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**NOTES FROM STUDY GUIDE**PLATO SYMPOSIUM, TRANS. W. HAMILTON (LONDON: PENGUIN, 1951):

Plato's dialogues are presented as philosophical conversations between Plato's former teacher, Socrates (469-399 BCE) and various interlocutors in fifth-century BCE Athens. The *Symposium* is presented as the account of a drinking party at which the guests are invited to each give a speech on the nature of love. Socrates delivers a final speech, recounting what a wise woman named Diotima has taught him about the nature of love. In it, Socrates tells us that what we actually love is beauty as such we begin by loving individual beautiful things and people but the ultimate object of our love is in fact the eternal, timeless beauty/good itself. In another dialogue, *Phaedrus*, Plato has Socrates tell his listeners that love is a form of 'divine madness', which takes us over when we encounter the same beauty we had direct contact with as souls, before we came into material existence. In other words, for Plato, love points *beyond* the world to a transcendent, timeless reality, one that is in fact *more real* than the physical world we see around us.

For Plato, love is a relationship we have to *ultimate reality*, one that points beyond this world of imperfect things to a perfect world of 'ideas' or 'forms'. Love, like philosophy, is for Plato part of how we transcend our human limits and come to know ultimate reality.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER 'THE METAPHYSICS OF SEXUAL LOVE' IN IS THE WORLD AS WILL AN REPRESENTATION TRANS. EFJ PAYNE, NEW YORK: DOVER, 1966, pp. 531-567:

Where Plato thought that the underlying reality of things was the Good, or beauty-in-itself. Schopenhauer believed that the underlying reality of the world was will - not will for any particular thing, but simply undifferentiated will-in-itself, which expresses itself in the world around us as a will-for-life. Everything we see around us, from inanimate objects to animals, is simply this underlying will expressing itself. While Schopenhauer's view have found few adherents, his ideas about the origin of love are intriguingly similar to modern evolutionary psychology. For Schopenhauer, what we think of as love for another person is simply the will-to-live expressing itself by tricking us into procreating. We're attracted to others not because of their specific qualities, but simply because we will be a good reproductive pairing with them.

RAJA HALWANI PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE, SEX AND MARRIAGE: AN INTRODUCTION (New York and London: Routledge, 2010) Chapter 1, 'WHAT IS LOVE?' pp. 7-28

In this chapter, Halwani sets out to identify the unique features of love. He initially looks at the three types of love between people that philosophers have classified, before narrowing his interest to characterising romantic love in particular. He wants to discover whether there are any essential features of romantic love (features the absence of which would imply that the relationship was not one of romantic love). He has an initial list, which he explores throughout the chapter, before summarising what he suggests are sixteen crucial features towards the end of the chapter. Only *one* of these sixteen features, he suggests, apply to *all* cases of romantic love: that love always shows concern for the well-being of the beloved.

Halwani describes romantic love to have six features:

1. Its intentionality need not always be characterised by beliefs, but could be characterised by mere thoughts or images;
2. It might outlast its originating beliefs, thoughts or images about the beloved;
3. It is a long-term emotion, one that is possessed by the lover for a long period and as such need not be *felt* all the time;

4. It seems to include the desire on the part of the lover to be with ("associate with") his or her beloved, and the desire to have sex with the beloved (a desire that may not remain throughout a long-lasting love relationship);
5. It is neither inherently morally good nor bad; and
6. It typically (though not invariably) starts passionately, only to calm down as time goes by, without, however, necessarily becoming any less deep or intense; indeed, it may, and probably does, deepen as the years go by.

*Involuntariness.* Romantic love is commonly thought to not involve choice. The metaphor of "falling in love" seems to attest to this, giving the impression that we succumb to romantic love instead of consciously choosing it.

*Exclusivity.* This concept usually means that love is exclusive to one and only one person - the love relationship is confined to two and only two people.

*Intensity and Dependence.* "Intensity" refers to the strength and depth of the emotion of love, in both its early, passionate stages, and in any successful, long-term love relationship. It is also rare that friendships manifest a degree of intensity of emotions equalling that found in love.

