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General Theories of Love

Chapter Outline

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- The Colors (Styles) of Love
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Throughout history, scholars from a variety of disciplines have speculated on the nature of love. For example, as early as 1886, the German physician and pioneering sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1886/1945) identified five types of love: *true love*, *sentimental love*, *platonic love*, *friendship*, and *sensual love*. Several decades later, psychotherapist Albert Ellis (1954) proposed additional love varieties: "Love itself . . . includes many different types and degrees of affection, such as conjugal love, parental love, familial love, religious love, love of humanity, love of animals, love of things, self-love, sexual love, obsessive-compulsive love, etc." (p. 101).

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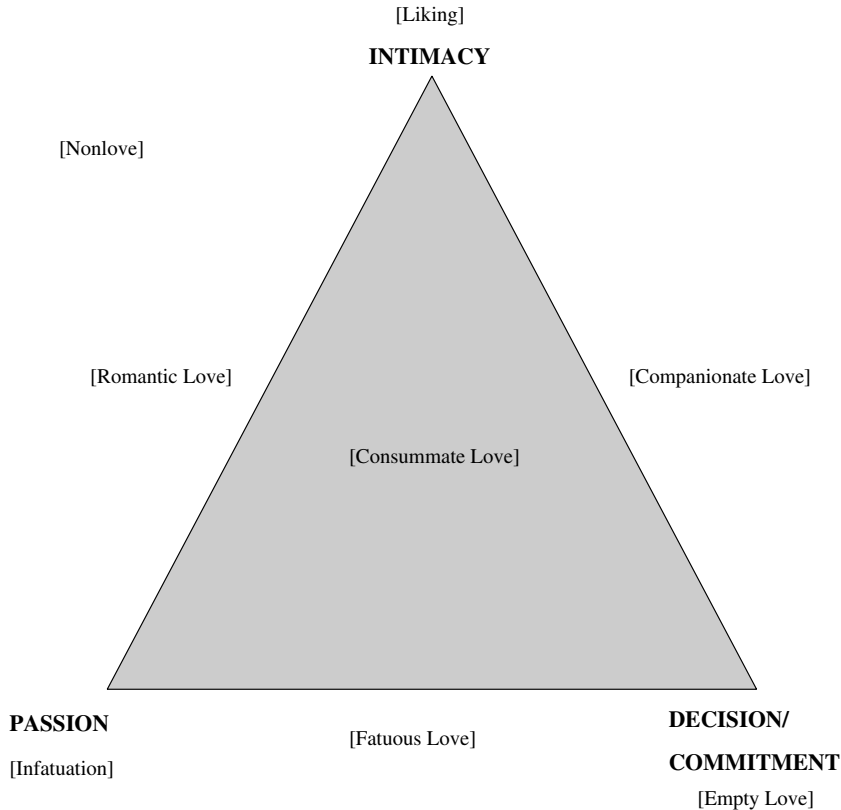
One of Ellis's contemporaries, religious theoretician C. S. Lewis (1960/1988), devoted an entire book to a discussion of types of love. Drawing on earlier distinctions made by Greek philosophers, he proposed four main varieties. *Affection* (or *Storge*, pronounced "Stor-gay") is based on familiarity and repeated contact and resembles the strong attachment seen between parents and children. This type of love is experienced for and by a wide variety of objects, including family members, pets, acquaintances, and lovers. Affectionate love has a "comfortable, quiet nature" (p. 34) and consists of feelings of warmth, interpersonal comfort, and satisfaction in being together. The second variety of love depicted by Lewis is *Friendship* (or *Philia*). Common interests, insights, or tastes, coupled with cooperation, mutual respect, and understanding, form the core of this love type. Lewis argued that Friendship, more than mere companionship, "must be about something, even if it were only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice" (p. 66). *Eros*, or "that state which we call 'being in love'" (p. 91), is the third variety of love. Unlike the other love types, Eros contains a mixture of "sweetness" and "terror" as well as a sexual component that Lewis referred to as Venus. Erotic love also is characterized by affection, idealization of and preoccupation with the beloved, and a short life span. The final love type is *Charity*, a selfless and "Divine Gift-love" that has no expectation of reward and desires only what is "simply best for the beloved" (p. 128).

