

Reaction to an ambivalent object

Definitions of terms, propositions of the thesis

Mgr. Jeronym Klimes
(email: jeronym.klimes@seznam.cz)

Preface

When I started to think deep about all the matter coupled with pair interactions, I was very often surprised by the fact, that there are some direct and indirect proportions in relationships. The direct proportions are well known form behaviorism: The more jolly, physically attractive, etc. we are, the more friends, success, etc. we have. Nevertheless there are other, more interesting reactions of others, which can be described as an indirect proportion: The more we love someone, the less he or she loves us. The more we strive to be with him or her, the less he or she want to spend time with us and the other way round. Why do we love most those who does not love us? Why do we feel we cannot fall in love with them, who profoundly love us? Why it is usual that there is one who loves more and the other is not so deeply involved in almost any couple. Which laws govern these regularities?

Yes, an indirect proportion - the less of one thing, the more of another or the more of the first, the less of the other - is really fascinating function in interpersonal interactions. It is quite simple from the mathematical point of view, but almost incapable in our live when we want to have others to love us.

The following text depicts an attempt to understand these laws from the point of view of theory of reaction to an ambivalent object. Ambivalent objects are in bigger or lesser amount almost all people we meet. Ambivalent or crosscurrent tendencies keep social balance or homeostasis. It is perhaps the reason why they are so strong, simple and ubiquitous. My thesis is though not only about the nature of an ambivalent object, but first of all about our reaction to an ambivalent object and processes which are induced by our interactions with it.

It is not easy to translate large parts of my thesis for me, and therefore I want to just show you a few basic principles and conclusions which can be derived from the theory. I will be happy to answer your further questions. You will find my emails above.

I also think a lot about any experimental or empirical prove of the theory. In other words I am looking for any possibility of a stay at any English or German speaking university where the scholars are interested in similar matter and think that I can be of some help for them.

Propositions of my thesis

In my thesis, I strive to depict and to prove a theory of a reaction to an ambivalent object. The theory is quite simple in principle, but it can be sophisticatedly elaborated to explain many phenomena of interpersonal interactions. I want only to list the phenomena explained by the theory and to defile the very basics of the theory and its elementary terms in this very short introduction.

The phenomena which can be explained by the theory of ambivalent object:

- ✂ emotional and social lability and attempts to stop them by force
- ✂ inveterate void feelings
- ✂ loosing sense of being and activities
- ✂ fall-down of sexual and other needs after establishing of a relationship
- ✂ upraise of systematic asymmetry of needs in a pair
- ✂ aptitude to manipulation a its consequences
- ✂ unwritten rules of manipulation
- ✂ aptitude to manipulation with experiences
- ✂ resulting rigidity and fear of an (irreversible) change
- ✂ tendency to seek the states of emotional arousal and different methods of autostimulation
- ✂ motoric restlessness by neurotics
- ✂ typology of relationships
- ✂ lawfulness of a progress of a relationship with an ambivalent object from courtship to a break up or a divorce
- ✂ aptitude to black-and-white seeing of the world according to the rule "do-or-die"
- ✂ fixation to one person and disguising others
- ✂ aptitude to extremism
- ✂ Oedipal complex as a consequence of either-or approach to parents
- ✂ broken-down self-conscious and aptitude to punishing of self
- ✂ feelings of innate exceptionality and reactive egocentrism
- ✂ incapability to own change his or herself
- ✂ ego-related threefold motivation (motives to avoid failure instead of motives to succeed, need of approval or recognition, pyramidal instead of parallel value system)
- ✂ aptitude to induration and ruthlessness in behavior
- ✂ blindness to real needs and nature of others

- ⌘ degenerated and effete expressing of needs
- ⌘ incapability to distinguish negative feelings
- ⌘ heredity of ambivalent behavior by means of learning mechanisms
- ⌘ psychosomatic aspects

There are further elaborated some therapeutic observations and general progress of therapy in the complete Czech version of the thesis.