*Marriage.* I understand marriage not only as a legal arrangement under which two people are recognised as spouses, but also any substantive, cohabitating arrangement by which two people are married in all the usual senses except legally. Richard Mohr defines it as "the development and maintenance of intimacy through the medium of everyday life, the day-to-day... [it] is the fused intersection of love's sanctity and necessity's demand" (2005, p. 61). Therefore two people can be married in a substantive but not legal sense.

*Social Expectations.* If we set aside past notions and practices of friendship, today and in almost all parts of the world there are relatively common social expectations of lovers. Briefly put, once we allow for lovers' duties to their work, friends, family, and children, lovers are expected to be the primary and main receivers of each other's time, energy, affection, and attention (sex included). There is a social expectation that the lovers are the primary recipients of each other's time, attention, energy, and affection is another generally necessary feature of romantic love.

*Union.* "Union" has different meanings, some strong, some weak. Under a weak concept of union, the lovers form, or desire to form, some sort of single entity. To Robert Nozick, the desire to form a "we" is not accidental to love, but is intrinsic to its nature (1991, p. 41). One feature of the "we" is that the wellbeing of each lover is tied up with the wellbeing of the other (Nozick 1991, p. 419). If something bad (or good) happens to one, something bad (or good) happens to the other. A second feature of the "we" is that it requires lovers to make some decisions jointly, thereby limiting each other's autonomy (1991, p. 419). A third feature is that the formation of a "we" alters each lover's identity: "to love someone might be, in part, to devote alertness to their wellbeing and to your connection with them" (1991, pp. 419-420; cf. Conlon 1995, pp. 297-298). The idea is that each lover becomes psychologically part of the other: they think and worry about each other all the time, and one lover even has imaginary dialogues with the other when the latter is not around (1991, p. 420).

*Jealousy.* Friends sometimes feel threatened and thus jealous by the interference or entanglement of other people into their friendships, but this does not usually characterise friendship. Parents tend not to be jealous of their children, and children tend not to be jealous of their parents. However, with lovers, jealousy is quite common, and although some philosophers portray it as a bad emotion, others argue plausibly that it need not be; if properly exhibited, it shows a healthy regard for one's love relationship.

### Infatuation vs. Romantic Love:

There are two general approaches to distinguishing between infatuation and romantic love. The first is to consider them as different in kind, the second as different in duration. The second approach views infatuation as unrequited or unfulfilled love. If correct, it explains the short duration we tend to associate with infatuation.

"unrequited love produces eros' most exquisite passion - infatuation" (Mark Vernon 2005, p. 34)

"However and whenever infatuation begins, if given the opportunity it transforms itself into continuing romantic love or else it disappears" (Nozick 1991, p.418).

Vernon does not *identify* unrequited love with infatuation, but claims that it *produces* infatuation. However, identification is more plausible, because it is not obvious why unrequited love causes infatuation instead of, say, bitterness, some other emotion, or no emotion at all.

There is another reason why infatuation is not unrequited love: the word "infatuation" has particular linguistic associations - infatuation is short-lived, whimsical, immature, not serious, not rooted in anything potentially enduring. Susan Mendus suggests that we should distinguish between love and infatuation as follows: "in the case of infatuation the lover's error lies in wrongly evaluating the qualities of the beloved" (1989, p. 240).

### Summary:

There are 16 crucial features of romantic love:

1. It occurs between adult human beings
2. Its intentionality need not always be characterised by beliefs, but could be characterised by mere thoughts or images.
3. It might outlast its originating beliefs about the beloved.
4. It is a long-term emotion, one that is possessed by the lover for a long period and as such need not be constantly felt (especially when reciprocated).
5. It seems to include the desire on the part of the lover to be with the beloved.
6. Like many other emotions, it is inherently neither morally good nor bad.
7. It typically starts passionately, only to calm down as time goes by, without, however, necessarily becoming any less deep or intense; indeed, it may, and probably does, deepen as the years go by (especially when reciprocated).
8. It has the desire to have sex with the beloved (a desire that might not remain throughout a long-lasting love relationship).
9. It is exclusive.
10. When reciprocated, it exists between only two people.
11. When reciprocated, it pushes the lovers towards marriage (legal or substantive).
12. When reciprocated over a long period, its emotional intensity and dependence are more intense and thorough than what we find among friends and different in kind than what we find between parents and children.
13. There are social expectations that the lovers are the primary recipients of each other's time, attention, energy, and affection.
14. When reciprocated, it limits the autonomy of the lovers.
15. It has jealousy as one of its main accompanying emotions.
16. It always has concern on the part of the lover for the wellbeing of the beloved.

