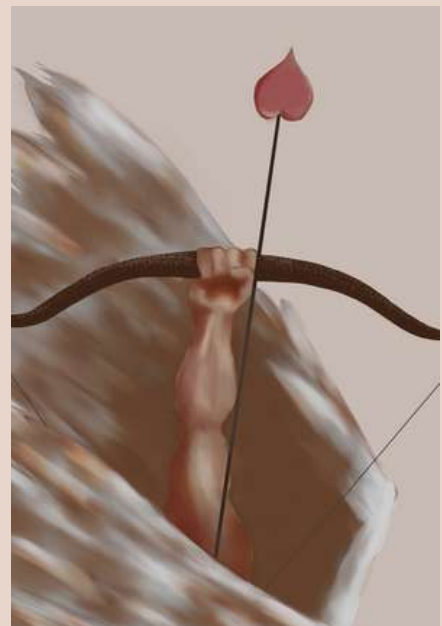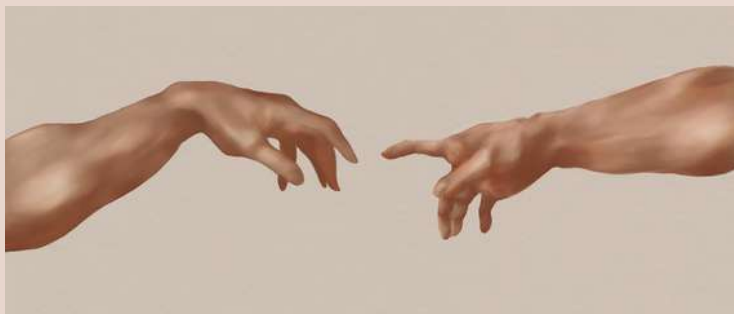# EIDOS

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Eidos 2022-2023

LOVE ET AL

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

EDITORIAL

Poets and prophets, singers, and scholars have all tried to define Love, but it remains nebulous and elusive at best. It is a universal feeling, one characterised by emotions such as happiness, giddiness, ecstasy, anger, disappointment, jealousy, and so on but one also influenced by culture, customs, norms, and traditions. The aforementioned forces all impact how we look at and perceive 'love'.

When the team of Eidos 2022-23 sat down to decide on the journal's theme, we found that the concept of love in itself, while occupying a position in sociological-anthropological dialogue, has been rather neglected by us students. We became aware of the tendency to regard it as a rather individualistic concept. But Love, a seemingly private phenomenon, is one that is greatly shaped by the society we live in. which is why the team wished to deconstruct the rather rosy image of love that we conceived in our heads while thinking about it.

Eidos 2022-23: Love Et Al embarked on a journey to study, observe, critique and deconstruct this lovely theme. We aimed to create a journal that is rich with contrasting perspectives and makes the reader question their conception of the very topic. Therefore, this issue of the annual journal uncovers topics ranging from Marriage, Grief, Nostalgia, Intimacy, Migration, Consumerism in Self-love, Love Bombing, and even Hate and so much more. It inquires into sociological interpretation and in some cases, reinterpretation of love, while also gaining theoretical frameworks from other disciplines for a richer and more holistic understanding of Love.

We hope that this journal encourages you to polish your lens of criticality and challenge normative understandings of love. We wish to have been successful in adding to our reader's knowledge and pushing them to engage more fruitfully with such an important construction that is Love (Et Al). Here's to a journey that is fulfilling for those with a love for intellectual endeavours!

Shafeen Shikalgar
Editor-in-Chief
Eidos 2022-23

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY (2022-23)

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai (Autonomous) conducted multiple events and activities for students from within as well as outside the department in this academic year. One of the events running throughout the year was 'Ways Forward', an interactive lecture series with professionals from various fields who are applying the principles of Sociology and Anthropology in diverse ways in their professional lives. The first of these lectures was with Pranav Kuttaih, and it was held on 19th July, 2022. Pranav Kuttaiah is a writer and educator from Bengaluru, currently pursuing a PhD in city and urban planning at the University of California, Berkeley. He spoke to the students about the importance of the soft skills learnt in a Sociology and Anthropology course, and the possibilities of engaging with theories from these disciplines in multiple other arenas.

The second session of 'Ways Forward' was held on 25th November, 2022 by Meghana AT, where she spoke about her education in authorial theatre, and the challenges and opportunities in choosing a career that is often defined as 'unconventional'. She also discussed the role of activism in her work, and how she uses theatre as a medium of spreading awareness about the causes that matter to her, thereby infusing her passion with her profession.

The next event was an online Instagram event based on the theme of 'Bollywood and Masculinity', held on 21st July, 2022. This was a series of posts that engaged with the portrayal of masculinity on the big screen, and the construction of the 'masculine ideal' through media as an agent of socialisation. Posts were shared about the different tropes employed in Bollywood to portray the 'Hindi film hero', followed by a discussion on how artists and creators could use a mass medium like Bollywood to undefine a rigid notion of masculinity, and create characters that portray men with nuance and complexity.

On 18th August, 2022, an ethnographic walk was conducted in the college campus to orient the newly arrived FY (first year) students to the college, as well as to the discipline of Anthropology. This walk was led by Ms. Ankita Gujar from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, where she introduced the participants to the ethnographic gaze that centres on reflexive observation, rather than judgement or stereotyping. Participants were encouraged to walk around the college with other student volunteers, and observe and absorb the sights, smells, sounds, and other sensory and non-sensory information from the places and spaces they visited. The volunteers took the participants around the classrooms in college, the college canteen, the foyer, the administrative section, the library as well as the woods. Professor Ankita later debriefed the participants by speaking to them about how they could reflect on the experiences they had throughout the walk.

An Honours Certificate Programme was offered by the Department over August and September, 2022. This was a series of 8 lectures under the programme titled 'Sociology and Art'. It consisted of immersive lectures by professionals from various artistic backgrounds, speaking about their art through a Sociological and Anthropological perspective, thereby embedding the art and the artist within the socio-political context. The first session was conducted by Meghana AT, a theatre artist who works primarily as an actor, writer, director, trainer, and producer. She spoke to the students about authorial theatre and the possibilities of using theatre as a medium of pedagogy and critical engagement.

Ms. Ankita Gujar, an Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, conducted the second session. She spoke about street art and the politics of power behind the visibility and invisibility of certain kinds of art in various contexts. Additionally, she also introduced the ideas of art as labour, and art as a tool for messaging, and concluded with a discussion on the contribution of art in creating and sustaining identities, through all the political and affective connotations attached to it.

The third session was conducted by Sefi George, who is an illustrator and visual artist. This session allowed for an experiential understanding of visual art as a medium for communication. With a focus on illustrations in children's books, Sefi spoke about the importance of representation,

inclusion, and diversity in visual content that children consume.

The fourth session was titled 'Kala, Katha, and Kula' and was conducted by Dr. Radha Kumar from the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture, and Archaeology, at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. She focused on the role of ancient sculptures and classical dance as tools for placemaking in ancient India, and contextualised them in the contemporary context.

Dr. Anita Rane Kothare from the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture, and Archaeology, at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai conducted the fifth session on the tangible and intangible heritage of Bombay, and the role of cuisines, tourism, oral histories, and local cultures in creating and sustaining the city.

The sixth session was conducted by Garvi Dhar, who is an independent ethnographer and strategic consultant, working with brands, NGOs, and CSR organisations. She spoke about the role of semiotics in art, and the construction of art and culture as a symbiotic process. She further emphasised on collage as a form of resistance art, where the artist can create new meanings through the deconstruction and reconstruction of existing artworks.

Avanti Patel, a playback singer Hindustani Classical and Semi-classical vocalist conducted the seventh session. She spoke about the role of Tawaifs in building the rich body of knowledge of Hindustani Classical Music, and the subsequent erasure of their contribution in the post-independence period, through the nationalist movement, and the connotations of purity/pollution attached to music. She further discussed the ways in which contemporary artists could acknowledge the contribution of the tawaifs through their art, and create space for questioning the power hierarchies inherent in what comes to be defined as 'classical'.

The eighth, and final session of this series was conducted by Ms. Arpit Gill. She took up the theme of Bollywood music, and deconstructed it using the Durkheimian approach. Further, she spoke about the role of lyrics and music within a mass medium like Bollywood, and the layers of subliminal messaging inherent in popular music, trying to appeal to a diverse audience.

In January 2023, an Industrial Visit was organised for the TY (third year) students of our department. About 40 students, along with 2 professors visited the city of Pune, and explored the sites of Shaniwar Wada, Tribal Research and Training Institute, National War Museum and the Katraj dairy.

Our Annual Seminar was held at Premanjali Counselling Centre, Nalasopara, on the 20th and 21st of January, 2023. This year's theme was 'Inequality: Transitioning from Rights, Resources, to Equity'. The seminar began with the panel discussion led by a student panel of seven members, where they discussed the broad areas of the theme, and the critical issues in the academic discourse surrounding inequality. On the next day, students presented research papers analysing inequality in the contexts of caste, gender, housing, socioeconomic status, politics, resistance, etc. Each presentation was followed by a question-answer session, where the audience participated in, and enhanced the scope of the discussions on the given theme. The seminar concluded with the closing session by the panel, and feedback from the professors as well as the audience.

In February 2023, we organised interactive sessions between our ex-students and the TY students about the application procedure for higher education in India and abroad. Our final event was an interactive session on academic writing conducted by Ms. Ankita Gujar.

FACULTY PROFILE:

Pranoti Chirmuley, attended a two day National seminar 10th & 11th of February in Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College, Ghatkopar on *Transforming Higher Educational Institutions: Aligning with National Education Policy (NEP)'* completed the (Asiatic Society) Mumbai Research Centre's Grant in January 2023 titled: *Public Spaces and posters: Re-engaging with space, symbolism and the rules of the city.* Presented a paper titled, *Are we 're-innovating' the wheel?* SDG goal 4 at the SVKM's Mithibai - in collaboration with ICSSR and RUSA at the One Day Multidisciplinary National Conference on the 25th of January 2023: 'Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development: Challenges and Opportunities. Presented a paper at the Interdisciplinary National Conference on "Contemporary Issues and Concerns in Globalization, Nationalism and Geo-Politics" 09th and 10th December 2022, Jointly Organized by IQAC, Sathaye College (Autonomous) In collaboration with ICSSR, Western Regional Centre title: *Deconstructing Nationalism: The rebirth of the nation within,* on the 9th of December 2022. She is the convenor for the TEDxStXaviersMumbai committee and the Library committee. She also attended the session for the revision of the University syllabus at St Andrews College Bandra on 29th June, 2022.

Ankita Gujar conducted a talk on 'Rain and Privilege' with the Student Inclusion Cell in August 2022. She was appointed as the Faculty-in-Charge of the Student Inclusion Cell in October 2022. She was nominated by the Principal for, and completed a 5-day Faculty Development Programme on 'Inclusion in Education' conducted by the MSFDA, Pune in August 2022. She conducted a guest lecture titled "Street Art and Expression in Urban India during the Pandemic" for the department's in-house Honour's

course. She was a facilitator for workshops (Antarchakshu) at Purple Fest, the first all-India festival for persons with disabilities organised by the Government of Goa in January 2023. She gave a talk on 'Digitization and Performance Art' as a part of the Department of English's collaborative course with the University of Stuttgart in January 2023. She also was a part of the two-member team conducting the 2-day Industrial Visit to Pune for third year students in January 2023. She is a part of the organising committee for the DIRS for an international conference titled "Being Interconnected" being held in February 2023. She also attended a session organised by St. Andrew's College and the University of Mumbai on the restructuring of the University's syllabus.

Radhika Rani facilitated a group discussion on "Being Apolitical" organised by The Theory Club. She attended a conference on Navigating The National Education Policy: Curriculum, Courses and Credits organised by Sophia College. She also was a part of the two-member team conducting the 2-day Industrial Visit to Pune for third year students in January 2023.

Sahana Sen was invited as a speaker for a session as a part of a National Webinar on Gender Sensitization organized by Government Degree College, Mangalkote, West Bengal on 9th June 2022. She also attended a conference on Navigating The National Education Policy: Curriculum, Courses and Credits organized by the IQAC Cell of the Sophia College, Mumbai on 4th February, 2023.

Arpit Gill, was part of the Gender Cell and Placement cell in college in the last semester. She resigned in December 2022.

Anupama Ramakrishnan, joined the department on 6th of January 2023. She is an alumni of the college and has a background in research and publishing.

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IN CONVERSATION WITH: MAURELLE D'SA

Maurelle is a sport and exercise psychologist. She graduated from St. Xavier's College in 2013 and completed her masters from University of Mumbai in applied psychology. She further got a masters in sport and exercise psychology from Loughborough University in the UK. She has been an athlete for most of her life. Being introduced to psychology opened that avenue of sports psychology for her and realising this is something that she wants to do full time.

What cultural values do you see sports inculcating?

Maurelle D.: I think it all comes down to the sport that is being played and the location I would say has a huge impact, because we know that different cultures would have different impacts on various sports. Sport is in itself a culture and every area has a sporting culture as well. So if you look at Mumbai, we have what you call a cricket culture, as compared to other sports like tennis or golf. But it also comes down to infrastructure as well. We have a lot more lanes as compared to golf courses.

I think it also comes down to the significant individuals involved there. In terms of how they view fairness and perseverance and discipline, things like that. So it would be very subjective. I would say in the sense that in some areas, in some societies you would say you would see athletes playing a lot more fair as compared to certain other societies and areas. You will see equality in sport in certain places but you won't see that in others. And just things like inclusion and respect. I think it really differs from place to place and if you work with athletes across borders and just across various areas, you see a major difference in how all of this fits into sport as well.

In your experience with working with athletes, what do you think drives them? Do you think it's necessary for them to love their sport to excel?

Maurelle D.: Oh, if you look at basic theories in psychology and in sports psychology, it talks about a mix of both. Looking at one of the most basic theories of motivation, it talks about both intrinsic and extrinsic and how it's not necessarily only one of the two. That's important. And there are various regulations that are involved there, right? From doing things for approval, for rewards for values that you identify with, for things that are important to you because it's a way of life.

So I think somewhere in that mix, loving your sport or at least liking your sport in my opinion is important. But from what I've seen, it's not always necessary. There are a lot of people who are doing it, purely for other reasons. They've played multiple sports and they've picked one sport not because they love it the most but because they see the most promise there or, there are certain benefits that accompany it. So while I believe

that it's definitely there in the mix at some point, it may not always be sustained in the long run.

Do you see sports as bringing people together or driving them apart, in terms of competition as well. And how do you see the uniting power of sports being played out like specifically with your experience and working with athletes as well?

Maurelle D.: Okay, I think it has the power to both bring people together, and also tear people down, it all comes down to perspective, right? And it also comes down to the environment that they're training in. If you have experiences, individuals as reinforcements that push you towards collective learning, for example equal recognition and things like that then it's developing an environment that can foster love within teammates and bring individuals together, as well as with competitors, People who you don't train with, there is a way in which you approach them, interact with them, and it's all dependent on the environment that you are brought up in, that

u are trained in and are exposed to.

If you have been exposed to an environment that is quite unequal and punishing, where you've been led to believe that it is only the survival of the fittest, then that has the possibility of encouraging people to tear each other down and get to the top. So I think it has the power to do both. It all depends on exposure.

I would also say that this power is not only limited to athletes. It's about anyone who's involved in sport in any capacity. If you look at the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, where a number of volunteers from across the globe travelled to volunteer for various roles within the tournament. People from different countries working together even if those countries may not necessarily be on good terms with one another. But then you have these volunteers who are, you know, working together and having a good time, and just collaborating and having fun, and all of that comes from love of sport, right?

Then you have people who are playing if you look at international athletes, right? They are competing against certain opponents who they may not necessarily like. We don't always like the people who are going up against but it is the love for the sport or the respect for the sport that enables us to behave in certain ways that are respectful of our opponents.

You know even sometimes we don't like them or we don't like where they're from or how they are. Oh, so I think it does in most cases have the power to pull people together but I would say it also has the capacity to tear people down.

Adding on to the previous question, can you elaborate more on how teamwork in sports can inculcate the larger idea of love and togetherness.

Maurelle D.: So one of the first things that you learn in a team sport is to work with others. You cannot carry your ball from one point of the field to the other just by yourself. So, one of the first things you learn in team sport is to rely on your team and to play with people rather than just by yourself, to trust other people. So there are a lot of values and skills I think that you learn, sometimes you don't learn this automatically, sometimes there is a little more intention to it, but the result is that you develop certain skills.

And most of those contribute to that sense of belongingness. I think that's something that you learn within sport, it builds some amount of teamwork within that group. It builds that as a life skill and helps you work with teams outside of sport as well.

But I know from experience that that's not always the case because people who are involved in team sports, sometimes learn in that environment that they don't enjoy working in teams as much.

But to answer your question I think it is just the nature of team sports, that helps build those skills and that helps build that teamwork is just what you're doing every day or having to do it for the success of the sport. So not everyone enjoys working in a team but if you love the sport for example and the sport demands that you work as part of a team, then a lot of people are willing to do that and do it well.

Do you think that love for sports sometimes gets you know overshadowed by the compulsion or the pressures of the sport of excelling in it?

Maurelle D.: Absolutely, absolutely in a majority of cases someone begins playing sport, at least continues up to a certain level because they enjoyed and eventually learn to love it, right? Some people are fortunate enough to explore a number of sports before they identify the one that they enjoy or love the most. In the majority of the cases people continue because they see something there. But just loving your sport may not be enough for a lot of people. If you want to sustain, you have to do well.

If you look at sports that are considered expensive or sports that are considered for the rich. If you look at tennis or golf, those are expensive sports because the equipment, training and infrastructure is expensive. I think the propensity to continue then doesn't entirely depend on love and they love the sport, but I may not be able to afford it anymore. I may love the sport but I may not be performing as well, which disappoints me very often and then there could be feelings of resentment creeping in. I love the sport but human pressure to do well is sucking the fun out of it. I have a golfer that I'm

working with who absolutely loved the sport when we began working together. But because of the level that they're competing at, because of the goals that the golfer has set for themselves, the self expectations or what they believe they should be doing in comparison to the amount of work that is going in. I think all of that can cloud the love that they have for the sport and at the end of the day, we have feelings of 'I don't even know why I'm doing this anymore', 'I'm not getting anywhere' and so you see a lot of that as well in sport.

How can an athlete retain that love again for the sport then?

Maurelle D.: One is not losing sight of why you started and why you kept going in the first place. We start for different reasons, we continue for different reasons. Not losing sight of why we're doing it in the first place is important, and it's not something that we're constantly reminded of as there are other things that take over. Winning a championship, getting selected to a particular team, playing at a particular level. All of these things do come in and they are important, I agree, and you know they can be there, but also going down to why are we doing all of this in the first place? Why do we want to win the championship? Why do we want to get selected for a particular team within that sport, right? Why are we still with this sport? I think it's important to reflect on things like these.

So I am a strong believer of reflective practice, it sort of keeps you grounded. It keeps you on track. It keeps you aware and I believe self-reflection is one of the things that could be helpful or instrumental in helping athletes not lose sight of why they're doing certain things and retaining that love.

Do you see how one can encourage love for sports for others as well?

Maurelle D.: That's a difficult question because I don't think there is a particular answer to that. I mean, if you're talking about psychological theories and principles. One of the most common ones that we know is mere exposure. The more you're exposed to something the more you begin to like that thing. So I think just introducing people to sport is, I believe, the first step. You can't force someone to love it. There has to be something about the sport that the person, at least likes to begin with before they can learn to love it. And so giving them freedom, giving them autonomy, giving them an environment where there is that sense of belongingness, basically the three basic needs. Those need to be satisfied, I believe. And it also depends on the individuals that the person is surrounded within that sport.Obviously, it's common sense that if, you know, I take you to let's say a football academy tomorrow for you to learn football and your teammates are being very rude to you. Your coach is being very biased towards you as compared to your teammates. That's not an environment you love. And then eventually your hated for the environment is going to rub off on the your feelings towards the sport. So the environment I believe is as important as the sport to foster that love.

IN CONVERSATION WITH: NIKHIL TANEJA

A Mumbai-based entrepreneur and storyteller, Nikhil Taneja is a purpose-driven individual. As the Head of Content and Development for the youth wing at Yash Raj Films, Y-Films, Nikhil produced some of the best content he had to offer. Producing 4 out of the first 8 web series ever made in India- Bang Baaja Baaraat, Ladies Room, Pappu and Papa and Man's World. At the peak of his career, he left YRF to start a content platform called Yuvaa India's first Youth led media company, to listen to young Indians.

What is the significance of representation? Can you explain what representation means to you?

Nikhil: Growing up in Bahrain, I've been very fortunate to be in a place where I befriended people from every part of India. Then, I landed up in NID Kurukshetra, and that's where my realisation of representation really happened. Of course, you didn't know these words at that time, but we used to have power cuts every day in the evening around 08:00. I realised that the best use of my time, after a point of time, was trying to just talk to different people. Every day I would just knock on the door of somebody in the hostel, introduce myself and just ask them their story. Just through that process, I ended up speaking to people in every state of India, getting to know the stories of people from different parts of India, of different communities, backgrounds, caste, colour, creed. Since then, I think I've realised how important and enriching it is to have friendships and conversations with all kinds of people.
Additionally, I used to teach at Jai Hind College and as a teacher, I think I just ended up learning a lot from my students. Instead of talking to my students, I spent a lot of time listening to them, which helped me realise a lot of things.

I think representation is a journey. As an example, there are so many films and shows that have come about queer identity without having queer actors. And there is a lot of uproar about it which is a very fair conversation. It's very important for queer folks to participate in the film, it's important that they are consulting, writing, advising, and being part of it in different capacities. But without trying to be controversial and getting self-cancelled, I also think it's important as a journey for first the most well known folks to portray characters that you as a society are uncomfortable with, because that's how you start first getting an understanding of the idea. So if a Rajkumar Rao and a Bhumi Pednekar today play queer characters, I think it is a very important step in the journey for someone who's an actual queer actor to be accepted by a larger audience. Before that, they've seen the most beloved people playing these characters saying it's okay. And it's very important for Rajkumar to be in that role, to help normalise the conversation because a system, like ours, is very much built on stars. First, if you see something normalised by the biggest of your stars, then you would accept them from other folks who

might be newcomers. And it is important we move to the journey of now getting queer actors to play queer characters.

But I feel like massy actors and massy filmmakers can get this conversation in people's homes, because you can't go from 0 to 100 immediately. Because with my generation? I have had to overcome homophobia, because, of course, I grew up with it. It was the privilege of having information and content available to me that helped me understand, for example, the show *Friends*, which I know is now considered problematic. Having said that, as a millennial watching *Friends*, the fact that there was a whole story line about two women ending up with each other, Carol and Susan, made you realise 'okay, this happens'. Of course, there were jokes on it which would at some point trigger you to in today's world. But for us this is actually the first worldview. *Oh ye bhi hota hai? Mujhe pata hi nahi tha. They get married also. How interesting.* It becomes like one step of normalisation and of course, 20 years later you realise some of that might have been problematic, but it was still a representation, a bad representation, but a representation nonetheless. Whereas I saw nothing of that sort on the Indian television screens.

I think with this privilege of knowledge and access comes a responsibility that we call emotional burden. Can you change people who are close to you? Can you start conversations with the people you love who might not have the same perspectives as you do? Is it an effort, an emotional burden? Yes, it is. But if you don't do it, who will do it? And if it's not done now, when will it happen? That's our responsibility as storytellers, as artists, as people who hopefully get this a little bit more than the others.

What is your notion of love and how do you see love being represented?

Nikhil: My ideas of love are very inspired by Karan Johar. Growing up, I saw Kuch Kuch Hota Hai when I was a young teenager and I heard "ham ek baar jeete hai, ek baar marte hai, shaadi ek baar hoti hai, pyaar ek baar karte hai" I was like ye correct hai, this is great philosophy of life.
The internet had just happened at that time. There were computers, but no Google. So you didn't have an understanding of the world beyond what was either told to you by films, what

you understood from music, or what you've seen at home. Most of our homes, our understanding of love is very contorted to patriarchy. Your mother sacrifices everything and that's love and sacrifice, which I had major problems with growing up, but maybe that's what I understood about love. My first understanding was just about giving. If you really love someone, you just give all of yourself. So while I would tell my mother, "This is wrong, don't do this, you're burning yourself out", I ended up being conditioned to also feel exactly like love is all giving. I'd be the exact same person as my mother and would burn myself out by just being all giving. That was my understanding of non-romantic love.

And romantically, I was just determined that Karan Johar is right and like Shahrukh Khan, you need to find that one person. And if I find that one person, she's my wife. I thought I found that one person in school, but she broke up with me. Then I found that one person in college and now she's been with me for 16 years. And I like to justify by saying that even in Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, it was the second person that he ended up with.

Of course my idea of love I think has changed, evolved in many ways since then. What does love mean to me today? I would say it is about creating safe spaces for each other. Spaces where you can be who you are without judgement. That I think is true love. That love is acceptance, love is empathy.

Being a storyteller as well as a producer, what are the different themes of love that you have explored?

Nikhil: I feel like everything I do is about love. Love is a very deep part of every story that I say, because I think love is a deep part of any relationship. It's also a way of looking at the world, right? Like you've grown up with stories of good and bad and stories of hero and villain. You grow up thinking we are the heroes of our story. So that's a lens that you are always on the heroic journey that people are looking at when it comes to stories. For me, the lens has always been love. Even when it is not about love, it is about love. That love could be about someone romantically, about the relationships you have in your home, about something you deeply care about. The stories that I've done, for example, Band Baja Baaraat, was about the love between parents and children. Ladies Room was about the love within a friendship, platonic love. Man's World was about learning to love. A man who might be a misogynist, recognizing what love is after going through a journey and then having empathy for everyone around. And Pappu and Papa was about the love between a father and a son. So, for me particularly, the lens has always been love.

I feel like because of my mother, love became very important to me as a way of expressing myself. Even when she was angry or upset, it was love. Even when she was happy and obviously all giving, it was love. I think your parents define a lot of this for you. It's said that experiences you have in the first seven years of your life inform the rest of your life. So in the first seven years, my understanding of love came from my understanding of my mother. And I think that I've taken that understanding across because I realised how it enriched me. Essentially, I felt very grateful somewhere deep inside that I have someone who loves me. If I have that, I feel like if I have to create stories, and if I have to have the privilege of being someone who can make and create art, what is a better use of art than to talk about love, right? What is the better use of telling stories than to have things that bring people together? I've never been able to understand. It's not like I don't like watching films that are about dark things, but I instinctively just feel like if you have the privilege and opportunity of art, why not use it to spread love?

