

Romance (love)

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Romance is the expressive and pleasurable feeling from an emotional attraction towards another person often associated with sexual attraction. It is eros rather than agape, philia, or storge.

In the context of romantic love relationships, romance usually implies an expression of one's strong romantic love, or one's deep and strong emotional desires to connect with another person intimately or romantically. Historically, the term "*romance*" originates with the medieval ideal of chivalry as set out in its *chivalric romance* literature.

Humans have a natural inclination to form bonds with one another through social interactions, be it through verbal communication or nonverbal gestures.



The Stolen Kiss by Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1786)

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General definitions

The debate over an exact definition of romantic love may be found in literature as well as in the works of psychologists, philosophers, biochemists and other professionals and specialists. Romantic love is a relative term, but generally accepted as a definition that distinguishes moments and situations within intimate relationships to an individual as contributing to a significant relationship connection.

1. The addition of drama to relationships of close, deep and strong love.
2. Psychologist Charles Lindholm defined love to be "...an intense attraction that involves the idealization of the other, within an erotic context, with expectation of enduring sometime into the future."^[1]

Historical definition

Historians believe that the actual English word "romance" developed from a vernacular dialect within the French language meaning "verse narrative"—referring to the style of speech, writing, and artistic talents within elite classes. The word was originally an adverb of the Latin origin "Romanicus," meaning "of the Roman style." The connecting notion is that European medieval vernacular tales were usually about chivalric adventure, not combining the idea of love until late into the seventeenth century.

The word *romance* has also developed with other meanings in other languages such as the early nineteenth century Spanish and Italian definitions of "adventurous" and "passionate", sometimes combining the idea of "love affair" or "idealistic quality."

In primitive societies, tension existed between marriage and the erotic, but this was mostly expressed in taboo regarding the menstrual cycle and birth.^[2]

Anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss show that there were complex forms of courtship in ancient as well as contemporary primitive societies. There may not be evidence, however, that members of such societies formed loving relationships distinct from their established customs in a way that would parallel modern romance.^[3]

Before the 18th century, many marriages were not arranged, but rather developed out of more or less spontaneous relationships. After the 18th century, illicit relationships took on a more independent role. In bourgeois marriage, illicitness may have become more formidable and likely to cause tension. In *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, Rutgers University professor Bonnie G. Smith depicts courtship and marriage rituals that may be viewed as oppressive to modern people. She writes "When the young women of the Nord married, they did so without illusions of love and romance. They acted within a framework of concern for the reproduction of bloodlines according to financial, professional, and sometimes political interests." Subsequent sexual revolution has lessened the conflicts arising out of liberalism, but not eliminated them.

Anthony Giddens, in his book *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Society*, states that romantic love introduced the idea of a narrative into an individual's life. He adds that telling a story was one of the meanings of romance. According to Giddens, the rise of romantic love more or less coincided with the emergence of the novel. It was then that romantic love, associated with freedom and therefore the ideals of romantic love, created the ties between freedom and self-realization.

David R. Shumway, in his book *Romance, Intimacy, and The Marriage Crisis*, states that the discourse of intimacy emerged in the last third of the 20th century and that this discourse claimed to be able to explain how marriage and other relationships worked. For the discourse of intimacy emotional closeness was much more important than passion. This does not mean by any means that intimacy is to replace romance. On the contrary, intimacy and romance coexist.^[4]

The 21st century has seen the growth of globalization and people now live in a world of transformations that affect almost every aspect of our lives, and love has not been the exception. One example of the changes experienced in relationships was explored by Giddens regarding homosexual relationships. According to Giddens since homosexuals were not able to marry they were forced to pioneer more open and negotiated relationships. This kind of relationships then permeated the heterosexual population.

Shumway also states that together with the growth of capitalism the older social relations dissolved, including marriage. Marriage meaning for women changed as they had more socially acceptable alternatives and were less willing to accept unhappy relations and, therefore, divorce rates substantially increased.

The discourse of romance continues to exist today together with intimacy. Shumway states that on the one hand, romance is the part that offers adventure and intense emotions while offering the possibility to find the perfect mate. On the other hand, intimacy offers deep communication, friendship, and long lasting sharing.



Bernger von Horheim in the *Codex Manesse* (early 14th century)

Popularization of love

The conception of romantic love was popularized in Western culture by the concept of courtly love. Chevaliers, or knights in the Middle Ages, engaged in what were usually non-physical and non-marital relationships with women of nobility of whom they served. These relations were highly elaborate and ritualized in a complexity that was steeped in a framework of tradition, which stemmed from theories of etiquette derived out of chivalry as a moral code of conduct.