Necessary

Generally necessary

Not necessary

## NOTES FROM LECTURE

### WHY LOVE, SEX, DEATH?

- Three major elements in human life
- Our attitudes towards them and our view of what *they* are will affect our sense of who and what we are, and what counts as a good life
- Examples of how complex something familiar can become once we think about it more carefully - a useful intro to doing philosophy

### DIFFERENT APPROACHES:

|               |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Biological    | Why did we evolve to love? Is sexuality grounded in nature, nurture, both? Which biochemical processes need to stop for an organism to count as 'dead'?            |
| Psychological | What psychological needs does 'love' meet? How does sexuality shape non-sexual behaviours? Which attitudes towards death enable healthy functioning?               |
| Sociological  | How do social norms structure how we love? What kind of taboos do we have about sexuality? How do death rituals reflect different beliefs about an afterlife?      |
| Theological   | Can a divinity command us to love? What forms of sexual expression do particular religions favour and condemn? Is there an afterlife – and if so, what is it like? |

### PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES:

#### 1. PLATO'S SYMPOSIUM

Socrates 469/470-399 BCE

Plato 428/7-348/7 BCE

Aristotle 384-322 BCE

- Love as a "divine madness" that arises when we glimpse the Beauty we knew when we were still in touch with the Forms
- Love as the reunion of two halves who were separated and are stronger together

#### Diotima of Mantinea:

- Priestess, lived ~400BCE
- Socrates claims that she taught him the 'philosophy of love'
- Controversy - could also be reference to Aspasia of Athens

"This is the right way of approaching or being initiated into the mysteries of love, to begin with examples of beauty in this world, and using them as steps to ascend continually with that absolute beauty as one's aim, **from one instance of physical beauty to two** and **from two to all**, then from **physical beauty to moral beauty**, and **from moral beauty to the beauty of knowledge**, until from knowledge of various kinds one arrives at the **supreme knowledge** whose sole object is that absolute beauty, and knows at last what absolute beauty is." (Diotima of Mantinea, p. 94). This is where we get the idea of a ladder.

Some points to consider:

- Gives love a very important role
- Reduces the importance of the beloved

#### 2. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

- Influenced by Buddhist philosophy, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
- Influence on artists/novelists (pessimism), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)
- Key ideas: World really is 'Will'; life is meaningless, all is suffering
- Suffering is caused by attachment.

"...all amorousness is rooted in the sexual impulse alone, is in fact only a more closely determined, specialised,[...]individualised sexual impulse, however ethereally it may comport itself." (p.533). Dig at Plato.

"...in every case of being in love, however objective and touched with the sublime that admiration may appear to be, what alone is aimed at is the generation of an individual of a definite disposition." (p.535) Dig at Plato. Making offspring with particular genetics.

#### On love:

- Shouldn't be underestimated - shapes much of our behaviour, social norms; causes many problems
- We delude ourselves into thinking that love is about something grander than procreation
- A trick by the 'will-to-live' to get us to reproduce - required because of our inherent selfishness

#### Some points to consider:

- Sympathetic to evolutionary psychology and biology
- Restricts love to certain types of relationships
- If Schopenhauer were right, would this make love illusory? Or is love more like fear or seeing colours?

#### PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS:

- Conceptual or descriptive (what does 'love' mean? What counts as an instance of love?)
- Evaluative or normative (what should love be? Is love a good thing or a bad thing? What is it to love well or badly? What role should love have in our lives?)

