



had a chance to work with another collection of social psychology luminaries—Jerry Marwell, Jane Piliavin, John DeLamater, and Shalom Schwartz, among others.

My prime interests then were on passionate love, sexual desire, and perceptions as to the importance of fairness and equity in love relationships and casual friendships.

**DL: You were awarded the “Golden Fleece Award” by Senator William Proxmire. What events led up to this award and what were some of the reactions/consequences?**

EH: The most damaging blow to my research program came in 1975. Wisconsin’s U.S. Senator William Proxmire discovered that the National Science Foundation had awarded Ellen Berscheid and me \$84,000 to study the antecedents of passionate and companionate love. Proxmire awarded us his first “Golden Fleece Award”—a public relations stunt designed to protect taxpayers from having to fund unneeded scientific research. He got a lot of political mileage over the years from ridiculing scientists.

Proxmire launched his well-publicized campaign by firing off a press release:

“I object to this not only because no one—not even the National Science Foundation—can argue that falling in love is a science; not only because I’m sure that even if they spend \$84 million or \$84 billion they wouldn’t get an answer that anyone would believe. I’m also against it because I don’t want the answer.

I believe that 200 million other Americans want to leave some things in life a mystery, and right on top of the things we don’t want to know is why a man falls in love with a woman and vice versa. . . .

So National Science Foundation—get out of the love racket. Leave that to Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Irving Berlin. Here if anywhere Alexander Pope was right when he observed, “If ignorance is bliss, ‘tis folly to be wise.”

In subsequent weeks, Senator Proxmire and his supporters issued a series of reductio ad absurdum press releases. I received bags of mail, mostly critical. A Chicago tabloid, *The Chicago Tribune*, ran a contest. People could call in and vote: Who was right—Proxmire or me? Three University of Chicago Nobel Prize winners wrote in to say “Hooray for research on love!” but

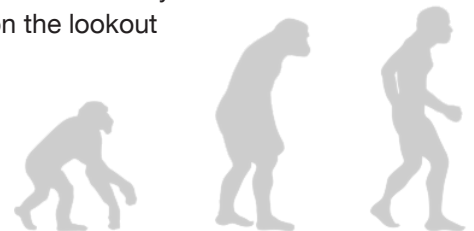
massive numbers of readers (and even a few friends!) wrote to say I was naive to think love and sex could be studied scientifically. Or they carped: “If she can’t even manage her own love life (they must have been foretelling marital problems I didn’t yet see) how can she advise other people what to do?” and to present their academic or clinical views. I lost the “election”: Proxmire 87.5%, me 12.5%.

Even my mother’s Bishop got into the act. He issued a message to the Detroit parishes denouncing the National Science Foundation for awarding scientists \$84,000 to unravel the “most sacred mysteries of love and life.” He asked: “Who granted these ‘scientists’ the ability to see into men’s minds and hearts?” Were our findings going to eliminate pride, selfishness, jealousy, greed, suffering, and war? “Jesus Christ has taught us all that we need to know about love and life,” he insisted. “His Word waits there, in The Holy Bible, for us. He has been waiting for us for almost 2,000 years. It is His commands we must follow, not the childish ‘advice’ of some arrogant, secular scientist, who presumes to know more than Our Lord.”

A sweet man, Dr. Roland W. Radloff, then Program Director of the Social Psychology Program, Division of Social Sciences at NSF, counseled me to refrain from submitting anything for awhile. “Let it blow over.” The peer-review process might approve it, the Program Director might approve it, but at great cost for science. And in the end it wouldn’t be funded. I had little choice but to go along.

Senator Barry Goldwater, of all people, came to my defense. So did James Reston, the leading columnist for *The New York Times*. In his *Times* column, Reston wryly agreed that love will always be a mystery. “But if the sociologists and psychologists can get even a suggestion of the answer to our pattern of romantic love, marriage, disillusion, divorce—and the children left behind—it would be the best investment of federal money since Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase.”

How did I cope? Not very well, I’m afraid. Though a few of my friends think I must look back at this time as one of personal and scholarly triumph—given the centrality of love research in psychology today—it was actually very hard for me. I am essentially a shy person, not on the lookout for conflict; I just like to pursue my intellectual interests. So L’Affaire



Proxmire was actually painful to me and when I remember it, I do so mostly with embarrassment, despite the eventual positive outcome.

