

Victor Karandashev

# Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts

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*To Tatiana, of course*

# Endorsement



Overall, I find Dr. Victor Karandashev is an excellent and fine scholar who has a firm grasp of both the fundamental principles of cross-cultural research and of anthropology. In our globalized world, *Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts* updates the description and explanation of similarities and differences in romantic love across generations and cultures. Romantic love encompasses the life span, rather than being a phenomenon largely confined to youthful years. The topic of this project concerns the deepest of our sentiments and pervades life from birth to death. This book will contribute to better knowledge of this phenomenon across generations.

Félix Neto  
Professor of Psychology  
Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação  
Universidade do Porto, Portugal

# Foreword

*Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts* is a delightful text. It is a cultural anthropological, literary, historical, and sociological review of the nature of romantic love. It comprehensively describes how cultures affect societal mores, norms, and traditions and the connection between love, sex, and marriage, as well as people's experiences and expressions of love. Everything comes together here.

Firstly, in an era where "objectivity" means psychologists attempt "objectivity", using the passive voice—aiming to write as if the book was written by nobody for no one—Karandashev gives you a real flavor of his personality. He punctuates his text with apt quotations from a variety of cultures. He obviously is a voracious reader.

Dr. Victor Karandashev is a world citizen, international, and cross-cultural scholar well-prepared to craft a book on *Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts*. He is one of the most original and yet rigorous theorists in the field. Usually, people do not possess both sets of skills, but in Dr. K. case, they form a potent mix. This book fills a gap in the literature and is destined to become a classic in the area of culture, love, and sex.

But Karandashev's originality does not stop there. It is rare that any scholar can contribute something really new to the voluminous literature on love, sex, and intimacy. But Karandashev does—again and again. Before I knew of his work, I came across an article arguing that although passionate love may be a cultural universal, societies differ markedly in the extent to which sensuality is tied to passionate love. In several conference presentations and articles on sensory preferences in romantic attraction, he and his colleagues reported the important role of the senses in physical attraction in romantic situations. As expected, he found impressive differences in a variety of cultures.

Regarding rigor, he and Stuart Clapp, in their seminal works, proposed an analytic framework, designed to see whether they could test their theories, and find common threads in the various tests of romantic and passionate love.

*Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts* is another milestone in Karandashev's scholarly writing. You will enjoy diving into this book, I suspect.

Elaine Hatfield, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology  
University of Hawaii, USA

# Preface

The word *love* can mean various things so that it is often unclear what a speaker is talking about while using it. Therefore, we need to pay attention to the context of communication to better understand the content of the love notion. This might be love for God, parental love for a child, or love of a child for parents, etc. Love also is often used as a synonym for sex. So at a certain point in history, people invented the word *romantic love* to denote a special host of emotions, cognitions, and behaviors. They thought that was *true love*. Were they right?

People over the centuries and over their personal lives have been striving to search for an answer to the question of *what the true and authentic love is*. Ordinary people look for the true love; the characters of the film *Frozen*, including my favorite snowman Olaf, are among them. Scholars from various disciplines try to define love too and argue with each other.

Because *love* can mean many diverse things, people often conventionally add the word *romantic* to distinguish the type of love that includes a sexual component from all other types of love. The notion of *romantic love* has had multifaceted meanings throughout human history and in modern cultures around the world. The purpose of this book is to disentangle its multiple connotations and depict the diverse romantic elements in various cultural contexts. The word *romantic love* is generally used to denote heterosexual love between men and women distinguishing it from other types of love: conjugal, maternal, friendship, and other types of close relationship feelings. In this sense, a romantic relationship is just the relationship between a man and a woman implying sexual interest and attraction.

