

**BUTTERFLIES, TURBULENCE, GROWTH:
VOICES OF LOVE**

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ABSTRACT

Butterflies, Turbulence, Growth:

Voices of Love

Donna Safatli

Almost everybody knows what love feels like. That euphoria. That torment. Those sleepless nights and restless days. Awash in ecstasy or apprehension, you daydream during class or business, forget your coat, drive past your turn, sit by the phone, or plan what you will say –obsessed, longing for the next encounter with “him” or “her.” Then you meet again, his slightest gesture stops your pulse. Her laugh dizzies you. You take foolish risks, say stupid things, often hug and kiss ---oblivious to the entire world as you tumble through a fever, breathless, etherized by bliss.

Despite thousands of poems, songs, books, operas, dramas, myths, and legends that have portrayed love since before the time of Christ, despite the countless times a man or woman has deserted family and friends, committed suicide or homicide, or pined away because of love, few sociologists have given this innate passion the study it deserves.

This study was carried out to determine how people felt about love and had experienced love and how it changed them. In-depth interviews were conducted with 7 men and 6 women in the Montreal region. The participants revealed their experiences with attraction, dating, love, and conflicts. I found that people’s definitions and experience of love varied widely: they described love as warmth, being on the same wavelengths, chemistry, butterflies, like floating on a cloud, an addiction, a drug, like being the creator, weird, electrical and, if love is not working out, as a torment. The thesis discusses theories of love from Plato to courtly love to modern psychological theories of Clyde and Susan Hendricks, Elaine Hatfield and Susan Sprecher. Helen Fisher describes love as chemical; PEA; Zygmunt Bauman describes post modern love as liquid; Anthony Giddens compares romantic love to confluent love. My respondents discussed how love changed as they matured, has many phases and many levels. More research is required on this topic which has been sadly neglected in sociology and also on the many issues related to love, from conflict resolution to divorce – but this is a start.

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INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years, poets have sought to capture love in words. We have for centuries concocted stories and plays about the cycles of love, the way it morphs and changes over time. The way passion grabs us by our flung-back throats and then leaves us for something saner. Loves symptoms are familiar enough: a drifting mooniness in thought and behavior, the mad conceit that the entire universe has rolled itself up into the person of the beloved. Love is a conviction that no one on earth has ever felt so torrentially about another human being before.

Love is mysterious, magical, complex, difficult, imaginary, inspiration, intuitional, ecstasy and torment, freedom and slavery. Poets and song writers would be in a fine mess without it. Plus, it makes the world go round.

We have relied on stories to explain and identify with the complexities of love; tales of the jealous Gods and arrows. We have also relied on movies such as the *Note Book* to recognize and comprehend the true meaning of love. "Love is all you need!" sang the Beatles interminably. Love holds central in everybody's everyday life. We spend years, sometimes lifetimes pursuing it, preparing for it, longing for it. Some of us even die for love.

When we ask "what is love?" we call into question something basic to the way we relate to other people and to the world. We are wondering about our very existence. Is love a possibility for every human being? Must "love" happen to me if I am to be fully human? Is it as Kahil Gibran (1992) has written that only with love will I laugh

all my laughter, cry all my tears? Is love real? Could it be that love is a type of self deception, a futile wish for something divine? Is romantic love a fairytale thing, a foolish thing? Could it be biology: an incentive, a lure toward the procreation of the human race? Is it an artifact of culture, prescribed and constructed for various societal purposes? Is it a hoax perpetrated on the unsuspecting? Is love all these things? And more? Is “what is love?” an absurd and unanswerable question?

Everyone has ideas about what love is, and their beliefs and disbeliefs have influenced our perception of love. Many explanations have been offered for “an obvious world of two.” Considering these explanations seems an important step on the way to understanding the experience of love. And it is an experience that is hardly unique to our culture.

Researchers report finding evidence of romantic love in 147 of 166 different cultures they studied in a recent cross-cultural comparison (Jankowiak & Fischer, 1992). Romantic love occurs even in most preliterate societies. The apparent absence of romantic love in the remaining 19 cultures, the investigators suspect, was most probably due to the limitations of their study methods (Gelman, 1993).

Our culture idealizes the concept of romantic love. Thus we readily identify with the plight of the “star-crossed” lovers in *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*, who sacrificed themselves for love. We learn that “love makes the world go round” and that “love is everything.” Virtually all of the participants in the Janus and Janus nationwide survey (96% of men and 98% of women) reported that love is important to them (Janus

& Janus, 1993). Like other aspects of sexual and social behavior among humans, the concept of love must be understood within a cultural context. Luckily (or miserably), we have such a context in the Western culture.

Romantic Love in Contemporary Western Culture

The experience of romantic love, as opposed to loving attachment or sexual arousal per se, occurs within a cultural context in which the concept is idealized. Western culture has long tradition of idealizing the concept of romantic love, as represented, for instance, by romantic fairy tales that have been passed down through the generations. Later perhaps, the concept of romantic love blossoms with exposure to romantic novels, television and film scripts, and the heady tales of friends and relatives.

During adolescence, strong sexual arousal, along with an idealized image of the object of our desires, leads us to label our feelings as love. We may learn to speak of love rather than lust, because sexual desire in the absence of a committed relationship might be viewed as primitive or animalistic. Being “in love” ennobles attraction and sexual arousal, not only to society but also to oneself. Unlike lust, love can be discussed at the dinner table. If others think we are too young to experience “the real thing”, which presumably includes knowledge of and respect for the other person’s personality traits, our feelings may be called “puppy love” or a “crush.”

Western society maintains much of the double standard toward sexuality. Thus, women are more often expected to justify sexual experiences as involving someone

they love. Young men usually need not attribute sexual urges to love, so men are more likely to deem love a “mushy” concept. The vast majority of people in the United States nonetheless believe that romantic love is a prerequisite to marriage (Fisher, 1992).

Romantic love is rated by young people as the single most important reason for marriage.

Which is the most romantic gender? Although the question may well incite an argument in mixed company, the Janus and Janus (1993) nationwide survey of adult Americans found that a slightly greater percentage of the single men (82%) than of the single women (77%) perceived themselves as romantic. Yet among married people, the figures were reversed, with the 79% of the women describing themselves as romantic compared to 72% of men. Perhaps there is some truth to the stereotype that men are more romantic during the courtship stage of relationships than during marriage. Then again, maybe self-perceptions of being romantic don’t quite jibe with the reality. In any event, you can explore yourselves as a romantic or a realist when it comes to love by completing the accompanying Love Attitudes Scale (Knox, 1983).

When reciprocated, romantic love is usually a source of deep fulfillment and ecstasy (Hatfield, 1988). When love is unrequited, however, it can lead to emptiness, anxiety, or despair. Romantic love can thus teeter between states of ecstasy and misery (Hatfield, 1988). Perhaps no other feature of our lives can lift us up so high or plunge us as low as romantic

The Research on Love

Love's Definition

A classical type of definition of love (that is, one in which all experiences named love share a common essence) has yet to evolve within sociology. There is no agreement upon a definition of romantic or passionate love. Hatfield (1988), with her colleague Berscheid, distinguishes between passionate and companionate love. "Passionate love involves ecstasy/misery. Companionate love flourishes in a mixture of pleasure sprinkled occasionally with real-life frustrations" (p. 207). The difference here is one of emphasis, unlike Rubin's (1970) distinct differentiation between loving and liking. Dorothy Tennov (1979) originated the concept of limerence to distinguish between love and "being in love" (limerence). She characterizes people as limerents or nonlimerents (those that love without ever being "in love"). John Lee (1973, 1998) developed research-based descriptions of love-styles. Using a color analogy to facilitate understanding of his concept, he describes primary styles (Eros, Storge, Ludus) and secondary styles (Pragma, Mania, Agape). His taxonomy has been used as a basis for psychometric measures of love.

Beverly Fehr and James Russell (1991) take a prototypic approach to love's definition. They believe that love, as a concept, has an internal structure but "fuzzy borders" (p. 426). Experiences identified as love (love for a child, love for a romantic partner, love for a friend) share a family resemblance: There are no sharp boundaries between members and nonmembers of categories of love. This may explain the inability

to achieve consensus on a definition of love. People can comprehend and use the concept of love without identifying necessary and sufficient features of it. Capellanus's definition of love in the twelfth century:

A certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace.

(Capellanus, 1959, pp. 28)

And Paz five centuries later "*love goes beyond the desired body and seeks the soul in the body and the body in the soul. The whole person*" (1996, pp. 26) are disparate and say little, we know that they are dealing with the same thing. We know what human phenomenon they have in mind.

The Research Problem

Love has been sadly neglected in sociology. Sex has been endlessly researched, as Foucault wrote three volumes on its history (Synnott, 2006). Millions of dollars are spent on the research, with the famous Chicago study typically entirely quantitative with no mention of love (this fixation on numbers rather than people's thoughts and emotions is very much part of the problem of contemporary sociology, in my view. Perhaps it is the reason words cannot describe its essence, the root of our basic nature.

Controversies rage about prostitution versus eroticism, abortion rights, and the Clinton-Lewinski matter and Congress, priests, lawyers, ethicists, politicians, biologists

all debate sex. Journals on sexology are endlessly published such as the *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* and departments of Sexology have been established; yet there are no departments or journals or, at my university, even courses neither on love nor on the emotions generally.

The core of our identities as mothers and fathers, husband and wives, and lovers requires, certainly, the same central place in our discipline that it has in our lived lives. And as most likely our prime cultural value, love deserves the same place in Social Science that it has in our hearts.

The focus of this study is exploring the perceptions of young love in particular and how love has an impact on these people's lives. What is love? How does love affect an individual? A hypothesis is not suitable for the research I have conducted as it is an exploratory ground-breaking qualitative study, a relatively unstudied topic gazing through a Sociological perspective lens.

The purpose of this research is to explore perceptions of intimate love and serves to illuminate the impact it has on our lives. Differences in the many conceptions and perceptions of love will help us better understand how love is expressed differently and even shared across cultures and societies and perhaps changes over time.

This was done by composing a semi-structured questionnaire to be used via in-person interviews to ensure rapport and high response rates. The respondents selected are between the ages of approximately 20 and 30 years of age. The sample involves mainly young adults in the Montreal region. The questions serve as open-ended as

possible in order to ensure that experiences of romantic love is adequately and freely expressed.

The organization and progression of the thesis is as follows: Chapter one is the historical background of love designed to illuminate how many different “ideas” of love have changed over time. Here I will be highlighting the works of Plato, Freud, Andreas Capellanus, as well as the infamous love story of the star-crossed lovers, Romeo and Juliette. Chapter two is designed to analyze the contemporary academic tide with more recent publications such as Anthony Giddens’ *Transformation of Intimacy*, Zygmunt Bauman’s *Liquid Love*, Helen Fisher’s *Anatomy of love*, and Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion: the Codification of Intimacy*. Chapter three and four present an analysis of the interviews. The conclusion is very important as it compares the experiences of the respondents to the theories presented previous.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

STUDYING LOVE

When I made the decision to study the experience of love, I found I was hesitant, even defensive, in acknowledging the topic to my colleagues. Coming across Robert Burton's (1621/1977) discourse on "lovel melancholy," I felt a rush of kinship. Burton prefaces his work with a justification for it, in the certainty that he will be censured for writing on "too light" or "too comical" a subject – one fit only for "a wanton poet, a feeling lovesick gallant, an effeminate courtier or some such idle person" (p. 3). He defends himself as a grave, discreet man who has no choice but to discourse on "lover matters" because love is a species of melancholy. Like Burton, I think I have been concerned that, with love as my subject, I may not be taken seriously. When students have asked me what I am writing my thesis on, my response has always led them with the reaction of a smile and a bob of the head. Some have gone so far as to say, "Oh, well that's fun".

In the past, psychologists have avoided this area of study "for fear of risking alienation and ridicule from the general scientific community" (Berscheid, 1988, p. 359). Ellen Berscheid (1988), Ph.D., a psychologist at the University of Minnesota, speaking from experience, made explicit that in the recent past one's scientific mantle was

stained if one was frivolous enough to do research on love (p. 360). It seems paradoxical that the study of love and its manifestations is so suspect. Have not all great thinkers, at least since Plato, considered love as central to the human condition? Can the study of the *psyche* be accomplished if love is out of bounds? Even B.F. Skinner, the eminent behaviorist (and staunch opponent of intervening variables), believed that love is an important factor in understanding human behavior (Evans, 1968).

Much of the hesitance regarding this focus of research came from the way in which we think about science. Science is about the scientific method (problem solving), experimental procedures, hypothesis testing, control of variables, rigor. A philosophy of science is evolving, however in which the study of human perceptions, intentions, and real-life situations is viewed as authentic research (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990; House, 1991). This perception is propitious to the study of love. There has also been a change within psychology from an exogenic model of knowledge to an endogenic one (Gergen & Davis, 1985). With this change in focus from the external environment of the human body to what is happening within it, psychologists became more interested in emotion. The publication in 1988 by Yale University Press of a landmark book, *The Psychology of Love* (edited by an eminent cognitive scientist, Robert Sternberg), further legitimized research on love. According to Berscheid (1988), the book's very existence was more remarkable than anything between its covers. Love is becoming more acceptable as a focus of inquiry (Fisher, 1992; Giddens, 1992; Bauman, 2004).

There is however, more than the scientific approach at issue when studying love. Martha Nussbaum (1990), a philosopher, raises a question, not about *how* or *who* should write about love, but *whether*. She supports the idea that she finds illustrated within Marcel Proust's work that it is through narrative art that life can assume a shape and become real. She says that we must consider Samuel Beckett's stance as well: Art forces life to assume a shape rather than letting it be as it is – messy and formless. Should we let love be?

Wisconsin's U.S. Senator William Proxmire once protested federal research funds being used to study romantic love, by awarding researchers such as Elaine Hatfield and her colleagues with a "Golden Fleece Award". Claiming they were "fleecing" taxpayers with their "unneeded" and "frivolous" scientific research (Hatfield, 2006). The senator had launched his well-publicized campaign against a bevy of love and sex researchers by firing off the first in a series of serio-comic press releases:

I object to this not only because no one – not even the National Science Foundation – can argue that falling in love is a science; not only because I'm sure that even if they spend \$84 million or \$84 billion they wouldn't get an answer that anyone would believe. I'm also against it because I don't want the answer.

I believe that 200 million Americans want to leave some things a mystery, and right at the top of the list of the things we don't want to know about is why a man falls in love with a woman and vice versa...

So National Science Foundation – get out of the love racket. Leave that to Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Irving Berlin. Here if anywhere Alexander Pop was right when he observed, "If ignorance is bliss, tis folly to be wise." (cited in Hatfield & Walster, 1978, p. viii).

As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, he took it upon himself to ferret out waste in government spending. One of the first places he looked was the National

Science Foundation, a federal body that both funds research and promotes scientific progress.

Upon inspection, Proxmire found that Ellen Berscheid, a psychologist at the University of Minnesota who had already broken new ground scrutinizing the social power of physical attractiveness, had secured an \$84, 000 federal grant to study relationships. The proposal mentioned romantic love; Proxmire loudly denounced such work as frivolous tax dollars ill spent. In terms that will sound all too familiar to today's International Academy of Relationship Research members, the Senator urged the United States Senate to seize control over the National Science Foundation and scientific granting and peer review process.

The publicity that was given Proxmire's pronouncements not only cast a pall over all behavioral science research, it set off an international firestorm around Berscheid that lasted the next two years. Colleagues were fired. Her office was swamped with hate mail. She even received death threats (Livermore, 1993). Proxmire's attacks generated so much public attention that before Proxmire's siege ended, 13 scientists exploring the mysteries of love and sex had been attacked for their "scientific boondoggles" and "con games" – including such luminaries, as Robert Baron, and Zick Rubin in addition to Elaine Hatfield and Ellen Berscheid, introduced above (Hatfield, 2006).

Amazingly, in that dangerous political climate, many distinguished citizens came to their support. Senator Barry Goldwater, three University of Chicago Nobel Prize

Winners, and the Editor of Science wrote laudatory letters to the *New York Times*, The *Capital Times*, and *Science* magazine. So did columnist James Reston. In his column in *The New York Times*, Reston wryly agreed that love will always be a mystery.

But if the sociologists and psychologists can get even a suggestion of the answer to our pattern of romantic love, marriage, disillusion, divorce – and the children left behind – it would be the best investment of federal money since Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase. (cited in Hatfield, 2006).

In the long run, the strategy backfired, much to Proxmire's chagrin. It generated increased scientific interest in the study of love, propelling it forward. Hatfield states: "I have hung around long enough to see things change for the better." (Hatfield, 2006, p. 8)

Scholars have certainly dared to say what love is and their beliefs and disbeliefs have influenced our perception of love. Many explanations have been offered for this experience.

OUT OF THE LAB AND INTO THE FIRE

For many scholars, romantic love comes directly from the troubadours of the eleventh or twelfth centuries (Valency, 1958; Lewis, 1936; de Rougemont, 1940/1956; Loudin, 1981; Seidman, 1991). The songs of these wandering poets of Provence celebrated *fin' amors*, pure love. The troubadours' poetry told of love in many forms – sexual, coarse, spiritual, and idealistic – but in their *canso maestrada*, the doctrine of love was the song of a suppliant knight to an unattainable lady (Valency, 1958). Sometimes the knight fell in love with his lady without seeing her; news of her charms was enough. He pledged himself to her, and lived to be worthy of her love. This total

devotion to an ideal of female goodness and beauty was the reversal of the real relation of man and woman in society. These were feudal times.

We can see this vision of love most clearly in the court of Eleanor, Queen of England and Duchess of Aquitaine. It was Eleanor's chaplain, Andreas Capellanus, who wrote *Tractatus amoris & de amoris remedio* (later translated as *The Art of Courtly Love*). Eleanor's daughter, Countess Marie of Champagne, was the patron of Chretien de Troyes, a writer of passionate love stories (Loudin, 1981). His chivalrous stories told of the conflicts between love and society. They always ended happily with heroic, if simple, solutions (Singer, 1984b). Eleanor and Marie established a kind of a game they called a Court of Love. They created a code of manners, a set of rules for this Court. When court was called, everyone would gather to consider some problem of love, to debate and banter. Consider this example of a love problem: Eleanor was asked to choose her preference in a lover between a young man of no virtue and a virtuous old man. Her answer was the latter, of course: Love is based on merit and virtue is to be prized (Ackerman, 1994). Love was about virtue but, according to this Court, not about marriage. Capellanus wrote:

We consider that marital affection and the true love of lovers are wholly different and arise from entirely different sources, and so the ambiguous nature of the word prevents the comparison of the things and we have to place them in different classes.

(quoted in Singer, 1984b, p.81)

Marriage was a forced choice based on economics, politics, and familial obligations; lovers' feelings were free and personal.

How did this vision of amorous relations come to be so influential? It was actually Gaston Paris, a French medievalist, who in 1883 coined the term *amour courtois* (courtly love) and argued that it was a social ideal, a system of love (Singer, 1984b). C.S. Lewis in his 1936 work, *The Allegory of Love*, popularized that view for us today. Lewis told us that the French poets of the eleventh century “discovered or invented or were the first to express” the romantic species of passion nineteenth – century poets still write about (p. 4). Denis de Rougemont (1940/1956), in *Love in the Western World*, decries the way the stories of the troubadours, like the story of Tristan and Isolde, have led us to embrace passion. He believes we desire suffering, separation, and death. Romantic love, for him, calls to the dark side of human nature and leads us away from the life-enhancing love of marriage.

Maurice Valency (1958), an eloquent scholar and expert on the lyric tradition of the troubadours, finds the suggestion that they invented love to be extraordinary. He can tell us how the love poetry of the troubadours differs in important ways from the “amatory patterns” found in the literature of antiquity, but he finds the idea that a momentous psychological phenomenon was created rather ludicrous. Such revolution would have made the Renaissance seem a very minor event. There is no sign in the economic, political, or social life of the Middle Ages that any foundational change in the relations of men and women was occurring (Valency, 1958).

The songs of the troubadours have roots in foreign places. The Crusades gave men a glimpse of a different world and they brought some of that world home with

them. The influence of Arab poetry (such as that of Ibn Hazm), in which lovers are transformed in a merger of souls more delightful than any physical union, is evident in the ballads of Provence (Ackerman, 1994). There is also good evidence that romantic love was occurring outside the boundaries of Europe at this time. William Jankowiak and Edward Fischer (1992), in a cross-cultural study of romantic love, cite the most popular tale of the Sung Dynasty (928 –1233), “The Jade Goddess.” In this story, Chang Po loves a woman already engaged to another. His despair closely resembles that of the Romance ballads. Eloping, Chang and his lover suffer poverty and isolation and eventually are forced to return home. Chang tells her, “since heaven and earth were created you were made for me and I will not let you go. It cannot be wrong to love you” (p. 153). Words for a troubadour.

GREAT LOVE STORIES

Love stories are powerful. They shape our beliefs and behavior (de Rougemont, 1940/1956; Nussbaum, 1990) and in turn, derive their potency from our lived experiences (Nussbaum, 1990). Longus, the third – century A.D. author of “Daphnis and Chloe,” tells us in his prologue that he saw, while hunting in Lesbos, a painting of a love story. He is determined to tell the story he saw there. It is a tale that “will remedy disease, solace grief, bring fond recollections to him that has loved, and instruct him that has not loved” (Longus, 1953, p.3). Such are the uses of stories of love.

Great stories not only give us a rich description of phenomena and words to use in talking about them, they shape our experience. Leslie Fiedler (1992), author of *Love and Death in the American Novel*, suggests that literature (as it expresses and defines societal conventions) tends to influence “real life” more than life influences it. In *Love and friendship*, Allan Bloom (1993) writes: “Books about love inform and elevate the fantasy life of their readers and actually become part of the eros while teaching them about it” (pp. 30 – 31). Nussbaum (1990) in her collection of essays, *Love’s Knowledge*, puts forward a similar belief:

So literature is an extension of life not only horizontally, bringing the reader into contact with events or locations or persons or problems he or she has not otherwise met, but also, so to speak, vertically, giving the reader experience that is deeper, sharper, and more precise than much of what takes place in life. (p.48)

Nussbaum makes the point that reading novels puts us in a position both like and unlike real life. In reading we are active with the characters and emotionally connected with them, but we are freer from sources of distortions that in our own lives may impede our thoughts and actions. This distance from a situation – when coupled with the engagement a good story provides – allows us to think more clearly about it. If we were to speak of love, we need common words. Stories, shared works that all of us can read and discuss together, give us those words (Nussbaum, 1990). They may help us understand or open up for us the lover’s discourse. Reading novels is practice for falling in love (Nussbaum, 1990).

In what follows I have outlined a celebrated love story. I would have loved nothing more than to illustrate a variety of great love stories; however that is beyond

the scope of this paper. I've selected this particular story because it has been identified by one or more scholars (Ackerman, 1994; de Rougemont, 1940/1956; Nussbaum, 1990) as a prototypical or paradigmatic tale of love. The story has endured over several centuries within the culture. There is no space here to share the poetry and beauty of all the romantic myths. I hope, however, that by including at least this framework of such a primal love story in this work, we may attend to the images, ideas, and dreams of love that shape our own. The chapter closes with the story, *Romeo and Juliet*. For those of us in the West, it is Shakespeare's "star – crossed lovers" who come to mind whenever one thinks of love.

