Attachment and Love

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CREDIT....

- “Social psychologists Zick Rubin (1970) deserves credit for focusing explicit attention on love by showing that this apparently fuzzy topic could be approached with as much rigor as any other topic within psychology.”

WHY STUDY LOVE?

- There are casualties of love in the form of heartbreak and divorce, in the abuse of spouses and the neglect of children.
- Though not diagnostically labeled, loneliness lies near the center of such disorders as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, and substance abuse (Booth, 1993; McWhirter, 1996).
- When asked to describe bad events or things that have gone wrong in their lives, the majority of people recount relationships conflicts or losses (Veroff, Douvan & Kukla, 1981).
- One of the ways that researchers legitimized the study of love was to highlight the problems ensuing from its absence and to identify factors helpful to avoid them.

IMPORTANCE OF LOVE

Relation with Well-Being

- The capacity to love and to be loved is viewed by contemporary theorists as an inherently human tendency with powerful effects on Well-Being from infancy through old age.
- Harris Reis & Shelly Gable (2003) went so far as to conclude that good relations with others may be the single most important source of life satisfaction and emotional well-being, across different ages and cultures (Berscheid & Reis, 1998; Klinger, 1977).
- Aron & Aron (1986) are of the view that falling in love provides a sense of very rapid expansion of the boundaries of self and is, therefore, a very pleasurable state of being.

BIOLOGICAL BASIS

- In this context special attention has been given to the hormone-like substance oxytocin, which is released in the brain in response to social contact, especially skin to skin touch (Insel, 1997). It has been called the cuddle hormone and it has been linked to the creation of a loving bond between two individuals and perhaps even to monogamy (Carter, 1998; Jorge, 1998; Young, Wang & Insel, 1998).
- Oxytocin increases during pregnancy and its presence facilitates the production of milk and more general “material behavior”.

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The oxytocin levels of a father-to-be rise as well during pregnancy of his spouse and to the degree that he spends time with his infant, his oxytocin level continues to increase.

Oxytocin is associated with the neurotransmitter ‘dopamine’ which is broadly responsible for reinforcement and pleasure.

Neuroimaging studies of individuals show that their brains work differently when they are looking at a picture of their true love versus picture of good friends of the same age & gender. (Bartels & Zeki, 2000)

Researchers found that when mothers look at a picture of their own children, brain regions responsible for negative emotions and social comparison are deactivated. (Bartels & Zeki, 2004)

The point is not that love is just biology. The point is that love is also biology and the fact that our biological bodies are designed to draw us to one another is a strong argument that social relationships are neither arbitrary nor merely convenient ways to other things that matter like food, sex, power etc.

It was an advantage if they liked and trusted one another and if they could divide up tasks such as hunting and child care.

Thus, the link of primitive emotional bonding to differential survival rates was the beginning of the evolution of love.


Attachment enhances survival by regulating an infant’s relationship and proximity to its/her caregiver.

He continuously monitors her whereabouts and plays contentedly as long as she is nearby. If the distance between them becomes too great, he will be upset and redirect his attention and efforts toward re-establishing proximity.

Is Love a reducible phenomenon?

Is infant attached to his/her mother because she feeds him/her? or

Is social attachment significant in its own right?

Harry Harlow (1974) conducted an experiment to explore this. He separated monkeys at birth from their mothers and raised them individually in cages with two stationary models. One model was made of wire and had a nipple which provided milk and the other was made of terry cloth which provided no food but had a pleasant texture.

If attachment is the result of being fed then the infant monkeys preferred the cloth model. They sought out the wire model when hungry but otherwise stayed closer to the cloth one.

When the infants were frightened by an unfamiliar sight or sound, they ran to the cloth mother and clung to them.

Harlow concluded that infants are predisposed to form attachments with objects that are easy to cuddle, like the terry models.

In this way Harlow’s research showed that the need for love and affection exists strongly.
In an important study, Johnson, Delacocique, Ellis & Horton (1999) showed that within the first hour following birth, infants are more likely to reach with their eyes a moving stimulus that looks like a face than they are to track similar but non-face-like stimuli.

It shows that the newborn is predisposed by evolution to attend to the most important aspects of the environment. The parent and the parent’s attention in turn is drawn to responsiveness of the infant, forming the base for attachment.

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ADULT ATTACHMENT SECURITY

- Personal perception on attachment are carried through childhood and adolescence and into stages of adulthood in the form of an internal working model of self & others. (Jewell, 1988; Sroufe, Hazan & Bradshaw, 1988)
- Early in their development, children integrate perceptions of their social competence, appeal and legitimacy (the self model) with their expectations regarding accessibility, responsiveness and consistency of caregivers (the other model).
- The model is a “conscious mindful state” of generalized expectations and preferences regarding relationship intimacy that guide participants information processing of relationship experiences as well as their behavioral response patterns (Lynn, 2000).
- If people carry forward a secure mindful state, they see the world as safe and others as reliable.

Bartholomew & Herowitz expanded the three categories of adult attachment to four categories by differentiating two types of avoidant attachment, dismissive and fearful.