Courtly love and the notion of *domnei* were often the subjects of troubadours, and could be typically found in artistic endeavors such as lyrical narratives and poetic prose of the time. Since marriage was commonly nothing more than a formal arrangement,^[5] courtly love sometimes permitted expressions of emotional closeness that may have been lacking from the union between husband and wife.^[6] In terms of courtly love, "lovers" did not necessarily refer to those engaging in sexual acts, but rather, to the act of caring and to emotional intimacy.

The bond between a knight and his Lady, or the woman of typically high stature of whom he served, may have escalated psychologically but seldom ever physically.^[7] For knighthood during the Middle Ages, the intrinsic importance of a code of conduct was in large part as a value system of rules codified as a guide to aid a knight in his capacity as champion of the downtrodden, but especially in his service to the Lord.



"La Belle Dame sans Merci" 1893, by John William Waterhouse (1849-1917)

In the context of dutiful service to a woman of high social standing, ethics designated as a code were effectively established as an institution to provide a firm moral foundation by which to combat the idea that unfit attentions and affections were to ever be tolerated as "a secret game of trysts" behind closed doors. Therefore, a knight trained in the substance of "chivalry" was instructed, with especial emphasis, to serve a lady most honorably, with purity of heart and mind. To that end, he committed himself to the welfare of both Lord and Lady with unwavering discipline and devotion, while at the same time, presuming to uphold core principles set forth in the code by the religion by which he followed.^[7]

Religious meditations upon the Virgin Mary were partially responsible for the development of chivalry as an ethic and lifestyle: the concept of the honor of a lady and knightly devotion to her, coupled with an obligatory respect for all women, factored prominently as central to the very identity of medieval knighthood. As knights were increasingly emulated, eventual changes were reflected in the inner-workings of feudal society. Members of the aristocracy were schooled in the principles of chivalry, which facilitated important changes in attitudes regarding the value of women.^[8]

Behaviorally, a knight was to regard himself towards a lady with a transcendence of premeditated thought—his virtue ingrained within his character. A chevalier was to conduct himself always graciously, bestowing upon her the utmost courtesy and attentiveness. He was to echo shades of this to all women, regardless of class, age, or status.^[9] Over time, the concept of chivalry and the notion of the courtly gentleman became synonymous with the ideal of how love and romance should exist between the sexes. Through the timeless popularization in art and literature of tales of knights and princesses, kings and queens, a formative and long standing (sub) consciousness helped to shape relationships between men and women.

De amore or *The Art of Courtly Love*, as it is known in English, was written in the 12th century. The text is widely misread as permissive of extramarital affairs. However, it is useful to differentiate the physical from without: romantic love as separate and apart from courtly love when interpreting such topics as: "Marriage is no real excuse for not loving", "He who is not jealous cannot love", "No one can be bound by a double love", and "When made public love rarely endures".^[10]

Some believe that romantic love evolved independently in multiple cultures. For example, in an article presented by Henry Grunebaum, he argues "therapists mistakenly believe that romantic love is a phenomenon unique to Western cultures and first expressed by the troubadours of the Middle Ages."^[11]

The more current and Western traditional terminology meaning "court as lover" or the general idea of "romantic love" is believed to have originated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, primarily from that of the French culture. This idea is what has spurred the connection between the words "romantic" and "lover," thus coining English phrases for romantic love such as "loving like the Romans do." The precise origins of such a connection are unknown, however. Although the word "romance" or the equivalents thereof may not have the same connotation in other cultures, the general idea of "romantic love" appears to have crossed cultures and been accepted as a concept at one point in time or another.

Types

Romantic love is contrasted with platonic love, which in all usages, precludes sexual relations, yet only in the modern usage does it take on a fully asexual sense, rather than the classical sense, in which sexual drives are sublimated. Sublimation tends to be forgotten in casual thought about love aside from its emergence in psychoanalysis and Nietzsche.

