

LOVE IS A RECENT INVENTION¹

ALFRED ADLER (1870-1937)

Originally published in 1936 in Esquire (4) the present paper is not included in any Adler bibliography and reappeared only last year. It was then made available for a display on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Adler's birth through the courtesy of Mrs. Ernest A. Feldmann who, as Evelyn Roth (Mrs. Sydney M.) was Adler's secretary during his last years.

While the ideas expressed in this paper are definitely Adler's, the reader will immediately notice a journalistic style which is not his. Apparently it was not the Esquire staff who did the rewriting² but the versatile George Sylvester Viereck (1884-1962), prolific writer, journalist, and poet. This assumption is based on Mrs. Feldmann's diary notes at that time, that Adler was working on an "article for Viereck," that Viereck was to be called up afterwards, and that he had "arranged the article for Esquire."³ ⁴

We are reprinting this paper now (a) to bring it into the Adlerian literature; (b) as an interesting documentation for the various channels and means Adler accepted to bring his message before the public; (c) as another version of the kind of "sex education" he considered so important, as well as (d) of his conception of female psychology which is today so timely again; and (e) for Adler's particular use of the term "invention," as well as introduction of a new term, "the human dyad."

¹Reprinted by permission of Esquire Magazine. (c) 1936 (Renewed 1964) by *Esquire, Inc.* Subheadings added; a few dated nonpsychological passages omitted.

²Myron D. Davis, *Esquire, Inc.*, personal communication, August 14, 1970.

³Evelyn Feldmann, personal communication, August 5, 1970.

⁴Ten years earlier, in 1926, Viereck had an interview with Freud. This he published together with those of 31 outstanding contemporary persons, mostly political leaders and generals, including Mussolini and Kaiser William II, but also such men as George Bernard Shaw, Arthur Schnitzler, Henry Ford, and Albert Einstein (10). Passages from the Freud interview are quoted by Ernest Jones (6, p. 126).

At the time of his contact with Adler, Viereck appeared to Mrs. Feldmann as "a strange person," of whom she was "very leary." But Adler believed he "was helping Viereck to become a fellowman on the useful and cooperative side of life; that he was not dangerous; that he was a capable writer; and that Adler needed help to spread the word. Adler worked endlessly and tirelessly—as though he had a premonition that next year would be too late" (personal communication, August 5, 1970). As to Viereck, it later became known that he had been a German propagandist during both World Wars; during World War II he was imprisoned for withholding information about such activities.

"Johnny," said Papa, with some embarrassment, to his ten-year-old hopeful, "have you been enlightened about the facts of life?"

"Yes, Papa," the lad replied with eager solicitude, "what is it you would like to know?"

There is no doubt that we know more about sex today than our fathers did. But do we know more about love? We are sometimes inclined to confuse the two. Many a Miss who comes to me for consultation has an imposing list of "complexes" and "repressed desires." Young and old know the patter of psychoanalysis and behaviorism. And they know a great deal that is not so. Forty per cent or more have at least an inkling of the technique of sex, but hardly one out of five knows the meaning and the nature of love. Nor is this surprising, for love, in its ideal sense, is a comparatively new discovery. Or perhaps, I should call it an *invention*⁵ or evolution. It was evolved only recently out of much muck and confusion. It certainly did not exist for the generality of human beings, even one hundred years ago.

Love is a word that is bandied about too freely. Falling in and out of love is a common experience, but how many men and women qualify as great lovers? How many would receive a passing mark in amatory proficiency? How many, even in this day and generation, would deserve the degree of A. D.—*Amoris Doctor*—Doctor of Love?⁶

Poets and philosophers have written much nonsense about love.

⁵To speak of love as an "invention" appears strange, but it is actually highly sophisticated and was ahead of the times. The meaning of "invention" in this usage has, to our knowledge, not been clarified until relatively recently through the work of the late George Kelly. As he noted, "Reality is subject to many alternative constructions, some of which may prove to be more fruitful than others . . . We shall have to be content to make a little progress at a time, to *invent* new alternative constructions" (8, p. 96, italics added). He called his philosophical position that of "constructive alternativism."

Concepts are according to Kelly not something to be discovered, but are constructions, constructs, "something *devised* by man for his own lively purposes" (8, p. 10, italics added). Similarly, though in a somewhat different context, Kelly suggested that Vaihinger's (9) fictionalism "has particular value for psychology" (8, p. 149).

