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A Little Bit about Love

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¹This chapter was prepared while Dr. Walster was at the University of Mannheim, West Germany.

I. The Elusive Nature of Love

Many who have tried to understand the nature of love have concluded in despair that it is impossible to specify in advance who will inspire love, under what conditions, or why. They have resonated to Durrell's (1961) poetic definition of love:

It may be defined as a cancerous growth of unknown origin which may take up its site anywhere without the subject knowing or wishing it. How often have you tried to love the "right" person in vain even when your heart knows it has found him after so much seeking? No, an eyelash, a perfume, a haunting walk, a strawberry on the neck, the smell of almonds on the breath—these are the accomplices the spirit seeks out to plan your overthrow [p. 106].*

Other writers have tried to explicate *facets* of romantic love. [Delightful essays have been written, for example, by Reik (1943); Beigel (1951); Maslow (1954); Fromm (1956); Goode (1959); and Hunt (1959).] These analysts have often provided compelling—but unnervingly inconsistent—insights into the nature of passionate love.

Contradictions also are found in the voluminous folk sayings addressed to the topic of love. The person who is concerned with predicting the effect of separation upon his romance, for example, will find that folk wisdom has a good deal to say, much of it contradictory: "Out of sight out of mind"; "Absence makes the heart grow fonder"; "Absence lessens half-hearted passions, and increases great ones."

Disagreements such as these led Finck (1891) to the conclusion that "Love is such a tissue of paradoxes, and exists in such an endless variety of forms and shades, that you may say almost anything about it that you please, and it is likely to be correct [p. 244]."

Can scientists do better than those who have provided only fragmentary and contradictory information about the nature of love? Perhaps. But most would agree this is a promise for the future, rather than a feat of the past.

The social scientific journals typically provide little more than an acknowledgment of the absence of an understanding of love. Maslow (1954), for example, offers a sharp criticism of psychological ignorance in this area:

It is amazing how little the empirical sciences have to offer on the subject of love. Particularly strange is the silence of the psychologists, for one might think this to be their particular obligation. Probably this is just another example of the besetting sin of the academicians, that they prefer to do what they are easily able rather than what they ought, like the not-so-bright kitchen helper I knew who opened every can in the hotel one day because he was so *very* good at opening cans. Sometimes this is merely sad or irritating, as in the case of the textbooks of psychology and sociology, practically none of which treats the subject. . . . More often the situation becomes completely ludicrous. One might reasonably expect that writers of serious treatises on the family, on marriage, and on sex should consider the subject of love to be a proper, even basic,

*From the book *Clea* by Lawrence Durrell. Copyright © 1960 by Lawrence Durrell. Published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. and used with their permission.

part of their self-imposed task . . . I must confess that I understand this better now that I have undertaken the task myself. It is an extraordinarily difficult subject to handle in any tradition, and it is triply so in the scientific tradition. It is as if we were at the most advanced position in no man's land, at a point where the conventional techniques of orthodox psychological science are of very little use. And yet our duty is clear. We *must* understand love . . . [p. 235].

Harlow (1958), too, has declared that, "So far as love is concerned, psychologists have failed in their mission. The little we know about love does not transcend simple observation, and the little we write about it has been written better by poets and novelists [p. 673]."

II. Liking and Loving

Passionate love can be perceived as a variety of *interpersonal attraction*. Interpersonal attraction has been defined by a number of researchers (e.g., Homans, 1950; Newcomb, 1961) as a positive attitude toward another, evidenced by a tendency to approach and interact with him.

Research on interpersonal attraction began early (1884) and has continued at a prodigious rate. Attraction theorists have generally agreed upon the genesis of interpersonal attraction: We are attracted to persons who reward us. The more reward they provide, the more attractive we find them. Reward has been conceived to have so predictable an impact on attraction that Byrne (1971) has even proposed an exact correspondence: "Attraction toward X is a positive linear function of the sum of the weighted positive reinforcements (Number \times Magnitude) associated with X [p. 279]."

Although a good deal of evidence has been marshalled to support the reinforcement formulation of attraction, almost all of these data (as well as most data gathered to illuminate the antecedents of attraction) are concerned with one variety of interpersonal attraction, liking. Despite the almost exclusive focus upon this type of attraction, attraction theorists recognize that there are many other varieties. Byrne (1971) has noted, for example, that in addition to liking, interpersonal attraction is composed of a number of other specific response components—such as friendship, parental love, romantic love, sexual attraction, and we would add, companionate, or marital, love. Byrne also warns that the antecedents of these various subcategories of attraction may not be identical.

We agree that "passionate love" (in Byrne's terminology, romantic attraction *and* sexual attraction) is a very special variety of interpersonal attraction and as such is entitled to independent attention. Furthermore, since the antecedents of passionate love seem to differ from liking in several important ways, the prediction of romantic love may demand special knowledge. Some of the ways in which these two phenomena appear to differ are outlined in the following sections.

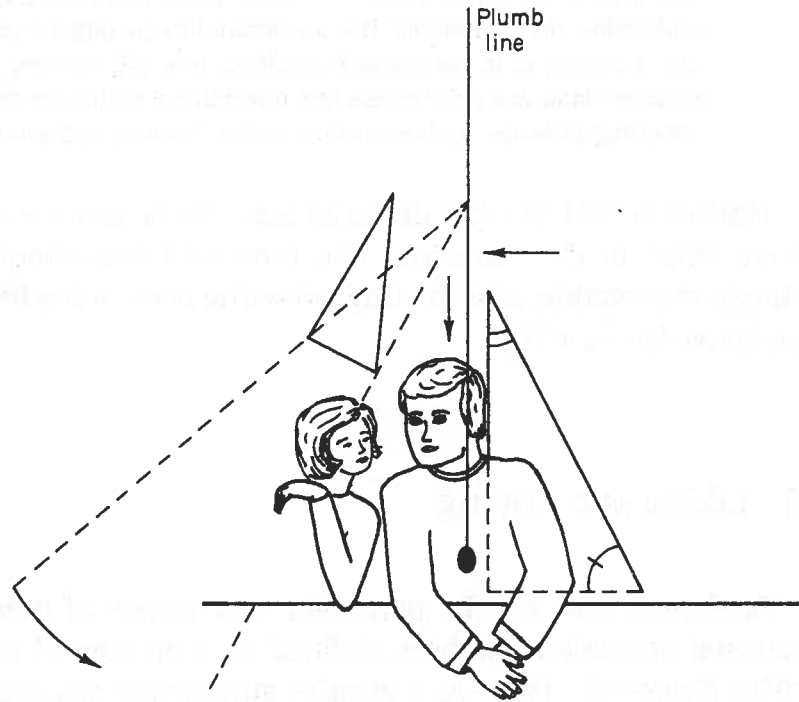


Figure 1 In 1884, Francis Galton (Webb *et al.*, 1966) became convinced that metaphorical expressions often mirror physical reality. He proceeded to investigate “the inclination of one person toward another [p. 151].” On the basis of his observations of people seated next to each other at dinner, Galton concluded that the more attracted dinner partners were toward one another, the more they leaned toward one another. Galton evidently believed that insults could be discreetly traded in an upright position, but that sweeter words are usually spoken at an angle of less than 90° .

