

The merchant of venice: plot summary essay

[Life](#), [Relationships](#)



An attachment is an emotional bond between two people. It is a two-way process that endures over time.

An evolutionary perspective of attachment was researched by the famous John Bowlby in 1969. Bowlby observed both humans and mammals. Bowlby's theory is an evolutionary theory, he emphasised that attachment had evolved, which means it was not something that was taught, because of its survival and reproductive value.

According to Bowlby, children have an innate (inborn characteristics which are genetically determined) drive to become attached to a caregiver as attachment has numerous long term benefits such as imprinting. Both, imprinting and attachment makes sure that a young animal or infant remains close to their caregiver who will feed and protect them. Therefore attachment and imprinting are adapting behaviours which mean that the survival and reproductive rate is increased. Infants who don't become attached are less likely to survive and reproduce. There are key features of Bowlby's theory of attachment and these are; continuity hypothesis, internal working model, monotropy, social releasers and sensitive/critical period. These features explain Bowlby's theory of attachment because this is the evidence that he concluded with whilst studying attachment. Seeing as attachment is innate, there is likely to be a certain stage where development takes place, this is known as the critical or sensitive period. The development of all biological systems takes place very rapidly and simply during a critical period, however it can take place at other times (sensitive period).

Bowlby used the concept of a sensitive period to attachment. He believed that the second quarter of the first year (3-6 months) is when infants are most sensitive to develop attachments. As the months pass by attachments are difficult to form infant-caregiver attachments. Attachment is not the only thing that is innate, caregiving is also innate because it is adaptive which means that it increases survival of their children. Infants are born with innate characteristics which are called social releasers, which elicit caregiving. Examples of social releasers are smiling, crying ect.

Attachment is the innate behavioural process in babies; caregiving is the innate response in adults. They both provide protection and henceforth enhance survival. Bowlby believed that infants form many attachments but the primary attachment (Monotropy) holds a special significance in emotional development. The primary attachment is usually the infant's mother. This is because they become strongly attached to the person who responds most sensitively to their social releasers. The primary attachment helps the infant's emotional development, self esteem and later relationships with peers, lovers and children of their own. Attachment starts at the first ever relationship between the infant and caregiver. This relationship may be one of trust, love, security etc or the contrary, Inconsistent, uncertain, aggressive etc.

This relationship will create an expectation if which all relationships will be like. Overtime an infant will develop a model about emotional relationships. This model will include concepts about relationships and expectations from others. Bowlby called this model the internal working model. The internal

working model portrays the idea that there is a consistency between early emotional experiences and later relationships. This leads to the continuity hypothesis, which is the idea that emotionally secure infants will grow up to be secure, trusting and socially confident adults. On the contrary emotionally competent infants will grow up to have social and emotional difficulties later in childhood and also adulthood.

Evaluating Bowlby's theory of attachment They are numerous strength of Bowlby's attachment theory,, Many psychologists have done further research on the attachment theory which all support it. The research done by Lorenz supports the idea that imprinting is innate. This is because the goslings imprinted the first object they saw, similarly this process is likely to have evolved in many species as a way to protect the young and enhance their chance of survival. The sensitive period was also researched by Hodges and Tizard and they found that infants who had not formed attachments later had difficulties with peers. If attachment did evolve as Bowlby suggests then it would have to be universal.

A study carried out by Tronik et al reflects this to be true. Tronik et al studies two children from an African tribe who lived in extended families. The infants were both looked after and even breastfed by other women during the day but slept with their own mothers at night. However despite having such differences in caregiving practices the infants (6 months) still only showed one primary attachment.