

Popular topics

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Archetypal lovers Romeo and Juliet portrayed by Frank Dicksee

Love refers to a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes that ranges from interpersonal affection ("I love my mother") to pleasure ("I loved that meal"). It can refer to an emotion of a strong attraction and personal attachment.[1] It can also be a virtue representing human kindness, compassion, and affection—"the unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another". [2] It may also describe compassionate and affectionate actions towards other humans, one's self or animals.[3]

Ancient Greeks identified four forms of love: kinship or familiarity (in Greek, *storge*), friendship (*philia*), sexual and/or romantic desire (*eros*), and self-emptying or divine love (*agape*).[4][5] Modern authors have distinguished further varieties of romantic love.[6] Non-Western traditions have also distinguished variants or symbioses of these states.[7] This diversity of uses and meanings combined with the complexity of the feelings involved makes love unusually difficult to consistently define, compared to other emotional states.

Love in its various forms acts as a major facilitator of interpersonal relationships and, owing to its central psychological importance, is one of the most common themes in the creative arts.[8]

Love may be understood as a function to keep human beings together against menaces and to facilitate the continuation of the species.[9]

Psychology depicts love as a cognitive and social phenomenon. Psychologist Robert Sternberg formulated a triangular theory of love and argued that love has three different components: intimacy, commitment, and passion. Intimacy is a form in which two people share confidences and various details of their personal lives, and is usually shown in friendships and romantic love affairs. Commitment, on the other hand, is the expectation that the relationship is permanent. The last and most common form of love is sexual attraction and passion. Passionate love is shown in infatuation as well as romantic love. All forms of love are viewed as varying combinations of these three components. Non-love does not include any of these components. Liking only includes intimacy. Infatuated love only includes passion. Empty love only includes commitment. Romantic love includes both intimacy and passion. Companionate love includes intimacy and commitment. Fatuous love includes passion and commitment. Lastly, consummate love includes all three.[21] American psychologist Zick Rubin sought to define love by psychometrics in the 1970s. His work states that three factors constitute love: attachment, caring, and intimacy.[22] [23]

Following developments in electrical theories such as Coulomb's law, which showed that positive and negative charges attract, analogs in human life were developed, such as "opposites attract." Over the last century, research on the nature of human mating has generally found this not to be true when it comes to character and personality—people tend to like people similar to themselves. However, in a few unusual and specific domains, such as immune systems, it seems that humans prefer others who are unlike themselves (e.g., with an orthogonal immune system), since this will lead to a baby that has the best of both worlds.[24] In recent years, various human bonding theories have been developed, described in terms of attachments, ties, bonds, and affinities. Some Western authorities disaggregate into two main components, the altruistic and the narcissistic. This view is represented in the works of Scott Peck, whose work in the field of applied psychology explored the definitions of love and evil. Peck maintains that love is a combination of the "concern for the

spiritual growth of another," and simple narcissism.[25] In combination, love is an activity, not simply a feeling.

Psychologist Erich Fromm maintained in his book *The Art of Loving* that love is not merely a feeling but is also actions, and that in fact, the "feeling" of love is superficial in comparison to one's commitment to love via a series of loving actions over time.[15] In this sense, Fromm held that love is ultimately not a feeling at all, but rather is a commitment to, and adherence to, loving actions towards another, oneself, or many others, over a sustained duration.[15] Fromm also described love as a conscious choice that in its early stages might originate as an involuntary feeling, but which then later no longer depends on those feelings, but rather depends only on conscious commitment. [15]

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