & Traupmann, 1978) and are less stable (e.g., Hatfield, Utne, & Traupmann, 1979). Thus, it would be advantageous for people to be equipped to estimate their own mating desirability and to adjust their standards for mates accordingly.

If people regard certain traits in others as necessities that they prioritize but eventually shift away from, then one's own ability to offer those necessities (e.g. physical attractiveness or social status) may influence the set point at which one's own preference shifts occur. Thus, a physically attractive woman may require a higher level of resources in a long-term mate or physical attractiveness in a short-term mate before being concerned about other traits. In fact, this appears to be the case (Li, 2003). Analyzing the low-budget choices (where necessities are most apparent), I found that the independently rated physical attractiveness of a woman correlated positively with the amount of resources she purchased with her mate dollars for a long-term mate. This pattern was not found for male participants. These findings are consistent with data from actual marriages, which show that the best predictor of a husband's social status is the wife's physical attractiveness (Elder, 1969; Udry & Eckland, 1984). For short-term mates, the physical attractiveness of both male and female participants correlated positively with the level of physical attractiveness (but not resources) desired at the low budget (Li, 2003).

Thus, when searching for mates, people not only prioritize key traits according to mating context (long- versus short-term), but also seem to calibrate their demand for mating necessities according to their own value along dimensions valued by the opposite sex. Mate value is a relative concept and may itself depend on various other environmental variables (such as the local sex ratio). . Some research has investigated which inputs influence one's mate value. For instance, Gutierres, Kenrick, and Partch (1999) found that people's judgments of their own mate value are affected by exposure to same-sex individuals who vary on criteria valued by the opposite sex. Specifically, viewing pictures of physically attractive women causes a woman to lower her self-perceived mate value, whereas attending to socially dominant men lowers a man's self-perceived mate value. Thus, one important determinant of mate value may be one's standing relative to one's competition on key traits prioritized by the other sex. Such adjustments are indicative of context-sensitive mate-value mechanisms, which may, in turn, feed into the setting of standards used in the mate-search process.

CONCLUSION

The budget-allocation and mate-screening paradigms reviewed in this chapter may be especially useful in understanding some apparent inconsistencies in human mating intelligence. They suggest that there may be minimal levels of certain key traits for mating to be reproductively worthwhile. Accordingly, mate search and mate choice may work best when people pre-consciously screen out all potential mates who do not meet certain minimum thresholds on the key traits (e.g. female youthfulness and attractiveness, male social status) or who even exceed one's mating budget (e.g., whose mate value vastly exceeds one's own). This may explain why high-mate-value New York women, when dining together surrounded by single waiters and bus-boys, complain that "There are no straight single men in Manhattan." They may not be literally correct, but they may be showing a high mating intelligence by commenting on the relative dearth of eligible (i.e., high-status) single men who appear on their mating radar. Conversely, the single bus-boys are probably saving a lot of courtship effort by not hitting on customers who are out of their league.

Men and women looking for mates, much like consumers shopping for goods or foragers looking for food, implicitly follow economic principles of marginal value, prioritizing key traits in their search for mates before looking at other traits. More generally, the findings reported on in this and other chapters in this volume are part of a growing body of literature that focuses on uncovering evolved psychological mechanisms specialized to solve various adaptive mating problems (e.g., Gangestad & Simpson, 2000; Haselton & Buss, 2000; Kenrick, Neuberg, Zierk, & Krones, 1994; Miller, 2000). Results thus far have helped to reveal the subtle structure of mate preferences, and will hopefully continue to contribute to a more extensive understanding of the nuances of mating intelligence.

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Comments

[JPT1] Change to match TOC?
[JPT2] Year