A. *The Importance of Fantasy*

Researchers have generally assumed that it is the actual rewards which are exchanged during interpersonal contact which create liking. It seems doubtful, however, that people are so reality-bound.

When the lover closes his eyes and daydreams, he can summon up a flawless partner—a partner who instantaneously satisfies all his unspoken, conflicting, and fleeting desires. In fantasy he may receive unlimited reward or he may *anticipate* that he would receive unlimited reward were he ever to actually meet his ideal.

Compared to our grandiose fantasies, the level of reward we receive in our real interactions is severely circumscribed. As a consequence, sometimes the most extreme passion is aroused by partners who exist only in imagination or partners who are barely known. Reactions to real-life love objects often seem to be far more tepid.

Theorists interested only in *liking*, then, may possibly afford to focus entirely on the impact actual reward has on liking. In contrast, it seems likely that romantic love theorists will be forced to take into consideration both the rewards a lover receives in fantasy and the rewards he fantasizes he might receive in future inter-

action with the partner. (Further discussion of the importance of fantasy in generating passionate love is provided by Reik, 1944, and the current state of scientific knowledge of fantasy is reviewed by Klinger, 1971.)

B. The Effect of Time on Passion

Passionate love also seems to differ from liking in its fragility. One of the laws of liking, expressed by Homans (1961), is that "... other things equal, the more a man interacts with another, the more he likes him [p. 203]." In stark contrast to this statement is the observation that "The history of a love affair is the drama of its fight against time." Authors of marriage and family texts tend to agree. Williamson (1966), for example, warns that romantic love is a temporary phenomenon and cautions that although intense passion may be a prerequisite for marriage, it is bound to dwindle after lengthy interaction. Reik (1944), too, warns that the very best one can hope for after several years of marriage is an "afterglow."

Over time, then, one's feelings toward another are probably affected less by the infinite rewards one fantasizes he will receive from his ideal, and are affected more by the lesser rewards one can receive from an ordinary mortal. Thus, to the extent that the passionate lover is aroused more by fantasy than fact, the reality information about another, which time usually provides, may erode passionate love. To the extent that liking is based on more realistic grounds, it should not be as vulnerable with continued interaction with the partner.

C. Liking Is Associated with Positive Reinforcements; Passion Is Associated with a Hodgepodge of Conflicting Emotions

Liking seems to be a sensible phenomenon. From Aristotle onward, theorists are in agreement: We like those who reward us and dislike those who thwart our desires. Unfortunately, that exotic variety of attraction, passionate love, does not seem to fit as neatly into the reinforcement paradigm. It is true that some practical people manage to fall passionately in love with beautiful, wise, entertaining, and wealthy people who bring them unending affection and material rewards. Other people, however, with unfailing accuracy, seem to fall passionately in love with people who are almost guaranteed to bring them suffering and material deprivation.

Observers disagree, passionately, about the nature of the emotional states which are most conducive to passion. Some insist that passionate love is inexorably entwined with fulfillment and the anticipation of fulfillment. Others insist that passionate love is virtually synonymous with agony. (Indeed, the original meaning of passion was "agony"—as in "Christ's Passion.") College students evidently share the theorists' confusion as to whether passionate love is a joyous state or a painful one. Students at several universities were allowed to ask psychologists one question

about romantic love. Among the most frequent questions was: "Can you love and hate someone at the same time?"

III. A Tentative Theory of Passionate Love

It can be argued, then, that passionate love differs from liking in several important ways and that a special approach to this particular variety of interpersonal attraction may be needed. Walster and Berscheid (1971) proposed a tentative theoretical framework to facilitate investigation of romantic love. Following Schachter's general theory of emotion (1964), it was suggested that individuals will experience passionate love whenever two conditions coexist:

1. They are intensely aroused physiologically;
2. situational cues indicate that "passionate love" is the appropriate label for their intense feelings.

A. Schachter's Two-Component Theory of Emotion

In 1964, Schachter proposed a new paradigm for understanding human emotional response. Schachter argued that two factors must coexist if a person is to experience emotion: (a) The person must be aroused physiologically; (b) it must be appropriate for him to interpret his stirred-up state in emotional terms. Schachter argued that neither physiological arousal nor appropriate emotional cognitions would, by themselves, be sufficient to produce an emotional experience for the individual.

To test the hypothesis that physiological arousal and appropriate cognitions are separate and indispensable components of a true emotional experience, Schachter had to find a technique for separately manipulating arousal and cognition. In their classic study, Schachter and Singer (1962) conceived of a way to do just that.

1. MANIPULATING PHYSIOLOGICAL AROUSAL

The investigators manipulated physiological arousal artificially. A drug—epinephrine—exists whose effects mimic the discharge of the sympathetic nervous system. Shortly after one receives an injection of epinephrine, systolic blood pressure increases markedly, heart rate increases somewhat, cutaneous blood flow decreases, muscle and cerebral blood flow increase, blood sugar and lactic acid concentration increase, and respiration rate increases slightly. The individual injected with epinephrine experiences palpitation, tremor, and sometimes flushing and accelerated breathing. These reactions are identical to the physiological reactions that appear to accompany a variety of natural emotional states.

Schachter and Singer injected volunteers with a substance that they claimed was Suproxin, a new vitamin compound whose effects upon vision was said to be of interest to the experimenters. In reality, one-half of the subjects were injected with epinephrine. By this procedure, Schachter and Singer insured that half of their subjects would experience an exceptionally high degree of physiological arousal, while the other half, those who actually received a saline solution placebo, would be relatively unaroused.

2. MANIPULATING COGNITIONS

The investigators wished to place half of the volunteers in a situation where their aroused or unaroused physiological state could be attributed to a nonemotional cause (the injection). The others were placed in a situation where their aroused or unaroused state could be attributed to an emotional cause.

Thus, in one condition (the nonemotional attribution condition) volunteers were given a complete description of how the shot would affect them. They were warned that in about 15–20 min, the injection of Suproxin would produce palpitations, tremors, flushing, and accelerated breathing. The researchers expected that when the volunteers began to experience these symptoms, they would attribute their stirred-up state to the shot. In another set of conditions (the emotional attribution conditions), subjects were *not* told how the shot would affect them. One group of volunteers was given *no information* about possible side effects of the shot. Another group of volunteers was deliberately *misled* as to the potential side effects of the shot. (They were told that the shot of Suproxin would probably make their feet feel numb, produce an itching sensation over part of their body, and give them a slight headache.)

