

Hello, English I Students! Attached is the work for our third week (May 4—May 8) of Distance Learning. It is an article from your StudySync textbook entitled Romantic Love: Reality or Myth?. Please contact me through email or phone (text me! ☺) if you have questions during the daily office hours listed below.

Teacher	Email, Phone	Office Hours
Mr. Alford	halford@tusd.net (209) 597-8589	9 am to 11 am

Getting Started: Please fill out the following:

Step 1: Circle your Teacher and Class Period

Mr. Alford	Mr. Alford	Mr. Alford
English I	English I	English I
Period 3	Period 4	Period 6
Assignment 1	Assignment 1	Assignment 1

Step 2: Identify Yourself (Please print clearly)

Your Name:

Week 2 Assignment Directions: Annotate or highlight the text to read closely and assist with your assignments. Please do the following three assignments in the order they are listed. Let me know during my office hours if you have any questions.

Assignment #1: First Read: (pages 442—446)

Assignment #2: Answer THINK QUESTIONS #1—5 from p. 446

Assignment #3: Close Read: Answer FOCUS QUESTIONS #1 and 2 from p. 447

Assignment #4: WRITING PROMPT from p. 447 (about 200 words)

How to turn in:

You may turn in this packet by either taking a picture of this cover page and completed assignments and emailing it to your teacher any time on or before May 15th, or by dropping it off completed at school on May 15th.

First Read: Romantic Love: Reality or Myth?

Read

Point: Romantic Love Is Real!

Most people who have experienced romantic love—and many who haven't—will insist that it is undeniably real. However, a few unbelievers still see romantic love as a cultural **phenomenon**; some even have the audacity to compare love to other cultural concepts such as popular music and manners. Fortunately, we don't have to rely on anecdotal evidence to prove the doubters wrong. A look at science and history proves that romantic love is indeed a real biological phenomenon. In fact, romantic love is more similar to the human ability to walk on two legs than it is to manners!

Romantic love evolved for humans in the same way that upright posture evolved. Humans evolved to walk upright because it freed their hands for reaching and carrying food, tools, and their young. This adaptation helped early humans survive, and therefore the trait was passed on to subsequent generations of humans. By the same token, the children of parents who were paired monogamously survived better than the children whose parents did not stay together. This is because monogamous pairs were more likely to work together to raise their children successfully. So what motivated parents to pair monogamously in the first place? The brain must have evolved to feel the very real emotion of romantic love. Therefore it makes sense that the capacity for romantic love is just as much a biological concept for humans as the ability to walk upright. Both of these biological adaptations were important for early humans to evolve into what they are today.

Another piece of evidence that romantic love is a product of evolution rather than culture is that romantic love has existed for a very long time. Culture is fluid and ever-changing. Although biology does change through evolution, that change is very gradual. The speed at which romantic love has developed and changed over time points to biology rather than culture. Romantic love has been around for much longer than other cultural concepts, such as manners. Plato wrote about the infinite nature of romantic love thousands of years ago. Romantic love was a driving force in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, also written in ancient times. Now compare this to the cultural phenomena we mentioned earlier: popular music and manners. Popular music and manners have changed so much over thousands of years that they are almost unrecognizable from what they were in the time of Plato or Homer. Romantic love has remained the same, and this proves that it cannot be a by-product of culture.

If these logical explanations don't convince you, there is also scientific proof that romantic love is real. Modern scientists are able to use magnetic resonance imaging scans (MRIs) to capture pictures of what happens in the body in the presence of certain **stimuli**. One stimulus that was studied is love. These studies have proven that when a person feels love, a network of a dozen brain regions are working

together to create these feelings. According to a *Scientific American* article about love, “the network releases neurotransmitters and other chemicals in the brain and blood that create the sensations of attraction, arousal, pleasure... and obsession.” This is just one more piece of evidence that proves that romantic love is a biological concept.

Although we can all agree that love has a very important place in our culture, its roots are biological rather than cultural. We only need to consult science and history to find proof. The historical and scientific evidence is **emphatic**: humans evolved to feel romantic love as a way to help the species survive, and the impulse to love still exists in the human brain today. Those who have experienced romantic love will probably agree: it is not only real, but it is one of the most amazing things about being human. To claim that love is only a cultural concept is to diminish the importance of love in the history of the human species.