Unrequited love can be romantic in different ways: comic, tragic, or in the sense that sublimation itself is comparable to romance, where the spirituality of both art and egalitarian ideals is combined with strong character and emotions. Unrequited love is typical of the period of romanticism, but the term is distinct from any romance that might arise within it.^[12]

Romantic love may also be classified according to two categories, "popular romance" and "divine or spiritual" romance:

Popular romance

may include but is not limited to the following types: idealistic, normal intense (such as the emotional aspect of "falling in love"), predictable as well as unpredictable, consuming (meaning consuming of time, energy and emotional withdrawals and bids), intense but out of control (such as the aspect of "falling out of love") material and commercial (such as societal gain mentioned in a later section of this article), physical and sexual, and finally grand and demonstrative.

Divine (or spiritual) romance

may include, but is not limited to these following types: realistic, as well as plausible unrealistic, optimistic as well as pessimistic (depending upon the particular beliefs held by each person within the relationship.), abiding (e.g. the theory that each person had a predetermined stance as an agent of choice; such as "choosing a husband" or "choosing a soul mate."), non-abiding (e.g. the theory that we do not choose our actions, and therefore our romantic love involvement has been drawn from sources outside of ourselves), predictable as well as unpredictable, self-control (such as obedience and sacrifice within the context of the relationship) or lack thereof (such as disobedience within the context of the relationship), emotional and personal, soulful (in the theory that the mind, soul, and body, are one connected entity), intimate, and infinite (such as the idea that love itself or the love of a god or God's "unconditional" love is or could be everlasting)^[13]

In philosophy

Greek philosophers and authors have had many theories of love.

Plato

Some of these theories are presented in Plato's *Symposium*. Six Athenian friends, including Socrates, drink wine and each give a speech praising the deity Eros. When his turn comes, Aristophanes says in his mythical speech that sexual partners seek each other because they are descended from beings with spherical torsos, two sets of human limbs, genitalia on each side, and two faces back to back. Their three forms included the three permutations of pairs of gender (i.e. one masculine and masculine, another feminine and feminine, and the third masculine and feminine) and they were split by the gods to thwart the creatures' assault on heaven, recapitulated, according to the comic playwright, in other myths such as the Aloadae.^[14]

This story is relevant to modern romance partly because of the image of reciprocity it shows between the sexes. In the final speech before Alcibiades arrives, Socrates gives his encomium of love and desire as a lack of being, namely, the being or form of beauty.

French philosopher Gilles Deleuze linked this idea of love as a lack mainly to Sigmund Freud, and Deleuze often criticized it.

In *How to Make Good Decisions and Be Right All the Time*, British writer Iain King tried to establish rules for romance applicable across most cultures. He concluded on six rules, including:

1. Do not flirt with someone unless you might mean it.
2. Do not pursue people who you are not interested in, or who are not interested in you.
3. In general, express your affection or uncertainty clearly, unless there is a special reason not to.^[15]

René Girard

Though there are many theories of romantic love—such as that of Robert Sternberg, in which it is merely a mean combining liking and sexual desire—the major theories involve far more insight. For most of the 20th century, Freud's theory of the family drama dominated theories of romance and sexual relationships. This gave rise to a few counter-theories. Theorists like Deleuze counter Freud and Jacques Lacan by attempting to return to a more naturalistic philosophy:

René Girard argues that romantic attraction is a product of jealousy and rivalry—particularly in a triangular form.

Girard, in any case, downplays romance's individuality in favor of jealousy and the love triangle, arguing that romantic attraction arises primarily in the observed attraction between two others. A natural objection is that this is circular reasoning, but Girard means that a small measure of attraction reaches a critical point insofar as it is caught up in mimesis. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, and *The Winter's Tale* are the best known examples of competitive-induced romance.^[16]

Girard's theory of mimetic desire is controversial because of its alleged sexism. This view has to some extent supplanted its predecessor, Freudian Oedipal theory. It may find some spurious support in the supposed attraction of women to aggressive men. As a technique of attraction, often combined with irony, it is sometimes advised that one feign toughness and disinterest, but it can be a trivial or crude idea to promulgate to men, and it is not given with much understanding of mimetic desire in mind. Instead, cultivating a spirit of self-sacrifice, coupled with an attitude of appreciation or contemplation, directed towards the other of one's attractions, constitutes the ideals of what we consider to be true romantic love. Mimesis is always the desire to possess, in renouncing it we offer ourselves as a sacrificial gift to the other.^[17]

Mimetic desire is often challenged by feminists, such as Toril Moi,^[18] who argue that it does not account for the woman as inherently desired.