How has the audience reacted to these portrayals of love? Has their perception of those depictions ever caused you to make changes in the next story you tell?

Nikhil: All the shows that I made in the initial rounds were like big hits and they were on Youtube so we got instant reactions everytime we spoke about gender or feminism. Even if we didn't use words like these at that time, they were feminist shows; shows that had an empathy towards a gender sensitivity like today. They spoke about masculinity in more accountable and introspective ways. We got a lot of bashful comments for Man's world, which was about a guy who is misogynistic, kind of recognising that women have it much tougher and then learning to show that love and empathy.

I think it comes from, again, a family set up in an Indian society, because it gives every young person an understanding of what love is; seeing your parents behave towards each other and how your parents behave with you. Without generalising, to a large extent, the understanding of love for boys when it comes to your father or father figures is always about anger. That love means shouting or being angry. And when it comes to your mother, it just means, again, sacrifice or burdening yourself and doing everything to care for the men. For women, love was about being given away. Love was about becoming a version of yourself that a man could agree upon. Love was about change. Love was always about somebody else loving you; never about yourself, but finding someone to love me. This is a definite understanding of love as young people. Growing up, you like the stories that agree with your idea of love. If they disagree, then you do not like the story. So something like a Man's world which talked about masculinity in a way where we said that actually the women have it tougher challenged the viewer's perception.

So for me, the next thing I make is not about what they are reacting to. The next thing I make will be to understand how to bring more people in. If there's a way to bring people in, I want to do that in every story. I don't want to make stories to shut people out. I want them to invite people in. If I'm making a women focused story today, and we are making this tricky story, a punk story about consent and harassment. Although

men are obviously the ugly aggressors in this, the question becomes - how do we say that story in a way where, of course the lens is focused on women, but hopefully invite men in and say, perhaps there's something you learn from them.

The idea is not to change people, but the idea is to make people feel less alone. If a story has concepts, moments or scenes that resonate with you as a human being, then it will bring you in. The moment we get you in is when you go back feeling that resonance with you, and that informs the way that you live your life in some way, even in a small little way, I think that's the idea of stories, right? You write stories, you tell stories either to feel less alone yourself or to have others feel a little less alone.

Have you ever depicted inter-caste or interclass love on screen? And has the experience of doing that been the same as that of a conventional depiction of love?

Nikhil: So I would say yes and no. In most of the things I've made, I've always been intrinsically excited about showing different relationships, communities and people. But I wasn't as aware of the lack of representation, which is also politics, right? But those were my subconscious biases.
So there was once a post by andheriwestshitposting (popular instagram handle) made 2-3 years ago, which essentially said here's all the web series that were made in India, and here's all the names of the characters. And 99% of them were upper caste. One of my shows, Band Baja Baarat, was also included. And until that point, I didn't even think about this. As they say, you don't think about caste when you are upper caste, right? So I never even thought about it. And Bollywood was also filled with all the Khannas, Malhotras and Kapoors.
So I realised that my ignorance on these subjects may have perpetuated the false notion that the only story worth watching is about upper caste folks. As someone who is given this great power of being in the industry where I can make change or at least, stand for something, I want to stand for empathy because my politics is empathy. Of course, recognizing that I do have a certain kind of privilege, I don't need to use this privilege to tell more stories of people like me. Maybe I want to use this privilege now to tell stories of everyone else who's just as much human as I am. Over the last many years, I've now started particularly being more conscious. That shows in the makeup of Yuvaa as an organisation, we have seeked and hired folks from different castes, communities, sexualities, genders. It is very important for us. The more opinions and more diverse perspectives we have, the better and richer everything becomes, since everyone has so much to offer.

So I am now being a lot more conscious in the way that we move forward. I commented on that post page saying that I actually made Band Baaja Baaraat and thank you for putting this up, it was very helpful for me. I did not think this, but I want to think about this.

Should representation show people as they are or what they should be like?

Nikhil: I think the best kind of representation is when you see a journey, when you see an emotional arc, when you see people getting from who they are to where they should. That I think is the most powerful kind of representation, right? You are bringing people in at a place that they are the same as you and then putting them on a journey where you want them to be. If they take something away from there or feel like they should go on a similar journey, isn't that the most powerful thing that you can actually do? So any kind of content which shows about that transformation. Lets take the example of Munna bhai, starting off as literally as a goon and then just becomes like the best version of himself because of a conflict that is thrown at him.

Even in Badhai Do, I really loved the film last year, the journey of Sheeba Chadda's (the male protagonist's mother) character. What a beautiful journey. As someone who probably would be very considerate to queer folks, sees her son struggle through it and then get into a moment where she just embraces it, that's enough. She doesn't have a judgemental reaction to it. She just embraces it. What a beautiful journey to show for a parents and children being capable of change. I think those are the kind of representations we just need to see more of sometimes. So I just find it more fascinating and more beautiful to go on a journey.

What do you think goes into making a lovable character?

Nikhil: I think one of the harshest things I used to do as a writer back in the day was judging my characters, that I would divide and say, okay, here's a lovable character, who has a lot of cute, funny, sweet, kind, flirty characteristics, and here's my not so good character, who is harsh , unempathetic, rude, obnoxious, or just straight up villainous. When I was writing a story with a co-writer, I kept making the villain darker. And my co writer said to me one day, that "You judge your characters. You've decided that this is a bad person. But people are more complex than that. Good people are capable of doing bad things and bad people are capable of doing good things." I think that is the deepest learning that I had. My characters have become much richer since then. You can look at a person and call them bad but then context provides us with answers as to why this person is doing this. And I think that's just an important question to ask in society, right? Are we born evil or do we turn evil, the question of nature versus nurture? How does one become a villain? What is the context to it?

I don't think people are what they say. I think people are more complex. There's a lot of things that go behind the words that come out of everybody's mouth. There is a whole history, a whole childhood, a whole context, and a story of a life lived that leads up to a point where you're seeing something and being somebody and whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. And I feel like it's important that we recognize that context. Even

terrible characters have the capacity of showing love, showcasing it in different moments. I think that makes everybody more complex, that's life. We need to allow for that complexity without which it's easier to just say hero, villain, and then living our lives feeling good about it. I am not that person who says I'm not terrible. But all of us are terrible in many ways, and all of us are good in many ways.

Every character can be loveable. Honestly, if you look at the people with context, there is a story behind every book. If you look at human beings as stories versus looking at them as labels, you have the opportunity of finding something to love in everyone. Having said that, I would say a loving character can be cute and funny and sweet. That's a great character. But I can promise you, the moment you kind of go deeper into their story, you realise the reason for their behaviour is because they're looking for love, because they were abandoned by their families, or didn't get love growing up. it. Vulnerability is what makes you even more lovable. The right answer is vulnerability.

1. 'SHAADI KE SIDE EFFECTS'

–SREELAKSHMI NAIR & SHAILI PALRECHA

Marriage is a social institution prevalent in every era and society in some form or another, used as a means to form kinship, create a flow of resources, simply as a survival mechanism, or steeped in elaborate ritualism. It primarily acts as a socially sanctioned way of courtship and reproduction, and consequently provides as a measure for what kind of love and kinship relations are desirable in that society or culture, such as monogamy and heterosexuality that is viewed most favourably in marriages today.The article examines how monogamous, heterosexual marriage, often seen as the foundation of the ideal family unit, is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history and how polyamory factors into this. This article questions whether humans are exclusively monogamous or polyamorous by nature.
It also seeks to understand the current position of marriage as a social institution and how emerging outliers, such as people marrying themselves, their pets, and live-in relationships, fit into the original concept.

Marriage is a cultural universal that has endured across civilizations and centuries, evolving in some shape or form in every era. Though it is often touted to be the ultimate act of love, its function is described differently by different ideologies, whether as a religious act, a political decision, an economic choice, a necessary rite of passage, or even an oppressive, patriarchal practice. Despite the long-standing history of this social institution, the monogamous, heterosexual marriage that is often seen today as the foundation of the ideal family model, born out of love, is a recent phenomenon in human history.

When deconstructing the norm, despite the expectation of monogamy being the most common type of marriage, historically, polygyny is the most observed form due to several reasons (Hasty et al., 2022). Looking as far back as the Paleolithic age, marriage was primarily a mode of creating strong kinship ties and raising children. Due to the hunter-gatherer division of labour, it did not manifest in people living in nuclear family units. Later on, in labour-intense societies, marriage became a means of division of labour and resources, primarily by men having multiple wives. In multiple instances across history, polygamous marriage was used as an instrument to establish power and create a hierarchy favouring men over their multiple female partners who held subservient roles or were seen as material assets.

However, the context and purpose of polygyny differ among communities, and even within the same society, therefore, there is no single explanation for it. For instance, plural wives play significant political roles in a populous society in Madagascar. The king's wives act as his local agents and give the common people a stake in the government (Noren, 2022).

The gradual popularisation of monogamy as we see it today can be explained as a consequence of wealth distribution among men in different societies in history. A theory proposed by Satoshi Kanazawa and Mary C. Still (1999) claimed that women had more power over choosing if a marriage would be polygamous or monogamous by nature. It was constructed under the notion that if resource disparities amongst the men in society were greater, women tended to choose polygyny as the way of marriage. If the resource disparities were small, then the monogamous institution of marriage emerged (Kanazawa & Still, 1999). They agreed with Becker (1974), Grossbard (1978), Ridley (1998), and Wright (1994) that most women were better off marrying polygamous rather than

monogamous as women were traditionally assumed to value financial security in a marriage highly. Women would marry polygamous if the man in question had more resources than the other men available, i.e. the woman would benefit more from being the second or third wife of a wealthy man rather than the only wife of a man with fewer resources.

Religious regulation on marriage was also responsible for legitimising monogamy over polygamy in many cases. Marriage ceremonies now required the priest's approval, which was interpreted as God's approval of the holy union. According to Christian doctrine, "the twain shall be one flesh," giving husband and wife exclusive access to each other's bodies. (The Week, 2015). This promoted sexual fidelity and a monogamous lifestyle. Regardless of changes, the Church maintained the status of men to be higher than that of women in marriage and declared them to be the head of the family, continuing a strong patriarchal base. Judaism shares this strict insistence on monogamy. As per the history of Hinduism, the

The illustration has a man and a woman standing against each other's back. They are covered in white strings spiralling them together. A white flower can be seen right in the centre of the illustration between the man and the woman. There are three different sentences written on the illustration which go as: She will not make a good wife; The guy had to compromise for her sake; She is too hot to marry.

Illustration by Anjisha Joy

concept of monogamy has prevailed since the Vedic period. Even though other forms of marriage, like polygamy and bigamy, have been permitted under certain conditions, monogamy has been the dominant form of marriage. During the Vedic period, the Upanishads, Sutras, and Smritis governed the regulation of marriage amongst Hindus. So from the above analysis, we can infer that the monogamous institution of marriage was strongly preached by most religious institutions causing it to be seen as the only acceptable form of marriage by people.

Even today, however, monogamy is not the default type of marriage everywhere. As is the case in Islam, where marrying up to four women is allowed, or in many African countries, where polygyny is commonplace and as pervasive as monogamy. (Kramer , 2020)

'Love', which is believed to be transformed into marriages today, didn't even exist as a school of thought in the 16th Century (The Week, 2015). In the Western world, it was not until the 17th Century that romantic love was seen as a prerequisite for marriage and gave importance to the individuals involved rather than societal norms or economic power. This idea seems to have fundamentally changed the perspective on marriage. The concept of marriage as the ultimate expression of love, we hypothesise, has led to gradual deviations away from the normative monogamous, heterosexual model discussed previously, perhaps changing the social value of the practice. Examples of this that are visible today are those relationships that retain parts of the family unit without entering into actual marriage, like live-in relationships and co-parenting.

Live-in relationships are arrangements in which two consenting adults live together under one roof without having their relationship legally recognized. While many millennials see this as a substitute for marriage, orthodox Indian society opposes it, viewing it as a threat to the sacred institution of marriage. Two prominent sociologists have offered different but related theories about what is happening to intimacy in Western nations today. According to Giddens, the Love Model, which emphasises relationship longevity and has prescribed gender roles, is being displaced by a new model of intimacy known as "Confluent Love" (Hull et al., n.d.) The Confluent Love model emphasises the ideal of the "pure relationship", which is defined as a relationship entered for its own sake and maintained only as long as both partners derive 'sufficient benefit from the relation to make its continuance worthwhile'. In this arrangement, sexual monogamy is not necessary, and the possibility of dissolution of the relationship is still available without any legal complications.

The second premise is suggested by Cherlin's deinstitutionalization argument[1]. According to this, the social structure that binds traditional marriages is weakening and therefore reducing their relevance today (Hull et al., 2014).

Bearing children out of wedlock, unmarried cohabitation, acceleration in intimacy levels before marriage, increase in same-sex marriages, and the rise in the number of divorces. These events question the very foundation of normative marriage and the ideals that it preaches.

Another obvious shift away from the heteronormativity of marriage is people of the LGBTQ+ community entering marriages. This also stems from the perception of marriage founded on love (like the slogan - love is love), along with wishing to secure the legal and social rights of married couples. Other sections of the LGBTQ+ community, especially those in polyamorous relationships which are not recognized before the law, are increasingly opting out of the institution altogether because of its heterosexist monogamist origins. Sologamy is another deviation. It means marriage to oneself, and interestingly, it was first done in India by Kshama Bindu from Gujarat in 2022. The advocates of sologamy emphasise the importance of self-love and commitment. Sologamy, therefore, rejects a key aspect of marriage as being a relationship 'between people' and stems from the notion that marrying someone, even if it is yourself, is the ultimate outward show of love and commitment towards that person. Although it isn't as binding as a legal marriage, sologamy is seen as a new trend in line with the millennial and gen-z adoption of ideologies of 'self-acceptance' and 'self-love'.
Even more bizarre marriages include people marrying their pets, anime characters, pillows, and even walls. Once again notable for their special emphasis on celebrating love and commitment– whether to an animal, object, or idea– these marriages are all the more remarkable for not receiving any recognition from governing entities. Moreover, benefits derived previously in history, such as division of labour and resources, financial security, social sanction to produce offspring, etc., are also not achieved through these marriages.

We understand that various other aspects, such as economic, political, and social changes outside of the idea of 'marrying for love', have affected the social institution of marriage. However, we propose that this idea has brought a huge shift in perspective. Also that these new 'bizarre' marriages are not simply anomalies but point towards a new understanding of an old practice. In countries like India, where traditional norms still hold a lot of weight, marriage still is an important and essential part of society, but it also has seen some change (eg. 'Hybrid' arranged marriages, where couples set up by familial sanction, are allowed to know each other beforehand and decide if they want to marry the person (Reed, 2022)). Kinship formation and mediating society are still important to the Indian marriage culture.

The authors do not believe the institution of marriage itself is under threat of extinction, but simply that it may evolve in form as changing political, social, and religious ideologies

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1 Cherlin, A. J. (2004, November). ERIC - EJ686645 - The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage, Journal of Marriage and Family, 2004-Nov. ERIC - EJ686645 - the Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage, Journal of Marriage and Family, 2004-Nov. Retrieved January 27, 2023, from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ686645

shape it. These changes have made marriage more habitable and liberal, as well as giving the people involved more power than society, resulting in a more sustainable system.

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2. THE HEART WANTS WHAT IT WANTS

–MAITREYI KULKARNI & SAPTADHA SENGUPTA

The discrepancies that exist within the idea that is love, is what makes it a fascinating concept, one that has dominated the minds of both academic and artistic geniuses. What is worth questioning is, in spite of its heterogeneity, how there has been an emergence of a hierarchy among the different kinds of love and why romantic love has seemingly occupied the apex position. Love takes up a significant position in our society, culture and individual lives and yet, we seem to know little about it. In a sense, love is simply a medley of emotions and behaviours that are characterised by intimacy, passion, commitment and affection. However, this does not imply that these emotions must be restricted to romantic love. So, why is love, at first glance, interpreted only in the romantic context? The complexity of this question leads us to call into dispute a number of other popular notions about love. Through our research, we will delve into and hopefully find answers to the reasons for the existence of such a hierarchy and the ramifications of it in society and in individuals' lives, as well.

Illustration by Anjisha Joy

In this illustration, a woman in a saree is seen smiling facing cameras, as the Taj mahal lies in the background. A couple and a family can be seen behind here in the background as the cameras pop out from the corners.

Be it in fairy tales where the happily ever after is achieved only after the protagonists fall in love and get married; or in the lyrics of a pop song, where the singer belts out verses filled with angst, asking their 'one true love' to complete them — romantic love tops all other forms of love in any discussion related to love. One of the reasons being the mythical affixation that romantic love is the fix to all of one's daily problems. This could be the driving factor behind people finding solace in romantic relationships; that maybe in the ease of a romantic, idyllic life, their complications would also disappear or become a lighter burden (Carter, 2015).

One can see this hierarchy displayed in societal structures, too. The aversion towards stags or 'loners' in traditional eating establishments or even the preference given to couples as compared to single people when it comes to selecting renters for an apartment, is very distinct.

And if things as basic as living residencies remain restricted to those in committed relationships, the tendency to capitalise on such couples and their lifestyle is even more evident in the marketing strategies of nearly every fathomable commodity. From the freshness of a toothpaste bringing two people closer together to entire applications dedicated to setting up people on dates, the list of things to capitalise on romantic love is endless. And, what could be better than making your audience homogenised enough to be able to buy what they have been groomed to accept as the right option?

In spite of this skewed and one-track perception of love, humans have consistently struggled with the existential question that, generic as it may be, but what exactly is love? From a sociological point of view, love has always been a fascinating concept due to its heterogeneous nature. At the same time, it is interesting to note that these discrepancies have been largely ignored in both academic and social spheres. One such example would be the widely studied 'A Triangular Theory of Love' by Robert J. Sternberg (1986). Intimacy is placed at the apex of this triangular theory, followed by passion and decision-commitment at the two vertices (Sternberg, 1986). This placement is not arbitrary but rather symbolic of the importance given to each component. Contrary to the all-encompassing nature of the intimacy component, the passion component leans heavily towards physical and sexual attraction in relationships, and limits itself to feelings of romance (Sternberg, 1986, p. 119). The last component of this tripartite theory of love is the decision-commitment component, establishing a timeline during which the feelings of love can either develop or fade (Sternberg, 1986, p. 119). The short-term aspect being the decision to love somebody and the long-term one being the commitment towards maintaining that love.

This theory is an example of how even academic spheres struggle to escape the notion that romantic love takes

precedence over all other kinds of love. There also exists the general notion that physical or sexual attraction only exists in romantic relationships, adding on to the said hierarchy. (Sternberg, 1986, p. 124). The Quadruple Theory by Tobore Onijighofia Tobore, on the other hand, builds upon this model of love along with the AAC model (Attraction, Attachment-Commitment, Caregiving). (Tobore, 2020). It puts forward a more comprehensive understanding of the components of love. The four corners of this theory entail attraction, connection/resonance, trust and respect (Tobore, 2020, p. 2-3).

Contrary to what one might think, attraction, under the Quadruple Theory, refers more to the perceived value/appeal of the relationship than purely physical or sexual attraction. Connection or resonance is the gateway to the feelings of commitment, caregiving, and intimacy and it is strengthened by proximity and similarity between loved ones. Feelings of oneness help enhance the building of trust in relationships which, in turn, is crucial for relationship satisfaction. Respect in relationships goes beyond just reverence; it also consists of admiration, regard, and value of the loved one's life (Batool and Malik, 2010).

While comparing the AAC model, the Triangular Theory of Love and the Quadruple Theory, it is evident that platonic and non-romantic forms of love are often overshadowed and even intellectuals, inevitably, find themselves talking about the undeniable importance of romantic and sexual compatibility in all relationships. And thus, romantic love ends up being the inescapable default setting, even in academic literature. (Berscheid and Reis, 1998). Fresher research, like the Quadruple Theory and the Colour Wheel Theory by John Alan Lee, does acknowledge the existence of sexual relations outside of romantic love, but societal structures still struggle to accept it (Lee, 1973).

To a larger degree, even when we see it from the point of view of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, sex comes under physiological, or basic needs, while love comes under psychological needs. (Maslow, 1943) It is worth noting the status of women throughout the history of humankind to see just how much they've been exploited on the basis of these two factors. Very few of their basic needs were met—let alone that of security. And as we've seen time and again, the brunt of sexual exploitation, to a large extent, has been borne by women. So, the idea of romantic love has appealed to them the most as it provides them a solace from all their miseries. However, was it simply a way to manipulate them into thinking things would get better, in order to make them fit into the patriarchal narrative neatly?

The rosy idea of settling down and bearing children with your perfect partner has always been the most popular idea of romantic love amongst women. It tied them down to one person and prevented them from going far beyond that.

This also prevented any room for other kinds of romantic relationships, like same-sex ones or polyamorous ones (and the only way that would happen would be if the male had extra-marital affairs). Thus, bringing forward a very heteronormative perspective to romantic relationships.

What's striking is how this hierarchy presents itself in different ways as we move across cultures. Parental love takes precedence over all other types of love in most Hindu scriptures. The well-known *Kurma Purana*, an important Vaishnavite text, talks in length about how vital it is to respect and serve one's parents if one desires any form of prosperity. Additionally, it also places servitude to parents above all forms of religious worship (Hazra, 1962). All throughout Hindu, Nordic and Greek traditions, we see repeated instances of children sacrificing themselves in service of parents. It is quite interesting to note that the Quadruple Theory talks about attraction in a similar tone, mentioning that attraction for sons is found to be greater (material or immaterial) (Tobore, 2020, p. 7). It also speaks at length about how even parental love is just as transactional as any other relationship; in the sense that the amount of investment put into a child, when compared to the amount of service done for the parents in return results in positive behaviour (Tobore, 2020, p. 7-8). It rings especially true when we hear of cases of child maltreatment at the hands of parents who can't afford to bring them up suitably owing to their unfavourable economic conditions. And yet, we see that the pedestalization of romantic love dominates most forms of modern media, a sharp contrast from what it must have been aeons ago. Who exactly benefits from this overemphasis and what are the ramifications of it?

Several ramifications follow this obviously skewed nature of assessing romantic love. The most obvious being this very utopian view of love as a way to win everyone over. "Love trumps all," "love always wins," etc. are the most familiar phrases that come to mind. On the flipside, there also exists a dystopian view: where love causes pain. The Taj Mahal is dubbed as one of the greatest shows of love in the history of mankind. Built to serve as a symbol of Shah Jahan's eternal love for Mumtaz Mahal, it drained the empire's resources and ultimately led to the downfall of one of the greatest Mughal rulers. Acid attack victims can attest to the notion 'love brings pain' - another extreme end of the scenario. It can be seen as one of the most dangerous outcomes of the previously discussed tropes of love being the fix-it to all problems.

The unconditionality of love sets up a dangerous precedent and contradicts the notion that it is just as transactional as any other relationship. But what it also does is blind its believers into thinking that there are unrealistic standards in life which can be fulfilled, with the help of love. Love, in every form, is as transactional as a relationship between an employer and an employee. And yet, the heart will want what it wants - be it affection, intimacy, trust or commitment. Romantic love, in particular, has been used to exploit many people - from women to lonely people seeking to find meaning

in life. Whether it is worth being celebrated or rejected is something the individual should decide, not the collective.

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3. ARRANGED MARRIAGES FROM THE FUNCTIONALIST AND RATIONAL-LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

–AARUSHI SHAH

Arranged weddings have long been a feature of Asian and, to an extent, Indian culture. These unions can be seen as a means of fostering social solidarity. But as more people enter into love weddings today, the caste system, which provided the basis for social solidarity in planned marriages, will finally come to an end. In this essay, the development of Indian marriage is examined through the lens of functionalist theory and bureaucratic theory. Families in societies that practise arranged marriages are hierarchically structured, with each member submitting to "group control," and playing socially prescribed duties. When new needs emerge, new institutions are created to meet them, according to functionalism. According to this viewpoint, system disorganisation, such as deviant behaviour, leads to change because societal components must adjust to achieve stability like love marriages.

COMMERCIALISATION OF ARRANGED MARRIAGES

Arranged marriages in Asian countries, particularly in the context of India, represent a similarity to the design and operation of a bureaucratic machinery as well as they serve to preserve social cohesion and advance power relations. In order to keep the caste system in place in India and preserve distinct boundaries between the top and lower castes, the custom of arranged marriages was first introduced (Khandpur, 2017). However, it quickly became the foundation for other issues to emerge, such as the dominance of male elders over others, etc.

Thus, this paper examines arranged marriages from the perspective of bureaucratic and functionalist thought. According to bureaucratic theory, the social structure of arranged marriages supports the pursuit of logical and collective goals that benefit society and boost its efficiency (Udy, 1959). Similarly, according to functionalist theory, arranged marriages relate to that specific social institution that is responsible for the perpetuation of societal norms. As a result, any violation of these norms will result in repercussions for the individual.

Norms are the basis of arranged marriage, as observed from the view of both theories. To begin with, the institution of arranged marriage represents the elements of a bureaucracy. The first characteristic has to do with task specialisation (Blau, 2014). Similar to the division of labour, the task of arranging marriages is divided within society, with family members responsible for selecting a spouse within their own caste and subcaste, the elders assigned with the responsibility of making the final decision, much like a CEO in a company and the nayan (middlemen) playing the role of human resources.

The second element has to do with how the couples are chosen. The selection process for those who would make good spouses is a protracted one. Prior to joining a family of the same caste or subcaste, they must first register, either online

at sites like shaadi.com or through the caste registry posted in the homes of the people who are planning to marry their children in the same caste. After registering, potential candidates meet and talk about their future plans, interests, hobbies, salaries, and other topics to see if they will be able to support a family in the future. Typically, the male is given the duty of providing for the family, while the female is expected to handle all household chores.

This is comparable to a bureaucratic organisation, such as a corporate job screening applicants for future employment in the organisation and evaluating their capacity to perform various responsibilities (Blau, 2014). Similar to job advertisements printed in the newspaper asking for candidates with specific degrees, skills, and qualifications, advertisements are occasionally printed in the paper by men and women seeking a specific type of partner with a particular colour complexion, a particular height and age, and a particular weight, among other characteristics.

