

ESSAI

Volume 17

Article 8

Spring 2019

Are There Really That Many Fish in the Sea?

Layla Aldaas
College of DuPage

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.cod.edu/essai>

Recommended Citation

Aldaas, Layla (2019) "Are There Really That Many Fish in the Sea?," *ESSAI*: Vol. 17 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/essai/vol17/iss1/8>

This Selection is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at DigitalCommons@COD. It has been accepted for inclusion in ESSAI by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@COD. For more information, please contact orenick@cod.edu.

Are There Really That Many Fish in The Sea?

by Layla Aldaas

(English 1101)

Technology is evolving and changing the way people interact with each other. This advancement has changed the ideologies of the dating world. With so little time on our hands, many of us have turned to online dating services. There have been copious amounts of different ways that one can find a significant other with so little effort nowadays. Still the issue that plays a key factor, is the danger that come with finding someone compatible. Online dating should be taken with an exuberant amount of precaution. Not only do these sites and apps make a profit from their users, there is little to no management on how these sites run. Therefore, a lot of people can be at risk for their safety.

First and foremost, Online dating apps have rapidly become more accessible to the general public. Meltzer exposes that, "Participation by those 18 to 24 has almost tripled since 2013, and boomer enrollment has doubled" (39). That is a staggering amount of people that are becoming more involved in the online dating world. There are numerous different dating apps to choose from: Christian mingle, Grindr, OkCupid, etc., but one app in particular stands out over most, "Tinder." This app is used to find people with just a swipe right (like) and swipe left (don't like). Once you and someone else swipe right on each other, you have matched! While this may seem like a simple well thought out app, quite a few things can go wrong. For example, this app is mainly used for hookups and non-serious relationships versus the other apps.

Meanwhile, apps are gaining oodles of money. For instance, on Match.com the said cost is, "\$21 per month for six months" (Meltzer 40). That is a large sum for maybe not even finding someone that you are remotely interested in. They charge a monthly fee, which can really add up if you don't find someone quickly. As where apps like Tinder are free of cost (Meltzer 40), but are usually presented to those seeking a hookup. The apps charging users money are more aimed towards people wanting to have a lasting relationship. And when these apps are not charging money, they are placing ads in your feed in order to suck you into purchasing things to make the app seem more useful. Scott Kominers, Ph.D. mentions, "most dating sites have some misalignment between profit model and user experience because they are financed through subscription fees or advertising" (Meltzer 39). These sites could really care less if you found someone, all they are really after is your money and your time.

The dating world can be a tricky place, but Tinder often makes that problem even worse. There have been a few incidences that have made this statement truthful. Hines states, "It's romantic! But as long as I'm still swiping through image reels, carefully cropped and culled, I'm mostly glad I'm the real me: ready to run a late-night background check" (9). She herself had a situation where she met someone on the dating app Tinder, and discovered that he was no more than an imposter himself. He lied about his educational status as well as where he works (Hines 9). This being a prime example of why you should always be a little apprehensive before you go on said date, and always do a brief background check. If she herself had done that before meeting her date, she would have saved herself the trouble of finding out the hard way who he truly was. Many users misrepresent who they are, leading to some users having trust issues on who they meet online.

Furthermore, with online dating, you can come across people known as 'Catfish.' "Catfishing is an online scam where a predator impersonates someone else to deceive a third party" (Heck 3). Being "catfished" is very likely and easy to accomplish due to the advancement of technology. There

have been countless incidences that still happen today. Because this epidemic has become enough of a public interest, it has transformed into a reality television show made for others enjoyment. This production exhibits the reality that many online users face. This show, known as *Catfish* has become very popular with a more direct concern with a teenage population. The main hosts of the show are Nev Shulman and Max Joseph. Nev Shulman was directly affected by this epidemic, known as “catfishing”, which inspired him to assist others with the exact same problem. Rothman explains that, “the number of people asking for help is on the rise” (59). The problem that surfaces is that more and more people are becoming suspicious on who they *really* are talking to, it can be anyone reciprocating your texts, calls and even Snapchats.

However, these sites are often deemed unsafe and cannot be trusted with the data that they collect, true or not. Meltzer exposes that, “the data breach in 2015 of the extramarital affair site Ashley Madison, which revealed user details including email addresses” (44). This epidemic led to the loss of peoples jobs, money and tampered identities. This app has also had the reputation to be an easy outlet for significant others to cheat on their spouses, because it is just that easy to hide behind a screen, and from your relationship. With these companies collecting your data, you are putting yourself at risk for hackers to seek out your information as well. “The FBI says Americans lost more than \$82 million to online dating fraud in the last six months of 2014” (Meltzer 44). The amount of money that people have lost due to scams due to online dating is astounding. At this point there should have been something to stop this from getting to the amount that it has reached.