Definition of an ambivalent object

An ambivalent object is a person (but not only human), who activates in a subject two opposite or antagonistic emotions or needs. I suppose two basic needs in my thesis. Firstly a generalized tendency to avoid contact with an object, which I use to call it according to context aversion or fear. Secondly a generalized tendency to approach an object, which I call appetency. These two tendencies are closely connected with proximity, i.e. physical or psychic distance between an object and a subject, and with amount of emotional arousal. We can easily imagine that the closer we stay to a chasm or any dangerous object the higher emotional arousal we experience. On contrary we also experience higher emotional arousal when we have to say good buy to loved person.

The dependencies among emotional arousal, distance and quality of emotional experiences can have different form. There is shown the most typical form of firm relationships at the following chart:

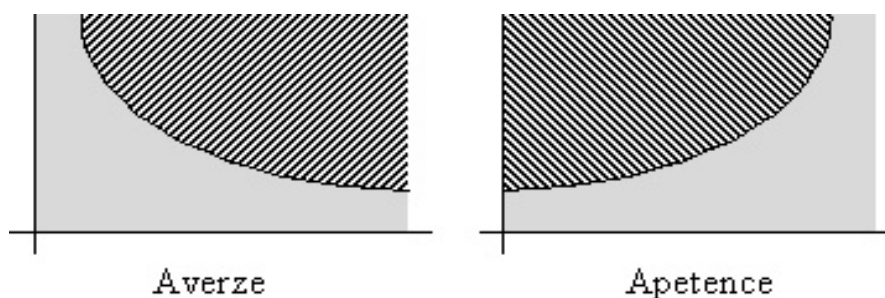


Chart 1 – Areas of pleasant and unpleasant experiences

Caption: Hatched areas show where a person feels good. Gray areas are of unpleasant experiences.

As was said higher, an ambivalent object activates both these needs, so we can place these two charts over one another and we get the following chart.

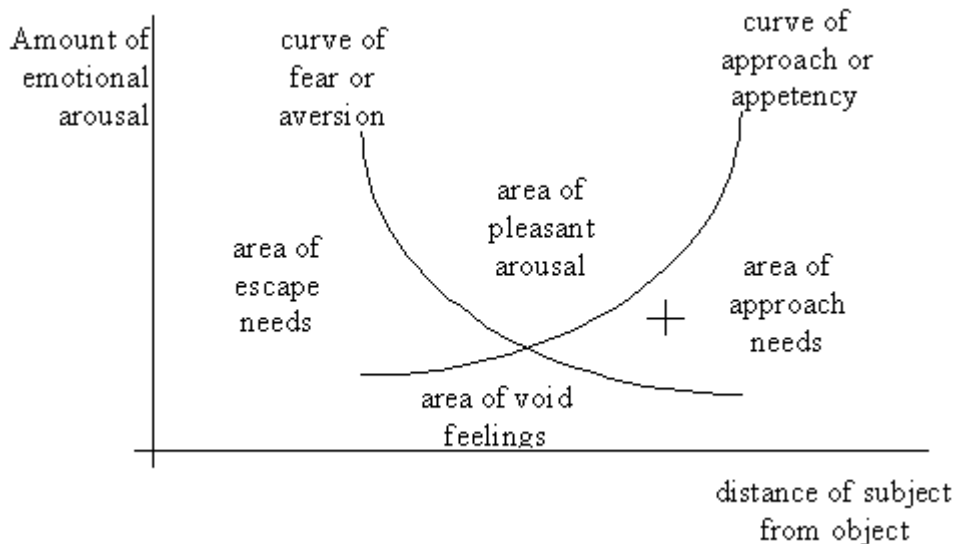


Chart 2 – Areas of pleasant and unpleasant experiences

Caption: The two curves delimit four areas of different psychic state with prevailing feelings. We can mark actual state of a subject by a cross when we know his or her psychic distance from the object and amount of emotional arousal.

