

Feminism and Love

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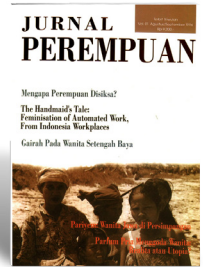
Patriarchal Relationships, Subordination and Glorification of Marriage: The Dilemma of Women across Generations in Living and Interpreting Love
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Telp./Fax (021) 2270 1689
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Naufaludin Ismail

Feminism and Love

Love is one of the most talked about topics and we are surrounded by various representations of love in our daily lives. Several works of art and literature as well as music, movies, soap operas and commercials have love as main theme. Love, as it is often narrated in romantic tales, is considered as indefinable, mysterious and beyond rational discourse. The meaning of love is held to be knowable only intuitively, at the level of feeling, and cannot be communicated in precise terms (Jackson 1999). Therefore, love is often seen as a unique personal need and a desire which is placed in the private realm. The idea of this kind of love is widely believed by society thus things that are part of social and cultural construction of love tend to be taken for granted. Meanwhile, social and cultural constructs are influencing and determining the meaning and definition of love. It can be said that there are two dominant readings of love (Grossi 2014). On the one hand love is seen in close relationship with patriarchy and heterosexuality. This is because the narrative of love is mostly associated with procreation, family, marriage and the household, as well as with monogamy and / or polygamy and loyalty. Thus for women, love is easily translated as being a wife or mother. On the other hand love is seen as not to be bound by social imperatives and constraints; on the contrary, it is related to the idea of freedom, equality and ones capability to act. In other words love is seen as a force capable of overcoming existing social barriers. Therefore for women love is considered to be liberating and empowering.

In feminist thought, the issue of love has been studied by early thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Shulamith Firestone and Ti-Grace Atkinson, feminists who criticize the role of love in perpetuating patriarchal relationships. In the 1980s, this was followed by feminists such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Audre Lorde and bell hooks who viewed love in more productive ways. According to Jackson (1999), feminist criticism of love is related to the notion that love is seen as an ideology that legitimizes women's oppression and which keeps them trapped in exploitative heterosexual relationships. In addition,

love is also seen to make women vulnerable, *not only to exploitation, but also to being hurt by men*. Feminists also see romantic love critically. This is because romantic love is central to heterosexuality and contributes to gender inequality and violence against women.

On the other hand there are also a number of feminists who view love as a form of resistance and transformation which can give women the capability to act. Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey who study the narrative of romance, argue that love retains its ability to free women from the patriarchal grip because of its "narrative" power. According to them the fusion with the love narrative allows women to facilitate the "rewriting of other spheres of life" (Grossi 2014). Moreover, the idea of queer thinkers who try to move beyond a conventional understanding of love, is also important in the discourse of love. This idea, for example, is related to dismantle the definition of love that is often associated with heterosexual sex or associated with human nature. The same goes with the dismantling of the relationship between love with marriage, family and procreation. Also important to note is that love sometimes correlates with concepts such as work, care, desire, and romance. Although often associated with romantic romance, the meaning of love is actually very broad.

Today's society has a tendency to view love as a profit-generating commodity or as a means to obtain pleasure and even subjugation and domination. Here, it is important to study feminist views on love, to look at it as an important ethical, social and / or political power with an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, JP96 discusses love in homosexual relationships, feminist experiences in romantic relationships, existence of popular culture in introducing patriarchal love values, violence in dating relationships, philosophical meaning of love, and how women experience the meaning of love. This issue encourages the deconstruction of ideological work that subordinates women in love and hopes to sharpen the feminist theoretical framework on the issue of love while finding mechanisms for change. **(Anita Dhewy)**

Abstracts Sheet

Hendri Yulius (Department of Gender and Cultural Studies, University of Sydney, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, New South Wales, Australia)

Rethinking and Queering Relationships in the Age of Same-sex Marriage: Multiplicities, Intensities, and New Potentialities

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 1-9, 1 image, 20 ref.

This essay presents a theoretical discussion, analysis, and formulation to reconfigure new meanings, potentialities and multiplicities of homosexual relationships. After a brief discussion on the rapid popularization of marriage equality as the primary goal of queer movements, an overview of queer critiques of marriage is provided. Special attention will be given to the discussion about homonormativity and the sharp criticism from queer negativity/anti-social queers. For these critiques, the subjects are encouraged to occupy an abject position, which I argue, only further depoliticize queer politics. After a critical overview of this political stance, I offer the accounts of Foucault and Deleuze to explore multiple forms of relationships beyond marital institution, focusing on the ways in which relationships are to be understood in terms of potentialities, intensities, and emergent forms and functions beyond the existing language capacities and formalized forms. This essay should, however, is not meant to be masterly or prescriptive, but rather is a modest effort to spur more critical concerns, discussions, and debates among queer Indonesians.

