FOUNDATIONS OF INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION
To my mother and father
with affection and appreciation
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Preface

This book is intended to provide students of interpersonal relationships with a source book that reviews, integrates, and elaborates basic material concerned with interpersonal attraction—the affectional component of social relationships. All interpersonal relationships can be characterized, in part, by the strength and nature of the affectional tie between the persons involved. The ubiquity of attraction phenomena, and the extensive data that have begun to emerge concerning its nature, antecedents, and interpersonal correlates, provided the original rationale and impetus behind the development of the book.

The title of the volume, with its inclusion of the term "foundations," was chosen not so much because I wish to imply that the chapter contributors provide answers to a series of foundational issues that, when taken together, furnish a solid base from which to erect sophisticated theories of attraction phenomena. The intention was more modest. My hope was—and is—that we have addressed ourselves to what will be regarded as a series of important—if not critical—issues and that we have provided a number of preliminary blueprints for laying such foundations and facilitating future research on attraction.

Some of the major issues addressed are: (a) the nature, measurement, and antecedents of various forms of attraction; (b) the similarities and differences in attraction when studied within beginning as compared to long-term relationships; (c) strategies for investigating attraction, especially those relating to extending the study of attraction to enduring relationships; (d) the status of the "reward hypothesis" in terms of predicting who is likely to be attracted to whom, and under what conditions; (e) the developmental, subcultural, and cross-cultural differences in the nature and role of attraction in social relationships; (f) the behavioral correlates of attraction, including both nonverbal (for instance, eye contact) and verbal (for example, self-disclosing) behaviors; and (g) the role in attraction of factors such as similarity, social power, cognitive processes, and a person's expressions of liking and disliking toward an individual.

The contributors draw from a variety of theoretical approaches in treating these and other issues, including attribution theory, cognitive—developmental theories, reinforcement and exchange theories, role theory, social comparison theory, and several "minitheories" of social interaction. The issues, theories, and research paradigms used to study attraction are blended in the 16 chapters comprising the book which is organized in the following manner. Part I, which consists of my
introductory chapter, briefly highlights the history of attraction research, indicates
the rationale behind the organization of the book (see pages 4—5), and lays out
some central themes related to conceptualizing and researching attraction. All
persons develop attachments through social interaction, but the nature and ante-
cedents of such feelings differ depending on the age and cognitive—developmental
level of the persons involved as well as on the sociocultural context in which the
interaction takes place. Part II is devoted to detailing these issues. Parts III and
IV consist of a series of contributions that provide conceptual frameworks for
studying attraction. The focus of the fifth, and final, part of the book is devoted to
romantic attraction, an area of inquiry that, until recently, has received only
minimal attention by social scientists.

Several people have contributed to the development of this book, the editing of
which was for me a challenging educational experience. The contributors ex-
panded my understanding of attraction phenomena, confronted some of my
cherished ideas, and led me to broaden my conceptual outlook.

I owe my deepest debt of gratitude to Gilbert Geis, who provided me with the
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Meg and Kelly, the three of whom have not only put up with me while I was
working on the book, but also while I was not. Their responsiveness in the former
situation has increased my pleasure in working on the book; their responsiveness
in the latter situation gives my life its sustenance.

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PART I

Introduction
A Perspective on Interpersonal Attraction

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I. Introduction and Overview

The affective bases of social relationships provide the key focus of the chapters in this volume. An understanding of the magnetic qualities that attract persons to one another and the cohesive forces that bond them into social units is necessary for the development of sound comprehension of interpersonal relationships. American society can be viewed as made up of several million subgroups, which, at their most elementary level, involve two-person networks. Each grouping has its
own history, quality, and direction. Many of these two-person relationships develop and dissolve as the feelings of the interactants toward one another wax and wane. Friendships, romantic attachments, and marriages, for example, are generally sustained by the affective ties between the partners and are often set aside when such ties weaken. Social scientists have been exploring the origin, nature, and consequences of the sentiments involved in such social relationships so that each of us might better understand our own behavior and the behavior of persons with whom we interact. To this end, this volume illustrates a variety of emphases and perspectives regarding the antecedents and social consequences of attraction.