The third characteristic has to do with the impersonal interactions between managers or owners and their staff (Blau, 2014). This can be compared to an impersonal interaction between the younger caste members and the older male members. In order to maintain caste status or, in a broader sense, the caste system in the community, the older members make sure that the young people marry within their own caste. In comparison to other younger members who choose to enter into love marriages with members of different castes, the young members who choose to enter into arranged marriages within the same caste as well as love marriages within the same caste benefit in terms of participating in the social and cultural activities of their caste.

In a similar vein, the fourth principle concerns the family's male elders' authority to make decisions. Arranged marriage is a hierarchical structure, with the highest position having the most authority, in this case the position of male elders in the family (Gupta, 1976). As discussed previously, the eldest members act like CEOs of a company, making decisions for

every member of the family.

The last principle pertains to the rules and laws that govern a bureaucratic organisation similar to the laws that regulate society (Wright, 2020). Everyone in the society is required to follow these regulations, and anyone who doesn't will be penalised by being shunned by the group. Thus, the bureaucracy theory suggests that by making sure that planned weddings take place within the same caste and subcaste, it guarantees uniformity among the members and ensures that the caste system is maintained in society, which aims to fulfil the wishes of the ruling class (Udy, 1959). As a result, the institution of arranged marriage can use all of the elements of bureaucracy to ensure social cohesion which in itself is a flawed system (Udy, 1959).

With this goal of social solidarity in mind, Emile Durkheim also proposed a theory, the theory of functionalism. Arranged marriage is regarded as a positive social institution that contributes to the harmonious functioning of society, according to this theory (Turner & Maryanski, n.d.). The core premise of Durkheim is that a self-conscious society mandates behaviour consistent with its own survival (Pope, 2016)

However, the application of social fact is another component of the functionalist theory that describes how social institutions like arranged weddings are imposed on society (Jones, 2007). Social facts are cultural or social in character and refer to anything that exists outside of the person and demonstrates their ability to bind the community together, such as social norms, institutions, rules, and regulations.

Societal consensus and order has been emphasised by functionalists, with a focus on public values and social cohesion (Pope, 2016). According to this viewpoint, systemic disorder, such as deviant behaviour, results in change because social elements must adapt to establish stability. When one part of a system breaks, it affects the other parts, creates problems for society, and necessitates social change. As a result, functionalism contends that arranged marriages serve as social institutions that function as the various organs of society, each of which has an impact on the other.

And as a result, Durkheim distinguished between normal and pathological behaviour, the latter being abnormal behaviour (Pope, 2016). The institution of arranged marriage is the usual in this case, but the abnormal institution is that of love marriage, which is also considered to have had an impact on how well the rest of society functions by altering the conventions of arranged marriages (Gupta, 1976). Technological advancements, education, and increased participation of young people in the labour sector have resulted in a shift in these customary practices of arranged marriages (Allendorf & Pandian, 2016). The perfect representation of this may be seen in the Bollywood film "Badrinath Ki Dulhania."

The movie covers the steps involved in an arranged marriage, beginning with the elders of the family selecting suitable partners for the children, meeting the candidates, their interactions, the dowry process, and the wedding itself. With regard to bureaucratic and functionalist theory, this film is an excellent illustration of the male elders' abuse of power and authority as observed in the authority given by the society to the groom's father, their hierarchy in the institution of marriage that they presided over, the patriarchal relationship between the two families, the upholding of the family's status in terms of caste and class as shown in the marriage alliance within the same caste, and the consequences of defying the family's will of marrying the person chosen by the family from the same caste can be seen in the fleeing of the bride on the last day of her wedding, which has negative ramifications not only for her but also for her family (Birnbaum, 1953).

The bureaucratic hypothesis contends that the bride's behaviour undermines the authority of those in charge and destroys the organisation, in this case, the society (Olsen, 2005). The functionalist argument contends that because the bride deviated from cultural norms and standards, her actions would cause her and her family to be shunned by society. These deviations can be seen as a product of the spread of the western culture, largely through mass media (Allendorf & Pandian, 2016).

Globalisation also has a significant impact on the transition from arranged to love marriages since it includes the mass media as a core component. Love marriages are viewed as modern and progressive. In contrast to planned marriages, love marriages are based on personal characteristics and interpersonal interactions that emphasise a 'horizontal bond' between marital spouses (Banerji & Deshpande, 2020).

Arranged marriage is thus a manifestation of cultural ideals of the marriage system. Members of society are expected to obey and protect societal norms, the law, and professional standards (Olsen, 2005). Hence, according to the bureaucratic and functionalist theories, the caste system is being used by the institution of arranged marriage to promote and practise one particular aim, namely the goal of social unity which aims to serve the ruling classes through the arranged marriage system and is flawed in itself as a foundation of the system. Thus, they have been criticised by further sociologists, for instance, critique by Karl Marx in terms of the failure of the functionalist theory to account for social change among other critiques. Hence, the functionalist theory does not take into account the changes in the arranged marriage system with respect to the decline of the importance of caste in recent times (Khandpur, 2017). According to both ideas, any departure from this structure causes social disputes and has a negative impact on the cohesiveness of the community.

Arranged marriage might therefore represent a "power structure" or a "chain of command" (Allendorf & Pandian,

2016). Arranged marriage keeps the authority to access and control resources within a single social group, and any attempt by other groups to obtain access to these resources is considered as a threat to their social standing. As a result, love marriage is viewed as an attempt by other social groups to raise their social standing. They are able to use members of their caste in order to persuade them to remain in power relative to other groups by marrying within the same group. An institution will disappear if it no longer fulfills its intended purpose, much like how there is an increasing hybridization of arranged and love marriages from a purely existing arranged marriage system, as suggested by the theories of family change (Allendorf & Pandian, 2016) in recent times. A decrease in arranged marriages indicates that caste and religion are becoming less significant (Allendorf & Pandian, 2016). Hence to conclude, the sociological theories of bureaucracy and functionalism can well explain the behaviour and actions of human beings with respect to the caste system in India. And though the functionalist theory explains behaviour based on caste, it fails to take into consideration the exploitative aspects of it.

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4. THE DYNAMICS OF INTIMACY

–SNEHA NAIR & TANVI GHOTAGE

With this article, the authors aim to examine the different dynamics of romantic love throughout life and how societal norms, pressures and restrictions can cause issues with intimacy that compromise our ability to be vulnerable. Our social circles, rituals and traditions that we associate ourselves with and the content we consume daily have an enormous impact on us, resulting in an inability to feel something that is supposed to come so naturally to us. By losing our ability to connect with each other, we are losing our ability to be human. We aim to deconstruct the complexity of love, in hopes of understanding it as it is- the pinnacle of human intimacy.

Humans are defined by their emotions. They fill us with drive and purpose and control our every action. Love is the most intense of all emotions. Romanticised by wars, literature and culture, the active products of love hold it true to its intensity. Love is an emotion often described as the natural urge to reproduce, caused due to a chemical reaction. But as a realistic concept, it is much more than a scientific definition. It has multiple aspects woven into itself and plays an integral part in our social identity, specifically our ability to be intimate.

For most, our first perception of intimacy begins at the earliest stages of our lives when we are exposed to the emotion of love through our parents or guardians. Gradually, this affects our dynamic with the other social groups that we involve ourselves with as we grow up. A string of issues related to hesitation towards being vulnerable and intimate may be sourced from being rejected by these social groups at such a 'young age'. The effects of rejection in childhood may also include fear of intimacy (Gillette, 2022).

Some young people may not be able to interact and socialise effectively due to the failed attempts of socialisation in their close family bonds. Through relationships with parents, other family members and caregivers, children learn about their world. This is because relationships let children express themselves and their needs. Individuals who have been exposed to active expression of love and affection in their early years do not hesitate to be vocal about their feelings, opinions, and love for others. When the parent responds, the child may feel safe and secure, building a strong relationship between the two of them. As a consequence, when the child feels safe and attached to the parent, the child is more likely to have the confidence to explore their world (Relationships and Child Development, 2020).

It is also to be noted that the behaviour of the parents is a representation of their social upbringing conducted by their parents and the impact of the social factors they were exposed to. These social factors may include their religious practices, their cultural backgrounds, their traditions, kinship patterns and family dynamics (if they follow matriarchal or patriarchal patterns), the socio-economic status, geographical location (the development of the country they live in) and their exposure to media. This upbringing may vary for every individual, making them question if their expression of affection is deemed appropriate or not.

During the age of adolescence, in most contexts, teenagers often compromise their authenticity in order to fit in and prioritise the feeling of achieving a certain type of socially appropriate love over everything else. But, simultaneously, teenagers are subjected to constant shaming even if they're just considering the idea of love (D'Lima et al., 2020). The elderly in India are generally obeyed, and
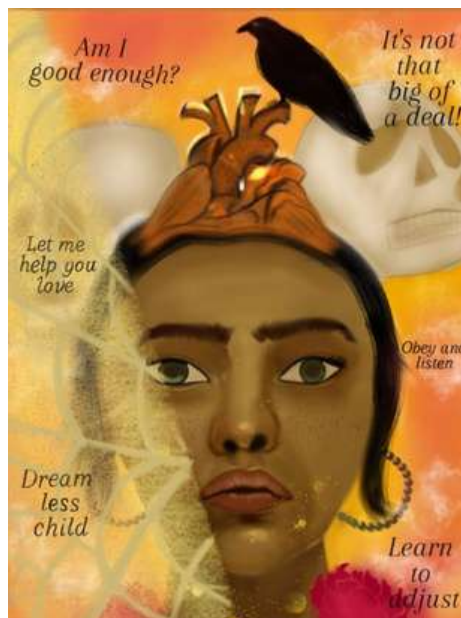
Illustration by Anjisha Joy

The illustration depicts a person with an anatomical heart on their head. A crow is sitting on the edge of the heart with images of two skulls behind it. There are six different sentences in the illustration which go as: It's not that big of a deal; Am I good enough?; Let me help you love; Obey and listen; Dream less child; Learn to adjust

treated with dignity by the family. This reinforces in the minds of the younger generation the respect and love the elders are entitled to get within the larger structure (Chadha, 2008). Love is thought of as a premarital manifestation, and is regarded as a disruptive element which upsets close familial ties. It is perceived as a loss of allegiance of a person as it is regarded as a transfer of loyalty from one's family to another individual. This leaves the family and kin group in disdain of their individual goals rather than what the family wants them to do. Love as a simple infatuation or a premarital activity is not encouraged. Rather, elders consider it as their most important duty to supervise everyone with a more pronounced focus on girls (Gupta, 1976). Thus, older people, usually at a position of power, naturally feel obligated to impose what their perception of the individual's priorities should be. This may also include them telling these young individuals what is and is not the right way to find themselves an ideal and appropriate partner.

Besides this, the idea of a serious versus casual relationship is a prominent topic of contemplation. Individuals start facing confusion with respect to "how much love is okay to give". Owing to misguided information, one may believe that sex is the only way to truly feel close to someone and is the highest form of intimacy (van Lankveld et al., 2018). Although this may be true for some, intimacy is ambiguous and authentic. In the

context of casual relationships, one may try to avoid all forms of affectionate or romantic behaviour and only resort to sexual behaviour to showcase their nonchalant attitude regarding the relationship shared by the two or more partners.

The idea of being physically intimate or even affectionate is highly disapproved of by the majority of Indian society. Intimacy is always looked at as a matter that is to be conducted behind private doors. When one doesn't have the luxury of privacy, the need for intimacy becomes more acute. According to intimacy coach Pallavi Barnwal (2022), the idea of physical space in the context of sexual intimacy is complicated because most Asians are raised with the approach that " "restraint," particularly when it comes to sex, is a virtue". "We are constantly told, especially women, that we need to control our urges – it could even be the urge to shop or to watch television," she said. "We are made to feel guilty about our desires, and so we don't view or design our spaces to accommodate [sexual] intimacy, to begin with" (Khan, 2022). All the relationships that get involved in the process of a marriage are highly interdependent on each other, which often leads to a reduction in privacy and personal space that are integral factors for creating an intimate bond, increasing the feelings of isolation. Our exposure to mainstream media also has a role to play in this as it glorifies the idea of falling in love and often portrays it as our sole purpose in life. Which also eventually leads to us having unrealistic expectations from our partner. In the Indian society, the socially appropriate method to find an ideal partner is through marriage.

In Indian society, marriage is considered as an obligation and any dynamic that is not monogamous and heterosexual is shamed and looked down upon. An example of this is very well presented in the Indian web-series called *Made in Heaven*. It is the most appropriate pop culture depiction of how two people who are about to get married can lose all their intimacy in the process to keep their family 'happy'. The constant need to follow traditions and culture somewhere exhausts the relationship and the whole essence of love. These traditions may also include the obligation of having children. Giving birth to children also has adverse effects on the partners individually, which may also affect their relationship. Traditions that are inherently patriarchal, like the 'kanyadaan' ('giving away the daughter') ritual in most Indian weddings, lead to the discomfort and hesitance of the bride. Traditions may also include virilocality and, especially in situations where the woman moves into a joint family, she may feel more alienated (Menon, 2012). A woman, if forced to become a housewife, may feel suppressed and coerced into believing that her professional and career oriented goals do not matter. This creates an unsafe space for her, leading to hesitation in opening up and being vulnerable with spouse.

At an older stage in life, especially in the case of re-partnering, men and women are perceived and judged by society on the basis of what their possible motive from the

relationship could be as intimacy is considered to take a backseat after the ideal retirement age (Samanta & Varghese, 2019). This essentially is seen due to the crossing of the 'age of procreation' or the ideal age where the couple can give birth to 'their own' children. Sociologically speaking, re-partnering from a woman's point of view is seen as a way to gain financial and social security after the demise of or separation from their previous partner.

Intimacy and the factors that affect it can impact virtually every relationship we have in our life. Although it's often most obvious in romantic partnerships, intimacy issues can cause problems in friendships, co-working relationships, and nearly every other relationship in your life (Catchings, 2022), often leading to no support group being available to us when we experience severe grief. The reason for this fear may more often be because of suppressing our emotions for so long that we forget how to identify them, let alone express them.

Most structures of society are focused on controlling every aspect of an individual's life. Not conforming to the rules of a community will lead to the individual being treated like an outcast, excluding them from the advantages of protection and support that come with being a part of the community. Their rebellion is seen as deviance and they are no longer accepted by the community. The fear of being left out and isolated forces them to resort to socially sanctioned ways of intimate behaviour. This shatters the authenticity of intimate relationships, as it always goes hand in hand with compromise and pain.

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5. FROM EATING TO SLEEPING TOGETHER: EXPLORING DOG–HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

–AMRIT JANGRA

Humans have coexisted with animals for thousands of years now. Today, mutually dependent relationships have developed between humans and domesticated animals, particularly cats and dogs. Our capacity to love, live alongside others, and show compassion is evident through our relationships with them. The fact that people treat their pet dogs as family members has transformed the social institution of a family, which was typically human. A lot of such families today are a hybrid of relations, where these new and important "family members", with their undying love and affection, have managed to modify social roles within the family.

This article seeks to examine what pet dogs mean for family practices, household routines, and relationships within the family. It thus extends the functional theory of families to non-human species and explores how affectionate relationships between individuals and their puppies also affect family dynamics.

Love comes in many forms. From casual intimacy and small acts of love to romantic love, parental love, and even fandoms- it can prolifically mean a myriad of things, making it all the more difficult to define and study. It also has the power to extend beyond human-to-human relationships, thus breaking the species barrier. Human–nonhuman relationships have existed since before the pre-agricultural age, wherein animals provided a means of subsistence to foraging societies. As humans started domesticating animals, animals such as horses or oxen helped with agricultural work and production. Today, they serve as a source of companionship and protection and are increasingly occupying meaningful positions in the lives of their owners.

George Herbert Mead theorised that animals are incapable of

Illustration by Amrit Jangra

Image consists of a large light pink heart with a thin, darker pink border. The heart is filled with different types of dogs. On the top right side of the heart is a girl sleeping with two other sleeping dogs. Next to them is the word 'love' written in small, cursive font.

using language and socialising using meaningful symbols and are thus outside the scope of sociological inquiry (Sanders, 2006). However, in today's post-industrial age, humans' relationships and interactions with other animals continue to shape society. Today, animals are not just used for subsistence or production but are also extensively involved in therapy and providing emotional support. Links with animals also permeate art and literature, language, theatre, music and other cultural dimensions. Examples include books and stories such as Alice's Adventures In Wonderland, Little Red Riding Hood, and Black Beauty. Pet dogs don't just influence their owners' behaviours but may also act as social facilitators for human-to-human interactions. For instance, one might actually bond with somebody over their shared love for dogs. However, in spite of animals' significant role in the development of human society and culture, they have largely been excluded from the scope of sociology because symbolic interactionist perspectives such as that of Mead continue to dominate the field (Sanders, 2006). This article seeks to explore what pets, particularly dogs, mean for family practices, household routines, and relationships within the family. It thus extends the functional theory of families to non-human species and explores how affectionate relationships between individuals and their pet dogs also affect family dynamics.

The most intimate human-nonhuman relationship would be people's experiences with their pet dogs. Dog ownership is growing exponentially, and a majority of people are likely to anthropomorphise their pet dogs (Charles, 2014). They are considered significant, sentient family members who need to be loved and cherished like any other human. The story of Hachiko, the Japanese Akita dog who waited for his human every day at the train station even after his death, calls attention to the enduring affectionate relationship between
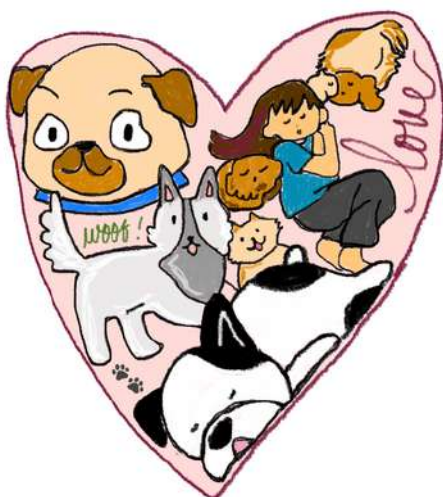
dogs and humans. People might adjust their own schedules to meet their puppies' needs, or they might spend more on the dog than on themselves. People usually form close attachments with their pet dogs, solidifying their sense of kinship and belonging by referring to them as their "fur babies" or themselves as "parents". People may also add their surnames to their dog's name, such as 'Milo Jangra', instead of just 'Milo'. The relationship people share with their dogs is often mutually dependent and similar to their bonds with other humans since they provide a sense of security, love, and support.

The fact that people treat pets as family members has transformed the social institution of a family, which was typically composed only of humans. Many such families today are a hybrid of relations, where these new and important "family members", with their undying love and affection, have managed to modify social roles within the family. In childless families, the pet dog may fill in the role of a child, therefore also positively affecting the humans' self-concept. However, pet dogs are more than just substitutes for children or friends. The dog's agency, though relatively limited, also constantly affects everyday practices in a household, and they cannot simply be placed within the existing understandings of a family. The home acts as a space wherein the dog's personality and 'otherness' alter the experience of home-making and what it means to be a family through a variety of new routines and ways of living. Pets actively reshape household practices, relationships and rituals. Tying a rakhi to a pet dog every year on Raksha Bandhan and even celebrating their birthdays are examples of the same. Unfailing love for their pet dogs and such tender relationships that people share with them also have significant effects on the economy. With the rise in the population of pets, the intimate relationship between humans and pets was capitalised on, with companies swooping in to offer products and services specifically designed to cater to pets' needs. Today, multiple brands sell pet products ranging from food to toys to grooming products.

Familial dynamics often change after the entry of a pet dog into the household. The dog's dependence on the humans leads to obligations that must be fulfilled. However, the responsibility of caring for the dog does not really seem like a compulsion but a conscious choice that one makes out of love for their pet. Individuals in the household may take up different roles and duties that come with caring for a pet dog. In a dog-human dyad, the human constantly assumes the positionality or perspective of their dog and comes to construct the personhood of the animal. People also often speak to and for their pets, seeing them as subjective beings who understand emotions. Both the dog, as well as its owner mutually construct definitions of the other and adjust their behaviours accordingly based on established meanings of gestures. For instance, the dog may sit like a 'good boy' whenever he wants a treat because he knows his human will understand this behaviour and give him a treat.

Sharing a domestic space with a dog leads to the blurring of the invisible boundaries of 'us' and 'them'. Letting our dogs sleep in our beds, sharing living spaces with them, and treating them as kin has blurred the species barrier and made us realise our similarities with them (Charles, 2014). The biophilia hypothesis emphasises the idea that as a result of coevolution, humans have the innate ability to be attracted to nature and all life forms (Gullone, 2000). This further explains the affinity between humans and their pet dogs. Dogs' ability to offer companionship, love and emotional support explains why they are called "man's best friend" and how they offer the ontological security that one may lack with other humans.

However, in such multi-species, hybrid families, the power dynamic between the humans and the dogs does not cease to exist, owing to the dogs' dependence on the humans. While they are family members, they are also 'pets', leaving them somewhere in a liminal space between kin and kind. The fact that dogs are formally trained to behave in specific ways that are socially acceptable outside the house puts them in a position that is subordinate to their human family members. Relations of dominance with their pet dogs reflect an evolutionary, biologically rooted hierarchical structure of interactions between humans and their dogs.

Dogs are social animals and are capable of understanding and expressing emotion (Payne, 2015). They play a significant role in their human's lives as social actors, constantly engaging in mutual recognition of the other as co-interactants and trying to gauge an understanding of each other's position in the interaction. More than human families made through the cohabitation of humans and their dogs are no less significant than those consisting only of people. Dogs, as their human's companions, are active participants in society, and their influence on social organisation and the workings of important institutions like families cannot be ignored.

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6. TILL DEATH DO US APART

–ANGELINE CORREA

It is a truth universally acknowledged that love has existed for aeons, captured through the lens of poetic expression. However, these literary devices are continually changing with evolving philosophies on what is socially permissible. With the onset of technological modernity, the boundaries of acceptable love have drastically shifted. The research article underscores this paradigm by reviewing feminist and queer literature, touching upon caste, and critically analysing Gen Z's parasocial relationships with fictional characters, chiefly villains. In this manner, literary works mirror love in the society in which they were penned. They impact our understanding of passion amid prejudice for generations to come.
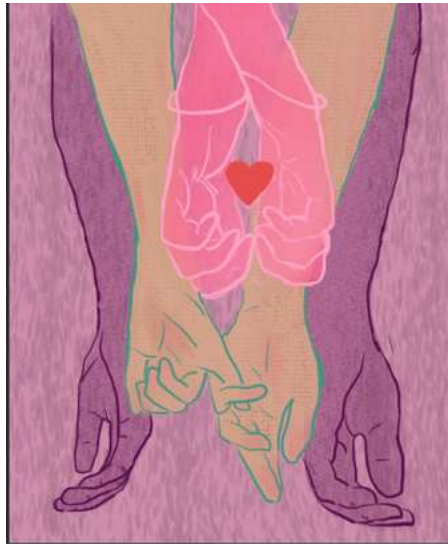

Illustration by Ruchika Basutkar

The image background is a pale mix of dull pink and purple.There are two large hands entering from the top side of the image. They are purple in colour with thin, darker purple lineart. They are facing away from each other. On top of them and two other hands, beige in colour with a thin teal lineart. They are smaller. The pinkie finger of the hand on the right is loosely holding the pinkie finger of the hand on the left. On top of these hands, is the third set of hands that are pink in colour with a thin, light pink lineart. These hands are faced towards each other, with their fingers curled towards each other. There is a small red heart that lies in the space created.

To the question of why love did not occupy a more central place in sociology's classical tradition, several tentative answers can be offered: One factor is love's empirical evasiveness. Love, as a private, intersubjective and emotional phenomenon that is often secret and clandestine, poses methodological challenges that make it difficult to observe, let alone measure. Unlike marriage, which has an objective institutional quality, love can be a fleeting subjective experience that does not always leave a record on an emotional marriage registry. Second, love has long been regarded as a psychological phenomenon, or at best a socio-psychological one, and thus outside the purview of sociology (Rusu, 2017). With the term "love", there often exists a notion of a somewhat permanent relationship.

Much like: together, forever. However, what if an unforeseen, uncontrollable circumstance occurs that completely hinders this social construct? In this article, I will attempt to deconstruct the implications of love and terminally ill individuals within the institutions of family and media

Family is a natural phenomenon. It remains affected by social, economic and political change. According to the North (western society), there exists a universal structure of family: a nuclear family. It consists of a father, mother and children, often referred to as a small kin group. Through a functionalist framework, Parsons suggests that in a nuclear family each member has a role to fulfil, which is the reason why this social institution still remains. The father is the breadwinner, the mother the homemaker and the children dependent on them. When these roles are fulfilled, it creates a warm feeling of gratitude, often perceived as love. So, a father, mother and children turn into a loving father, loving mother and loving children This creates very structured roles of a father portraying his love by providing for his family. A mother on the other hand expresses her love by maintaining the house and children by being obedient to their parents by studying, going to school and participating in extracurricular activities. When any one of the members is diagnosed with a terminal illness, there is an immediate redefinition of roles. A terminally ill father will not be able to "provide" for his family. This leads to the mother or the oldest child to take over the "father's role" of being the financial support to sustain the family. This displaces all other roles such as cooking, cleaning, going to school, studying, participating in extracurricular activities. Oftentimes the terminally ill father will feel unworthy simply because he cannot play the role he is conditioned to perform. He is required to come to terms with accepting the "dying role" instead of a "sick role" (because there is no scope for recovery and death is inevitable). This affects the dynamics of love within the family. If the oldest son possesses the primary source of income, his portrayal of love is accomplished by playing the role of his terminally ill father. In the case of a terminally ill mother, the additional roles played by other members showcases a significant amount of love in maintaining the structure of a family.