Keywords: queer, homosexual, marriage equality, Foucault, Deleuze, potentialities, multiplicities, relationship

Meike Lusye Karolus¹ & Laili Nur Anisah² (¹Center for Southeast Asian Social Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia & ²Jejer Wadon, Boyolali, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia)

When Female Feminists Falling in Love: Ideology, Media, and Practices

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 11-17, 20 ref.

Falling in love is a universal experience that cannot be limited by racial, religious, ethnic, or even ideologies. Female feminists also experience falling in love and being in a relationship. When falling in love, female feminists often face the tension between their consciousness holding on to feminist ideology, and their collective experience influenced by patriarchal culture. Therefore, female feminists often have to compromise and negotiate in their relationships. This paper examines the contemplative experiences of female feminists falling in love in the context of patriarchal culture by focusing on three main areas: feminist ideology, the influence of patriarchal media, and relationships in everyday lives. This research is a descriptive-qualitative paper which uses in-depth interviews with female feminists of different backgrounds in Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Jombang. Findings show that female feminists' concept about love cannot be separated from the existence of their partners, the experience and media reproduction towards the concept of love, and the practice of female feminists relations formed before a formal relationship.

Keywords: love, feminism, media, female feminist, patriarchy

Aulia Rahmawati (Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social dan Political Sciences, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia)

Romance and Femininity in Indonesian Teenage Dramas: A Transnational Post-Feminist Analysis

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 19-27, 25 ref.

Even after the rise of Indonesian feminist film directors like Nia Dinata, Mira Lesmana, Mouly Surya, Nan T Achnas and Lola Amaria, Indonesian moviegoers still flock to the cinemas to watch teenage romance dramas, many of which are badly written. This paper examines the way romance and femininity have been shaped in cinematic representation in the movies *London Love Story 2*, *Promise* and *Dear Nathan*. This paper concludes that Indonesian romance teenage dramas are entrenched with masculine power and heavily dominated spectacles in which the feminine heroines are treated as passive objects of desire whose agency and subjectivity are being stripped away. Using feminist literature on post-feminist romance cinema, the heroines in these films have mostly been constructed as independent, smart and seemingly capable to act at first, but nevertheless pursue romantic, traditional, heterosexual relationships saturated with masculine control and dominance. This paper shows that the awareness of post-feminism has become transnational, crossing geographical borders between West and East, and has influenced the production and consumption process of the popular entertainment industry, including in Indonesia.

Keywords: love, romance, teenage dramas, post-feminism

Nike Nadia (Gender Studies Program, School of Strategic and Global Studies, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia)

In the Name of Love: Power Relation and Revictimization on Sexual Violence Case in Courtship (Case Study of Court Decision)

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 29-34, 1 table, 11 ref.

This paper aims to explain the dimensions of the imbalanced power relations and revictimization that occur in rape cases by the victim's partner. Using the case study of court decisions and radical feminist theory as a tool of analysis, the author argues that the narrative 'in the name of love' used by perpetrators of sexual violence in personal relationships is another manifestation of the inequality of power relations and becomes the site of subjugation of the female body. Therefore, forms of exploitation that use a 'proof of love' narrative in cases of forced sexual intercourse in personal relationships should be identified as part of sexual violence.

Keywords: sexual violence, rape, violence in relationships, seduction, partner by consent

Bagus Takwin (Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia)

Love, Existential Project, and Truth Seeking

DDC: 305

Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 35-42, 19 ref.

This paper explains what love is by referring to the philosophical thoughts of several philosophers and the results of empirical research that have been done on the phenomena of love. It also discusses the tendency to extend love on one side, as well as narrowing and even negating love on the other. This paper takes the position that love is an existential project. Philosophically, love is seen as the continuing search for truth. As the fruit of will and sincerity of human endeavor, love has real and concrete results. In its concrete form, love is the embodiment of a mutual promise in reality; a step-by-step process presents the concrete manifestation of the statements made in that promise. This philosophical thought is corroborated by empirical studies of love that love differs from sexual passion or lust. Love can last long time, can be eternal and stay intense through a couple's efforts to care for, nurture and develop each other.