I was blessed in this instance, however, by coming from a family and a community that cared not a whit about academic pursuits. It comes as no surprise to me that most of that world thinks my interests—in books, foreign films, and scholarly pursuits—are a bit absurd and certainly frivolous. In my working class family, I was not expected to succeed brilliantly at anything—simply to “do my best.” So, when things are terrible, I tend to be shell-shocked for a few hours, then, reeling, start plodding doggedly along again. Sooner or later, the tide changes.

In 1978, I wrote a little book (*A New Look at Love*) in an attempt to review what social psychologists knew about passionate and companionate love and to explain why the study of love is important. Luckily, it won the American Psychological Association’s and the American Psychological Foundation’s National Media Award. Even so, not everyone welcomed such a book.

**DL: How have attitudes of the academic (and non-academic) communities changed regarding the scientific study of love and close relationships?**

EH: I’ve hung around long enough to see things change. Eventually it became clear to politicians, scholars, and the general public that even “irrational” emotions such as passionate love can be studied scientifically. In 25+ years, the field of social psychology has become much smarter about the importance of mate selection and relationships. In 1969, when Ellen Berscheid and I wrote the first text that considered passionate love (*Interpersonal Attraction*), we had difficulty finding any material on passionate love. The 1980s and 1990s saw a tremendous surge of interest in love and intimacy.

In the 1980s, Steve Duck and Robin Gilmour inaugurated a series of volumes on the initiation, maintenance and dissolution of relationships. Scientists banded together to form four international, interdisciplinary organizations designed to foster research on close relationships—the International Society for the Study of Personal Relationships (ISSPR), the International Network on Personal Relations (INPR), the International Society for Research on Emotions, the International Academy of Sex Research, and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex. In 1984, Steve Duck and his colleagues at INPR founded the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, which is devoted entirely to research on close relationships. Later, in 1994, Patricia Noller and her colleagues at ISSPR inaugurated a second journal, *Personal Relationships*,

dedicated to publishing research on the same topics. Since then, thousands of studies concerning love, sex, mate selection, and intimacy have been published in these and various other journals.

**DL: How did you come to get involved with Clark and the study on sex differences relating to the receptivity of sexual offers?**

EH: In the mid-1970s, I visited Florida State University to give a talk. At that time, FSU was a hotbed of a new kind of social psychology—Sociobiology/Evolutionary Psychology.

The 1960s to 1970s was a period of social transformation. Many Social Psychologists, repelled by the chauvinistic notion that men and women are destined by God to be different “species,” were convinced that men and women are generally more similar than different: that both care about love, romance, sexual adventure, and a million other things. Scientists dedicated to understanding gender differences in attitudes, emotions, and behavior were viewed as slightly suspect. (In 2007, the pendulum seems to have swung the other way. To many, evolutionary psychology is now the received wisdom. To question the notion that Men are From Mars, Women From Venus provokes a quizzical look. This too, I suspect, will pass away.)

Both Russ and I were skeptical of the notion that traditional gender differences had all but disappeared. I: because I couldn’t imagine traditional cultural differences in gender roles occurring overnight. Russ: because he was convinced that gender differences are writ in the genes. In a Q & A session, Russ dropped a bomb. “A woman,” he said, “good looking or not, doesn’t have to worry about timing in searching for a man. Arrive at any time. All she has to do is point an inviting finger at any man, whisper ‘Come on ‘a my place,’ and she’s made a conquest. Most women,” he said, “can get any man to do anything they want. Men have it harder. They have to worry about strategy, timing, and tricks.”

Not surprisingly, the women in the audience were incensed. One sent a pencil flying in Russ’s direction. In one of Russ’s finer moments, he observed: “We don’t have to fight. We don’t have to upset one another. It’s an empirical question. Let’s design a field experiment to see who’s right!”

In a subsequent social psychology class, Russ and his students conceived of a simple experiment. Class members would approach men and women (of the opposite sex), and ask one of three questions: (1) Would

you go out with me tonight? (2) Would you come over to my apartment tonight? or (3) Would you go to bed with me tonight?