Contemporary social and behavioral scientists also have proposed taxonomies that specify types or varieties of love (for reviews, see Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992; Sternberg & Barnes, 1988). Two of the more common classification schemes were developed by psychologist Robert Sternberg (e.g., 1986, 1998) and sociologist John Lee (e.g., 1973, 1988).

THE TRIANGULAR THEORY OF LOVE

Sternberg (e.g., 1986, 1998) conceptualized love in terms of three basic components that form the vertices of a triangle: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment (Figure 1.1). The *intimacy* component is primarily emotional or affective in nature and involves feelings of warmth, closeness, connection, and bondedness in the love relationship. The *passion* component is motivational and consists of the drives that are involved in romantic and physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena. The *decision/commitment* component is largely cognitive and

Figure 1.1 Sternberg's Triangular Model of Love. The three components of love are indicated at the vertices of the triangle. The various types of love produced by different combinations of the components are in brackets.



SOURCE: From Sternberg, R. J. (1988). Triangulating love. In R. J. Sternberg & M. L. Barnes (Eds.), *The psychology of love* (pp. 119-138). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Copyright © 1988 by Yale University Press. Adapted with permission.

represents both the short-term decision that one individual loves another and the longer term commitment to maintain that love.

According to Sternberg, these three love components differ with respect to a number of properties, including *stability*, *conscious controllability*, and *experiential salience*. For example, the elements of intimacy and decision/commitment are usually quite stable in close relationships (once they occur and become characteristic of a relationship, they

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tend to endure), whereas passion tends to be less stable and predictable. In addition, whereas people possess a great deal of conscious control over the commitment that they make to relationships and possess at least some degree of control over their feelings of intimacy, they actually have very little conscious control over the amount of passion that they experience for their partners. The three components also differ in terms of their experiential salience. Specifically, an individual is usually quite aware of the passion component, but awareness of the intimacy and decision/commitment components can be extremely variable. That is, a person may experience feelings of intimacy (e.g., closeness, connection, warmth) without explicitly being aware of those feelings or even being able to identify what he or she is feeling. Similarly, a person might not consciously realize the full extent of his or her commitment to the relationship and the partner.

Types of Love Relationship

The three basic components of love combine to produce eight different love types, summarized in Table 1.1. *Nonlove* (no intimacy, passion, or decision/commitment) describes casual interactions that are characterized by the absence of all three love components. Most of our personal relationships (which are essentially casual associations) can be defined as nonlove. *Liking* (intimacy alone) relationships are essentially friendship. They contain warmth, intimacy, closeness, and other positive emotional experiences but lack both passion and decision/commitment. *Infatuation* (passion alone) is an intense, "love at first sight" experience that is characterized by extreme attraction and arousal in the absence of any real emotional intimacy and decision/commitment. In *empty love* (decision/commitment alone) relationships, the partners are committed to each other and the relationship but lack an intimate emotional connection and passionate attraction. This type of love is often seen at the end of long-term relationships (or at the beginning of arranged marriages). *Romantic love* (intimacy + passion) consists of feelings of closeness and connection coupled with strong physical attraction. *Companionate love* (intimacy + decision/commitment) is essentially a long-term, stable, and committed friendship that is characterized by high amounts of emotional intimacy, the decision to love the partner, and the commitment to remain in the relationship. This type of love is often seen in "best friendships" that are nonsexual or in long-term marriages in which sexual attraction has faded.