Keywords: love, existential project, commitment, influence of love

Naufaludin Ismail (Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, Indonesia)

Patriarchal Relationships, Subordination and Glorification of Marriage: The Dilemma of Women across Generations in Living and Interpreting Love

DDC: 305

Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2018, pp. 43-53, 1 table, 13 ref.

This paper focuses on the experience of women across generations living and interpreting love as part of their lives. Their experiences in living and interpreting love will be seen from two points of view, namely their romantic relationships and the institution of marriage or their family. Based on the data of six subjects of research with different backgrounds like age, marital status and sexual orientation, this paper shows that there are different perspectives on love and marriage or family institutions compared to mainstream society. The six people in question assume and believe that love or romantic relationships have a close relation with patriarchal cultural values, like men's domination, subordination and ownership if they'd agree with mainstream society's thoughts about love. They also believe that marriage is an institution that produces patriarchal cultural values that will disadvantage women if the marriage is not built on equality and fairness. These six subjects of research agree with the grand narrative of feminism that love shouldn't always be related to ownership, men's domination but instead must be liberating for women to become independent and autonomous.

Keywords: love, romantic, marriage, oppression, subordination

Love, Existential Project, and Truth Seeking

Bagus Takwin

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia
Kampus Baru UI, Depok, Jawa Barat, 16424, Indonesia

bagus-t@ui.ac.id

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Abstract

This paper explains what love is by referring to the philosophical thoughts of several philosophers and the results of empirical research that have been done on the phenomena of love. It also discusses the tendency to extend love on one side, as well as narrowing and even negating love on the other. This paper takes the position that love is an existential project. Philosophically, love is seen as the continuing search for truth. As the fruit of will and sincerity of human endeavor, love has real and concrete results. In its concrete form, love is the embodiment of a mutual promise in reality; a step-by-step process presents the concrete manifestation of the statements made in that promise. This philosophical thought is corroborated by empirical studies of love that love differs from sexual passion or lust. Love can last long time, can be eternal and stay intense through a couple's efforts to care for, nurture and develop each other.

Keywords: love, existential project, commitment, influence of love

Introduction

What is love? This question has been asked repeatedly, and the answer is still being debated. It seems like people can never agree on the meaning of love and have never come to the same definition. Some understand love in very narrow sense, like equating love with sex, others understand it more widely, like regarding love as the unifying the universe. It looks like this question is a cliché, but in fact, the issue of love is always current. People experience it uniquely, live it as a singular event so it can't be compared with other events. Every person has a special love experience. Other people's experiences, lessons from previous love, as well as the theory of love, cannot answer the question of what love is. People must experience love to know it. Then why is it categorized as and named love? If this is different, why is it designated as the same occurrence: love?

I try to explain what love is by referring to the thoughts of some philosophers and the results of empirical research that has been done about love. Before that, I aim to discuss the tendency to extend or exaggerate love on one hand, and the tendency to constrict and even negate love on the other. In my opinion, both tendencies disrupt the understanding of love and encourage people to interpret love with inadequate meanings.

Here I take the same position as Alain Badiou, that love is an existential project: an attempt to reaffirm

self-identity by building the world from a self-centered viewpoint, using a view other than the drive to survive (Badiou 2012, p. 25). Following Badiou, I also see love as a continuing search for truth. As the fruit of will and the sincerity of human endeavor, love has real and concrete results. In its concrete form, love is the embodiment of a mutual promise in reality; a step-by-step process presents a concrete manifestation of the statements made in that promise.

I take this position because it can lead us to recreate love amid the consumerist tendencies that have turned love into a traded commodity, and the hedonism that sees love as a means of gaining pleasure. Badiou's philosophy on love encourages us not to fear love or regard love as a trivial matter that does not affect life, but to see it as an effort that moves us to explore other things and differences, which ultimately leads us away from the obsession with ourselves. The concept of love according to Badiou presents us with an understanding that love is not a contract between two narcissists, nor is it fate or something that has been determined by outside forces. For Badiou (2012), true love is a long-lasting, sometimes painful victory; victory over obstacles built by time, space and the world.

Badiou's view of love also states that marriage is not the end of love; instead, it could even be the beginning of love. This view differs from the romantic view of the

theater that love culminates in marriage; as if "love" has been accomplished, and is finished and complete with marriage. Furthermore, according to Badiou, firmness and struggle are needed in the "adventure" of love. Love is a tough adventure, in the sense that it contains elements of adventure, containing both surprises and risks; and requires persistence, perseverance and loyalty. Love does not yield to the first, second, third, and so on, nor does it stop at the first, second, third, and so on.