Love is an undeniable feature that forms human relationships and structures social life (Rusu, 2017). Why do we feel the need to "fill the gap"? When a family member is diagnosed with a terminal illness, they are unable to fulfil their familial obligations. The rest of the members compensate to establish a smooth functioning. According to Durkheim, these roles are carried out to maintain social order. Family love is the first and foremost call of duty, it is the expression of social morality. Without this expression of love between the members, the structure of the family will fall apart (Rusu, 2017). It is thus a social obligation, that all members love each other in order for them to carry out their roles and the roles of the terminally ill member. Like Durkheim, Weber also mentioned the expression of love indirectly in his writings. He thought of love as similar to his work on the sociology of religion. He unpacked the term "brotherly love" in the realm of religion that transcended to salvation. According to him, before the whole notion of salvation, kinship ethics were based on two fundamental principles. First, was the idea of reciprocity: treat others the same way you would want them to treat you. Second, was the concept of neighbourliness: help for the friendly neighbour. The second principle established a universal code ethic of brotherhood which is broadly classified as the "communism of love" (Weber, 1946, p. 330). In the context of family and Weber's ideal types, a "perfect" family will have a healthy balance of love and reciprocity. When a member is terminally ill, do these principles occur in a similar manner? I disagree. The healthy members tend to give more than they receive in terms of caretaking and compensation of roles. Also, the expression of love might significantly increase or diminish depending upon the socioeconomic status of the family.

The media plays an important role in the portrayal of this "perfect healthy family". If one misses any of one of these three words, it is automatically regarded as something deviant from the norm. In postmodern times, a cliché exists that the media formulates how our act of love must look like. In a similar manner, family love is portrayed in an extremely stereotypical way. 'Hospice comics' address an underserved area of healthcare resonate with honesty, brave intimacy and heart-breaking detail. A thorough examination of them is a worthwhile endeavour, particularly in light of the stigma associated with natural death and dying. Rather than viewing terminal illness as an unavoidable source of pain and death, the texts illuminate the experience to become more complex, allowing for new intimate and familial love experiences (Czerwiec et al., 2014). Individuals are not sensitised to other forms of family love, in this case the diagnosis of a terminal illness on a family member. On October 9th 2020, Disney released Clouds. This was a film based on a teenage boy diagnosed with a terminal illness and his strain on maintaining a positive outlook on life. One can observe in the film that his family gives him "Glass-half-full" advice and showers him with as much love as possible. Viewers can gain insight on the importance of familial love and support through tough times.

There is a scene where the boy's father arranges for him to drive his dream car. But even this form of media portrayal leads to very rigid behaviours that are 'expected': to be carried out of such a situation should occur to a close one. That is how love should be portrayed, giving your terminally ill children as much as possible while they are alive. Society tends to provide unsolicited sympathy and advice to these 'different' individuals. In my opinion, the advice tends to be an attempt to maintain the structure of a typical 'familial love'. For example, advice like "You're sick because you are not positive enough", "Everything works out in the end" and "You'll get over it or get used to it" immediately insinuates that because he/she/they have little time to live, they should make the most of it. There is an expectation for them to try to carry out regular functions in the midst of a dysfunction. There is a feeling of having to show pity to families with a terminally ill member by engaging in toxic positivity. I know, it may come from a place of love and care for the sick individual. However, this leads to a violation of privacy.

Media also showcases an aspect of 'eternity'. A family will not always be happy, healthy or have love for one another forever. But that does not hold true for anyone in this world. In the case of a terminal illness, these dynamics become a little more scrutinised. Confessional deaths, in which terminally ill people fight, face, and eventually accept their deaths, reconciling themselves with their loved ones, retelling and sometimes reconstructing personal biographies, and presiding over their final days in a manner similar to that of a chief mourner at a funeral, have become increasingly valued in the anglophone world (Seale, 2004). The media seldom takes into account the varied socio-economic statuses of individuals. For example, a terminal illness does not always lead to reconciliation with loved ones, sometimes it may be forced. Love in this case has an expiration date, it is not 'eternal'. Media tends to portray the struggle for the maintenance of expressing love from a terminally ill individual. A terminally ill parent tends to struggle in expressing love out of the sadness that he/she/they may not be able to be there for all the milestones that their children will achieve. For example, in the movie Kaash released in 1987, an alcoholic father learns that his child has brain cancer and vows to fulfil his child's wishes before passing away. Similarly, terminally ill children will experience an overdose of love from the parents because of their shorter lifespan. In conclusion, I observe that there is a unique expression of love of and for terminally ill individuals within the institutions of family and media. The structure of family heavily influences love in the case of a terminal illness and media cements a stereotypical view of the portrayal of love. The limitation to my article is that my operational definition of family excludes several families that change the aspect of love among the members. A terminally ill individual tends to receive love more than they are expected to express it. Love tends to be equally reciprocal in "normal" society but the dynamics change in such special circumstances.

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7.GRIEF: LOVE PERSEVERED

-RIA SHUKLA

Throughout time, there have been stories of love that have had happy endings. However, the number of situations of people being in love that had to suffer a tragic death is substantially higher. The literature of every culture has a story of romantic love that builds on this said trope. From William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet that has its origins dating back to 1597, to the Arab originated tale of Layla-Majnun. With repetitive themes of grief-inducing love stories, one begins to question why, as social beings, are humans attracted to such themes in their literature again and again, even after knowing how each of them will end? With this question in mind, the aim of this paper is to analyse and understand the reasons behind humans choosing this particular trope of grief filled love repeatedly, while also examining their relevance in modern day scenarios.

Love is a miniscule four lettered word that has enough power to shape nations and raise armies, with almost all actions being termed as 'fair in love (and war).' After all, is love not a war in itself, as it often revolves around conflicts? On an individualistic level, it is known to influence a person's behaviour, lifestyle, way of thinking, and a lot more. Taking a broader perspective into account, love is a force to be reckoned with, a fact well evidenced by the number of wars that have been claimed to be fought on such grounds. It is a cathexis. It is an emotion that ranges from being familiar to unknown, reciprocal to unrequited, allowed to forbidden, and mostly spans between platonic and romantic while looking at it with only one specific frame of reference in mind- being the heterosexual binary. Love happens to be a strong emotional attachment that can exist among adolescents and adults. There is a sense of tenderness and sexual desire that comes along with it (Goode, 1959). This article will be looking into the scope of love, mainly tragic love, in adolescents and adults following a heterosexual point of view due to the same.

Throughout time immemorial, there have been stories of love that have had 'happy endings.' However, the number of situations of people being in love that had to suffer an unexpectedly premature death is substantially higher, as portrayed by the numerous tales in the literature of countries such as Turkey, Iran, France, Italy, India, and many more. The tales that are originally the creations of a certain culture and country are found to be popular in several other ones as well. For example, the love story of Hero and Leander, is a popular Greek tale, but has been found to be immensely admired throughout Europe, including Ukraine (Shan, 2000). The literature of every culture has a story of romantic love that builds on the trope of tragic love. From William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet that has its origins dating back to 1597, to the Arab originated tale of Layla-Majnun, every story has multiple renditions, each more sorrowful than the last. With repetitive themes of grief-inducing love stories, one begins to question why, as social beings, are humans attracted to such themes in their high culture and folk culture amongst other types, even after knowing how each of them will end? This trope became a reality in the subaltern culture primarily considering the fact that the social and class difference amongst people could act as plausible cause for their share of 'tragic love'.

From a sociological perspective, it is important to understand why as a society, we uphold values that highlight recurrent themes of love that have been influenced by grief. It is also essential to analyse the fascination that humans showcase with reference to such tropes that make them immensely popular in various forms of cultures. Though different cultures are known to have contrasting views on the conceptualisation of emotions, along with the ways to respond to a particular emotion, the recurrence of such themes in the literature belonging to these strikingly varied cultures proves that regardless of the inconsistency in the outlook, there are some similarities in the perception of certain aspects of love and grief mainly spanning across the realms of high culture, folk culture, popular culture, and lastly global culture. This can be seen by the similarities in the tales mentioned above along with a few other ones such as the one of Heer and Ranjha.

Furthermore, the repeated representation of similar tropes of love across cultures also displays the shift that these themes of grief and love bear witness to while they smoothly transition from being critical elements of one particular culture to another due to various processes such as globalisation, increased mingling between varied social groups amongst other forces. The popularisation of Romeo and Juliet has led to it being categorised as an element of high culture, mass culture, and subsequently popular culture due to mass globalization, as seen in the work of Herbert J. Gans. on the plurality of tastes and culture, with reference to the European and broader western society.

An alternative reason to the gross popularity and persistence of such tropes could be possibly due to the linkage that individuals can form between the emotions of grief and love belonging to these tales and the situations that they might face in certain real-life scenarios. The major focus of each of these tales happens to revolve around a form of class differentiation in one way or another. In Romeo and Juliet, though the Montagues and the Capulets were both well-

established families belonging to the higher strata of the society of Verona, this tale helps in understanding that love can be forbidden for such individuals as well. Furthermore, due to its mass popularisation, the appeal of this tale reached the lower sections of society as well. An Indian retelling of the same which emulates this structural point of view in popular culture are the movies Ram - Leela and Ishaqzaade that not only build upon similarities in the class structure but also show an inter religious angle in the latter.

While looking at the story of Heer and Ranjha and similar ones that are popular in Punjabi literature such as Sohni Mahiwal, Mirza Sahiban and Sassi Punnhun. It can be concluded that there were clear differences between the social standings of the two protagonists in relation to their social and economic class, as well as their relative status and caste. This led to them being separated and their love not being accepted by their families and largely by the society. An outcome that can be seen as a parallel to situations occurring in real life that still hold relevance to the current state of society.

Literature is known to mirror the state of the society and dwellings of the people that make it. The stories of Romeo and Juliet, Heer and Ranjha, Layla Manjun might just be tales of fiction that have gained popularity over time. However, the basis of their popularity stems from the fact that the core theme behind these tales still resonates with the situations that people are possibly facing today. A popular real life set of incidents that broadly focus on this are the ones that relate to the issues that rise up during inter caste and inter religious marriages, while also loosely being witnessed in marriages that are built upon class differences.

As mentioned previously, though, it can be seen that every culture has its own specific way of reacting to and understanding a particular emotion, especially profound ones such as love and grief. These crucial differences that are exhibited in the actions and thought processes of individuals belonging to different cultural backgrounds, are the main factors contributing to the repetition of such trends while being aided by forces that act as transferring agents, mainly globalisation, capitalism, and mass production of books that focus on given tales. The western world, mainly the United States of America, also known to be the current hegemonic power, with its highly individualistic nature, has an extremely liberal sense of love, particularly romantic love in a marital setting. The essence behind this character of westernised notions of love and ensuing grief lies in the much appreciated morals of freedom, individualism, and development and growth of personality, as personal space to both show affection and grief in are encouraged. On the other hand, the orient is quite at odds with the occident facet of love. For the east, love still has tradition attributed to it in the sense of the accepted actions and proceedings undertaken by the two parties. Here, the main characteristics of love and grief lie in their timidness followed by their expression being restricted
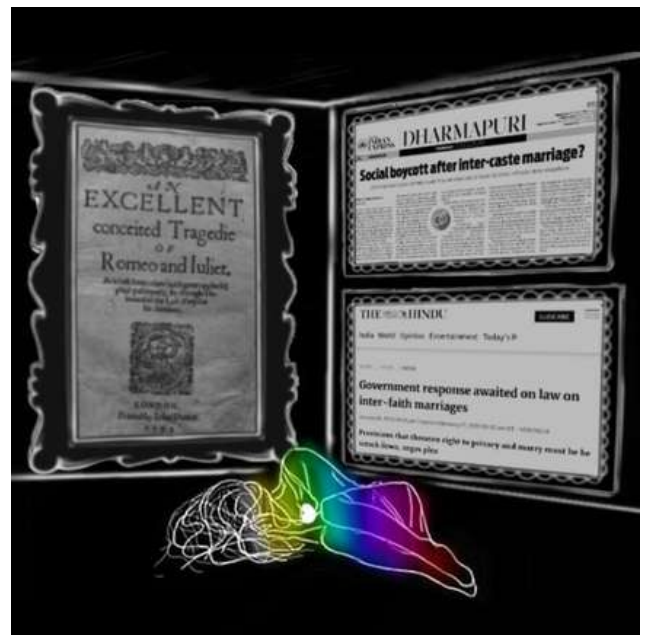
Illustration by Chriselle Fernandes

IThe illustration depicts a room devoid of any colour, with only monochromatic tragic articles and a page from the famous tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. A grieving human lies in the middle covering the face. A gradient of colours can be seen highlighted in the person.

by the well established and conventional nature of the society. The fundamental grounds of love in this understanding are based on respect, arguing that love is an emotion that can find its way in the lives of the people after marriage, however mutual respect is crucial for its emergence and longevity. It is this side of the world that sees love as a tragic aberration, a trend that has been highlighted multiple times in the belles-lettres of such cultures.

However, regardless of the conflicting views on grief and romantic and marital love, all cultures show minute but key similarities in the way they process and cope with these emotions (Eltman Keltner, 1997).

The central and driving force behind our society happens to be love due to the transformations that have taken place in the last two centuries (Seebach, 2017). Due to these changes in society, the social and individualistic implications of tragic love have changed as well. In all of its manifestations, whether positively or negatively induced, the fundamentals of attachment, affection, and adoration act as both binding and separating agents for individuals through times, thick or thin emotionally. In a practical sense since the emotion acts to be a guiding principle, it also shapes the way people encompass and exhibit the fundamentals behind hope. The state of grief that accompanies love, happens to correspond to the aforementioned one. After all, it is nothing but perseverance of love.

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8. MIGRATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS: WHAT WE TAKE AND FIND IN THE PROCESSES OF MOVING AWAY FROM HOME

–ANICCE CRASTO

Migration trends are interconnected to the trajectory of human socio-cultural life. The contact with human relationships and its lack thereof suggests that movement across distances creates stretches of periods spent away from certain habitual institutions for those individuals. These institutions relate to a migrant through the spaces of familiarity and are negotiated in a lack of this proximity. The presence of love as manifested in concern, affection and care can exceed local, national and international boundaries on both sides of these 'long-distance' relationships. To understand what migrations and relationships mean to different types of migrants, this article hopes to consider the experience this phenomenon creates and observe how they simultaneously maintain the transmission of different forms of love.

Illustration by Chriselle Fernandes

This illustration depicts people moving from one place to another carrying their luggage. Their luggage carries nothing but hearts. Some bags are shown heavy, filled with smaller hearts, while some are only single large hearts. Some can be seen bearing the weight, while others are seen losing some hearts along the way.

INTRODUCTION

Migration as a process can be an individual or a collective endeavour. Moving away from a current place of habitat is only the beginning of what constitutes a journey with a sizable amount of investment across factors. Migration may be voluntary or forced and further involves financial costs, distance from pre-existing interpersonal relationships, loss of home culture contact, compromised health and well-being and acculturation into a non-native location, among others. The migratory experience, whether nationally or internationally, could be a combination of any of these. Other popular explanations for migration patterns have constituted push and pull elements that motivate and even necessitate migration (Rao, 1981). However, what can supplement these theorizations and encourage a greater social-science perspective can be seen through the otherwise sidelined aspect of emotions in these discourses (De Haas, 2021). To respond to this tussle between rationality and emotionality, this article explores the subsets of responses to the distance between individuals and their basic support units. These

responses include concern, affection and responsibility that will be purposefully looked at in two-fold ways- firstly, the resulting relationship dynamics between partners or couples herein and secondly, parent-child dynamics.

MIGRATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

My familiarity with the exposure to terms such as 'moving away' and 'settling' into a different city has associated these sub-types of migration with the improvement of livelihood through increased income. This coincided with economic approaches to migration from the perspective of optimization (De Haas, 2021). Even among proposed migration theories, functionalist approaches were a part of early studies, where economically, migration processes served to ensure the demand-supply equilibrium of labour (Rao, 1981). Here, the space for discussion on emotional motivations and consequences of migration has been limited. A largely successful and long-standing opposition drawn between rationality and emotionality, particularly found in the Western tradition, has been proven to be untrue. Rationality and reason are interconnected with emotional factors in determining human choices (Weyher, 2012).

Marx's understanding of the positioning of humanity in the rationality-emotionality dynamic is based on the suffering and the passionate selves of humans. The human experience of emotions is influenced by the society around them. It is also simultaneously changing with the input of the emotions unique to the individual. Marx's placement of our emotions, feelings and other forms of awareness as central to the understanding of the human experience is insightful (Weyher, 2012). For example, there exist 'instrumental functions' that are carried out by our interpersonal interactions through daily-life activities of personal and household assistance. These functions are immediately disrupted with the creation of a physical distance (Mason, 2004). However, migration is a complex process and does not rely on a universal interpretation of migration patterns (De Haas, 2021).

The effects of migration that take place through lack of proximity and social presence are further navigated through

'habitus'. As a Bourdieusian concept, and seen through emotions such as hope, joy, anger, anxiety, and guilt that are likely to occur in the migratory process, the pre-existing clockwork of human emotions is re-organized to accommodate them according to geography, distance and time. Thus, first-time migrants create and divide themselves into a foreign self and an inner self (Albrecht, 2016). The rationality-emotionality binary now receives new tertiary points across its spectrum where one does not have to limit oneself to either of the extremes. This dichotomy is an exhausting process, and break-ups through tertiary points along the binary facilitate the ease of the migration experience. Thus, they engage in negotiations that bring together the ends of this spectrum (Cuff et al., 2015). The following section explores this navigation within the migratory experience.

Couples, kin and the self

When the livelihoods of individuals are spent in the physical presence of their kin, the institution of the family becomes the most immediate of these and is directly impacted by the individual choice of any member (Krieger, 2020). Migration circumstances cause a physical and metaphorical separation within households. Irrespective of the size of the family, members from joint and nuclear families may experience domestic or transnational splits that bring about the working class requirement to engage with remittances. In such cases, movement becomes deliberate, that is, moving to a location that promises some form of income with the purpose of contributing to the family budget (Singh et al., 2012).

A likely precursor to this event, however, challenges cultural assumptions about couples. Prior to any form of reunion, partners in a relationship may spend time away from each other. Factors that owe to these aspects, such as the unconventional factor of living in entirely separate locations, lead such partners to label their relationship status as a long-distance relationship. Despite the temporal and spatial distance here, couples within such relationships still interpret long-distance relationships to be as authentic as general relationships. This is possible because of the recognition that emotions continue to be significant even when they transcend physicality. Symbolically then, the bond of the relationship is reinforced through such unconventional interpretations (Kolozsvari, 2015).

In the case of older and therefore earning members, processes of 'tied migration' are observed. For example, at the upfront of the tied-migration theory, the female marital partner, who may or may not have a job of her own, has to move to the designated location with the male earning member. Here, as a lead migrant in a couple's migration, men have greater decision capacity than women, and the process of traditional and patriarchal gender roles is reinforced. Here, despite the nature of the lead migrant being imposed with greater expectations to maintain financial security, there is also greater agency exercised by them in initiating migratory decisions. But the larger female experience as a tied migrant ends up skewing the share of the responsibility of

remittances. The consequences of living in a globalised world are such that the need for making negotiations further arises as migration is becoming a common experience for many individuals. Across legal hurdles, cultural barriers and waiting periods, couples and families continue to make those choices for such journeys (Krieger, 2020).

However, globalisation has yet been unable in setting up a complete homogenization of all that encompasses human societies. This means that in countries such as India, this collectivist nature of interdependence manifests itself in the filial piety of adults as children to their parents and the parents to their children. Such lead migrants are thus validated by their societal backgrounds in assuming responsibility for sending remittances. Remittances connect individuals back to their families as this form of money allocation allows for intergenerational proximity. The culture of 'filial piety' characterised by seva not only allows for adult children to live with their old parents in a culturally encouraged society but also for the same to take place over longer distances (Sharma & Kemp, 2012). Irrespective of whether this is an option for migrant individuals, filial piety through remittances characteristically takes place beyond family budgets, emergencies or special occasions. This means that collectivist cultures contribute extensively to this caregiving nature, particularly when geographical distance indicates otherwise (Singh et al., 2012). The presence of a shifting scale for different migrants that operates differently in different contexts, as seen in the case mentioned above, becomes another example of these negotiation outcomes.

There is a second two-fold aspect used in responding to and bridging this gap through communication across a distance and at a distance. The former is a greater investment due to the costs involved in travel that can get migrant individuals and their kin to meet with each other physically. At the same time, communication at a distance has become an increasingly viable phenomenon due to technological advancements in virtual communication (Mason, 2004). Emotions are essential drivers in our social relationships. Rationality is capable of taking over emotions in decision-making, yet in such instances, we return to emotions as negotiators of such newer spaces and their dynamics (Albrecht, 2016). Long-distance relationships, couple and family migrations, as well as post-migration traditions, reflect a decision-making capacity that is managed by a migrant's emotions as much as it is also managed by any existing outlines of rational behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS

Classical theoretical texts have shown patterns of neglecting emotions in the material and its interpretation. For an aspect that is central to human social life, emotions are essential and must be used as one of the many vital filters to uncover different aspects of this social life. Movements related to migration constitute a variety of emotional reactions. When closely observed, these emotions decide a migrant's

trajectory, but also find ways to an intrinsically important aspect of human life. Interpersonal relationships then influence the nature of those emotions, and interpersonal dynamics are now negotiated by such a migrant. Placing the interpersonal as that which constitutes love in different varieties of meaningfulness for migrants explains why long-distance relationships, tied migration and aspects such as remittances have a role to play in their lives.

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9. SELF-LOVE: TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY

–NEHA BHIDE

This paper wishes to examine the gendered depiction of self-love in the media. Even a mild observation will expose us to the biases of the media. This essay delves into why such a phenomenon might occur. Looking at how the adherence to norms of conventional physical attractiveness for women have a role to play in the perception of their self-worth, we find one of the many answers to this question. While exploring the nurturer-provider dichotomy, the drawbacks of such binaries and stereotypes are exposed. A gap in research and representation with respect to self-love and the trans community also comes to light.

Self-love can be loosely defined as acknowledging and appreciating one's worth and value.
The ancient Greek term 'philautia' carrying the same meaning, tells us that this concept has been in existence since long. With recent trends in society, people have increasingly started to acknowledge the concept of self-love and realised its importance; social media is full of people promoting ways to practise self-love or brands selling self-care products. However, a pattern can be found in these engagements with self-love.

Through different types of media, the conversations around self-love always seem to revolve around women. They are considered the flag-bearers of self-love. Several books that cater to this topic are written by women for women. The book 'The Body is Not An Apology' by Sonya Renee Taylor talks about radical self-love. Although it does not explicitly mention this, it targets solely the female audience; the cover and the references in the book hint at the female population.

Famous pop culture songs like 'Scars To Your Beautiful' by Alessia Cara, and 'Perfect To Me' by Anne-Marie are also songs by women for women. The lyrics of several songs of the South Korean boyband BTS delve into topics considered 'unmanly'. Their songs like 'Love Yourself' or '21st Century Girls' talk about self-love; a genre men do not often explore. This is one of the main reasons why a perception of them being effeminate men exists.

Additionally, a cursory look at the Google image search for self-love will bring to your notice a distinct pattern. All these images have either photos of women or are coloured in hues associated with women, for example, pastel pink, peach, and lavender. Even the hashtag 'selflove' on Instagram and Twitter results in images linked to women. The keywords 'self-love journey' on YouTube result largely in women of a particular age group talking about how they began to love themselves. It will not be too far-fetched to state that there aren't any self-love journey videos by men that talk about their personal engagement with this concept, on the internet.

Some motivational speakers explain these concepts, but not from a first-person point of view. This brings to light the question of whether self-love is a gendered concept. We wonder if it is
meant for a specific subset of the population, and if yes then why?

Society has well-structured beliefs about how a woman should ideally look. A woman's worth is directly proportional to her alignment with the societal standards of beauty. In India, an ideal woman's image includes being thin, fair, not too short, and not too tall – all this to ensure she is a perfect specimen for the marriage market. Furthermore, the media depiction of women most often fits into these stereotypes. They are of the exact size, exact height, and exact skin colour that society finds desirable. The female characters found in films and series are often unrealistic and therefore unrelatable to a large population of women.

Illustration by Shaili Palrecha

Image consists of a person in a greek tunic (Narcissus) looking at his reflection in a lake that is actually a mirror. The mirror border comes out in three directions shaped like gender symbols. The three symbols are the blue arrow for male, pink cross for female and a purple arrow with a line for androgyne. The overall illustration has an oil-paint feel to it. The main colours used are shades of deep purple and pink.

This inevitably affects the self-perception of, and consequently self-esteem of women. Wilcox and Laird (2000) prove that looking at slender models produced lower self-esteem and satisfaction around weight, among women whose emotions were based on personal cues as compared to women viewing more robust models, apparently reflecting social-comparison processes.

All these stereotypes make women internalise cultural beauty standards and judge themselves based on these parameters. Due to societal reinforcement, physicality becomes the field for self-worth to play on. It has been proven that awareness of ideal standards perpetuated by general society and immediate peer groups impacts self-views (Balcetics et al., 2013). This causes dissatisfaction with one's own body in women. This is not to say that men do not go through these issues. However, from a young age, girls are taught to measure their worth only through their physical appearance.

This can be testified by the compliments toddlers receive. Girls are often called 'pretty' while boys are associated with being 'strong'. If they do not fit into the mould of the societal definition of pretty, women are often made to feel as if they are lacking in some form. One can claim that to combat this blatant objectification of the female body and pose a direct resistance to the stereotypes of society, the idea of self-love is promoted by different forms of media predominantly to the female population.

Going beyond the gender binary, queer self-love has often come to mean self-acceptance first and sometimes choosing to not fit into pre-existing societal structures. Results from cross-sectional studies suggest that lower self-acceptance of sexuality was associated with higher levels of self-reported minority stressors, including a lack of acceptance from friends and family, a lack of disclosure to others, and internalised heterosexism (Camp et al., 2020, p. 2353). Even though the queer community is often seen embracing their identity through pride marches and drag performances, we do not see enough media representation of the trans or the non-binary community in the advocacy for self-love. A gap in representation is seen in music videos and even self-care product advertisements.

Self-love by default still seems to be associated with the female. If the media aimed to help uplift the self-worth of people, then we would find representations of the trans and the non-binary community too. But including them in the mainstream media could backfire owing to the taboos surrounding the trans community. Additionally, in already limited data about self-love, research on this concept concerning the 'third gender' is almost non-existent.

In several societies across the globe, women are seen as nurturers. The primary child-rearing responsibilities fall on them.