Table 1.1 Sternberg's Typology of Love Relationships

<i>Kind of Love Relationship</i>	<i>Love Component</i>		
	<i>Intimacy</i>	<i>Passion</i>	<i>Decision/Commitment</i>
Nonlove	Low	Low	Low
Liking	High	Low	Low
Infatuation	Low	High	Low
Empty love	Low	Low	High
Romantic love	High	High	Low
Companionate love	High	Low	High
Fatuous love	Low	High	High
Consummate love	High	High	High

NOTE: According to Sternberg (e.g., 1986), the three basic components of love—intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment—combine to produce eight different types of love relationship. For example, infatuation-based relationships are characterized by relatively high levels of passion but relatively low levels of intimacy and commitment.

Couples who experience *fatuous love* (passion + decision/commitment) base their commitment to each other on passion rather than on deep emotional intimacy. These “whirlwind” relationships are typically unstable and at risk for termination. Finally, *consummate love* (intimacy + passion + decision/commitment) results from the combination of all three components. According to Sternberg, this is the type of “complete” love that many individuals strive to attain, particularly in their romantic relationships.

Because the three basic components of love occur in varying degrees within a relationship, most love relationships will not fit cleanly into one particular category but will reflect some combination of categories.

Measurement

Sternberg (1998) developed a 45-item scale to assess the three basic elements of love. The Intimacy subscale consists of 15 items designed to reflect feelings of warmth, support, self-disclosure, trust, and other aspects of intimate connection. Examples include “I receive considerable emotional support from _____,” “I feel close to _____,” “I feel that I can really trust _____,” and “I share deeply personal information about myself with _____.” The 15 items that make up the Passion

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subscale are designed to capture the more intense, physical, and exciting elements of romantic relationships, including “Just seeing _____ excites me,” “I especially like physical contact with _____,” “I adore _____,” and “I fantasize about _____.” The Decision/Commitment subscale contains 15 items that assess feelings of stability, commitment, and permanence. Examples include “I view my commitment to _____ as a solid one,” “I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with _____,” “I plan to continue in my relationship with _____,” and “I will always feel a strong responsibility for _____.”

Interestingly, although this scale was designed to measure three distinct aspects of love—intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment—empirical evidence suggests that it may actually measure one general aspect of love. For example, psychologists Clyde and Susan Hendrick (1989) administered the Triangular Love Scale to a large sample of men and women. Their results indicated that the three subscales were highly intercorrelated and also that the items formed a unifactorial scale. In other words, the scale appeared to measure one global love dimension rather than three distinct elements or components of love. Perhaps for this reason, the scale has not received widespread use among social scientists interested in examining people’s love experiences.

THE COLORS (STYLES) OF LOVE

Another contemporary theory of love, and one that has produced a widely used measurement instrument, is the typology developed by Lee (e.g., 1977, 1988). In this novel approach, each variety of love is likened to a primary or secondary color (hence the title of Lee’s [1973] book, *Colours of Love*).

Primary and Secondary Love Styles

According to Lee, there are three primary colors or styles of loving. The first, *eros*, is an intensely emotional experience that is similar to passionate love. In fact, the most typical symptom of *eros* is an immediate and powerful attraction to the beloved individual. The erotic lover is “turned on” by a particular physical type, is prone to fall instantly and completely in love with a stranger (i.e., to experience “love at first sight”), rapidly becomes preoccupied with pleasant thoughts about that individual, feels an intense need for daily contact with the beloved, and

wishes the relationship to remain exclusive. Erotic love also has a strong sexual component. For example, the erotic lover desires the beloved sexually, usually seeks some form of sexual involvement fairly early in the relationship, and enjoys expressing his or her affection through sexual contact. In sum, the erotic lover is "eager to get to know the beloved quickly, intensely—and undressed" (Lee, 1988, p. 50).

The second primary color of love is *ludus* (or game-playing) love. The ludic lover views love as a game to be played with skill and often with several partners simultaneously. The ludic lover has no intention of including the current partner (or partners) in any future life plans or events and worries about any sign of growing involvement, need, or intense attachment from the partner. As the quintessential commitment-phobe, the ludic lover avoids seeing the partner too often, believes that lies and deception are justified, and expects the partner to remain in control of his or her emotions. In addition, ludic lovers tend to prefer a wide variety of physical types and view sexual activity as an opportunity for pleasure rather than for intense emotional bonding.

