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Quick Study ACADEMIC

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELATIONSHIPS

STUDENTS' GUIDE TO RELATIONSHIP PROFILES - NOT A SELF-HELP CHART

INTRODUCTION

BASIS OF REFERENCE CHART

- Intended to provide a basic understanding of fundamental concepts of psychology of interpersonal relationships, including a historical overview and current concepts regarding this topic.
- Primary focus is on defining problems in relationships.
Not a Self-Help Chart.

PROPOSED DEFINITIONS

HISTORICAL PHILOSOPHICAL OVERVIEW

ARISTOTELIAN'S METHOD

- Humans were originally both male and female, sexually autonomous beings.
- Zeus separated the male and female halves. These new incomplete creatures were condemned to search the world for their other half.
- Myth holds that people are incomplete and must search to find their ideal partner.

CHRISTIAN LOVE

- Love that can never be consummated. Essential nature is a perpetually unfulfilled yearning. Love of someone from afar.
- This type of "honorable" love can easily border on worship.

LOVE AS EROS

- Sensual or romantic love.
- Plato called this love the "divine madness" due to the propensity of those who are romantically in love to have skewed and distorted perceptions of their beloved and of the world around them.

LOVE AS FRIENDSHIP

Aristotle distinguished three types of friendship:

- Friendship of Pleasure: Some characteristics of the other affects pleasure, e.g. sense of humor, physical attractiveness, etc.
- Friendship of Utility: Some common goal or shared activity motivates the friendship, e.g. competing, sports, etc.
- Friendship of the Good: Love of another for himself.

LOVE AS AGAPE

- Religious: Unconditional love of a superior or for an inferior, most clearly manifested in God's love for the individual sinner who is utterly undeserving of this "grace".
- Secular: Unconditional, or nearly unconditional, love of an independent or dependent person, most clearly manifested in the love of a parent for a child.

LOVE AS COMPASSION

Doubtful notion of Aristotle. Defining characteristics of *Karuna* are compassion, affection, and sympathy.

LOVE AS "I-THOU"

Buber's theory

- Manually inclusive relationship where each partner fully experiences the other, not merely through empathy, but as an integration of consciousness; the relationship is not "I and the other," but it is a relationship of total reciprocity.
- In an "I-Thou" relationship, one's whole being is integrated with the other and one holds nothing back.

LOVE AS SADMAGOSHSIC ALTERNATION

Sartre's view:

- Process of sadomasochistic appropriation, in which two persons in a love relationship seek to possess each other and yet wish to be simultaneously possessed by the other.
- Sartre's view of sexual activity: We either focus on our own pleasure (a sadistic orientation) or the other's pleasure (a masochistic orientation) culminating in a situation where desire is denied, for it bears within itself the cause of its own failure.

LOVE AS RESENTMENT AND OPPRESSION

Nietzsche's theory of love:

- Romantic love or "love-as-passion" is a perversion and the artificial product of a decadent slave morality.
- Unadhered sexual desire is legitimized by refusing it on the merit of romantic idealism.

LOVE AS SUBJUGATION

- Romantic love is a cultural invention created by men for the subjugation of women.
- Love is a fruitless substitute that women have been deceived into accepting in lieu of power, prestige, wealth, education, or any empowering ideal to which women may aspire. Having love is somehow supposed to make any deficiency in their lives acceptable.

LOVE AS DUTY

Kierkegaard's theory is that love founded on inclination, or feelings, suffers from three deficiencies:

- It is subject to be easily transformed to hate, jealousy, or indifference in the light of changing circumstances.
- It is dependent upon the beloved's feelings and circumstances; for instance, whether they reciprocate to a like degree, their waning physical attractiveness due to aging, and so on.
- It can become disproportionate by overly idealizing the beloved to the point that the beloved is not seen as they really are, but as the lover wishes to see them.

- Love based on a sense of duty, however, avoids these difficulties because it is based on more permanent and secure foundations than mere inclination—namely commitment and honor.

PSYCHOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

DEFINING THE ESSENTIALS OF ROMANTIC LOVE

- Sexual attraction: May be for members of the same, or the opposite sex. Believed by some to constitute as much as 90% of the experience of "romantic love."
- Emotional involvement: Not necessarily positive as one may say that they love but do not like their partner.
- Insecurity: Testimonials of the relationship where one feels they may be unable to keep the interest of the other.
- Possessiveness and jealousy: Wanting to keep the beloved completely to oneself, and feeling rejected at even the slightest provocation.
- Obsessiveness: One cannot stop thinking about the beloved and find oneself utterly preoccupied and consumed by thoughts about that person.
- Dependency: Unlike friendship, one is dependent on the relationship for a sense of well-being and balance. Any disruption to the integrity of the relationship may be experienced with great anxiety and distress.
- Passivity and helplessness: Feeling of having lost control of emotions and behavior, thus the involuntary nature of the experience of falling in love.
- Ephemeral and transient: The science explains that duration of being in love seldom lasts more than three months. After that initial period of animosity and realism gradually return.
- Idealization: The beloved is perceived in an unrealistic, idealized perspective.

LOVE'S ILLUSION

- Freud and Schopenhauer
 - Lover "love-values" the beloved feeling that they too will finally achieve total contentment and happiness.
- Schopenhauer
 - Love is Nature's greatest deception, played on us in order to procure the species.
 - Once its purpose of procreation is achieved we are often left bewildered, disappointed, and burdened with unexpected responsibilities for offspring.

THE FACIOMS OF LOVE

- Fromm's theory
 - Love is the most effective coping mechanism to counter the pain of one's separateness and existential isolation.
 - Individuals make many false starts because they mistake common cases of misguided pseudo-love with true genuine love.
- Types of pseudo or misguided love:
 - Infatuation: Transference of feelings for a parent to a partner. Hence, one loves not the partner but certain attributes one has unknowingly superimposed upon the so-called "beloved."
 - Stoniness: Having grown up in an emotionally cold home, a person may adopt the same emotionally distant attitudes toward the partner while believing himself to be loving.
 - Impulsivity: Imagining oneself to be loving and caring, in order to cope with an emotionally impoverished life, when in reality one is cold and distant.
 - Erosiveness: Seeking to feel loved, fed, etc.

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