Counterpoint: Romantic Love Is a Fairy Tale

Some people truly believe that romantic love is a biological phenomenon. They may point to anecdotal evidence about their parents, or even their own relationships, as proof. But the logical thinkers of the world know that anecdotal evidence is not scientific proof. The people who believe in romantic love may also point to **dubious** scientific studies where brain scans “prove” that when humans feel romantic love they respond biologically. These studies are not reliable; even many scientists are skeptical about their results. According to Dr. Sally Satel of the American Enterprise Institute, activity in a small area of the brain called the insula has been used to prove that one can both “love” one’s smartphone *and* feel “disgust” for a former political candidate who was involved in a scandal. How can activity in one area of the brain prove both love and disgust? How can scientists tell that the person doesn’t love the former political candidate and feel disgust at the smartphone? The only thing that these brain scan studies prove is that science can be twisted to support whatever the scientist or writer believes.

Other attempts to prove that romantic love is real have also failed. One reason for this is that love is not easily defined. It means different things to different people. Think about some of the biological concepts that can be measured, such as hormone levels or blood type. These concepts can be measured with specific words and numbers. Now try to define love with words or numbers. It’s not so easy! Even other emotions are more concrete than love. If you ask a group of people what anger or frustration feels like, you will probably get the same answer from most of them. If you ask a group of people what romantic love feels like, you will probably get many different answers. The fact that love can’t be defined proves that it is not a real biological concept, but rather an invention of our culture.

It is understandable that many people believe in romantic love. The concept is so entwined with human culture that it is difficult to tell that it is a cultural invention rather than a biological phenomenon. Romantic love is **depicted** in almost every childhood fairy tale, and it continues to frame the narrative of our lives all the way into adulthood. When you examine the history of the human species, it makes sense that culture evolved this way. Families are at the root of the organization of human civilization, and as humans became

more organized, they promoted the idea that there was some force holding these family units together. That force, of course, is romantic love. Because the family unit was advantageous for human survival, it became a way of life. Then the romantic love that held the parents together became a centerpiece of human culture.

Another reason that romantic love is so prominent in human culture is that people are in love with *the idea* of falling in love. One of the things that makes the human brain special is its ability to create a fantasy world that may be very different from a person's tangible surroundings. Our fantasies have very real implications for our behavior in daily life. For example, if we dream of living in a nice house and driving a fancy car, this motivates us to work hard, so we can afford to buy those things in reality. Similarly, we imagine a partnered relationship that fits the concept of "romantic love" and then we try to create that relationship in the real world. Just as the importance of a nice house and a fancy car is dictated by culture, the same is true of romantic love. The world around us tells us that a partnered relationship is something to strive for, and we internalize that idea as the truth.

The fairy tale of romantic love is one that we all want to believe. Who wouldn't want to live in a world where we all have one true mate who will complete us and make us happy? But wanting to believe in the stories of Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty doesn't make them true. In reality, the concept of romantic love is one that comes from our culture, rather than some biological need to find a romantic partner.

Annotations

Romantic Love: Reality or Myth? (THINK QUESTIONS)

1. What connection do both passages make between the idea of romantic love and the importance of the family unit in human society? Support your answer with details from the text of both passages.
2. Use details from both passages to explain how both writers use examples of romantic love in literature.
3. Identify the basic sources that both passage writers use in their arguments about romantic love. Use specific details from both passages in your answer.
4. Use context to determine the meaning of the word **dubious** as it is used in "Romantic Love Is a Fairy Tale." Write your definition of "dubious" here and explain how you arrived at it. Then check your inferred meaning in a print or digital dictionary.
5. Remembering that the Latin prefix "de" means "of" and the Latin root "pict" means "image, picture," use the context clues provided in the passage to determine the meaning of **depicted**. Write your definition of "depicted" here and explain how you arrived at it. Consult a dictionary or thesaurus to clarify the precise meaning.

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Both authors mention sources they used for their pieces. As far as you can judge, do the sources appear to be relevant, and do they appear to provide accurate and sufficient information? How does your analysis of the sources affect your opinion of the persuasiveness of each essay? Use specific details from the pieces in your response.
2. Choose one example in either piece of weak or irrelevant evidence and analyze what makes this evidence weak. How does the writer's choice to include this evidence affect your overall impression of the piece, and why? Use specific details from the piece to support your answer.

WRITING PROMPT

Both pieces agree that the phenomenon of romantic love is very powerful in human experience. If it's true that romantic love is a fairy tale, how do you account for love's power in human civilizations from ancient times to the present day? Use evidence from both pieces to support your response, including how the writers use certain connotations to persuade readers.