The experimenters expected that the volunteers who received either *no information* or *incorrect information* about how the shot would affect them, would *not* attribute their aroused state to the shot. Instead, it was expected that these volunteers would attribute their arousal to whatever they happened to be doing when the drug took effect 20 min later.

The experimenters then arranged the situation such that what all volunteers “happened to be doing” was either participating in a gay, happy, social interaction or participating in a tense, explosive interaction. Half of the subjects—those who were to be participating in a gay interaction (the *euphoria* condition)—were asked to wait for 20 min in an adjoining room until the tests of vision could begin. Another student, who was also scheduled to wait in this room for his tests, was actually an experimental confederate; it was his job to make life exciting for the subject. As soon as the experimenter left the room, the confederate doodled briefly on a piece of paper, crumpled it up, and then shot it at a wastebasket. He missed. He constructed a paper airplane, and set it hurtling around the room. A sloppy pile of manila folders caught his eye. He stopped, built a tower of the folders, and then began to shoot paper wads at the tower from across the room. He ended his performance by picking up a hula hoop and dancing wildly.

The remainder of the subjects—those who were to be participating in a tense

situation (the *anger* condition)—were asked, along with the confederate, to fill out questionnaires while they waited in a nearby room for the experiment to begin. The confederate was instructed to make life explosive for the subject. The questionnaires started off innocently enough, requesting standard information. Then the questions became more and more insulting. The questionnaire requested such information as who in the subject's family did not bathe or wash regularly and who seemed to need psychiatric care. Another question asked, "With how many men (other than your father) has your mother had extramarital relationships?" The possible responses started with "4 and under." As the confederate and subject worked on these questions, the confederate became increasingly indignant. He criticized the task as a stupid, outrageous waste of time. Finally, in a rage, he threw his questionnaire to the floor and stomped out shouting: "I'm not wasting any more time. I'm getting my books and leaving."

3. ASSESSING THE SUBJECT'S EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

Schachter and Singer predicted that subjects who had received an epinephrine injection, and thus experienced a high degree of physiological arousal, should have stronger emotional reactions in the euphoria or anger settings than should either subjects who had received a placebo (and were not as aroused) or subjects, who had received an epinephrine injection, but had been warned of exactly what physiological changes to expect (and, therefore, should not have attributed their arousal to the emotional cues in the questionnaire situation).

The researchers measured the intensity of the subjects' emotional response in two ways. First, observers stationed behind a one-way mirror assessed the extent to which the subject "caught" the stooge's euphoric or angry mood. Second, subjects were asked to state how euphoric or angry they felt.

The data supported Schachter and Singer's (1962) hypothesis and provided support for the contention that *both* physiological arousal and appropriate cognitions are indispensable components of a true emotional experience; neither component alone appears to create the experiencing of an emotion.

Evidence from Schachter and Wheeler (1962) and Hohmann (1962) has provided additional support for the two-component theory of emotion.

B. The Two-Component Theory and Passionate Love

Walster and Berscheid (1971) speculated that perhaps the two-component theory would be a more useful blueprint than the reinforcement paradigm for assembling the apparent jumble of redundant, inconsistent, and implausible pieces of the passionate love puzzle. Certain puzzle pieces which don't fit into the reinforcement framework seem less awkward in the two-component framework. There is, for example, no longer the problem of explaining why both intensely positive and intensely negative (and presumably unrewarding) experiences can be conducive to love. Both types of experiences may produce physiological arousal. Stimuli

which produce "aesthetic appreciation," "sexual arousal," "gratitude," "rejection," "jealousy," or "total confusion" generally produce states of intense physiological arousal. Thus, these positive *and* negative experiences may all have the potential for deepening an individual's passion for another.

What may be important in determining how the individual feels about the person who is apparently generating these intense feelings is how he *labels* his reaction. If the situation is arranged so that it is reasonable for him to attribute this agitated state to "passionate love," he should experience love. As soon as he ceases to attribute his arousal to passionate love, or the arousal itself ceases, love should die.

Does any compelling experimental evidence exist to support the contention that under conditions of physiological arousal, a wide variety of stimuli, properly labeled, may deepen passion? No. Studies have not yet been conducted to test this hypothesis. There are, however, a few investigations designed to test other hypotheses that provide tangential support for the two-component theory of passionate love.

IV. Generating Physiological Arousal: The First Step in Generating Passionate Love

A. *Unpleasant Emotional Experiences: Facilitators of Passion?*

Negative reinforcements produce arousal in all animals (see Skinner, 1938). For human beings there is some evidence that under certain conditions such unpleasant—but arousing—states as fear, rejection, and frustration may enhance romantic passion.

1. FEAR

When a person is frightened, he becomes intensely physiologically aroused for a substantial period of time (Wolf & Wolff, 1947; Ax, 1953; Schachter, 1957). An intriguing study by Brehm, Gatz, Geothals, McCrommon, and Ward (1970) suggests that fear can contribute to a man's attraction to a woman. Brehm and co-workers tested the hypothesis that a person's attraction to another would be multiplied by prior arousal from an irrelevant event. To test this hypothesis, one group of men was led to believe that they would soon receive three "pretty stiff" electrical shocks. Half of the men in this group ("threat" subjects) were allowed to retain this erroneous expectation throughout the experiment. The other half ("threat-relief" subjects) were frightened, but then were later reassured that the experimenter had made an error; they had been assigned to the control group and would receive no shock. The remainder of the men were told at the start that they had been assigned to the control group; the experimenter did not even mention the possibility that they might receive shock. All of the men were then introduced to a young female college student and asked how much they liked her.

The men in the three groups should vary in how physiologically aroused they were at the time they met the girl. The threat subjects should be quite frightened. The threat-relief subjects should be experiencing both residual fear reactions and vast relief. Both groups of men should be more aroused than the men in the control group. The investigators predicted, as we would, that both threat and threat-relief subjects would like the girl more than would control subjects. These expectations were confirmed. (Threat and threat-relief men did not differ in their liking for the girl.) A frightening event, then, may facilitate attraction.

2. REJECTION

Rejection is always disturbing. When a person is rejected, he generally experiences a strong emotional reaction. Usually one labels his reaction embarrassment, pain, anger, or hatred. It should also be possible, however, under certain conditions, for a rejected individual to label his emotional response as "love."

Some suggestive evidence that love or hate may spring from rejection comes from several laboratory experiments designed to test other hypotheses (Dittes, 1959; Walster, 1965; Jacobs, Berscheid, & Walster, 1971). Let us consider one of these experiments and the way a Schachterian might reinterpret it.

Jacobs and co-workers attempted to determine how changes in the self-esteem of college men affected their receptivity to affection expressed by a female college student. First, the experimenter gave the men a number of personality tests (the MMPI, Rorschach, etc.). A few weeks later he returned a false analysis of their personalities. Half of the men were given a flattering report, stressing their sensitivity, honesty, originality, and freedom of outlook. The other half received an insulting personality report. The report stressed their immaturity, weak personality, conventionality, and lack of leadership ability. This critical report naturally disturbed most of the men.

