

BOOK REVIEW

Temporal Love: Temporality and Romantic Relationships

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Mira Moshe has previously published books, chapters and articles in the field of sociology of emotions, and showed a particular academic interest for the time dimension in various other fields: political communication, new media, etc. The book published by NOVA Publishing House in 2016, *Temporal Love. Temporality and Romantic Relationships*, is a bold and refined inquiry into the intricacies of “there-and-then” vs. “here-and-now” of romantic relationships. To our knowledge, no other academic book has so far presented the multi-faceted relationship between love and time, aiming at accounting for all instances that romantic relationships could incarnate, when faced with temporal perspectives. From this point of view, we believe to be no exaggeration in naming Mira Moshe’s book a pioneering endeavor.

The book is structured into five chapters: a first general approach to the temporal orientation of romantic relationships, and then two binary oppositions based on two time dimensions: synchrony (there-and-then vs. here-and-now) and diachrony (“taking a break” vs. “ever and ever”).

In the first chapter, “Temporal orientation and romantic relationships”, the author makes an interesting radiography of time representation in romantic relationships, based on people’s orientation towards the future, the past, or the present. A poignant insight into understanding how people perceive relationships on the time continuum is suggested by the comparison with a “Doppler effect”: the emotional responses to future events are much higher than those associated with past events. At the same time, the author shows the other side of the coin: the past becomes much more prominent when people “get stuck” in a (usually traumatic) past event.

The “here-and-now” dimension of romantic love, covered in the second chapter, delves into the hedonistic aspects of love and sex. The topic of “here-and-now” in the digital era raises sensitive questions of behavior, moral, and sense of reality. Building on Manuel Castells’ concept of “timeless time”, the author argues for a complex relationship between time and space in the virtual era, which reveals new concepts: “telepresence” or “tele-existence”. As opposed to the myth of measuring the intensity of romantic love through time duration, the “here-and-now” avatars of romantic relationships become an expression of power, in the sense that each individual can picture himself or herself outside of the romantic dyad, without losing the sense of purpose, meaning, or reason of being.

Delving into a (re-lived) past, the “there-and-then” type of fantasy is a form of projection that reshapes the past anew, with the purpose of either creating a sense of continuity in a person’s individual history, or reevaluating past events thorough the lens of a paradoxical need for “a better past”. In the third chapter, Mira Moshe analyzes the intricacies of “there-and-then” in romantic relationships, either within a current relationship or with regards to past partners. An interesting focus of the chapter cast various shades of light on the representations of secrets in love relationships.

The title of chapter four, “Taking a Break: Romantic Relationships, Love, and the Notion of Time-Out”, is self explanatory for what Moshe proposes in this section: what are the implications of temporal discontinuities in romantic relationships? In this chapter, time is discussed not only as a “rhythmic flow”, but in connection with space as well, “taking a break” becoming “needing space” and vice versa. Most of the time, the temporal discontinuity in a romantic relationship is viewed as a coping mechanism with either betrayal, anger, or other forms of intense negative emotions. Building on the theory of communication privacy management, Moshe reveals the important role the notion of “boundary” plays in the dialectic “my time” – “our time”. Taking a break is not necessarily discontinuity in the relationship,

but could be fragmentation of time as well, devoting time to the relationship, as well as maintaining private time.

The last chapter is a kind of mirror of the previous one. It deals with the never-ending continuity of time in relationship: love for ever and ever. In contrast with chapter four, this section is an invitation to reflect on the projection of happiness and well-being. When living in a future fairytale story, couples tend to imagine a never-ending happiness. However, reality of time passing shows the limits of this projection. The chapter concludes with the perspective of the romantic relationship as a symbolic shield to the threat of death.

Overall, Moshe's book on Temporality and Romantic Relationships is a well documented academic endeavor, circumscribing a very rich and fascinating domain of the sociology of emotions. The author builds on theoretical and empirical evidence from previous studies, framing a full radiography of romance from the perspective of time passing. The reader is automatically transported in the realm of rises and falls of romantic relationships, with their inherent projections and making-believes. At the same time, the author offers an entire vocabulary of romance, by either underlining key concepts of the academic field, or creating new, suggestive ones. Thus the book could fulfill an articulation function for the field, by providing the academic terms to talk about romantic love, time, and the need for happiness.

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