Regarding the present topic, Adler's thesis is that the reality of man's sexual behavior was conceived or construed differently throughout the ages, and that our present "ideal love" is a recent construction or invention, the nature of which is discussed in this paper. Similarly, in another of his last papers, Adler described himself as "the *inventor* of the 'inferiority complex'" (5, p. 776, italics added).

⁶This humorous sounding passage is not a mere embellishment by the re-writer but quite in accordance with Adler's intention since his working-title for the paper had been, "Wanted: a Training School for Lovers." Mrs. Feldmann's appointment book states that on February 17, 1936, she worked with Adler on four articles, one of which was the "article for Viereck" with this title (personal communication, August 5, 1970).

But the percentage of human beings capable of perfect love was always insignificant. However, it is possible to report "progress." Possibly twenty per cent of those who talk of love today have the right to call themselves lovers.

FALSE CONCEPTIONS

Here the reader, with contracted eyebrow, may ask very properly, "What do you mean by love?" Don't expect a humble psychologist to say in one sentence what ten thousand poets and rhapsodists in all the ages have been unable to expound. It is easier to tell what love is not than to tell what it is.

Love is not the glorification of the body that inspired King Solomon's *Song of Songs*. Physical fascination is only one of its elements. It is not the romance of Antony and Cleopatra. Each of these glamorous lovers attempted to beguile and dominate the other. That is not love. Love is not the syrupy song of the Troubadour, whose one-sided adoration feeds on its own lyric frustration. Tannhauser thought he knew something about love. But did he? Love is not the morbid concupiscence of the senses—the "obscure Venus of the hollow hill, the thing transformed that was the Cytherean."

Love is not Don Juan's impotent lust for conquest. I remember one patient who boasted of a new affair every week. I told him: "You are a collector of scalps, not a lover." It is not the pleasure hunger of Casanova. The voluptuary who seeks a sensuous thrill in every movement, in every swish of a skirt, is pathological. He is an amorist, not a lover.

Many neurotics come to me who have vainly sought love. They are lost in blind alleys. Love is not a blind alley. It is not the infatuation of Narcissus with his own lovely image, nor the inane devotion of the nymph Echo who pines for the beautiful youth in vain. I have known too many young men and too many young women who imagined that they were in love with others when they were only in love with themselves; I have known too many unhappy women who frantically hug an illusion.

The other day a patient came to me who extolled the Wells of Loneliness in which she had sought her barren satisfaction. I told her: "My dear girl, you are all wrong. The House of Love has many mansions. But Love's other name is not Perversion." The passion of Hadrian and Antinous, the desire of Sappho for her maids, may have vivified sculpture and poetry, but it was not love.

All departures from the natural path are sired by neuroses and mothered by inferiority complexes. They violate the first law of life. Life insists upon perpetuating itself. I have met too many erotic egotists, too many defeatists in love, who vainly attempt to transport to Hollywood or to Broadway, the Athens of Plato or the Lesbos of Sappho. Stripped of aesthetic pretensions and psychological evasions, all diversions from the groove of normal love are inspired by fear of the other sex and the refusal to make the mutual sacrifices which love demands of both parties. They are flights from, or substitutes for, reality.

WOMAN'S EMANCIPATION

Many of these subterfuges have been mistaken for love, but they were not love. The ideal of modern love did not come into existence until woman was emancipated from her social and economic shackles and human life was placed upon a level higher than the mere satisfaction of physical appetite. Venus, goddess of love, according to legend, rose from the white sea foam. I believe that love is more indebted to the vacuum cleaner, the electric refrigerator, the electric washer than to the briny deep. Oscar Wilde once said that civilization depends upon the slavery of the machine. He was right. Only the enslavement of the machine gave the average man and the average woman sufficient leisure to develop the more exalted emotions. To the extent to which our civilization still falls short of realizing these essentials, it still falls short of achieving love.

Century after century, the vital energies of men and women were absorbed by grueling tasks before the conception of the eight-hour day, the five-day week. Women, as a rule, were uneducated, and did not take the exacting care of their bodies which came with the age of plumbing. Marie Antoinette, for all her rococo daintiness, was careless about brushing her teeth. We know this from the letters of her mother, Maria Theresa, to the Queen of France. Bathing was regarded as a luxury, even by royal ladies. The home of peasant and burgher, even the castle of the feudal lord, was primarily a factory. Eve cooked and spun; she made soap and candles and minded the children, but she did not visit the beauty parlor. She was primarily housewife and mother. Adam ploughed the field, he hunted and he fought and he performed his conjugal duties with great regularity. Devotion to the mother of his children did not always exclude the seduction of housemaids. He was sexually active, but sex activity is

not love. Domestic devotion is not love. Love includes both, but it demands more.