Soon after receiving their analyses, each man was made acquainted with a young female college student, who in actuality was an experimental confederate. Half of the time the girl responded to the man with a warm, affectionate, and accepting evaluation. The investigators found that the men who had received the critical personality evaluation were *more attracted* to the girl than were their more confident counterparts. Half of the time the girl was cool and rejecting. Under these conditions, a dramatic reversal occurred. The previously rejected men *disliked* the girl more than did their more confident counterparts. Under these conditions, the previously insulted individual's agitation was presumably transformed to enmity. A preceding painful event, then, may heighten the emotional response we feel toward another's expression of affection or disapproval.

3. FRUSTRATION AND CHALLENGE

Khrushchev, depicting the Russian character, said:

When the aristocrats first discovered that potatoes were a cheap way of feeding the peasants, they had no success in getting the peasants to eat them. But they knew their

people. They fenced the potatoes in with high fences. The peasants then stole the potatoes and soon acquired a taste for them [Galbraith, 1969, p. 110].

Theorists seem to agree that the obstacles a lover encounters in his attempt to possess another intensify love.

a. Sexual Frustration. Sexual inhibition is often said to be the foundation of romantic feelings. For example, Freud (1922) argued: "Some obstacle is necessary to swell the tide of libido to its height; and at all periods of history whenever natural barriers in the way of satisfaction have not sufficed, mankind has erected conventional ones in order to enjoy love [p. 213]." Presumably, when sexual energy is bottled up, it will be sublimated and expressed as romantic longing, rather than sexual longing.

Experimental evidence concerning the impact of other kinds of obstacles to love on the intensity of the lovers' romantic feelings comes from Walster, Walster, Piliavin, and Schmidt (1973) and from Driscoll, Davis, and Lipitz (1972).

b. The Hard-to-Get Girl. Socrates, Ovid, the Kama Sutra, and "Dear Abby" are in agreement about one thing: A girl who is hard to get inspires more passion than does a girl who "throws herself" at a man.

Socrates (in Xenophon, 1923) advises Theodota, a *hetaera*:

... They will appreciate your favors most highly if you wait till they ask for them. The sweetest meats, you see, if served before they are wanted seem sour, and to those who had enough they are positively nauseating; but even poor fare is very welcome when offered to a hungry man. [Theodota inquires] And how can I make them hunger for my fare? [Socrates' reply] Why, in the first place, you must not offer it to them when they have had enough—be a show of reluctance to yield, and by holding back until they are as keen as can be for then the same gifts are much more to the recipient than when they are offered before they are desired [p. 247].

Ovid (1962) remarks:

Fool, if you feel no need to guard your girl for her own sake, see that you guard her for mine, so I may want her the more. Easy things nobody wants, but what is forbidden is tempting . . . Anyone who can love the wife of an indolent cuckold, I should suppose, would steal buckets of sand from the shore [pp. 65, 66].

Bertrand Russell (in Kirch, 1960) argues:

The belief in the immense value of the lady is a psychological effect of the difficulty of obtaining her, and I think it may be laid down that when a man has no difficulty in obtaining a woman, his feeling toward her does not take the form of romantic love [pp. 10–11].

To find authors in such rare accord on an aspect of passionate love is refreshing. Better yet, their observation seems to provide support for the two-component theory. Unfortunately for the theory (but fortunately for easy-to-get men and

women), the data suggest that hard-to-get men and women do not inspire especially intense liking in their suitors. (See Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1971; and Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973.)

Walster *et al.* (1973) report several experiments designed to demonstrate that a challenging girl will be a more dazzling conquest than a readily available girl. All experiments secured negative results.

In the first set of experiments, college males were recruited for a computer date-match program. The program was ostensibly designed to evaluate and improve current computer matching programs. In an initial interview, men filled out a lengthy questionnaire. They were informed that the computer would *either* provide them with the name of a girl especially matched to their requirements, *or* with the name of a girl randomly selected from the date-match pool. (Presumably, only by comparing men's reactions to matched versus randomly selected girls could it be judged whether or not the matching procedure was effective.)

Two weeks later the men reported to collect the name and telephone number of their date-match. They were asked to telephone her and to arrange a date from the laboratory, so that after the call their first impressions of the date could be assessed. Actually, each man was provided with the telephone number of the same girl—an experimental confederate.

In the *easy-to-get* condition, the girl was delighted to receive his telephone call and grateful to be asked out. In the *hard-to-get* condition, the girl accepted a coffee date with some reluctance. She obviously had many other dates, and was not sure whether or not she really wanted to get involved with someone new.

The results of this and other similar experiments failed to support the "hard-to-get" hypothesis; it was found that boys had an equally high opinion of the hard-to-get and the easy-to-get girls.

A further study—a field experiment—also failed to support the hypothesis. In this study, a prostitute serving as the experimenter, delivered the experimental communication while she was mixing drinks for her clients. Half the time she played hard to get. She indicated that she could only see a limited number of clients, and thus, she had to be very selective about whom she could accept as a customer. Half of the time (in the easy-to-get condition) she did not deliver this communication, but allowed the clients to assume that she would accept all customers. She then had sexual intercourse with the clients.

The client's liking for the prostitute was assessed in three ways: (a) the prostitute estimated the client's liking for her; (b) she recorded how much he paid for the 50-min hour; and (c) she recorded how soon he called her for a second appointment.

The hard-to-get hypothesis was *not* supported. Clients appeared to like the selective and unselective prostitute equally well, regardless of the measure of liking used.

Faced with this shower of evidence that a hard-to-get date does *not* seem to inspire more passion than the easy-to-get one, Walster and co-workers reconsidered their hypothesis. First, they systematically considered the advantages and dis-

advantages a suitor might anticipate from a generally hard-to-get or a generally easy-to-get girl. For example, an "easy-to-get" girl, while perhaps desperate for company because she is unattractive, might be a friendly and relaxing date; a "hard-to-get" girl, while having the advantage of being a challenge, might be unfriendly and ego-crushing. In previous research, each girl's advantages and disadvantages may have balanced one another out. The girls—whether easy or hard to get—had potentially attractive assets and potentially dangerous liabilities. What would the perfect date be like? What kind of a girl would possess most of the advantages, but few of the disadvantages, of both the hard-to-get and the easy-to-get girls? A girl who is crazy about you (she is easy for *you* to get), but is hard for anyone else to get should be maximally rewarding.

Walster and co-workers then tested the hypothesis that the selectively hard-to-get girl would be preferred to a generally hard-to-get girl, to a generally easy-to-get girl, or to a control girl (a person whose general hard-to-getness of easy-to-getness was unknown) in the following way: Men were again recruited for a computer date-match program. They filled out questionnaires, and then waited several weeks for the computer to match them with potential dates. When they reported to the lab for the name of their date, they were told that five girls had been selected by the computer. The men examined biographies of these girls so that they could choose which one they wanted to date. The girls' biographies described their backgrounds, interests, attitudes, etc. Attached to the biography was each girl's evaluation of the dates that had been assigned to her. Each subject, who knew his own code numbers, could thus discover how each girl had rated him and the four other men with whom the computer had matched her. (Presumably, her evaluations were based on the biographies she had been shown.)