From childhood, women are socialised to be family nurturers and caregivers, that is, to develop a "motherhood mentality" (Mohai, 1992). Even at a young age, girls are expected to take care of their younger siblings and look after them like their own children. Later in life, a woman plays the role of a nurturer not just to her kids, but also to the ageing population in the family, no matter whose side they belong to. Additionally, quite often, she even needs to nurture her husband to a great extent.

Targeting self-love to females in particular is like turning the concept of woman as a nurturer on its head. In this case, she is expected to be the nurturer too, but for herself. It exposes a woman to the idea of the 'inward gaze of love'. Especially in the Indian context a woman is taught to be selfless and put everyone else before herself. She is trained from early on to put others' needs before her needs and give everyone priority before herself, so much so that Lemkau & Landau (1986) have a term specifically for this. The "selfless syndrome" was found in women who seek satisfaction via self-denial and fulfilling the needs of others to the exclusion of their own. Doing something for themselves is synonymous with wasting time and later leads to guilt. Through the media's curation of self-love for women, these ideals get challenged. Women can now do something for themselves and not be guilty of it.

Men, on the other hand, have always been seen as providers. Right from the times humans have inhabited forests, this gender is most often assigned the hunting duties while women take up the gathering responsibilities. These duties require them to be the strong and rational half of the binary, as opposed to the sensitive and emotional one of the female. Feelings are considered the enemy of rationality and practicality. Thus, men are socially prescribed to avoid outwardly exhibiting their emotions. The 'men don't cry' phenomenon is a long-standing proof of this. Carroll & Schaefer (1994) found that bereaved mothers were more likely than fathers to seek support both outside and within the family, including crying with friends and asking for prayer, holding their partner or spouse, and accepting support from their partners or spouses.

This inability to express themselves affects men in several ways. Conforming to gender norms that require men to be the stoic and strong part of the population is detrimental to the mental and, consequently physical health of men. This kind of behaviour and the idolising of hyper-masculinity make it difficult for men to ask for help. Men who endorse more conventional norms of masculinity have greater health risks than other men (Cleary, 2012, p. 499).. Toxic masculinity makes it taboo for men to associate with tender emotions like love. If the media exempts men while depicting self-love, a deeper divide will be formed between men and their acceptance of emotions. Furthermore, the association of self-love with the female makes it even more difficult for men to accept the idea. Since the concept of masculinity is pitched as a stark contrast

to femininity, self-love for men becomes a territory not to be ventured into.

On the flip side, it might be a marketing strategy of brands that sell self-love products to target the insecurities of women and milk money from it. The strategy might also specifically avoid targeting the male gender to prevent themselves from being boycotted. However, in the larger scheme of things, it does prove to be noxious to the self-perception of the male gender. By the depiction of self-love as something only the females (or at times the non-binary or trans) can relate to, the concept of toxic masculinity is encouraged. While the world is moving towards a space where everyone is trying to be in touch with their feelings and accept themselves wholly, why should we leave the men behind?

To sum it up, the media depicts self-love in an immensely gendered manner. Even a mild observation will expose us to the biases of the media. This essay delves into why such a phenomenon might occur. Looking at how the conventional physical attractiveness of women has a role to play in the perception of their self-worth, we find one of the many answers to this question. While exploring the nurturer-provider dichotomy the drawbacks of such binaries and stereotypes are exposed. A gap in research and representation with respect to self-love and the trans community also comes to light. It is important to understand the gravity of self-love and inculcate a lifestyle where every person practises it in measures suitable to them, without the barriers of gender or age, and is not criticised for the same. Because it is through self-love that one can reach their fullest potential and blossom into the best version of themselves.

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10. DEEPLY MADLY DIVIDEDLY

–LYNN RITA SHMITT

Love has been an interesting topic of study among philosophers, psychologists and other social scientists for decades. In this article, we shall explore how in heterosexual romantic relationships, the labour is divided on the basis of one's gender. The existence of hegemonic masculinity and oppression of women in the monetary aspects of heterosexual relationships throws light upon the gendered categorization of love. Although efforts are made to provide equal opportunities to both the sexes in the global sphere, the inequality rooted at base levels of relationships is the outcome of institutions like religion and popular media which shall be discussed briefly.

My sister and I had a childhood practice of making greeting cards and giving it to our parents on occasions of anniversaries and festivals. The cards were made up of drawings, stickers and thankful words. In the anniversary cards, I always used a sticker which had two hearts, one bigger than the other, personified with eyes and a smile, looking at each other with 'love'. I remember one year, my amma categorically pointed out and asked me why one of the hearts was bigger than the other. I very innocently replied, "Because that is appa and the small one is you!" She then very adamantly asked why there was a difference in the sizes of the hearts and why she couldn't be the bigger heart. I didn't have an answer then. The question has stuck with me over the years and now, as a sociology student, I am trying to understand the mechanics that conditioned me to think that there existed, and still exists, a power dynamic in how love is expressed for different genders. Although nowhere was it specified that the male counterpart was the bigger heart, I instinctively thought that it represented the man in a relationship. Why is it that a man expressing his love is considered divine and godly and the women in our lives ought to have a loving, kind and obedient nature? How is it valid when the man who has the 'bigger heart' doesn't resign his job to look after the children and considers it the duty of the wife? Why does it seem to be unmanly to do household chores and help the woman in his life? How are the basic tasks of two people in a romantic relationship (here, a man and a woman) categorised into a hierarchy based on their gender?

The human desire to establish power relations has also slithered into the innocent and immaculate emotion of love. Along with being a universal phenomenon, love is also one of the most basic and predominant human emotions. Pismenny and Prinz (2017) argue that love is a syndrome rather than an emotion as it is a manifestation of other emotions. It falls anywhere along the spectrum of pleasantness and unpleasantness; for instance it can elevate positive emotions like happiness due to the presence of someone beloved and also cause negative emotions like anger or hate due to the lack of reciprocation of feelings by someone they idealise (Pismenny & Prinz, 2017)..

Romantic love is not the only form of l'amour nevertheless power differentials exhibited among heterosexual romantic couples shall be our main area of focus in this essay. It would be trivial to say that the effect of patriarchy has no relevance in modern times, even though there is a considerable increase in the amount of women in the educational and labour sectors, rather than being restricted to the four walls of the house. But gender inequality is so deeply crystallised in the minds of people throughout the years, culturally and psychologically, that the idea of men and women being on an equal footing is viewed as absolutely baffling.

Cross-cultural studies disclose that children are conscious of their gender roles by age two or three (Little, n.d.). Our names become our identity in early stages of life and it is later that gender and sex play an important role in assigning different societal roles through socialisation (Little, n.d.; Odegard, 2021). If we negate the masculine and feminine traits from the cultural formation of a human being, the natural inclination in expressing oneself would result in a much more free and equal society.

The indifference that a child has towards either of the sexes paints the picture that these differences and power relations between genders are socially constructed and do not wholly represent the true nature and inner quality of the person. Men are told to be dominant, aggressive and are expected to take control over different aspects in life. According to Odegard (2021), men are expected to initiate the romantic relationship by saying "I love you" first, ergo gaining command over the relationship. The socialisation process has equal effects on women who are taught to be soft and agreeable and an object of man's desire (Odegard, 2021).

Romantic merger is a phenomenon where both the lovers come together and produce a new entity to make certain ends meet at certain times. In the discussion about merger identities where the literal union of two lovers' identities is termed as "we" (Friedman, 1998), Nozick (as cited in Friedman, 1998) observes that men view this *we* (husband-wife) in a

relationship as a part of themselves whereas women view the *we* formed with their partner as something which contains them as a part of itself (the relationship).

Friedman (1998) criticises Nozick's lack of commentary on his own observation and writes about how he indirectly implies that women's lives are believed to be wholly engulfed around love in contrast to men who feel that they are 'more' than their romantic relationships. Byron states, while romantic love is a part of a man's life, it is the whole existence of a woman (as cited in Friedman, 1998). The conception of this thought can be traced back to the pre industrialization times. Functionalists argue that gender roles were entrenched before the preindustrial era to meet the needs of the family, where men were hunter gatherers and women worked inside and around the house because of physical restraints like pregnancy, nursing, etc. This established a well functioning system with a clear division of labour that perpetuated into future generations (Little, n.d.).

The foundational institutions like religion and culture reiterate the notion of one gender being superior to the other. Religion being a sentimental and important aspect in the lives of individuals, plays a huge role in establishing the grounds of beliefs and practices of people. The interpretations from the religious texts play a vital role in understanding the traditional gender stereotypes and the status of women in the society (Klingorová & Havlíček, 2015) which also stems in structuring an 'ideal' version of love. For example, when Sita was kidnapped, she did not fight against evil although she had the power to do so. As symbolism of love to her husband, and the fact that physical strength is not considered the feminine domain, the popular belief is that Sita 'waited' to be rescued by her husband (Eller, 2007).

In Kuzio's article on Women in Love (2021), she analyses the change in courting and expression of love throughout the decades taking into consideration the different aspects like gender, economic and social status, role of media, etc.

Pre-World War II western society viewed marriage and courtship as reaffirmation of masculinity by showcasing power over women and children (Kuzio, 2021). The portrayal of women as damsels in distress in the popular media affects the young minds and continues to inculcate and carry forward the legacy of gender stereotypes where women crave love. This notion apparently moulds the man as the provider of love and care to the woman and the caretaker of the household by earning income, thus creating an environment where the female partner is dependent on the male partner emotionally, physically and mentally. Although the role of nurturing falls on the woman, the 'masculine' task of going out and using his strength for monetary income and providing bread falls on the man. "Masculinity is still culturally associated with autonomy and the position of subject, while femininity remains culturally associated with dependency and the position of object" (Benjamin, 1988, p.174).

Due to the unequal power differentials, women tend to search for emotional validation in intimate relationships which men get through work and rewards upholding their status in society (Duncombe & Marsden, 1993). Social scientists also conducted surveys which proves that women have higher rates of psychological distress and physical illness than men (Gove, 1984) because they are socialised to compromise their needs and sustain intimate relationships (Friedman, 1998). According to the nurturant role hypothesis, women's minds are chiselled in a manner that they are incapable of adopting the sick role. They constantly have to care for the children and other members of the family which leaves them to completely ignore the fact that they need to rest and relax (Gove, 1984). It was applauded when the Indian cricketer Virat Kohli took a paternity leave to accompany his wife at the time of delivery of their first baby. The same was criticised by many exclaiming that he chose family over 'national duty'. Hierarchising the status of the nation before family for a man mirrors the deep-rooted, age-old patriarchal gender stereotypes and its implications. His decision was one example for the world to reform the traditional gendered division of physical and mental labour and expression of love but it will take a long time to change the mindset of a huge population to trample down the conventional 'feminine' and 'masculine' roles and revitalise ideas of intimate personal relationships and love.

Being in love is a phenomenal experience but the gendered societal roles permeate into the simplest of actions, irrespective of gender. With attention growing towards the generations of oppression of women and men pressured into behaving a certain way, both sexes are transcending the former set of predetermined norms. Women are focused on being independent and contributing to the economy of the family while men are learning to be emotionally available and in touch with their 'feminine' side. This sparks excitement about what roles men and women would undertake in the future. In the end, love is between two individuals. What has society got to do with it?

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11. LOVE IS LOVE: BOON OR BANE?

–AKRITI BANERJEE

This paper investigates the notion of the phrase "Love is Love", and how it does more harm than good for the LGBTQIA+ community in the long run. Exploring the origins of the phrase and its inherent assimilative nature, this essay presents a detailed analysis of the purity culture associated with this phrase, as well as its exclusionary nature towards the transgender community. Furthermore, this essay examines the cis heteronormativity present in society by traversing the history of the oppression of the LGBTQIA+ community.

At first glance, the saccharine representation of vivid rainbows plastered onto every other capitalist corporation, accompanied by the slogan "LOVE IS LOVE!" or "Love Wins!" seems nothing short of supportive and refreshing; a clear public declaration of unwavering support for the LGBTQIA+ community. It is a means of similitude, a draw of parallelism between cisheterosexual people and the LGBTQIA+ community, so effective that the trademark of 'Pride' amongst the masses is the typical public campaign phrase– 'Love is Love'. However, the question arises as to whom this phrase is truly effective for, and which communities it is really benefiting.

Illustration by Anjisha Joy

Here, a transgender person can be seen as the central figure of the illustration. Scars can be seen on the person's face in red. There are different coloured flowers around the person and abstract line designs in the background.

Love within LGBTQIA+ spaces has always had a history of being severely demonised and vilified by associating elements of shame to it (Kurdek, 2006). This is especially seen when examining the Stonewall riots of the late 1960s, which emerged due to the blatant discrimination that the queer community was facing. During this time period, the solicitation of homosexual relations was an illegal act, and queer bars, which were a safe haven to members of the LGBTQIA+ community, were constantly subject to police raids (Carter, 2004). Similarly, in recent years, more and more laws have been passed against queer people that directly infringe upon their rights, such as Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' bill, which prevents the LGBTQIA+ community from expressing themselves freely. However, with the current uprising of this puritanical, easily digestible phrase being plastered across all corporations, it tends to foster a notion of similarity, and thus, conformity.

What started out as an act of revolution has now turned into a means of integration into dominant structures, wherein assimilation into, and replication of dominant institutions, such as marriage and the traditional family structure, are the goals (Cohen, 1997). With the phrase, 'Love is love', the notion that is spread across to the masses is, "Our (queer) love is exactly like your (cisheterosexual) love, and therefore, it must be allowed and respected in the same way," whereas the reality is simply that queer love is not like cisheterosexual love and cannot be watered down to something that is palpable to the majority.

Institutions like marriage have always had a long history of repressing queer individuals and pushing them to the sidelines, which is why many veterans of earlier forms of gay activism have discarded the legitimacy of this popular phrase. To most queer veterans, marriage and the subsequent assimilation into heterosexual society is seen as a less urgent concern for the queer community when compared to the hardships that they face[1]. The LGBTQIA+ community is forced to endure a plethora of adversities in terms of legality of their existence, social exclusion in public and private spaces, unemployment and homelessness, navigating a world that is mainly heterosexual, and many more struggles that do not revolve around the subject of romantic love (Warner, 1999). It is thus clear that along with asking for permission to co-exist in the same realm as cisheterosexual love, the platitudinous phrase also does a disservice to the hardships faced by the LGBTQIA+ community that go beyond merely love.

The main focus of the queer community is not the integration into iron-fisted, iron-clad structures, but rather, the transformation of the basic fabric of oppressive hierarchies that allow systems of subjugation to persist and operate efficiently in society. One needs

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[1] Michael Warner in his book, "The Trouble With Normal" expands on this by stating that the crux of queerness lies not in the need to mould oneself into assimilationist norms such as marriage but in the embracement of queerness in "all of its indignity". He says that the queer movement has always been rooted in dignity in one's shame, dating all the way back to the Stonewall Riots. He goes on to explain that in the past, there was never a need for acceptance into mainstream society by queer people as no amount of acceptance can eliminate the experience of queerness.

to be able to consider same-gender identities outside of the prism of romance. To continue promoting the narrative of LGBTQIA+ people as existing only within the realm of romance is to prevent the majority from confronting the realities of sexuality amongst and within the queer community– something that formed the very essence of the Queer Liberation Movement of 1969. The kink community and the LGBTQIA+ community came together to write long-standing history as a means of fighting back against the purity culture that existed, and continues to exist in the world today. Kink and queerness have always existed in the same realm due to both of them being viewed as deviations from 'natural' sexuality (Scott, 2015), and to separate the LGBTQIA+ community from sexuality is a disservice to the history of the intertwinement of the two.

According to Hollibaugh (2000), though LGBTQIA+ liberation does not necessarily revolve around sexual desire and sexuality for all members of the community, it still does hinge on lust and eroticism for many others. Viewing queerness that does not revolve around love, or more specifically, that revolves around sexual relations, as something that is intrinsically negative and morally 'incorrect,' unless strictly adhering to the rules set out by the cisheteronormative society is an indignity to the LGBTQIA+ community. Examining the relationship between queerness and societal norms reveals that the LGBTQIA+ community has been a constant victim of shaming for expression of anything that deviates from the 'normal'. This vilification may even shift into prejudice when one considers the leeway that heterosexuality is offered in society. This is especially true when one examines how heterosexuality is not solely defined by romantic love. While queer media exclusively portrays sterile depictions of love between same-gender people as a means of mainstream acceptance, heterosexual media frequently veers from this by portraying multiple facets of relationships using tropes such as "friends with benefits," which do not fit the typical standard of organic love in society (Williams & Jovanovic, 2014).

When viewing the typical standards set in society, it is crucial to take into account transgender individuals, the forerunners of the Stonewall Riots of 1969, who unabashedly break out of society's rigidity (Serano, 2007). Transgender and nonbinary people are consistently excluded from discussions surrounding the LGBTQIA+ community, cast aside despite the number of anti-trans laws passed, and are not given any heed to when using the phrase, 'Love is love'. Though all minorities are censored to varying degrees, trans-erasure is a pressing issue amongst cisheterosexual communities as well as queer communities. In a world where being cisgender and cissexual is the norm, transgender individuals are erased from public awareness, and the phrase 'Love is love' further exacerbates this narrative.

When transgender people express the problems that they face in society due to their "transness," they are almost always written off and cast aside as their problems: to the cisheteronormative world, they do not fit the mould of the easy-to-digest phrase, 'Love is love' (Hein & Scharer, 2012). Transgender people, especially transgender women, were the figureheads of Pride, and using this slogan diminishes the contributions of one of the most marginalised groups in society. Though the society we live in is seemingly opening its mind to the existence of queer people, the truth is that it is only opening its mind to what is 'easy' to open its mind to– this being people in same-gender relationships who want to assimilate in society as it is, by following the institutions of marriage and family, much like their cisheterosexual counterparts. This open-mindedness, however, does not extend to transgender individuals who have been continually absent from narratives and the public eye.

However, as many flaws as the phrase 'Love is love' may have, one must acknowledge the impact of the phrase in a society where queer relationships, regardless of conformity to societal standards, are repudiated. Though it may be an ostracisation to differing extents, the truth still holds that cisheterosexual people at large do not see the LGBTQIA+ community as worthy of loving in the same way that they do. In this context, the phrase has a certain legitimacy that cannot be denied, and it makes a statement of fighting back when made to believe that the queer community is inherently inferior to the rest of the world.

This being said, the slogan still holds a negative connotation when examined in a more essential context, where compliance and submissiveness is expected from queer individuals. The phrase, though beneficial at large, still conveys a message of allegiance to what is considered 'normal'. This, in the long run, hurts the most vulnerable sections of the LGBTQIA+ community, the ones that are particularly susceptible to discrimination and prejudice. As Julia Serano in Bornstein (2010) puts it– "It's easy to fictionalize an issue when you're not aware of the many ways in which you are privileged by it" (p. 82), which stands true even twelve years from its year of publication. The modern catchphrase that now operates as a jejune slogan further proves this point— it is easy to use the words, 'Love is love' as an end-all, idealising the words and utilising them as a blanket term to champion for the entire LGBTQIA+ community's rights, when the reality is that, that cannot be done without the harsh implications behind it.

The phrase that has recently become popular amongst LGBTQIA+ circles, "Queer Liberation, Not Rainbow Capitalism", holds a much higher significance than the phrases, 'Love Wins!' and 'Love is Love'. It is a much more inclusive phrase that not only redirects the focus back to the roots of the queer community, that is, revolution and protest, but also takes into account the real ramifications of catchy phrases that do more harm than good. To summarise, the eradication of the phrase 'Love is love' is absolutely essential for the liberation of the LGBTQIA+ community, and the subsequent understanding of the harm that the phrase causes is something that must be strived for.

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12. CULT-IVATING LOVE

–ANUSHKA DEY

The idea that cults as a societal system might in some ways, be identical to other social groups in modern society in terms of having common goals, motives and rules among members is often frowned upon. But is the understanding of love for members of a cult similar to the traditional view of it, both in terms of its perception and expression? How does the notion of love in cults differ from the conventional display of it in the larger society? This article explores how love is used as a strategic tool in cults, right from recruiting new members and ensuring their steadfast allegiance to the leader, to modulating the members' expression of love. Borrowing evidence from Simmel and Durkheim's theory of love, it examines how love bombing, isolation, manipulation, reinforcement, and planned withdrawal of affect are wielded as techniques by cultic leaders to create the illusion of safety and belongingness among members.

A concern that has plagued theorists, sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists is not so much to do with the religious, political and philosophical ideologies of cults, but with how the very structure plays a role in exerting various levels of control over anyone who drifts within their grasp, laying down the foundation for manipulating its followers (Stein, 2021).

How do totalitarian cults ensure unwavering obedience and loyalty by members? Leadership, structure, ideology, process and outcomes have been identified as the five key dimensions that determine how the system within a cult operates (Stein, 2021). Within these dimensions, by manipulating and using love as a tool at various degrees and levels, the cult ensures a lifetime of bondage to the group.

The personality of the leader of the cult determines the direction of the cult's beliefs, philosophies and rituals. This personality is shaped by two contrasting facets- charisma and authoritarianism (Stein, 2021), which is manipulated to varying extents as the first technique of using love as an instrument. The members of the cult love, worship and admire the charismatic nature of the leader, while simultaneously being instilled with a sense of impending threat, fear and danger by the authoritarian nature of the leader. While the characteristics of the leader that give rise to emotions of love in the members act as a way to pledge their allegiance to the leader's cause, the characteristics that induce fear remind them of the rigid hierarchy in the cultic society. A combination of the two elements of love and fear thus serves to stabilise the leader's position as well as to ensure attachment and loyalty from members, either by a sense of idealisation or apprehension.

Hierarchically, the cult is dominated by the leader in all aspects. The structure of the cult is used as a tool to assert the leaders' authority and isolate group members, both from each other and the outside world. The cult grows by internalizing and replicating the qualities of the leader for use with potential recruits (Stein, 2021). This is primarily achieved by making use of the second technique, and a central one to indoctrination and continued membership, love bombing. Love bombing is a ploy used by cults to lure and enlist new members, and can be understood as 'bombing' a prospective recruit with flattery, verbal praise, physical forms of affection such as touching, etc (Pretorius, 2013). This kind of love is merely displayed for its utilitarian value and inherently possesses an ulterior motive. At the stage of recruitment, it is one of the first interactions a potential member will have with the manners of the cult (Pretorius, 2013). The social environment of the cult is seen as safe and healthy by the now new member due to the illusion of a 'blanket of love' created as a result of a coordinated effort between the leader and existing members to deceive the new recruit.

Simmel's theory of love comprises certain ideas that both contradict, and strongly support the notion of love as seen within the cultic group. For the purpose of this article, the focus will be on the similarities between his theory of love for society in general and for love within cults, and not as much on the inconsistencies mentioned by him. According to him, love possesses the quality of having a revolutionary power, disturbing the existing reality for the members involved (Simmel, 1984, as cited in Cerulo, 2016). This leads us to the third technique of love manipulation, which is brought into the picture by continuing the display of love but strictly from either the leader to the members or among members. Once the recruitment process is complete, first, a social environment of isolation and confinement is created, with no contact with the outside world, to prevent escape and social support from institutions such as belief systems and former associations, family members, peers, and the broader society outside the cult. Second, the member is led to believe that only the cult can fulfil their basic human need for love, which leaves the member with no option but to search for love within the cult (Schwartz & Kaslow, 1979). The existing reality of the outside world is thus distorted for members of the cult, and the environment of the cultic society becomes their social reality. This illusion causes them to reshape their relations with each other, primarily with the leader of the cult, as one of

unwavering loyalty. The creation of this new social order is only operational within the reality of the cult, and the external world is changed permanently for the ones 'in love' with the leader, philosophies, ideas and membership to the cult. Finally, by positively reinforcing the member with the 'promised' love, complete commitment and sincerity are ensured. According to Simmel, as long as the members are in an environment of interaction with their loved one, their perspectives of the world are altered to appear more appealing than what it truly is.

Love in cults comes with yet another condition related to the regulation of the kind and source of love within the group. There exists a rigid and strict boundary between spiritual love, dedicating oneself to love for a greater mission (agape, as believed by Plato), and eros (romantic or erotic love), which is highly forbidden by most cults. This type of love is labelled as selfish, unregulated and divisive, and is known as 'dyadic intimacy' (Wright, 1986). Romantic ties do not serve the greater purpose the cult has aligned itself to, nor do they fulfil the requisites of the cult. In fact, they are in direct conflict with the goals and purpose of the cult, and a threat to its very existence. If a dyadic intimacy is formed between two members of the cult, it leads to a shift in their primary loyalties from the cultic group to their romantic partner. Their priorities change, and they become disinterested in the previously staunch fidelity expressed to the cult. Such love within the cult is prevented by means such as celibacy or arranged marriages since the rise of it can cause discord for the interests of the group, and instigate the involved couple to exit the cult. Thus, to avoid the conflict that would subsequently arise in the case of romantic involvement, love as a concept is controlled and monitored along with the members themselves.

By drawing a comparison to Durkheim's conception of family love with love in cults, one can argue that both hold at their core, a strong sense of an expression of social morality and the fulfilment of duty (Durkheim, 1897, as cited in Iorio, 2010). The absence of love within a family, or in this case, the cultic group, would cause the institution of the family or cult to collapse. Thus, one might assume that it is imperative that the leaders continue the display of love towards all, but particularly towards new recruits in order to retain the strength of the cult. However, the final technique through which love is manipulated occurs when the initial illusion of love that institutionalises the members owing to the sense of trust it creates is suddenly made conditional. When members raise questions or doubt the intentions, motives, methods or ideas of the leader, this love ceases, thus creating an absence of it (Pretorius, 2013). The sudden void and feeling of solitude leave the member feeling lost and frightful. Since the purpose of the initial bombing of love was to create a state of dependency, all forms of critical thinking and independence are robbed from the member (Deutschf, 1980; Schwartz & Kaslow, 1979, as cited in Alexander & Rollins, 1984). They are

unable to function, think and act outside the cultic group. The member has been repeatedly told that the only form of love and understanding they can receive is from the cult, and they have been socialised to accept that the only place where they might belong is within the cultic society (Alexander & Rollins, 1984). Thus, due to the erasure of their old frame of reference, and a fear of abandonment and complete loss of identity, the member chooses to continue staying in the cult. This fear prevents the absence of love to cause the destruction of the institution.