Though the centrality of rivalry is not itself a cynical view, it does emphasize the mechanical in love relations. In that sense, it does resonate with capitalism and cynicism native to post-modernity. Romance in this context leans more on fashion and irony, though these were important for it in less emancipated times. Sexual revolutions have brought change to these areas. Wit or irony therefore encompass an instability of romance that is not entirely new but has a more central social role, fine-tuned to certain modern peculiarities and subversion originating in various social revolutions, culminating mostly in the 1960s.^[19]

Arthur Schopenhauer

The process of courtship also contributed to Arthur Schopenhauer's pessimism, despite his own romantic success,^[20] and he argued that to be rid of the challenge of courtship would drive people to suicide with boredom. Schopenhauer theorized that individuals seek partners who share certain interests and tastes, while at the same time looking for a "complement" or completing of themselves in a partner, as in the cliché that "opposites attract", but with the added consideration that both partners manifest this attraction for the sake of the species:

"But what ultimately draws two individuals of different sex exclusively to each other with such power is the will-to-live which manifests itself in the whole species, and here anticipates, in the individual that these two can produce, an objectification of its true nature corresponding to its aims." --World as Will and Representation, Volume 2, Chapter XLIV

Other philosophers

Later modern philosophers such as La Rochefoucauld, David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau also focused on morality, but desire was central to French thought and Hume himself tended to adopt a French worldview and temperament. Desire in this milieu meant a very general idea termed "the passions," and this general interest was distinct from the contemporary idea of "passionate" now equated with "romantic." Love was a central topic again in the subsequent movement of Romanticism, which focused on such things as absorption in nature and the absolute, as well as platonic and unrequited love in German philosophy and literature.

Philosophers and authors interested in the nature of love, which may not have been mentioned in this article are Jane Austen, Stendhal, George Meredith, Marcel Proust, D. H. Lawrence, Sigmund Freud, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Ernest Hemingway, Henry Miller, Gilles Deleuze, and Alan Soble.

In literature

In the following excerpt, from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo, in saying "all combined, save what thou must combine By holy marriage" implies that it is not marriage with Juliet that he seeks but simply to be joined with her romantically. "I pray That thou consent to marry us" implies that the marriage means the removal of the social obstacle between the two opposing families, not that marriage is sought by Romeo with Juliet for any other particular reason, as adding to their love or giving it any more meaning.

"Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set On the fair daughter of rich Capulet: As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine; And all combined, save what thou must combine By holy marriage: when and where and how we met, we wou'd and made exchange of vow, I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray, That thou consent to marry us to-day."

--Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Scene III

Shakespeare and Søren Kierkegaard share a similar viewpoint that marriage and romance are not harmoniously *in tune* with each other. In Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, for example, "...there has not been, nor is there at this point, any display of affection between Isabella and the Duke, if by affection we mean something concerned with sexual attraction. The two at the end of the play love each other as they love virtue."^[21] Isabella needs love, and she may reject marriage with the Duke because he seeks to beget an heir with her for her virtues, and she is not happy with the limited kind of love that implies.

Shakespeare argues that marriage, because of its purity, simply cannot incorporate romance. The extramarital nature of romance is also clarified by John Updike in his novel *Gertrude and Claudius*, as well as by *Hamlet*. This same supposition of romance is also found in the film *Braveheart* or rather apparent in the example of Isabella of France's life.

Romance raises questions of emotivism (or in a more pejorative sense, nihilism) such as whether spiritual attraction, of the world, might not actually rise above or distinguish itself from that of the body or aesthetic sensibility.

While Buddha taught a philosophy of compassion and love, still in his philosophy of anatman or non-self spiritual appearances are of a piece with the world and essentially empty. The contradiction between compassion and anatman seems to be a part of Buddhism. In that case a seemingly negative insight can result in very different overall views, for example if one compares Buddha and Shakespeare with Friedrich Nietzsche.

Kierkegaard also addressed these ideas in works such as *Either/Or* and *Stages on Life's Way*.^[22]

Tragedy and other social issues

The "tragic" contradiction between romance and society is most forcibly portrayed in literature, in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The female protagonists in such stories are driven to suicide as if dying for a cause of freedom from various oppressions of marriage.

Even after sexual revolutions, on the other hand, to the extent that it does not lead to procreation (or child-rearing, as it also might exist in same-sex marriage), romance remains peripheral though it may have virtues in the relief of stress, as a source of inspiration or adventure, or in development and the strengthening of certain social relations. It is difficult to imagine the tragic heroines, however, as having such practical considerations in mind.