The love in Badiou's philosophy is more than a relationship between two people. Badiou even applied his ideas about love to politics. He sees love as a way of limiting identity politics, and "integrating the widest distinction" in a kind of common life that allows real equality. Politics in the frame of thought of love is different from the reactionary politics that always defend its own group values, imposing one particular identity as the only possible one. Seen in a wider scope, Badiou's view of love is a perspective that promotes multiculturalism, while demonstrating his support for a secular state where people of all faiths, cultures and ethnicities can live together. Like the love that allows people to see the world from the point of view of two rather than one, adequate politics can also see the world from multiple perspectives rather than just one point of view.

The concept of love proposed here opposes the view of "love" that is hegemonized by the patriarchal system or social system that places men as primary power holders and dominating society. "Patriarchal love" tends to place men as the holder of authority, as the father who heads the family, while the woman as the one who is being controlled, as a wife or mother who is rigidly restricted by male dominant rules and social norms. This concept of love is also against the notion of love being reduced to sex. Love is not determined by sexual relations, overcomes sexuality, and frees people from sexual limitations. This concept of love also opposes the tendency of people to constantly "fall in and out of love" or "change love" for the sake of freedom. Love does involve, even requires freedom, equality and agency. With freedom people can commit and keep commitments. Without freedom, we cannot survive the forces outside of ourselves that can make us break the commitment. Without equality, an intersubjective connection between two people cannot take place. Without agency, subjective decisions that can be accounted for cannot be made.

The discussion about love is important for two reasons. First, the notion of love today is reduced to a kind of relationship that must be profitable, risk free, and can be engineered just like people do business. The

reductionist definition eliminates the meaning of love. It takes an explanation and understanding of love that can cope with the reduction of concept or practice of love into a kind of efficient shared market transactions, in which both individuals remain free and autonomous but only reap the benefits of relationships and deserve to be abandoned when unprofitable. Why must the notion of reducing love to this "trade relationship" be avoided? The answer to this question lies in the second reason below.

Love is the most powerful antidote to the selfish tendencies that dominate the modern world and our greatest hope to bridge the gap between others and ourselves. An important impact of this love can be obtained as long as love is not understood only as a mutually beneficial exchange, or is not considered a pre-calculated investment of its profit. Love takes us to the main areas of experience and understanding of differences, and, basically, leads us to the idea that we can experience the world from different perspectives. In the face of a contemporary world that almost every time puts us in the face of different people and different perspectives, experiencing, realizing and understanding the differences tangibly to finally see the world from a variety of different views is very much needed.

Expansion-Refinement of Meaning and Rejection of Love

The definition of love that is too broad often makes the meaning of love blurry. It is difficult for people to express firmly and clearly what is actually called love. On the other hand, narrowing the meaning of love, such as romantic love, *eros*, or *ludus*, even equating it with sex as it is contained in the sense of *make love*, also makes people lose the significance of love. This is a problem because it makes it difficult for people to understand love. In fact, many of those who have been disappointed in the experience of sex have concluded that love is either absent or too broad so that its meaning is insignificant.

There is indeed a basis for the expansion and narrowing of the meaning of love. The extension of love that we find in Ancient Greece was carried out by the Empedocles (5th century BC), which states that there are two main principles as well as the main elements working in the universe, love (*philia*) and hate (*neikos*). Love contains the power to unite the contents of nature and produce harmony, while hate contains the power to separate, destroy and produce divisions (Bertens 2001). These two forces combine with the four natural elements consisting of earth, water, air and fire, resulting in variations and dynamics in the universe.

Narrowing the meaning of love can be traced in the English language. The word love comes from the word "lufu" in old English, which means to desire. This meaning is similar to the meaning of the word "lubh" in Sanskrit. Looking at the two words, love seems to be understood in a narrow sense. In Latin, we can also find love in the narrow sense in the word "lubere", which means to make happy or give satisfaction. In practice, the meanings of these three words are referred to and displayed, but there are also those who seek to deepen and broaden the word "desire", "make happy" or "satisfy" by trying to explore their role in life. We can read about these efforts in old texts about sex like Kamasutra or books about *Tantra*.