Storge is the third primary love color. Described by Lee (1973) as "love without fever or folly" (p. 77), *storge* resembles Lewis's concept of Affection in that it is stable and based on a solid foundation of trust, respect, and friendship. Indeed, the typical storgic lover views and treats the partner as an "old friend," does not experience the intense emotions or physical attraction to the partner associated with erotic love, prefers to talk about and engage in shared interests with the partner rather than to express direct feelings, is shy about sex, and tends to demonstrate his or her affection in nonsexual ways. To the storgic lover, love is an extension of friendship and an important part of life but is not a valuable goal in and of itself.

Like the primary colors, these primary love styles can be combined to form secondary colors or styles of love. The three secondary styles identified by Lee contain features of the primary love styles but also possess their own unique characteristics. *Pragma*, a combination of *storge* and *ludus*, is "the love that goes shopping for a suitable mate" (Lee, 1973, p. 124). The pragmatic lover has a practical outlook on love and seeks a compatible lover. He or she creates a shopping list of features or attributes desired in the partner and selects a mate based on how well that individual fulfills the requirements (similarly, he or she will drop a partner who fails to "measure up" to expectations). Pragmatic love is essentially a faster-acting version of *storge* that has been quickened by the addition of *ludus*.

Mania, the combination of eros and ludus, is another secondary love style. Manic lovers lack the self-confidence associated with eros and the emotional self-control associated with ludus. This obsessive, jealous love style is characterized by self-defeating emotions, desperate attempts to force affection from the beloved, and the inability to believe in or trust any affection the loved one actually does display. The manic lover is desperate to fall in love and to be loved, begins immediately to imagine a future with the partner, wants to see the partner daily, tries to force the partner to show love and commitment, distrusts the partner's sincerity, and is extremely possessive. This love type is "irrational, extremely jealous, obsessive, and often unhappy" (Lee, 1973, p. 15).

The last secondary color of love is *agape*, a combination of eros and storge. Agape is similar to Lewis's concept of Charity and represents an all-giving, selfless love style that implies an obligation to love and care for others without any expectation of reciprocity or reward. This love style is universalistic in the sense that the typical agapic lover believes that everyone is worthy of love and that loving others is a duty of the mature person. With respect to personal love relationships, an agapic lover will unselfishly devote himself or herself to the partner, even stepping aside in favor of a rival who seems more likely to meet the partner's needs. Although Lee believed that many lovers respect and strive to attain the agapic ideal, he also believed that the give-and-take that characterizes most romantic relationships precludes the occurrence of purely altruistic love.

Measurement

Lee's classification scheme inspired the development of several measurement instruments. The most well known and commonly used is the 42-item Love Attitudes Scale (LAS) designed by the Hendricks and their colleagues (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Hendrick, Hendrick, Foote, & Slapion-Foote, 1984). The LAS appears to reliably measure the six love styles and has subsequently been redesigned so that each of the items refers to a specific love relationship as opposed to more general attitudes about love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1990). A shorter, 28-item version of the scale is also available (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Dicke, 1998). The complete scale, along with its shorter version, is reproduced in Exhibit 1.1.

Exhibit 1.1 The Love Attitudes Scale

Instructions

Please answer the following items as honestly and accurately as possible. Whenever possible, answer the questions with your current partner in mind. If you are not currently dating anyone, answer the questions with your most recent partner in mind. Otherwise, answer in terms of what you think your responses would most likely be.

Response scale

- 1: strongly disagree
- 2: moderately disagree
- 3: neutral
- 4: moderately agree
- 5: strongly agree

*Items*Eros

- 1. My partner and I were attracted to each other immediately after we first met.
- *2. My partner and I have the right physical "chemistry" between us.
- 3. Our lovemaking is very intense and satisfying.
- *4. I feel that my partner and I were meant for each other.
- 5. My partner and I became emotionally involved rather quickly.
- *6. My partner and I really understand each other.
- *7. My partner fits my ideal standards of physical beauty/handsomeness.