The shape and position of these two curves are not stable in time. They are moving and changing. Let us have an example. The child is watching a mime actor with a white face at the street. This actor activates in the child a lot of curiosity (appetency) and fear (aversion) at the same time and therefore he is an ambivalent object to the child. The distance from which the child will observe the mime is the balance point at the crossing of the two curves. Suddenly the mime frightened the child by some gesture. The child ran away and stopped in some bigger distance. The balance point moved. It means the curves have changed too.

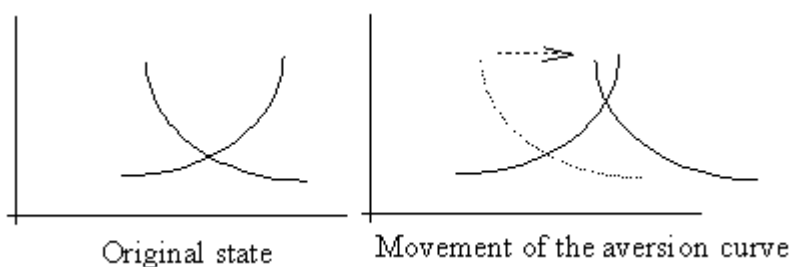


Chart 3 – The aversion curve's movement away from an ambivalent object

Caption: As the aversion curve moved a bit aside, the balance point moved also further from object, and toward higher emotional arousal and this way the area of pleasant feelings has diminished and the area of void feeling has expanded.

We can see the basic consequences of reaction to ambivalent object even at this very simple example.

The child is much more concerned with mime now. An ambivalent object draw our attention much more than common objects and we feel as to be much more attracted to them.

The child pays much less attention to other people and thing around him now. Interactions with an ambivalent objects leads to narrowing of spectrum of interests, loosing friends and social

contacts and to some general simplification of a subject's personality.

The child is more emotionally aroused, (must be to feel good). As such emotional arousal is not long-term maintainable, chronic ambivalent interaction lead to feeling of void or nothingness most of the time.

The child feels good only in narrow precise distance from the mime, he can go nor closer neither farther. People affected by interactions with ambivalent objects, loose their flexibility. They are unable to establish and keep firm partner relationship; they manipulate to force others to be in a smaller area of pleasant feelings.

Changes in needs given by crossing over the curves

It was clearly proofed that there is big difference in sexual needs before and after establishing of a partnership by hysterical women. They show big sexual appetency before entering the relationship and after that, we can see a big sink of sexual needs in the marriage, which is much lower then in the control group. The situation is depicted at the following chart.

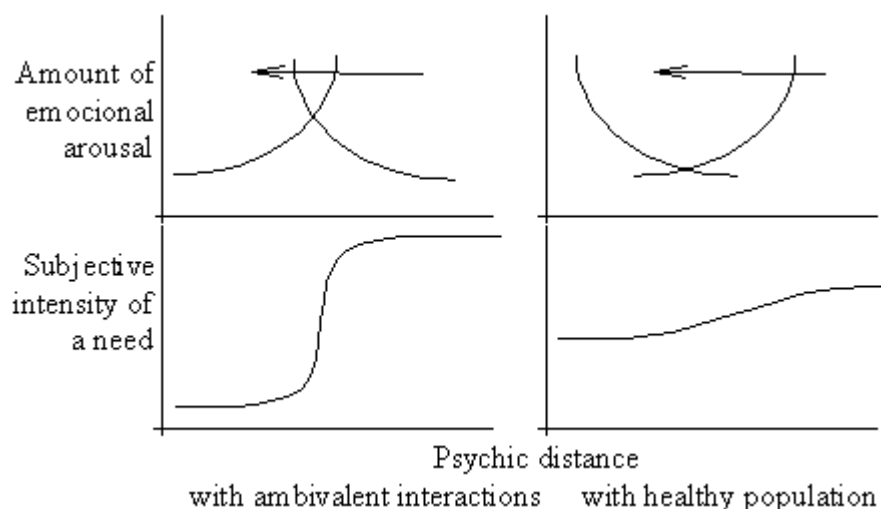


Chart 4 – A fall-down of needs given by approaching of an object

Caption: There are shown two cases in two columns. The first one is an ambivalent and in the second one healthy person. The arrow shows what happen by lessening psychic distance. The ambivalent (say hysterical) person will feel a sudden fall-down of his or her needs. On contrary, the needs of healthy populations remain more or less at the same level.

