

The flaw in equating survival and happiness



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James Williams The Flaw in Equating Survival and Happiness

In Why Homosexuality is Abnormal, the author Michael Levin concludes that the misuse of body parts concerning homosexuality will eventually lead to unhappiness. Unhappiness; as defined by Levin in homosexuality terms is based on the use of body parts, so the lack of such rightful usage of one's own body parts will lead to one's own unhappiness.

He also states that one of the rewards of the heterosexuals is natural descendants. Another one of Levin's premises is that even if society starts to accept homosexuality he states that homosexuals will still be unhappy, and that there would still be self-punishment for homosexuals and this will override any happiness. Levin makes it very evident that one of the purposes of the penis is to introduce semen to the vagina; which he states that it will lead to happiness. He even goes on to say that it was selected in because of this purpose; so it appears that Levin employs Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection for the bases of his argument and uses it to support his argument that it will bring unhappiness to misuse a body part. Consequently, I argue that Levin's argument is faulty because it is based on Darwin's Theory; in which it was used incorrectly, and also the vagueness of his use of the term unhappiness and how it correlates to homosexuals. The reasons why his argument is invalid is because it's based off of the misuse of Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection, and he also tries to equate the misuse of body parts with unhappiness while using the Theory of Natural Selection as his arguments foundation.

A simple definition can make it very clear why Levin's argument should not incorporate the Theory of Natural Selection as its foundation. The

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definition of Natural Selection is the process by which traits become more or less common in a population due to consistent effects upon the survival or reproduction of their bearers; it is in fact the key mechanism of evolution, and seeing that there is no reference to happiness in this definition pretty much insinuates that happiness cannot be correlated with Darwin's Theory. There are many ways one can show the right usage of the Theory of Natural Selection such as the mockingbird example. So for an example, if we have a mockingbird, which in fact is happy or as happy as, a bird can be, in the Galapagos Islands. The Galapagos Islands are isolated from other land masses due to plate movements, the mockingbird, obviously is isolated from its relatives, and can populate freely with the other mockingbirds on the island; which can potentially induce happiness. The Theory of Natural Selection is applied when the first arrival of the mockingbird had the trouble of opening up a certain nut; which probably induced unhappiness. The mockingbird obviously had a beak that had a function for picking berries.

Since the mockingbird did not have a fitted trait, its offspring started to have mutations to their beaks because of not being able to open nuts. The nuts are a major source of nutrition; this will probably lead to happiness because they will be able to open the nuts. Now these mutations happened over generation's worth of time. So this concludes the practical application of the Theory of Natural Selection, and how Levin tries to equate happiness with it, but I believe it will be interesting to see the view point of a person that states that there might be a chance where using a body part; for other than its initial function, could possibly benefit an individual.

The author John Corvino also states that Levin tries to argue based on an evolutionary theory. He sums up Levin's argument by saying, "... an organ is for some function if and only if that function explains its existence through evolution" (Ethics in Practice, 302).

Corvino has it right. He even goes on to say Levin argues that human beings have penises and vaginas because our ancestors had them or that they put their vaginas around penises; which resulted in reproduction and that these genitalia would be used in this fashion, and that any other use would be abnormal. But Corvino counter argues that by saying that we use many different body parts in ways that do not lead to reproduction or even for their initial intended use. He uses the example of how humans wear glasses. Our noses were used for smelling and were not made to support as a bridge for glasses, but glasses helped humans to survive by correcting their vision. Another example would be clothes. We do not need clothes necessarily and our bodies were not made for the purpose of a clothes hanger, but the cover of clothes has helped humans to stay warm in colder environments. Levin uses part of the Theory of Natural Selection concerning how body parts are used.

The Theory of Natural Selection also includes, not just the use of a body part, but also how it mutates because of its ineffectiveness for the individual's survival. Levin totally eludes this in his argument because if the Theory of Natural Selection was applied correctly then homosexual's penises would fall off or mutate because of their ineffectiveness to help an individual to survive. There are many examples of how homosexuals find other ways to survive and reproduce.

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For instance, what if there was an island where there are females and homosexual males, and the male homosexuals had condoms. The males may have sexual intercourse with each other, and possibly there was a way to harvest the sperm. So let's just say there was a sperm bank on this island, or a primitive one per se. Then the females on the island utilized the sperm banks, so to be able to get themselves pregnant. Consequently, the females get pregnant and then eventually those kids will follow their ancestor's roles; which will lead to generations.