Romeo and Juliet

This story immortalized in a play by William Shakespeare (sometime between 1591 and 1597), originally appeared as *Storia di Verona* by Girolamo della Cortea and was told as a true story happening in 1303. The earliest English version is a 1562 poem by Arthur Brooke entitled *Romeus and Juliet*, founded upon a French novel, *Histoire de Deux Amans*, by Boisteau. Brooke's poem and translation of Boisteau's novel were likely Shakespeare's sources. For his play Shakespeare reduced the period of the story from months to days (Rolfe, 1904). *Romeo and Juliet* has been transferred to film several times, including an American musical adaptation, *West Side Story*.

Romeo and Juliet, in this story of Renaissance Italy, are the children of two feuding families, the Capulet's and the Montague's. They encounter one another at a Capulet feast and fall in love. Juliet meets Romeo again when he comes at night to the

garden of her home. As she stands on the balcony outside her room, he overhears her sighing for him:

O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?

Deny they father and refuse thy name:

Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love

And I'll no longer be a Capulet. (Romeo and Juliet, 2.2. 33-36)

Romeo makes his presence known, and when Juliet recognizes his voice, she asks how and why he came over the orchard walls: This place is death for a Montague. His answer: He loves, so nothing can stop him.

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls,

For stony limits cannot hold love out,

And what love can do that dares love attempt;

Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me. (Romeo and Juliet, 2.2. 66-69)

In this moving balcony scene, the two avow their passion and love. Romeo leaves before he is discovered but the next day, with the help of Juliet's nurse and friar, Laurence, to whom Romeo has turned, they are secretly wed. Their joy is short-lived as the family feud is heightened by the death of Mercutio, a comrade of Romeo, killed by Juliet's cousin, Tybalt. Romeo, angry and taunted at the fight, in turn kills Tybalt. He is banished from Verona.

Juliet, grief-stricken over the turn of events, is told she will be wed to one of her suitors, Paris. She turns to Friar Laurence for help. He conceives of a plan in which she will drink a vial of distilled liquor that will put her into a deep sleep for 42 hours. She will take it the next evening and thus seem dead when the members of her family come

to awaken her for her wedding. As a corpse, she will be then taken to the ancient Capulet vault. Death and deception unite in this love story. Death is used as a device to deceive; death is the disguise.

The friar reassures Juliet that he will write to Romeo, now in Mantua, and tell him of the plan. Romeo will surely come and, with the friar, be there for her waking. Juliet is afraid but, desperate; she does as the friar bids her. The lovers' ill fortune continues, however, when the friar with whom Laurence has sent his letter is quarantined en route. Instead of the letter, Romeo's servant Balthasar arrives with news of Juliet's death. Romeo rushes to the Capulet tomb. There, Paris finds him, and suspecting him of coming "to do some villainous shame" to the dead bodies, attacks Romeo. Romeo slays Paris, and dying, Paris asks to be placed in the tomb with Juliet. Romeo grants this wish and then turns to his still and silent bride. Wanting to join her in death, he takes a draft of poison and then kisses her. With his last breath he says, "Thus with a kiss I die." Friar Laurence and Balthasar arrive soon afterward at the tomb to find Romeo dead and Juliet awakening. They witness Juliet finding the body of her love, his lips still warm. She refuses to leave the tomb, and abandoned by the friar and alone, she snatches up Romeo's dagger. Juliet stabs herself and falls dying on her lover's body.

We are left with this terrible image of the lovers, forsaken by all, as triumphed over by death. Their innocent hopes for union seem to have been doomed from the start. And yet, this tragic ending can be seen in another light. These lovers chose death as a final act toward union. Their very dying is an expression of the belief that love

cannot be denied. The friar is left to explain the deaths to the families. In shame and grief, they resolve their longtime feud: "For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo" (Romeo and Juliet, 5.5. 309-310).

This story reflects our mythical images of love: Love comes as a thunderbolt from the sky or like a wind, shaking its victims. It strikes without warning as an arrow from the bow of a mischievous god. It seizes us through a love potion, unwittingly ingested. Lovers are struck, smitten. When love comes abruptly they respond impetuously, full of ardor. They love without reflection or calculation; love comes as an all encompassing passion. Even if they try struggle against it, to fight it, to hide it, to overcome it, they cannot. The love story overturns society (Campbell, 1968). Love changes everything.

The power of this story and others such as Tristan and Isolde, despite the hubris, the transgressions, the madness, we are on the side of the lovers. We sense that through the stories are over, the love is not. These tales seem to take us beyond the grave to an image of lovers finding a togetherness that eluded them in life. There is a palpable hope in the telling of these tales that death is not the end: Love ultimately triumphs.

There is irrationality to this, of course. Our mythical tales are meant to touch us in a way logic does not. They touch us emotionally, revealing dreams, phantoms of our collective imagination. Considering love stories allows us to recognize some subconscious images of love, images that influence us unawares.

CHAPTER TWO

LOVE UNDER A MICROSCOPE

MODELS OF LOVE

In this chapter we will first be considering the psychological models of love. Psychological discusses the topic of love early on. Then we will be looking at sociological and anthropological perspectives, notably Fisher (1992), Giddens (1992), and Bauman (2003).

Theodor Reik (1941), who wrote an early, major psychological treatise on love, *Of Love and Lust*, did so because he couldn't shake off the question he heard posed one night at the opera:

You who do know
All the heart's turns,
Say is it love now
That in me burns? (pp. 10)

Reik heard it as a challenge to psychologists and analysts who claim to be in the know: What is love? Do you really know? In his era the psychological perspective was primarily psychoanalytical, that is, love was a goal-inhibited form of the sex drive. Reik, however, believed love was different from sex and noted, "Psychologists discuss sex very fully nowadays, but there is a conspiracy of silence about love" (p. 10 – 11). Reik broke the silence, but not many voices followed him.

Irving Singer (1987) believes that it is methodological qualms that keep many scientists from researching love, as if this aspect of human nature is too delicate or elusive to warrant scientific analysis. When I examined the way in which psychologists are attempting to make sense of love, I much appreciated their qualms; however, it still left me unsatisfied.

The Measure of Love

Zick Rubin's (1970) measurement of romantic love is a landmark work that stimulated the development of several other tools. Tools that psychologists use to measure love include the Love Attitude Scale (LAS), the Passionate Love Scale (PLS), the Triangular Theory of Love Scale and the Love Attitude Scale.

An example of an investigation of love within the discipline is a study that was focused on adolescent love. Hatfield, Brinton, and Cornelius (1989) tested the hypothesis that anxious adolescents are more likely than others to experience passionate love. Forty-one children between 12 and 14 years of age completed a trait anxiety measure. They were asked if they could have anyone in the world as a boyfriend or girlfriend, whom would they pick? They then completed the Juvenile Love Scale (JLS). Hatfield and her colleagues define passionate love as a "state of intense longing for union with another"; "It is a state of profound physiological arousal" (p. 271). The JLS is designed to "tap the cognitive, physiological, and behavioral indicators of 'longing for union' in children" (p. 271). Multigression analysis was used to explore the relationships between anxiety, gender, age, and JLS scores. Anxiety scores were

significantly related to the JLS scores. The researchers concluded that adolescents who are anxious are “also especially likely to have experienced passionate love” (p. 287).

Despite the adherence to the scientific model evident in this study, I do wonder if these researchers have truly discovered that anxious 12-year-olds have experience with passion. It seems to me there could be an alternate explanation for their results: The physiological arousal items on the anxiety measure correlated with the ones on the JLS.

Styles of love

The paradigm is also evident in a study that was focused on the different *styles* of love. Some psychologists speak in terms of *styles* of love. Clyde and Susan Hendrick (1986) developed a love attitude scale that not only suggests the existence of six styles of love, but measures all six styles among college students. The following is a list of these styles. Each one is exemplified by statements similar to those on the original scale.

1. *Romantic Love (eros)*: “My lover and I were attracted to one another immediately”
2. *Game-Playing love (ludus)*: “I keep my lover up in the air about my commitment”
3. *Friendship (storge, philia)*: “The best love grows out of an enduring friendship.”
4. *Logical Love (pragma)*: “I consider a lover’s potential in life before committing myself.”
5. *Possessive, excited love (mania)*: “I get so excited about my love that I cannot sleep.”
6. *Selfless love (agape)*: “My lover’s needs and wishes are more important than my own.”

You may embody more than one of these styles. You are also more likely to change style with time and circumstance.

You may, for example, have spent the beginning of your college years as an Eros lover, passionate and quick to get involved, setting store on physical attraction and sexual satisfaction. Yet today you may find yourself happy as a Storge lover, valuing friendship-based love, preferring a secure, trusting relationship with a partner of like values.

There are Ludus lovers, game-players who like to have several partners at one time. Their partners may be very different from one another, as ludus does not act on romantic ideals. Mania-type lovers, by contrast, experience great emotional highs and lows. They are very possessive and often jealous. They spend a lot of their time doubting their partner's sincerity.

Pragma lovers are more pragmatic, for lack of a better word. They get involved only with the "right" man or woman, someone who fulfills their needs or meets other specifications. This group is happy to trade drama and excitement for a partner they can build a life with. In contrast, Agape, or altruistic, lovers form relationships because of what they may be able to give to their partner. Even sex is not an urgent concern of theirs. "Agape functions on a more spiritual level" Hendrick says.

Most people who are "in love" experience a number of these styles, but the Hendricks (1986) found some interesting gender differences in styles of love. College men are significantly more likely to develop game-playing and romantic love styles. College women are more apt to develop friendly, logical, and possessive love styles. There were no differences in selfless love and men and women seem to be equally passionate and altruistic in their relationships. On the whole, argues the Hendricks, the sexes are more similar than different in style. Furthermore, the Hendricks have discovered that at least one personality trait is strongly correlated to a love style. People with high self-esteem are more apt to endorse mania than other groups. "This

finding fits with the image of a secure, confident eros lover who moves intensely but with mutuality into a new relationship” they maintain.

The Hendricks and their colleagues found that romantically involved couples tend to experience the same kinds of love styles. They also showed that couples with romantic and selfless styles of love are more likely to remain together. A game-playing love style leads to unhappiness, however, and is one reason that relationships come to an end. “A substantial amount of passionate love” and “low dose of game-playing” love are key to the development of satisfying relationships.

Passionate-love scale (PLS)

Social psychologists Elaine Hatfield and Susan Sprecher define passionate love in terms of a state of intense physiological arousal and the cognitive appraisal of that arousal as love. The physiological arousal may be experienced as a pounding heart, sweaty palms, and butterflies in the stomach when one is in the presence of, or thinks about, one’s love interest. Cognitive appraisal of the arousal means attributing it to some cause, such as fear or love. Passionate love is therefore defined by:

A state of intense longing for union with another. Reciprocated love (union with the other) is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy. Unreciprocated love (separation) with emptiness; with anxiety or despair. A state of intense physiological arousal. (Hatfield & Webster, 1978, p. 9)

The perception that one has fallen in love is thus derived from several simultaneous events: (1) a state of intense physiological arousal that is connected with an appropriate love object (that is, a person, not an event), (2) a cultural setting that idealizes romantic love, and (3) the attribution of the arousal to feelings of love toward the person.

Drawing on this definition, Hatfield and Sprecher developed a Passionate Love Scale to “use in research to determine the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of passionate love” (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986, p. 394). The two colleagues devised a 15 – item questionnaire that measures thoughts and feelings Hatfield previously identified as

distinctive of this “intense longing for union with another” (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986, p. 389). The intense longing for union with another, the researchers maintained, manifested in cognitions, emotions, and behaviors. Once the components of passionate love were identified, the next step was to write items (various statements) to represent these components.

Lovers rate the applicability of a variety of descriptive statements using a nine-point response scale (ranging between ‘not at all true’ to definitely true’). A few of the statements which appear on the questionnaire are as follows:

- In the presence of _____, I yearn to touch and be touched.
- Since I’ve been involved with _____, my emotions have been on a roller coaster.
- I feel happy when I am doing something to make _____, happy.

To be passionately in love is to be preoccupied with thoughts of your partner much of the time. Also, you likely idealize your partner. Therefore, for those who are passionately in love would, for example, give “I feel happy when I am doing something to make _____, happy” a score somewhere between “moderately true” and “definitely true” on the PLS.

The questionnaire also asks subjects if they find themselves trying to determine the other’s feelings, trying to please their lover, or making up excuses to be close to him or her. It canvasses for both positive and negative feelings. “Passion can be ignited by pleasure and/or pain; by delight in the other’s presence or pain at the other’s absence.” (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986, 387). In other words, passionate lovers experience a roller coaster of feelings: euphoria, happiness, calm, tranquility, vulnerability, anxiety, panic, despair.

Contrary to popular myths that hold women responsible for romance, Hatfield finds that both males and females love with equal passion, “gender is not an important predictor of how much passionate love is experienced” (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986, p.

404). However, “men may be the first to fall in love, while women are more cautious” (p. 404) during early stages of dating. This was the largest gender difference between men and woman in the study. Another interesting result was that gender had no effect or interaction of how much passionate love is experienced with the stage of the relationship. Furthermore, “passionate love increases as the relationship goes from early stages of dating to the dating exclusively state, but then levels off by the more committed stage” (p. 405).

Hatfield has administered the test in places as varied as the U.S., Pacific islands, Russia, Mexico, Pakistan and, most recently, India (Hatfield & Berscheid, 1988) and has found that romantic love is not simply a product of the Western mind. It exists among cultures world-wide.

Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love

Psychologist Robert Sternberg (1986, 1987, 1988) offers a triangular theory of love. In his view, there are three distinct components of love:

1. *Intimacy (the top vertex of the triangle)*: the experience of warmth toward another person that arises from feelings of closeness, bondedness, and connectedness to the other. Intimacy also involves the desire to give and receive emotional support and to share one’s innermost thoughts with the other.
2. *Passion (the left - hand vertex of the triangle)*: an intense romantic or sexual desire for another person, which is accompanied by physiological arousal.
3. *Decision/Commitment (the right - hand vertex of the triangle)*: a component of love that involves *dedication* to maintaining the relationship through good times and bad.

(Sternberg, 1986, p. 119)

According to Sternberg's model, love can be conceptualized in terms of a triangle in which each vertex represents one of these basic elements of love (see appendix). The way the components are balanced can be represented by the shape of the triangle. For example, a love in which all three components are equally balanced would be represented by an equilateral triangle, (see appendix).

Couples are apparently well matched if they possess corresponding levels of passion, intimacy, and commitment (Sternberg, 1986). Compatibility can be represented visually in terms of the congruence of the love triangles, "the larger the triangle, the greater the amount of experienced love" (p. 128). Thus the smaller the triangle, the more severely mismatched involvements, and therefore major differences exist between the partners on all three components. Relationships may run aground when partners are mismatched. A relationship may fizzle if one partner experiences more passion than the other, or if one wants a long-term relationship when the other's idea of commitment is to stay the whole night.

According to Sternberg (1986), various combinations of the three elements of love characterize different types of love relationships. For example, *infatuation* (passionate love) is typified by strong sexual desire, but not by intimacy and commitment. The partners may each feel passionate love for the other, or, as in the case of Tom, such feelings may go unrequited:

Tom sat behind Lisa in physics class. Tom hated physics, but he could not say the same for Lisa. One look at her was enough to change his life. He had fallen madly in love with her. Instead of listening to the teacher or looking at the blackboard, he would gaze at Lisa throughout the class. Lisa was aware of this and was not happy about it. She did

not much care for Tom, and when he tried to start a conversation with her, she moved on as quickly as possible. Tom's staring and his awkwardness in talking to her made her feel uncomfortable. Tom, on the other hand, could think of little else besides Lisa, and his grades began to suffer as he spent the time he should have been devoting to his homework thinking about her. He was a man obsessed. The obsession might have gone on for quite some time had not both Tom and Lisa graduated that June and gone to different colleges. Tom never saw Lisa again, and after several unanswered love letters, he finally gave up on her.

(Sternberg, 1988, p. 123)

Sternberg (1988) went on to develop different types of love according to his triangular model (see appendix). He refers to liking as a basis for friendship. It consists of feelings of closeness and emotional warmth without passion or commitment. Liking is not felt toward passing acquaintances. It is reserved for people to whom one feels close enough to share one's innermost feelings and thoughts. We sometimes develop these intimate relationships without making the commitment to maintaining a long-term relationship that typifies other types of love. Liking may develop into a passionate love, however, or into a more committed form of friendship (called *companionate love* in Sternberg's model).

Can lovers also be friends, or shall the two never meet? "It is indeed possible to be in love with someone who is not also a friend. Being in love can refer to states of passion or infatuation, whereas friendship is usually based on shared interests, liking and respect" (Sternberg, 1988, p. 124). Sternberg's model recognizes that the intimacy we find in true friendships and the passion we find in love are blended in two forms of love: romantic love and consummate love. These types of love differ along the dimension of commitment, however.

Romantic love had both passion and intimacy but lacks commitment. Romantic love may burn brightly and then flicker out. Or it may develop into a more complete love, called *consummate love*, in which all three components flower. Desire is accompanied by a deeper intimacy and commitment. The flames of passion can be stoked across the years, even if they do not burn quite as brightly as they once did. Consummate love is most special, and it certainly is an ideal toward which many Westerners strive.

In *empty love*, by contrast, there is nothing but commitment. Neither the warm, emotional embrace of intimacy nor the flame of passion exists. With empty love, one's lover is a person whom one tolerates and remains with because of a sense of duty.

Sometimes a love relationship has both passion and commitment but lacks intimacy. Sternberg calls this *fatuous (foolish) love*. Fatuous love is associated with whirlwind courtships that burn brightly but briefly as the partners come to realize that they are not well matched. Intimacy can develop in such relationships, but couples who rush into marriage often find that the realities of marriage give the lie to their expectations:

They expect a marriage made in heaven, but do not realize what they must do truly to maintain such a marriage. They base the relationship on passion and are disappointed when the passion starts to fade. They feel shortchanged – they have gotten much less than they bargained for. The problem, of course, is that they bargained for too much of one thing [passion] and not enough of another [intimacy]. (Sternberg, 1988, p. 128)

In *Companionate love*, finally, intimacy and commitment are strong, but passion is lacking. This form of love typifies long-term (so-called platonic) friendships and those

marriages in which passion has ebbed but a deep and abiding friendship remains.

Berscheid and Walster defined companionate love as “the affection we feel for those with whom our lives are deeply entwined” (1978, p. 9).

Although romantic love may become transformed into companionate love, the process by which this transformation takes place remains vague. Companionate love need not be sexless or lacking in romance, however. Although passion may have ebbed, the giving and receiving of sexual pleasure can help strengthen bonds. Partners may feel that their sex lives have even become more deeply satisfying as they seek to please each other by practicing what they have learned about each other’s sexual needs and wants.

The balance among Sternberg’s three aspects of love is likely to shift through the course of a relationship. A healthful dose of all three components, found in consummate love, typifies, for many of us, an ideal marriage. At the outset of marriage, passions may be strong but intimacy weak. Couples may only just be getting to know each other’s innermost thoughts and feelings. Time alone does not cause intimacy and commitment to grow, however. Some couples are able to peer into each other’s deeper selves and form meaningful commitments at relatively early stages in their relationships. Other long married couples may remain distant or waver in their commitment. Some couples experience only faint flickering of passion early in the relationship. Then it becomes quickly extinguished. For some, the flames of passion

burn ever bright. Yet many married couples find that passion tends to fade while intimacy and commitment grow stronger.

Knowing about these components of love may help couples avoid pitfalls. Couples who recognize that passion exerts a strong pull early in a relationship may be less likely to rush into marriage. Couples who recognize that it is normal for passions to fade may avoid assuming that their love is at an end when it may simply be changing into a deeper, more intimate and committed form of love. This knowledge may also encourage couples to focus on finding ways of rekindling the embers of romance, rather than looking to escape at the first sign that the embers have cooled.

Although Sternberg's model is a major contribution to the psychological study of love, does it account for all the nuances and complexities of love? The model tells us little, for example, about the goals of love or the sources of love. Do poets, philosophers, and theologians, who have been writing about love for millennia, describe it more adequately?

Psychometrics is, the dominate method in psychology's pursuit of romantic or passionate love. In this method the researcher tries to determine the dimensions adequate to describe individuals' experiences. The dimensions are measured relative to one another and measures with low variability (poor indicators) are discarded.

The works indexed in Psychological Abstracts/PsychINFO under love are, on the whole, focused on scale development, cross-cultural comparisons, attachment and love-styles, correlates of satisfactory relationships, and love as experienced within special

groups, for example, the obese, drug abusers, parents of a disabled child, the depressed, or workplace colleagues. By far the most studied group is that of college and university students.

Overall, love research is suggestive of several things: that psychologists aspire to do socially relevant research; that they look to explain and predict; that they continue to use scales to measure love and to consider it in relation to other phenomena and across cultures; and that psychologists have approached love, as might be expected, from the vantage point of the dominant psychological model.

Psychologists are studying love. They are, however, choosing explanatory models and research methods that do not seem to reach love's essence. After reading the well-written and procedurally correct studies, I was left wondering if psychology has achieved in its study of love that what it sought in the first place. I think, at times, the research tells us more about psychology than it does about love.

DEFINING LOVE

Love Is Universal

The philosopher Robert Solomon (1988) argues that it is sexual desire that is universal but that 'I love you' is not in a universal language. For Solomon, there is nothing like it in most societies and no emotion quite to compare with it. Romantic love, he writes, is "anthropologically speaking quite rare" (p. 38).

William Jankowiak and Edward Fisher (1992), on the other hand, tell us that the anthropological study of romantic love is virtually nonexistent due to a widespread belief that love is unique to Euro-American culture. Questioning the truth of this, they used data from works of the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample to identify those cultures in which romantic love was present or absent. This study is useful in questioning whether or not romantic love exists as a human universal.

In their research, the presence of romantic love in a culture was accepted only if the ethnographer made a distinction between love and lust, and then noted the presence of love. The exception to this was if the ethnographer claimed that love was not present and yet provided a folktale or incident that belied this claim. Then the negative interpretation was rejected. In many ethnographies there were no detailed illustrations of romantic love so other clues were used, for instance, specific acts like elopement. Folklore proved to be the richest source of documentation. The presence of any of the following indicators in a culture qualified it to be coded as love present (pp. 151-152):

- Accounts depicting personal anguish and longing;
- Love songs or folklore that highlight the motivations behind romantic involvement;
- Elopement due to mutual affection;
- Native accounts affirming the existence of passionate love;
- The ethnographer's affirmation that romantic love is present.

At least one incident of passionate love was found in 88.5 % of the 166 cultures studied.