In fact, there can be many issues with the way that users handle any online dating site. STD’s and other diseases can be transmitted if the users are not being safe and communicating with these strangers that they meet online. Many go on their first date expecting something that maybe the other was not intending to happen. Without communication, someone can be scarred for life. Jackson explicitly states, “20 MILLION is the estimated number of new cases of sexually transmitted diseases occurring every year, and more than half of them are in people under 25” (96). This is a high amount of people who are becoming affected by sexually transmitted diseases. If users are not becoming more aware and safe of what actually goes on during these dates, the number of people contracting these STD’s and anything else will surely rise. Geolocation also plays a huge role in the online dating world. “Apps like Bumble, Grindr, or Tinder use things like your location and sexual preference” (Meltzer 41). Basically you put what area you live in on the app. The app then generates people in the same area who are looking for hookups as well. With having geolocation on it has become increasingly easier for individuals to have casual sex and with the rise in STDs, this is something that is a cause for concern.

Nevertheless, others have numerous intentions when it comes to online dating so, that you can not just trust anyone that takes an interest in you. Rothman exposes that, “A 2008 study she co-wrote found that 81% lie about their age, weight or height” (9). This is a staggering percentage that many find very unlikely, but is indeed truthful. The fact that many people lie about simple characteristics stated above, is just to show that people are overestimating how safe these apps really are. This is quite surprising finding out that many are being misled by just simple facts, “Don’t hesitate to search online using a suitor’s full name, to see whether his or her photos and claims match his or her social media imprint” (Meltzer 44). This way you are not blindsided by the person you are talking to.

Likewise, there have been a lot of reported incidents that have happened due to people becoming too trusting to the individuals that they meet online. Many have also become victimized and placed into uncomfortable situations which can be alarming, “Tinder is often blamed for killing romance. But given how easily the pursuit of “The One” can veer into stalking and violence, perhaps it is time for romance to get taken down a notch” (Robb). Some have gotten raped, brutally murdered, and stalked because they were not taking the correct precautions when meeting strangers off the web. One nurse was raped and murdered after meeting up with a man she met on Tinder. This

sparked the attention of many. “Just two weeks later, the police say, Mr. Drayton raped and murdered a young nurse he met on the dating app Tinder” (“Tinder Killer” 21). This story is very unfortunate and goes to show that not everyone is safe to be with. It was also mentioned by Southall that, “But law enforcement authorities say a Connecticut man used them to prey on women” (“Connecticut Man” 19). Not only did this only happen to one user on the app, he was preying on other women as well. These incidences all had something in common, lying and dating websites.

It should be noted, that when going on a date there are things to look out for as well as be aware of. Meltzer clearly states, “Most sites offer common-sense tips on how to protect yourself, including not sharing personal contact information right away and going on first dates in public places. And if someone asks for money, don’t send it” (44). These are just a few of the many different precautions one should take if even remotely thinking of meeting up with someone. Mrs. Stewart was just one of the countless reported incidents that have been connected to the use of online dating apps. If she would have been more cautious with meeting someone off the web, the situation would have might turned out differently for her.

Any online dating app that you take part in can be risky; the best thing to do is to make sure you are taking the correct safety precautions. Safety is the number one priority that anyone should really pay attention to when going on these apps. You never know who is out there and what their intentions might be. Finding someone is tricky, but making sure you are safe and secure is what really can be difficult. The journey to finding the “one” has many obstacles and loopholes to jump through. In the end when you are with someone it should be safe and never questioned. Be sure to make sure to do those online background checks and meet at a public place. However, the question still poses, are there really that many fish in the sea?

Works Cited

- Heck, Zachary. “‘Catfish’ Added to the Sea of Litigation.” *Young Lawyer*, vol.21, no.2, 2017, pp.3.
<https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=122729235&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. Accessed 10 Nov. 2018.
- Hines, Alice. “Swipe Right. Stalk. Repeat.” *New York Times*, 5 Oct. 2018, Late ed., p. 9.
<https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.cod.idm.oclc.org/docview/2116301458?accountid=10202>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2018.
- Jackson, Charreah K. “The Data On Dating.” *Essence*, vol.48, no.11, p.96, 2018.
<https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=128706405&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2018.
- Meltzer, Marisa. “Match Me If You Can.” *Consumer Reports*, vol.82, no.2, 2017, pp.38-45,
<https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=120215774&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2018.
- Robb, Alice. “The Fine Line Between Romance and Madness: Why Reasonable People Can ‘go crazy’ Over Love.” *The Washington Post*, 18 Sep. 2018.
<https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.cod.idm.oclc.org/docview/2108724160?accountid=10202>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2018.
- Rothman, Lily. “The Catfish Came Back.” *Time*, 1 July 2013, p. 59.
<https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=88377694&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. 18 Nov. 2018.

- Southall, Ashley. "Connecticut Man Used Tinder To Prey on Women, Police Say." *New York Times*, 31 July. 2018, late ed., p. A19. <https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.cod.idm.oclc.org/docview/2079656939?accountid=10202>. Accessed 9 Nov. 2018.
- . "Tinder Killing Suspect Was Free Because of Missing Court Paperwork." *New York Times*, 23 Aug. 2018, late ed., p. 21. <https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.cod.idm.oclc.org/docview/2091538457?accountid=10202>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2018.