This passes the technical misuse of a body part because the use of the body part is to introduce semen to the vagina, in which it does, just not directly; so I believe everyone is happy in the end. Why exactly is this example relevant; well it is because it shows a case where homosexuals actually had intercourse; in Levin's terms- misusing their body parts, and were also able to produce descendants indirectly. Also I do not believe that the homosexual descendant's penises fell off because of generations of not putting them to use; which is different to the mockingbird, so the use of the Theory of Natural Selection in Levin's argument is misused. One cannot base happiness off of the misuse of body parts that is supported by the Theory of Natural Selection. So what if one considers, not the science, but the social view of how homosexuals can live in society.

What will the effect be if society actually accepts homosexuality Levin states that even if society starts to accept homosexuality, homosexuals will still be unhappy. He justifies this statement by saying that even if society lays down their prejudice of homosexuality the homosexuals will still feel like they are still incorporating self-punishment within their lives. But how is this self-

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punishment if one feels content and happy with what they do. This statement itself proves Levin's premise is wrong. Many homosexuals go about their day without a guilty conscience that could derive from their concern about their sexual orientation. To counter the statement that Levin's argument is faulty would be that his argument, in fact, is not faulty.

One can justify that I misinterpreted his use and how he incorporates the Theory of Natural Selection into his argument. One may say that Levin uses the Theory of Natural Selection to give a different perspective that is more rational than an argument based on religion or simple prejudice. They might say that he uses it to show that he is basing his argument on purely mechanical reasons in which the use of a body part can have a consequence; if it is misused, then one of those consequences is unhappiness. A counter argument for the mocking bird example would be one asking couldn't this Theory of Darwin's be effectively applied to Levin's argument concerning the misuse of body parts which will eventually lead to unhappiness.

Well let's apply the Theory of Natural Selection to his argument. Let's just say there were a group of homosexuals on an island isolated from everyone else. Now we can conclude that the misuse of their body parts will not benefit them in the long run because eventually their generation will die off and they will be deprived of the reward of having descendants; which will probably lead to unhappiness. A counter argument for Corvino's is that the misuse of body parts may possibly have more weight, in which it might inflict a more drastic change of happiness than any other use of any other

body part. So the misuse of one's nose cannot possibly have more of a level of impact on one's happiness than one's genitalia.

Because one's genitalia can result in the release of hormones which does in fact have a direct link to one's happiness. The counter argument for the example of the sperm bank would probably be that the use of a sperm bank would be technically unnatural. The animals such as the mockingbird are very natural. They have sexual intercourse without any kind of substitute other than direct insertion of the body parts. One may say that the sperm bank cannot be used because it does not pertain to the major argument that the use of the Theory of Natural Selection is not, in fact, natural. A counterargument for the premises concerning self-punishment would be that: even if homosexuals are happy they might still not feel themselves fitting into society. They might look around and realize that a majority of people are not having homosexual intercourse in the world. So this will be only applicable if and only if society can accept the homosexuals.

Seeing that they are accepted doesn't mean they are normal. They might want to be normal and being homosexual might obstruct this desire. So the lack of the potential of being normal in the eyes of society will probably have an impact upon the individual which will potentially lead to unhappiness. A counterargument, for the last argument, concerning that homosexuals can still obtain happiness because they are still able to get descendants can easily be made. Even if homosexuals have descendants it does not explain where happiness derives from. It may possibly be a contributor, but the weight of happiness for the rightful usage of a body part may be more than the weight of having a descendant.

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IV To counter my first argument I can say that Levin does not simply state that a misuse of a body part might just lead to a certain ??? amount??? of unhappiness, so he should have elaborated or even considered that a human being can have multiple different variables in which could lead to an individual??™s holistic happiness or unhappiness. So these variables could possibly lead to different amounts of happiness or unhappiness, and one amount can override the other. The example for the homosexuals on the island, by themselves, has a point; but just because it is a point does not mean it is a valid one. Even if the homosexuals, whom were on the island disappeared what about all the other homosexuals elsewhere. The argument is inconsistent because it cannot be effectively applied to different situations. Homosexuals can be happy even if they misuse their body parts; the misuse of body parts does not fully contribute to happiness or unhappiness, and I believe Levin puts too much weight on body parts when it concerns happiness. Whether or not the sperm bank is unnatural does not matter because natural and happiness are no longer linked in our evolution. Levin tries to equate humans as sub-beings and also tries to insinuate we do not feel any kind of happiness other than the happiness that may result from using a body part properly or for its intended use.

Corvino??™s view that genitalia usage has a larger impact than nose usage in correlation to happiness can be countered with the effect of the extent and timing of the happiness. If genitalia have a certain edge for the rise of happiness when compared to the nose usage, how long does that effect have When one has an orgasm how long does that contribute to happiness It is not very long and, in fact, it has to be repetitively done to balance hormone

levels at different times especially when the levels are high, but the usage of one??™s nose for glasses can possibly have long-term contribution towards happiness because it entails survival. And having sexual intercourse is not a requirement for survival, but glasses are because it corrects the impairment one??™s eyes. A rebuttal for the premise concerning self-punishment and how it correlates with the potential to normality can be made by arguing the criteria of what makes something normal and how does that affect an individual.