The remaining 19 cultures were coded as romantic love not present. Jankowiak and

Fisher believe, however, that it was most likely that the negative cases arose “from ethnographic oversight rather than any set of cultural norms that prevent an individual from experiencing romantic affection” (p. 153). These researchers conclude that romantic love is a near-universal, which is universal enough.

Has romantic love always been a human possibility? John McGraw (1994) in an article on the universe and universality of love writes that a sign of love’s significance and universality is that it is indisputable the dominant theme in all non-didactic and imaginative literature. “Of all the phenomena associated with human consciousness, love has been consistently the most universally compelling and celebrated” (p. 11). Martin Bergmann (1987) accepts the existence of love poetry 3, 500 years ago in ancient Egypt as evidence of love’s universality. Solomon (1988), on the other hand, disputes such claims. He believes that love is to be found only in the past few centuries and only in certain parts of the world. Examples of passionate love from the past that conflict with his belief he claims is “the rare emotion of one or two exceptional individuals (typically kings or queens or otherwise very privileged persons) hardly points to a general conception” (p. 25).

William James, considered the father of American psychology, argues that human love could not be a modern invention. Though James (1887/1987) writes little about romantic love, we find in his review of an 1887 book, *Romantic Love and Personal Beauty*, that he challenges the author’s position that romantic love in its “bare existence” and not just its “fashion” is a late product of evolution. James writes that

though “Mr. Finck devotes nearly two hundred pages of historical review to showing that love , as a cultivated modern person feels the passion, was unknown in any previous age,” he fails to do so. “So powerful and instinctive and emotion can never have been recently evolved” (p. 404). As James points out, it is the ideas about our emotion and the esteem in which we hold them that differ from generation to generation.

Diane Ackerman echoes James’ view in her 1994 work, *A Natural History of Love*. She argues that if you took a woman from ancient Egypt and put her in a Detroit automobile factory she would certainly be disoriented, but if she saw a man and woman stealing a kiss, she would smile and understand (p. xx). What would we find scholars saying of love if we went back to ancient times?

Love is the Good

“Love is the only thing I profess to know about,” says Socrates in Symposium (Plato, 1956, p. 75). Such a statement from this philosopher, it grasps us immediately. The banquet is a celebration at the home of Agathon, the playwright, in honor of the successful opening of one of his tragedies at the Theater of Dionysos. After dinner, the guests decide against a bout of heavy drinking. Eryximachos, a physician, advises them that drunkenness is a dangerous thing, especially if one has a headache from yesterday, and many of these guests have already been celebrating. They decide, instead, to entertain one another with talk. It is proposed that they talk of love, “for we should find

plenty to amuse us in the speeches” (p. 75). There are no women here; even the female flute players and dancers have been dismissed. This is how the most significant philosophical work on love is set: Male friends in the aftermath of excited celebration, full of dinner, speak of it.

Through the speeches of the guests, Plato explores and exposes various ideas about love. We recognize, however, that it isn't until the final oration, that of Socrates, that we are getting Plato's preferred rendering of love. Though he will affirm that love exists, Socrates claims he has learned about the affairs of love from Diatima of Mantinea. It is this woman who has taught him in a dialogue, not by experience, about love affairs. Love, Socrates has learned, is the desire for the perpetual possession of the good. It is excellence and beauty that we love. Through love we move toward a vision of the world as it truly is. For the author of Symposium, the world is better understood by the lover than the non-lover (Gould, 1963). Plato envisioned lovers seeking the good from one beloved and then another, always in a quest for the higher good. Through Socrates he tells us that the right way to go to love is to begin with a beautiful thing and then:

to mount for that beauty's sake ever upwards, as by a flight of steps, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies, and from beautiful bodies to beautiful pursuits and practices and from practices to beautiful learnings, so that from learnings he may come at last to that perfect learning which is the learning solely of that beauty itself, and may know at last that which is the perfection of beauty. (1956, 105-106)

In other words, aroused by the magnificence of another, the lover finds inspiration for his soul. Passion provides the energy for our journey toward perfection. Physical love for example, is the bottom of the hierarchy; and lust is a vice: a distraction. Though true lovers experience physical passion for one another, they resist acting upon it, for doing so would stop them in their progress toward the highest good.

In another work, *Phaedo*, Plato (1956) tells of a Socratic encounter in which passion and rationality are debated. Socrates meets Phaedrus going off to memorize a speech by the great orator Lysias. The speech is the persuasive appeal of a man to a boy in which the boy is asked to yield and become the man's lover. The man argues that he does not love the boy; he espouses the merits of the non-lover. The man's admiration is rational; his friendship is available; he is in control of his emotions. On hearing this, Socrates wants to define the exact nature of the subject addressed in the speech, and he engages Phaedrus (and us) in an exploration of love. Socrates arrives eventually at the idea that man needs to love with passion and spirit, he harnesses these metaphorically together as the black (sensory desires) and white (spirituality) winged horses of the psyche. Driven by the charioteer of reason, they may take him to the summit to view the Forms (which are what a good life is all about).

Platonic love is conditional. Plato believed that what true love demands from us is recognition of the good, the ability to determine what, or who, has moral excellence. The beloved must possess intrinsic value. It is that value, that goodness, which the lover

seeks to possess. For Plato, then, love is not for an individual self, but for universally good qualities.

The idea that love is based essentially on qualities possessed by the beloved continues to be debated. Blaise Pascal (1966), the French philosopher and mathematician also believed that we love qualities, not the self of another individual. Pascal argued that one's self is not the sum of one's qualities: There is a self that exists even if the qualities perish. One may lose one's judgment or one's beauty and not lose one's self. A body or soul can only be loved for the sake of qualities, not, Pascal wrote, "for some abstract substance" (p. 245)). *We*, as our *selves*, are not loved. Pascal ends this thought (Pensee # 688) with "Let us then stop scoffing at those who win honor through their appointments and offices, for we never love anyone except for borrowed qualities" (Pascal, 1966, 245).

Nussbaum (1990), in a renowned piece on "Romantic Rightness and Platonic Aspiration," argues the opposite: When we love we love more than qualities (goodness); we love an individual. She holds that "love is in its essence a relationship with a particular person and that the particular features of the person are intrinsic to its being the love that it is" (p. 334). Nussbaum imagines going out looking for someone with the good qualities of justice and wisdom or perhaps even advertising for him. The limited potential for success in this shows us that it fails to capture the way love happens. Determining the qualities of an individual is a complex thing: We become known to each other through the filters we put between others and ourselves (images, masks, and

disguises). “Often I will know only that this person is beautiful and exhilarating in some way I cannot yet describe” (p.328). Nussbaum argues for love as incommensurable. Loving someone who is intelligent and sensitive does not mean that we could love another in his or her place as long as this other has the same degree of intellect and sensitivity. Nussbaum finds that non-repeatable properties are essential to love – and there are properties necessary for a particular love, not in the qualities of the beloved, but in the love relation itself.

Love Is Lust

Ovid considered love “a shudder in the loins” (Ovid, 1982). Unlike Plato, who saw love as a spiritual force and the truest reality, Ovid reacted against such idealism and claimed love as lust and carnal desire. He saw love as based in the same reproductive zest as that of other beasts. He declared that humans should express themselves as lovers with civilized taste, style, and even panache. He set about to teach them how to do so. Conquest was the ruling metaphor in his “Art of Love”: pursuit, capture, and surrender.

Love, like war, is a toss-up. The defeated can recover,
While some you might think invincible collapse;
So if you’ve got love written off as an easy option
You’d better think twice. Love calls
For guts and initiative. (Ovid, 1982, 102-103).

This early Roman (43 B.C. – A.D. 17/18) saw the participants in the war games of love as equals. Unlike Plato, who saw love as the prerogative of men (Singer, 1987), Ovid thought women had the right to love, that is indulge themselves in the joys of the flesh, and that they made worthy opponents. His poems of love are sophisticated, even by contemporary standards. Full of wit and humor (often black), in them eros is depicted as a dangerous pleasure, one that makes life worth living. He writes of the details of finding, stealing, and securing a lover. He advises, in "Cures for Love," how to deliver oneself from love as well. Ovid provides a perspective of love as the serious, yet paradoxically playful, game of life. Love is not about finding universally good qualities in a beloved as a means of achieving a spiritually fulfilled life. Good qualities in a lover for Ovid mean finesse in lovemaking: "Technique is the secret." "Technique can control Love himself" (Ovid, p.166).

Arthur Schopenhauer (1818/1966) shares the basic proposition of Ovid that love is entirely rooted in the sexual impulse. Love for Schopenhauer is also essentially about the qualities of lovers. This is so because love, Schopenhauer believes, is nature's cunning device. In *The World as Will and Idea*, he tells us love causes so much trouble because what is decided by it is nothing less than the next generation. His argument is that no matter how ethereal and individual love seems it is the will to live of the whole species. He does not deny that people fall in love or that they act as the poets say. His point is that love is a biological stratagem. Passion is the way nature ensures that the right man mates with the right woman for the benefit of the species. Random sexual behavior does not produce the kind of offspring required for the next generation. So

lovers are filled with hunger for one another and tormented until they come together. Once sexual intercourse has taken place, however, things are different. The passion dissipates. Lovers discover they have deluded themselves: Love as happiness is an illusion. Schopenhauer says love never dies: Every generation will be duped in the same way (Schopenhauer, pp. 336-381).

He is preemptive of our contemporary sociobiological explanations for adultery. Schopenhauer maintains that men fall in love easily because they have the capacity to procreate many times. A woman, on the other hand, needs to fasten onto the father of her offspring for protection and care. Why are we surprised, he asks, that all societies censure adultery in women more than in men? A happy marriage according to this philosopher, and he did believe it possible, if unlikely, is one of convenience; the choices are made consciously and in the absence of desire. He leaves us one consolation: Sometimes friendship can exist between the lovers unconsciously driven together by the will of the world.

For Freud, too, love was actually sex, what he termed *aim inhibited sex*. He saw love as a type of delusion. His explanation was that love is our attempt to find again the bliss of infancy when sexuality and tenderness were one. "A boy's mother is the first object of his love, and she remains so too during the formation of his Oedipus complex and, in essence, all through his life....in the Oedipus situation the girl's father has become her love object, and we expect that in the normal course of development she will find her way from this paternal object to her final choice of an object" (Freud, p.

147). Our attempts to recover what he termed *infantile narcissism* were always doomed to failure, but out of them evolved civilization: art, culture, living successfully together. Striving for a futile goal, we soon learn to satisfy our desires through fantasy. We learn to take our pleasure in socially acceptable ways, and, by the mechanism of sublimation, turn primal sexual energy toward other less dangerous but creative pursuits, for example, composing a symphony, devising a method of psychotherapy. It is our suppressed desires, our frustrated sexual longings that create civilization.

This proposition by love toward a higher type of existence is likely the basis for Freud's claim that his concept of sexuality coincides with the eros of Plato. It is difficult to see any other similarity. Plato saw love as real, as the goodness of the lover must be. For Freud love was a fantasy: there is no love that is not based in sexual aggression. Being in love means that one has made a misperception, a sexual overvaluation of a love-object. When this happens, one is regressing, going back to childhood, and idealizing the object-choice in the same way the mother was once idealized. As being in love (complete object love rather than narcissistic love of oneself) originates in a little boy's love for his mother, girls do not experience it. Freud believed that only men experience the state of being in love. Females may have complete object love in one instance when as mothers they give birth to a child they can love as a separate object. This satisfies their narcissistic feelings because the infant has been a part of their own body.

Love is a social structure

One of the most prominent modern day thinkers and sociologist Niklas Luhmann applies his complicated theory of social systems, labeled by some as 'contingency functionalism', to the case of intimate relationships in his book *Love as Passion: the Codification of Intimacy*. The book analyzes the evolution of love in Western Europe from the seventeenth century to the present. He explores the history of the literary coding of love exploring the subjects of contingency, reflexive complexity, communication, and codifying schema. He attempts to reach an understanding of the evolution of contemporary intimate relationships and makes a few proposals and predictions for the future.

Putting it rather simplistically, Luhmann argues intimacy is a social system, and as such it is subject to the same processes as other social systems. The unique characteristic of intimate relations is the personal element. As intimate relations progress, every element and characteristic of each participant becomes a crucial part of the relationship.

Luhmann points us to Classical and Arabian love poetry, as well as the Medieval minnesang, as the earliest of such codes. However, the need for these codes was not yet established because intimate relations were not yet doubly contingent. During this time, love was more of an 'ideal' of poetry and drama than a symbolic generalization.

The seventeenth century man did not immediately abandon that ideal, but he did recognize the appearance of double contingency and the emerging codification of

love. "At least one important aspect changed during the seventeenth century: the unattainability of the woman worshipped was shifted by virtue of being transformed into a decision made by the woman herself," (49). When intimacy was dependent only on the man's decisions and actions, improbability was not a concern. The sudden significance of the woman's decisions and actions, and their co-existence with those of the man, created the improbability that accompanies what he terms double contingency.

The appearance of double contingency shifted love from an ideal to a paradox, a man is left wanting only what is improbable. This improbability renders the need for a codified love that "provides forms to be used to glorify one's own emotions, but is also designed to regulate communication between two partners" (pg. 50). In other words, if both male and female simply followed the codes that were disseminated in many books, and then they might be able to overcome the improbability of love.

This system, Luhmann argues can only be successful briefly, and the logical end to the love story is marriage. If the man and woman continue to hold each other in high esteem, they will conclude their love affair by marrying each other. If not, they will marry someone else. In other words, marriage is not a continuance of love, but an alternative to it.

Enter passion. Etymologically speaking, passion refers to a passive experience. One is so overcome with passion that he must succumb to it and follow where it leads.

A man or woman who is impassioned for his beloved makes certain wild gestures in an attempt to woo. They cannot help it; it is passion which has remained hidden.

Passion then argues Luhmann, had to overcome frivolity as the chief program for the codification of love. As the eighteenth century increasingly attempted to incorporate sexuality into loves code (where before sex and love had been handled separately), non-sensual relations became an alternative symbolic generalization of intimacy-friendship. That didn't last long since as friendship failed to perform the necessary functions of intimacy, including reproduction in the family system. But a codified love that incorporates sexuality must also incorporate marriage. In time, marriage ceased to be an alternative symbolic generalization, and became a part of love, which became the symbolic generalization.

Luhmann says we are now in the realm of romantic love. The ideal love is finally abandoned. What counts instead is "to bring the subject down to the level of everyday operations and to test its viability" (134), the subject being love. Every love story, if it is to be successful, must now include the marriage story. Until the twentieth century, the feminist movement and the sexual revolution changed everything. Neither the procreative nor the recreational aspects of sex need to be confined to marriage. All programs from the codification of love have been rejected as patriarchal and archaic, and have yet to be replaced.

Love and Biology – Love is chemistry

One of sociology's biggest competitors in terms of how we define and think about love is by breaking it down to its chemistry. Many renowned and respected theorists such as Helen Fisher and Michael Liewbowitz have endlessly researched loves biological and chemical roots; when sparks fly between two people; popular meaning is said to be chemistry. Both theorists have argued chemistry to be behind those sweaty palms, the jumpy stomach, thumping heart, and nervous jitters. Furthermore, chemistry also contributes to that warm, comfortable feeling you get from being with a longtime partner.

Helen Fisher (1992) is an evolutionary anthropologist who is looking for biological and genetic roots of love. She has devoted much of her career to studying the biochemical pathways of love in all its manifestations: lust, romance, attachment, the way we wax and wane. She associates human courtship with the mating rituals of other animals: Love is about the survival of the species. Fisher is frank: "So here is my theory: Like pair-bonding in foxes, robins, and many other species that mate only through a breeding season, human pair – bonds originally evolved to last only long enough to raise a single dependent child through infancy, the first four years, unless a second infant was conceived." (p. 154). Her postulation is that when humans came down from the trees and were forced to walk on two legs instead of four, caring for babies became a huge reproductive burden. Tools, weapons, and help were needed for survival. Nomadic men could neither feed nor protect harems of females so pair –

bonding became the most successful way for both sexes to pass on their genes. Fisher has an evolutionary explanation for divorce. In the early hunting and gathering days, females likely nursed their infants for as long as four years. During that time mothers were dependent on males for some food and security. Once a child was weaned, however, that was less imperative. A new mate could be found. This, Fisher says, explains why divorce statistics tend to peak around the fourth year of marriage.

Fisher calls love a “violent emotional disturbance” (pg. 52) beginning with a small molecule called phenylethylamine, otherwise referred to as PEA. PEA is known as the excitement amine, a substance in the brain that causes feelings of elation, exhilaration, and euphoria. In order to understand how PEA might contribute to attraction, there are a few things to clarify about the brain (pg. 52).

For the sake of clarity, the brain is divided into three general sections; Reptilian brain, Limbic system, and Cortex. The most primitive section surrounds the spinal bulb at the end of the spinal cord. This area, the ‘reptilian brain’, governs instinctual behaviors such as aggression, territoriality, ritual, and the establishment of social hierarchies. This area of the brain, Fisher suggests, is most likely used in courtship when we ‘instinctively’ flirt (pg. 52).

Above and surrounding the reptilian brain is a group of structures in the middle of the head known collectively as the limbic system. These structures govern the basic emotions of fear, rage, joy, sadness, disgust, love, and hate. So in other words, if someone is overcome with happiness, it is portions of the limbic system that are

producing electrical and chemical disturbances. Fisher argues “The storm of infatuation almost certainly has its physical origin here” (pg. 52).

Overlaying the limbic system (and separated by a large layer of white matter that communicates between brain parts) is the cortex, a gray, rind of spongy matter that lies directly below the skull. The cortex processes basic functions like sight, hearing, speech, and mathematical and musical abilities. Most importantly, according to Fisher, the cortex integrates your emotions with your thoughts. It is this section of the brain that *thinks* about “him” or “her” (pg. 52).

Fisher then describes how PEA (and probably other neurochemicals, such as norepinephrine and dopamine) may play a role. Within and connecting the three basic parts of the brain are billions and billions of neurons, or nerve cells. Impulses travel through one neuron and jump across a gap (called the synapse) to the next nerve cell. PEA lies at the end of some nerve cells and helps the impulse jump from one neuron to the next. Equally important, PEA is a natural amphetamine revving up the brain. Hence Fisher as well as psychiatrist Michael Liebowitz (1983) speculates that we feel infatuation when neurons in the limbic system, our emotional core become saturated or sensitized by PEA and stimulate the brain. “No wonder lovers can stay awake all night talking and caressing. No wonder they become so absentminded, so giddy, so optimistic, so gregarious, so full of life. Natural occurring amphetamines have pooled in the emotional centers of their brains; they are high on natural speed” (pg. 53).

Further; Fisher also discusses in her work (1992), how there are several stages to courtship that she divides into 5: Attention getting phase; Recognition phase; talk; intention cues; and body synchrony. I will discuss these stages later on in my data chapter.

Briefly mentioned above, Michael Liebowitz (1983) also believes that emotions of love are neurochemical. He takes this explanation of love one step further by defining it as an addiction. Liebowitz links such things as new, hasty, “on the rebound” love following a failed relationship with the pharmacological phenomenon known as the rebound effect, and the possible biological basis for drug addiction with being addicted to romance. Liebowitz and his colleagues arrived at this conclusion while treating patients they called attraction junkies. He contends that these people crave a relationship. In their haste they pick an unsuitable partner. Soon they are rejected, and their exhilaration turns to despair – until they renew their quest. As this cycle of love affairs proceeds, the romance junkie swings from feeling brokenhearted and desperately depressed to feeling elated over each inappropriate, ill-fated romantic fling. Liebowitz suspected that these lovesick people suffered from a tangle in their romantic wiring – specifically a craving for PEA.

But infatuation is more than exhilaration. It is part of love, a deep, unique devotion to another human being. Is this complex sensation due solely to natural stimulants in the brain? The mysteries of love for these scientists reside in our biology and in the reproductive drives of our bodies. We need a sociological theory of love

because biological explanations cannot account for social variation and social patterns. While they offer us some insight, they are not complete explanations (and certainly, some would argue that they are not even partial explanations). Chemical and biological explanations of love may play a role in how we define love, it nonetheless does not change the fact that we are social beings and that we give unique meaning to things as well as our emotions.

Love is Power

The authors of *Remaking Love* argue that eternal love, with its grand and magical meanings, is in reality about submission to male power (Ehrenreich, Hess, & Jacobs, 1986). Rather than being seductresses, women are actually the ones expected to surrender:

Draped in mystery and mythic themes, sex itself was an act of sublimation for woman: not an immediate pleasure to be appropriated but a symbolic act to be undertaken for ulterior aims—motherhood, emotional and financial security, or simply vanity. (p.195)

Distrust of love based in romantic feelings is fundamental to the women's movement. Love is seen as predicated on a power relationship (Wollstonecraft, 1792/1975).

In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft dramatically argues for the right of women to be educated as reasonable human beings and to be permitted to engage in healthy, active lives. She points out that in her society woman's

only access to power is through charm and weakness. She uses Rousseau's prescription for the education of women to illustrate her point. Rousseau, she argues, wants "woman" never to feel herself independent for a moment but to be an alluring object of desire in the form of a coquettish slave. The ideal woman is expected to embody the soft playfulness of love whenever a man wants to relax himself with a 'sweet' companion. Rousseau, she finds, only wants a meretricious slave to fondle. He would deny a woman's knowledge and turn her aside from truth so that she is pleasing to him. Astonishingly, he does this in the name of love and devotion. Wollstonecraft wants a different approach to male-female relations, one not based in sentiment:

To speak disrespectfully of love is, I know, high treason against sentiment and fine feelings; but I wish to speak the simple language of truth, and rather to address the head than the heart.
(p.27)

Her argument against love as a basis of the relationship between the sexes lies in the dangers of passion as a passing thing. "Love, considered as an animal appetite, cannot long feed on itself without expiring" (p.73). Once love is devoured, the danger for the woman is that she is no longer a goddess but becomes more of an "upper servant." She is expected to accept this change in roles like a lady, without complaint. Young couples, Wollstonecraft warns, are wiser to check their passions and formulate a plan to regulate a friendship that only death ought to dissolve.

When women are once sufficiently enlightened to discover their real interest, on a grand scale, they will, I am persuaded, be very ready to resign all the prerogatives of love, that are not

mutual...for the calm satisfaction of friendship, and the tender confidence of habitual esteem. Before marriage they will not assume any insolent airs, or afterwards abjectly submit; but endeavoring to act like reasonable creatures, in both situations, they will not be tumbled from a throne to a stool. (p.104)

Wollstonecraft's arguments were provocative and influential in her time. That her work has been reissued again and again suggests that society still has much to learn from it.

A renowned feminist, Shulamth Firestone (1971), goes beyond Wollstonecraft's position and determines that because of societies' inequalities between the sexes, love can never be fulfilled. Her position is that men, because of their insatiable lust for power, cannot know true love and that women, who can, get exploited whenever they try to love. She says it is because the social and economic oppression of women has failed to keep women in their inferior place that an ideology of romantic love has evolved. It has the same purpose: Romance is the modern means of female oppression.