Border of unbearable and seven fields of resistant behavior

The area of pleasant feelings is limited at the top by a border of unbearable or too strong emotional arousal. This way we can get seven areas with can be characterized by typical behavior, which aim is to survive unpleasant present.

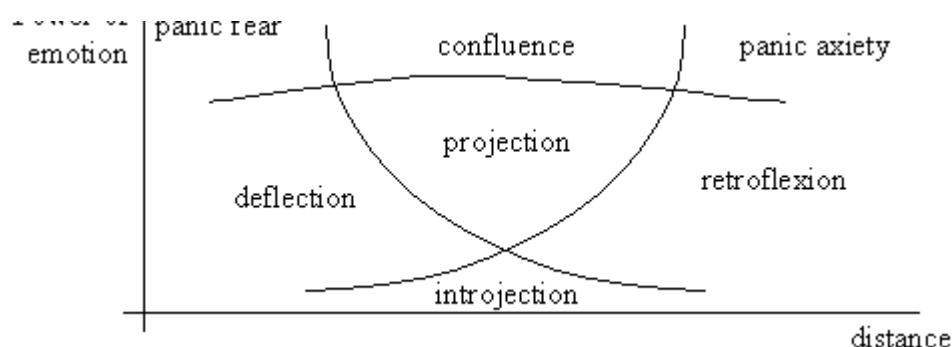


Chart 5 – Seven areas of typical ways of defensive behavior

Caption: The pairs of curves and the horizontal border of unbearable intensity of emotions define seven areas with typical defensive behavior.

All described types are typical not for temperaments, but for specific situations. It means that one person can be a deflector in one situation and retroreflector in another. For instance, a husband is deflective towards his wife, but retroreflector in relation with his mistress.

Deflector

The aim of deflective activity is an increasing of psychic or proximal distance from an object. Deflection starts by seeking and making proximal incongruences, e. g. bending sight away, ironic speech, scorn, mystifying of an object. It therefore includes all evasive activities destroying fluent and natural progress of conversation. Further all activities to avoid contact with an object - crossing the street, pretending not to have recognized the object, pretending sleep or stupidity, aversion to sex with particular person, seeking of loneliness or other deflective activities like tours of duty, incompatible hobbies (aerobic, workshop or computer), etc.

Retroreflector

Retroreflection is a counterpart to deflection. It includes all sort of behavior, which is to decreasing psychic or proximal distance from object. For instance seeking and prolonging eye and body contact, common time, talks and activities like walks, hobbies, etc. Fantasies about sex with desired person. In general there is typical seeking of alternative saturation (e. g. reading of pulp fiction) and establishing of congruence.

Introjector

The aim of an introjector is get free from idleness and life emptiness. The people and contact with them serves like a mean to achieve this aim. They are not interested in changing the distance from an object, but about arousal and interesting life. Introjector takes a swallows everything what is available. He or she does not relish or enjoy new strong impressions and attempts to supply quality by quantity. This involves adventurers of all any kind pursuing risky situations, like mountain climbing, bungee* jumping, sky surfing, etc., and partly lovers of an Italian household, typical by alternating quarrels and reconciliation. There is not necessary to replace idleness and life emptiness by extreme arousal. Introjektor strives to fill up his emptiness by absorbing attributes of others, usually interesting people. Those are people with their own life vision or aim. He admires people with strong religious conviction or another ideology. He uses to keep or visit patron parties etc.

Confluencior

Confluence is counterpart of introjection again. Confluencior overloaded by impressions and experiences, which he consider as chaos or unexpected mess. His feelings are too strong and hurting. Confluence is every activity reducing intensity of experiences. Coinfluencior does not want to change distance to people, but he rather wants to induce order to prevent conflicts.