These ratings constituted the experimental manipulation. One girl made it evident that she was *generally easy to get*. She indicated that she was "very eager" to date every fellow the computer had assigned to her. A second girl made it evident that she was *generally hard to get*. She indicated that she was willing, but not particularly eager to date the five fellows assigned to her. One of the girls made it evident that she was *selectively hard to get*. Although she was very eager to date the subject, she was reluctant to date any of his rivals. Two of the potential dates were *control* girls. (The experimenter said that they had not yet stopped in to evaluate their computer matches, and, thus, no information was available concerning their preferences.)

These data provided strong support for the revised hypothesis. Men liked the generally hard to get, the generally easy to get, and control dates equally. The selectively hard-to-get girl, however, was uniformly the most popular girl, liked far more than her competitors.

c. Parental Interference. Driscoll, Davis, and Lipitz (1972) proposed that parental interference in a love relationship intensifies the feelings of romantic love between members of the couple. The authors begin their delightful article by surveying the extent to which parental opposition and intense love have been pitted against one another. They remind readers that Romeo and Juliet's short but intense love af-

fair took place against the background of total opposition from the two feuding families. The difficulties and separations which the family conflict created appear to have intensified the lovers' feelings for each other.

Finally, the authors remind us that DeRougement (1940), in his historical analysis of romantic love, emphasized the persistent association of obstacles or grave difficulties with intense passion. They conclude that an affair consummated without major difficulty apparently lacks zest.

The authors distinguish between romantic love (for example, infatuation, passionate love) and conjugal love. They point out that romantic love is associated with uncertainty and challenge in contrast to the trust and genuine understanding of conjugal love. Conjugal love is said to evolve gradually out of mutually satisfying interactions and from increasing confidence in one's personal security in the relationship.

The authors tested their hypothesis that parental opposition would deepen romantic love (as opposed to conjugal love) in the following way: 91 married couples and 49 dating couples (18 of whom were living together) were recruited to participate in a marital relations project. Some of these couples were happily matched; others were not. The typical married couples had been married 4 years.

All of the 49 dating couples were seriously committed to one another; most of them had been going together for about 8 months.

During an initial interview, all the couples filled out three scales:

Assessment of Parental Interference: This scale measured the extent to which the couple's parents interfered and caused difficulties in their relationship. Participants were asked whether or not they had ever complained to their mate that her (his) parents interfere in their relationship, are a bad influence, are hurting the relationship, take advantage of her (him), don't accept him (her), or try to make him (her) look bad.

Conjugal Love Scale: This scale measured the extent to which participants loved, felt they cared about and needed their partner, and felt that the relationship was more important than anything else.

Romantic Love Scale: The researchers rescored the Conjugal Love Scale in order to obtain "a purified index of Romantic Love." (This index was constructed by partialing out of the Love Scale that portion of variance which could be counted for by trust—a characteristic the authors felt more typical of conjugal love than of passionate love.)

The authors found that parental interference and passion were related, as they expected them to be. Parental interference and romantic love were correlated .50 for the unmarried sample and .24 for the married sample. However, parental interference and conjugal love were also correlated (.36) for the unmarried sample, although not for the married sample (.00). Parental interference and romantic love did seem to be positively and significantly related.

Next, the authors investigated whether *increasing* parental interference would provoke increased passion; 6–10 months after the initial interview, the authors invited all of the couples back for a second interview. During this second inter-

view, the participants once again completed Parental Interference, Conjugal Love, and Romantic Love Scales. By comparing subjects' initial interview responses with their later ones, the authors could calculate whether the participants' parents had become more or less interfering in the relationship, and how these changes in parental interference had affected the couples' affair. The authors found that as parents began to interfere more in a relationship, the couple appeared to fall more deeply in love. If the parents had become resigned to the relationship, and had begun to interfere less, the couples began to feel less intensely about one another. (Changes in parental interference correlated .30 with changes in romantic love and also .34 with changes in conjugal love.)

Since the data from the Driscoll *et al.* study are correlational, rather than experimental, alternative explanations for these findings are, of course, possible. The authors specifically mentioned two other plausible explanations.

First, the results may be due to the selective attrition of participants from the study. A couple with a weak relationship may stop seeing one another as soon as parents voice disapproval. Only couples who are very much in love may be willing to defy strong parental opposition. Thus, parental interference and love may seem to be related only because the sample does not include couples who were low in love and high in parental interferences.

Second, parental interference may not be a *cause of*, but rather a *reaction to*, the couple's commitment to marry. When parents realize that the couple is deeply in love, they may begin to interfere. Thus, it is not interference that deepens love, but deepening love that stimulates worried parents to interfere. The authors attempted to test the validity of these alternative explanations with other available data and concluded that these alternative explanations did not seem probable.

Data indicating that parental interference breeds passion are fascinating. When parents interfere in an "unsuitable" match, they interfere with the intent of destroying the relationship, not of strengthening it. Yet, these data warn that parental interference is likely to boomerang if the relationship survives. It may foster desire rather than divisiveness.

The preceding data lend some credence to the argument that the juxtaposition of agony and ecstasy in passionate love may not be entirely accidental. Although most people assume that agony follows love, it may be that it precedes it and provides the ground in which it can flourish. Loneliness, deprivation, frustration, hatred, and insecurity all appear capable—under certain conditions—of supplementing a person's romantic feelings. Passion demands physiological arousal, and unpleasant experiences are arousing.

B. Pleasant Emotional Experiences: Facilitators of Passion?

1. SEXUAL GRATIFICATION

We previously noted that Freud and others assumed the arousal associated with inhibited sexuality to be the foundation of romantic feelings. Yet both inhibited sexuality and gratified sexuality should be arousing. According to Masters and

Johnson (1966), sexual intercourse induces hyperventilation, tachycardia, and marked increases in blood pressure. According to Zuckerman (1971), during the initial, or excitement, phase of sexual arousal, the physiological reactions exhibited are "not specific to sexual arousal, but may reflect orienting to novelty, or emotions other than sexual arousal [p. 297]." In fact, many of the physiological responses typical of this phase are also characteristic of fear and anger. Zuckerman (1971) argued (on the basis of Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhard, 1953) that, "In general, only tumescence, vasodilation, genital secretions, and rhythmic muscular movements are characteristic of sexual arousal alone [p. 300]."

In brief, sexual experiences and the anticipation of such experiences are generally arousing. And religious advisors, school counselors, and psychoanalysts to the contrary, sexual gratification has probably incited as much passionate love as sexual frustration has.

