

“Discuss two explanations of attachment”
(18 marks)

Attachment is a close, emotional, and reciprocal bond between an infant and its primary caregiver. Freud developed the ‘Cupboard Love’ theory, Freud believed that infants have an innate desire for pleasure and this motivates the infants to seek satisfaction. The first stage is the oral stage which is from birth to 2 years; this is when pleasure is gained orally and stimulation around the mouth. This case would be the pleasure gained from breast feeding, according to Freud this is the only reason why an infant forms an attachment to the mother because she meets their need for pleasure orally and also that the mother is unique and this is the first and strongest love-object and later relationships will go well if this one does.

Freud says that attachment is based on feeding but there is evidence that goes against the idea e.g. Harlow Et Al studied the Rhesus monkeys and found that food was not the most important factor but found comfort was more important. The infant monkeys were taken from their mothers at birth and placed in a cage with 2 surrogate mothers, one mother was made of wire and the other was covered in cloth, milk was provided by the wire mother. Harlow found that the monkeys spent most time with the cloth mother and ran to them when they were frightened, this study goes against Freud theory of attachment because the most important factor for attachment was comfort

and not food. Though this study can also be criticised, it can not be generalised because the sample were monkeys, this is called Anthropomorphism; where you can not generalise animal studies to humans and also the study was unethical because it affected the monkeys whole lives and what they did later on thinking their own mother was a cloth/wire monkey.

Bowlby believed attachment was important for survival because human infants are helpless and need adults to feed, care and protect them or they will not survive. Bowlby believed that human infants are born with an innate ability to form attachments and because attachment is reciprocal. **Bowlby had 4 theories;**
Monotropic: this is the idea that the infant bonds with one special attachment figure, he believed that this was mainly the mother ('A bad mother is better than the best institution' Bowlby). Innate: Bowlby believed that attachment was innate and passed down through evolution. The result is that infants are born programmed to become attached and that adults are also programmed to attach to their infants. This is achieved by certain behaviours that encourage the bond like smiling, crying, cooing, looking cute etc. these are called social releasers which make the adult respond and bond with them. **Critical Period: Bowlby believed that there is a critical period for this attachment behaviour to occur. That is if attachment does not take place within this critical period then it will not occur at all. Bowlby believed that the critical period**

for this attachment was between 7 months and 2½ and 3 years. Internal Working Model: Bowlby also believed that the first attachment to the mother was very important for all later emotional bonds and relationships and gives the child the information about themselves to build their own personality. Bowlby's theory was very influential and led to lots of research which tried to prove and disprove the theory. But there are also a lot of problems with this research, there is no evidence to prove that attachment is innate and no gene that could be responsible for attachment behaviour. Bowlby also claims that the mother is the central attachment figure and that the father's only role is to support the mother, but research has shown that fathers have a bigger part to play in attachment than just financial support.

Schaffer and Emerson investigated Scottish infants and also found that food was not the most important factor in attachments, they found responsiveness. Researchers observed 64 infants and families from Glasgow. Detailed records were kept of primary attachment figures. They found that over half of all infants studied seemed to have a closer bond with their father as he was the person who played with, bathed the child etc. This study goes against both studies of attachment because the most important factor is responsiveness and not food nor anything else.

Overall, Freud's theory is too simplistic and not supported by research

other theories are better e.g. Bowlby's
Monotropic theory.