Romance can also be tragic in its conflict with society. The Tolstoy family focuses on the romantic limitations of marriage, and Anna Karenina prefers death to being married to her fiancé, however this is because she is tired of waiting and being hidden away from public, when her fiance makes failed attempts to get his mother's approval of the marriage. Even being aristocrats did not make them both free, as the society was nevertheless equally binding for all. Furthermore, in the speech about marriage that is given in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard attempts to show that it is because marriage is lacking in passion fundamentally, that the nature of marriage, unlike romance, is explainable by a man who has experience of neither marriage nor love.

Reciprocity of the sexes appears in the ancient world primarily in myth where it is in fact often the subject of tragedy, for example in the myths of Theseus and Atalanta. Noteworthy female freedom or power was an exception rather than the rule, though this is a matter of speculation and debate.^[23]

Psychology

Many theorists attempt to analyze the process of romantic love.

Helen Fisher



Romeo and Juliet parting on the balcony in Act III.

Anthropologist Helen Fisher, in her book *Why We Love*,^[24] uses brain scans to show that love is the product of a chemical reaction in the brain. Norepinephrine and dopamine, among other brain chemicals, are responsible for excitement and bliss in humans as well as non-human animals. She is famous for the use of MRI to study the brain activity of a person "in love", discovering the importance of the ventral tegmental area and the caudate nucleus in this biological drive.

Fisher concludes that these reactions have a genetic basis, and therefore love is a natural drive as powerful as hunger.

John Townsend

In his book *What Women Want, What Men Want*,^[25] anthropologist John Townsend takes the genetic basis of love one step further by identifying how the sexes are different in their predispositions.

Townsend's compilation of various research projects concludes that men are susceptible to youth and beauty, whereas women are susceptible to status and security. These differences are part of a natural selection process where males seek many healthy women of childbearing age to mother offspring, and women seek men who are willing and able to take care of them and their children.

Karen Horney

Psychologist Karen Horney in her article "*The Problem of the Monogamous Ideal*",^[26] indicates that the overestimation of love leads to disillusionment; the desire to possess the partner results in the partner wanting to escape; and the taboos against sex result in non-fulfillment. Disillusionment plus the desire to escape plus non-fulfillment result in a secret hostility, which causes the other partner to feel alienated. Secret hostility in one and secret alienation in the other cause the partners to secretly hate each other. This secret hate often leads one or the other or both to seek love objects outside the marriage or relationship.

Harold Bessell

Psychologist Harold Bessell in his book *The Love Test*,^[27] reconciles the opposing forces noted by the above researchers and shows that there are two factors that determine the quality of a relationship.

Bessell proposes that people are drawn together by a force he calls "romantic attraction," which is a combination of genetic and cultural factors. This force may be weak or strong and may be felt to different degrees by each of the two love partners. The other factor is "emotional maturity," which is the degree to which a person is capable of providing good treatment in a love relationship. It can thus be said that an immature person is more likely to overestimate love, become disillusioned, and have an affair whereas a mature person is more likely to see the relationship in realistic terms and act constructively to work out problems.

Lisa M. Diamond

Romantic love, in the abstract sense of the term, is traditionally considered to involve a mix of emotional and sexual desire for another as a person. However, Lisa M. Diamond, a University of Utah psychology professor, proposes that sexual desire and romantic love are functionally independent^[28] and that romantic love is not intrinsically oriented to same-gender or other-gender partners. She also proposes that the links between love and desire are bidirectional as opposed to unilateral. Furthermore, Diamond does not state that one's sex has priority over another sex (a male or female) in romantic love because her theory suggests it is as possible for someone who is homosexual to fall in love with someone of the other gender as for someone who is heterosexual to fall in love with someone of the same gender.^[29] In her 2012 review of this topic, Diamond emphasized that what is true for men may not be true for women. According to Diamond, in most men sexual orientation is fixed and most likely innate, but in many women sexual orientation may vary from 0 to 6 on the Kinsey scale and back again.^[30]

Martie Haselton

Martie Haselton, a psychologist at UCLA, considers romantic love a "commitment device", or mechanism that encourages two humans to form a lasting bond. She has explored the evolutionary rationale that has shaped modern romantic love and has concluded that long-lasting relationships are helpful to ensure that children reach reproductive age and are fed and cared for by two parents. Haselton and her colleagues have found evidence in their experiments that suggest love's adaptation. The first part of the experiments consists of having people think about how much they love someone and then suppress thoughts of other attractive people. In the second part of the experiment the same people are asked to think about how much they sexually desire those same partners and then try to suppress thoughts about others. The results showed that love is more efficient in pushing out those rivals than sex.^[31]

