



Heart and Mind - Who will win?

by Jacob Garcia - 21 July 2005 <http://home.comcast.net/~rayae1>

PHILOSOPHERS HAVE LONG MUSED over what love is - this is not an intellectual analysis of all aspects of love, merely an observation on one particular question: What is it in us that loves? All types will have different answers. The Romantic authors will be certain it is the heart that loves, and most people would agree. However, the Enlightenment authors thought that love is an intellectual endeavour.

Let us assume the view of the Romantics. The Romantics followed a movement of relatively dry literature - the Age of Reason. They sought a new way of thinking, that shunned Puritanical bile towards overt love and intellectual mumbo-jumbo thereof; they sought romance. The great pillars of Romantic literature reflect romantic, heart-driven love: Rochester and Jane in *Jane Eyre*, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, and Hester and Dimmesdale in *Scarlet Letter* for example. Hester and Dimmesdale provide a particular example of the heart-driven passion of love; society shunned it, but Hawthorne asserts that true love prevails (even through Dimmesdale's death).


“The heart is a fickle organ.”


The problem with love exclusively from the heart is that the heart is a fickle organ. Romance changes drastically. I cannot even count the number of adolescent affairs (for that is certainly the best word for such brief flirtations) end in a sudden change of heart. The core of the problem is the fact that the heart is only exposed to emotions. Nothing matters to, nothing influences, nothing persuades the heart save emotion

Now let us consider the case of the mind. Obviously, little is written concerning intellectual love, for this is boring. There is no need to read about someone who knows they love someone, but feels nothing. The closest could probably be Benjamin Franklin's musings on moderation which asserted that man might perfect himself by moderation of all things. The brain, however, is limited with the fact that it only takes in fact, proof, reason.

So what do we do? How can we love without being hurt? How careful ought we be? A paradox


“I know I love.”


must be resolved between the romance of the heart and the reason of the mind. Romance is fickle, but intellect is constant. Therefore, while it exists, romance should be allowed to rule. However, a constant baseline must accompany that romance that says "I know I love." This is the prime issue in most relationships, especially of the adolescent variety: an uncommitted couple knows they feel romantically about each other, but they aren't constantly aware of the kind of love that is willing to give all. Without this intellectual basis of love, romance is a cycle that builds up the spirit just as it destroys it. If intellect accompanies romance, than tough times are simple to handle. Take, for example, a married couple teetering on divorce. If their relationship depended entirely on romance, sign the papers. But if their relationship was based on a reasoned understanding that each loves the other "for better or worse," there is no worry. I would even extrapolate this to say that the firmest foundation for love is love of God: there is no more constant love than that of God, and that is the best common ground for any relationship.

Now, this is not for everyone. Ask any teenager (even myself), and you will easily uncover a desire for a deep romance with the opposite sex. But ask again if that teenager is willing to devote the rest of his life united with his partner and the answer will reveal a lack of maturity. Perhaps it is significant that Jesus first said "Love is patient... ."