We can meet these demands better than our ancestors. The new leisure has enabled us to develop a new conception and feeling of love.

DYAD OF EQUAL PARTNERS

Love is neither a gamble nor a one-sided infatuation. Love, modern love, is based upon mutual physical and spiritual devotion. We are not lovers until we know that *it takes two to make love*. When I explained this to a patient of mine who, in spite of innumerable amours, somehow never finds happiness, he laughed. "And you call that a discovery? I knew that from the day when I first made eyes at the janitor's girl." That is, no doubt, the average reaction to my statement. Paradoxical as it may sound, the average person does not realize that *love is a task for two*. "A task?" said a pretty young friend of mine. "I thought it was a pleasure." I deliberately use the word "task." Love may have its beginnings in a sudden infatuation, but it does not mature, it does not deserve the name of love, without labor and discipline, sacrifice and co-operation.

In the past, as in the present, the predatory male seized the female and the predatory female ensnared and captured the male. Such a relationship involves neither reciprocity nor mutual sacrifice. Love, like the dance, needs the harmonious co-operation of two partners. German peasants to this day impose upon a newly betrothed couple the task of cutting a tree trunk with a two-handed saw. On the way in which they handle the job, on their ability to co-operate, are based predictions as to their future and their chances of connubial felicity.⁷

"My husband loves me," remarked a rotund brunette to me, "he gives me all the money I want for clothes and does not mind if I lose his hard-earned money at the bridge table." What have such things to do with love? Very little. The husband in question receives in return only frigid caresses. Possibly he even admired his wife for being a "good" woman—too good to be thrilled by passion. It is obvious that neither has guessed the secret of love even if they look upon their marriage as satisfactory.

Love is not an unequal partnership, where one gives all and the other gives little nor nothing. *Love is the equal partnership between a man and a woman—where two are merged into one, a human dyad,*

⁷Adler was very fond of using this illustration (see, e.g., 2, p. 122, and 3, p. 263).

reconciling the sex urge of the individual with the biological needs of the race and the demands of society.

"Dyad," I am afraid, is a dictionary word. It is worth looking up. I use it because it is the only word that completely expresses my meaning. It signifies the true marriage, on equal terms, of two souls and two bodies.⁸

ACHIEVING THE DYAD

To achieve the dyad of perfect love, the following rules may recommend themselves to the reader:

1. Don't look up to your mate, and don't look down: approach love as an equal.

2. Don't expect an impossible perfection in others, of which you yourself are incapable: love a woman, not an angel; a man, not an idolon [phantom, ideal].

3. Don't think of yourselves as one or as two, but as a twosome.

4. Don't take without giving, nor give without taking, in love.

5. Don't pick out a partner who does not entice you physically, but do not entangle your fate with one who appeals to you only on a physiological basis.

6. Don't fail to co-operate with your mate on every plane, socially, economically, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and biologically.

7. Don't lose yourself in by-paths and blind alleys: there is always a way out of emotional labyrinths—potentially all humans are fundamentally normal.

8. Be a slave neither to convention, nor to your own idiosyncrasies: remember you are not merely an individual, but a unit of your social group and the human race.

It was Leibnitz, a great German philosopher, who said that the soul was a "house without windows." All mortals in his opinion were "monads," solitary creatures, incapable of communication. But he did not know that love opens the windows of the soul. When Jack and

⁸Adler had always been an outspoken opponent of the male domination in our culture, and champion of the equality of women (see I, pp. 102-122). Speaking of the women's liberation movements of his day he considered it "our duty to support them in their efforts to gain freedom and equality" (I, p. 121).

Jill find love, they cease to be monads. In place of solitude, "the solitude of all created things," the lovers discover a new and blessed state for which Nietzsche has coined the term *Zweisamkeit* — duality.⁹ "Though indeed," as Sir Thomas Brown remarks in *Religio Medici*, "they be really divided, yet are they so united as to seem as one and make rather a duality than two distinct souls." We may well say with Shakespeare of perfect lovers: "An apple cleft in two is not more twain than these creatures."