University research

Research by the University of Pavia suggests that romantic love lasts for about a year, before being replaced by a more stable form of love called companionate love.^[32] In companionate love, changes occur from the early stage of love to when the relationship becomes more established and romantic feelings seem to end. However, research from Stony Brook University in New York suggests that some couples keep romantic feelings alive for much longer.^[33]

Major theories

These are the major theories associated with current research on romantic relationships, especially in the context of positive psychology.

Attachment patterns

As mentioned in the introduction, attachment styles that people develop as children can influence the way that they interact with partners in adult relationships, with secure attachment styles being associated with healthier and more trusting relationships than avoidant or anxious attachment styles.^{[34][35]} Hazen and Shaver found that adult romantic attachment styles were similar to the categories of secure, avoidant, and anxious that had previously been studied in children's attachments to their caregivers, demonstrating that attachment styles are stable across the lifespan.^[36] Later on, researchers distinguished between dismissive avoidant attachment and fearful avoidant attachment.^[37] Others have found that secure adult attachment, leading to the ability for intimacy and confidence in relationship stability, is characterized by low attachment-related anxiety and avoidance, while the fearful style is high on both dimensions, the dismissing style is low on anxiety and high on avoidance, and the preoccupied style is high on anxiety and low on avoidance.^[38]

Romantic love definition/operationalization

Singer (1984a,^[39] 1984b,^[40] 1987^[41]) first defined love based on four Greek terms: *eros*, meaning the search for beauty; *philia*, the feelings of affection in close friendships, *nomos*, the submission of and obedience to higher or divine powers, and *agape*, the bestowal of love and affection for the divine powers. While Singer did believe that love was important to world culture, he did not believe that romantic love played a major role (Singer, 1987^[41]). However, Susan Hendrick and Clyde Hendrick at Texas Tech University (1992,^[42] 2009^[43]) have theorized that romantic love will play an increasingly important cultural role in the future, as it is considered an important part of living a fulfilling life. They also theorized that love in long-term romantic relationships has only been the product of cultural forces that came to fruition within the past 300 years. By cultural forces, they mean the increasing prevalence of individualistic ideologies, which are the result of an inward shift of many cultural worldviews.

Passionate and companionate love

Researchers have determined that romantic love is a complex emotion that can be divided into either passionate or companionate forms.^[44] Berscheid and Walster (1978^[45]) and Hatfield (1988^[46]) found that these two forms can co-exist, either simultaneously or intermittently. Passionate love is an arousal-driven emotion that often gives people extreme feelings of happiness, and can also give people feelings of anguish. Companionate love is a form that creates a steadfast bond between two people, and gives people feelings of peace. Scientists have described the stage of passionate love as "being on cocaine," since during that stage the brain releases the same neurotransmitter, dopamine, as when cocaine is being used.^[47] It is also estimated that passionate love lasts for about twelve to eighteen months.^[48] Psychologist, Robert Firestone, has a theory of the fantasy bond, which is what is mostly created after the passionate love has faded. A couple may start to feel really comfortable with each other to the point that they see each other as simply companions or protectors, but yet think that they are still in love with each other.^[49] The results to the fantasy bond is the leading to companionate love. Hendrick and Hendrick (1995^[50]) studied college students who were in the early stages of a relationship and found that almost half reported that their significant other was their closest friend, providing evidence that both passionate and companionate love exist in new relationships. Conversely, in a study of long-term marriages, researchers (Contreras, Hendrick, and Hendrick, 1996^[51]) found that couples endorsed measures of both companionate love and passionate love and that passionate love was the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction, showing that both types of love can endure throughout the years.

The triangular theory of love

Psychologist Robert Sternberg (1986^[52]) developed the triangular theory of love. He theorized that love is a combination of three main components: passion (physical arousal); intimacy (psychological feelings of closeness); and commitment (the sustaining of a relationship). He also theorized that the different combinations of these three components could yield up to seven different forms of love. These include popularized forms such as romantic love (intimacy and passion) and consummate love (passion, intimacy, and commitment). The other forms are liking (intimacy), companionate love (intimacy and commitment), empty love (commitment), fatuous love (passion and commitment), and infatuation (passion). Studies on Sternberg's theory of love found that intimacy most strongly predicted marital satisfaction in married couples, with passion also being an important predictor (Silberman, 1995^[53]). On the other hand, Acker and Davis (1992^[54]) found that commitment was the strongest predictor of relationship satisfaction, especially for long-term relationships.