Ludus

- 8. I try to keep my partner a little uncertain about my commitment to him/her.
- *9. I believe that what my partner doesn't know about me won't hurt him/her.
- *10. I have sometimes had to keep my partner from finding out about other lovers.
- 11. I could get over my love affair with my partner pretty easily and quickly.
- *12. My partner would get upset if he/she knew of some of the things I've done with other people.
- 13. When my partner gets too dependent on me, I want to back off a little.
- *14. I enjoy playing the "game of love" with my partner and a number of other partners.

Storge

- 15. It is hard for me to say exactly when our friendship turned into love.
 - 16. To be genuine, our love first required *caring* for a while.
 - 17. I expect to always be friends with my partner.
-

(Continued)

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Exhibit 1.1 Continued

- *18. Our love is the best kind because it grew out of a long friendship.
- *19. Our friendship merged gradually into love over time.
- *20. Our love is really a deep friendship, not a mysterious mystical emotion.
- *21. Our love relationship is the most satisfying because it developed from a good friendship.

Pragma

- 22. I considered what my partner was going to become in life before I committed myself to him/her.
- 23. I tried to plan my life carefully before choosing a partner.
- 24. In choosing my partner, I believed it was best to love someone with a similar background.
- *25. A main consideration in choosing my partner was how he/she would reflect on my family.
- *26. An important factor in choosing my partner was whether or not he/she would be a good parent.
- *27. One consideration in choosing my partner was how he/she would reflect on my career.
- *28. Before getting very involved with my partner, I tried to figure out how compatible his/her hereditary background would be with mine in case we ever had children.

Mania

- 29. When things aren't right with my partner and me, my stomach gets upset.
- 30. If my partner and I break up, I would get so depressed that I would even think of suicide.
- 31. Sometimes I get so excited about being in love with my partner that I can't sleep.
- *32. When my partner doesn't pay attention to me, I feel sick all over.
- *33. Since I've been in love with my partner, I've had trouble concentrating on anything else.
- *34. I cannot relax if I suspect that my partner is with someone else.
- *35. If my partner ignores me for a while, I sometimes do stupid things to try to get his/her attention back.

Agape

- 36. I try to always help my partner through difficult times.
 - *37. I would rather suffer myself than let my partner suffer.
 - *38. I cannot be happy unless I place my partner's happiness before my own.
 - *39. I am usually willing to sacrifice my own wishes to let my partner achieve his/hers.
 - 40. Whatever I own is my partner's to use as he/she chooses.
 - 41. When my partner gets angry with me, I still love him/her fully and unconditionally.
 - *42. I would endure all things for the sake of my partner.
-

Scoring

Starred items are those included on the short form of the LAS. To find out your love style, add up your ratings for the items in each subscale. Divide this total by 7 (or by 4 if using the short form). You will have scores for the three primary love styles and for the three secondary love styles. Is your relationship characterized by one particular style of love? Or is it more complex than that?

SOURCES: Adapted from Hendrick, C., & Hendrick, S. (1990). A relationship-specific version of the Love Attitudes Scale. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 5, 239-254. Copyright © 1990 by Select Press, Inc. Items reprinted with permission. Starred items are included in the short form of the scale from Hendrick, C., Hendrick, S. S., & Dicke, A. (1998). The Love Attitudes Scale: Short Form. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15, 147-159.

NOTE: Response options have been reversed from original source.

Individual and Group Differences in Love Style

Unlike the Triangular Love Scale, the LAS has been used in numerous empirical investigations. In general, the results of these studies reveal that love experiences vary as a function of individual difference and group variables. For example, many researchers find that women score higher on the love styles of storge and pragma than do men, whereas men tend to score higher on ludus (e.g., Dion & Dion, 1993; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1987, 1988, 1995; Hendrick et al., 1984, 1998; Rotenberg & Korol, 1995).