Brennan et al (1998) considered Bartholomew & Herowitz’s system from a different perspective. They conceptualized attachment on the two dimensions of attachment-related security and attachment-related anxiety.

- Secure attachment involves a comfort with emotional closeness and a general lack of concern about being abandoned by others.
- By successfully recruiting care from significant others, children and adults become stronger and more able to cope with threats. (Jewell, 1988)
- By pursuing growth experiences within the context of safe secure relationships, we can pursue optimal human functioning and flourishing. (Lopez, 2003).

Hazan & Shaver (1987)

- I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them, having them depend on me. I don’t often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

- I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others. I find it difficult to trust others completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close and often love partner want to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

- I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn’t really love me or won’t want to stay with me.

Brennan & Herowitz (1994)

- Interview demonstrates coherent, description and evaluation of attachment-related experiences are consistent, whether experiences are favorable or unfavorable.
- Interview is not coherent, and interviewee is dismissing of attachment-related experiences and relationships.
- Interviewee may lapse in the monitoring of reasoning or discourse. Interviewee may lapse into prolonged silence or eulogistic speech.
- Interviewee is preoccupied and interviewee is preoccupied with or by past attachment relationships/experiences. Interviewee appears angry, passive uses words that are long grammatically entangled.
- Interview demonstrates coherent. Description and evaluation of attachment-related experiences are consistent, whether experiences are favorable or unfavorable.
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Three prominent classification systems of adult attachment styles

- Secure
- Anxious
- Avoidant
- Disorganized

People who see the social world as unpredictable and other people as unreliable have difficulty attending to their desires to keep others at a distance.

Numerous theorists have extended attachment theory across the life span into other adults as well as to the children for whom they will serve as caregivers.

Brennan, Shaver & Collins (George, Kaplan & Main, 1986; Main & Goldwyn, 1984, 1998) developed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) that asks adults to recall and interpret feelings and experiences related to their childhood attachments.

They found that adult attachment could best be described by a four category system comprising Secure/Autonomous, Dismissing, Preoccupied and Unresolved/Disorganized.

An analysis of eighteen studies using the AAI found that the clarity, coherence and consistency with which these early attachments are remembered and interpreted reliably predicts the security with which the respondents’ own child will be attached to him/her. (Main & Goldwyn, 1984).

Cindy Hazan & Philip Shaver, studied attachment in the context of adult romantic relationship and found that the three category of Secure, Avoidant & Anxious effectively described the nature of adult attachment to a significant other.
IS THERE NO HOPE FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAD AN INSECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE....???

- Through research on love and attachment, psychologists have learned something about the cultivation & re-cultivation of love among adults. Emotionally focused couples therapy is a well validated approach for troubled couples, which is based on attachment theory and teaches a more flexible approach to expression and satisfaction of needs. (S.M. Johnson, 1994; S.M. Johnson, Hunsley, Greenberg & Schinke, 1999).
- Partners learn to comfort, to reassure, to support one another, in short to open the doors to new emotional experiences, those that bind people together in secure relationships.

LOVE.......... THE COLOR OF LIFE

- "Life without love would be for many people like a black and white movie full of events and activities but without the color that gives vibrance and provides a sense of celebration."
  - Hendrick & Hendrick
- The capacity for love is a central component of all human societies.
- Love in all its manifestations, whether for children, parents, friends or romantic partners, gives depth to human relationships.

WHAT IS LOVE...???

- Robert J. Sternberg (1995) says - "Love is a story. The lovers are its authors, and the kind of story they make up reflects their personalities and their feelings about their relationships."
- In fact an agreed on definition of love has proved elusive for both laypeople and love theorists.
- According to Baron & Byrne - "Love is a combination of emotions, cognitions and behaviors that often play a crucial role in intimate relationships."

The Prototype approach to love is a possible solution to this dilemma.
- According to this approach a concept is defined in terms of its "best example", or its "best set of features", referred to as the prototype of the concept.
- In an initial work with this approach, Beverly Fehr (1988) found that in a free listing of 68 features of love (and centrality ratings of those features), the prototype of love in general equals companionate love, though passionate as well as other features were also found.
- The results were confirmed by Fehr & Russell (1991) who had research participants rate the prototypicality of 20 types of love.
- Maternal love, Parental love and friendship were the three most prototypical examples.
- Romantic love was ranked 5th, but passionate love and sexual love were ranked quite low on the list.

Contd.....

- Aron & Westbay (1996) factor analyzed prototype 68 features and identified three dimensions
- Passion, intimacy and commitment (earlier identified by Sternberg in theory of love)
- Intimacy to be more central than passion and intimacy
- Most general conception of love is companionate love.

Analyses from several studies revealed that the prototypical features of love consistently found were trust, caring, honesty, friendship and respect. (Fehr, 1993)
- Regan et al (1998) found that when the focus was explicitly on romantic love, sexual attractiveness and passion were included in the list of central features.
- However, they were ranked well below trust, honesty, happiness and other companionate features.
- Romantic love domain also includes same sex partners who experience romantic feelings for each other and consider themselves to be a couple.

