Romantic Resonance in Deep, Long-Lasting Love

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Doctoral Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

The present research addresses one of the most important aspects in the establishment and sustainability of deep, long-lasting love, which many wish upon themselves but few are able to achieve. On the one hand, the modern era sanctifies love as the basis and core foundation of relationships. On the other hand, the number of couples who divorce, in Israel and around the world, has increased (Moshe, 2013), and many other couples report a sense that they are “compromising” romantically, with ebbing feelings for their partner (Buss, 1994; Fisher, 1992, 2010; Sternberg, 1986). In theory, one might suppose that nowadays romantic love would flourish and be long-lasting, since so many individuals seek such love and, unlike earlier periods in history, there are now fewer social prohibitions standing in its way. However, there is in fact a major gap between the prevalent desire for meaningful, long-lasting love and the relatively small number of people who manage to maintain this type of love life – one that is satisfying, exciting, and fruitful – with the same partner[[1]](#footnote-1) over time. This gap is the most concerning and critical issue in the study of love in our time (Lev, 2016).

The current research seeks to explore this gap through the use of a relatively new term that has not been sufficiently studied in the scholarship on emotions and love: romantic resonance. It brings a focus to the theoretical conceptualization of romantic resonance and to identifying the conditions necessary for its creation and development over time. The central claim in this research is that love tends to deepen and intensify when romantic resonance exists between a couple, alongside additional components that characterize healthy, ever-evolving love. It explores the nature of romantic resonance and its interaction with other important elements of romantic relationships. Furthermore, it seeks to clarify the importance of romantic resonance in analyzing some of the central questions occupying contemporary academic discourse on the subject of romantic love, as well as to clarify the feasibility of its long-term success.

Resonance is a concept that comes from the field of physics. It describes a state in which a certain system reacts forcefully to an external stimulus and draws energy from it in a highly efficient manner. This phenomenon occurs when the frequency of the external force is equal to or very close to the natural frequency of the system; the resonant frequency thus intensifies in the system. Like a physical system that operates with maximum efficiency when sharing a resonant frequency with the stimulus, romantic relationships can enable partners to realize themselves in the fullest possible way. Emotions, personality traits, and talents that contribute to their flourishing are amplified by the “resonant arousal frequency,” in the right moments, in the right way, in the right amount. In borrowing the concept of resonance to study emotions and love, romantic resonance indicates an extension and increase in the sense of love between partners (Ben-Ze’ev, 2019). Through the partners’ inherent resemblance and complementary nature, they act upon one another spontaneously, simultaneously, and in a synchronized fashion. This reinforces each partner’s character, talents, and emotions, which in turn contribute to their personal and mutual success.

The prototype of romantic resonance in deep love is includes both emotional resonance and resonance in activities. Emotional resonance between partners is characterized by an authentic, natural manner; the experience of being mutually understood, frequently without verbal communication; the sense of feel “at home,” which sometimes occurs the very first time a couple meets; and a unique combination of familiarity alongside a sense of wonder. Some of the ways this is manifested in a relationship include an ongoing and ever-evolving interest in one another, creativity, excitement, the ability to tease one another,[[2]](#footnote-2) and shared humor. Resonance in activities is characterized by having numerous shared interests or pursuits that both partners consider pleasurable and valuable. During such activities, each partner’s presence enhances the other’s enjoyment and excitement as well as their success in the activity. Romantic resonance deepens relationships, makes them more meaningful, and supports the development of each partner while preserving a sense of shared excitement.

The current study integrates two primary layers of discussion, the philosophical and the psychological. Through them, it seeks to describe deep romantic love and the conditions that enable it to last and increase over time. A previous study (Gruber, 2017) laid the foundations for using the term “resonance,” borrowed from the fields of physics and music, through a reading of materials about resonance and through discussions with experts from those fields. In the present research, which aims to deepen the understanding of this concept and introduce it into the academic and public discourse on love, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten couples engaged in a committed partnership for over ten years, who profess an active sense of love, joy, and deep mutuality between them; these are all elements associated with romantic resonance. The goal of the interviews was to render the study’s main theoretical claims more tangible, offering language from real life, and thus to contribute to an understanding of romantic resonance and the unique ways it is expressed in relationships.

This pioneering view on romantic resonance, which relates to its various facets – emotional resonance and resonance in activities – and the insight into its critical role in long-lasting love, seeks to contribute to the scholarship on emotions and love. The present research can serve as a basis for future qualitative and quantitative studies about romantic resonance, and its manifestations and functions in meaningful, long-lasting love. Furthermore, it may provide a practical contribution; being aware of the essential factors at play in maintaining and promoting personal development and love between partners can help people choose a life partner who is well-suited to them and with whom they have far-reaching, profound potential to thrive in the long term.

The doctoral thesis consists of ten chapters: The first chapter serves as an introduction, describing the challenge that romantic love faces in the modern era and how romantic resonance can address it; the second chapter presents the research methodology, since this philosophical study includes, among other elements, research interviews; the third chapter offers a literature review on the nature of romantic love (3.1), the impact of time on love’s intensity and depth (3.2), and romantic resonance and the main models of love (3.3); the fourth chapter outlines the philosophical underpinnings of the present discussion of romantic resonance, namely, Martin Buber’s philosophy of dialogue and the idea of a “middle space,” which stands at its core; the fifth chapter discusses the characterization of romantic resonance and the unique contribution that the present research offers toward the discourse on the nature of deep romantic love; the sixth chapter describes emotional romantic resonance, one of the two central types of romantic resonance; the seventh chapter describes romantic resonance in activities, which is the second type of resonance typically present in romantic resonance, alongside emotional resonance; in the eight chapter, romantic resonance will be discussed in the psychological context. One of the offerings of this chapter is an additional theoretical model for understanding the conditions that affect the success and depth of love in romantic relationships; the ninth chapter relates the story of one the couples that were interviewed. Their story exemplifies the prototype of romantic resonance in deep, long-lasting love – full, comprehensive romantic resonance that includes emotional romantic resonance, from their very first meeting, as well as romantic resonance in numerous activities that both partners value; the tenth and final chapter summarizes the work and suggests directions for future research.

1. For the sake of ease, the present research uses pronouns that refer to heterosexual couples; however, it intends to refer to partners of all sexual and gender orientations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mutual arousal that is not explicit in a negative way [*I’m not sure exactly what this means, perhaps clarify?]* and is accompanied by humor, mutual understanding, and spontaneity. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)