Apart from this simply indicative function, the term *romantic love* has had long historical tradition describing a special emotion and the host of *romantic* feelings between men and women. In this meaning, *romantic love* is distinguished from *sex* and *sexual love*, while still being remotely related to basic sexual motivation. Generally speaking, the word *romantic* has rather a specific meaning of an idealized and sublimed view of reality. In this regard, *romantic* means a perception of life events and feelings as in a fairy tale, a song, a novel, or a movie, that is, something not routine. *Romantic* means something uplifting from a mundane

and ordinary way of living, as opposite to anything down to earth. In this regard, *romantic love* does not necessarily mean passionate; this might be just affectionate. The degree of passion, or affection, may depend on temperament of a lover rather than on the object of attraction. Nonetheless, *romantic love* is definitely an erotic and emotional attraction and attachment to a person of the opposite sex characterized by idealization and admiration of this person and relationship. This means *love* as in romance, romantic novel, poem, or any other idealized image of aspiration. It is an uplifting passionate or affectionate feeling of sexual attraction mediated by various actions, feelings, and cognitions displaying its sublime nature. The concept of *romantic love* in this book will be considered in this more specific meaning, not just as a passionate love. I believe that degree of passion does not constitute romantic love, but is just a condition of temperamental lovers. Being widely depicted in novels and movies, they became an iconic symbol of romantic love. However, a calm affectionate lover might be no less romantic, although less energetic than hot passionate lovers. To make it clear upfront, when I say *romantic love* in the context of this book, I really mean *romantic love*, in terms of its idealized and valorized meaning.

Love has been a basic aspect of human history, in many human cultures and civilizations. For centuries, romantic love has been explored by writers, philosophers, artists, and musicians who have described its various aspects and revealed multiple emotions, feelings, and behaviors related to this type of love. Many philosophers, historians, novelists, poets, journalists, anthropologists, and other authors have written about love from antiquity to the modern era.

The systematic efforts of social scientists to comprehend the concept of romantic love began in the twentieth century. In the 1950s–1990s, scholars from many countries started to delve into the concept of love from evolutionary and cultural perspectives. Many publications shed light on our understanding of romantic love as a cultural phenomenon; the researchers in history, literary studies, anthropology, sociology, and psychology substantially expanded the picture of the cross-cultural variation of love across the globe. The theme has become an especially popular topic of scholarly work and scientific research in recent decades. Scholars from various disciplines—historians and philosophers, novelists and literary scholars, anthropologists and sociologists of twentieth century—have advanced greatly our understanding of love and described its typical displays, rituals, and feelings. Accordingly, this book comprehensively describes how cultures affect societal mores, norms, and traditions and the connection between love, sex, and marriage, as well as people’s experience and expression of love. The research findings presented in the following chapters suggest that love is a universal emotion experienced by a majority of people, in various historical eras, and in all the world’s major cultures. However, love displays itself in different ways because culture has a substantial impact on people’s conceptions of love and the ways they feel, think, and behave in romantic relationships.

What is romantic love, and is it different from or similar to other kinds of love? The word *romantic love* is often used to distinguish from *conjugal love*, *parental love*, *friendship love*, and other types of close relationships. In this meaning,

*romantic love* often assumes just heterosexual, passionate, and erotic love. Another meaning of the term *romantic love* differentiates it from other types of heterosexual love, the love between a man and a woman—*realistic love*, *sexual love*, etc. The key feature of romantic love in this sense is in accord with the true meaning of the word *romantic*, which is characterized by an idealized view of life—in this case, of love life. It is opposite to realistic, pragmatic love. *Romantic love* should not be contrasted with companionate love (as non-romantic) because the latter can also be romantic if represented in idealized form and manner. The concept of romantic love is defined and described in Chap. 1 to set a common background and present the possible manifestations of romance and romantic love in various cultural contexts. The chapter will present thorough analysis of *romantic love* as a complex and multifaceted concept. That definition and descriptive characteristics will guide the following review of romantic love elements in historical and modern cultures.