Weeks later the results came in—and they surprised almost everyone. When class members asked: “Would you go out with me tonight?” men and women were equally receptive: 56% of the women and 50% of the men agreed to go out on a date. Yet, when confederates asked, “Would you come over to my apartment” or “Would you go to bed with me?” the gender differences were striking. Whereas few women were willing to risk going to a man’s apartment (6%) or to bed with him (0%), a full 69% of the men agreed to go the woman’s apartment and 75% were willing to go to bed with her.

Three scientific journals—Sex Roles, Ethology and Sociobiology, and Representative Research in Social Psychology (an innovative methodology journal)—seemed good fits for this small paper. From June 1978 to September 1980, Russ tackled them all.

The reviewers were not amused. Reviewers’ reactions came typed or angrily scrawled on notepaper. Typical of the scornful reviews was this:

. . . “had this paper been based on a federally funded grant it would have walked away with the Golden Fleece Award of the decade. Apart from the rather comical nature and situations of the study and the debriefing which are regrettably not discussed for they should be hilarious, [sic.] there is no value to this study. The propositions (no pun) on which it is based are incredibly naïve, the conclusions unwarranted, etc. This paper should be rejected without possibility of being submitted to any scholarly journal. If *Cosmopolitan* won’t print it (with the anecdotes of encounters, documenting # of rapes of females by males who were propositioned, males who were slapped, etc.), then *Penthouse Forum* might like it. But, not \_\_\_\_\_ (name of journal omitted.)

One editor found the study so offensive that she claimed she had written to the editors of all other social psychology journals. Studies by Nazi scientists had never been published; this one should suffer the same fate. Under no conditions should this study ever be published. Other journals responded in kind.

For a time, Russ stuck the paper in the drawer.

On a visit to Madison, Wisconsin, Russ told me of his plight. I was incensed. I volunteered to take the paper in hand and craft it into a more felicitous style (designed to appeal to readers of mainstream social psychology and human sexuality journals). In rewriting it, I tried

to make it clear that Russ and I had no axe to grind. I acknowledged the fact that either Social learning theory and/or Evolutionary theory provided equally compelling explanations for our data. Nature and Nurture. I detailed the scientific importance of charting cultural and social changes in men’s and women’s sexual attitudes and behavior, and closed by noting the critical importance of “promiscuous” or “experimental” sexual behavior in determining which populations were most vulnerable to the ravages of sexually transmitted disease—although in the 1980s clinicians were far more worried about STDs other than AIDs (which had not yet appeared on anyone’s radar.)

From there on in, it was smooth sailing. We had a winner. Almost.

In fact, we were not prepared for the long, winding road that lay ahead. More on that later.

**DL: What was your initial reaction to the pattern of data Clark found? Did the pattern surprise you?**

EH: I was surprised that the gender differences in sexual daring were as great as they turned out to be.

**DL: What was the reaction of your peers to this paper? Was it accepted for publication immediately? If not, what were some of the comments from the reviewers?**

EH: **The Search for the Holy Grail.**

Two journals seemed likely prospects for our paper: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and *Archives of Sexual Behavior*.

In March, 1981, we began sending the revised paper out yet again. This time, editors were more positive: close but still no cigar. As one editor observed: “I feel the paper should (and almost certainly will be) published somewhere. I regret that I cannot tell you we will publish it.” NIMJ.

A second editor claimed that the Editorial Board had voted to reject it “on the basis of the reviewer’s recommendations.” Alas, the reviewers had all advised, “Accept.” Never mind. Again, it was NIMJ. Many scientists are most comfortable in a black and white world. They either believe in Nature or Nurture. Woe to the scientist who answers: “Both.”

**And Yet Again.**

In the years since Study #1, a new critique had arisen: “The times they are a’ changin’.” Some critics claimed that Study #1 was now dated: Gender differences may have been important in 1978, but by the enlightened

1980s they had all but disappeared. In addition, the prevalence of new and virulent STDs as well as the discovery of AIDs had surely made young men far more cautious than they were in the “bad old days.” Thus, in Spring 1982, we decided to run the study yet again—same protocol, same time, same place. Whatever results we secured were bound to be interesting. Gender differences remain the same? That argued for the stability of cultural and evolutionary imperatives. Gender differences disappear? That would argue that social factors (such as the women’s movement and deadly diseases like AIDs) had had a profound impact on men and women’s sexual behavior.