There also are multicultural and cross-cultural differences in love style. Within the United States, Asian American adults often score lower on eros and higher on pragma and storge than do Caucasian, Latino, and African American adults (e.g., Dion & Dion, 1993; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). Latino groups, on the other hand, often score higher on ludus than do Caucasian groups (e.g., Contreras, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1996). And cross-cultural comparisons reveal that Americans tend to endorse a more storgic and manic approach to love than do the French, who in turn tend to demonstrate higher levels of agape (e.g., Murstein, Merighi, & Vyse, 1991).

These differences notwithstanding, it is important to keep in mind that not all individuals possess one approach or style of loving. A man or woman may adopt numerous love styles, and a person's love style may change over his or her lifetime or during the course of a given relationship. For example, the preoccupation and intense need associated with a

manic love style may occur more often during the beginning stages of a romantic relationship, when the partners are uncertain as to their feelings and the future of their association. Over time, however, these feelings may be replaced by more erotic, storgic, or agapic feelings.

THE PROTOTYPE APPROACH: MENTAL MODELS OF LOVE

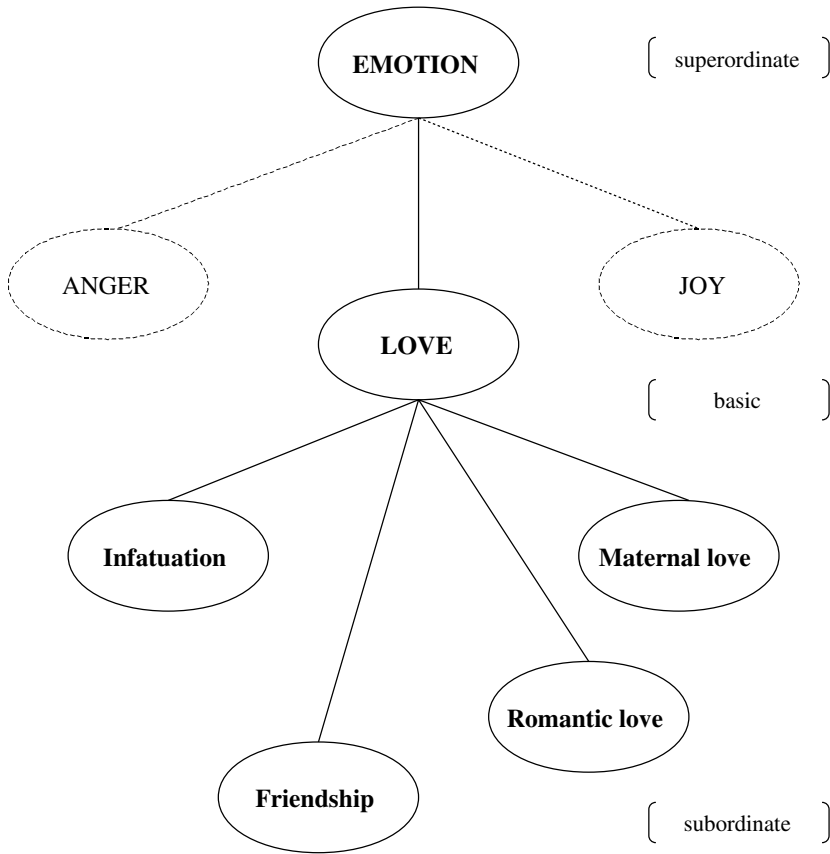
Some researchers, rather than following the theoretical “top-down” approach adopted by Sternberg and Lee (and others), have taken an empirically driven “bottom-up” approach to delineate the nature of love. One such technique, the prototype approach, involves collecting data directly from men and women about their knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes—their mental representations—of the concept of love. Researchers who use the prototype approach are interested in exploring what people think of when they are asked about love, how they differentiate love from related concepts (e.g., liking), how they form their conceptualizations of love, and how these conceptualizations or mental representations influence their behavior with relational partners.