Valins (1966) has demonstrated that even the erroneous belief that a woman has excited a man sexually can facilitate his attraction to her. Valins recruited male college students ostensibly to determine how males react physiologically to sexual stimuli. The men were told that their heart rate would be amplified and recorded while they viewed ten semi-nude *Playboy* photographs. The feedback the men received was experimentally controlled. They were led to believe that when they examined slides picturing some of the *Playboy* bunnies, their heart rate altered markedly; when they examined others, they had no reaction. (Valins assumed that men would interpret an alteration in heart rate as enthusiasm for the bunny and no change in heart rate as disinterest.)

The men's liking for the "arousing" and "nonarousing" slides was assessed in three ways: (a) they were asked to rate how "attractive or appealing" each pin-up was; (b) they were offered a photo of a pin-up in remuneration for participating in the experiment; and (c) they were interviewed a month later (in a totally different context) and were asked to rank the attractiveness of the pin-ups. Regardless of the measure of attraction used, men markedly preferred the pin-ups they thought had aroused them to those they thought had not.

2. NEED SATISFACTION

Psychologists have tended to focus almost exclusively on the contribution that sex makes to love, but other rewards are also important. People have a wide variety of needs, and, at any stage of life, many of their needs must remain unsatisfied. When a potential love object meets an important, unsatisfied need, the suitor is likely to have a strong emotional response. Such positive emotional responses should be able to provide the fuel needed for passion.

3. EXCITEMENT

Dangerous experiences are arousing. For some peculiar reason, psychologists almost inevitably assume that the arousal one experiences in dangerous settings is entirely negative. Thus, they typically label the physiological reactions which are provoked by dangerous experiences as "fear," "stress," or "pain." They then focus

upon ways individuals can learn to foresee and avoid actual danger, or to overcome unrealistic fears. (They almost seem to equate "excitement seeking" with wickedness. For example, in *Human Sexual Response*, Masters and Johnson (1966) reassured readers that "mere thrill seekers" were scrupulously prohibited from participating in their research. Presumably, one has to be properly respectful about sex before he is entitled to assist in scientific discovery.)

Almost never do psychologists acknowledge that it is sometimes fun to be frightened; that it is enjoyable to have a strong emotional response; that reactions to danger can be labeled in positive, as well as in negative, ways; that excitement is an antidote to boredom. One pioneer, Berlyne (1960), has recognized that "danger and delight grow on one stalk," and has systematically explored the conditions under which novelty and excitement are especially attractive to people.

Nonscientists appear to believe that arousal can be fun. Parachuting, skiing, and sportscar racing are valued by sports enthusiasts for the danger they provide. Passionate affairs are valued by many for their excitement. The individual who realizes that he is on dangerous ground may label the rush of passion that he experiences as "love," as well as "anxiety."

We have proposed a two-factor theory of passionate love. The preceding discussion has focused almost exclusively on one factor. We have discussed the idea that physiological arousal is a crucial component of passionate love, and that the stimuli often associated with fear, pain, and frustration, as well as those often associated with more positive experiences, may contribute to passionate love.

Let us now consider the circumstances that help push individuals to label their tumultuous feelings as "passionate love."

V. The Second Step in Generating Passionate Love: Labeling

What determines how an aroused individual will label his tumultuous feelings? The reinforcement paradigm helps us to pinpoint some of the factors that should affect the way individuals interpret the arousal.

A. *Children Are Taught How to Label Their Feelings*

An anarchic array of stimuli constantly impinge on a child. The child learns how to categorize these stimuli, to discriminate "important" categories of stimuli from "unimportant" categories. He also learns what reactions different categories of stimuli produce in a person.

Envision, for example, a little boy who is playing with a truck while his mother greets a newly arrived neighbor and her infant daughter. He is rubbing his eyes; he has missed his nap. Soon it will be dinner time; he experiences vague hunger pangs. While absorbed in the visitor's movements, he accidentally runs his truck over his hand; it hurts. He watches his mother talking and gesturing to the visitor

and her little girl. Her voice seems unusually high and animated. They all look at him. His nose tickles.

In response to this *complex* of factors, the boy becomes momentarily overwrought. He hides his face in his mother's skirt for a few seconds; and then peers out. What caused him to hide his face? What emotion is he feeling? Is he jealous of the little girl? Is he afraid of strangers? Is he playing a game? Is he angry because the truck hurt his hand? Is he trying to get attention?

His mother provides an answer for him. She says, "Don't be shy, John. Susan won't hurt you. Come out and meet her." His mother reduces a chaotic jumble of stimuli to manageable size. She instructs him that it is Susan's appearance that has caused his emotional agitation. She informs him that when one has an emotional reaction in the presence of strangers it is called "shyness." She also communicates that the other stimuli, his sore hand for example, are not responsible for his aroused state.

By the time one reaches adolescence, he has learned cultural norms concerning categories of stimuli (situations) that produce specific emotions. He has been painstakingly taught what the common emotions "feel" like. He may base his identification on: (a) the perception that he is generally aroused *plus* his knowledge of the situation; or (b) the perception that he is *generally* aroused *plus* his knowledge of the situation *plus* the perception that he is physiologically aroused in a *special* way. (Physiologists have not yet identified the extent to which each emotion is associated with unique and readily recognized physiological cues.) In any case, by adolescence, individuals are well trained in what stimuli go with what emotions.

B. Some Emotions Are Better Articulated Than Others

Children undoubtedly have clear perceptions as to what hate, embarrassment, jealousy, and joy are supposed to feel like. They get little practice in learning to discriminate more esoteric emotions, such as bliss, loathing, and contempt.

"Passionate love" is undoubtedly a poorly articulated emotion. Children receive little instruction as to the conditions under which "passionate love" is an appropriate label for one's feelings versus the conditions under which the passionate love label is inappropriate. Most parents assume that children are incapable of experiencing passionate love; they consider passion to be an adolescent phenomenon.

The fact that children are given only glimmerings of information as to the situations conducive to passion, and what passion is supposed to feel like, probably accounts at least in part for the fact that so many teenagers seem confused about the nature of love. "Dear Abby" frequently receives concerned letters asking, "How can I tell if I'm really in love?" Inevitably, she fails to provide an answer. Her stock reply is, "When you're in love, you'll know it; you won't have to ask." Perhaps "Dear Abby" doesn't know either.

Popular songs provide some instructions to teenagers concerning what love should feel like: "When your heart goes bumpety, bump . . . that's love, love, love" they are informed. [The notion that love can be identified by the presence of

physiological arousal, at least as evidenced by a quickened heart rate (or even, in severe cases, by cardiac arrest) is common in folklore—if new to social science.] The fact that adolescents often have only very general and somewhat vague notions about how to identify love suggests that situational factors should have a profound impact on whether they label a wide variety of states of generalized arousal as love or as something else.