The self-expansion theory of romantic love

Researchers Arthur and Elaine Aron (1986^[55]) theorized that humans have a basic drive to expand their self-concepts. Further, their experience with Eastern concepts of love caused them to believe that positive emotions, cognitions, and relationships in romantic behaviors all drive the expansion of a person's self-concept. A study following college students for 10 weeks showed that those students who fell in love over the course of the investigation reported higher feelings of self-esteem and self efficacy than those who did not (Aron, Paris, and Aron, 1995^[56]).

Mindful relationships

Harvey and Ormarzu (1997^[57]) developed a model of minding relationships with five key components: seeking to know and be known by the other; using knowledge learned in a relationship to enhance the relationship; accepting the other person; being motivated to continue this process of learning, enhancing, and accepting; and developing a sense of appreciation in the relationship. Each of these components is considered adaptive, however, nonadaptive steps to minding a relationship were also theorized by the research team. The five nonadaptive components include: one or both partners out of step in seeking to know and be known by the other; not using the knowledge learned in a relationship to enhance the relationship (or using that knowledge to hurt the other); low acceptance and respect for the other person; not being motivated to continue the process of learning, enhancing, and accepting; and failing to develop a sense of appreciation in a relationship. Gottman studies the components of a flourishing romantic relationship have been studied in the lab (1994,^[58] Gottman & Silver, 1999^[59]). He used physiological and behavioral measures during couples' interactions to predict relationship success and found that five positive interactions to one negative interaction are needed to maintain a healthy relationship. He established a therapy intervention for couples that focused on civil forms of disapproval, a culture of appreciation, acceptance of responsibility for problems, and self-soothing (Gottman, Driver, & Tabares, 2002^[60]).

Relationship behaviors

The most recent research on romantic love and relationships focuses on behaviors that either sustain a relationship or aid in its dissolution. These behaviors can be considered either appetitive or aversive. Appetitive relationship processes are considered the promotion of positive relationship behaviors, as determined by psychologists Gable and Reis (2001,^[61] 2003^[62]). Aversive relationship processes are described as eliminating behaviors that have a negative effect on relationships (Gable and Reis 2001,^[61] 2003^[62]). This new research has also allowed relationship success to be predicted as a function of these appetitive and aversive processes. This is all related to research that shows that sharing positive life events with one's partner is related to greater relationship satisfaction and intimacy (Gable et al., 2004^[63]). In research by Gable et al. (2003) appetitive (promotion of positive relationship behaviors) and aversive (elimination of negative relationship behaviors) processes are independent constructs. A specific type of appetitive processing, capitalization, leads to increased relationship satisfaction and intimacy when one member of the relationship tells the other about positive life events and receive quality reactions and feedback from the partner (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004^[63]).

Applications

Awareness of major theories on positive romantic relationships and knowledge of proven findings that support them gives couples the tools to strengthen their relationships and allows single individuals to have the resources to build a flourishing relationship in the future. Access to information like this could contribute to the reduction of divorce rates, as well as producing happier and healthier home lives for many families. For example, though there appears to be a correlation between an increased divorce rate and premarital cohabitation, living with a person of romantic interest before marriage still appears to be a common and growing trend.^[64] Knowledge of this is one way positive psych could help aid flourishing relationships.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, awareness would also provide the opportunity for people to better understand or empathize with those who may not illustrate the level of positivity found in these major theories. Knowing this information can help with coming to terms with someone that is particularly difficult in a given romantic relationship, and could help one aid them to a better outlook through this gain of knowledge. The attachment style of individuals has a strong influence on the way future relationships are created and harnessed. While those with a secure attachment style fare better, one may be prone to more bumps in the road if having a disorganized style of attachment.

With a heightened awareness comes an upward spiral of positive relationships in general. Having younger individuals modeled by positive interactions would, in turn, greatly influence the probability of these individuals implementing such behaviors in their own social relationships.