The present article explores the various manipulation techniques brought about by wielding love as the primary agent such as the dichotomous personality of the leader, love bombing, isolation from any external sources of love, regulation of the manner and nature of love and finally by making the love offered by the cultic group conditional. There exist a myriad of differences, but also similarities between legitimate love in societies, and the restricted, unconventional love within cults as explored by the theories of Simmel and Durkheim. In order to disarm the operations of cults, it is necessary to acknowledge the ways in which the cultic groups are akin to the larger society, and a deeper understanding of their structure and goals is essential.

Illustration by Chriselle Fernandes

Illustration of silhouette of a person entering a colourful tunnel. In the tunnel, four silhouettes of hands can be seen holding four different hearts. The end of the tunnel has two different symbols.
At the end of the tunnel there is no light. Rather, it is a black void.

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13. THE DARKER SHADES OF LOVE

–CHINMAYEE GUPTA

Love is an overpowering emotion which has been discussed in depth in our society since time immemorial, focusing mainly on how enriching and rewarding it can be. But the fact that love opens up a way for many negative emotions is highly neglected. There is often a conscious effort made to glorify love instead of embracing its reality. This article tries to create a psychosocial connection between love and manipulation and discusses the need to normalise and embrace conflict as a tool to deal with this manipulation. The attempt is to look at love objectively, considering its negative side and gaining an evolved perspective about love.

Love. What is love? The number of emotions this one, four-lettered word encompasses is enormous. The importance of love has been realised by various writers, poets, psychologists and other literati, as there have been several attempts to define this abstract emotion. It doesn't matter how one defines it; what makes love sociologically interesting is the aftermath of this bewildering experience, what it does to humans and how it affects their perceptions of the world.

Love, however, glorified by various literati, isn't all perfect. Like any other emotion, love has both positive and negative aspects. There is a constant tug experienced between the dreamers and the realists, who are considered 'unromantic' for merely stating facts. There is often some reluctance when it comes to discussing the 'dark' parts of love; the conflict experienced within it, the manipulation caused in loving relationships, and even the abuse that comes with it are some examples of the same. Many emotions often accompany love; It brings with it the beautiful siblings; happiness, contentment, thrill and the evil stepsisters; jealousy, insecurity and manipulation.
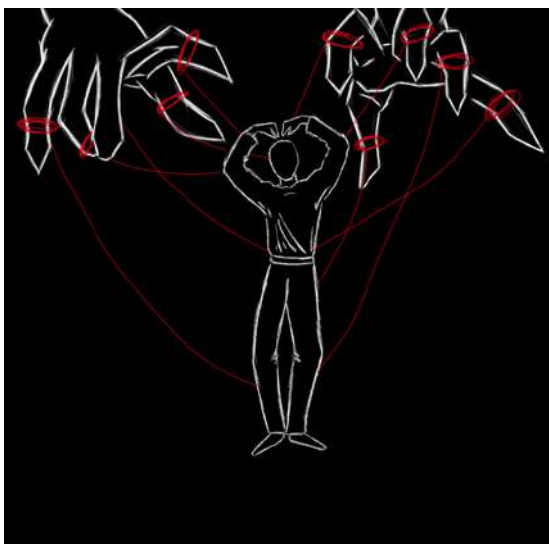

Illustration by Chriselle Fernandes

The image shows a pair of puppeteer's hands can be seen manipulating a human-like doll. The doll is entangled in red strings which also tangle around the fingers of the puppeteer.

Manipulation is one of the giants among the negative feelings attached to love. Manipulation exists everywhere; it is the need to control the actions of the people around oneself, and it is not restricted to romantic relationships exclusively. "Manipulation is coercive or unethical behaviour driven by the goal of exploiting or controlling another person for your own personal gain." (Vogel & Craft, 2015). There is a certain amount of persuasion in every relationship. "Persuasion is a process in which one person or entity tries to influence another person or group of people to change their beliefs or behaviours" (Cherry, 2022). For e.g.;, persuading close ones to try out their favourite restaurant. However, this cannot be regarded as manipulation. As mentioned above, manipulation is a coercive activity, and there is a significant difference between coercion and persuasion. According to Van Dijk, (2006:361) The crucial difference is that in persuasion, the interlocutors are free to believe or act as they please, depending on whether or not they accept the arguments of the persuader, whereas, in manipulation, recipients are typically assigned a more passive role: they are victims of manipulation..

"Manipulation in relationships can sometimes be so subtle and effective, you may wind up questioning your perception of the situation, rather than the other person's actions or motives" (Vogel & Craft, 2015) and there are various tactics used for manipulation. Some of the most frequently used tactics are guilt tripping, gaslighting and love bombing.

"Guilt-tripping is when someone tries to make you feel responsible or guilty of your actions or decisions. Drake explains that guilt trips often involve using something one person did for the other as "leverage" to get what they want" (Vogel & Craft, 2015).

Guilt can be good when internalised, it can show introspection on the person's part and shows how important this relationship is for them, but the biggest criterion here is that it should be identified individually as an act to correct inappropriate behaviour and should not be assigned externally (Burton, as cited in Stone, 2022).

Guilt trips are a way of manipulating individuals to exploit the love and care the victims have for the abusers.

The victims feel guilty for not behaving according to the expectations of either the guilt-tripping individual or the society as a whole and hence feel obliged to change these behaviours against their own will. It happens because the abusers don't have the knowledge to express unhappiness with their partner's action in a healthy manner, and instead of discussing the issue in a straightforward manner, they guilt trip them into acting a certain way, which can be problematic in the long run (Burton, as cited in, Stone,2022).

Gaslighting is also often used to manipulate individuals in a loving relationship."Gaslighting — a type of psychological abuse aimed at making victims seem or feel "crazy," creating a "surreal" interpersonal environment" (Sweet, 2019). Gaslighting is a way to manipulate the individual into questioning their reality, their sanity and their experiences. This can be done by using the victims' love for them as a weapon, accusations of paranoia and constant criticisms which are aimed at bringing out the victim's insecurities into the limelight and are not executed constructively (Bergen, as cited in, Beauchamp, 2022). The reasons behind such behaviour in a relationship are mainly to establish the power hierarchy and enjoy control over the victim's life. This power struggle is noticed in all social institutions, starting from the fundamental social unit, the family. Considering that the existence of a family is built on this hierarchy having the head of the family at the top, usually, is someone who earns bread for the rest of the family and hence is the final decision maker. So it is understandable why power would play such an important role in any interpersonal relationship. Nivedita Menon, in her text, Seeing like a feminist, mentions how the structure of a family would collapse if everyone in the family were treated as an equal (Menon, 2012, p. 6). Likewise, in any relationship, the power dynamic is dependent on various factors like gender, economic background, etc. and the individual who has more power tends to desire more and more of it, which may lead them to indulge in dangerous practices, such as gaslighting.

In the case of physical violence, the abusers' justification for their actions may be to bring out the victim's fault, which enabled them to act this way. They urge the victim to stop their inappropriate behaviour, so the abuser doesn't have to take such extreme measures. This is also an example of gaslighting. The abusers, in both physical and verbal abuse, often apologise profusely, promise never to do it again and justify themselves so that the victims feel responsible for their actions.

Love bombing is another such subtle manipulation tactic which is challenging to recognise. Love bombing is manipulation through excessive attention, often showering one inappropriately with gifts, compliments, affection, and time. These things may be wonderful, which can be confusing.

However, love bombing is when this feels enrapturing, takes all their attention, and is excessive (Vogel & Craft, 2022). Love bombing occurs in a relationship either with an intention to manipulate the partner or due to unconscious and unresolved attachment patterns formed over time (Steele and Huynh, as cited in, Simon, 2022). Gifts and compliments are often considered the highest form of expressing affection, especially in a society where vital importance is assigned to the celebration of Valentine's day, whose premise is based on the gift culture.

Since society preaches that the only intention behind giving gifts is love, it becomes an easy medium of manipulation as showering someone with gifts makes them feel indebted to the abuser and this works in their favour. It is often used when the abuser is insecure about the relationship, so they try to forge a bond that isn't established yet, as the victim feels indebted to them after receiving various gifts; this is an easy way to secure the relationship (Steele, as cited in, Simon, 2022).

Causes of manipulation can be more than just psychological. Manipulation may very well penetrate these interpersonal relationships due to the larger sociological factors. Roles in society are predetermined, and they in turn dictate the behaviour of individuals in a relationship. These roles could be based on various factors such as gender or in terms of culture; they could also be based on the socio-economic background or the financial independence of the two individuals etc. Often manipulation might occur as an effort to carry out these societal expectations without having the right methodology to do so. Manipulative tactics may occur out of sheer frustration originating due to the inability to conduct these roles efficiently. Like the predetermined role in every relationship, society often maps the outlook of an ideal relationship which compels individuals to focus on this prescriptive view of a happy relationship to maintain the societal stature instead of describing an unhealthy relationship as it is. As soon as one realises that they are in an unhealthy relationship, one of the most difficult things to do is accept that they were in fact manipulated by a loved one. People often start to question their instincts and try to make it work as much as possible without any conflict.

"Conflict is inevitable, but not inherently negative. All relationships face conflict with some frequency and long-term romantic partnerships are no exception" (Hamlin,2018). Many thinkers believe that conflict is not just inevitable but necessary in the social context.
According to Coser, the closer the relationship, the more intense the conflict is. The fear of intense conflict is likely to lead parties to suppress their hostile feelings, the accumulation of which is likely to intensify the conflict further once it breaks out (Coser, 1956). Though he meant this for more extensive social groups, it can perfectly be applied to intimate relationships which are part of the larger society.

The conflict or rebellion need not be a vicious thing. According to Cahn and Abigail (2014), conflict is the building block of an interpersonal relationship and is meant to achieve greater benefits. Managing and overcoming conflict makes a relationship stronger and healthier. "Ideally, when interpersonal couples engage in conflict management, they will reach a solution that is mutually beneficial for both parties"(Cahn & Abigail, 2014, as cited in Wrench et al., 2020). When conflict is addressed with the aim of reaching a collective result and is handled effectively, it can be highly productive.

Manipulation and conflict, both as important as they are, are often neglected while talking about love. Love is considered pure and sacred and associating these 'profane' concepts with it is strongly avoided. There is a need to identify love for what it is, with all its vices and virtues. This ensures a better understanding of what to expect while encountering this enigma, called 'love'.

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14. THE TANGLE OF LOVE, NOSTALGIA AND THE MATSUTAKE MUSHROOM

–DIVYADARSHINI RAMANATHAN

This paper attempts to critically engage with the idea of nostalgia by using the matsutake mushrooms as a template for study. From the indeterminacy of its life form, elusive and subjective smellscape associated memory, how it affects the formation of emotional bonding transcending a simple dish. Nostalgia is a multivocal symbol of life, the ever present desire to associate with something cognition recognizes as budding memory. The matsutake mushroom is life beyond limits. It keeps growing and changing with the evolving environment. The paper attempts to evaluate recent trends of capitalizing on the nostalgia based experiences through incorporation of the matustake into mainstream production. They are used differently within the same culture for various effects. Matustake cannot be described without its love of nostalgia attached to it. It has years of history in the making of its modern love story. You can only tell by smelling it.

There are moments of longing for a past left behind. Moments of childhood that have remained as memories throughout our lives and sometimes invoke some long forgotten emotion. Moments like returning back to your birthplace after a long hiatus, the smell of the earth after the rains, the ice cream cart stationed outside your tuition center, more often than not the smell or taste of something that was experienced in childhood. Memories where nothing went wrong and everything would remain happy ever after. The past is an idealized version of what occurred, it is a version which we subconsciously project onto ourselves. It is a collection of memories which bring happiness while filtering all that was negative. Nostalgia does not contain itself to a specific memory of an incident or object but rather an emotional state.

This article attempts to correlate the feeling of nostalgia with the emotion of love. More particularly by using the smellscapes of the matsutake mushroom to establish this relationship. This is to show how scent, emotion and memory are all interconnected. Through observation, scientific studies prove that odor is the strongest sense intertwined with emotion as the nose is directly connected with the olfactory lobe in the limbic system -- the area of the brain that is considered as the seat of all emotions. It is scientifically known that an average human being can smell upto 10,000 different odors, whereas no two persons can smell in the same manner (Krusemark, Novak, 2013). Our individual reactions and responses, and associations with smell are very different and signify different things for different people. Nostalgia is a multivocal symbol of life, the ever present desire to associate with something cognition recognizes as budding memory.

The matsutake mushroom is life beyond limits. It keeps growing and changing with the evolving environment. The matsutake mushroom cannot exist without transformative relations with other species. Ecological factors influence coexistence among species as well as their individual needs. Matsutake mushrooms are the fruiting bodies of an underground fungus associated with certain forest trees.

Illustration by Ruchika Basutkar

Image consists of a glass flask that has been shut by a cork. The flask is filled with different types of leaves and plants. There are four personified mushrooms, one of which is hanging onto a stem, another that is sitting on a mossy rock, the third is looking at pink petals and the fourth is collecting foliage in a small basket. Outside the flask, on the left side, is a long stem with leaves. On the bottom left of the flask, is a small purple snail.

Matsutake makes it possible for host trees to live in poor soils, without fertile humus (Tsing, 2015). In turn, they are nourished by the trees. This transformative mutualism has made it impossible for humans to artificially cultivate it. Smell is very elusive. We cannot put a finger on it. Moved by the smell, people and animals brave wild terrain searching for it. Deers are known to select matsutake over other mushroom fungi. It brings about a very visible need for consumption among humans and animals likewise.

.Many patrons of matsutake report their first experience with the mushroom was not very memorable. They found the smell very sickening and overpowering. Many were cooking it with butter and oil which further (ruined) its smell (Tsing, 2015). When they discovered the proper way of preparing it they were overjoyed with the experience and continued its consumption. They could not remember what they once considered sickening, because now they were filled with happy memories of it.

With changing times, given the expense of matustake and its inconsistent availability, clientele engage in simply smelling the stock as a window into past experiences. Koji Ueda runs a beautifully trim vegetable shop in Kyoto's traditional market.

During the matsutake season, most people who come into the store don't want to buy (his matsutake are expensive); they want to smell. Just coming into the store makes people happy. That's why he sells matsutake, he said: for the sheer pleasure it gives people. The love it induces in their memories (Tsing, 2015).

Perhaps this powerful and pervasive emotion attached to the matsutake mushroom is what made corporate odor engineers to design food products with artificial matsutake flavor and taste. Now you can buy matsutake-flavored potato chips and matsutake-flavored instant miso soup. But for some long time consumers it just doesn't taste the same yet it reminds them of what matsutake truly tasted and smelt like (Tsing, 2015). Many new generation Japanese have only this artificial taste as a benchmark, never having truly tasted the wild mushroom. Matsutake lovers in Japan disagree and say that the younger generation has no first hand experience of the actual matsutake, their sense of taste having been hijacked by the newer not real flavors. In marketing research, scented products and shopping environments are found to enhance consumer behavior and their evaluation of a service; smells are essential in creating pleasant retail atmospheres (Tsing, 2015). In line with such findings, cities serve as service escapes and smells used to market various types of business can be strategically planned and managed to provide explicit communications of a city's culture and identity. Positive smellscapes can bring restorative effects to cities, making inhabitants feel healthier and happier (Tsing, 2015). These positive and negative experiences are important cues of emotional embodiment of individuals, especially the foundation of emotions like love and feelings like nostalgia. Matsutake; it is said by the older generation of matsutake lovers, smells like village life and a childhood visiting grandparents and chasing dragonflies. It recalls open pinewoods, now crowded out and dying. Many small memories come together in the smell. In the research, 'Mushroom at the end of the world' brings to mind the paper dividers on village interior doors, the author Anna Tsing explained; grandmothers in the village would change the papers every New Year and use them to wrap the next year's mushrooms. It was an easier time, before nature became degraded and poisonous (Tsing, 2015)

Coining the smellscape concept, consideration is given to how the perceived smell environment of a particular place, at a particular time, responds to the context and an individual's background (Xiao, Tait and Kang, 2020). The smellscape concept itself constructs a relationship between human experiences of smells, the physical space and the context of place.

Perception is at the core of the smellscape concept. Smells play an important role in triggering emotions in places. 'Olfaction gives us not just a sensuous geography of places and spatial relationships, but also an emotional one of love and hate, pain and joy, attachment and alienation' (Xiao, Tait and Kang, 2020, p. 3).

A scent associated with a good experience can bring a rush of joy. A foul odor or once associated with a bad memory may make us grimace with disgust (Tsing, 2015). The action of smelling or sensing smells links the past and present, internal and outside world. The emotional reactions towards smells in particular places are often aroused from the recalled memories of a particular moment in the past when people experienced a certain smell (Tsing, 2015). The feeling about an odor becomes attached to a certain stimulus or situation. Odor-evoked memories and imagination play an important role in smell-initiated emotional reactions. Nostalgia is not an emotional state, but rather "a longing for a sanitized impression of the past," according to Alan R. Hirsh in "Nostalgia: a Neuropsychiatric Understanding" (Hirsch, 1992, p. 392). Rather than seeing the past for what it truly was, we recall it as a conglomeration of various memories, filtering negative ones out to integrate the positive ones which creates nostalgia.

"Smells do bring back memories," says Dr. Ken Heilman, in conversation with NBC news "Smell goes into the emotional parts of the brain and the memory parts, whereas words go into thinking parts of the brain" (Holohan, 2012). Olfactive frames of remembering are employed in order to explicate sensory meta-narratives including sensory relations (pertaining to familial and other ties), sensory memory, time and space, and sensory scapes (Holohan, 2012).

Critically, the appraisal profile of nostalgia is more similar to those of positive, especially social, emotions such as tenderness, love, feeling loved, and awe, than to those of negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and disappointment. A hallmark feature of nostalgia is its similarity to positive interpersonal sentiments. A new spatial positioning analysis on the state experience of nostalgia and other emotions indicated that nostalgia is positioned near loss-related emotions such as longing, melancholy, homesickness, and love-related emotions such tenderness, feeling loved, and gratitude (Tilburg, 2022). In terms of nostalgia invoking love, there is a reason towards the increasing tendency to romanticize memory and past experiences. Love has a very reparative function. As witnessed in Matsutake commercialization, there are higher levels of willingness to accommodate the very transitions the mushroom has taken simply to preserve its memory entrenched in love.

But there is no willingness to sacrifice the mushroom or compromise adjusting to its inevitable end. The love that resides in memory has enough pull for the necessity of invention. More particularly the invention of artificial matsutake replacements. Experiencing nostalgia through reflecting on these specific autobiographical memories has already been shown to serve several positive benefits in the personal lives of people.

The sociality function of nostalgia demonstrates how individuals may feel increased levels of connectedness to friends or other significant people in these individuals' lives as a result of this experience. There are communities across the globe who are united through a singular cause - their love for matsutake. Or more importantly the love entrenched in their memories of Matsutake (Tsing, 2015). "Nostalgia helps remind us that we do have some control during a time of great uncertainty," says licensed psychologist Krystine I. Batcho, PhD, who researches the psychology of nostalgia. "Even Though we can't control so much of what has been happening, we can remember how we dealt with crises before and survived them. Equally importantly, nostalgic memories remind us of those we love and who have loved us, which strengthens our sense that we are not alone." (Garis, 2020). Past research illustrates that nostalgia offers solace in the face of loss (e.g., meaninglessness, loneliness, disillusionment) and relief in the form of love (e.g., social connectedness, attachment, belongingness). Nostalgia is uniquely positioned among emotions in offering a bridge from loss to love.

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15. LOVE ON THE GRAM: A GLIMPSE INTO INSTAGRAM PDA

–SHAMIKA NAYAK

Social Media has become the pivot of people's lives ever since the early 2000s. With the social media influence affecting every aspect of individual life, it has inevitably influenced the way people look at love. This article aims at presenting the intersection of love and social media through the lens of Public Display of Affection (PDA). It attempts to unveil some reasons why people engage in PDA, primarily through Goffman's theory of self-presentation. The article further probes to understand some of the consequences of social media PDA and the manner in which these influence individuals in society.

The age of Social media began in the early 2000s. Today, most of our social interactions have been modified. Most young people interact both online and offline and switch between these dimensions or even interact online and offline simultaneously (Granholm, 2016). All of us know what social media is in its literal form. Kaplan and Haenlein define social media as "A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 60). But interestingly, something which is merely defined as a 'group of applications' guides most of our lives today. Social media has changed the lifestyle of society (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016), our likes, dislikes, and choices are largely determined by what we consume on it . With so much influence of social media on our lives, it inevitably enters the way we form relationships with others. Be it romantic relationships, relationships with our family, friends, or pets, it has become a trend to showcase this affection on social media. This has brought to the forefront something known as Public Display of Affection on Social media or Social Media PDA. However for the purpose of this article, the focus shall primarily be on the aspect of PDA in romantic relationships.

Illustration by Chriselle Fernandes

The image has a hand holding a phone with the display screen on the phone is the Instagram logo. The bubbles contain pictures of recent couple trends. The colours are bright to show the "perfect life" that the couple usually display.

The Public Display of Affection is not inherently a concept brought about by social media. But the platform has played a pivotal role in escalating the extent to which pda existed long before the social media age. However, it is true that social media has people engaging in PDA. Hereon Public Display of Affection shall be referred to as 'PDA'. The focus shall be on PDA specific to Instagram as the social media platform. PDA is the tendency to display feelings in romantic relationships in public. (Kocur et al., 2022) Although initially, it began as an American slang, today it has become a commonly used term. Some instances of PDA include publicly commenting romantically on one's partner's post or sharing pictures about your partner or loved ones online. In the Indian context for example, celebrities like Virat Kohli commented on a picture posted on instagram of his wife and actress, Anushka Sharma calling her his heart and world. In another instance, Joe Jonas posted a picture with his fiancée Sophie Turner with a caption saying "Infinity and Beyond" (Khatib, 2019).

An interesting question that has risen now is why people feel such a need to share their personal lives online and in doing so, engage in PDA. One potential response to this question could be found through Erving Goffman's Theory of Presentation Of Self in everyday life (1956). (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). According to this theory, the self isn't static or fixed; but a dynamic social process(Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). He compares individual self-projections to that of a theatrical. Like actors playing multiple roles on the theatre stage, individuals mask themselves as different characters in their social interactions with different people on different platforms. They intend to project themselves as something which is in correspondence with popular social conventions and they mask their true tendencies in public view. Here, a key metaphor used by Goffman in his theory is that of 'The Mask'. The Mask is used as a tool of deception in face-to-face interactions by theatre artists. In the age of social media, we find this mask taking a virtual avatar as social media profiles. Today, people use their social media profiles to project a socially convenient identity to the public. It should be observed that in using the mask an individual does not transform into another person like in the case of imitations, but merely superimposes certain traits that they find likeable and desirable in society over their innate self. Out of numerous reasons for social media PDA some include the use of social media profiles as masks to project excessive displays of affection either in an attempt to make their partner feel more validated and loved or as an expression of commitment and loyalty or to cover self-perceived flaws in their relationships and gain popularity while creating a popular 'impression'. When the latter is a stronger cause for people to

engage in social media PDA, the need to create a desirable impression not just to known people but to unknown strangers online creates a sense of pressure on some individuals encouraging them to further engage in PDA.

"People think that they will not be able to project the desired image strongly enough or believe that some event will happen that will repudiate their self-presentations, causing reputational damage" (Schlenker and Leary, 1982).

Therefore, even though people try to replicate much of their offline selves online, individuals are at times collectively pressurised and in turn, pressurise other users to engage with popular social media trends to stay 'relevant' on social media as well as to prove to the world that they are perfectly happy.

Some people are at times selective in the amount of PDA they want to showcase to their acquaintances and strangers. This has given rise to the popular concept of 'Finsta' accounts on Instagram. A finsta account is one with a selected number of viewers where the user often engages in excessive PDA. It must be noted, however, that PDA isn't the only purpose of finsta accounts. Finsta accounts are an outlet to share emotional, low-quality, or indecorous content with close friends. (Xiao et al., 2020) However, for this article, the focus shall be on PDA as one of the purposes of finsta accounts. This bifurcation is mainly a result of sociocultural appropriation or the desire to display affection publicly yet keep it away from the view of a particular group of individuals. Goffman in his works explained such a phenomenon as an attempt to adopt multiple roles and multiple identities in our everyday life, to create different personas of our one individual self. Social media has simplified this attempt for individuals engaging in PDA. As mentioned before, individuals on social media use a 'mask' to correspond with social conventions, because Globalisation and Westernisation have got the globe together often creating an urge amongst people to walk the western way. Yet, every region and every society has specific levels of acceptance for PDA, every region has levels at which people can comfortably express their fondness for each other in public spaces (Khan, 2019). Limiting to those levels keeps the individual at par with the social trends while going beyond those levels is not very welcomed or accepted by the majority of society. While even today, only celebrities have the trend-setter labels of introducing new forms of PDA and other mainstream trends, individuals who remain extremely active on social media, keeping their audiences engaged hence influencing a large section of the public are known as 'Influencers'. These Influencers have today managed to gain somewhat celebrity-like status. Still, the celebrity status is way above the influencer status.

This highlights another reason for such a high rate of PDA on social media. An attempt by people to imitate most things celebrities do by using social media. This is because of the role of social media as an equalising platform giving each user unbiased tools, resources and access. Although people may or may not be able to dress up or look exactly like their favourite celebrities, they can now post a couple-picture with a similar pose as their favourite celebrities, using the same captions and audios on social media. While staying in the same luxurious hotels as a celebrity is difficult for most common people, clicking similar couple pictures at scenic locations for pre-wedding shoots is achievable . Therefore they do it. It is their closest attempt to replicate what a celebrity has done.

Imitation of celebrity PDAs has become extremely common today. However, most often if not, PDA by celebrities is labelled 'Too Cute' (Niharika Sanjeev, 2022) while the same acts by non-celebrity people are labelled as 'Cringe'. This disparity in the way celebrities are looked at versus the way non-celebrities are looked at for the same scenarios has some roots in 'Celebrity Worship Syndrome 'or CWS. According to Kader (2018), Society has become so fixated on celebrities' lives that it has begun impacting their own lives in negative ways. Celebrity Worship Syndrome has been linked today, with a number of psychological repercussions including depression and anxiety, to name a few (Shi and Mitchell, 2018). CWS has many more psychological implications on the development and minds of the engagers. Social media has increasingly enhanced this aspect of celebrity worship and created an amalgamation of obsession with celebrities and constant comparison of individual relationships with those of celebrities. Right from making relationships 'Official' through Instagram to posting everyday PDA on social media. This has initiated a process of generalisation and uniformity in the millennial society.