The gender differences found in Study #1 were replicated almost exactly in Study #2. I rewrote the paper yet again.

### Once More Into The Fray.

By now, since we’d been slapped around pretty badly, I proposed that it might be a good time to try Women’s Studies journals (such as *Psychology of Women Quarterly*), *Social Psychology* journals (such as *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*), and *Close Relationships* journals (such as *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*). So from November 1981 to January 1984, we worked our way through these journals. The story remained the same: more rejections.

One reviewer observed:

“The study itself is too weird, trivial and frivolous to be interesting. Who cares what the result is to such a silly question, posed in such a stranger-to-stranger way in the middle of the FSU quadrangle? I mean, who cares other than Redbook, *Mademoiselle*, *Glamour* or *Self*—all of which would cream their jeans to get hold of this study. This study lacks redeeming social value.”

There was a call for more research. Reviewers raised questions: How did we know the 18 student experimenters were credible actors? Why were men saying “Yes,” the women saying “No?” Were we sure a debriefing was effective?

For four years the manuscript lay fallow.

Then, in July 1988, I sent the paper to the *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality* and it was accepted. The reviewers were not enthusiastic, but they were willing to publish. The long quest was over.

### DL: How many times and where has this study been replicated?

EH: Times have changed. Today, most scientists recognize the importance of scientific knowledge about topics that were once considered taboo—love, emotions, physical attraction, sexual desire, and sexual behavior—to name a few. This study has turned out to be the most cited of my (our) papers. It has been replicated in America, England, Germany, and the Netherlands. It’s also been covered (hilariously) by the popular press.

Log on to the web today and you’ll still find the study being debated—in all its distortions. In the early days, a few feminists decried the study because it seemed to justify male chauvinism and sexual license (“The Devil [or Darwin] made me do it.”) And they had a point. The powerful seem able to turn any and all research findings to their own advantage. Today, some women insist that it just goes to show what idiots (“cads,” “jerks,” “animals,”— fill in the blanks) these men are. Go to any Web site today and you will find:

Indirect evidence that men are stupid . . . [<http://home.attbi.com/~brynoh/MainSite/men.htm>]

Yep! It’s The Study.

Guys = Icky: The definite proof. [<http://www.rpi.edu/~baere/guys%20are%20icky.html>]

Yep! Right again.

Foreign Dispatches: Men are Such Simple Creatures [[foreigndispatches.typepad.com/dispatches/2004/10/men\\_are\\_such\\_si.html](http://foreigndispatches.typepad.com/dispatches/2004/10/men_are_such_si.html) - 31k -]

Recently, Touch & Go recorded a very funny rock song called “Would you . . .” which transforms our experimental manipulation into an M-TV tune. (The Album is called “I Find You Very Attractive.”) You can find it on: [<http://launch.yahoo.com/track/1486375>]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NVAaN3ZAc0> The song is so goofy it always makes my classes giggle.

### DL: What kind of research are you currently involved in?

EH: In addition to exploring a number of new topics, such as emotional contagion and “lethal” people, I remain interested in issues related to love, sex, and gender. I am especially focused on trying to integrate cultural, historical, and evolutionary perspectives, and in multidisciplinary approaches generally. Consider, for example, such a basic question as: “Why are men and women interested in sexual activities?”

In the Old Testament, its writers decreed that righteous people might engage in sexual intercourse for three reasons—pleasure, attachment, and procreation. (Later,

Christian church fathers reduced that number to one: procreation.) Traditionally, sexologists have had a similarly simple, straightforward vision of the nature of passion, emphasizing the Biblical three sexual purposes: making babies, having fun, and expressing love. Take a foray into the worlds of culture, time, art, and literature, however, and suddenly you are reminded of how narrow Western scientists' perspectives have been. As Levin (1994) observed:

Coitus is undertaken not only for pleasure and procreation but also to degrade, control and dominate, to punish and hurt, to overcome loneliness or boredom, to rebel against authority, to establish one's sexuality, or one's achieving sexual competence (adulthood), or to show that sexual access was possible (to "score"), for duty, for adventure, to obtain favours such as a better position or role in life, or even for livelihood. (p. 125).