* More PEACE! Live up with scars of happiness knowing you are living life forever.
The nature of love noted that most people “hope to combine the delights of passionate submission with the security of companionate love.” (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1993)

Interpersonal Attraction by Berscheid & Walster (1969) introduced the concepts of love, attraction, and intimacy in the context of close relationships. These concepts have been foundational in understanding how people form and maintain relationships.

34

Agape, another form of love, is a kind of love that leads to a whirlwind courtship, in which a couple becomes deeply attached to each other within a short time. Peterson & Seligman (2006) described Agape as the kind of love that helps people overcome obstacles and pursue their goals.

33

Families work with an expert to explore their relationships and help them develop strategies to improve their interactions. Noller (1996) emphasized the importance of open communication and support in maintaining healthy family relationships.

36

In ancient Greece, homosexual love was prized above heterosexual relationships. Evidences show that marriages can be quite satisfying for the partners. (Aron & Aron, 1998)

35

In their book “Love in Historical Perspective….” (Spengler, 2008), researchers have explored the various aspects of love throughout history, highlighting how cultural and societal influences have shaped our understanding of love.

31

The theoretical approaches to romantic love have evolved over time, with many different perspectives提出的爱的理论方法。在他们的书中 “Theoretical Approaches to Romantic Love….” (Sternberg, 1986) developed a model that includes the three components of love: passion, commitment, and intimacy.

LOVE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.....

Passionate love is a three-component philosophical theory of love from antiquity until the modern era. (Hatfield, 1988)

Berscheid & Walster (1969) noted that passionate love, the most emotionally intense form of love, is often characterized by strong feelings of desire and attraction.

29

In their study, they found that nearly half of the college students named their relationship as passionate love, characterized by intense emotional and physical attraction.

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Theorists propose a triangular model of love, which includes passion, intimacy, and commitment. (Aron & Aron, 1998)

27

This model suggests that each love relationship is made up of three basic components that are present in varying degrees in different couples. (Aron & Westaby, 1996).

26

Intimacy: The closeness two people feel and the strength of the bond that holds them together.

25

Passion: Based on romance, physical attraction and sexual desire.

24

Commitment: A decision to initiate and sustain a relationship.

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The triangular theory of love suggests the various possibilities of the combination of the three components, yielding eight types of relationships, including Non Love, in which all the three components are absent. (Sternberg, 1986)

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO ROMANTIC LOVE

There is a classical distinction between Passionate love and Companionate love.

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Passionate love, also known as romantic love, is defined as a state of intense love for another person by two people whose lives are deeply intertwined. (Hatfield, 1988)

21

Companionate love is defined as the unshakable affection felt for each other, which can occur simultaneously or sequentially from passionate to companionate.

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Despite two forms of love can occur simultaneously or sequentially, each form has its own characteristics, such as intensity, duration, and satisfaction.

19

This formulation suggests that each love relationship is made up of three basic components that are present in varying degrees in different couples. (Aron & Westaby, 1996).

18

Passion: This form of love is passionate and intense, characterized by strong emotional and physical attraction. (Hatfield, 1988)

17

Intimacy: This form of love is characterized by the bond that holds people together, fostering a sense of mutual understanding and support. (Hatfield, 1988)

16

Commitment: This form of love is characterized by the decision to initiate and sustain a relationship, which can vary in strength and duration. (Hatfield, 1988)

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Consumate Love = (Intimacy + Passion + Commitment)
A complete love consisting of all three components, ideal, difficult to attain.

Liking Love = Intimacy Alone
(True friendship without passion or long term commitment.)

Fatuous Love = Passion + Commitment
(Commitment based on passion but without time for intimacy to develop; shallow relationship such as a whirlwind courtship.)

Sternberg linked his theory to other theories and discussed how the three primary love components might change over time within a relationship & between different relationship.

Some of the researchers have focused on the predictive value of these three ingredients of love:
- In a study of 104 couples, both husbands’ & wives’ intimacy, followed by passion, predicted marital satisfaction. (Silberman, 1995)
- Research on adults’ views about their relationships found that commitment was the best predictor of relationship satisfaction, especially for the long-term partnerships. (Acker & Davis, 1992)

Cultural Influences on Love
- Although love seems to be virtually universal (Goleman, 1992), its meaning and expression vary across time and space.
- According to Anne E. Beall & Robert Sternberg, 1995:
  - People in different cultures define love differently and the way they think about love affects what they feel.
  - Love, like social institutions, is a concept people create out of their culturally influenced perceptions of reality.
  - This concept influences what is considered normal, acceptable, or ideal.
  - Culture influences not only the definition of love, but the features considered normal, acceptable, or ideal.
  - Culture influences not only the definition of love, but the features considered desirable in choosing a beloved, the feelings & thoughts expected to accompany love, and how lovers act toward each other.
- Social approval & support from family and friends reinforce satisfaction with and commitment to a relationship.

CONCLUSION..
- Meaning of “I LOVE YOU”...
- There is much we don’t know about the emotion that connects us to each other.
- There is a lot to explore.
- There are miles to go....

I Love You

And last but not the least....

Thank you all for your active listening and cooperation.