It can be said that romantic love creates pair bonding between two individuals. It also increases the amount of available resources by combining those of two separate individuals thus leading to an increase in the reproductive fitness of potential offspring. This can be seen in the animal kingdom as well. For example, researchers observed the survival rate of mice offspring in father present and father absent environments and discovered that while both groups had approximately the same birth rate, with the father absent group even being a little bit higher, ultimately only 26% of the offspring in father absent group survived to emergence as opposed to the 81% of offspring that survived in the father present group.^[65]

Controversies

Researchers such as Feeney and Noller question the stability of attachment style across the life span since studies that measured attachment styles at time points ranging from 2 weeks to 8 months found that 1 out of 4 adults' attachment style changed.^[66] Furthermore, a study by Lopez and Gormley found that attachment styles could change during the first year of college and that changes to more secure attachment styles were associated with adjustments in self-confidence ratings and coping styles.^[67] On the other hand, attachment styles in childhood mirror the ones found in adult romantic relationships.^[68] In addition, research has shown that building interpersonal connections strengthens neural regulatory systems that are involved in emotions of empathy, enjoyment of positive social events, and stress management,^{[69][70]} providing evidence that early social interactions affect adult relationships.

Another topic of controversy in the field of romantic relationships is that of domestic abuse. Following the theory that romantic love evolved as a byproduct of survival, it can be said that in some instances, it has turned into a maladaptation. Oxytocin is a neurophysical hormone produced in the brain. It is known to cause a decrease in stress response. It also can cause an increase in feelings of attachment. In the beginning stages of a romantic relationship, OT levels surge and then remain relatively stable over the duration of the relationship. The higher the surge of OT, the greater the likelihood is of partners staying together.^[71] It plays an important role in increasing positive interpersonal behaviors such as trust, altruism, empathy, etc.^[72] This response is not universal and can in fact, cause the opposite to occur depending on environment and individual. Individuals ranked high in rejection sensitivity exhibited aggressive tendencies and decreased willingness for cooperation, indicating a link between oxytocin and relationship maintenance.^[73]

The feelings associated with romantic love function to ensure the greater reproductive fitness of individuals. The obligations of individuals in romantic relationships to preserve these bonds are based in kin selection theory, where by exhibiting aggressive behavior, a mate can use intimidation and dominance to ward off other potential predators, thus protecting the pair bond and their actual or potential offspring. This has however evolved to the point where it has become detrimental to the fitness of individuals; what is causing attachment to occur in a relationship, is now causing one partner to harm the other.

In the search for the root of intimate partner violence, intranasal oxytocin was administered to a control group and a group of participants with aggressive tendencies. Participants were then surveyed on how willing they were to engage in 5 behaviors towards their romantic partner. What they found was that oxytocin increased IPV inclinations only among the participants with a predisposition towards aggressive tendencies.^[74] Oxytocin decreases trust and prosocial behavior in individuals with interpersonal difficulties. This, coupled with its role in relationship maintenance, illustrates that oxytocin serves to instill a sense of territoriality and protectiveness towards a mate.

See also

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|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Platonic love ▪ Chivalric romance ▪ Romantic orientation ▪ Interpersonal attraction | <p>Romantic practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Romantic attraction ▪ Flirting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Romanticism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poetry ▪ Drawing ▪ Painting |
|--|--|--|

- Courtly love
- Erotomania
- Erotophobia
- Infatuation
- Intimate relationship
- Love
- Marriage
- Love sickness
- Physical intimacy
- Romanticism
- Romantic friendship
- Romance novel
- Sexual relationship
- Valentine's Day
- *The Four Loves*
- *True Romance*
- Fraternizing
- Courtship
- Pet names
- Intimacy
 - Eye contact
 - Hugging
 - Holding hands
 - Kissing
- Interpersonal communication
 - Face-to-face
 - Love letter
 - Telephone
 - Internet romance
- Dating
 - Cooking
 - Couple dancing
 - Movies
 - Stargazing
 - Serenade

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12. Beethoven, however, is the case in point. He had brief relationships with only a few women, always of the nobility. His one actual engagement was broken off mainly because of his conflicts with noble society as a group. This is evidenced in his biography, such as in Maynard Solomon's account.
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14. *Symposium 189d ff.*
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16. In works such as *A Theatre of Envy* and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of The World*, Girard presents this mostly original theory, though finding a major precedent in Shakespeare on the structure of rivalry, claiming that it—rather than Freud's theory of the primal horde—is the origin of religion, ethics, and all aspects of sexual relations.
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