In the treasure trove that is modern philosophy, we find also contradictions about the meaning of love, as well as about the absence of love. We start with the most extreme deliberation of Friedrich W Nietzsche, which is widely interpreted as an expression of rejecting love. This is also related to his attempt to reject the philosophy of Socrates and Platon. In the book *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche (2001) asserts that what people call love is none other than a form of egoism that is covered up with an expression of pretentious care or pretending to be willing to sacrifice. Basically, everyone is driven by the desire to gain power. Romantic relationships are at their core relationships about power. Those who engage in romantic relationships seek to control the person who they call their beloved. Everyone is trying to control the desires of others, and this is very evident when it comes to love. Love in Nietzsche's view is another form of slavery, even the most severe form of slavery. In a love relationship, people want to control the desires of others, not just to control their body and mind. The desires that form the basis of the will are the most vital part of a human. Controlling someone's desires means to take control of the whole person, to take control of all their activities and life. A romantic relationship demands a person to direct his passion towards a loved one, demanding soul, body, and life of the person involved, unconditionally, without considering any other options. Thus, it can be interpreted further that for Nietzsche, love is the most extreme form of totalitarianism.

Nietzsche, it seems, misidentifies egoism or narcissism as love. (Or perhaps he was discussing egoism or narcissism that people often regard as love). More than that, he does not seem to believe that people can transcend the will of their gratification, nor break free from their own perspective. His view of love is limited by his belief in the inevitable domination of the will of power over men. He insists that whatever happens, every

relationship is a power relationship. If in reality there are people who are able to understand the world using different views, using two perspectives rather than one perspective in understanding the world, still if we refer to Nietzsche, the relationship will be judged as a relationship of power, slavery and totalitarianism. If we follow Nietzsche's way of thinking in *The Gay Science*, what is supposed to happen in this world is that people become more hostile, move away from each other, diminish and eventually become extinct. But the fact remains that we can still find people living together, there are still people who love each other in the sense of understanding the diversity of different viewpoints. That there are many people who build relationships with others on the basis of the will to rule and control the desires of others does not mean there is no love or love is impossible.

Freud presents a more concrete thought than Nietzsche. According to Freud, humans are basically driven only by two motives: the instinct of life or *eros* and the instinct of death or *thanatos*. The basic principle that is innately biological is the principle of pleasure. People behave in a certain way to gain pleasure and avoid pain. The mechanism that works the human psyche is the reduction of tension. Eating, drinking, sex, work and so forth is a manifestation of efforts to reduce tension. With that foundation, love is understood as a process of reducing tension. Freud reduces love to mere sex with *eros* as its driving force. There is no unconditional love or pure love. Love according to Freud is based on physical needs, a need based on instincts that want to get immediate gratification. Ultimately, love is only erotic gratification and in extreme sexual acts, love is also peppered by the destructive impulses of *thanatos*.

Love, according to Freud (2010), is a phenomenon of overstatement of sexual nature, where the loved ones are unconsciously regarded as objects free from criticism and all their characteristics are valued higher than people who are not loved. If sensual tendencies are suppressed or set aside, an illusion is created, where the 'object' becomes so loved because of the spiritual benefit, although this benefit originates from its sensual charm. According to Freud, love is an illusion. The judgment that the loved one's worth is higher than what it is supposed to be is the result of a falsehood. The idealization of the object of love that results in excessive judgment is a projection of the judgment of one's own self, a transfer of narcissism (love of one's self-image) to another object. The propulsion is a narcissistic libido (psychic energy). People who are in love treat the object of their love in the same way as they treat their own ego, so that when

people fall in love, a large amount of narcissistic libido bursts into the object. The object serves as a substitute for the unreachd and unrealistic ideal image of one's ego. According to Freud, this circular way of transferring narcissism through projection on other objects, with the aim of easing tension and gaining pleasure, is based on the sympathy of love and other phenomena valued as noble, such as altruism and heroism. People love certain objects because of the image of the perfection of the ego they want to achieve, and then it becomes something they must gain this way as a means to satisfy their narcissism.

Freud considers love to be the same as sexual intercourse. This equation is problematic because in reality we can see a difference between love and sexual intercourse. We need to differentiate between these two things. When it comes to sex, people connect with themselves through the mediation of others. There, people find pleasure with the help of others. Meanwhile, when it comes to love, the presence of others is important; the others are important to themselves as well, not simply a tool for finding pleasure. In love, one tries to approach the other and the individuals go beyond themselves, beyond the narcissistic impulse. The nature of love is that people try to reach the other side, and aim to take their loved ones with them; not as a place of diversion or projection of his narcissistic libido. That difference can be observed in reality in long lasting, loving relationships of love between couples until death parts them. The partners remain faithful, take care of and understand each other, until they can no longer engage in sexual activity.