Juliet Mitchell (1984), in *Women: The longest Revolution* summarizes Firestone's position that true erotic love is impossible in our society and compares it with Germaine Greer's position in *The Female Eunuch* (1971). Greer finds romance to be more about social class. For the rising middle class, romantic love came to replace parental coercion as that which forced one into marriage. Romance was no longer about adulterous courtly love but was embraced as leading to an establishment marriage. Rather than

either Firestone's or Greer's works, it is Denis de Rougemont's *Love in the Western World* (1940/1956) that Mitchell identifies as the classical book on love. Rougemont's thesis that love and death, not love and marriage, go together. Romantic love is about searching for an ideal that cannot survive. Mitchell provides an analysis to suggest that romantic love was once, in the days of *amour courtois*, the male subject's search for his lost feminine self. It has become over time, however, a consolation prize for women. Romance is a woman's consolation for future confinement in domesticity, that is if she has the luck and appeal to win a dark, handsome stranger as her lawfully wedded husband.

Madonna Kolbenschlag (1979), in *Kiss Sleeping Beauty Goodbye*, writes that women as keepers of the hearth and caregivers of the species have been condemned to the repetition of life rather than its transcendence. The romance fiction read by women perpetuates this as dreams of being rescued by Prince Charming. Rose (1985) finds in the fairy tale (the prototype for romance script) manifest themes of unappreciated virtue, captivity, rescue, being, and waiting. The young woman waits to be validated and consumed by love. If the strong, loving stranger does not come to complete her life, she will be unfulfilled. "Woman has had an excuse for, and the luxury of, abdicating from responsibility for her own life, for remaining morally and existentially asleep" (Kolbenschlag, 1979, p. 20).

The romance myth, on the whole, is seen as patriarchal and women's acceptance of it as self-destructive. At best, it sanctions drudgery and physical incompetence

(Greer, 1971). At worst, it means that to accept a female destiny, a woman must renounce self-determination. Kathryn Morgan (1986) puts it forcefully: She finds romance immoral. It is the choice of an intrinsic evil (voluntary servility) and causes singular harm to both lovers and society.

Gloria Steinem (1992) in *Revolution from Within* discusses romance versus love. She believes that what characterizes romance is its separateness from other deep feelings, for a friend or a child, for the ocean or a sheltering tree. "What marks love is: It's all the same" (p.282). Romance, not love, is about power. In real love you want the other's good; in romantic love you want the other person. Steinem praises Charlotte Bronte's rendering of love in *Jane Eyre*. What she admires is Jane's refusal to be romantic. Unlike Emily Bronte's wildly passionate lovers in *Wuthering Heights*, who search for completion through one another, Jane Eyre successfully fights to keep her true self. Steinem holds up Jane's and Rochester's relationship at the end of the novel as an example of a sensitive, loving relationship. Here Jane tells Rochester that she loves him better now, because he is blind and injured and she can be of use to him than she did when he was the giver and protector. Steinem calls for a remything of love, one that will not involve power. She supports defining love as the refusal to think of another person in terms of power.

Luce Irigaray (1996) has a practical suggestion. She wants us to find a different way to say *I love you*. The dreams of adolescent girls, she says, are about sharing carnal and spiritual love with a male lover, of communication of body and spirit, of exchanging

words and social activities. Girls dream about sharing love with another. Irigaray wants that to be possible for them. The phrase *I love you*, however, risks reducing the other to an object, even if an object of love. "In order to love there has to be two persons" (p. 131). Her suggested new words of love are I love to you. With this phrase one is saying "in you I love that which both is and becomes, that which is forever foreign to me" (p. 138). To love to you provides space for lovers to think about what brings them together and distances them, to think about the spacing that is necessary for their coming together and distances them, to think about the spacing that is necessary for their coming together. For Irigaray, loving and desiring in this way, with this phrase, would always be about questioning ("who am I? Who are you?) and about becoming.

Donna Laframboise (1996) offers a dissident feminist view of men, women, and sexual politics. She suggests that mainstream feminism is adopting an extremist view of the world in which men are the enemy. She refers to a 1991 article published in the Nov-Dec. issue of *MS* magazine: "Orchid in the Arctic: The Predicament of Women Who Love Men" (pp. 31-33). Written by Kay Leigh Hagan, a former heterosexual who is now lesbian, the article seeks to give women who still sleep with men guidance about living life with "the oppressor." It tells women that by having sex with men they are being "intimately colonized." Women who think their fathers, husbands, or lovers are exceptional men are in denial. Hagan tells the readers of *MS* to keep one rule in mind: "if he can hurt you, he will." She advises them, also, to try to get a room of their own with a door that locks. Laframboise also reviews a 1992 book, *The War Against Women*, by respected feminist author Marilyn French. French proposes in this work that men

have been waging a centuries long global attack on women. Laframboise paraphrases a list of 10 items French provides, which “the vast majority of men in the world do one or more of.” Four of these items are beating their spouse, murdering their spouse, raping women they know or women who are strangers, and sexually molesting female children. Laframboise sees these positions as extremist, as she does the view that all sex is rape. This latter doctrine she attributes to Catherine MacKinnon, author of a 1989 book, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, who believes that consent by a female in a male dominated society is not a meaningful concept. Lamframboise looks to a more balanced view of the relations between the sexes, one in which a woman can love a man without being a collaborationist.

Perhaps Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1989) captures most eloquently the position of those who conceive of love as a struggle for power. She writes: “On the day when it will be possible for woman to love not in her weakness but in her strength, not to escape herself but to find herself, not to abuse herself but to assert herself --- on that day love will become for her, as for a man, a source of life and not of mortal danger” (p. 669).

Contemporary sociologist Anthony Giddens (1992) problematizes male sexuality, describing it as “compulsive,” extremely prone to violence and to performance anxieties. Giddens discusses how in a social world we are undergoing profound transformations. Women no longer go along with male sexual dominance, and both sexes must deal with the implications of this phenomenon. Personal life has become an

open project, creating new demands and anxieties. "Our interpersonal existence is being thoroughly transfigured, involving us all in what I shall call everyday social experiments, with which wider social changes more or less oblige us to engage" (pg. 8).

Women are more capable of what he calls "confluent love", described as emotional intimacy between equals, opening oneself out to the other, which he says is more characteristic of women. This confluent love contrasts with romantic love, which he describes as projective, mutually dependent between unequal's often avoiding emotional intimacy and possesses an egalitarian strain, skewed in terms of power (pp. 61-62). In his view, male sexuality has been warped by several factors: 1) the male domination of the public sphere; 2) the double standard; 3) the alleged binary of women: the virgin/whore syndrome; 4) the belief that gender difference are God-given; 5) the problematizing of women as irrational; and 6) the sexual division of labour (p. 111). Giddens argues that as men lose control over women, "this generates a rising tide of male violence against women. At the moment, an emotional abyss has opened up between the sexes, and one cannot say with any certainty how far it will be bridged" (pg. 2). As the other authors briefly discussed above, he is critical of men and male sexuality. He does however dismiss the well-known stereotype "women want love, men want sex" as "a crude stereotype" (pg. 66), but it seems to me the theme of his book.

Love is socially constructed

Zygmunt Bauman (2003) attempts to unravel in his book *Liquid Love*, the uncanny frailty of human bonds, the feeling of insecurity that frailty inspires, and the conflicting desires

that feeling prompts to tighten the bonds yet keep them loose. He states the residents of our liquid modern world are worrying about one thing while speaking of another; “their wish, passion, aim or dream is to relate but are they not in fact mostly concerned with how to prevent their relations from curdling and clotting?” (xi). Zygmunt is painfully aware of the fragility of relationships in post-modernity. He has referred to “Liquid Love” to describe how it ebbs and flows as the world turns. Expectations are very high, especially for romantics, and so are break-up rates by splitting or divorce. Many factors are relevant here: the increased ease of divorce, the lower fertility rate due to contraception, and therefore the higher rate of women in full time work, therefore their higher incomes, therefore the shift in the economic balance of power in the family; plus the increased role of government in child support and welfare legislation.

Unlike old-fashioned relationships and committed relationships, Zygmunt terms connections to be ‘virtual relations’. He contends “they seem to be made to the measure of a liquid modern life setting where ‘romantic possibilities’ are supposed and hoped to come and go with ever greater speed and in never thinning crowds, stampeding each other off the stage and out-shouting each other with promises ‘to be more satisfying and fulfilling’” (xii). Unlike real relationships, ‘virtual relationships are easy to enter and to exit. Zygmunt suggests they look smart and clean; feel easy to use and user-friendly, when compared with the heavy, slow-moving, inert messy ‘real stuff’.

This raises the further questions: Does love have the same meaning for men as it does for women? Does it have the same meaning for us as we age? Is love the prime value for men and women? Or either sex? How could we find out? How could we operationalize the concept of love?

BEYOND THEORY

Of the theories developed to explain love (which I didn't do justice), and reviewed previously in this chapter, I find one to be particularly satisfying. Nussbaum (1990) claims that theories about love are too simple, "they want to find just one thing that love is in the soul, just one thing that its knowledge is, instead of looking to see what is there" (p. 283). How do we see what is there? How do we try to understand love without reducing its complexity? Saul (1995) in what he terms a *Dictionary of Aggressive Common Sense*, defines love as "a term which has no meaning if defined" (p. 194). How do we get closer to love without destroying its meaning? How do we get closer to the way it is lived?

One way might be through actually interviewing people about their own perceptions and experiences of love. Attempting to see what is there is a fitting place to start.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Love is generally regarded to be the deepest and most meaningful of sentiments. It has occupied a preeminent position in the art and literature of every age, and it is presumably experienced at least occasionally by the vast majority of people. In Western culture moreover, the association between love and marriage gives it a unique status as a link between the individual and the structure of society.

In view of these considerations, it is surprising to discover that sociologists have devoted virtually very little attention to love, although interpersonal attraction and sexuality has been a major focus of social-psychological theory and research, researchers in this area have not attempted to conceptualize love as an independent entity.

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 in my opinion. The research reported in this thesis represents an attempt to improve this situation by introducing and validating a preliminary sociological conception of romantic love. People who have fallen in love have rarely had the opportunity to tell their own stories: to describe their experiences and perceptions. This thesis attempts to remedy this

failure in social science by creating a foundation for the beginning of what I hope becomes a better understanding of love and how it influences our lives.

Sample Recruitment

Thirteen people, 7 men and 6 women, participated in this study. Only four subjects were personally known to me at the beginning of the process. To recruit the other participants, I proceeded snowball sampling, asking each interviewee if he or she knew someone who would be interested in sharing their experiences with me. I also asked friends, fellow students and professors for any recommendations.

Since love is a very difficult and complex topic to discuss, searching for participants who wanted to share their experiences was a relatively difficult task contrary to what I had imagined. Once I started asking the respondents the questions however, the gates were open and a lot have shared a generous amount of their experiences with me.

Characteristics of the Sample

Since this study is based on perceptions of young adult intimate love, the participants ranged in age from 24 to 34 years, with a mean age of 27 for women and 28 for men. All except for one of the respondents were from the Montreal region.

A majority of the respondents were in love at the time of the interview; one of those respondents were in love; however, not in a relationship. All of the respondents have reported being in love or having thought they were in love at the time of the

experience; however, two have stated recalling their experience knowing what they know now, wasn't real love. All of the respondents are heterosexual.

The table below represents the personal characteristics of the respondents:

Name	Age	Sex	Residence	Occupation	Relationship Status	In Love?	Loved Before?
Lily	26	Female	Montreal	Student	relationship	Yes	Yes
Paige	24	Female	Montreal	Social Coordinator	single	No	Yes
Renee	26	Female	Montreal,	Financial Planner	single	Yes	No
Kayla	25	Female	Montreal	Student	relationship	Yes	Yes
Alexis	25	Female	Montreal	Coordinator	single	No	Yes
Arianna	34	Female	Montreal	Waitress	Relationship	No	Yes
Bobby	32	Male	Sherbrook	Engineer	Relationship	Yes	Yes
John	25	Male	Montreal	Entrepreneur	Relationship	Yes	Yes
Tristan	29	Male	Montreal	Chef	Single	No	Yes
Troy	25	Male	Montreal	Student	Relationship	Yes	Yes
Jayden	34	Male	Montreal	Sales	Married	Yes	Yes
Marcus	27	Male	Montreal	Accountant	Single	No	Yes
Bennett	26	Male	Montreal	Intern	Single	No	Yes

Procedure

Since it was my intention to provide my respondents with the opportunity to furnish detailed accounts of their experiences, I chose an open-ended, semi-structured format as my method of data collection rather than rigidly constructed questionnaires (please refer to Appendix). Semi-structured interviews also provided the latitude to probe more pertinent topics more deeply. The questions revolved around two core themes: beginning stages of intimate love and perceptions of love.

The interviews were conducted during the spring and summer of 2006. At the beginning of each interview, the nature and objective of the research was explained to each respondent. For the purpose of documenting the interview content, each respondent was given the choice of using his or her real name or choosing a pseudonym to remain anonymous. To protect my respondent's confidentiality, I chose to use pseudonyms in this thesis. It is important to note that all the respondents insisted that their real names be used as they felt no shame or embarrassment discussing their life experiences with falling in love, if anything they were aware that their experiences are understood and similar contexts are shared by many.

All of the interviewees in Montreal agreed to meet with me personally. However, due to conflicting schedules, one participant made arrangements to answer the questions by email. The interviews were conducted in various places, according to the comfort of the respondent. Most were held in coffee shops in the surrounding Montreal area. Two interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants; one

agreed to hold the session at Concordia University; and the remaining two were met in restaurants downtown Montreal. These sites were chosen not only because of its convenient locations for both the respondent and I but because they were comfortable and laidback.

The face-to-face interviews were tape-recorded, averaged one hour in length. All of the interviews were conducted in one session. Each was later transcribed verbatim, and consistent with the qualitative research tradition, thoroughly reviewed for common patterns, themes and topics (Babbie, 2002).

The respondents were extremely generous with their time, and when sharing their recollections. Many mentioned that they had not previously given much thought to the issues on which they were questioned. A substantial majority have expressed their difficulties actually putting how they truly felt into meaningful words. However, they felt it to be a useful experience, and through this research most of the respondents gained greater insight towards their love lives. As John pointed out, "this actually feels like I'm in therapy!" Many of them were curious as to why I had chosen to conduct a research on people in love, and were encouraging that I had decided to devote my efforts into researching love through a sociological perspective.

I found this experience to be tremendously illuminating, rewarding, and fun. Perusal of the scholarly literature had alerted me to the fact that it was necessary for Sociology to take a stand. Despite this allegation, I was not at all prepared for the

difficulty it has been researching and especially writing about the complexity of the topic.

Methodological Limitations

I do not claim in any way to have a random or representative sample of the population studied, as this research was carried out to generate ideas for the future research on the social aspects of perceptions of love. I listened to a small number of young adults from whom I was able to gain as much data as possible with regards to how and in what ways has love affected people who have experienced it. In studying a small number of individuals, the percentages cited are based on a non-representative and non-random sample. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from this research cannot be generalized to the larger population of lovers, especially those outside of the sample dimensions.

Hence, this study should be regarded as exploratory ground breaking research. The objective was merely to provide a brief overview of the constructions and meanings of young adult love by illuminating how it affects many aspects of people's lives. Given the paucity of sociological research regarding perceptions of love as an independent entity, more rigorous studies utilizing larger samples must be conducted. I appeal to other researchers to explore this under-studied domain and give it the attention it deserves.

CHAPTER FOUR

FALLING IN LOVE: EVERY LOVE STORY HAS A BEGINNING

The findings of this research are presented in this chapter, as well as the succeeding one. For the sake of clarity and organization, the results are divided along the beginnings and then to a deeper and more meaningful stage of an intimate relationship. By virtue, a love story always has a beginning and it is precisely these experiences of the initial stages that determine whether a relationship will wax or wane. This chapter will focus on the beginning stages of intimate love: attraction, compatibility, passion, romance, dating, games, and 'falling' in love. The next chapter will concentrate on a more personal definition of love: how the participants themselves feel about love and how it has affected their lives.

The quotes called from the interviews are lengthy and numerous; this was deliberately done to provide an opportunity for the participants to speak for themselves as much as possible. Reams of theories, ideas, and images of love have been bandied and have attempted to control the intangible emotion; this qualitative research offers the chance for the amorous lovers to share their experience within their own words and for researchers to listen. Specific core themes consistently arose and these are featured as the section headings.

ATTRACTION

We might like to think of ourselves as so sophisticated that physical attractiveness does not move us. We might like to claim that sensitivity, warmth, and intelligence are more important. However, we may never learn about other people's personalities if they do not meet our minimal standards for physical attractiveness. All of the respondents articulated that physical attractiveness is a major determinant of interpersonal and sexual attraction. In fact, physical appearance is the key factor in consideration of partners for dates, sex and marriage (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986).

Physical Attraction

When Respondents were asked what attracts them to others, the responses were quick to identify various physical characteristics:

When I think about what attracts me to men, I think of shaved heads. For some reason it catches my attention. Face, I always notice face. Body...I mean I like a guy with a nice body, I like cut loins...but I mean when you first see somebody and your first attracted to them, I'm attracted to their face, how they're smiling, their eyes, you can see personality in somebody's face. I don't like guys with long hair, that's what I mean, shaved head...sort of bad boy look, pretty eyes, something about eyes. I don't like hairy, hairy guys, you know, un-groomed eyebrows or something. There's something about the face. A good face, that's what I first notice.

-Kayla

I like girls who are small, short, because I'm short. Feminine, like slender fingers, cute, the cute look is what I like. I don't necessarily like sexy or like smoldering.

-John

I guess initially before you meet someone because you don't have a chance to really know their personality, usually there are the physical components...um but that is just enough to sort of get ones attention and then from there it really depends on how you click with someone.

-Troy

I'm attracted to a man that exudes confidence. Physically, I like men with dark hair, dark eyes, and a beautiful warm smile. Nice teeth are a must for me. I'm pretty petite so I tend to be attracted to men who are much larger than me in weight and height. I like a masculine build, broad shoulders, tall, and strong. You can tell a lot by looking into someone's eyes, if they are a caring, genuine person. There is something about the eyes that have to satisfy me before I could go any further. I need to feel like I can trust him, feel safe. This is going to sound weird, but smell has a surprisingly profound affect for me, I like a man that smells good to me. And dress. Lately, a nice pair of jeans, maybe a collared shirt and a blazer to top it off pretty much drives me crazy. Don't think I like the prep look, its more of a clean, laid back, fashionable, take pride in what I look like look.

-Lily

It's a physical attraction....there are many dimensions to it....its too hard to narrow it down

-Bennett

Physical appearance plays a really large role. It could be anything really. It could be a smile, it could be the way she walks, her hair...it's a whole group of things, there's not one way to describe it. It's not a group of things. There's not one word to describe it, there's not one person that combines all of those things together but of course you hope that you can find a person that gives you the most of those attractive qualities.

-Marcus

In general what attracts me to men is the same thing that attracts me to women; which is an amazing personality, their passion in life and their beliefs. Physically it would be their eyes; I like tall guys...that would be the first thing I would notice, tall muscular men who are in shape. Someone who's caring...who likes kids. Someone who can lead me, guide me, and motivate me in life.

-Paige

The vibe I get from a person. His smile would be the first thing I would notice. Good sense of humor is a good indicator for me. Appearance is big for me; I'm very superficial. In order to be attractive there has to be some kind of physical attribute that draws me to him, like a nice butt, or nice eyes, a small head, nice hair...

-Ariana

Physically...they have to be tall, because I am. It makes me feel like I'm not (giggling). I like the tall dark and handsome look. I do. He has to be tall, because I'm tall and I want to feel small. I know its cliché but I like them dark...tall, dark with the brown eyes. Their eyes are very important, they tell a lot about someone and teeth. Teeth are important, nice smile. They have to dress nice; they have to be clean and well groomed. I don't mind a little bit of stubble, if they didn't shave that day. I was never attracted to the blond, blue eyed men.

-Renee

I have a thing for dark hair, curly hair. It's a physical thing that catches my eye at first.

-Jaden

I think a big attraction for me is innocence. Now I don't mean she has to be an innocent person, just come off being, just that vibe of innocence...that's she's a good girl, that maybe she's naive about certain things...just that cute innocent, daddy's little girl type of thing. I don't have a type. A lot of guys like tall, lean, blonds or something, but I don't have a specific type looking back at all the girls I dated. But yeah, I think innocence is probably the biggest thing.

-Tristan

Initially it is the face that attracts me to a lady, typically dark hair, the smile, the eyes, also a clean simple look (the less makeup the better). I love the Mediterranean look! Once I get past the face she has to be fit/athletic looking, not overweight or malnourished. I love legs toned tanned legs, come to think of it that olive skin is perfection to me. After the initial introduction has been made if a lady is funny, approachable and witty, that just adds to the attraction. I love being around a lady who I can be relaxed around, not have to worry about being someone else because I don't do anyone else very well. Shy quiet women do not cut, but neither does the loud obnoxious ones, the middle of the road I find intriguing. I love someone who talks just enough to spark that curiosity, but not so much so that it annoys you.

-Bob

All of the respondents indicated that the physical aspect of attraction was a very important factor that catches their attention from another at least in the beginning.

Helen Fisher (1992) argues that there are several stages of courtship. She further states that each stage possesses distinctive escalation points. She divides them

into five. The first is the “attention getting” phase; (26) in which men and women perform differently. Stage two, the “recognition” stage (27) beginning when eyes meet eyes; then one or the other potential love acknowledges the demarche with a smile or slight body shift, and the couple move into stage three, “talking” phase. This idle Helen argues is “often meaningless conversation, which often become higher, softer, and more singsongy tones one also uses to express affection to children and concern for those in need of care” (27). Stage four: “touching” (28) begins with intention cues which Fisher suggest are leaning forward, resting one’s arm toward the other’s on the table leading into the climax: one person touches the other on the shoulder, forearm, or wrist, or some other socially available body part. So if our pair continues to talk and touch, they usually achieve the last stage, of what Fisher terms the courtship ritual: body synchrony. Body synchrony is the final stage as potential lovers become comfortable. In time, they mirror each other more and more. He crosses his leg, she crosses hers; as he leans left, she leans left; when he smooths his hair, she smooths hers. Fisher states “they move in perfect rhythm as they gaze deeply into each other’s eyes” (29).

Maybe there is some truth to these stages of love; however, Fisher stops at body synchrony which to me is incomplete and according to these interviews, far from the final stage of courtship. While most of Fisher’s stages of courtship focus on the body and biological side of how we perform as individuals, she is forgetting that we are not just animals. We are social beings that attach meaning to our encounters and even before the occurrence of them.

Interestingly enough, all members of the sample had different ideas as to what physical characteristics were considered attractive. The dark and curly hair attribute in women that certainly attracts attention to Jaden, does not necessarily attract attention to Tristan or Marcus. This study clearly indicates that the respondents want physically appealing partners. However, what appeals to one person may very well be repulsive to another. It is also very important to point out that some subjects had a really difficult time coming up with specific characteristics that generally attracts to another. Women were more likely than men to come up with concrete and particular answers when asked what attracts them to others.

