

Role of Love in the Evolution of Cognition

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Abstract

Novel features emerge from changes in the state and complexity of matter. Physical, chemical and biological principles govern these changes. Brain is the most complex matter known to humans. It emerged over 500 million years ago and has now evolved into its most complex form: the human brain. During this time, as more complex neural structures evolved, novel cognitive capacities have emerged. Through this process, adaptation and natural selection have prompted the evolution of animals with larger brains. On the other hand, large brains need to continue to grow for several years after birth requiring maternal care and love. The basic biological features necessary for the emergence of maternal love were gradually evolved over the course of 70 million years leading to the emergence of maternal love in the early mammals 180 million years ago. The expansion of brain structures responsible for maternal love has prompted the emergence of other social emotions and cognitions such as empathy, trust, romantic love, mystical love, and moral cognition. In this talk I will explain the highlights of this evolutionary process that has shaped our cognitive and emotional world.

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