Confluenciors use to be loner, they do not like changes, visits of people or relatives. They like order not only in things but also in relations. They exact assurances from people or set up some firm rules. They got hurt when these spoken or unspoken rules are broken. They are very

touched by canceling of appointments, etc. They use to have only few friends.

Projector

When a person sometimes gets to the area of pleasant feelings, he does not want to leave such a state and resists all what is about to destroy his well-being. It can cause partly impulses from his mind - memories, worries, his own wishes, growing tiredness, etc. Projector is always convinced he is all right and it is safer for him to ascribe these disturbers to environment or to others according to rules of projection or denial. For instance projection of tiredness: "I am not tired, but the psychologist is down.", "I am not interested in men, but they are crazy about me."

An ambivalent object in a partnership

When two people live in a partnership, then they combine and we can read many laws that govern ambivalent interactions. First typical combination is coexistence of a deflector and a retroreflector.

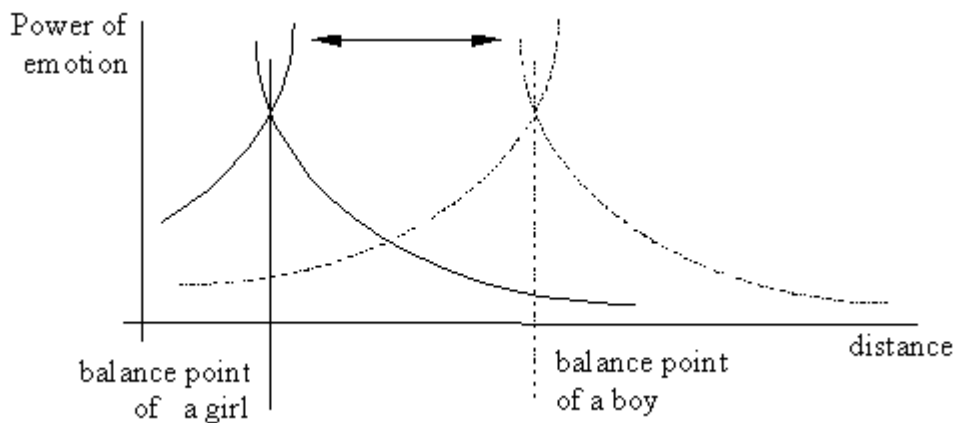


Chart 6 – Partnership of deflector (boy) and retroreflector (girl)

Caption: Chart shows a conflict combination of curve pairs. The girl wants closer relation and therefore the balance point of the boy is placed in her approach needs' area. On contrary the boy wants a looser relation and is frustrated, because the girls' balance point lays in his escape needs' area. The boy is a deflector and the girl is retroreflector in this configuration. The deflective (here boy's) behavior is typical avoiding behavior. Late incomings home, avoiding of sex, body contact, common talks, etc. The retroflective (here girl's) behavior will be marked by longing for boy (deflector), unsatisfied needs of sex, body or contact, lacking of common talks or events in general. The girl is forced to live in area of approach needs and the survival defensive mechanism is retroflexion, i.e. she satisfies her longing for the escaping boy by fantasy (reading of romantic books) or by pleasing herself anyhow. There will be a lot of reproaches and inculpations from the girl and good deal for rigidity at boy's side. This configuration leads to permanent pressure or "fug" atmosphere, which are symbolized by the arrow, but there will be no wild quarrels and dynamic harangues.

The second typical combination is coexistence of an introjector and a confluencior.