This introductory chapter sets forth the organization of the volume and presents a brief history of attraction theory and research. Conceptual, measurement, and methodological problems of attraction research are highlighted, and directions that attraction research might fruitfully pursue are indicated. The discussion of the research problems and the suggestions regarding future directions are built upon the chapters making up the volume. The reader, therefore, may find it profitable to read this chapter either as an introduction or an afterword.

A. The Goals and Organization of this Volume

This volume should enrich the attraction literature in several ways. First, its contents provide a much-needed broadened framework for understanding attraction processes. Theorists conceptualizing attraction sometimes note, in passing, the developmental, subcultural, and cultural limitations of their formulations; and researchers often insert a caveat in their reports indicating similar limitations in regard to their findings. Few theorists or researchers, however, have proceeded far with the task of adequately conceptualizing or testing the generalizability of their work beyond its initial data base, which usually involves white, middle-class, college students. Sound theories of attraction, whether they be of the broad, comprehensive type or the "mini-theory" variety, must consider the degree to which their formulations are applicable across different populations. To stimulate thinking along these lines, therefore, a series of chapters (Part II) devoted to developmental, sociological, and cross-cultural considerations in attraction immediately follow this introductory chapter.

A second goal is to bring together in a single volume several major theoretical frameworks for the study of attraction. Part III presents broad conceptual frameworks, whereas Part IV sets forth formulations focusing on relatively circumscribed sets of antecedents of attraction. It is noteworthy that each chapter in these sections assumes the hedonistic character of human behavior and builds a paradigm linking affection for others to the others' potential or actual reward value to the subject. Collectively, the chapters provide a number of contrasting approaches to understanding the nature of social rewards and offer leads to the possible solution of some of the knottier problems of reward theory (see Section VI).

The chapters, in addition, preview two other trends in attraction research that will undoubtedly gain momentum during the 1970s. The first trend is an increasing
interest in studying attraction within the context of long-term relationships (see Chapters 2—6, 10, and 16); the other is a growing concern with providing conceptual and empirical links between formerly isolated theoretical frameworks. The latter trend, evident in many chapters, is given particular prominence in the contributions by Lickona (Chapter 2), Levinger (Chapter 5), Altman (Chapter 6), Clore and Byrne (Chapter 7), Tedeschi (Chapter 9), McCall (Chapter 10), Lerner (Chapter 14), and Rubin (Chapter 16).

The third, and final, objective of this volume is to present outlines for the development of a social psychology of romantic attraction, a heretofore neglected aspect of interpersonal attraction. Part V contains two chapters dealing specifically with the manner in which love-based relationships are formed. Several other chapters (Chapters 2—6, 9, and 10) offer discussions of broad relevance to an understanding of both liking and loving and, thus, add breadth and perspective to the material presented in Part V. Until recently, no sophisticated scientific work on the social psychology of romantic attraction existed. Several forces—including things such as the “personal” nature of love, a taboo against the invasion of privacy in regard to emotionally laden feelings, and some complicated methodological problems—seem to have dissuaded investigators from attempting to employ scientific procedures to study love. Research concerned with love, especially the “passionate” variety, was also hindered, according to Walster (1971), because psychologists and funding agencies alike were reluctant to acknowledge the subject as a legitimate area of scientific inquiry. Philosophers, novelists, and poets for centuries have expounded on the nature of love, though; and sociologists provide us with some intriguing data regarding who is likely to marry whom (see Kerckhoff, Chapter 3), as well as specifying the conditions under which sexual intimacy is likely to occur (for recent reviews see Ehrmann, 1964; Cannon & Long, 1971). The recent development of measures of love, coupled with the commitment of social psychologists to the position that a scientific understanding of love is both desirable and possible, promise that progress in this area will now move forward rapidly.

B. Historical Background

The chapters in this volume draw upon half a century of theory and research. Although a few studies of attraction were conducted during the first third of the 1900s, it was not until Moreno (1934) developed the sociometric method that serious attention was paid to the topic. Moreno’s sociometry requires that each person in a group designate some subsample with which he or she prefers to associate. By examining the choices of the group, researchers can ascertain which members were chosen most frequently (that is, the popular ones) and which were chosen least frequently (in other words, the unpopular or rejected ones). A spate of studies conducted from the mid-1930s through the early 1950s concentrated on the kinds of personal and social characteristics related to popularity in groups (see Lindzey & Byrne, 1969, for a review of this material). Sociometric procedures