In this study, women were more likely to consider taller men to be more attractive.

I'm pretty petite so I tend to be attracted to men who are much larger than me in weight and height. This is going to sound weird maybe, but I like men who are bigger than me because I want to feel safe and protected in a way. Plus, sexually, I really like the weight of a man's body on me. I wouldn't want him to be overweight per se, still in shape but bigger than me. It sounds very stereotypical, but I don't care, that's what catches my eye and makes me feel more like a woman.

-Lily

Paige and Renee had also stated above that they prefer men who are taller than them.

On the contrary, all of the male respondents except one reported preference in women who are shorter and/or smaller than them. Here are couple examples:

I like girls who are small and short, because I'm short. I like them to be feminine and cute.

-John

I like shorter, more petite girls because I want to feel more like a man. I have dated someone in the past who was actually taller than me, but it didn't feel right. That's just my preference.

-Bob

All of the female respondents, except one who did not specify her preference either way, prefer men who are taller than them and a majority of the male respondents indicated a preference for women who are smaller than them. Some of the respondents went so far to explain why: women want a taller man so they can feel small and more lady-like while men prefer smaller women so they can feel more like a man.

If we go back to Giddens' and his discussion of social world undergoing profound transformations, and women no longer going along with male sexual dominance, why is it that women are still attracted to the stereotypical dominant man? I think that gender roles are very much a part of our relationships on a daily basis, it may not be something we perform directly or even be aware of these factors; however, it is something that is embedded in our social structure as human beings. We grew up performing gender; it is only inevitable, even despite the transformation of intimacy, that it will surely affect the way in which we choose a mate. It is important to note that other factors such as ethnicity, religion, and age determine other boundaries on the way we choose a mate; however, that is beyond the scope of this research and most probably the forefront for future research.

Personality/Aura Attraction

Despite Helen Fisher's five stages of courtship, all respondents reported that even though it is physical attraction that initially catches their attention from another,

personality attributes play a role in the introduction; “talk” phase (Fisher, 1992) for them to be attracted enough to pursue further. Most respondents reported good sense of humor, funny, out-going, happy, relaxed, respectful, and caring as important elements of a great personality. Most of the respondents stated they can identify desired elements of another’s personality within the first encounter. Women were more likely than the men in this sample to flat out articulate their intuition of someone’s personality during the first encounter.

I like a funny personality, someone who could make me laugh, and someone who is very caring. Trust is an attractive quality of course, it’s very important and just a mutual respect of not just each other but for each other’s beliefs and for life, mutual respect is good.

-John

After the physical attraction, whether or not being with her is fun for me is important; whether she is a fun person, she really has to be a fun person.

-Bennett

In order for someone to catch my attention off the street, or at random, it is purely a physical thing. Once we meet for the first time, or talk, I’d like to be interested to the point where I’m curious about him, someone who’s positive and emanates happiness is always a bonus for me, but not too confident, that will just annoy me. You can tell right off the bat if your attraction for someone is strong by speaking to them for the first time, or even by just being around them. I believe we all possess this kind of force, or energy for lack of a better word, that we can’t see or touch. It’s beyond us but from that, I believe you can feel something about someone whether it is negative or positive.

-Lily

You can see personality in somebody’s face

-Kayla

I’m attracted to the vibe I get from someone

-Ariana

Attraction and Connection

A majority of the sample respondents have reported that a sense of connection is what not only attracts them to another but amplifies their desirability to get to know them further. A sense of belonging, respect or feeling understood was described to be a major determinant in creating a bond with someone.

I guess initially before you meet someone you don't really have a chance to really know their personality, usually there's the physical components...but that's just enough to get one's attention and then from there it really depends on how you click with someone. I find if someone's on the same wave length as me, like if we really understand each other that is part of the connection for me. I don't mean to put down the idea that opposites attract, but I think you need to experience a lot of the same things, not just in the past but where you are presently. For instance, I would think it would be really hard for me to fall for someone who wasn't a university student, that's just one thing and its not like that would ruin the opportunity but if they're not willing to engage with what I'm doing and vice versa then it sort of makes things a little difficult. I think it really depends on personality types too.

-Troy

I think it's important that when you meet someone, you feel a connection to them, you feel so close, you feel like you really feel each other and you understand each other. I want to feel good about myself.

-John

When I first start talking to someone, I want to feel more then anything that I'm understood. That actually sparks better discussions that way.

-Lily

Physical aspect of attraction plays part of the role [in attraction]. Their knowledge and what they think of life and certain issues I would prefer we'd have in common, if they're a religious practicant or not... an orthodox Christian is my preference. It's basically the level of contact. How you feel around the person, how the chemistry works

-Marcus

When asked if attraction has changed over time, 10 sample members, four women and six men, stated physical appearance was a primary concern when they were

younger and as they became older and more mature, other characteristics held greater if not equal significance in mate selection. Only two of the respondents, both women, recalled their attraction for another had not changed over time. Four respondents reported wanting more meaningful, lasting relationships more recently than they ever had in the past. Physical attributes were no longer enough to fulfill this additional objective. Three of the respondents reported goals for a more long-term relationship transpired the older they became. Three of the sample members recalled not knowing when they were younger what they were searching for in a partner and easier to desire exclusively the physical appearance of another. Three respondents learned from failed relationships and experiences over time what they want and or needed in a partner. One woman said the more you become aware of yourself and your own personal characteristics, the more likely you come to the realization and acknowledgment of the qualities and traits considered necessary in selecting a partner. Three respondents reported preferring someone who is on the same wave length as them in terms of wanting the same things out of life, such as kids, as they got older. When they were younger, they reported being careless to these insights within the future.

The kind of guys that I go for aren't gangster, juvenile looking, you know where they wear baggy pants and they look like rappers you know that's what we were or that I was attracted to when I was about 15, 16. Now I'm more attracted to somebody kind of groomed, nice shoes, somebody who looks like they're not poor on the street. Somebody who looks nicely dressed. It's all about the silhouette, the appearance like if you're walking on the street and you see some guy coming towards you, you can tell immediately if you think he's cute or not, it's those guys that I catch. But has it changed? Yes, as far as maturity, I look for guys that don't look like they're 19 anymore, that's too young.

-Kayla

I think when you're younger, looks were a big deal like what a girl would look like but you know it's only a few relationships where you realize that it's not so important. I mean obviously you want to be physically attracted to someone but I think for a lasting, meaningful relationship, you really start to look for other things.

-John

When I was a kid, before high school it was all about the looks, what can you expect I was a kid. When I got to high school, looks were still a really big deal, but I was also looking for someone I clicked with, someone I had things in common with like participating in similar activities, and someone who I basically just got along with. When I went to University, The connection and physical attraction still applied but the views and beliefs, what she thought about life began to play a role as well. I wanted to be with someone that I could either learn from, or understand and have her understand me. I guess as time went on, you could say my expectations increased.

-Marcus

It has definitely changed over time. I think I never really cared. I dated people who were very different from me. As you get older, you realize that you do want to have a family and then when you do have a family you want the kids to be brought up in a certain way, in a similar way that has similar beliefs and morals. So with time, you realize what's important to you, and when you realize what's important to you, you want those things more. I realized what's important to me in the last five years through other experiences that I've witnessed. You see so many families who are struggling to decide which church their kids are going to go to and then they don't end up at all, then they don't have any morals or any sense of community that's going to bring them up

-Paige

Not really, I have the same style from what I can remember about myself.

-Ariana

It's always been the same. I always liked the dark look.

-Renee

Jaden, discussing his current wife had stated:

As I got older, I wasn't just going out with someone just to go out with them anymore. When Sue came into the picture, I wasn't looking for anyone special, but I think ideally I was looking for someone as a wife or future wife and that's what attracted me to her.

When she walked into the room I was like 'wow', because she's really good-looking. She's not just a girl I'd want to go out with though, she's a girl I'd really want to get to know, really understand her, learn a little more about her and continue the relationship that way. That first night we met when we were talking over a pitcher of beer with mutual friends, I kept thinking to myself 'wow, she's really awesome!'

-Jaden

Yes, the more I developed my own identity and therefore a better sense of self, the more I knew exactly what attracted me to others. Before is was more superficial, now it's all about connecting on a deeper level

-Alexis

I would say that my taste in men, or my attraction for men have definitely changed over time looking back at all my relationships. When I was younger, popularity and looks played a large role for me. I would be interested in men who were really out-going, confident, good-looking, involved in a great deal of activities in school or wherever it may be. But I found as I got older, that list of criteria that I had just got longer and longer. I find that good-looks and popularity just doesn't do it for me the way it use to, I look for more in a man now. I think when I hit university, I had begun to know more and more about myself, and the more I got to know about myself inevitably added to my list of what I need and want in a man. Yeah, that's exactly what it is. The more you get to know yourself, the more you understand what you need in a partner, and that comes with time. It's impossible to say that nothing has changed in your attraction to someone having the experiences you do growing up and learning more about yourself. Things are always changing and you're always growing...

-Lily

I think it has changed, really when you're younger you don't know what your looking for and you don't know how to find out unless you learn from a relationship or experience. You can even think your looking for something in a person, and then you meet them and you're with them for a while and then you realize this is not what you want at all. Yeah it's changed. I've had a lot of different relationships and every relationship I've had have been very different.

-Tristan

It is important to point out that timing may hold great responsibility when attracted to someone. Most of the respondents revealed that if you are on the same

page as someone else, your chances of 'connecting' or 'clicking' are higher. This

hypothesis is stated clearly by Troy:

You could have met someone that could have been your ideal mate but if they were just having a bad day and you were feeling a little impatient, you might just not click with them. I would say there's a lot of factors that play into attraction...but I think these [different elements of attraction] are all coalescent and effect different encounters with people and its really at that point where its going to make or break a certain situation.

-Troy

Physical appearance is what draws our attention to another not to mention, a key factor in consideration of partners for dates, relationships, and sex. The respondents have made clear how they may never learn about other people's personalities if they do not meet their minimal standards for physical attractiveness. Once the initial recognition has taken place, other elements, the respondents reported, such as personality, a sense of aura, and connection become criteria in order for the attraction to persist and intensify. Interestingly enough, not one respondent reported only one element of attraction, for example, physical attraction, as solely being the determinant in mate selection.

Furthermore, attraction changes over time on a scale from being more superficial at a less mature or younger age, to a coalescent of different elements depending on one's preference. Preferences are not prevailed by physical appearances as they once were but rather, commonalities; mutual respect; trust and communication are all collaborating factors that contribute to a meaningful and everlasting relationship, a goal that has become more popular with maturity.

And there's always timing of course:

Guys are like cabs, you got to get them when their light is on...

-Lily

LUST, ROMANCE & GAMES

Building a relationship follows initial attraction. Factors that motivate us to try to build relationships include mutual physical appeal, mutual liking and positive evaluations, and similarity in attitudes. Factors that deter us from trying to build a relationship include lack of physical attractiveness, dissimilarity in attitudes, and negative evaluation. Once an attraction for someone is present, dating is a familiar practice in developing a relationship. Dating in this case refers to any social activity involving two people with the aim of each assessing the other's suitability as their partner in an intimate relationship or as a spouse. Through dating there is an unspoken set of rules compelling 'appropriate' behavior. This dating code increases the chance of many misunderstandings, judgments and assumptions. The respondents in this sample refer to this mishap as an instigator to game playing.

Dating

All of the respondents reported having dated when expressing their thoughts and experiences on the subject. However, most of them believe that dating does not serve as a productive way in selecting a partner unless they are anticipating an intimate long-term relationship and/or marriage. On two accounts, dating was viewed as a distraction until something better came along. One respondent expressed how he

perceived dating to be a game. A few of the respondents perceived dating to be a learning process; that it is a way of discovering preferred characteristics in a partner.

I don't really date. I've been on dates before, but all of those dates except two have always turned into a relationship. You sort of know from meeting someone for the first time if it's the right fit or not. I'm generally good at knowing if a relationship will develop from meeting someone on the first encounter. I would rather not date for fun, so if I feel like it wouldn't work out with someone from meeting them the first time, I'm not one to waste my time searching for something that's not there. Those two dates I've been on where it didn't go anywhere; one was a blind date on Valentines Day that my friend set up to avoid being home alone. We actually went on a few dates afterwards, but nothing ended up progressing. I kind of knew that wasn't going to go anywhere but it was a good distraction until the real thing came along. I was just tired of looking you know? I guess I figured if I stopped searching, and kept myself busy, someone who was better fit for me would come along. The other guy I dated wasn't interested in me after the first date which was actually not easy for me, it was my first rejection! He kissed me at the end of the night and asked me to be his boyfriend and then two days later changed his mind! I didn't even see him after the first date. I didn't know how to deal with that... I was devastated because I actually really liked him and I was hoping he would want to be with me. I'm so glad I'm not dating anymore! It's tough out there.

Love was always the goal in getting to know someone, or 'dating', whatever you want to call it. Isn't that what dating is all about; the search to find someone you could spend the rest of your life with? Not even only that, I think through dating and relationships, you learn more and more what you need and want. You learn through your experiences and see where they lead you.

-Lily

No, I don't date, I get into relationships. I've never dated, I don't know what dating as a word really means...I've been in four relationships that were either semi or long term relationships and each of those times we went out, and then we were together the same night except the last one, which was a lot more complicated then anything else. It started off as something that was supposed to be casual, which was a first time thing for me, and then it turned into something more then that, it turned into a relationship.

-Tristan

When asked why dating wasn't an option, Tristan discloses:

I don't really know, I haven't really thought about it until now. It's not important to me. I feel like if you have that connection with somebody, then you have that connection and then you just know whether or not that is somebody you're going to be with or not. Dating for me is trying to see, you're looking for clues, you're hunting for something that's not there and then eventually over time what dating turns into is a comfortableness with somebody that you just want to be comfortable with and be with for that reason and that you've gotten to know better.

-Tristan

Not anymore! I stopped dating three years ago; I guess it's been about that. I stopped because to me, and what I was doing and my definition of dating and maybe its most peoples, was just, you know going out with someone for the sake of meeting someone and getting to know them but it really didn't have a true purpose to it, a defined purpose to it, it was more of just being with someone and seeing where it took you rather than saying 'my goal in dating is marriage' and the goal should have been marriage but it was really 'well, we'll see what happens'. To me that is not why I wanted to be dating someone. The reason I want to be dating someone is if marriage was the goal and if it was, if I met someone right now and we both had that in mind and we were both ready at that point in our lives, then I would for sure consider getting to know the person and maybe eventually dating with the purpose of marriage, but right now unless that happen, I wouldn't date. I would definitely go out with people and meet people and maybe go out on single dates (if you want to call them that) to get to know someone, okay but I don't call that d-a-t-i-n-g, like dating people regularly, waiting to break their hearts or them break mine. I think there is more of an attachment to dating and people have a tendency to hurt people. We don't protect each other's hearts enough; we give the illusion that maybe something will happen, rather than saying 'this is a friendship and we'll keep it that way and if something happens we'll let each other know. People don't define their relationships constantly when it comes to stuff like that. Instead of saying right off the bat, 'right now we're friends, I'd like to get to know you', that's ok. People kind of have an assumption that maybe they like me rather than saying this is our point right now. That's my problem with dating, that's maybe why I don't. I would go out with a guy if it was clear we were just friends and there is no expectations and if that does change at some point, then we would talk about it with each other so that there are no hurt feelings or hurt hearts. But yeah, I would go out in that sense, I wouldn't call it dating because it wouldn't be like "oh, it's another date, maybe something will happen after that" like there's a clear purpose to it. Okay, I'm going to change the definition: I wouldn't go on dates the way that society understands it; I would go on purposeful dating. I wouldn't go out with someone just to see what he's like.

-Paige

I don't really date. I don't go out and take girls on a date per se, I'm more like...if I wanna get to know them, why don't you come over and we'll chat, or lets talk on the phone; nothing formal at all. I just think its...I think its more of a quality time thing where you find out stuff as opposed to....going out in a formal setting whether its like a dinner or a theatre, where there's other distractions...I don't know.

Yes, for me, love is ultimately my goal in hanging out with them. Usually that will all stop if I don't feel like we're really there to cultivate love.

-John

I don't date per se but yeah, I've been on a couple of dates, like real official dates, dinner and a movie, yeah. They were pretty good cause I'm social, I'm not like socially retarded or awkward...I was a little nervous for one of them and I drank and that was a bad idea, you shouldn't drink and then go on a first date because then you feel things and you wanna kiss him, and you move too quickly cause the alcohol makes you more open I guess, less inhibiting. Um, another date I was on, I was on the date and the more the date went on I realized I didn't like him and he wanted to kiss me at the end of the date and he asked to kiss me! He's like 'can I kiss you' (in a demeaning way) oh God! I didn't want to kiss him at all so I let him kiss me, but it was a peck! And I felt like an idiot but um...dating is ok, it's the second date that's harder then the first date. The second dates harder because then you already talked about a lot of stuff in your first date so sometimes its hard to keep it going.

The goal was always to find something meaningful. I never went on a date with a guy that I just...no, no, I've been on dates with guys I just knew wasn't going to turn out to be anything with, just to go on that date and have that experience. But whenever I'm with a boyfriend, for any length of time, its usually because I anticipate it going somewhere, even in those younger relationships, like your with him because you're WITH him, and if it goes on for two years, you probably know when in your head your not going to get married at 16, but...I date and I'm with boyfriends to find out who I'm going to be with for the rest of my life, it's like a learning process.

-Kayla

Bennett clearly expresses his view of dating to be a game.

Dating for me is the game where you're trying to get to know someone and your trying to select someone so it's the first couple of interactions that you get with that person so for the majority of the time, you are on your best behavior. I don't think you really get to know someone that way though if they're not completely themselves.

When I was younger, it was dating for pleasure but the problem with that is, I was seeking gratification and the pleasure that it brings is only temporary and resolves in creating that satisfaction afterwards. Nowadays I look at it differently. I look at it as laying a foundation for a relationship, that's more long-term.

-Bennett

It is important to note here that all of the respondents agreed that love and/or marriage was primarily the goal in dating for them presently. Only a whopping four respondents recalled unforeseen potential dating in the past. But most of those respondents had trouble deciding that was the case. Troy recalls his own relationship experience when he was in high school:

I don't think love was the goal in dating for me...I think it was a different kind of relationship. I didn't see it as being a long term thing...the nature of the relationship was entirely different then my relationship now, not to say there wasn't potential for love but I didn't expect it to be a serious commitment. Again, this is hindsight too; I think if I was in the state of mind I'm in right now, I would have never started it. So maybe I saw there being potential in it at the time...yeah, hindsight is a funny thing.

-Troy

Love is absolutely the goal in dating someone. You want that person to want to be next to you, to need them and they need you, you wanna be with them every day, you wanna be beside them, you want to experience things with them, you wanna become their best friend, you are their best friend, you wanna feel like this relationship is a very special relationship, of course. Respecting each other, understanding one another, appreciating one another, being honest with each other, love comes after all that. I always think about my future with someone when I meet them or want to pursue things with them. I always wonder if there is potential. I won't date someone unless I think there's potential.

-Renee

If we relate this back to the Hendricks styles of love (1986), it is clear how some of the respondent's perceptions on dating may be categorized into different styles. Most respondents see dating as game-playing. A majority of the respondents abide by the logical love category considering the potential of a lover before that kind of commitment.

First Loves

Most of the respondents felt their first loving experience when they were in their adolescent phase. By adolescent, I'm referring to anywhere between the ages of thirteen to nineteen. Most of these occurrences took place through the school environment, work or mutual friends. The sample reported various accounts and emotions of a genuine connection, trust, respect, lessons, and communication by their first loves.

John describes his first love experience fluently:

I was about twenty years old when I experienced my first love. It lasted about a year. I think we had a break and then we got back together for a few months or whatever. We met through school and ah it was just really passionate and really intense. Like we liked being close to each other and being around each other, we laughed a lot...we just...it was kind of like, just like little kids you know, just enjoying life, we felt young or whatever. She inspired me to achieve certain goals and I don't know if I inspired her but I think I was a support system, a support person for her and I was always there for her. Um, its funny I always think that people connect for different reasons and with her I felt like I was just there to help her through certain personal issues and to be there to keep her focused on what her goal is. She use to run away...she use to, it was almost as if she was too afraid to succeed certain things. She would almost complete a degree and then find an excuse and back out and whatever. She would always get so close to things and then afraid to grab it, so I think I was there to kind of help her through school and you know once that happened the summer came you know we were really close the summer came and we spent a lot of time together and got closer and closer and she was moving far away and it was almost like...I think that was the point our relationship honestly ended now that I look back on it because ah...there's nothing really more that I could give her.

She was confident in herself then and in everything she was going to learn or achieve she was ready to do it herself without anyone to support her. I never understood what I got from her but I think I just got lessons in living life and being less inhibited and ah knowing what's important and learning what a real connection with someone else is.

I knew I loved her because she made me feel good about myself and when you're with someone its like this connection, you feel so close, you feel like you feel each other and you understand each other and you're there for each other. You're living as one but its not like it's the same life; you know you're living your separate lives but your living it as one person, as one spirit, as one being, I think one being is the best way to put it. Um...and I never felt that before, I never felt at that point in my life being that close and connected to someone and I never felt like I trusted someone that much, that's a big thing, to really trust someone especially, I think I have a jealous nature, with all these insecurities, that's why. But regardless of that I, and she was a really outgoing beautiful girl, and there's lots to be jealous about and um...all those things that I could not control in a previous relationship like jealousy or impatience or ah me being a control freak or whatever, that all went away when I was in that relationship so I knew that I had something special there and you know for her I can't comment for anyone else, she said she loved me and I know that um with me she unlocked a lot of her own, she unlocked a lot of herself, she kind of grew or whatever I don't think that's the right word but she found herself a little bit I think, in the presence of me around I guess. That sounds self praising or whatever, I probably shouldn't give myself that much credit but some people need that stimulus or whatever it may be to help them see themselves or even give them a push down the hill to keep the ball rolling.

-John

My first love was my high school sweetheart. We fell in love, but like everything else, we moved on and nothing happened of it but it was more of an innocent, pure type of love.

-Tristan

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has been mainly devoted to illustrating the beginning stages of an intimate relationship: attraction, dating, games, and first love. When taken separately, each account within each stage served as a stepping stone closer to further understanding what love means to them and what kind of love they want in their lives.

So far, the respondents have expressed in detail about what their intimate relationships were like leading up to true love. The next chapter will describe how they define love and the impact it has had on them.

CHAPTER FIVE

VOICES OF LOVE: PUTTING LOVE INTO WORDS

Everyone wants to know more about love. We want to know what it means to love, what we can do in our everyday lives to love and be loved. Contrary to what was explored in the earlier chapters, there are still some books on the subject of love working hard to avoid giving clear definitions. In the introduction to Diane Ackerman's *A Natural History of Love*, she declares, "Love is the great intangible." A few sentences down from this she suggests: "Everyone admits that love is wonderful and necessary, yet no one can agree on what it is." Coyly, she adds: "We use the word love in such a sloppy way that it can mean almost nothing or absolutely everything." No definition ever appears in her book that would help anyone trying to learn the art of loving. Yet she is not alone in writing of love in ways that cloud our understanding. When the very meaning of the word is cloaked in mystery, it should not come as a surprise that most people find it hard to define what they mean when they use the word "love."