Shakespeare, if we may believe the testimony of his sonnets and the testimony of his biographers, including Frank Harris, was *not* himself a successful lover. But he has said many beautiful things about love. He was sufficiently great and, belonging to all time, sufficiently modern, to have at least an idea of the new conception of love. *Romeo and Juliet* is a beautiful early version of modern love, a love that defies family conventions and sacrifices—if necessary, even life itself. In the days when Romeo and Juliet lived and in the days of Queen Elizabeth, such love was rare, so rare that it inspired the greatest of playwrights. Today the story of Romeo and Juliet is no longer exceptional. There is not a day when some girl in the Bronx does not defy her family for her love's sake . . .

There are everywhere in the world, in the USSR no less than in the USA, youngsters who approach love and marriage on the basis of complete equality and unstinting co-operation. It is not necessary to be a Robert Browning to be a great lover. I have known many couples in small houses and lilliputian apartments who live in perfect dual felicity. Their names will not thunder down the ages, but they are contented lovers. The little girl with the feather in her hat, who sits opposite you in the subway, and the young man who gazes into her eyes, may know more about love than all the poets put together.

The philosophers knew even less than the poets. Plato has devoted symposium after symposium to love. But Plato himself was an imperfect lover because he could not, or did not wish to, find a woman who was his equal. Nevertheless, it was Plato who originated an enticing theory of love. According to him the male and female were one until the gods, jealous of man's perfect bliss, split them in two. Since that time each half seeks its counterpart forever, and seeks it often in vain. It is only in our own day that the search is beginning to be successful.

⁹"Twosomeness" would seem to be a better translation for Nietzsche's *Zweisamkeit*, in parallel construction to "lonesomeness" (not "solitude" as above) for *Einsamkeit*, as these are used by Walter Kaufmann (7, p. 140).

SOCIAL AND BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Even the great lovers of the past lacked, as a rule, a social conscience. Perfect lovers are adjusted perfectly, not only to each other, but to their social environment. Their personal adjustment must be physical as well as emotional. Even the most idealistic lover must realize that love is an art that requires technique. Both the Occident and the Orient have given us manuals of love, text-books of passion. There is something to be said for *Kamasutra* for *The Scented Garden*, even for *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and there is much to be said for popular scientific books which attempt to give expert knowledge to amateurs. But all knowledge and all artistry are vain unless it is shared by both lovers in a mutual devotion.

We should not, with false modesty, close our eyes to the truth that love, even in its physical aspect, is a task involving the harmonious and whole-hearted co-operation of both parties. Don Juan must be forever unsatisfied, because to him fornication is a task for one. The fatal error that a carnal relationship may be a task for one, is the basis upon which prostitution is reared. From it springs not only the red-light district, but the disease and infection that are bred in its unhealthy atmosphere. No young man who understood the secret that supreme sexual satisfaction requires mutuality, could be contented with the inferior *Ersatz* of peripatetic charmers.

Two American writers, Viereck and Eldridge, in *Salome, the Wandering Jewess* [11], portray a woman who seeks perfect equality vainly for two thousand years. Their heroine gives her favors freely to sturdy gladiators and Nubian slaves, but denies herself to the one man she loves because she will not accept him except upon the basis of absolute equality. She attempts to achieve this equality by levelling the difference between her sex and his. Salome, or her interpreters, fail to realize that equality in love does not imply equality of function. It requires, on the contrary, biological differentiation.

Love, though necessitating the union of the two sexes, is not based solely on the sexual function. The pleasure of sexual union is the premium nature pays to insure propagation. But neither pleasure nor propagation is sufficient in itself. Love is not love unless its uplift is spiritual, as well as physical. This uplift must not be at the expense of society or of the race; it must be in harmony with man's biological function and the preservation of civilization.

CONCLUSION

Love in our century has emerged from its Dark Ages. Many factors in modern life are favorable to love. Nevertheless there are still many factors, rising from the imperfections of human society, which militate against love. These factors inspire the "masculine protest" in women and the inordinate "fear of women" in man. No man is civilized or a perfect lover until he knows that he can find complete self-realization only in what I have called "the human dyad."

Woman is even more handicapped than man by ancient taboos, sombre vestiges of her sexual past. Language itself creates antagonism between the male and female by referring to Eve's daughters as "the opposite sex." Language denies to woman the complete equality essential for love. We still say that a man "takes" a wife. Words and proverbs in which the old prejudices still linger are more potent than most men realize. They keep false traditions alive and subtly corrupt our judgment. There should be no "taking" in love or marriage, but a mutual "give and take"; a Holy Twinity (if I may be permitted to coin a word), in which neither the male nor the female strives for domination.

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