Many thoughts about love essentially reject love or equate love with lust, passion, physical pleasure or experimentation and exploration of possible acquisition of pleasure from the body. Then there are those who reduce love to a derivation of other driving forces, such as power, profit gain, bargaining according to economic law, negotiation based on social status and material quantity, as well as the embodiment of the stimulus of aggression, which is more acceptable to and enjoyed by society. Those opinions have gained considerable support even though they are not generally accepted opinions in various societies.

Love as defined above results in people equaling indulgence, sexual desire and a loss of sensitivity with adequate love. The reduction of love to be limited by the body, the desire to satisfy one's instincts or to gain more power makes people blind to the wider possibilities that love offers. This reduction stands in the way for the

power of love to build civilization and a better culture for human life. This understanding of love often results in control, exploitation, attenuation, ridicule, and suffering in the name of love. When I look at these conditions, I agree with Alain Badiou who says that love is threatened. Badiou (2012), quoting Rimbaud, affirms, "Love needs to be recreated."

Understanding Love Sufficiently

We can learn from Karl Jaspers who opposed Nietzsche on the human ability to foster intersubjective relationships, including building love relationships. Humans, in their existence, have freedom in the sense that there is a potential for freedom. As potential, new freedoms are meaningful if actualized. Moreover, freedom is also meaningful only if it is presented before necessities, in the presence of various obstacles, barriers and restraints, before bondage (Jaspers 2003). A man is only truly free if he can display discretion under any circumstances, including in togetherness with other human beings. This means, a liberating shared life or an intersubjective togetherness can be lived by humans, as well as an unobtrusive love affair.

Here, love is understood as the manifestation of human freedom in fostering relationships with others. Therefore, love is not something that has already been made; it isn't something we are born with. Love, like humans, is concrete. This means that love always comes in a concrete and real form, namely in the actions of humans manifesting their freedom. Love, just like life, is the result of struggle, achievement and always needs to be taken care of by those who display it. Love is not a commodity. It flows in the groove of time, can stay alive if taken care of and can also wither and die if ignored.

We can also learn about love from Alain Badiou, by reviving the thinkers of passionate love, from Plato, Kierkegaard, de Beauvoir to Proust, Lacan, and Beckett. Badiou created a new narrative about love in the face of the modern 21st century. Badiou (2012) invites us to see love as an adventure, an amazing endeavor that forces us to explore other things and differences that ultimately lead us away from being obsessed with ourselves.

For Badiou (2012), love is a situation that allows humans to become subjects and reach the truth. Subjects here need to be understood as potential as well. Humans are not necessarily subjects, but through the pursuit of reaching a well-desired image accompanied by uncompromising faith and loyalty. This image must also contain the idea of becoming a good influence for others,

and—if realized—to be concrete, then its influence plays an important role to improve the welfare of others. Love as an encounter and the effort to live together between two individuals requires people to understand plurality and unity at once: two positions of experience, in one humanity. Living in togetherness without losing its one's own distinctions, achieving common good, producing renewal and transcending the world—this is love.

Love causes people to overcome time, face uncertainty, avoid treachery, resist temptation, remain faithful in both joy and distress, persevere in blessings and sufferings and remain united for an indefinite period. Two people who love each other do not become one, they are still two separate entities. Everyone in love bears two people in all things, unlimited, and forever. According to Badiou (1996) in *"What is Love?"* love is one in two towards the infinite, starting with a chance encounter between two people, an event that permanently transforms two individuals, challenging them to see the world from the point of view of two people (Badiou 2012). For Badiou, 'one into two points of view' is the most important transfiguration of love.

By engaging in love sincerely and faithfully, transcending the differences of two people, referring to humanity and overcoming diversity without abolishing it, a person can become a subject. The commitment that is protected and maintained by two partners on the basis of belief in their ability to be together in any kind of situation will in time become the truth. "I love you" which also means "You and I can be together in this life, always and forever" is a statement that acts as a kind of hypothesis that will be proven in timeless relationships. The proven hypothesis becomes a thesis, a statement that shows the taking of human positions as subjects into a singular and universal truth. It should also be pointed out that not all couples that are together until death parts them do so because of love. People can also stay together for other reasons, such as traditions and environmental pressure, considerations of profit and loss, threats from either party or sacrifices.