This chapter will focus on the respondents' own feelings and thoughts about love and its extraordinary manifestations. What better way to understand love than to hear the words that describes its mystical magic directly from the source of those who experience it. These ordinary, everyday people largely indicate the profound effect love has placed in their lives, not only emotionally, but spiritually, mentally, physically, and

beyond forces we can describe in words. I'd like to begin this section with a personal love story one respondent in particular has shared with me.

True Love: When Two Become One

Bob, a 32 year old male who works as a software engineer for a large company expresses his own experience of how he fell in love with the woman he wants to spend the rest of his life with: *The One*. He has contributed to this study his accounts of love in the past but this one, he explains, is profound and something more meaningful than he has ever felt or encountered for another. Every love story has a beginning, and here is Bob's...

I was enjoying the single life after breaking up with my previous girlfriends 6 months earlier. I had gone out with some friends of mine to a club over the Christmas holidays for some drinks and dancing and at the end of the night is when I saw her. We were at the coat check picking up our jackets when she came up and said bye to one of my friends, I literally spun around as she walked by so that I could look at her longer. Immediately I approached my friend to find out who she was and the response I got was "that's A.H."

"Who is A.H?" I replied.

My friends told me that she is related to my brother in law and that I know her, I have known her for years. All I knew was that I had to meet her AGAIN!

It turns out that I did know her, well sort of. I knew her in passing to say hello. I first noticed her at my sister's wedding, nine years ago, I thought to myself that is one beautiful girl but at the time I was seeing someone else so I did not approach her. A few years later I moved away for a job and she went away to college. We would see each other in passing when we came home for the holidays but again I always had a girlfriend at those times so nothing ever developed.

But this year was the first time I had seen her and I had nothing holding me back, well except the fact that I didn't know if she was even attracted to me plus the fact that most people in our community that knew us did not want the "good girl" with the "bad boy".

Regardless I had no way of talking to her again unless I got her phone number but at this point she had already walked away while I stood there frozen staring at her beauty. That is when the nagging stage began. My two girlfriends (just friends who happen to be a female) knew her fairly well and so that is when I began asking them to find out where she is going, or when she is going to be out next. They said they would call her tomorrow she has already gone home to bed. That was not good enough for me, tomorrow was too far away and when I see something I want, I hate waiting. I spent the remainder of the night on my friend Nancy's ass begging her to call this girl and to somehow plant the seed that I was interested, VERY VERY interested.

The next day, or maybe it was that night when we were heading home that she called her, I can't recall but initially she thought I was good looking but she was not interested, to the point where she told my friend not to give me her number to call her. My friend however, knew that I was truly interested in this girl and probed a bit more to find out that she was going to go to a party the day after Christmas then fly back school. Once I found out that she was going to this party it was my mission to see her again!

At the party when I saw her I completely froze again. What you need to understand is that is not me at all... I am right on the border between confident and cocky, so for me to freeze up when I see her shocked my friends. She spent the entire night working the room bouncing from friend to friend who she hadn't seen in forever. Finally when she sat down I approached her and asked her to dance. She said yes but remained seated...I stood there waiting for her to get up and she looked at me and said "oh you mean now?" We danced and chatted a bit and she finally gave me her number, but she was leaving the next morning back to Montreal. Funny thing was that I had planned a trip to Montreal for the first week in January. I told her I would give her a call and I would love to see her when I got there.

Upon arrival to Montreal the first thing I did was call her. I was so excited to see her again and I know it showed when I spoke to her. We had made plans to meet up at a lounge later that evening; she was coming with her friends and me with a group of my boys. She took forever to get there and the entire night we were being approached by attractive women but I paid no attention to them, my focus was on the door, waiting for her to walk through it so I could see her again. When she finally did come through the door I don't think we left each other's side for more than 30 seconds. All my friends left to go to the casino but I stayed back to be with her. The next day we hung out again and then Sunday I went back home.

You know that weekend I never kissed her. I wanted to the entire time she was with me but I never made a move. That Sunday morning I was getting in the car after we had breakfast, I said good bye to her and at that moment I could feel something, not sure if it was love but I knew at that point when I look at her, hugged her, and said good bye that it was far from over.

I don't recall the exact moment I fell in love with her but for some reason that one moment when in front of Eggspectations, when I held her in my arms then pulled away from her, a huge rush of emotions flowed through me. Feelings like happiness that I met this incredible lady, sorrow that I am saying good bye to her, fear that maybe she does not feel the same way about me. But in the end when I let go after the hug, still holding her hands I looked at her face, into her eyes and how she was looking at me, all fear and doubt was flushed away and a new heightened sense of confidence in the relationship that was about to be took over me.

That moment more than anything stands out vividly in my mind. That is where the seed of love began to grow. After a year together we still have our ups and downs, days where we fight and days where we are sad together and days where we feel God is showering us with his love. The good days are great; hell the bad days are not so bad either because I have her in my life. I Love my Dove!

-Bob

Is there something about Bob's story that everyone who has experienced love can relate to? All of the respondents in this sample have so generously and graciously provided their totaling experiences of their first, true loves; unfortunately it is beyond the length of this paper to include all the respondents encounters of love in detail; however, the next section describes how the sample subjects knew they were intimately in love.

How Did You Know?

A majority of the respondents interestingly associated the recognition of love in various ways; however, some respondents were very similar in their descriptions. Kayla recalls her experience of recognition the first time she saw her lover as early as high

school. She is convinced she experienced a moment of ESP during her first encounter and knew that she was going to share amorous feelings with this man in the future.

In a new school the first day, his locker was a couple of lockers away from mine, and I remember I was late for class, I had just gotten there, it was terrifying and I looked up and he had this Kurt Cobain look and at the time I just knew that I'd get to know him, I had a feeling I'd meet him, or that we'd know each other eventually, I had a split second moment of ESP you know? And we made eye contact, he probably thought I was a huge geek at the time because I had just gotten into the school and I had curly hair and glasses.

-Kayla

Similarly, Tristan knew he was falling for his love on their first date. He met his beloved through mutual friends and asked her out for dinner. With something as simple as a dinner shared between them their first night out together, he explains he just knew.

I knew the first night we went out. The first time you kiss, you just know

-Tristan

All of the respondents had difficulty explaining into words the acknowledgment of such a strong and meaningful bond. Marcus, 26 years old, attempts to elucidate his awakening:

We were sitting in the middle of nowhere. We were out camping somewhere in the summertime...we just sat there in silence...it was the silence that made me realize I was in love with her. The fact that we could both sit there in silence and me be able to read her thoughts as if I was in her own head and have them affect me the way they would

her, made me realize I was in love. I knew that she was feeling the same, I can't explain it, it's hard to explain, it was just this feeling I had.

-Marcus

John sternly aims to recall multiple feelings in pragmatic terms to illustrate how he felt:

It felt wholly, it felt truth, it felt like life, do you understand these words, these are the words, these are the things that it felt like, it felt real, and honest and pure and the answer, the one, the only thing that was right, the only thing that could be...you know? Like there's nothing else other than us that could work for each other, a completion, they're all cliché's, I wish I was original.

-John

Alexis, who claims she has never truly and genuinely been in love has her own version of it; due to her past relationships and experiences she shares her own view of how love should and can be determined.

Looking back, I don't think I've ever been in love but I think you know you are in love when you feel it in your bones....when the relationship brings an incredible amount of positive energy into your world. I think you know you are in love when that person is your number one priority and your individual worlds become one instead of two separate worlds. Songs sounds nicer, food taste better, stress is easier to handle. I think that's what being in love is supposed to feel like. When you know that no matter what happens, that person is a part of your life and this alone, reassures you and calms, makes you feel safe. When you know that you just can't live without that person, when you get butterflies just seeing his name on your phone even though he's called you everyday for the past year, I think you know you are in love.

-Alexis

Both Renee and Troy described how their love was acknowledged by its development over time. They experienced the growth of love through the development of infatuation towards passion and intimacy; excitement towards comfort & warmth; and empathy: really being able to put themselves into the shoes of their beloved and have it affect their day as it would their partners. It is also important to note here, Renee and Troy's recognition of how deepened their love is amplified fathoming life without their beloved.

You just know. When you're in love with someone, you just know. It wasn't right away at all; first year was infatuation really, that whole physical part or whatever. When I truly felt like I couldn't live without this person, was after our break actually, our break was almost two years after going out. We had our break for about two or three weeks and then we got back together. I went away for the first week-end of July, and I was coming back home on the plane talking to my friend, I had a fun week-end, I was away and I saw different people and we went into a club once and it just hit me at that point of time that 'oh my god, I'm so lucky to have this person in my life and I love him so much' At that point I realized what he truly meant to me, I would die without him. And it was on the plane and I was telling my friend, I said to her 'I'm so lucky to have Anthony in my life, I'm just so blessed and I thank god we have each other' I just felt weird, just this warmth, like something came into me, and I realized it big time then. I knew I loved him before, but it really hit at that time. I'm sure the first year where I said it was infatuation, I thought it was love at the time I'm sure, and its not until you go through things together and that you do things together that it becomes even more.

-Renee

you know as soon as you can consider yourself with someone and, not to say that it always has to be like that, but with the case of my current girlfriend, I mean things started out great and the way they developed to its...I mean the nature of the love changes over time but...it's not only the comfort you feel with someone, but the passion you feel for them to and the way you really get to understand them and really empathize with them..., the daily trials of which relations they go through and the way you really can put yourself, you can really position yourself in their shoes, and the way...when you think about your life you can't think of it without thinking of them and I mean that it just opens up so many possibilities in terms of your own potential and there's this other half

which its just there or its not and I guess that's where it kind of gets tricky but...you just know if its there at the same time.

-Troy

It's important to point out here the similarity in over half of the responses: an initial moment of solidification which then creates a deeper and more meaningful connection to their partners. Depending on the experience and the individuals, there appears to be a general gut feeling that is created that causes most of the sample subjects to acknowledge their bond of love.

It is also important to note that nine respondents have stated love to be a matter of hindsight. Most of the samples subjects thought it may very well have been possible they perceived love for someone in the past before their current loves. Lily, Tristan, John, Bob, Troy, Kayla, Paige, Jayden, and Bennett recalled having been in love more than once; however, defined their present love as either deeper or a more genuine passionate love; for lack of a better word *real* love.

To summarize, most of the respondents claimed they knew they were in love for various reasons; however, the findings were more similar than different. Six of the interviewees in this sample describes this experience of awakening as 'you just know' [the moment you fall in love] and similarly, three respondents have stated this recognition as 'hitting them' or 'hitting them like a wave.' Five of the respondents suggest as soon as an unspoken language develops between the two of you, this is a strong indicator of love. Beginning to empathize with their partner was another strong indicator of acknowledging love (5 respondents). Many respondents found it difficult to either calculate the moment they initially fell in love with their partner; many of the

respondents stated that it is not just one feeling but a multiple of feelings and emotions that created this deep connection; some believe, interestingly, that there are many times they fell in love with the same person; and few respondents found great difficulty describing into words, for lack of, to generalize what they felt. Most of the respondents stated that empathy, reassurance, sense of calm, security, a strong feeling of warmth, and excitement were all general indicators of falling in love in addition to others.

Defining Love

I took the liberty to search for the definition of love in the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*; to my disappointment, nothing was written. The dictionary offers the definition for “lock – out” but nothing for love: Typical. The online *Oxford Dictionary* defines love as an “intense feeling of deep affection” for someone. Helen Fisher (1992) suggests love is merely infatuation. For Michael Liebowitz (1983), Love to be a complex chemical reaction in our brain. Freud believes love is rooted in our earliest infantile experiences with intimacy. Plato’s work on love demonstrates love to be a sublimated form of eroticism: Love is not beautiful, it desires beauty. Solomon (2006) believes love is a word denoting a set of ideas. Octavio Paz (1993) emphasizes the sentiment, not the idea: the passionate attraction towards a single person. And the list goes on.

There are many different ideologies, theories and definitions of love and what it means, however; to truly come to terms with love, we must come to terms with the fundamental differences between how people define love. Love is not simple. Love is a

mixture and several elements united and animated by desire; each desires something different.

Most of the respondents reported true genuine love to be unconditional. John believes that the basis and most important aspect of love is the unconditional. John brilliantly reports how love is not something you like about the person but loving everything about the person.

Love is unconditional...its not, it's easier to say what love is not than what love is, I think. Love is not, 'I like you, you like me' we know each other really well, or 'I wish this were a little bit different about you' or whatever. These types of relationships are not love. When I'm talking unconditional I'm talking about when your with that person...you love that person. You don't love their hair, you don't love that make you laugh, you don't love that they work on Wall Street; that's pieces of who they are, fractions. I'm talking unconditional, everything about them, everything you understand and know about them you love and you even love the things you know you don't understand yet, that's what I'm talking unconditional. So, I don't think that's the definition of love but I think it that's a glimpse of what love is all about. That's what it is to me, unconditional.

-John

Troy reports similarly to John's notion that to love is to love everything about someone. He takes this one step further by explaining otherwise it will just be a temporary feeling and nothing can grow from that:

I think that's something that, that might sort of put you in the forefront when you think about why or how much you love them but I think that has to be a very temporary thing, I think at the end of the day you have to love them for who they are as a person and recognize the components which build up that but if its just a matter of certain components well that's, I mean, that'll play itself out and I think you'll realize its not real love if that's the case.

-Troy

Kayla defines love in several ways: Butterflies, excitement for her lover, happiness and providing the other with the same. Kayla further reports that a strong indicator of love is when one or the other lover gets sick and still see's them in a beautiful light.

Love is butterflies. Love is getting excited to see someone. Love is being fine seeing somebody and not doing anything else, like not...when you're with that person it doesn't matter what anybody else is doing, if there's a big party that night, its fine to just sit at home with your boyfriend or your partner. Its love when ya laugh and ya play and ya touch. Its love when you're feeling sad and he's able to pick you up and vice versa. Its love when you have the flu and you look horrible and he still thinks you're beautiful...that's love. I think that a couple really experiences whether they're in love or not when one or the other gets really badly sick and has have to be taken care of and they look nasty but the other person still sees them in a really nice way you know in a beautiful light...I think that's partly love. I think that's a strong indicator of love.

-Kayla

Troy reports love to be a warmth that you can always count on remaining a part of you. He explains how love can be a mutual influence on another's life. In addition, Troy describes how love affects us on a daily basis and the decisions we make for the future. Most importantly, and popularly, Troy reports love to be an extension onto the rest of our lives becoming more passionate about other things and having those things become more meaningful with the presence of love.

When you first wake up in the morning to when you lay your head on the pillow at night I think that's, almost the risk in it, in the sense that you might start taking it for granted but its something that its like a warmth that's always with you and not only can you always count on it; it opens up so many doors in terms of your own mood and ... being able to have an influence or being able to offer yourself in someone else's life If someone you love is having a bad day you get so much pleasure from helping them out and just the way you're always caring for each other and the way its this really reciprocal thing where you know, you care for someone and they care for you back and you appreciate each other's care and it can get you through so much...I mean that's one of the things that I found, once I knew that I was not only in love with someone but loved back, all these things in my mind that were worrisome, (I mean for instance, this is when I was in my 3rd year of my BA, I had no idea what I was going to be doing afterwards, and not that everything should be about school but there was this huge question mark in my life and just with regards to not just was I going to go on to more schooling or like what did I want to make of my life) seemed less pressing through love, they just found a way of resolving themselves and it spills out onto the rest of your life, you just become so much more passionate about everything else, about just reading some text book about something random (completely removed from your love), it just makes you so much more passionate about everything else, it just gives you so much meaning to everything.

When the person's not around you, you know that you're in their heart and they're in your heart and its something that you can measure in terms of your own feelings on a day-to-day basis You have not only this passion to be with them and to help them actually achieve all their dreams, but in achieving your own dreams you see them in it and its this thing that you don't even, its not even something you can calculate or even question, their just there...and...its hard to say the big picture of how love can be measured in ones life. But I suspect that's really the presence or absence of love, is when those things that people really determines peoples temperaments when, and I don't want to sound morbid, but on their death beds, or at any point you're appraising your life and thinking about all the things you've done and all of the things you've regret not having done. I think in 99% of the cases, and I think I would be especially susceptible to this, is its something that if you were in love...you could have done nothing else in your life and that would have been a fulfilled life whereas you could be some great industrialist or some prolific artist or something and that's not going to hold any weight later on in life, I mean you need...you need to have that impact on someone else's life and allow someone to shape your own.

-Troy

Marcus defines love by describing how it differs from the initial encounter of infatuation of the beloved. Marcus finds his way into his definition of love by illustrating how love grows from that seed of lust. During the course of growth, Marcus reports mutual recognition, compromise; understanding for one another; passion as amplifies and expands the love for another.

[Love] isn't the same thing as feelings of infatuation when you first meet someone, it's something that comes from that, and is based on mutual recognition; being on the same wave length; knowing what the other person is thinking and knowing that they understand you just as well; feeling very comfortable and willing to share anything about yourself to them; always feeling like they bring you so much to your life that you almost feel guilty for (in your mind) not being able to equal that.

-Marcus

John reports love to be like a marriage; the combination of two souls, two bodies, two spirits and two minds.

Love itself to me is like a marriage of people's feelings, emotions, and of the souls. It's when you are with someone and sharing everything together, the joy and sorrow. You can have this love with someone, you take that bond with them, your spirit, your life, your energy, and say that ends, it's broken....the next time you feel that way with someone, it's not the same because they're two different bodies and souls, it's not the same mixture as the first time but you can still have love as the same result. Love is just different each time. You can experience that with different people, you grow...it's the fact that you learn new things, you get on a higher level each time you fall in love. Love has different levels. Both times that I've been in love it has been different, the last love always cancels out the previous loves, it feels that way cause it's the most recent, you forget about the past love, the present one is more real but maybe because it's recent that you feel like that. That's just in my experience, since it's new and recent, it makes you feel like its 'real' love and the previous were not, even though they were in their own way.

I've had two different loves, my first love was like I really admired her as a person, how she carried herself, how strong she was, I loved her as a person. She made me in love with her by being who she was, I put her on a pedestal, but it didn't feel mutual.

My second love, I didn't feel so odd by her. Brain and looks; it was more like...it felt more shared...experienced...a more shared experience with each other; love was more mutual. Things just came together. There was a mutual bonding, it made me feel great; it made my life feel better, the food tasted better, the sun was brighter; in that light, I loved her as a person, they both felt like opposite loves because the first one was me loving her but the second was me being in love with her because it felt more mutual.

-John

John makes many important points here that are shared by a majority of the respondents in this sample. John states love to have different levels and each level of love is defined separately and differently from the other. John has had two loves and defines each of them differently since he has experienced them differently. All of the respondents who have been in love more than once agrees that love holds a distinctive meaning each time. John takes this one step further by explaining why: each love experienced possesses a different mixture of feelings, emotions, and spirits between two people. In addition, John, as well ten of the respondents' reported their current love or more recent love to be their greatest love.

Alexis, 25 years old, has yet to experience love the way she imagines and believes it to be:

I don't think that I have ever been in love because in both of my serious relationships, there was always an omnipresent element of doubt which leads me to believe that I wanted to be in love, but that in reality, I wasn't. I think that truly being in love happens when you feel like everything is perfect, or at least, as close to perfection as it can be. There shouldn't be doubts lingering in the background. In my world, being in love is supposed to feel like you are floating on a cloud...how can you float on a cloud if you always have doubts weighing you down? So my answer is that I've wanted and tried

desperately to convince myself that I was in love, but in the end, considering that I didn't really feel it in my bones, then nope, I have never been in love. It will be nice when it will happen though! I think a lot of people love something about the other, but from my experience and in my opinion true love, everlasting love, healthy love, is loving the person entirely for who they are not just something about them.

-Alexis

Through her experiences with past relationships and believing at the time she was indeed in love, Alexis has learned what a healthy love consists of. She strongly believes that love leaves no room for doubts in the relationship and much like what John as reported previously; loving someone as a person entirely is necessary in the development of a healthy long – everlasting love.

Bennett on the other hand, does not believe love exists in the similar fashion the media portrays it to be. Bennett believes love is lust; the love shared between two people in a marriage is developed from trust, honesty, and respect for one another.

Love is just a release of hormones from the body when you are lusting after someone; it's an addiction, an addiction to the hormones when you want someone. If it's not an addiction, it's not love. Love is based on sex, but it is not sex...love is an addiction. I don't really think that love exists; I mean the way that we see in the movies anyway. I think that love in a marriage is something we build on from trust, honesty, and respect for one another, it is unconditional, it's mutual, and you're open with each other, this is love is to me.

-Bennett

Although Bennett has reported love is based on lust, there are some indicators of love in his response that share commonalities with a majority of the respondents: unconditional, mutual, and communicating openly. It is important to highlight Bennett's

suggestion of love as an addiction. Many social-psychologists such as Michael Liebowitz and Helen Fisher have based their research upon the argument that love is indeed an infatuation.

Fisher (1992) states love as a “violent emotional disturbance” (p. 52) beginning with a small molecule called phenylethylamine (known as PEA), a substance in the brain that causes our revved up feelings of elation, exhilaration, and euphoria. Similarly, Liebowitz (1983) speculates we feel infatuation when neurons in the limbic system become saturated or sensitized by PEA and/or other brain chemicals (norepinephrine and dopamine) and then stimulating the brain. Liebowitz takes this one step further by indicating this process as an addiction, or “craving” (pp. 31-39).

Much like Bennett, Fisher, and Liebowitz, Tristan believes a part of being in love can be correlated to drugs:

Being in love is great sometimes and it sucks other times. Sometimes you're blinded by love. Sometimes it keeps you from doing what you truly want to do with your life. And it affects your decisions, not always in a bad way, but it affects your decisions because you're thinking for two people instead of one. Love is like a drug; it feels like you can do anything. Feels like your life is ahead of you and you can see everything laid out and your direction that you're looking for is right in front of you and its open for you. It feels like you have someone standing beside you letting you know that everything's going to be ok.

-Tristan

Paige explains how true love to her is rooted within the institution of marriage and how relationships are based on lust. Paige believed she was in love three times in the past and realized looking back at her relationships it was just lust and there was no future.

Relationships, Paige reports are a waste of time unless the end result is marriage. She reports that an illusion is created in your head then what's actually there. Could this be the same case for Alexis? Hence, a relationship, Paige believes should only be had with the one you are going to marry. This creates less hurt and a deeper and meaningful relationship is created as a result. Furthermore, she reports unlike some of the other respondents that love beyond loving certain aspects of a person, but rather, everything about them. She also believes love to be a mutual devotion between two people and strongly believes love is God. By this, Paige suggests love is unselfish, patient, and a journey in becoming better Christians.