Today, love and affection have become to some extent conditional to PDA. With social media PDA triumphing on the list. It should, however be noted, that although excessive PDA might have definite repercussions on individuals and society, the concept of PDA should not be assessed only through a negative lens. There are a number of factors, the amalgamation of which collectively result in PDA. Therefore, although PDA to a certain limit has both positive and negative consequences, excessive PDA might be hazardous to not only engaging individuals but viewers in general too causing a sense of 'Missing Out' or as it is said in the social media language, causing FOMO (fear of missing out). Therefore, PDA in excessive proportion comes with harmful consequences for every user on the social media platform, which in today's world includes almost every single person in society.

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16. LOVE, CARE AND DILEMMAS

–JANHAVI DESHPANDE AND ANUSHKA BHOSALE

Through this article we undertake a linguistic and economic journey on the quest of understanding the concept of self-love in today's times. Advertisements become the lens through which we differentiate between self-love and its counterpart of 'self-care' which is purely based on materialistic consumption. The patriarchal undertones of certain phrases used in these advertisements, helps us reflect on how we understand work and leisure when it comes to women, whereas a statistical analysis of incomes helps us trace consumption patterns of self-care products.

ust ponder over this question... How do we show self-love? Majority would answer by, "going on a solo-trip!," "by giving in to my food cravings!," "by shopping for myself!" or "by visiting a salon!" One thing remains common in these answers – 'buying' goods and services to reduce some burden on the 'self.' The long deterioration of the 'self' in this capitalist society looks at buying self-care as its reward. Thus, self-love is equalized with demanding expensive self-care products and services as compensation .

Some consumers see self-care products like night creams, massaging oils, balms, etc as a way to ensure mental and physical well-being. "These days, consumers view wellness through a much broader and more sophisticated lens, encompassing not just fitness and nutrition but also overall physical and mental health and appearance" (Callaghan et al, 2021). Therefore, buying self-care is seen as a part of a process in achieving this end result of perceived 'wellness.' But can we assume that everyone wants to achieve this goal of looking like a happy, satisfied, self-loved person?

To answer this question, we analysed the medium through which we predominantly communicate self-love – the self-care products. Self-care products largely meant for women allowed us to research better and more efficiently from our own positionality. The addition of women as independent consumers is itself a feminist success of capitalist inclusion.

It becomes important to consider that a woman's labour is treated as labour in an economic sense only when she physically toils to serve the family. Women have to make sure that they are efficient in their ways of cooking, cleaning and child rearing for them to establish their position in a household. Thus, for her to be 'tired' of something, there has to be work which was performed according to the standards set by the household. A mother can be tired only when she fulfills every duty as a mother; we see the reflections of this selfless-self-care in the portrayal of women in advertisements.

Her love for herself is always shown as very 'simplistic, economic and quick' (Fuchs, 2016). It should be easy to handle, carry, and quick to use but it must show long term results. Self-love and self-care is portrayed as fuel to keep the process of labour going. She is shown to be investing as little time as possible on herself and is then given the titles of "my superwoman," "my elegant lady," "my angel." These qualities or titles find their roots in what the gendered-colonial definition of woman has been passed on to us (Gunn, 2005).

We expect women to be as laborious as possible and still have the so-called 'perfect' physical attributes. Therefore, femininity as a concept is focused on as a dimension to play on the insecurity around not being enough (Stets and Burke, 2014). "For her soft lips," "for her generous/kind/giving hands," "for her river-like flowing hair"- a woman here in these advertisements is nothing but a metaphor to reinforce the image of femininity so as to please the viewer's eyes. The liminal experience of being the 'self' is then channelised through the display of self-care through economic means.

This 'appearance' aspect is used well by the producers in the self-care economy. The advertisements of products are such that they tick the checkbox beside self-love. They add to the perceived compulsion of purchasing self-care products to show self-love! Thus, the literacy behind expression of self-love is truly crumpled. The gendered dictation of norms of expression truly hides the deserved pursuit of love and binds it to overt care. Can we ever love ourselves without any parameters? is another question in itself.

One such unignorable parameter is income! According to Engels, as income rises, once a luxurious good (such as self-care products) becomes a necessity. Connecting it to the capitalist set-up, there is a clear division of 'haves' and 'have nots.' The haves think such self-care products are a necessity. To the contrary, as per Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) that shows self-love or self-actualization at last and food, clothing, shelter, etc as first, for the 'have nots' and the ones 'not on either end but on spectrum', self-care products are either the last priority, or, not even a priority.

For example, 'haves' do not feel a huge burden after spending on brands like Chanel or Dior, but the ones on the spectrum save an extra penny each day to buy the same brands. The 'haves' face a dilemma related to this. According to Thorstein Veblen (1899) and his work on conspicuous consumption theory (Veblen, , the rich buy expensive goods as a public display of economic power. This consumer behaviour overlooks the utility factor of a commodity. Specifically speaking for the ones on the spectrum, there is a dilemma whether to prioritise 'self' or to save up for the future. This is because this class has the purchasing power but for them, the checklist of paying bills, EMIs, car loan, home loan, etc comes first. (as well explained in the Consumer expenditure survey, U.S census bureau, 2021) But for this section of the society as well, the conspicuous consumption is seen as they too desire to 'fit in' in the upper strata and demarcate themselves from the have nots!

According to the World Bank Report, the poverty line was set at $1.08 in 1993 and now in 2022, it has been increased to $2.15 (Rs.175.6) per person. Two-thirds of the money spent by poor Indian households go to roti, kapda aur makaan. This consumer behaviour can be attributed to the scarce resources they have in their hands. There was a social-psychology experiment using manipulations of drink scarcity (Aarts et al. 2001) Participants who were made to feel thirsty recalled drinking-related items better against the ones not thirsty. Thus, the 'have nots' focus on achieving the basic amenities. And so, there is absolutely no prioritisation of the consumption of self-care products in this social class.

The linguistics of the advertisements set a reward model for women where care and love are to be earned through labour invested in ensuring the well-being of others. Self-care is then hegemonised through language. "The power of language to construct subjectivity and social reality makes it a site of both ideological and political struggle. The language planning discipline has been at the heart of such a struggle" (Edelman, 1985).

We are put in a linguistic dilemma where expressing self-love through self-care becomes an economic debate between luxury and a necessity. What happens to women or around them when they have a specific body or skin type is a question of money and effort that gets to the body. Is a product worth investing in, translates itself into "am I worth spending my money on?" The worth of a gender's labour is then dictated by the demand of patriarchy from that gender and economics around it.

This truly makes us question, how do we position ourselves (from our positionality) to exercise self love? It restricts itself to buying some or the other commodity to reduce the burden of expression on the 'self'. When we look at the market force of demand for the self- care products, it has risen over time due to this urge of always buying because that's how we have been told to respond.

To conclude, love is a feeling and its expression is what makes it beautiful. The concept of self-care works as a channel to experience that love but the dilemmas it creates in its quintessential understanding make it more elitist in nature. What is victimized the most in this process is an entire gender and economic spectrum that shows its power in a true sense. And what we are left with is love, care aur dilemmas!

Illustration by Ruchika

Image background is a dark blueish-grey. From the top left yellow rays of light are falling. Towards the right side of the image, is a lady with curly hair and a dusky skin tone. She is holding a sharp carving tool which has a bit of red on the edges. In front of her on a dark brown surface, is an open, red lipstick. The top of the lipstick has a carved out figure of a girl with her arm outstretched.

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17. PROSE AND PREJUDICE

–SALONEE KUMAR

It is a truth universally acknowledged that love has been captured through poetic expression for aeons. However, literary devices are continually changing with evolving philosophies. With the onset of technological modernity, the boundaries of acceptable love have drastically shifted. This paradigm has been underscored by reviewing feminist and queer literature. This article also critically analyses Gen Z's parasocial relationships with fictional characters (chiefly villains) against the backdrop of mental health. In this manner, literary works mirror love in the society in which they were penned, consequently impacting our understanding of passion amid prejudice for generations to come.

Illustration by Shaili Palrecha

Image consists of an open book. It has a rainbow heart that encompasses the entire book. In the middle, stretching across either side of the book are two hands that hold each other in the middle. The hands are white.

History has had few constants but love, with literature defining its zeitgeist through the ages. Platonic, sexual, lost, unrequited, and other forms of love have left us spellbound. For instance, when our love for our political ideologies overpowers our love for humanity, it has the potential to end our civilisation. Moving and devastating images of love have existed in facets of society for those who crave it, despise it, or rebel against it. Love knows no frontiers, as it materialises across races and genres. Literature has valued love as a fundamental theme since its genesis. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, declarations of love by writing in a 'romantic stile' meant using overblown flowery language, akin to what we term 'romance' today (Holloway, 2020). Handwritten sonnets from the eighteenth century and Wattpad stories from the twenty-first century alike reflect a writer's fervour for their muse, slowly developing beyond artificially erected boundaries.

Love is an integral component of symbolic interactionism in that we derive purpose from the exchange of symbols and language. It creatively represents things that would have otherwise remained unsaid. Love and literature, both independently and collectively, concede the principle of 'meaning' at their core. This meaning could be assigned by the artist, the muse, or an observer. Love has been apostrophised by philosopher Roberto Unger (1984) as an ideal that is "the most influential mode of moral vision in our culture" (as cited in Lindholm, 1998, p. 1). From a Durkheimian viewpoint, love is a sacred religion; several ritualistic influences constitute the foundation of non-platonic relationships. Per traditional French marriage conventions, a newly married couple must drink a brew concocted from honey and metheglin as the moon went through its normal phases (Bloch, 1992); this culminated in the term 'honeymoon'.

The employment of comparable yet manifold themes in romance constitutes a sociological vehicle of advancement and acceptance. The Victorian era reinforced families' intimate involvement in the marriage of their children. These behaviours could be seen against the backdrop of the functionalist theory, for marriage stitched the fabric of socio-political alliances at the time. In this context, psychologist Paul Rosenblatt (1966; 1967, as cited in Jankowiak & Fischer, 1992) correlated cultural transmission and social organisation methods to the emergence of romantic love. The effects of this phenomenon rippled throughout Victorian literature, where women started voicing their views on their bodies, particularly in terms of sexuality and consent. This period was marked by pseudonyms, championed by Louisa May Alcott, and popularised by Jane Austen (or 'A Lady'). Now, their writings serve as literary classics. Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte narrates a peculiar love story. The titular character navigates through a challenging family situation and is baffled when her romantic interest, Mr Rochester, wants to marry for status purposes and not love in its purest sense.

Such Western stories highlight implications for families in India even today. Consequently, couples resort to eloping. They file legal cases to ensure their right to life and liberty (Srinivasan, 2021). In the wake of families openly forbidding inter-caste or inter-faith marriages, author Namita Gokhale has taken these restrictive norms head-on in her novel entitled The Things To Leave Behind. She writes about how, in pre-independence India, the caste system imprisoned love. There

s a geographical and emotional divide between North and South India, with their respective customs and rituals prioritised over love. This has been captured by Chetan Bhagat's 2 States - a dramatic account of his love story. Though we are moving towards secular love marriages in urban spaces, something hinders inclusive progress: homophobia. A pervasive social construct that underlies homophobia is power: the power to dominate over others.

In earlier periods, subtle references to queer relationships were made by Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf, and other authors whose 'romantic' characters often constituted the 'best friends' archetype. This could be attributed to the fact that they were written when same-sex relationships were globally outlawed. The noteworthy emergence of LGBTQIA+ relationships in literature can be traced back to ancient Greece. The infamous connection between the two heroes of the Iliad, Achilles and Patroclus, is a disputed one in the literature on the Trojan War. The story was retold in The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller, accentuating forbidden queer love, sacrifice, and grief. Queer fiction in war settings (which are typically 'masculine' in nature) has also been explored in books such as On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous by Ocean Vuong, which emphasises discrimination in the twenty-first century. It entails routine harassment against transgender individuals, microaggressions due to the internalisation of toxic masculinity, and the assumption that 'unconventional' sexuality is a temporary phase.

When renowned writings express affection deemed unconventional of its respective era, it could be construed as a perilous step. French philosopher Foucault (1980, as cited in Green, 2007) delved into the tenets of queerness with reference to sociological theory. He posed the question: how has sexuality been conceived and utilised in forming the modern self? Firstly, there has been significant resistance to this queer aspect of gender studies. Goffman (2003, as cited in Green, 2007) denied the existence of a 'personality' where individual traits or demeanours are carried from situation to situation. Additionally, West and Zimmerman (1987, as cited in Green, 2007) argued that gender was not a stable part of the self but rather a process that arose from 'doing' masculine and feminine activities (or gender fluid, gender non-conforming, and other activities that may be associated with various sexual orientations and gender identities).

We choose to believe that we are moving towards reformation due to legal decriminalisation, queer-affirmative therapy, and adoption for same-sex couples in some countries. The media has become a hub for representation (whether tokenistic or counterproductive is an integral afterthought). Stories with inclusive characters, such as Heartstopper, have taken the world by storm. Heartstopper is a graphic novel and web series that narrates an LGBTQIA+ interpretation of the 'bad-boy-good-girl' trope. Viewers exclaimed that they felt heard and seen for a change, as captured effectively by the Second

Adolescent podcast, where older viewers did not have similar positive experiences growing up. This aligns with the reflection theory, which communicates, in social and historical terms, the quality and greatness of literature through content, style, and form (Albrecht, 1954). Thus, the field of literature presents interpretive frames of reference, which have counterparts in real-life belief systems.

Our parasocial relationships with written characters are also fascinating. As media users, we feel connected to fictional or media people (Giles, 2002) and may interact with them as though they are real or know us. The concept was first theorised by Horton and Wohl (1956, as cited in Giles, 2002). It has become increasingly relevant due to open access to technology and online relationships post the Covid-19 pandemic. In Gen Z lingo, 'men written by women' could be construed as a result of the female gaze, where thoughtfulness, softness, and gentleness are admired. Fictional men with these characteristics are desired to the extent that readers fall in love with them or admire them. Loveless by Alice Oseman discusses discrimination within the LGBTQIA+ community, primarily the ostracisation of people on the asexual spectrum. In the novel, Sunil Jha, a non-binary, asexual homoromantic character, stands up against a bully and creates a safe space. We tend to feel strongly about such empathetic fictional male characters. Nevertheless, our emotions often transcend reality, blurring when the lines between fiction and reality.

We form parasocial relationships with the story's antagonist, but this is not a cause for concern. Many readers tend to love those who have been deprived of love, are incapable of love, or destroy one love for the sake of another love. As we open up about mental health, self-awareness, and other previously shunned topics, we attempt to identify with those similar to us. Villains allow readers to investigate darker, indecent, or repressed parts of their personalities safely and hypothetically- something psychologist Carl Jung preached as essential to confronting and understanding human nature (Fan, 2021). We commune with antagonists despite their flaws because, like humans, they too have layers that must be slowly uncovered and fleshed out. Our affinity with fictional characters or our disdain for them also stresses societal anticipations.

Gen Z's recent identification with villains is well-defined by the trending phrase: 'my villain origin story'. It connotes that a painful story arc gives one the potential to become a villain, as well as justify their transformation. Villains are no longer viewed as undesirable people, the way they were in previous generations' literature. According to the American Psychological Association, Gen Z is the most likely to acknowledge, report, and work through poor mental health (Bethune, 2019). As they sort out their own issues, they consider the mental health and thought processes of villains. They want to know what makes these characters act in

different, violent ways; this curiosity reverberates in their writings, wherein they provide the villain's perspective.

The publications of an epoch, especially in the context of love, become historical documents that echo social, political, and psychological sentiments. Thus, they could be dissected using sociological and psychological theses, underlining the presence and intensity of love in the midst of perennial conflict. This conflict could be linked to sexual orientation, gender identity, family restraints, technological avenues, mental health, and so on. In conclusion, a lack of understanding of love creates prejudice, which leads to undertones of acceptance and inclusion in prose.

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18. EMBRACING HATRED

–SHUDHATMAN SINGH RATHORE

This article will analyse the dynamics between the popularised forms of love and the unpopularised forms of hate. These forms are observed from the early Homo sapiens till the contemporary global citizen who struggles to comprehend how these two aspects dictate our emotions and influence our lives too. An exploration of the spectrum of hatred covers intensities, orthodoxy and validities when it comes to critically understanding hatred in a holistic manner. The article also tries to understand whether love & hate can coexist or not.

Hate has deep roots which date back to the first ethnic cleansing, where Homo sapiens drove the Neanderthals to extinction despite their similarities. "When someone is too different to tolerate but too similar to ignore" (Harari, 2015), this summarises our origins of hatred towards 'our very own'. Hate becomes a form of love that remains unexplored when discussions about love take place and this article will talk about those varying forms. These forms are often left undetected because they have been integrated as a part of you. You cannot detect you; it is not that simple.

Love manages to find its way in many aspects of our lives and it changes shape according to every situation. It is common to garner love for everyday things that you come across. It may be the colour of the sky, a Netflix character, a football team, a kitten, someone's outfit or just someone new. Unfortunately, your love for something can also be the cause of hating something else. One can see that sports rivalries induce hostility for rival fans that stems out from the love for one's own team. Here, a way to love one's team is to hate another's. However, hatred in such forms is not always detectable, and many people spend entire life spans without realising that it was always a part of them, because they could not comprehend it and associate it with irrationality and stupidity. It is not surprising that hatred is internal, imperceptible along with our 'self' because people are unwilling to acknowledge that the act of hating is a part of us. No matter how evidently it weighs down a person, it is rarely mentioned in a cultural context and often omitted. Here, 'self' is used to indicate the new persona born from the unconscious. The internal 'bottling up' of love & hate with scarce means to address them, engulfs an individual into being hateful or loving. A study (Halperin, 2008) conducted on group-based hate among Israelis recorded people claiming that they have never experienced hatred in their lifetime but went on to express their desire for the annihilation of Palestinians when confronted with the historical Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This study is an example of how socially condemned hate is outright denied because such behaviour is deemed unacceptable in a society. One cannot establish such a public identity for their 'self'.

On an acceptable note, the anthropocene highlights our emphasis on differences, which are tolerated instead of being accepted, but do we hate everything that is different from us? A pet owner would disagree with you since they love someone quite different from themselves. At the same time, people are ready to inflict violence on someone just because the other person is from a different caste or religion. Our species has an 'idée fixe' while differentiating among ourselves which consequently normalises our tendency of othering. 'Idée fixe' is a French term which conveys a fixed ideology that dominates our mind. This subconscious othering which differentiates us from one another also measures the threshold of our tolerance, but does it reach the mark of hatred? Hate's darkness blinds us to the fact that everybody is human, and differences between us should not stand in our way. However, humans are slow and they take their time to adjust their eyes to this darkness. We cannot look at how every individual deals with love and hatred but we can dig deep into that versatility in our lifespan.

We may say that hate is an antonym of love, but it is not an opposing force against love; it is yet another form of love. The light of love falling on something shall always give birth to a shadow of hate. Inside you, is an omnipresent form of hate that might actually be a consequence of love that you are holding, or used to hold. Yes, your ex-partner can be an example. There is always a love in someone's life that remains unrequited or unresolved, this love starts to rot and harms the wielder. Sometimes, even rendering them incapable of loving again.

Furthermore, hate works as a defence system for love, if someone insults your favourite author or if something harms the baby of a mammal mother, the output of hate shall be different, because the love that is fostered for an author and the love of a mother for her child is quite different. A brighter light casts a darker shadow, but how does that mutation take place with our internal 'self'?

Well, love and hate are different sides of the same coin and the thin line that divides them can be flipped over quite easily.

You don't believe me? Let us take a look at the mythological legend of Ramayana. People tend to focus on the love shared by Ram and Sita, but nobody talks about how the story does not end in a 'happily ever after'. Their tale ends when Sita begs the earth to swallow her because the feelings she garners for Ram become unbearable; she cannot continue this life where she was betrayed even after giving her all to become an ideal wife or 'pativrata.' Hate justifies love when it fails or breaks down. It instantly substitutes the feelings of love with hate on par with intensity, commitment, and attraction into repulsion (Sternberg, 2008). These three are the metric system used to balance out the equation which converts love into hate when the values convert into negative. One will hate with the same intensity and commitment as they once loved. Sita's feelings of love couldn't just vanish into thin air because it would leave a void of feelings with the absence of love, and this is where hate comes in, to fill the gap and make sense of the world that didn't make sense a few minutes ago. However, it is not correct to conclude that Sita simply developed hatred for Ram. Her feelings were composed of her new lack of faith in patriarchy, the cold realisation that the social system that vowed to protect her had failed her, and her irremediable dependence on her husband, who derogated her self-worth by nudging her to take the 'agni pariksha' which would validate her purity, honesty and respect as a queen (Bradley, 2006).

This is where an unorthodox form of hate presents itself on the hatred spectrum which has various dimensions and representations in society. One's hate for tomatoes in a burger shall be accepted but when the same hatred is projected on another person, it becomes unacceptable and rejected by the

Illustration by Ruchika Basutkar

Image is divided into two sides. The left side is pink with a white hazy effect on top of the plain pink background. The right side is black with a red hazy effect on top of the plain black background. There is a Large heart that is split in the middle, with each half on either side. The left half is red in colour with a white border. It contains the word 'LOVE' in white, capital letters. The right half of the heart is black in colour with a red border. It has the word 'HATE' in red, capital letters. In front of the large heart, on the left side is a person with light, angel-like wings and a gold halo, whereas on the right is a person with grey, bat-like wings and two red horns. Their hands are almost touching and there are sparkles around them. There is a lighter and smaller red heart on top of them, with each half on either side.

society which plays a huge role in the dichotomy between orthodox and unorthodox hate. It might come off as too inductive, but if love can go hand in hand with happiness, hope, and trust, then hate can also have the same relationship with other negative elements such as repugnance, humiliation and revenge. Though these elements compliment hatred, it is important to understand that these do not represent hatred on their own. Hate stands out through its emotivational goals which produces long term behaviour for a particular goal which is absent in emotions (Roseman et al., 1994). Emotivation in hatred reflects an emotion-induced drive to hurt or eliminate the target socially, mentally and in extreme cases even physically. Sita socially eliminated Ram from her life by isolating herself, which distanced her from him. The process involves negative feelings but the ultimate goal of hate and its long-term actions differentiate it from other negative emotions.

Time also plays a key role as it reveals the parallels between love and hate by testing the element of intensity. Higher intensities of love & hate can blind an individual to other things around them due to the great influence these two emotions have on the human psyche. Your love for someone makes them perfect, but does it come at the cost of overlooking possible "red flags?" Initially, a couple tends to be in "puppy love" where everything is perfect due to high intensity feelings for one another. This expression of "puppy love" can be found in various love songs, films and poems which glorify and romanticise this period but seldom prepares us for what comes next. The bright light of "puppy love" dims down, revealing imperfections that test the compatibility of that relationship. Suddenly your partner is possessive, careless or has changed, but the truth is, it was always this way. Similarly, a conflict between friends may escalate to the phenomena of 'immediate hate' (Halperin et al., 2018) where emotions overpower one's rationale. When hate's darkness is eventually driven away by the light of rationality, the friends realise that fighting over a box of cereals may have been stupid.

Whether we like it or not, hate is all around us and it is here to stay. Our divisibilities have only increased with time, but so has our interconnectedness. The media tends to distribute equal hate for every individual to garner. Instead of fulfilling political propaganda, if the power of the media could be directed towards understanding what makes us different as an individual who holds multiple identities at once such as religion, caste, occupation, sex, and gender, then perhaps one can accept the relationship between their 'self' and hatred. To not tolerate but embrace.

This acceptance comes when a beautiful equilibrium is struck with the coexistence and interdependence of love and hate. These peacekeepers remain on constant guard with one another to not only defend but assert dominance when the time comes. Hate doesn't always deserve the hate you give it

and Love doesn't always deserve the love you give it. That seems like a complex relationship to uphold. Can we keep up with this Hate-Love story?

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19. LOVE AND LIBERATION

–JUSTIN THOMAS

In today's time, one can see a rise in right-wing movements. This has led to a rise in people enforcing authoritarian values. But such authoritarian values have always existed in our society. These values are in fact enforced in the name of love. But does love mean being authoritarian? Do people know what love actually is? History has shown us that in times of rising authoritarianism, it was love and solidarity that brought people together to attain freedom. So can love be a political as well as a revolutionary act? Can practising love help us as a community achieve a libertarian[1] society? These are some questions that this article will try to answer.

"The word "love" is most often defined as a noun, yet all the more astute theorists of love acknowledge that we would all love better if we used it as a verb."
~ Bell Hooks

Right wing movements and ideas seem to be spreading rapidly across the world. They seem to be present everywhere, be it in America, Europe or Asia. In fact, on 22nd October 2022, Italy elected the fascist politician Giorgia Meloni as its Prime Minister. But one doesn't need to look at Italy or any other country to see the rise in right-wing movements. One can see that in India as well. In recent years, India has seen a rise in right wing populism (Varshney et al., 2021). But what does the right wing even mean? In simple terms, we can say that it supports the existence of a social hierarchy and believes that certain values and traditions are necessary for the functioning of society (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010). But if we look closely, the right wing ideology seems to be more complex. With regard to the economy, it seems to believe in less state intervention, but when it comes to matters of civil society, it seems to advocate for more state intervention. This can be seen through the anti-immigration policies of various right-wing governments, anti-abortion laws, anti-LGBTQ+ laws, anti-minority laws and much more.

But this doesn't stop here. The rise of the right wing is followed by the rise of right-wing extremism. One can see a rise in hate crimes across the world (Basu, 2019; Anonymous, 2022; Nagesh, 2022). In New Zealand, following a right-wing terrorist attack, Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Arden seemed to have made an important observation. She said, "there is no question that ideas and language of division and hate have existed for decades, but their form of distribution, the tools of organisation—they are new."(Ashby, 2021). In a report titled, 'The Mobilisation of Conservative Civil Society', Vijayan MJ writes, "… the right wing Jan Sangh, in the period between the 1960s and early 1980s, and its successor the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)— captured the popular imagination, leading to a revival of religious and cultural nationalism." Looking at both of these points, one major thing can be observed- these ideas seem to have always existed in our society. They were just given some more space to be expressed and revived. Before knowing how these ideas exist in our society, it is important to know what these ideas are. If we observe closely, we can see that these ideas are very violent. They also seem to promote divisiveness and authoritarianism.