It is proven that a love commitment contains several important meanings; love is the embodiment of human desire based on the desire to develop the world. Love is also the result of understanding the freedom of life together, the actualization of the human potential as a subject, the actualization of freedom. Love is something concrete, built by perseverance, integrity, loyalty and the ability to endure suffering. Furthermore, love is a manifestation of human effort to go beyond himself, beyond the present and here, beyond the world. Borrowing Cassirer's term

(1944), love is a manifestation of the ability of man to transcend the real to new possibilities, which will later be realized into a new reality.

The commitment to keep a promise and keep it persistently in reality in Badiou's terminology is the process of truth, namely, the process of making the statement in accordance with reality through action and step by step. The statements contained in promises or oaths such as "You and I will always be together, in good times and bad, until death parts us" has been proven to be in accordance with reality, as truth, through a series of concrete actions that are sustainable. On this basis, love can be understood as a process of seeking truth. Once again I want to stress, love is the result of effort, a process that must always be cultivated. Love is a lasting commitment in a variety of spaces and times. Love is a will that manifests, a desire for prosperity and development of the world. After love awakens, the good image about love will follow. Love transcends the concrete and the abstract, encompasses and transcends the past, present and future.

On this basis, we can understand that love is different from passion or sexual desire, nor is it a relationship of mutual control and objectifying. Impulse and passion that are rapidly extinguished – this is not love. The desire to gain pleasure and satisfaction is also not love. Similarly, egoism, control and calculations of profit and loss are not part of love. Love is the result of a sustainable endeavor, involving a long series of actions, commitment, persistence, tenacity and sincerity. To quote Badiou (2012, p. 32), "True love is a long-lasting, sometimes painful victory over the obstacles built by time, space and the world."

Love, in this sense, goes beyond sex, the dichotomy of the sexes, the role of gender, while recognizing the difference and respecting women and men equally with the differences that exist between them. Love is not an endorsement of sex, not the recognition of the differences between women and men, nor is it an endorsement of gender roles that are commonly practiced in most cultures. Love cannot be reduced to sex, gender, gender roles, or other social roles. As "integrating the widest distinctions", which allows people to see the world from the perspective of two people, love is not determined by sex, gender and gender roles. Love is also not a form of defense against the value of traditions, social values, or the value of certain groups that regulate sexual and social relationships between people, nor is it a rule or limitation on sexual relations, gender roles, and who should contribute in a particular way in society. On the

contrary, love allows people to overcome traditions and social rules, to offer new alternatives and change social relationships.

It needs to be stressed that love appreciates and unifies the differences and uniqueness that exist in women and men. Love is a way to achieve equality between women and men through concrete actions and is at the same time a manifestation of this equality. Love embraces those differences, while turning two different perspectives into a way of seeing and interpreting the world, knitting the facts of the differences to achieve change and fight for it. In love, the differences that exist between two people are not ignored and not reduced because everyone is recognized and respected for their freedom. Love is the relationship between two free people.

In this sense, the implications of love are in line with the thoughts of Simone de Beauvoir in her work *Le Deuxième Sexe* (The Second Sex) from 1949, where she states that authentic love must be based on the mutual recognition of both people's freedom. According to de Beauvoir, in an authentic love, "... people experience themselves as themselves and as the other; they will not give up their transcendence, they will not cut themselves; together, they will both reveal value and purpose in the world" (de Beauvoir 2010, p 706). We can also find thoughts in line with this concept from supporters of de Beauvoir, among them Shulamith Firestone. Firestone (1972) states that love becomes complicated, damaged or impeded by the balance of unequal forces. Love becomes painful and destructive if there isn't a worthy exchange of one another. For Firestone, inherently nothing is destructive in love. According to her, it is an imbalance of power that destroys love. Love is something that enriches and develops us. "The love between two equal persons will be enriching, while each person expands himself through the other..." (Firestone 1972, p. 128).

Research Results About Love

It has been argued that love differs from sexual passion or lust. Several studies support this view. A study by Acevedo et al. (2012) shows there are different parts of the brain that regulate sexual appetite and that regulate love. Indeed, physical attraction is an important part of love for most people, but love is different from lust. This is why one-night-stands and sexual attraction or passion under the influence of alcohol tend not to lead to long-term relationships. Real time studies of the brain show that people who awaken and fulfill their passions only

experience the activation of the brain area associated with motivation or appreciation, while people who are or were in love long term experience the activation of the brain areas connected with caring and empathy.

Research results show that in couples that have undergone a long-term relationship, there is a special system in the brain that is involved in maintaining the attachment and strong bonding of a couple (Acevedo et al. 2012). The results of this study provide an understanding that to be able to maintain a love relationship, one needs to think ahead; a shadow of the future has to be shared, along with the meaning of the moments that have been experienced, including the emotions that accompany them. Thus it can be understood that love includes feelings that emerge from moment to moment as well as long-term kind of thinking.