Love for me is more of a mutual thing, its more then just loving what the person looks like, or just the aura of them, its loving what's really inside of them and truly being able to be led by them in life and complement them in every way possible, love is God. I think that God has taught us love, his goals were to love others and to constantly be showing our brothers and sisters love and I think that the marriage is the highest level of love. The highest level of love is when it is between a woman and a man. I think it would be the ultimate relationship where you are each other's best friend, you are each other's rock, and you lead each other to be better Christians and to be better people to your friends and families and strangers and I think its definitely a lot more then a relationship where its just lust because none of that really matters, its more then a façade or look, or a physical thing where true love to me is very, very deep and its rooted, for me, Godly love. It's obviously not for everyone, but for me, that's what it is. I think love is not selfish. When you truly love someone, I think you would do truly anything to make them happy and to help them out. Where as lust you care more about yourselves; which is true, I think the reason we get into so many relationships is for ourselves and not for the other person. I think to truly really love someone we'll take the time and make sure that the other person wants this and is ready for it; you're so cautious because its so much deeper then just lust.

-Paige

Paige discusses, as well as Bennett earlier, how relationships are selfish, and only beneficial to the self. Bennett describes it as “self gratification” and meaningless similarly to Paige.

Renee like most of the other respondents found it difficult to define and express love into words. She reports love to be comforting, accepting, butterflies, beyond the physical, an abundance of energy. Dissimilarly, Renee has added some interesting thoughts:

It's unexplainable, it's weird. It's so weird to explain. No matter what that other person is like, everything negative or bad about them, you accept.

It's really hard to describe it. It's a very comforting feeling knowing that somebody was there, you can be yourself, totally and completely, you don't have to hide yourself in front of him. It's very nice. It's something that I might not feel again, forever. I might love somebody. I might marry someone and I will love them in different ways, in many ways but to be in love with somebody is completely different then loving somebody. Being in love with someone is not something everyone gets a chance to feel in their lifetime and you'd be lucky.

-Renee

Renee continues to define love clarifying the unnecessary need to be in love in order to be in a marriage. When asked what kind of love carries you through a marriage, she responds:

Once two people are committed to each other, they have the same goals in life, they want to have a home and raise a family and have kids and raise them according to their shared values, you have to share the same values obviously or understand each other and accept each other. It might not be to the point where you feel butterflies in your stomach every time he touches you or that you look into each other eyes and you just feel like you could completely be lost in them forever. It's like this feeling, it's like electrical, and it's beyond the physical. It's almost like having this extra energy or

something, this charge. Marriage, you don't have to be in love to make a marriage work, you don't. As long as you understand each other, I think. It would be great if you were in love. That's something that is a bonus I think. But like I said, you can love somebody; you can love them with all your heart and as you grow older and with someone you will learn to appreciate them more and your love deepens for them. It's only because my parents are in that situation, and there are a lot of problems because they're not in love with each other. I think that every person has a different perception of what love is. What I might think love is, someone else might not. Like, I might give more, or I might think that you have to be romantic all the time and you have to be googo ghawghaw and butterflies and all that. Some people don't believe in that, some people might not want to believe in that.

I think that love comes after marriage. I think that love grows, as it starts out a little bit of love is there but then the more things you go through in life, the more things you experience together, the children you have together, those are incredible experiences to share something with someone and to go through that together, you appreciate the other person that much more and you love them more for that. Love has different levels. The love that comes after marriage is very much affected by responsibility.

-Renee

Unrequited Love

I think it is really important to highlight the significance of mutual recognition here. Not one respondent left out this indicator in their definitions of love. Can there still be love if love is unrequited? When reciprocated, romantic love is usually a source of deep fulfillment and ecstasy; when love is unrequited, however, it can lead to emptiness, anxiety, or despair. Intimate love can thus teeter between states of ecstasy and misery (Hatfield, 1988). Perhaps it is like the sample subjects have described: no other feature of our lives can lift us up so high or plunge us as low as romantic love. Tristan believes there is still potential and love may still grow from that.

There could be unrequited love and I don't see that as being the kind of love where you have that mutual recognition but you don't just arrive at that stage. There's love at first

sight and that's not the same love that you manifest when, like on your wedding day but its all sort of part of the same trajectory and I mean there's many trajectories each individual, each couple has and goes about it in a different way but I think you can have love that starts off...as it being a one-sided thing, where it just remains one person loving the other person and the other person doesn't recognize that first person, if that doesn't resolve itself soon with that other recognition then it probably won't go anywhere but it can go somewhere potentially.

-Troy

As highlighted above, all of the respondents have no doubt, different ways of defining love, however, if we look closely enough, we can find a substantial amount of similarities among them.

Establishing Love/Mutual Recognition

All of the respondents reported the establishment of love for one another, verbally, is a big step in the development of a relationship. Establishing love solidifies where the relationship stands. Troy describes mutual recognition like an architectural structure:

I almost look at it as an architectural structure where they need each other to sort of support each others weight not that its absolutely essential but it seems that, there can be stress, you can have your own doubts about whether or not somebody really loves you and if it gets into this situation where your love for them overlaps with the love for you and there's just that recognition and letting it develop into something like that, I think it just...it provides you with so much more support emotionally and...it allows it to get beyond a state where your just assuring yourself of that love but applying it in your lives.

-Troy

Troy reports the assurance that your loved one feels the same way you do creates a stronger support system and transcending that support in other area's of their lives.

This next section serves to illustrate the many different ways each of the respondents established their love for their partner and how it affected the relationship afterwards. In Renee's case, she reports the words just being blurted out of her mouth as if she was saying something routinely such as "good night", or "thank-you".

Interestingly she admits that she wouldn't have put herself in that vulnerable position had she not knew her partner felt the same in return. As Troy had reported above, Renee felt so much reassurance, and that in turn had deepened her love for her partner, Anthony.

It kind of came out. I thought it was too soon but at that moment in time, as I was saying goodbye to him as I was leaving, it just came out, it blurted; I said it first. And it just came out of my mouth and instinctively put my hand on my mouth. I was like 'oh my God'. I didn't think it was appropriate at the time. It was two months after we started our relationship. I know it was him who felt more for me in the beginning and it was him that kept telling me to take my time and to not feel pressured about commitment. I was just so happy. I felt excitement, and I felt like I was the most beautiful person ever, and he was just so proud to be my boyfriend. So when I said it, it was at the time when I was dropping him off at his friends and we were saying goodnight to each other and then I just said it; like it was normal or something. He came right back into the car, he shut the door and he was like 'whoa' (laughing). He couldn't believe it, that I said it, he was in shock but in a good way. He was happy that I said it. And I think he said it back, I think he said 'well I love you too'. He was just in shock that I said it first. It was a mutual thing. I don't think that if I didn't think he felt it I would have said it because of my pride, I wouldn't belittle myself like that. I have to always make sure that the other person at least feels the same way. I'm not going to force someone to love me or force someone to date me, like I don't want it. I think mutual recognition is huge for love. I think the more mutual it is, the deeper it is. And it's funny because after it was established or recognized officially that we were in love with each other, it's like I loved him even more. I didn't think I could possibly love him more, but I did after that. I did anyway. I never asked him, I never had to ask him. I felt so much

reassurance, and we started talking about our future together and how we were the one for each other and nobody else and they we were the loves of our lives, and how we want to have children together I want you to be my wife or husband. You just start talking about the future a lot together. And I think for a man to talk about children names and where we're going to live, about a wedding, what kind of engagement ring I would like, it's a bigger deal then a women talking about those things because women want it more.

-Renee

For Renee and Anthony this solidification has led them that much closer to the next step in their relationship: marriage and having children. Tristan and John too believe that this affirmation between two lovers is moving them forward.

It's affirming that you have that so you don't worry about it anymore. Then you can count on that person to give more and for you to give more to that person then you would have before; you let yourself open a lot more because after that, it's a big step, a big thing, to know that from one another. It means a lot of things; it means you have someone to count on if you're with that person. It makes the relationship better, moves forward.

-Tristan

Better. More. Growing. Increases love. I don't know what its like but that's what it is. Things change, things like ah...(long pause) I think there's more of a trust, faith in each other allowing you to open more and therefore love more, you know, things change, you evolve, you grow, its growing.

-John

For Troy, everything between him and his partner happened in such a short period of time which caused his recollection up until that point to be a blur.

I sort of look back in that period and its, its kind of a blur to because it seems like so much happened in such a relatively small period of time and when you look back to before you went out with them its like your life was so much different but it was only a

couple of months ago and then things just change so much and it just becomes so...becomes so enveloped in being with them and everything else that was so important beforehand like school, work and everything...I don't even remember going to class but I must have I guess, or like working or anything. When I look back on that period all I think of is the time I spent with her so there was definitely a context which built up to that. It was the kinda thing where...in my own mind...I was sure of this, I had that resolved but that there was also a bit of anxiety with regards to, if it was too early and in many respects it was very unprecedented for me and I was also not sure if it was something that she agreed with...if she was on the same wavelength as me...Even with those anxieties, I knew in my own mind, in my own heart that it was true so...I felt like it was up to me to just say it and I would be doing the relationship a great service by saying that and ya...sure enough...she reciprocated.

-Troy

When Troy was asked what the relationship was like after this establishment he reports:

in one sense, I think there was knowing and I think in one sense it doesn't really change because the feelings were there beforehand but just having that verbal acknowledgement and knowing it was a mutual thing, I think it eases some of the anxiety but at the same time its not so much that there's something new there, its just now you have...now you can use this term to describe something which you in your own mind were using anyway but now you can just say it verbally to the person without worrying if they're not going to think it. It goes back to the idea that it's not just a matter of declaring love but it's always...it always has a precedent that it builds from

-Troy

Similarly to the other respondents, Troy and his partner's declaration of love, was a relief to know the feeling was shared and returned. He also states that the sentiment was developed through the beginning stages of the relationship.

Fear & Games

As we have touched on briefly in this thesis the many different ideas and defined practices we are meant to carry out in a relationship, this unfortunately leads to a lot of misunderstandings and fear of rejection. As mentioned in the previous chapter, an unspoken set of rules, and guidelines are appointed to how relationships are meant to be preceded. This leads many people to be confused as to what is appropriate or not according to the timing or stage in the relationship.

Kayla describes her own experience of declaring her love

I held back at the beginning because you don't want to come off strong...and I knew from early on that I pretty much loved him or had super strong feelings for him, more than I had any other but I didn't vocalized that I loved him cause you kinda still play a game, you know, in healthy love you don't think you should play a game, but I think games are sort of inevitable. So, at the beginning you don't say you're in love and then you get to a certain point where you think its ok to say it or its comfortable...or you don't think the person's going to up and leave you or get freaked out that you said you loved them. So I guess I started saying it at a certain point and then he started saying it but I was never sure he meant it the way I did cause you can never know truly what that other person is thinking, so yes, we both vocalized it to each other, its just sometimes I'm doubting the sincerity, if he's as in love with me as I am with him.

-Kayla

Kayla suggests that games are inevitable in a relationship, even in a healthy relationship.

There is always going to be that sense of fear in the relationship since one will never truly know what the other is thinking. I then asked Kayla when it is right to say 'I love you'; she responds:

It is right to say you love someone when you're not going to regret saying it. You should be able to say you love someone with the consciousness of knowing that they may or may not say it back right away and if you're comfortable saying it, regardless of whether they say it back to you or not, that is the right time to say it but also, you don't want to freak the other person out. So you should probably be sensible and you shouldn't say it too early...I'd say if, ok, say you're going out for...three, four, five months, I think then you can start saying it. I don't think its appropriate to start saying you love somebody within the first month, but then again there's people who fall in love...love at first sight immediately like how could you say you can't say I love you...you know that you love somebody within that first month, that its wrong, or too early...so I don't know when the right time to say it is but I think its good to say it if you feel good saying it and hoping that the other person feels the same. I don't think it's good to say it if you're not sure if the other person feels the same.

Like Renee, Kayla believes that it is the right time to say 'I love you' when you are confident the other is feeling the same way about you. If you are comfortable declaring your love for someone that is usually a good indicator it is the right time.

Troy reports his experience of fear during his previous loved relationship and admits looking back how it didn't do the relationship any good by withholding his true feelings:

I think I loved someone and not told them, and again I mean this is the me I am right now, I don't think it would have turned into actual love, I think it was still in a very infatuation sort of stage where any sort of uncertainties you kind of fill in the blanks yourself and doing yourself and that other person a great disservice

-Troy

John would have to disagree with Kayla and Troy:

If are you saying truth, as long as your speaking truth then its ok to say you love someone. Too many people get worried about, you know, 'am I gonna hear it back?'

That's not real love. If you can't say it or gonna say it and looking for some kind of response then that means it's not unconditional. That means it's conditional. And that's not really love. You know you love them but you're going to be reserved or restrained or gonna feel different emotions depending on their reaction. No. That's a condition. That's a condition. Isn't even fear a condition? You know? I really don't think that if you do find that unconditional love I don't think anything stands in the way of that. It's kind of almost undeniable. Maybe you can have a love that's not mutual and still be unconditional. But anyway, if you're scared, then there's something wrong.

-John

A majority of the respondents in this sample have reported feelings of fear and anxiety of their love unreturned. Entertainingly, women are more likely than men to hesitate saying 'I love you' unless they know how the other feels. Men were more likely to take the risk.

Growth, Attachment & Bonding

Most of my respondents are still in the beginning phase of their relationships. By beginning, I am referring to unmarried and in a relationship at the most, four years. Only one respondent, Jayden, is married with two kids. Unfortunately I couldn't gather much data of how the relationship has developed during significant changes like marriage and children, however, every relationship has their obstacles and challenges. When I asked the respondents generally how love has changed them, a variety of responses were described.

Kayla expresses how she feels crazy: unstable and less in control of her feelings

It has made me insane. Being in love I've noticed sides of myself I don't like...like jealousy, I'm not a jealous person. If I see my boyfriend talking to another girl for a

minute my gut clenches, I can feel it in my gut, the green monster and you would never want to say 'oh, I'm jealous' cause then you look weak and pathetic but you really Feel it; it's there, no matter what. And I don't like how love makes me crazy cause when we fight I get sick, I feel like 'oh, we could lose each other any minute' and...I feel unstable being in love. I like to have control; I don't really like the fact of somebody else controlling my day. If that person calls me that morning and they're in a really bad mood, I'm not going to be in a good mood the rest of the day cause I feel what the person feels and if the person is having a hard time in life, then I'm having a hard time; their problems become my problems and vice versa so...it makes me crazy. It makes me a crazy person.

-Kayla

John feels life is more meaningful and fulfilling

Life is strange in the sense that...we have a society and its almost like we fit into little holes and we do our little jobs and we think this is it, we play out our role. We don't change, it's not that we stop growing the rate that we grow as children learning and experiencing especially as teenagers, wow! We're just like a burst of hormones and energy and experience and we're just like growing as people (said enthusiastically). We lose that at some point and I think love is the one thing that really breaks us from that, really brings us back into life's path and we flow with it and we grow with it, we feel like...we're more than are role or our job, like we could do so much more. That's how I feel, I feel like ah more inspired, more alive, less like a worker bee and more like the creator himself. It's a weird thing to say.

-John

Troy reports how love brings him closer to reality and how love is more important than fleeting moments of life's obstacles

In a way its like a numbing, in terms of the hardships that you do encounter or just daily disappointments or stresses or with the thesis realizing 'oh, I wanted to get this chapter done this week' but you're behind and still working on the last one...all those things, you see them for what they really are and you see them as, ...so what? She's still with me, I

can work on this next month, she's working on her papers too, and we'll have fun with it. Everything kind of becomes an opportunity to enjoy each other's presence.

-Troy

Similar to Troy, Tristan feels love brings him a sense of serenity and calm. Tristan further reports that he became a more confident person learning more about himself.

Love makes me happy, makes me feel like I'm not a piece of shit; that it is all worth it. It makes me want to go home at the end of the night, makes me want to get my stuff done so I can go home at the end of the night. It eliminates something that I would normally worry about which intern makes everything run more smoothly. Love has made me wiser, makes me look at myself as other people see you. It makes me grow as a person in general; I learn more about myself, about what I want, what I'm willing to do for someone and what I'm not willing to do for someone. It makes you think about what other people are willing to do for you. When I'm in a relationship, I almost cut everything out of my life that I had before and I just got into the relationship zone. Friends that I used to hang out with, I don't call as much, ever. I wouldn't consider that healthy; I don't think it should be that way.

-Tristan

It is important to point out here that Tristan isn't alone getting into the 'relationship zone' as he calls it. More than half of the respondents have reported losing touch with their friends entering into a committed intimate relationship. Interestingly, there were no gender differences.

Just like Tristan, Troy adds how love has given him the confidence to acknowledge his potential further motivating him toward his goals.

I think within yourself you...I would think if I look back to the way I was beforehand, I think I had much more doubts about myself and my own potential that you really need someone, especially someone who loves you and someone who you love so that there is that sort of comfort between you, or that insurance, that you are more as what you see yourself as being. So I see that as being the primary way it affects people and I think

also that doesn't just happen by them telling you what you can do but seeing perceived limitations in the other person and recognizing that your helping them (word I don't know 31:50) too and in doing so, I think, going back to what I remember in psych, one of the best forms of therapy is to help someone else and I think in dealing with someone else's hardships and not just the strong ones but self imposed, you really recognize your own potential.

-Troy

Renee takes a sharp turn and describes how love has its limitations in fulfillment. She reports how being in love is misleading to those who believe it is 'all you need'. Renee suggests that to love someone means to go through those hardships together, recognizing it will not make it better or go away. She then goes on to describe her fear of vulnerability in loving again.

I'm a very emotional person and when it comes to just loving people in general I would do anything for anybody. I need love in my life; love is huge in my life. Of course you can't live in a dream world where you think that because you love, everything else in the world will be fine (like your job, a weight problem...); love won't affect those other parts of your life, well, of course you will be happy but it only can fulfill you to a certain point. Being in love with someone is not going to solve problems and that's where people have to understand that when you are in a marriage and when you do love that other person, it is more important I think to be able to communicate with each other and understand each other and know how to solve problems and to go through life and to be committed to each other then to be in love. Being in love with someone is not going to solve your problems. And that's why being in love and loving somebody is completely different. It affects how you feel towards other people, and if you've ever been through it and you don't have it anymore, it's going to affect every other relationship with another man that you are going to encounter and you'll be able to see things clearly. It affects my other relationships negatively because you will always compare it to that love, always. It's hard to get over and because it's so difficult the trust factor is less. The more you go through a relationship and it fails, the more difficult it will be to trust and move on with someone else, especially when you were at your barest. It's like someone had you in the palm of their hands and then they just completely let you go. How can you ever trust to be in someone's hands ever again? Because you've experienced love, you're more

vulnerable by getting hurt by it because you let it in, you put all your walls down, and then it's just gone

-Renee

Expressing Love

All of the respondents have reported various ways of expressing love verbally and nonverbally.

I think that love is expressed in so many ways and there's no dumb guide book on ways to express love. It's different for everyone. I think that I express love through being a great friend in guidance and support through life. I express love with hugs and care; praying for them...

-Paige

I'm a very touchy person...I say it a lot, I verbalize it more then I ever have because it's the simplest way, that is the simplest way and yet its important. its not just show how you feel...you know, just come out and say anything 'I love you', say it, SAY IT! So anyway yeah, I show by physical contact, I say it verbally. I think that I project it so that she feels it. My eyes tell her. I think that at some point every part of me is going to say it, speak that to her...I also try to show love by showing that I think about her, I'm thinking in the best interest of us so that she knows that there's love there... something that you know you typically wouldn't enjoy doing or would typically do, you would do for the relationship, for the love for it to grow, you feed it, you nurture it, you make it grow and hopefully she sees love in those actions which I'm sure she does I mean its almost undeniable.

-John

Actions; words; things; its more like...you know how people say 'I love you, I would do anything for you'? Not just saying it, you do it. It's out of nowhere, there doesn't have to be a reason, there doesn't have to be an occasion, there doesn't have to be a time; it's

anytime, every time. Just when people do things out of the ordinary, or just because...when you share things; being best friends with each other is very important, you need to be able to tell that person anything and everything and not ever worried about how they're going to judge you. If you're outside and you're completely naked, how do you feel? It's the worst feeling ever, you're feeling very vulnerable. You are at your barest and you still feel worth it. You can be that way with them and you know you're not going to be judged and know that you're not going to be critiqued by your flaws. In the beginning of our relationship, when he first saw me physically, I was very insecure and very self-conscious, I would cover myself because I had some stretch marks on my stomach and I was trying to hide them from him and he was wondering what I was doing. He would tell me that he loves me and he loves everything on me and about me, those stretch marks are a part of you, and I love you. It's almost like the more you feel love for them, the more you don't care about anything. You don't care about what people think. And you can also tell from other people, other people can see it in you. My best friends still tells me that when ever you are together, you can see this glow.

-Renee

I make them feel like the way I feel, that this is the only person that matters to me right now.

-Tristan

you express it by doing nice things for the person to make them happy...also to make yourself desire it cause you want the other person to desire you for doing nice things but mostly to make them happy and smile. I express love by compliments, genuine compliments..."you're cute"... "you're handsome"... "you got a cute nose"... "you got great hands or feet" just little cute compliments, you don't have to be cheesy but. I think massaging, offering a massage or foot rub is really loving and offering to pay for dinner sometimes or offering to pay something for him and not expecting him to pay for everything all the time is nice. I think laughing and making him laugh is a way I express love. Those are the ways I think.

-Kayla

things which are really important to them become really important to you to the point that, and this is more of a daily kind of thing then sort of a turning point but I think about how...when I think of her family...the boundary between it being a separate family

and being a part of my own family is really blurred and to the point that I'll start talking about her grandmother as grandma! It seems like almost a direct way of manifesting it but there needs to be more than just saying I love you.

-Troy

It is obvious there can be many different ways of expressing your love to someone you deeply care for intimately. One popular way reported by most respondents was by sharing intimate details and secrets about you. Making you loved one happy, depending on the individual, was another agreed way to demonstrate their love for their partner.

Sustaining Love: Importance in a Loving Relationship

There are many ways to nurture and strengthen a meaningful relationship. Depending on the couple, there are several and various ways to prevent the flame from burning out. A majority of the responses included important key factors such as communication; respect; trust; understanding; consideration; prioritizing; spending time together; happiness; compromise; appreciation; and attraction.

Communication is number one. It is so important, to communicate is when you feel something, you talk about it to the other person, let them know what you're feeling and if that other person is quiet and you feel that gut instinct that something's wrong, get it out of them, let them talk to you, let them know that you're there and that they can tell you anything. That's so important. Respect is huge. Understanding is another. Exactly how a best friend would be to you, that's how you guys be to each other; to know that you're there together no matter what and through whatever.

-Renee

To always think of and consider the other person's feelings, etc. especially when making decisions. To demonstrate affection. To prioritize 'us' instead of 'me' all while staying true to yourself. To communicate, to spend quality time together, to share, to care, to respect each other in every sense of the word. To include each other completely in each other's lives. To do everything in your power to make the other person happy is always fun too!