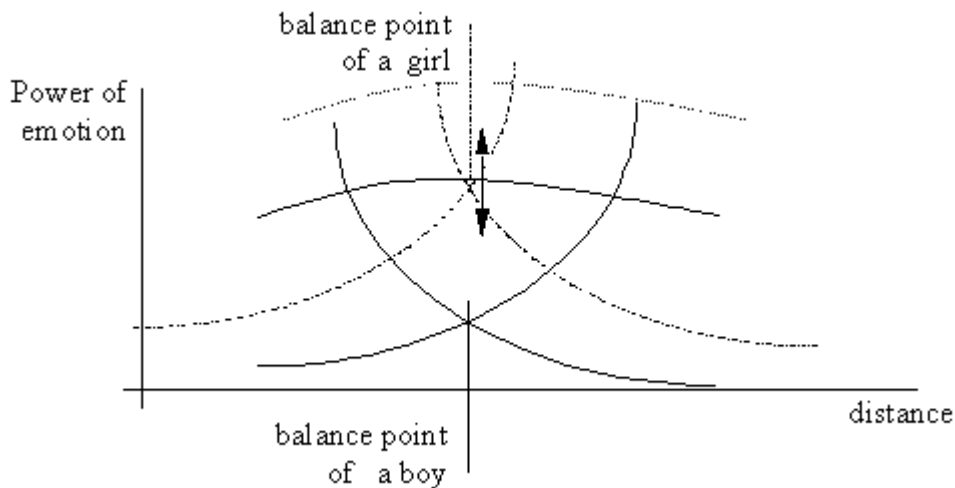


Chart 7 – Partnership of introjector (girl) and confluencior (boy)

Caption: Chart shows another conflict combination of curve pairs. The boy wants calmer relation and therefore the balance point of the girl is placed in his area of unbearable intensity, and on contrary the girl wants a more dynamic and vivid relation and suffers, because of the boys balance point lays in her void feelings' area. The boy is a confluencior and the girl is introjector in this configuration. The confluent (here boy's) behavior is typical by accenting order, regularity, laws, etc. The introjective (here girl's) behavior will be marked by longing for adventures, changes, dynamics, experiments or arousal of any sort. There will be a lot of wild "irrational" arguments and provocation form the girl, as she suffers from boredom and void feelings, and good deal of indolence or emphasis of regularity and order at boy's side. This configuration leads to wild quarrels and dynamic harangues, which are symbolized by the arrow, but there will be no so much reproaches as in the former case.

These two cases combines in praxis and so we often encounter coexistence a deflector-confluencior with an introjector-retrofactor.

Manipulations and instrumental approach to people

The word "manipulation" is derived form Latin word manus - a hand - and suggests that a manipulator handle others like instruments or unanimated things. Such approach is regress form developmental point of view. There are two main sources of such approach to people. First of all these people have very low self-conscious and therefore they suppose that nobody would love them such as they are. Secondly, the area of pleasant feelings of those people is very narrow and small and it is very difficult to keep others in this special configuration.

Let us imagine a hysterical woman who needs very high amount of attention. Such amount of attention is not natural and not sustainable all the time and therefore her need forces her to use manipulation to increase man's natural amount of attention. She arranges arguments, gives him occasions for jealousy, etc. and man's attention is suddenly much more concerned with her as she wished. No man would provide her such attention voluntarily in common situation. He is forced to by her manipulation. He is just a thing or instrument for her to get what she needs.

So we can define manipulation as an attempt to by-pass other person consciousness and free will, i. e. to consider him to be just a thing without consciousness and free will for satisfying manipulator's needs. It is clear that tendency to manipulations is safe way to extreme loneliness in the world where are no people but only things.

There are many ways of manipulation, but the most common ones are reproaches, needless arguments, intrigue and machinations. All these serve to increase emotional arousal or to adapt psychic distance from a chosen object.

Some rules of manipulation:

- ⌘ Weaker is who shows (especially positive) emotions, who apologizes, who express need, ask, sympathy, weakness etc.
- ⌘ Universal answer to any request or wish of other is "No!". The best way is to do the opposite of his or her need.
- ⌘ The duller and weaker is who was bitten, who is the dupe, who rest upon promise of other. For instance the weaker dumb is who waited at an appointment but not that, who voluntarily did not come. The cuckold is deceived partner and not the deceiver. That who were faithful and who relied on love of the other feels very poorly.
- ⌘ Weakness, vulnerability, sickness are culpable and reprehensible. In Milgram's experiments the experimental persons said about the victim: "He was so stupid, that he deserved the electric shocks.
- ⌘ Man must be careful not to give more than another. Nothing is gratis or for-free.