In line with this, other research has shown that in long-term marriages, the intensity of love can last and is comparable to the feeling of newly falling in love. Factors that contribute to a long-lasting love include thinking positively about one's partner when apart, intimate behavior and sexual relationships, sharing new and challenging experiences, and the happiness of life in general (O'Leary et al., Acevedo, Aron, Huddy, & Mashek 2011). A deep relationship experienced by a couple is reflected in facial expressions, gestures, and even other physiological rhythms. Couples in long-term relationships, there is also a lasting mental and emotional state accompanied by actions that indicate a great concern for the other's well-being, feeling touched by the other's pain and the motivation to help alleviate the suffering of the other.

A meta-analysis by Acevedo and Aron (2013) on long-term studies of love relationships highlights some of the behavior patterns in couples that stay together until death parts them. This pattern includes the behavior of couples that think positively about each other when they are not together; they support each other's personal growth and development; and they have new experiences together to learn, grow and develop together. Therefore, it can be concluded that building lasting relationships requires a lasting effort from both sides.

I already mentioned that love is something concrete. Love not only exists in one's mind, but also in concrete actions and steps in reality. On the other hand, love not only affects the mind or one's feelings, but also the body. Research (among others Esch & Stefano 2005; Diamond, Hicks & Otter-Henderson 2008; Brooks, Robles, & Schetter 2011; Loving & Slatcher 2013) has shown that loving relationships have long-term benefits for one's physical

health, while on the other hand loneliness and a lack of social connections have proven to shorten the lifespan of people. The feelings, thoughts and behaviors displayed by couples in love affect the body. The influence of love on the body can occur either directly or through psychological processes such as decreased stress, feelings of calm and comfort, as well as happiness and satisfaction.

Love can be strengthened and maintained when couples share new experiences (Aron et al. 2000). Couples who encourage each other to participate in new experiences have an impact on the strengthening of love and the longevity of relationships in the long run. A focus on love also strengthens it and makes it long lasting. When people deliberately focus their attention on their feelings and actions towards their loved ones, they will start a positive reciprocal spiral of mutual respect and happiness. The feelings and actions of this person will then give positive feelings to his partner in return, who will reply with positive feelings and actions as well. Then the person will come back with even stronger feelings and more positive actions—and will get an even stronger reply from their partner. If this continues, a spiral-like pattern is formed, which—the longer it lasts—will get stronger and have a wider impact on feelings of appreciation and happiness. The results also show that expressing gratitude in words or actions produces positive emotions on both the giver and the recipient.

Love can help overcome negative feelings and traumatic effects people have experienced—through a sense of security and trust, both of which are prerequisites of love. To connect with love and empathy, our prefrontal cortex must send signals to the amygdala (the alarm center of the brain) to deactivate “fight or flight” responses that generally work automatically on our nervous system. People who experience trauma, neglect, abuse, or have childhood experiences that threatened their security may find it more difficult to turn off the “fight or flight” system that often feels threatening and uncomfortable. This problem can be overcome if a couple repeatedly shows confidence, attention and care. When people are intensely in love, the amygdala sleeps, so this reduces the feelings of being threatened and uncomfortable to the person who experiences it (Zeki 2007).

Conclusion: We Need to Work on Love

Again, love is not something that happens at once. It is not an intimate and passionate meeting that happens once or twice, nor an exploration of the conformity of life

with another person. Love is a long process. As I stated at the beginning: love is an ongoing existential project; the ongoing search for truth. Love can last long, be eternal and stay intense through a couple's efforts to care for, nurture and develop each other.

Various studies in the fields of neurology, endocrinology, psychology, and anthropology that I have partially cited show evidence that love needs efforts to survive, and it is essential for human health and sustainability; love is based on the need to be together a loved one and it has a biological basis, especially neurologically (Acevedo & Aron 2013). Even more basically, humans have a need to love and be loved. It is also biologically innate to survive and maintain group survival, but for themselves, people are able to develop love into an existential meaning, a project to gain meaning in life as a human, both as an individual and in a group. There are strong indications that love is a human need. Fulfilling those needs is something that has to be pursued. In short, we need to seek love. As conclusion, I would like to stress again that love exists and will continue to exist as long human beings exist and work on it. Love is something that is cultivated, fought for and cared for, accomplished by freedom. Love is something that results in truth, a universal singularity.

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