What if a homosexual did not care about what society may think of them; what if it is even a turn on for the homosexual to be different than the technical ??? norm??? in society. So this homosexual with this mentality would, more than likely, not be fazed by the refusal of conformity into their society. The individual may see many people having heterosexual intercourse, but the individual probably would not care because it is the difference of the individual??™s sexual orientation that may set them apart in society; which will probably induce happiness in this individual because of their uniqueness, even if it may bring about discrimination. So I would consider the prior argument concerning the norms inconsistent because there are many examples where certain homosexuals are happy for being different than most of society. The term happiness is misused.

The reason for this is because an individual is not just going to be unhappy because they did not use a body part right. Levin??™s argument states that homosexuals misuse their body parts, and that the misuse of body parts lead to unhappiness, so we can conclude that homosexuals are unhappy. So what exactly is the definition of happiness Happiness is a state of well-being and <https://assignbuster.com/the-flaw-in-equating-survival-and-happiness/>

contentment; which can be the consequence from having a pleasurable experience or the accumulation of pleasurable experiences. So do homosexuals have well-being and contentment; if so is it possibly derived from their pleasurable experiences or the accumulation of these experiences. The Theory of Natural Selection only truly applies to animals and plants, and probably animals and plants happiness is based on their uses or functions of their body parts.

It just so happens that humans use their body parts to get some pleasurable experiences, but not ??? all??? of their experiences are from body parts. Humans tend to be more complex than what Levin tries to portray. Levin puts too much weight on the misuse of body parts when it concerns happiness. The weight should be put on to the self-acquisition of one??™s ideal self. Happiness is more determined by feelings about one??™s self; if one feels content with how one feels about one??™s self; or where they are in life, then they tend to be happy. Even if society may look at the individual as if they are abominations, it would not matter because the individual is content with how they think of themselves.

If an individual looks for the approval of society then the individual needs to be less shallow and needs to gain better confidence about themselves. Society can be a determining factor in one??™s views, but it should not be an ultimate determining factor for one??™s happiness. One can gain fulfillment for their happiness by just being themselves and being comfortable at being that, but many would say that it would be difficult to get happiness when one is shunned and unaccepted by their peers and that acceptance by their peers is part of a growth in an individual that can raise
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the confidence level of a person. This view is reasonable, but the solution to this view would be to move out of the environment of the unaccepting people and go to people who are accepting or at least tolerant. So this happiness is at liberty to be attained for any individual if and only if that individual is willing and at liberty to attain this happiness. Homosexuals are human. Humans have the potential to be happy, so homosexuals have the potential to be happy. That is the true argument, and there isn't much room to argue it because many people would agree that all human beings have the same amount of right to the acquisition of happiness.

Happiness is blind; it does not take in consideration one's sexual orientation, or the science of it, when it considers offering itself to an individual and if that individual meets a certain qualification to attain it. The author's first premise was on the misuse of body parts and how that affects homosexuals happiness, in which he uses the Theory of Natural Selection to aid his argument. I countered with saying that he misused the Theory of Natural Selection and that the theory was not relevant in its context; in which I incorporated an example of where the Theory of Natural Selection will be applied correctly with the example of the mockingbird.

Then I made a rebuttal for my counter argument; I said that there might have been a possibility I misinterpret his use of the Theory of Natural Selection. Finally, I countered by saying that a scientific theory cannot explain something as abstract as happiness. Levin's second premise states that heterosexuals have natural descendants and are happy, and since they can have this reward; and be happy, this shows that homosexuals will be unhappy because of the lack of this award. I countered this argument

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by saying that homosexuals can still have descendants by using a sperm bank, which will bring the same reward and happiness that the heterosexuals have.

The rebuttal for this was that the use of the sperm bank was unnatural and that this cannot equate with heterosexual??™s natural descendants, but I finally countered this last argument by saying that humans do not need to rely on natural ways to reproduce because we have moved on beyond mere basic needs. This is the main point and also it ties the whole argument around the fact that survival??™s basic needs are not the ultimate determining factors for our happiness. The author??™s last premise was on the fact if society actually starts to accept homosexuality the homosexuals will still be unhappy on the grounds of self-punishment. I counter by saying that if one is happy and content with their lives then self-punishment is irrelevant.

Then I made a rebuttal for that argument by saying that self-punishment could be relevant; the homosexuals use self-punishment because they see a majority of other people having heterosexual sex, so they realize they are not normal. I countered this by saying that even if society looks at a person differently this should not ultimately determine a person??™s happiness.