C. Sometimes Individuals Experience a Mixture of Emotions

People sometimes have difficulty labeling their feelings because a number of potential labels could reasonably describe their aroused state. Consider, for example, the soldier who reports that when he received his first mail from home, he became extremely agitated. He is at a loss to explain just why the package had upset him. Was he feeling homesick? Perhaps the package was upsetting because it was a tangible reminder of how much he longed to be back home. Was he feeling lonesome? His girlfriend had sent the package; perhaps he hadn't realized how much he missed her. Was he feeling resentful? The package reminded him that people back home were free while he was stuck in foreign combat. Or was he worried? His girlfriend's accompanying letter mentioned problems with his car and with his application for admission to college.

When a myriad of labels are potentially appropriate labels for one's feelings, we might again expect social influences to have an unusually great impact on one's choice of label.

D. Determinants of Labeling in Ambiguous Situations

Schachter stated that individuals will label their emotional responses with the "most plausible" label available to them. Are there rules which help us predict what label will seem "most plausible" to the individual? The presence and salience of certain stimuli previously associated with a particular label undoubtedly play a role. But there are undoubtedly other factors which influence "plausibility." Many have argued that reinforcement principles pervade and influence all of human behavior. Walster, Berscheid, and Walster (1973) among other investigators have hypothesized that individuals will try to maximize their outcomes (where outcomes equal rewards minus costs). We would suggest that cost considerations influence one's choice of emotional labels, as well as other behaviors. The label that is likely to be socially approved, for example, would be more likely to be chosen over those which are not.

E. Everyone Loves a Lover: The Cultural Encouragement of Love

In our culture it is expected that almost everyone eventually will fall in love. Individuals are strongly encouraged to interpret a wide range of confused feelings as love. Linton (1936) made this point in a harsh observation:

All societies recognize that there are occasional violent emotional attachments between persons of the opposite sex, but our present American culture is practically the only one which has attempted to capitalize on these and make them the basis for marriage. The hero of the modern American movie is always a romantic lover, just as the hero of an old Arab epic is always an epileptic. A cynic may suspect that in any ordinary population the percentage of individuals with capacity for romantic love of the Hollywood type was about as large as that of persons able to throw genuine epileptic fits [p. 175].*

F. Cultural Norms Specify Whom It Is Reasonable to Love

1. I TOOK ONE LOOK AT YOU AND THEN MY HEART STOOD STILL

"It's not true that only the external appearance of a woman matters. The underwear is also important [Firestone, 1971, p. 134]." In our culture, people assume that passionate fantasies are inspired only by attractive human beings. If one admits that he is sexually attracted to a hunchback, an octogenarian, or a man with no nose, he is branded as sick or perverse.

The evidence suggests that most individuals docilely accept the prescription that beauty and sexual and romantic passion are inexorably linked. The best evidence we have suggests that teenagers and young adults are more enamored by the physical attractiveness of their dating partners than by the partners' intelligence, personality, or similarity.

In a typical study, Berscheid, Dion, Walster, and Walster (1971) took Polaroid snapshots of college males and females. Judges categorized each photo as attractive or unattractive. The experimenters then secured a dating history from the student. The physical attractiveness of female subjects was strongly related to their actual dating popularity. Attractive females had more dates within the past year ($r = .61$), the past month ($r = .50$), and the past week ($r = .44$). There was slight (but insignificant) relationship between the males' physical attractiveness and his dating frequency (past year $r = .25$; month $r = .21$; and week $r = .13$).

Byrne, Ervin, and Lamberth (1970) conducted a field study to determine the extent to which beauty and romantic attraction were related. Students were told that the study involved computer dating and that they had been matched by the computer with a partner who was similar or dissimilar in attitudes to themselves. During this initial interview, the experimenter unobtrusively evaluated the man and woman's physical attractiveness. The partners were introduced to one another and asked to spend the next 30 min on a coke date in the student union. They were told they should then return to the experimental room so that the experimenter could ask them about their first impressions of one another. Each subject indicated how sexually attractive his partner seemed, how much he thought he would enjoy dating him or her, and how much he would like this person as a spouse.

The physical attractiveness of both the male and the female were strongly associated with how desirable they were as a date. The more handsome a male,

*From *The Study of Man* by Ralph Linton. Copyright 1936 D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc. Reprinted by permission of Appleton-Century-Crofts, Educational Div., Meredith Corp.

for example, the higher his partner evaluated his sexuality (.69), his datability (.59), and his marriageability (.59).

Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, and Rottmann (1966) assessed the physical attractiveness of 752 college freshmen. (A panel of college sophomores rated them; they had only 5 sec or so in which to rate the freshmen's attractiveness.) A good deal of data concerning the freshmen's intelligence, personality, and attitudes were also assembled in subsequent university-wide testing. Freshmen were then randomly assigned a date for a large computer dance. During intermission, the freshmen were asked to say how satisfied they were with their computer date. The authors discovered that the sole determinant of how much students liked their date, how eager they were to date their partner again, and how often they subsequently asked their partner out for a date (it was determined later) was simply the physical attractiveness of the partner. The more physically attractive the date, the more he or she was liked and the more he or she was pursued. Efforts to find additional factors that would influence attraction failed. For example, students with exceptional social skills and intelligence levels were not liked any better than were students less fortunate in this regard. It seems, then, that it is helpful to be beautiful if you wish to inspire passion in your contemporaries.

2. LOVE AND MARRIAGE . . . GO TOGETHER LIKE A HORSE AND CARRIAGE

Winch (1952) has also argued that one's culture dictates whom one can or cannot love. He maintains that cultural norms legislate that for each person only a strictly prescribed subsample of the population is lovable or "marriageable." This acceptable group is called "the field of eligibles." Young, unmarried adults soon learn that if they fall in love with the right person—someone in their field of eligibles—they can marry and merit social approval. If they should fall in love with the wrong person, they must expect to encounter stinging social disapproval. In American culture, the "field of eligibles" consists of partners who are of the opposite sex, who are single, who are similar to oneself in age (marriages between elderly women and young boys are subject to more disdain than marriages between elderly men and young girls, however), similar in other social background variables, who have known one another for some time, and who desire one another sexually. (See Chapter 3 of this volume.)

Cultural influences are generally effective in determining whom one should love. (See Chapter 4 of this volume.) If parents try to impose additional restrictions on their children's choices, they may not be effective in guiding their children's selections. We recall that "unjustified" parental interference was found by Driscoll *et al.* not to deter the formation of romantic bonds.

3. INFATUATION VERSUS LOVE

In a poll conducted at three universities, college students were asked what one thing they most wished they knew about romantic love. A surprisingly frequent question was: "What is the difference between infatuation and love? How will I know when I am really in love and not just infatuated?" We have become increas-

ingly skeptical that infatuation and passionate love differ in any way—at the time one is experiencing them. Data provided by Ellis and Harper (1961), for example, suggest that the difference between infatuation and romantic love is merely semantic. Ellis reported that young adults use the term “romantic love” to describe relationships with the opposite sex that are characterized by strong positive affect and that *are still in progress*. They use the term “infatuation” to describe relationships with the opposite sex that were characterized by strong positive affect and that, for a variety of reasons, *were terminated*.