#### DEFINING LOVE:

- We use 'love' to pick out a wide range of phenomena: romantic love, love for family, parental love, love of places, animals, objects, love of country, God...
- Is there some common 'core' that makes all these instances of 'love'? Or do we just use one word to cover what are in fact different things?

#### **3. RAJA HALWANI (b. 1967):**

- **Professor of Philosophy at the Art Institute of Chicago**
- **Key figure in contemporary philosophy of love and sex**
- **Method involves lots of examples**
- **What is the character of romantic love? What are its necessary features?**
- **Halwani (2010)**
  - **One *necessary* condition: "concern on the part of the lover for the well-being of the beloved" (p. 28)**
  - **Eight 'generally necessary' conditions - e.g. desire for sex, exclusivity between two people, aiming at marriage, more intense than familial love, social expectation that lovers devote most time and energy to each other, jealousy, limit on autonomy**
  - **Seven only found sometimes - e.g. between adult humans, doesn't depend on beliefs, lasts a long time, includes desire to spend time with each other**
  - **Necessary condition --> concern for the beloved's wellbeing - caring about their happiness, welfare, etc.**
  - **We *also* care about the happiness of our friends, family, pets - so just meeting this condition doesn't guarantee we're talking about *romantic* love.**

- Halwani (2018) - Revised account - proposes difference between:
  - **Romantic Love (RL) 1:** Passionate, sexual; more about desire (sensations, images) than emotion (affected by beliefs about beloved); lovers want to spend time together, think about each other all the time
  - **Romantic Love (RL) 2:** "commitment, attachments, and companionship" (p. 16); more like an emotion (affected by beliefs - can end if the beloved changes too much, can change if new beliefs arise); lovers not thinking about each other all the time.

Some points to consider:

- Looking at examples and instances to find shared characteristics seem like a useful approach
- Also invites us to come up with counterexamples that undermine the project each time

#### DETOUR - NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS:

**Necessary condition** --> must be met in order for something to be the case, to be classified as a particular type of thing, etc.

**Sufficient condition** --> enough to guarantee that something is the case, is classified as a particular type of thing, etc.

- 'Having four sides' is a *necessary* condition for 'being a square', but not a *sufficient* one
- But 'being a square' is a *sufficient* condition of that shape 'having four sides'.

Let's say that closing a shop at the end of the day requires:

- a. Locking the front door,
- b. Cleaning up stock, and
- c. Wiping down surfaces.

Each of these three things is a *necessary condition* that must be met in order for the shop to count as having been closed properly.

One or two of them will not be enough on their own; they are only *jointly sufficient*.

### NOTES FROM SEMINAR

#### WHY LOVE, SEX, DEATH?

- Three major elements in human life
- Our attitudes to them and our view of what *they* are will affect our sense of who and what we are, and what counts as a good life
- Examples of how complex something familiar can become once we think about it more carefully - a useful intro to doing philosophy

#### PLATO - DIOTIMA'S LADDER:

"...to begin with examples of beauty in this world, and using them as steps to ascend continually with that absolute beauty as one's aim..." (p. 94)

- Love has a purpose - to bring us to a higher level of knowledge.
- Recognising the steps you take in love to ascend to a higher level of love.
- Starts with a basic love and it slowly builds to a world where we find ourselves complete with a love for everything
- I feel like it's very similar to Maslow's hierarchical needs but based on love and self-transcendence
- I think it also explains that as we mature, we prioritise different forms of love
- Love isn't an end in itself, it has a function and a rule as a person to take you higher.

- He believes that it's how we transcend our human limits and the imperfections of our reality to connect with an ultimate reality
- People experience feelings because we're people, not as a stepping stone

#### SCHOPENHAUER:

- Romantic love shouldn't be underestimated - has a huge impact on human life, history
- We delude ourselves into thinking that love is about something grander than procreation
- Love is really just a fancy disguise for the sexual impulse - a trick to encourage reproduction, required because we're too selfish to keep the species going
- Loving a specific person = their traits would mix well with ours to produce good offspring