However, do such ideas really exist in our society? If we look around us, the answer seems to be positive. All our social institutions are based on hierarchy, and most of our relationships seem to be based on some kind of domination.

Since we continue to live in a racist-casteist-ableist-capitalist-heteropatriarchal society, divisiveness and authoritarianism seem to exist everywhere. Thus, this seems to be not only a political issue but also a social issue because the ideas of divisiveness and domination are very much embedded in our society.

But what has love got to do with it? Probably everything. Before explaining that, it is important to know what love is. Love is defined as a set of emotions (which can be both positive and negative emotions) that are characterised by intimacy, care, affection etc. (Cherry, 2022). Looking closely, this definition seems to define love as a feeling that people experience. On the other hand, Paulo Freire says that love is "the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself." (Freire, 1968/2017, p. 62). Erich Fromm defines love as "an act of will, namely, both an intention and action" (as quoted in hooks, 2001). Looking at both these definitions, we see that instead of being defined as a feeling, love has been defined as an action or a practice. In this article, the author will see "love" as an action/ practice.

Illustration by Shaili Palrecha

Image has a background of yellow and light yellow rays. There is a giant float in the shape of a big fist in the centre, with silhouettes of two people, one holding a speaker and the other holding up a banner with the word 'LOVE' in capital letters. Surrounding the fist at the bottom are silhouettes of people, depicting a revolution. In the front, there is a parent holding a child on their shoulders. The child is holding a purple flag with a dark pink heart on it. In front of them is a person on a bicycle, carrying two elderly people. The elderly people are holding a rainbow flag with a capital 'A' within a white circle.
At the top of the illustration are the words "It is not by might nor by cruelty but by love that burns relentlessly that this world will be redeemed."

When we look at any kind of domination or oppression, we see that they exist not just in larger political, social or economic systems but are also very present in our day-to-day relationships. People practise casteism in their day-to-day lives. However, that does not stop here. There is also a presence of systemic casteism, where one sees the overrepresentation of the upper castes in various institutions and discrimination towards the lower castes in educational and other institutions. This type of dominance for hooks creates a "culture of domination," which she considers to be "anti-love" (as cited in Monahan, 2011). This is because love for her includes ingredients like "care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, trust, as well as honest and open communication." (hooks, 2001, p. 5). When we look at caste, we can see that it is not a system that promotes affection among people or one that recognises people as equals. Nor is it a system that promotes respect because discrimination and segregation are a part of the caste system. Thus, we can conclude that caste is anti-love.

When we look at a parent-child relationship, we can see that there are many cases where parents dominate their children. There are many instances where parents disrespect their children by violating their space and autonomy. In fact, one would think that it is necessary to do so because children need to be guided to the "correct" path. Certainly, children should be guided; but does guidance involve domination? Should the guidance of parents be forced down upon children if it violates them? Is there no other way to guide children other than being dominating and authoritative? Looking at the ingredients that love has, it can be concluded that the domination of children is anti-love. Loving people, children specifically within a parent-child relationship, would aim at liberating them (children) and encouraging them to "establish their agency" within the relationship (Ghosh, 2021).

But do we actually need this culture of domination to keep people in control and society together? On close observation, the answer seems to be negative. This is because the culture of domination seems to create adversities. Along with creating adversities, it also forces people to follow certain norms and behave in a certain way, thus creating conditions where people are not free to do what they want and be who they want to be. It is no wonder why hooks calls this culture anti-love (hooks, 2001, p. 93).

Then how can we remove the culture of domination? The answer is to love. When we love someone, we choose to respect them; we choose to empathise with them; we choose to care for them. In fact, when we love, we start moving towards freedom and hence we liberate not only ourselves but also others (hooks, 1994). Since we are moving towards freedom, it (love) should "generate other acts of freedom; otherwise, it is not love." (Freire, 2017, p. 63). Here it becomes important for us to realise that love and, with it, generating

other acts of freedom should not be limited within our personal spaces. It should extend to the community as a whole. Only as a community can we abolish the systems of domination and oppression and thereby abolish the "culture of domination." It is only "by abolishing the situation of oppression is it possible to restore the love which that situation made impossible." (Freire, 1968/2017, p. 63). Thus, we can see that when we love, we move towards freedom and thus directly challenge the status quo, making us engage in revolutionary practice. Love can play a crucial role in dismantling systems of domination and oppression and, thus, can help create more libertarian conditions. More freedom can help us love people because "Freedom exists for the sake of love." (Paul II, 1993, p. 135) But for all this to happen, we must use love as a verb (hooks, 2001).

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SOCIOLOGY– ANTHROPOLGY SEMINAR 2023 PAPERS

1. SPATIAL INEQUALITY IN BOMBAY: THE CASE OF DHARAVI

-ISHIKA KHOLLAM

Bombay is a city of contradictions. With significant horizontal, and vertical divisions, socioeconomic, cultural, and identitarian parameters influence the production of space in the city to a great extent. In such circumstances, identity becomes one of the major factors determining life chances, opportunity, and mobility within the city. At the same time, the intricacies and nuances of the informal politics of space play a role in challenging and subverting the threats of dislocation and disenfranchisement, thereby retaining the phenomenon of the 'city in flux'.

In Bombay, one of the spaces where this becomes evident is the slum complex of Dharavi. Through this paper, I aim to understand how the often elusive structures and systems, identitarian factors, along with the actions and affective involvement of the local populations that allows Dharavi to become a 'city within a city' and manifests itself in myriads of negotiations of power; for space, identity, and a right to the city.

Dharavi has long been synonymous with Bombay. Often called 'the largest slum of Asia', Dharavi has been the subject of multiple media creations and films. The iconic shot of the BKC parallel to Dharavi has been used multiple times to highlight the contrasting, and paradoxical realities of the city (Baweja, 2015). However, there is more to this slum than meets the eye. Between the vast expanse of shanty towns, aluminium sides, blue tarp roofs, and enmeshed houses; there lie stories of a bustling informal economy, growing modes of artistic expression, diverse socioeconomic categories, multiple layered identities, different ways of negotiating with social and political power, and the remnants of the history of this almost 140 year old slum complex. Thus, Dharavi becomes an important site to understand spatial organisation, and the relationship between space, identity, and life chances.

With an area of just 2.1 square kilometres, Dharavi is home to over 10,00,000 people, thus having a population density of 277,136 per square kilometre, making it one of the most populated areas in the world. Mazing through narrow alleyways, through which hardly one person can go through, there are stinking drains opening into small courtyards, garbage dumps abound, and sanitary hygiene is almost non-existent. Even sunlight barely enters these underbellies of the slum complex (Saglio and Yatzimirsky, 2013). The monsoons make it even more difficult, as most of the low-lying areas in the slum complex get flooded. Families are often large, as generations continue to live in the same space. Thus, anywhere between seven to twenty people continue to share the same small room, where the mosquitoes, insects, heat, and the toxicity of burning garbage hardly allows them to have a good night's sleep. Water facilities, though provided by the government, often result in brownish water flowing from the taps, and even with electricity, power cuts are rampant. Thus, people are mostly found outside their homes (Saglio and Yatzimirsky, 2013).

The housing and living conditions are also influenced by the kind of occupations that individuals follow, which is in turn determined by their caste, or religious identity. Thus, Dharavi becomes more like a city within the city. And therefore, the study of life and spatial organisation in Dharavi is ultimately linked to identitarian factors, and a historical understanding of the waves of migration that followed.

INTRODUCTION TO DHARAVI'S SPATIAL ORGANISATION

Through its apparent randomness, there still is a certain logic to the spatial organisation within Dharavi. Different, yet often overlapping criteria of 'belonging' bind communities together in Dharavi. Some of these include the same village or region of origin, the same caste, the same religion, or the same profession (Saglio and Yatzimirsky, 2013). Thus, migration to Bombay does not necessarily lead to a breakdown of such identitarian factors, but rather a strengthening of their influence.

Thus Dharavi can be divided into five main areas: Dhorvada, Kala Killa, Kumbharvada, Transit Camp, and Matunga Labour Camp. The Dhorvada is termed so after the North Indian 'dhor' untouchable caste that specialised in leather works. In the northern part of the slum is the Kala Killa, which also houses leather workers, but these have migrated from Maharashtra. (Saglio and Yatzimirsky, 2013).

The Kumbharvada has been the working space of the potters who migrated during the 1930s. This has been recorded as a fairly homogeneous wave of migration, and that has reflected within the homogeneity in the structures of the houses in Kumbharvada (Saglio and Yatzimirsky, 2013; Sharma, 2013). These are often larger than the other houses in Dharavi with kilns in front of them to facilitate the creation of earthen vessels. The houses are usually just one or two rooms equipped with facilities like a television or a refrigerator, thus reflecting the relatively higher living standards of this community.

These three regions of Dharavi that are described above are the oldest in the slum complex, and are relatively more

well-organised. The Transit camp at the far eastern end of the slum complex was built during the first wave of rehabilitation that took place in Dharavi. It was meant to house the people affected by the rehabilitation project temporarily. However, multiple factors stalled the project, and therefore, this section has been constructed in a haphazard manner, with houses that stand very close together, and have makeshift shelters.

The Matunga Labour camp, separated from the rest of the slum complex, derives its name from the adjacent Matunga railway station. It is built on the main road, and has food preparation units, markets, and plastic recycling facilities surrounding it. This area was established by the government in the 1940s as a residential complex for dock workers, mill workers, and construction labourers (Saglio and Yatzimirsky, 2013). This area is far cleaner than the other parts of the slum complex, and is generally inhabited by the erstwhile untouchable communities who are employed in reserved government administrative jobs. They generally consider themselves as separate from the 'slum' Dharavi, owing to their higher social status in terms of the occupations they are engaged in.

However, despite this entire system of spatial organisation, these areas are constantly being reorganised to make room for the continuing influx of migrants to an already overcrowded space, and to also accommodate for the changing nature of many of the occupations practised by the inhabitants. Urban space thus becomes 'an index and instrument of the immigrants' assimilation and social mobility.' (Schnapper, 1998).

Apart from caste, religion has also played an important role in the organisation of space in Dharavi, and the experiences of the slum complex for different people, especially after the 1992-93 post-Babri riots. This also has political implications and underpinnings, since the emergence of the Shiv Sena as the ruling party in the Dharavi constituency (Banerjee, 2021). The division within various communities based on religious identity became much more prominent after the riots. (Sharma, 2013). In many of the vadis and chawls of Dharavi, walls were built to segregate the Hindu and muslim dwelling spaces. Today, the Muslim section of Dharavi is starkly different from the Hindu section, and intermingling between these communities has just begun to develop again. However, spaces remain segregated and stand as current markers of the historic riots in the city.

Another aspect that shapes the experience of this slum complex is gender. Generally for men, Dharavi represents working opportunities, but for women, along with work, there are a host of other issues like a lack of privacy, inadequate and unclean sanitation, living in cramped surroundings while catering to large families, threats of violence and also an economic burden that necessitates them to work multiple jobs while also catering to the household (Ohlsson, 2013). The majority of them also remain uneducated, and therefore dependent upon the men in the families to provide for them. Spaces are also more restricted for them, as they cannot afford to work and stay in the same spaces like some of the

leather workers, or taxi drivers do. Access to water is also coded according to gender, as different communities have different rules as to whether the women are allowed to step outside the home to get water (Ohlsson, 2013). Especially in a space like Dharavi, it is evident how the built form has been catering predominantly to the male population.

The above sections explored the internal stratification and spatial segregation within Dharavi. But it is also essential to understand the relation of Dharavi with the city of Mumbai at large. Macro narratives have so far focused on the structural reasons for the persistence of slums within the city of Mumbai. A complex array of factors like slower urbanisation, the lack of a growing formal manufacturing sector, rural poverty, and the inability of the government to provide housing security have been cited as some of the causes leading to the consistent trend in the growth of slums in the city. However, these have often relegated slums to be a repository of cheap labour, unemployment, and conceptualised slums as a burden on the city, or as by-products of over-population (Nijman, 2015). Roy (2009) on the other hand, presents a counter argument to this view of the slums. This sees slums as sites of economic production, where out of necessity, slums evolve into spaces that become incubators of small-scale, and informal production, thus providing valuable employment, along with residence. This evolution of the slum into a slum economy gives it a degree of resilience, thus promoting its persistence, longevity, and stability (Weinstein, 2014). Especially in the case of Dharavi, it is this intricate network of social geography, tied to economic landscapes, that enables the survival of the oppressed caste communities that inhabit these spaces. These caste networks have also often enabled financial backing, and economic mobility, albeit in the very occupations that these caste identities enable their owners to hold. Thus, Dharavi continues to receive migrants from multiple parts of the country to this day.

This places Dharavi in a perplexing conundrum, where it becomes essential to get past a binary, black and white view of the slum. Micro-narratives, thus bring forth the role of the agency of the residents to be raised in terms of designing and sustaining urbanism and urban cultures. Thus, it is this constant interaction between structural forces, and ground-up mindsets and narratives that ultimately build and shape the cities. It is in this intricate space that the Dharavi Redevelopment Project has been taking shape in trying to mould and control the spatial organisation of this real estate. In its latest development, the Adani Group won the bid for this project in November, 2022. (Indorewala, 2022).

The preliminary surveys conducted have cited the eligibility criteria to only include owners of ground floor tenements, built before the year 2000. (Indorewala, 2022). However, this excludes first floor occupants, and tenants who live on rent in the current slum complex, thus raising the threat of evictions, dislocations, and encroachment of space. The bureaucratic challenges of dealing with the lack of documentation, further excludes a large population from the eligibility criteria.

Additionally, the increase of the FSI from 1.3 or 2, to 4 for the project, allows for the compression of the existing population into a further denser space, on a fraction of the land area, thereby opening up the rest of the space for complexes that can be opened up to the market for sale (Baweja, 2015).

The state's voting rights on this issue has been reduced to 20%, thus leading it to have little to no power in decision making, while still allowing for a share in the profit from the project (Indorewala, 2022). Thus, this project has raised further questions about the role of the state in slum development, the consequences of privatisation within this sector, and the rights of the residents of the people living in slum complexes. Therefore, in the path to move from rights and resources, to equity, multiple approaches have been suggested to understand and look at the urban poor.

One of the most recent, and widely discussed approaches has been the Capabilities Approach (Shiraz). This approach places humans at the centre of development, and reinforces the role of agency in decision making (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2005). However, with a space like Dharavi, the challenge remains its ever-increasing complexity and heterogeneity, coupled with the dynamism that serves to accommodate and negotiate with the everyday demands of life in the slum complex (Clark, 2005). However, common perceptions of the state, the private developers involved in Dharavi, and even the citizens of Bombay, have taken a gaze of homogenisation towards Dharavi. By reducing the slum complex to a unified, and static entity, the SRA, and the Adani Group have devised policies to cover the entire area of the slum complex through their redevelopment plan. However, as described in the initial sections of this paper, Dharavi is a cluster of multiple communities, with different needs, values, and issues; with space constantly being reformulated and reimagined.

And therefore, for effective and equitable redevelopment, it is essential to fund community-led interventions, and adopt a conceptualisation of development with holistic measures taking into account the quality of life, and the human parameters of development, rather than a utilitarian perspective of 'cleaning up' the slums, and aiming for a slum-free city, by focusing on infrastructural redevelopment and alternative livelihoods. By conceptualising the urban poor as citizens with an equal right to the city, the discussions about the larger complexities of the implementations of these equitable programmes and the inherent contradictions and conflicts that will occur in translating them into reality can be focused upon.

Thus, with multiple inequalities in terms of power, from different sources like caste, class, and religion, Dharavi grapples with internal segregations and stratifications, along with external vulnerabilities that challenge the very existence of the slum complex. The internal inequalities drive the possible consequences of the external threats for the residents in Dharavi. Furthermore, in negotiating with the multiple stakeholders that have inherent vested interests in the urban land that Dharavi offers; it becomes a site for the manifestation of the 'city in flux' where space is permanent,

and ephemeral at the same time, imprinting upon itself, the lived realities of the people who inhabit it.

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2. A NEED FOR EQUITY IN SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS

–GIA ALVEREZ

On May 25th, 2022, India saw a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court issue an order, finally recognizing sex work as a profession and ensuring that all sex workers are entitled to dignity and equal protection under the law. Although this may seem like a momentous, significant and progressive event in the course of history, there is much that is left to be resolved in the taboos around the profession of sex work, in particular prostitution in India. Whenever the word 'sex' is uttered in Indian society, there is a collective shudder of disgrace, disgust and disapproval which increases tenfold when the act is capitalised on. This stigma stems from the supposed need to protect and shield a woman's sexuality but unfortunately contributes to the problematic issues that threaten sex workers everyday.

The transition of prostitution from an 'immoral' to a 'moral' profession cannot be facilitated with basic, simple legal action. It entails a number of needs, both physical and mental, to carry out this work and dismantle the harsh cultural and social stigmatisation around it. There has to be a proper assessment of what these needs are, so that the required support and care is provided to sex workers by the passing and implementation of effective laws.

Sex is recognized as a biological urge across most species living on this planet. In the case of human beings, it is perceived and practised differently according to the economic, political, social and cultural setting of society. However, this narrative gets stirred when one approaches the profession of sex work. "Stripped of the relationally binding powers of social obligation and reciprocity, commercial sex invites a Pandora's box of value judgments around autonomy, exploitation and entrapment with regard to human rights as well as individual and national well-being" (Donnan & Magowan, 2010, p. 71). The industry mainly consists of three components, local prostitution, sex tourism, and lap and table dancing. In this paper my main focus will be on the lives and work of sex workers. Sex work is considered an 'immoral' deed, yet no one can deny it is a thriving industry. At face value, its legalisation in various countries seems to show their acceptance of sex work but this is far from the truth. In a practice as personal, intimate and socially complex as this one it requires a lot more. In order to truly accept the profession for what it is, to transition from an 'immoral' to a 'moral' profession, there needs to be a detailed evaluation of the social stigma around it.. Evaluating why it exists and how it can be dismantled to provide a helpful and efficient framework of laws suited to the socio-economic and cultural setting of that country in a way that is beneficial to sex workers, those who are most prone to being induced into sex work and their dependants.

As is with most institutions in society, there has been and will always be a clear class hierarchy of sex workers depending on several factors, the first being the type of customers. Sexual intercourse used to be highly esteemed, appealing and aesthetic in most East Asian countries. The Geishas in Japan and the Yiji in China, were both very sought after and respectable professions (Donnan & Magowan, 2010). In India,

prostitution emerged as intertwined with sacred fertility rituals. A visit to the temple was followed by sexual intercourse with the women of the temple in exchange for a donation. However, in present times, they have lost their auspicious status and live as a marginalised community. The Devdasis are married into the temple before reaching puberty and are made to believe that it is in service to God and their religion (Donnan & Magowan, 2010). Most girls who are married into the temples are of a lower class, enabling the rich and affluent to sexually exploit them, reinforcing their socio-economic superiority. In Europe there existed a clear divide between high class and lower class prostitutes as they had their own separate guilds and differed in their overall manner of dress (Donnan & Magowan, 2010). There was wide acceptance of prostitution in cities in Europe in the later mediaeval period, having been considered a 'social utility'. It is clearly visible across cultures and continents that sex work is a practice which can have various connotations and motives. In spite of what these connotations and motives are, the act of sex itself is approached differently by everyone, and a majority of the time there is a conservative shame against it. The disdain for sex work is present across most cultures, but where does it stem from? "It occurs due to the reduction of the complex social and biological relationship between male and female to the male sex drive, a static conception of the human body, and the assumption that the female is both the seducer and the exploiter of the male" (Truong, 1990, p. 19).

The profession of prostitution takes an enormous physical as well as mental toll on women. On speaking with a practising gynaecologist, there are a few ground realities which we can ascertain. Sex workers do have access to healthcare, although it primarily seems to be through private healthcare and non-governmental organisations and not much assistance from the government. However it is not as simple as black and white to

pinpoint the government as 'not doing their job'. There is simply always scope for improvement when it comes to issues as sensitive as these. Post the AIDS epidemic around twenty years ago, the need for healthcare surrounding sexual health was stirred. Unfortunately, private healthcare is often too expensive to be availed of by patients like sex workers, so it seems to be the best option that government healthcare, an affordable and accessible alternative, be made specially available to sex workers.

Currently, contraceptive awareness, awareness of sexually transmitted diseases, and awareness of abortion (the entire process, pros, cons) is an important feature of healthcare for sex workers. Awareness, as easy as it sounds, is a key part of the process.

In any business transaction, there is a common phrase which is irrefutable for all workers, 'customer is king'. In the case of female sex workers, the customer (who is usually a man), has the power to fulfil his desires, whatever they may be, as long as he is paying for it. This enables the customer to perform any kind of act, irrespective of what it is, but does the sex worker have the autonomy to say reject an advance that they are uncomfortable with? Is there a line that exists, more importantly, is there consent that exists? Does it depend on the status, class, or financial position of the sex worker? It has been ordered by the Supreme Court that the police must avoid discrimination against complaints (especially a sexual offence) lodged by sex workers. They should be provided with immediate medico-legal care. The police's reaction to most cases like these are often violent and brutal, not giving sex workers the same treatment as any other citizen. There is a clear lack of sensitisation in the police force which needs to be reprimanded (Thomas, 2022). During the issuing of the court order of the legal recognition of sex work as a profession, Justice L Nageswara Rao restrained the police from subjecting sex workers to any abuse or torture and sensitised law enforcement agencies to treat them with dignity. "It has been noticed that the attitude of the police to sex workers is often brutal and violent. It is as if they are a class whose rights are not recognised," observed the bench, also comprising justices BR Gavai and AS Bopanna (Thomas, 2022). Due to the monetary transaction that takes place, the issue of consent, equality and autonomy is often subverted which can make this industry a problematic and even dangerous profession to engage with.

In a country such as India, sex work can be a very complex and delicate issue to deal with while framing laws due to the social stigma around sex, rampant poverty and an illiterate population which is currently being policed mainly by upper caste Hindu men. Currently in India, prostitution has been legalised, which means there are elements of decriminalisation, which makes it legal, as well as prohibitionism, which keeps a few parts of the business in check. At the end of the day, it is still a commercial industry that is regulated by the state. For example, sex work is not

considered illegal but associated businesses like trafficking for sexual exploitation, owning a brothel and renting out property for sex work is punishable according to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA). The legalisation also provides for the protection of the children of sex workers, that is, they cannot be forcibly separated from their parents if found living with sex workers, until it is proven that they are children who are not related to them and are being trafficked or exploited. There seems to be a layered form of legal provisions which makes the lines between legal and illegal blurry.

The sex trade in Thailand is a trillion baht industry (Thailand Should Legalise Prostitution, 2022). The country is famous for it, with the industry contributing to 3% of its GDP, yet it remains illegal (Thailand Should Legalise Prostitution, 2022). It is ironic that a sector which contributes a significant amount to the economy is one which has to function illegally. Despite this enormous economic contribution, sex workers are subject to criminalisation, fines and imprisonment. Thailand had around 250,000 sex workers, ranking no.8 in the global sex industry (according to a survey by Havocscope in 2015) (Thailand Should Legalise Prostitution, 2022). It is well known how the sex workers function and their popularity keeps business booming. The economy relies on this income and is therefore unwilling to actually construct a system which would be beneficial for the industry employees and stakeholders. Instead of trying to maintain this traditional, conservative outlook on the regulation of the sex workers, it would be easier if prostitution was made legal in order to make the work, rights and quality of life of sex workers better.

Germany on the other hand, has progressive laws, granting a nod of approval from the state. Yet, there still exists (and might always exist) a side against the framework of laws that supports the industry of sex work. Prostitution has been legal in Germany since 2002, and in 2016, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and it's coalition partner, the Social Democratic Party took the laws around sex work in a new direction (New Sex Work Law Planned in Germany – DW – 02/02/2016, 2016). This consisted of guidelines for registration of sex workers, health counselling, labour conditions and mandatory usage of condoms. All places of business need to have a minimum number of security personnel as well as standards on hygiene. "Alexa Müller, 38, is one of the sex workers who passionately defends Germany's unique path on prostitution law. "Women can run brothels responsibly here and not be prosecuted, that's an incredible achievement. And sex workers are autonomous legal agents. They can take a client to court if he refuses to pay up," she said (New Sex Work Law Planned in Germany – DW – 02/02/2016, 2016)."

The main causes of the induction into prostitution are poverty, unemployment and the lack of appropriate rehabilitation. Which brings us to the question, why can't they just leave their work? It is easier said than done. It is a profession which

people are pushed into when they have no other option, when they need to fill their stomachs or provide for their dependents irrespective of the social exclusion they might have to endure. After working as a sex worker, there is an absence of alternative sources of income. They remain in the bubble of sex work mainly because society cannot seem to accept them stepping outside of it. In the same manner that most are pushed into the job, they cannot seem to leave it; there is no other option. If there is no legal protection of sex workers as well as efficient legislation of the industry, in order to discourage the act, rehabilitation of sex workers should be more actively pursued and practised.

It might appear that there cannot be a perfect model of regulating and legalising an industry as complex, sensitive and exploitative as this one. What we can hope to achieve and aim for is a structure which improves the quality of life for sex workers. This is only possible with the equitable treatment of sex workers in society. This not only requires a proper legal framework but also a sensitisation and destigmatisation of society. The cultural politics of associating sex work with immorality is clouding the judgement of the state and steering the legal framework in the direction of moral policing rather then effective legislation. The Brahmanical and patriarchal position of the state dictate what the norms and values of society should be. Yet, when it comes to professions such as sex work, it is the lower class and caste families who are pushed into the industry and are brutally affected. The sexuality of lower class and caste women is perceived with fear and anxiety, as their work and lifestyle is considered a threat to the mainstream norms. It cannot be expected to quickly change overnight, but a slow and steady change of the mentality towards it will forge a new path with healthier attitude towards sex, accessible and subsidised healthcare, a sensitised police force, and no discrimination in any institution on the basis of their profession.

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