Historians such as John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman (1988) have observed that throughout history, people have assigned very different "meanings" to passionate love and sexual activity. Throughout time, they contend, the dominant metaphors have been religious, medical, romantic, or commercial.

Over the past decades, (building on the work of D'Emilio and Freedman) I and my students have asked people at the University of Hawai'i to list all the reasons they and their friends have had for engaging in sexual activities. Our respondents were typical of Hawai'i's multi-ethnic population. They belong to an array of religious groups [Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Jewish, Mormon, Other and None] and possess diverse ethnic ancestries (African, Chinese, European, Filipino, Hawaiian, Japanese, Korean, Samoan, Vietnamese, Other-American, and mixed.)

Among the sexual motives such informants cite are, indeed, the Big Three (the same trio of procreation, sport, and affection) that scholars have so much studied. But our informants also mention an impressive array of other motivations as well—among them: Self-Esteem, Status, Spiritual transcendence, Duty, Conformity, Kindness, Desire to Conquer/Power (people can, of course, also withhold sex in the hopes of attaining power,) Submission to others, Vengeance (to conquer, degrade, punish,) Curiosity, Money, Make Someone Jealous, Health and Long Life (Yin and Yang), Stress Reduction, Save the World, Political Revolt. . . and so on.

We have now developed scales designed to measure all the sexual motives known to humankind. We've also conducted several studies designed to find out how

men and women who desire power (or who possess power) differ in their sexual attitudes, feelings, and sexual behavior.

**DL: What are your thoughts on what it is like to be a female academic? Have you noticed any changes since you first started out?**

EH: Academia has improved markedly. When I was an undergraduate at the University of Michigan (in 1955-1959), women weren't allowed to enter the U of M Student Union via the front door; they had to sneak in around the back.

During that weird time at Minnesota at the Student Activities Bureau (arranging student dances), I also taught, advised students, and conducted research in the Psychology Department. But I was not paid a penny by the Psych Department. My colleague, Ellen Berscheid, and I were told the following by the Chair. (1) Women were not allowed to hang up their coats in the faculty cloak room in Coffman Memorial Union, and (2) Women were not invited to eat lunch in the Faculty Club.

At Coffman Union, there were two dining rooms, separate but unequal. The Faculty Club was stellar: it had high vaulted wood-beamed ceilings. Its walls were glass and it looked out over the Minneapolis skyline and the Mississippi River. It was hushed, elegant, airy, well-upholstered, and intimate. Student waiters, resplendent in starched white jackets, presented the food just-so on the creamy, starched tablecloths. The Faculty Club was not just a men's club, but a WASP men's club. Now and then a visiting professor from Sudan or the Punjab, coming in to give a speech about Public Health in Dehra Dun or Urban Planning in Kassala, would darken the snowy-white constituency, but that was rare. The Club was reserved for faculty members—meaning men. If a special conference was scheduled at the Club, women could attend; Deans and faculty members could bring along their secretaries to take notes, but that was it.

The Café was a large public cafeteria which served the lower orders. Young women—the administrative staff, secretaries, and teaching assistants who helped run the place—ate. The dining hall was large and noisy. The clatter ricocheted off the hard surfaces of the tile ceilings, white walls, and tile floors. The food was mediocre and serve-yourself. The steam tables filled the room with damp and heat.

The Chair said that he was sure we'd prefer the steam room. Actually, he said cheerily, he wished he were free to eat in the staff café himself. "The food is better, the

service faster, and the company is certainly a lot prettier.” But alas, he was condemned to sit with his colleagues. Ellen and I were too polite to mention that he was free to join us in the cafeteria anytime he liked.

And so, for a time, Ellen and I ate lunch together every day in the cafeteria and became fast friends. It was, however, a bit irritating when our colleagues teased us for spending all our time together at lunch, when, in fact, we had no choice but to do so.