It appears, then, that it may be possible to tell infatuation from romantic love only in retrospect. If a relationship flowers, one continues to believe he is experiencing true love; if a relationship dies, one concludes that he was merely infatuated. We need not assume, then, that at the time one experiences the feeling, “true love” differs in any way from the supposed “counterfeit,” infatuation.

If an individual relabels his feelings as infatuation, rather than love, it may have important consequences for his subsequent behavior. In our culture, “romantic love” tends to be the *sine qua non* for marriage. Kephart (1967) found that in his sample, 65% of the college men would *not* marry a woman they did not love—even though she possessed every other characteristic they desired in a wife. (Women did not associate “love” with “marriage” to the same extent as did men. Only 24% of the women said that they would *not* marry a desirable man simply because they did not love him.)

Since romantic love is likely to lead to marriage in our culture, parents are eager to insure that young people label their feelings as “love” only if they are directed toward “right” people. When their children are attracted to the wrong sort—to someone outside their field of eligibles—the parents may try to persuade their children to label their attraction as “infatuation” and thereby decrease the likelihood that the children will marry unsuitable partners.

G. Cultural Reinforcements Determine Appropriate Labels

When an individual is experiencing arousal which he can reasonably label in a variety of ways, we speculated earlier that he will prefer to label his feelings in whatever way he anticipates will be most rewarded by others and will avoid labeling his feelings in ways that he can anticipate will provoke punishment. When one systematically applies such reinforcement principles to predicting how individuals will label their reactions there are some interesting ramifications. For example, at one period in American history (and perhaps even today), the “double standard” for sexual behavior was commonly accepted (see Reiss, 1960). This standard insisted that “nice” girls must not have sexual intercourse before marriage. If, however, they were “in love,” especially if they were engaged, and particularly if they married soon after, transgression was forgivable. These restrictions did not apply to men. Men were supposed to have some sexual experience before marriage. In fact, in many circles a man who had made many sexual conquests was held in high regard.

How would we expect these inconsistent sex-specific, social norms to affect the way men and women labeled sexual arousal? Cost considerations would predispose men and women to choose quite different labels for precisely the same type of physiological reaction. When a man became aroused in a sexual context, he could afford to frankly label his reaction as "sexual excitement." A woman could not. She had most to gain from convincing herself that passion equaled love since such a label allowed her to have both sexual relations and self-respect.

Given such a reward structure, it is not surprising that people soon came to believe that men are sexier than women, and that it is women who are the romantics.

H. Individual Expectations

We have argued that whether or not an individual is susceptible to "falling in love" will depend on the expectations and reward structure of his culture and his reference group. An individual's own expectations should also determine how likely he is to experience love.

1. SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND LOVE

The individual who thinks of himself as a nonromantic person should fall in love less often than an individual who assumes that love is an inevitable and recurring experience. The nonromantic may experience the same feelings that the romantic does, but he should code them differently.

2. SELF-ESTEEM AND LOVE

A person who assumes he is unlovable should have a difficult time finding love. An individual conveys his expectations in subtle ways to others; these expectations should influence the way his partner labels *her* reactions. The insecure man who habitually complains to his girlfriend: "You don't love me, you just think you do; if you loved me, you wouldn't treat me this way," and then itemizes evidence of her neglect, may—by interpreting his girlfriend's actions for her and in a damaging way—alter her feelings for him. Alternately, a man with a great deal of self-confidence, may by his unconscious guidance induce an unreceptive woman to agree that her feelings for him should be labeled love.

3. BACKGROUND FACTORS AND LOVE

Wide variations exist in the feeling states individuals associate with "passionate love." The boy brought up on the sunny lyrics of: "What a day this has been. What a rare mood I'm in. Why it's almost like being in love . . ." is likely to assume that love is a positive experience. For him love is likely to be associated predominantly with esthetic reverence, sexual ecstasy, excitement, and joy.

An individual brought up on a diet of: "Can't help loving dat man. . . ." "I should hate, yet I love you . . ." "You've got me in between the devil and the deep blue

sea . . .," or "Bill Bailey, won't you please come home . . ." is likely to assume that love is a negative experience—a state inexorably linked to sexual deprivation, longing for appreciation, and the shame of rejection and neglect.

4. ATTITUDES TOWARD DEPENDENCY AND LOVE

Dependency is an important theme in much of the romantic love literature. When one imagines the flawless partner, or is lucky enough to find in real life a person who can satisfy many of one's desires, an awareness of the extent to which one could be dependent on that other, how much one needs the other, is a frequent concomitant. But when lovers realize they are about to become or have become dependent on the loved one, they may experience conflicting reactions.

On one hand, their awareness of how much joy the loved one may bring them should cause lovers to further appreciate each other. On the other hand, their awareness of dependency may be upsetting: First, the more the benefits the loved one provides, the more the dependent lover has to fear should the loved one no longer love him. Second, adults are supposed to be independent; weak, dependent adults are scorned. One prominent theorist, Maslow (1954), exemplified the subtle way we cast aspersions on a person who reveals his dependency. Maslow argued that there are two types of love: (a) an inferior type of love characteristic of "nonactualized," ordinary mortals—*D love*, or deficiency love, where one loves another for what the other can do for them; and (b) that rare and superior type of love characteristic of "self-actualized" people—*B love*, or love for the other's being.

Because dependency is both delightful and disturbing, most individuals are intensely ambivalent about becoming dependent on another. A number of romantic love theorists have commented upon this ambivalence. For example, Blau (1964) noted that in romantic love, dependency "has a frightening aspect." Reik (1963) and Klein and Riviere (1953) associated "anxiety of dependency" and "fear of dependency" with love. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) ascribed the "ambivalence which frequently dominates heterosexual love relationships" to the threat to independence which a person tries to delay "before it overwhelms him [p. 66]."

Those individuals who associate romantic love with dependency, and who have learned to fear deep reliance upon another person should be less vulnerable to passionate love.

VI. Summary

Psychologists know very little about passionate love. Thus, our chapter has had two goals: (a) To describe some of the sparse experimental laboratory data that exist on the topic of passionate love; (b) To marshal evidence that supports the two-

component theory, which seems to handle the complex and elusive phenomenon of passionate love. According to this theory, two conditions—physiological arousal and appropriate labeling—are necessary if an individual is to experience a “true” emotional response. It was suggested that a wide variety of arousing experiences may have the potential to fuel passion. What may be crucial in determining what emotion the person will experience is how the individual labels his aroused state. A number of cultural and personality factors should affect whether individuals label their feelings as passionate love, or as something else. A great deal of research must be done before this approach gains the status of even a tentative theory of romantic love. At the present time, however, the two-component theory seems to be an effective way to organize the little we know about love.

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