The Hierarchy of Love

According to Eleanor Rosch (e.g., 1973, 1975, 1978), an early pioneer in the use of prototype analysis, natural language *concepts* (e.g., *love*, *dog*, *apple*) can be viewed as having both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. The former concerns the hierarchical organization of concepts or relations among different levels of concepts. Concepts at one level may be included within or subsumed by those at a higher level. For example, the set of concepts *fruit*, *apple*, and *Red Delicious* illustrate an abstract-to-concrete hierarchy with superordinate, basic, and subordinate levels.

Using the methods originally developed by Rosch, some researchers have investigated the hierarchical structure of the concept of love. Psychologist Phillip Shaver and colleagues (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987), for instance, found evidence that *love* is a basic-level concept contained within the superordinate category of *emotion* and subsuming a variety of subordinate concepts that reflect types or varieties of love (e.g., *passion*, *infatuation*, *liking*) (see Figure 1.2). That is, most people consider passion, infatuation, and liking to be types of love, which in turn is viewed as a type of positive emotion.

Figure 1.2 The Hierarchy of Love and Other Emotions. Research conducted by Phillip Shaver, Beverley Fehr, and their colleagues (Fehr & Russell, 1991; Fischer, Shaver, & Carnochan, 1990; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987) suggests that *love* is a basic level concept contained within the superordinate category of *emotion*. In addition, *love* appears to contain a variety of subordinate concepts that reflect types or varieties of love; of these, *maternal love* is viewed as the most prototypical variety.



The Prototype of Love

Concepts also may be examined along a horizontal dimension. This dimension concerns the differentiation of concepts at the same level of inclusiveness (e.g., the dimension on which subordinate-level

concepts such as *Red Delicious*, *Fuji*, and *Granny Smith* apples vary). According to Rosch, many natural language concepts or categories have an internal structure whereby individual members of that category are ordered in terms of the degree to which they resemble the prototypic member of the category. A *prototype* is the best and clearest example of the concept (the “applied” or the most apple-like apple [e.g., *Red Delicious*]). Individuals use prototypes to help them decide whether a new item or experience belongs or “fits” within a particular concept. For example, in trying to decide whether or not he is in love with his partner, a man might compare the *feelings* (“I’m happy when she’s here and I’m sad when she’s not”), *thoughts* (“I think about her all of the time,” “I wonder what our children would look like”), and *behaviors* (“I rearrange my schedule to spend time with her, and we go everywhere together”) he has experienced during their relationship with his prototype—his mental model—of “being in love” (“People who are in love miss each other when they’re apart, think about each other a lot, imagine a future life together, and spend a lot of time with each other”). If what the man is experiencing “matches” his prototype, he is likely to conclude that he is, in fact, in love with his partner.

The prototype approach has been used to explore the horizontal structure of a variety of relational concepts, including love. Beverley Fehr and James Russell (1991), for example, asked men and women to generate as many types of love as they could in a specified time and then asked another sample of individuals to rate these love varieties in terms of prototypicality or “goodness-of-example.” Of the 93 subtypes generated, *maternal love* was rated as the best or most prototypical example of love, followed by *parental love*, *friendship*, *sisterly love*, *romantic love*, *brotherly love*, and *familial love*. *Infatuation*, along with *sexual love* and *puppy love*, was considered one of the least prototypical examples of love.

Researchers also have identified the prototypic features (as opposed to types) of love. For example, in an earlier demonstration, Fehr (1988) asked one group of participants to list the characteristics of the concept of *love* and a second group to rate how central each feature was to the concept of love. Features that her participants believed were central or prototypical to love included *trust*, *caring*, *honesty*, *friendship*, *respect*, *concern for the other’s well-being*, *loyalty*, and *commitment*. Features that were considered peripheral or unimportant to the concept of love included *see only the other’s good qualities*, *butterflies in stomach*, *uncertainty*, *dependency*, and *scary*.

