

Human attachment

Psychology



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Human Attachment By + Human Attachment Harlow's profile and what he studied Harry Harlow is a psychologist famous for carrying out research on monkeys and using his findings for analytical purposes. He grew up in Iowa and later received his doctorate from Stanford University. It was while he was lecturing at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that he came up with a project to mastermind a primate observatory. This is when his interest in these mammals deepened, and he began analyzing and studying monkeys and their behavioural patterns and habits.

How he carried out his research

Harlow began experimenting with different reactions of the monkeys to different phenomena and was able to attain conclusive results concerning his findings. Harry's experiment involved infant monkeys and their mothers. He separated the newborn monkeys from their mothers six hours after birth and then placed them with " surrogate mothers" who were substitute figures.

One of the numbers consisted of a block of wood wrapped with cloth and the other comprised of wire mesh covered with fabric. Both of the mothers were warm, and the wire mesh mother figure was somewhat rougher than the wooden one, which was soft, and cuddly (Ottaviani & Meconis, 2007).

Though the monkeys received food from both parents, it was observed that they spent considerably more time with the cloth and wooden one, which was the softer of the two figures. Later on when the monkeys grew up, it was observed that they behaved quite differently depending on how they grew up. The isolated females who grew up without a mother figure grew up to reject the advances of approaching normal male monkeys. The separate men tried very hard to copulate with the typical female monkeys. The isolated female monkeys were not negligent or abusive when they became

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mothers. Instead, they cared for their young. The other mothers were abusive and neglectful towards their offspring. It was clear that the denial of emotional bond to these monkeys made them unable to have a secure attachment to their offspring. This experiment shows the importance of mother-child bonding.

The application of Harlow's findings to human attachment

The studies and observations carried out by Harlow showed the monkeys reacted well to warmth and softness of the cloth. The reaction of the monkey reveals to us the physical and emotional bond between a mother and a child. The behaviour of the baby monkeys showed dependence on reliance on a mother's love and affection. It also shows us the bond between a mother and a child and the attachment that young babies have for their mothers. It shows us how a small child becomes attached to its mom and what causes this attachment.

Limitations of Harlow's work for understanding human attachment

Many people argue that the way he treated the monkeys was unethical and inhumane. It appears that the monkeys experienced too harsh conditions for experimental purposes, and this raised the query of the treatment of animals by scientists in laboratories. Another section of people argued that you couldn't test certain functions on monkeys and reach conclusion on human beings based on it.

The adoption of Harlow's work by other researchers

He led the way for many researchers to follow the theories that he explained. As a lecturer, he mentored Abraham Maslow into psychology, and in turn Abraham followed in his footsteps and went on to become a prominent psychologist as well. William Mason was another student inspired by Harlow,

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and he continued researching and conducting experiments after leaving the university. Gene Sackett and Deborah Blum were other students of Harlow who followed the path set by the great psychologist.

He was renowned for his great contributions to psychology and joined a great league of psychologists who contributed immensely to the field through many years of research and analysis.

Bibliography

Ottaviani, J. and Meconis, D. (2007). Wire mothers. Ann Arbor, MI: G. T. Labs.