In December, Ellen and I decided that it was time to make a gentle expedition into the world of social activism. One Monday, we made our move. But we’d underestimated the power of tradition (or the tradition of power.) When we walked into the Faculty Club and chorused: “May we sit down?” our six colleagues couldn’t have been more courtly. “Of course! How lovely to see you both. Do sit down.” But, just as we were easing into our chairs, Colleague #1 glanced at his watch, feigned amazement, and declared, “Oh, do excuse me I have to run. I didn’t realize it was so late. I’m due back at the lab.” He stood up, obviously relieved to be escaping, and with a regretful glance at his still full plate, like the White Rabbit, he practically ran out the door. There was a pause. Then, horribly, the ghastly exodus continued. Colleague #2 shifted uneasily, then remembered that his wife was picking him up. He bolted. Colleague #3 snatched up a dinner roll and said that he better walk out with his friend. There were a few things they needed to talk about. The remaining men realized that they’d better be going, too. “Wow! It’s later than we’d thought,” they exclaimed. Within minutes Ellen and I were sitting alone at the elegant table, surrounded by six heaping plates. It was a moment we will never forget. The two of us, now fiery red with shame, were unable to speak. We sat alone, bravely smiling, chewing, choking, and crying inside. We would never try again, we vowed.

But of course we did. Skinner had provided a method; we would apply it. Each day we came in, walked into the Faculty Club, at first sitting on the outskirts of the Club, then moving in, one table closer each week or so. Eventually, we ended up sitting near to our colleagues—adjacent to, not with. We weren’t brave enough for that.

Today, things are much, much better. Discrimination still exists in academia, of course, but I and my UH woman colleagues haven’t witnessed any overt prejudice in a long, long time. Colleagues are sometimes obnoxious, but they seem to be equal opportunity boors. Professors tend to disdain any work but their own, but at the University of Hawaii I am happy to report that I and my

women colleagues are treated with exactly the same respect (or disrespect) that everyone else merits.

And today, of course, Ellen is a Regents Professor at the University of Minnesota and eats with her colleagues at Coffman any time she jolly well pleases.

**DL: What are some of the challenges facing scientists interested in emotions and close relationships today?**

EH: Powerful political, religious, and business constituencies always yearn to get into the act; yearning to control what scientists investigate, how they conduct their research, the conclusions at which they arrive, and the information they disseminate. So it isn’t surprising that cultural and evolutionary psychologists (and scholars interested in close relationships and emotions) often find themselves struggling with powerful critics. Nonetheless, I think it’s important to remind ourselves that, in the long run, Science is on the winning side.

Today, young researchers face two intriguing challenges:

1. How to integrate our understandings as to the nature of culture, genes, and our evolutionary heritage into a new, more comprehensive model of human behavior.

Cultural psychologists point out that people are “wired up” to be able to adapt to a stunning variety of political, social, and environmental contingencies. People can be found on the icy steppes of Siberia and the parched deserts of Sudan; they have survived in the formal cultural milieu of 5th century China and in 21st century Cyberspace. Cultural studies allow us to gain an understanding of the extent to which people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are shaped by the situations in which they find themselves.

Yet, people are not infinitely adaptable. As psychologists such as Buss, Cosmides and Tooby, and Wilson and Daly remind us, a great deal of human potential is “writ in our genes”:

. . . the specifics of evolutionary biology have a central significance for understanding human thought and action. Evolutionary processes are the “architect” that assembled, detail by detail, our evolved psychological and physiological architecture.

One major challenge young psychologists face, then, is in crafting an evolutionary model that will predict the types of attitudes and behavior that will readily adapt to changing circumstance versus those attitudes and behavior which will be tightly constrained by the inherited architecture of the mind (and impervious to changing circumstance).

A second challenge.

2. Geneticists have discovered that certain cultural and environmental factors may cause various genes to be “expressed,” or “repressed.” Young evolutionary scientists may want to attempt to gain a richer understanding of the complexities of culture, genes, and biology, and to incorporate their insights into their models of close relations and emotion.

These are exciting challenges that offer endless opportunities for brave and rigorous thinking and research.

**DL: Do you have any words of advice for students just starting out on their academic journey in the social sciences?**

EH: It is far less important to be brilliant than to be fiercely determined. Dogged does it. When you are knocked around you have to bounce back.

Also, don't lose sight of the fun and thrills to be had from trying to understand ourselves and our world. I've loved (almost) every minute of the scientific enterprise!

## Novels by Elaine Hatfield & Richard Rapson