-Alexis

Trust, honesty. Honesty. Honesty. I think honesty lies with communication and vice versa. If you're not honest, you're not communicating. Compromised, not everything has to be compromised but you're going to reach decision where you will have to compromise any worse for someone than the other in a decision. It takes an understanding between both people about the way they live and about what they want out of life and the understanding that's what each other wants and it has to be something both people want to help each other with, not preventing, or disagree with certain issues.

-Tristan

John sternly suggests the importance in sustaining love is to blatantly pay attention to the relationship to gain perspective to what's happening within it.

It is important to not take the love for granted. It's important not to neglect the thing that you have grown together. Just because its starting to walk or its growing leaves, doesn't mean its fine and you can leave it and its going to learn to do everything on its own...you still got to nurture your love and remember that its there and take care of it and yeah, don't neglect it. pay attention to your love, pay attention to yourself...to ah...ah...keep perspective on your love and yourself together, a relationship...you don't want to hold on to things, say something's going wrong in a relationship or whatever, you want to hold onto things in the past to keep the relationship going and you don't want to predict things in the future that are going to make things better ah in the future, like, 'oh, when this happens things will be ok', or 'when we have a baby, we'll love each other again'. You really need to keep paying attention to what's going on, individually and together so you have perspective on where you are in the relationship.

-John

Kayla illuminates what is important to her in a loving relationship

That I feel happy, that I feel loved and taken care of, and Appreciated (emphasized). I wanna feel like the person makes me Better, that I want to be better because of them, and I don't want to feel insecure, and I think trust. Trust is huge. Trust is huge. Communication is huge, being able to talk without arguing all the time is huge. I want to feel passionately loved, I want somebody to passionately make love to me and explore my body and, and want to be all over my body, like I want somebody to be wanting to touch me, I don't want to, like I don't want my boyfriend to not want to give me a massage if I ask him to do it, you know what I mean? Like I want him to want to touch me, and kiss me and to make me feel good and compliment me and to make me feel like I'm super special cause if I don't feel that way, then it's a downward spiral.

And by sustaining love Kayla reports:

First off, you both have to be attracted to each other. I think attraction is huge. I do, like I think its huge, to keep you together and then all those other little things like communication, trust, showing affection, being able to tell the person how you feel when you're feeling bad or being able to tell them a secret...being able to tell them something about yourself that you might be embarrassed to tell somebody else...um...being able to rely on them for help, if you get stuck somewhere and you need somebody to pick you up at three in the morning, and you have nobody else to call, you should totally be able to call that person. What sustains a loving relationship? When I say attraction, if one person starts getting a little less attracted or starts getting bored, what are you going to do? The whole thing's falling apart, you know. I think to sustain love you have to keep things creative, I think it takes work, I don't think it's always easy.

-Kayla

Conflicts

All of the respondents admit that love has its ups and downs. Depending on the individuals, each couple experiences their hardships in different ways. Conflicts in a relationship may range from having fears or doubts to arguing and fighting to ending a

relationship. The following of just a few sample respondents express their conflicts which are included within that range.

Renee shares how her love with Anthony came to an end

Love has different levels. After you go through one phase you begin phase two or three, or whatever. Our relationship was not so loving near the end and it's because other things in our lives didn't join together. We were heading in different directions. At That point I was ready for a different level or to take the next step and he wasn't. And what I thought was a loving relationship became a hateful relationship. We were fighting a lot and because I was at that point, we were just at different levels of our life; I was ready to get married, have children and take that next step. We've already done everything, so what's next? That's the next step isn't it? To be together, to live with each other, but I know for a fact that there was a lot of resentment; a lot of fighting, arguing, bickering and I was complaining a lot that he was moving away taking a different path then what we planned and just completely different steps and levels totally. I think what's important in a loving relationship is that you have to see eye to eye, you have to have things in common, you have to have the same goals at the same time. If you don't, love can't save you. Love can't save you.

You know what I wish he told me? Forget about me. Just forget about me. I don't love you anymore. I think I just need to hear that from him and that's why I'm still holding on to him. I hate that I am because I still feel that there's still something, no closure. And yeah I will still talk to other people but he will always be in the way. That will always be in the way of getting to know other people.

-Renee

Renee and Anthony grew apart and ended the relationship. Since there was a lot of love shared between the two, she had come to terms that love isn't enough to sustain a relationship.

Alexis claims that even though love is established in her relationship between her and her partner, Fred, deep down she believes that the love isn't real

I became a completely different person and stopped expressing my opinions in order to please someone.

-Alexis

Kayla's current relationship is no bed of roses either. Kayla reports having more than one conflict or obstacle in her relationship. She reports having her heart broken by her lover, causing her to feel doubts in the sincerity of their love. Kayla further describes how her relationship can secure one moment and then the next it feels off beat. She compares this imbalance to a heroin fix.

Well, see, it was complicated cause when we first established that we loved each other...maybe a few months after he broke up with me, out of the blue moon, broke my heart, completely shocked me and like no warning signs what so ever. So it almost makes me think that those establishments or statements of loving each other almost seemed untrue. It just didn't seem genuine. Then when we got back together and he wanted me back, and from that point until now, things have been good with rocky periods, but I find whenever we express ourselves, it can stay really good, like if he says, like we were at his house Friday night, he looks at me and says "I love you", which he does often, I'll look at him and say "I love you too boo" and then we can just ride on that high for a while, but sometimes when we say it I find the next day's a down day, you know, its like a heroin fix. If somebody tells you they love you, or that you're amazing to them but once they say that, and they're not going to say that everyday! You know, its just too much maybe, to say you're the love of my life Everyday. Not everybody does that, so once you hear that one day, the next day you feel...not down, but if you don't hear it that next day...it makes you feel a little bit off.

I don't know, that's why I said heroin fix, it's like withdrawal. Like once you start dating a guy and you start playing that phone thing, like how often you phone each other, if you get in the habit of speaking every day, that one day he doesn't call you, you Automatically think your whole relationship is going down the tubes and like 'why didn't he call?' and 'something's off'. That's Kind of how it is when you start saying you love somebody or giving them really strong compliments because the next day you don't hear it, you question whether it's still there, or if the person still feels that way, so you need to hear it all the time but yet if you heard it All the time, you'd think you'd be smothered. So, that's what I mean, it's a fine balance and sometimes you could ruin the balance so easily.

-Kayla

John has felt love from his first love consistently throughout their relationship, even up until the end. His current love leaves him feeling insecure and worried that she may not love him the way he loves her. There is a sense of doubt and confusion.

The first person, I felt the same feeling the whole time up until it ended but with the second, with Diane, I feel love for her all the time but I think there has been times where I worry what she's feeling or I don't know what she's feeling for whatever reason, if its insecurity on my part or holding back on her part or whatever it is if its got some reason, something is getting blocked and not just verbally, not just physically, not just whatever energetically or spiritually, it could be a combination of those things or one of those things but something, something is being blocked preventing me from feeling that at a certain point so there's gotta be a reason why I don't feel it but something is there, I just don't know what that is.

-John

Troy admits his relationship is not perfect and acknowledges love is not a safeguard against the conflicts that arise in his loving relationship. He describes these conflicts or obstacles as growing pains.

Not to say that it doesn't worry, not to say that you won't get into arguments with them or disagree with them or even, you know, reevaluate your position with them. I don't think love is a safeguard against that, in that sense it can fluctuate but I think there's always that core component which makes fights or arguments or just growing pains (the nature of the relationship changes) which is there and has to be there to facilitate that. I think that sort of goes back to the 'if it's the kind of love which is just based on one aspect of the person' If something happens in that aspect that isn't as accessible or if its not there anymore, then its not a matter of going through relationship growing pains, it's a matter of realizing it never was love.

-Troy

Unhappiness

Unfortunately conflicts that do not get resolved quickly by communicating with your partner can lead to unhappiness. Kayla and John share their experiences with unhappiness with their loved ones.

When Kayla was asked what love is like in her current relationship, she reports:

Tormenting. It's tormenting. Love, and I don't know if it's supposed to be like this, has ups and downs, it's the way to know you're alive. When you're single, you're just medium all the time, you don't have the ups and downs cause somebody else isn't affecting your day, when you're in love somebody else affects you more, so being in love right now is tormenting, right now I'm not happy. It's making me miserable, it has the propensity to make me feel at the lowest I've ever felt but the highest I've ever felt. All within a three day period, it can go up/down. It's from one extreme to another and right now I'm really worried about my relationship and I'm worried about losing him and I'm worried about my life without the person but I'm worried about my life with him because right now it doesn't seem like a healthy love to me. It doesn't seem like we're growing with each other, it seems like one's pulling the other down, that's how it feels. So yes it's tormenting right now. I don't say I'd give it up to have nothing. I mean, to have it never happened and just to feel normal, I wouldn't say I want that but right now the bad, the lows are really low and they're hard to get through, they're hard, sometimes you wish you weren't in love.

I still love him, but he's making me miserable and I think because I'm miserable, I love him even more, ha! Whoa, how messed up is that? My boyfriend is so unhealthy right now, he's going through his own issues, and some of these issues are major issues that would affect our lives together and he tells me that he loves me, and he does nice things for me, don't get me wrong but he's making me...sometimes I'm having a bad day and I call him to help, you know, cheer me up and a lot of the time he does. Recently he didn't. He made me feel worse. Which sucks, but I still love him, I love him a lot. I love him even more because he was a jerk. I don't understand.

The thought of losing him makes me, I told you, so sick it's hard to even imagine. So, here it is: When he makes me miserable, when he upsets me or if he does something that bothers me, I still love him because I love his faults, that's what love, I think, a lot of love is, but when he makes me feel a little miserable, it makes me question our relationship and if we're meant to be together and then obviously I automatically think of us not being together and that scares me so badly that I know I'm in love with him

because I'm so scared to lose him. That's exactly what it is. So not to say he makes me miserable so I love him any more, it's that correlation.

-Kayla

John reports that when one is emotionally unhappy in their relationship, it has the propensity to manifest itself physically. John relates this theory to his own experience of being cheated on by his first love, Magda.

I have risked my heart exploding for love and ah I would do it again if I believe that the love is there, if I believe I'm in love. you know I kind of believe sometimes that in a heart break, I think you could die from that in a sense, I'm gonna sound like a real romantic or whatever but things that happen emotionally can manifest itself physically and if the body believes it hurts after a heart break, I believe its possible to physically, maybe not your break but something, it could lead to something that will kill you, like you could develop a sickness or something, your body's gonna manifest how you feel emotionally

I think immediately one time I really wanted to be with Magda and I loved her and I felt like she loved me but she cheated on me, I didn't know what was happening, I felt like I went into a deep, dark hole like I was really down, I was really questioning things about life and what's important and things like that. Now it also may have to do with a lot of other things that were going on with my life but I think that love disconnect made me have a physical disconnect and I actually was sick for a short period of time, flu or whatever it seemed like.

-John

Searching for Love

Renee expresses her difficulties in her search for love again. She believes there is a substantial chance she may not find love the way she has experienced it with Anthony and can only hope that he will find his way into her arms once again:

Dating for me has not been good. I was in a six month relationship, long distance, never doing that again. You try to get over things, you try to find love again, you wanna move on, you don't wanna hold on to something that might be, that might not be, you wanna be happy and you wanna find someone that has the same views as you. You may not be in love with them but you wanna find common ground and see where it can go. I don't like dating. And it's very difficult where I'm at to date. With all of those guys that I did date and that I did love, or try to love, I always cried missing Anthony; always. And I don't think those emotions and feelings will ever go away unless I find something that matches it or meets it...might or might not; in different ways it could match it. With me, I've learned especially recently, to just let go. Let things be and just let time take its toll because there's nothing I can do to make things happen. I may move somewhere else, I might meet somebody. You always do hope for that; you hope for things to change. Maybe it wasn't right for me and Anthony at the time but you hope that things will work out still. I still harbor hope that he will come back or meet each other again somehow or somewhere and see. I love this person completely and yet you can't be with them because they're not ready or maybe they want to see what else life has to offer them somewhere else.

I wouldn't be content with my life if love wasn't there, other people might, but not me. I just think it's such a beautiful thing and that you need that in your life. I think love fulfills you in a different way than other things can. Every night I go to bed and think about my day and what I'm going through in life; I wish I had somebody to hold me or to know somebody is there to witness all that with me.

-Renee

Kayla reports that the love she is presently experiencing leaves her with many doubts that it is even real.

the love I'm experiencing now is not ideal because its not always making each other grow, you bring each other up, you're creating a life together that's secure, you have the same ideas, you don't play as many games...um, that's ideal love, like the movies. Even with a couple of arguments, its still ideal love, even love at first sight...knowing pretty

much right away that you love the person. Even if you were friends for a little while first and you know then became a couple. The love I feel now doesn't always feel like it should be and that's why it sometimes I feel down about it because I'm comparing it to what it should be and I don't feel like it...I wonder if it's really the type of love I should be experiencing or that I should want for the rest of my life.

Kayla was then asked to describe a healthy love she reports:

When both of you grow together, when you both make each other better. When you can see...when you sort of cultivate each others hopes and dreams for the future and how you can see each other moving in or progressing, and it seems easy. You can still fight and have arguments but in healthy love you don't argue that much, you compromise, you talk a lot, and you get along with each other, you don't get sick of each other and I think healthy love is being able to talk during dinner and not have like awkward silences and have comfortable silences and to know each other's families, that's healthy love.

-Kayla

Soul Mates

In her insightful book *all about love: New Visions*, bell hooks makes a useful distinction between attraction, familiar to us all, which she calls a "heart connection," and another type she calls a "soul connection." Here is how she defines it:

A soul connection is a resonance between two people who respond to the essential beauty of each other's individual natures, behind their facades, and who connect on a deeper level. This kind of mutual recognition provides the catalyst for a potent alchemy. It is a sacred alliance whose purpose is to help both partners discover and realize their deepest potentials. While a heart connection lets us appreciate those we love just as they are, a soul connection opens up a further dimension—seeing and loving them for who they could be, and for who we could become under their influence.

(p. 182)

Throughout our lives we meet lots of people with whom we feel that special click that could take us on the path of love. But this click is not the same as a soul connection according to bell hooks. Often, a deeper bonding with another person, a soul connection, happens whether we will it to be so or not. Indeed, sometimes we are drawn toward someone without knowing why, even when we do not desire contact. Several couples I talked with, including this sample, who have found true love enjoyed telling the story of how one of them did not find the other at all appealing at first meeting even though they felt mysteriously joined to that individual. In all cases were individuals felt that they had known true love, everyone testified that the bonding was not easy or simple. To many people this seems confusing precisely because our fantasy of true love is that it will be just that—simple and easy. Do soul mates really exist?

The respondents were asked whether or not they believe in soul mates and if they had found theirs. Here are a few very interesting array of responses received.

if soul mate means that my soul and someone else's soul connect, not necessarily because we're old souls and we've been friends in other lives, if it means my soul, my being and your being have a similar energy or whatever it does for them to connect on a spiritual level...if that's a soul mate then yes, I believe but I don't think I've found mine...

-John

I believe a soul mate is someone with whom you connect on a cosmic level. People are attracted and befriend each other for different reasons; a soul mate is not just someone you are friends with. It's not a best friend either. Best friends can come and go depending on life circumstances but there is something everlasting and undeniable about finding a soul mate. At the risk of sounding ridiculous, I think that a soul mate connection occurs when two souls recognize each other. You see, you can HAVE friends, but you FIND a soul mate. It's like a connection that already existed on another level and you just feel it when you meet that person. Its not just about having similar interests,

likes and dislikes, the connection between two souls is deeper...its hard to explain in concrete terms because its something that is more powerful than what can be concretely defined. I believe that it exists because I believe in the concept of having a soul. We are not just physical beings; on the contrary, we are much more than merely physical. And when you find someone that you feel connected to on a different level, I believe that you have found your soul mate. That being said, a soul mate, in my opinion, can be of the same sex or of the opposite sex, can be older, younger, to a certain extent, I am even ready to believe that you can find your soul mate in your pet

-Alexis

I believe that a friend can be a soul-mate. I don't think a man necessarily has to be your soul-mate. I think it means you have a very unique connection that you share forever, for all of your life with someone. I think my best friend is my soul mate.

-Renee

I think that soul mates are two people that belong to one another and that can not be with anyone else then that person. I think soul mates are a very special thing. I don't think you necessarily have to be in a relationship to find your soul mate. Two best friends can be soul mates and live a long life together being just that and I don't think you have to be in a relationship to find that person. If it so happens you are in a relationship and it happens to be your soul mate, that's unbelievable.

-Tristan

A soul-mate is somebody who you click with immediately who could think like you do. Even after not knowing you for a long time, you compliment each other perfectly, you're like old souls, you know what the other person is thinking, just from a look, you can finish each other's sentences oddly enough or you have the same sense of humor, the same likes, the same family life, and you come from the same places or maybe you don't even come from the same places but you just click so much, it would have to be a spectacular type of clicking with the person. Like I have friends that I think I'm soul-mates with... but it's not the same. Some same criteria but I think you'd have to click so well to be soul-mates and I don't think the one I am with now is necessarily my soul-mate, and that makes me sad.

I think you could also have multiple soul-mates. I mean, you have to have multiple soul-mates! I believe that maybe you knew each other in a past life and you have a special connection but I believe in love at first sight, I believe in a soul-mate, I believe in multiple soul-mates.

-Kayla

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The two major theoretical perspectives on love are the scientific and the social scientific. The scientific are represented by Helen Fisher and Michael Liewbowitz and social scientific by Zygmunt Bauman, and Anthony Giddens. The two are complementary and clearly there are biological factors but the biological factors are mediated as well as constructed by sociological factors. A sociological theory of love is necessary because biological explanations cannot account for social variation and social patterns. While they may play a role in the way we live love, they are nonetheless incomplete explanations and does not change the fact that we are social beings and that we give meaning to our experience and encounters of love. Indeed the sociological perspective enables us to attend to the variations in styles and types of love as well as to the structural constraints and codes within which interpersonal loves operate.

Love has been categorized in various ways by different theorists. Luhmann has shown how love has changed over time, and clearly courtly love has little resemblance to the love described by my sample. C.S Lewis argued that there are four kinds of love; Clyde and Susan Hendricks suggested that there are six types of love; and Anthony Giddens compares between two types of love. Two, four, six: there is room to debate love.

Many of my respondents differentiated between stages and/or levels of love notably between immature love or lust, based on sexual attraction, and the more mature love based on shared experiences and deeper understanding of their loved one.

Love is a complex phenomenon that cannot be summarized except in the crudest dictionary terms of one line which I have already cited; the actual expression of this dictionary term in real life is wide ranging. In sum, whether one says with Giddens that there are two types of love or with Lewis that there are four or with Hendricks that there are six, is largely a matter of categorization and differentiation and how one collapses the categories. My focus was more on the stated experiences and meanings of love than on trying to find one definition that would encompass up to six different types.

I do not claim in any way to have a random or representative sample of the population studied, as this research was carried out partly to generate ideas for the future research on the social aspects of perceptions of love, as well as to begin research on my age cohort. It is a homogeneous sample, mostly from Montreal, within a particular age group and this is going to relate to further research; but clearly a wider sample in terms of age, ethnicity, religion, culture and so on would have given different results. Life histories with an older and more diverse sample would certainly have produced different results and different experiences of love and would be the preferred method for further research.

According to the interviews, definitions of love vary: Troy says love is warmth. John believes love is unconditional. For Kayla, love is butterflies. Marcus says love is being on the same wavelength with someone. For Alexis, love is floating on a cloud. Bennett believes love is an addiction. Tristan says love is like a drug. For Paige love is God. And interestingly enough Renee said that love is weird. She also that it is electrical. Love has many different levels and phases and if love goes wrong like it did for Kayla, love is a torment.

The Hendricks offered six different types of love and all of these are exemplified to greater or lesser degree by my respondents. Bob shares his enduring story of how he was instantaneously attracted to his lover, which is what the Hendricks categorizes as romantic love:

I had gone out with some friends of mine to a club over the Christmas holidays for some drinks and dancing and at the end of the night is when I saw her. We were at the coat check picking up our jackets when she came up and said bye to one of my friends, I literally spun around as she walked by so that I could look at her longer.

-Bob

Game playing love can be exemplified by how Renee was ready to be in a committed relationship, yet sadly her lover was not ready to commit, so they broke up. Friendship love style was said by a majority of the respondents as something necessary for a true everlasting love. Here is Marcus's version of a friendship love according to the Hendricks:

[Love] is knowing what the other person is thinking and knowing that they understand you just as well; feeling very comfortable and willing to share anything about yourself to

them; always feeling like they bring you so much to your life that you almost feel guilty for (in your mind) not being able to equal that.

Paige's notion of love can be represented by the logical style of love. She only considers lovers' potential in life before committing herself. The possessive love style certainly lies in Kayla's current experience of love:

Being in love I've noticed sides of myself I don't like...like jealousy...If I see my boyfriend talking to another girl for a minute my gut clenches, the green monster comes out.

Last but not least, selfless love can be exemplified through John's experience of his first love:

I think I was her support system, a support person for her and I was always there for her. It's like I was just there to help her through certain personal issues and to be there to keep her focused on what her goal is... I think I was there to kind of help her through school.

A couple of respondents resonated in Fisher and Liewbowitz theory of love as chemical and referred to love as an "addiction." Kayla states that love has been like a "heroin fix" for her; Tristan describes how love is like a "drug"; and Bennett defines love as a "chemical reaction"

While the existing theories on love (despite their different orientations and disciplinary backgrounds of anthropology, psychology, and sociology), help us to understand some of the dimensions of love uncovered by the research here, it is also clear that there is much left that is unexplored and unexplained in relation to love.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire – semi-structured interview

1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Sexual preference
5. Marital Status
6. What attracts you to others?
7. Has this changed over time? Does it vary with each person?
 - a. In your experience, do opposites attract?
8. How would you describe yourself?
9. Have you ever been in love?
10. How do you know you're in love?

Was it established that you were both in love? How did you both say or show 'I love you'? When is it right to say 'I love you'?
11. How many times have you been in love?

What was it like? What does love feel like to you?
12. Have you ever loved someone and not told them?
13. What's love?
14. How do you express love?
15. How does love affect you? Does love change you? How?

16. When you love, do you love them as a person or something about them?
Explain
17. When you were in love, did the person you love, love you back?
18. Do you know when someone else loves you? *How?*
19. Once you're in love with someone, do you feel that love all the time?
20. Is there a difference between being 'in love' and love?
21. What is the difference between love and lust, can you distinguish between the two?
22. Do you date?
23. Is love the goal in dating or being with someone?
24. When you meet someone, do you think about your future with them?
Immediate/long-term?
25. When it is established that you are in love, what is it like afterwards? Do things change? If so, how?
26. What's important when in a loving relationship? What's important in order to sustain a loving relationship?
27. To what lengths have you went and how far would you go for love?
28. What has or would break the bonds of love for you?
29. Where do you get your ideas of love?
30. Would you be content with your life if love wasn't there?
31. Do you believe in soul-mates? Love at first sight?