More recently, psychologists Arthur Aron and Lori Westbay (1996) extended Fehr's work by exploring the underlying structure of the prototype of love. These researchers found evidence that the 68 prototypic love features identified by participants in Fehr's (1988) study could be reduced reliably to three latent dimensions that resembled those included in Sternberg's triangular theory of love typology: passion, intimacy, and commitment. Thus, Sternberg's theory appears sound; that is, the love experiences of many men and women do indeed reflect the three basic dimensions he proposed.

SUMMARY

Social and behavioral scientists, recognizing the important role that love plays in human life, have theorized about its nature. In the process, they have proposed a number of typologies or classification schemes that specify types or varieties of love. Other researchers, following a prototype approach, have attempted to delineate the nature of love by examining people's common understandings of love and their love experiences. This body of theoretical and empirical work reveals that there exist a multitude of ways of loving. Love truly is a many splendored—and multifaceted—experience.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Storge (p. 4)
- Philia (p. 4)
- Eros (p. 4)
- Charity (p. 4)
- Triangular theory of love (pp. 4-5)
- Intimacy component (p. 4)
- Passion component (p. 4)
- Decision/commitment component (pp. 4-5)
- Stability property (pp. 5-6)
- Conscious controllability property (pp. 5-6)
- Experiential salience property (pp. 5-6)
- Nonlove (p. 6)
- Liking (p. 6)
- Infatuation (p. 6)

Empty love (p. 6)
Romantic love (p. 6)
Companionate love (p. 6)
Fatuuous love (p. 7)
Consummate love (p. 7)
Erotic love style (p. 8)
Ludic love style (p. 9)
Storgic love style (p. 9)
Pragmatic love style (p. 9)
Manic love style (p. 10)
Agapic love style (p. 10)
Concepts (p. 14)
Vertical dimension of the concept of *love* (p. 14)
Horizontal dimension of the concept of *love* (p. 15)
Prototype (p. 16)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why have scientists tended to devote so much attention to romantic or passionate love? Do you think that this focus has helped or hindered our understanding of love in general?
2. Although philosophers, poets, and writers have speculated on the nature of love for many hundreds of years, the topic of love has only recently begun to receive scientific attention. What do you think might account for this state of affairs?
3. Describe Sternberg's (1988) triangular theory of love. Select two relationships you have seen portrayed in the media (e.g., books, plays, movies, television). Which type of love does each relationship illustrate? Describe each in terms of the three components of love.
4. Define the three primary and three secondary colors of love. What would be the best pairing of love styles? The worst? Why?
5. Scientists interested in the nature of love have tended to adopt a theory-driven "top-down" approach (e.g., Sternberg, Lee) or a data-driven "bottom-up" approach (e.g., Fehr, the prototype researchers). What does each approach contribute to our understanding of love? Is one better than the other? Why or why not?

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Hendrick, C., & Hendrick, S. S. (1989). Research on love: Does it measure up? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 784-794.

In this classic article, the authors examine whether the available love instruments actually measure what they purport to measure.

Lee, J. A. (1973). *Colours of love: An exploration of the ways of loving*. Toronto: New Press.

This book serves as a wonderful introduction to the author's theory. Although out of print (check the library or a used book store), it is well worth the effort to locate it.

Kephart, W. M. (1967). Some correlates of romantic love. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 29, 470-474.

Simpson, J. A., Campbell, B., & Berscheid, E. (1986). The association between romantic love and marriage: Kephart (1967) twice revisited. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 12, 363-372.

In 1967, Kephart asked a group of men and women whether love was essential for marriage. Twenty years later, Simpson and his colleagues did the same. The results revealed that attitudes about the association between love and marriage had changed dramatically over time, particularly among women.

Sternberg, R. J., & Barnes, M. L. (Eds.). (1988). *The psychology of love*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Although dated, this book remains a valuable reference tool for people interested in understanding social scientific views of love.