Attachment – Lecture Notes

Brief Recap:

- **Ethology:**
  - Lorenz and Tinbergen.
  - Imprinting and Innate behaviours:
    - Imprinting is a form of learning that occurs during a critical period **without any immediate reinforcement** and can be extremely powerful!
    - Animals imprint on the first thing they see and blindly follow them.
    - E.g. Lorenz and his ducks!

- **Bowlby – Evolutionary Theory of Attachment:**
  - Children are pre-programmed to form attachments with others as soon as they are born.

Definitions:

- **Attachment:**
  - “... a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings.” (Bowlby)
  - “... a close emotional relationship between two persons, characterized by mutual affection and a desire to maintain proximity.” (Shaffer)

- **Attachment Theory:**
  - “... many forms of psychiatric disturbance can be attributed to deviations in the development of attachment.” (Bowlby)

Harlow’s Monkeys:

- This famous study suggested that attachment is **not always likely to form from the biological need to survive**, but instead from the emotional support and comfort an attachment figure provides.

- A baby monkey attached itself to the warm, soft ‘mother’ that provided NO food or sustenance (wire mother wrapped in soft material) and **only leant across to feed from the cold, mechanical mother (wire mother with no material and a milk dispenser)** while staying within the safe embrace of the soft and warm attachment figure.