Although many scholars uphold romantic love as a cultural universal, according to a social constructionist perspective, the definition of love is culturally determined. To be comprehensive, the definition of romantic love should reflect its time period and place and, in particular, the functions that romantic love serves there. In cross-cultural research, instead of one restrictive and unified definition of love, it is worthwhile to take into account various cultural contexts in which love evolves. The dimensional approach to the search of romantic love in historical and modern cultures would be more beneficial than a categorical one. Chapter 2 will discuss the criteria for exploration of universality and cultural specificity of romantic love and various realities in which the elements of romanticism can be found. Among those are ideas, institutions, social interactions, and individuals. Romantic love may appear in all or in some of these four spheres, as a norm or deviation, in descriptive, injunctive, or personal norms.

In Chap. 2, I also argue for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of romantic love. Philosophers, literary scholars, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and communication scholars, all contribute their valuable information and methodology in the study of romantic love from different, yet overlapping perspectives. They might complement each other in their cultural and cross-cultural investigations.

Is romantic love a universal emotion across various historical periods of humankind? What aspects of love are limited to certain historical eras or to specific cultures? Several chapters of Part II trace the origins and the following evolution of romantic ideas, norms, deviations, rituals, and traditions in various historical periods and in different cultural areas of the world, from Ancient Africa, China, Greece, and Rome (Chap. 3), to Medieval South Asia, China, Japan, the Perso-Arabic world, European culture, and Slavic society (Chap. 4), and further to Eastern, Middle Eastern, South Asian, Polynesian, Australian, European, and American cultures of the sixteenth–nineteenth centuries (Chap. 5), and finally to the cultures of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in China, Japan, Russia, America, Europe, Latin America (Chap. 6).

Is romantic love a universal emotion among contemporary cultures across the globe? What aspects of romantic love are universal and what are culturally specific? Several chapters of the Part III present the revolutionary expansion of romantic love ideas and practices in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in various parts of the world and review the development of romantic love as a cultural idol of the modern cultures. These chapters describe romantic love in North America and Western Europe (Chap. 7), the Arab World (Chap. 8), South Asia (Chap. 9), Latin America (Chap. 10), Australia, Polynesia, and Southeast Asia (Chap. 11), Africa (Chap. 12), in China and Japan (Chap. 13).

Cross-cultural exploration is a good way to expand the horizons of one's mind and overcome natural ego- and ethnocentrism of a human. We should honestly acknowledge that people are basically egocentric and ethnocentric by nature: We assume that other people should think, feel, and behave the same way as we do. Why? Because it makes sense to us and it is the only sensible way to be. In the case of child development, Swiss psychologist J. Piaget demonstrated this very conclusively.

Do all children when becoming adults grow out of their ego- and ethnocentrism? It seems that not all adults comprehensively overcome their mind egocentrism in some areas of their thinking. Many adults still tend to attribute their views to other people. Ethnocentrism is a social version of egocentrism. People have difficulty seeing the life from another culture's view, especially when they know little about that culture. People tend to attribute their view to the people of another culture.

Two opposite standpoints are possible in debates on the question of whether another culture holds romantic love ideas and practices or not. As the first standpoint posits, Western scholars with romantic minds, living in a society that generally accepts the romantic view of love, may think that other people in other cultures would view it the same way. Such an attribution of Western cultural norms of romantic love to other cultures seems likely. This is the natural way how it should be. As the second standpoint claims, when it turned out that another culture's mores and norms do not meet Western expectations and standards of romantic love, scholars tend to deny the existence of romantic love in that other culture. Is such an opposition adequate?

I believe that the more productive position in these debates is to talk not about the presence or absence of romantic love in other cultures, but rather about the extent and qualitative characteristics of love and how they meet the cultural standards of that culture. An *emic*, rather than an *etic* approach, will be employed in this book. The *emic* approach means that the concept of love is described in terms of its cultural aspects and functioning, rather than in terms of any theoretical and comparative scheme, as in an *etic* approach.

We will look at the problem of romantic love from the perspective of the culture under review, rather than from the perspective of an outsider. I hope that a comprehensive review of love ideas around the world, across the ages, and across disciplines, presented in this book, will help us to understand the love of men and women from other cultures better.

How has romantic love been related to sex in human history and across contemporary cultures? These relations have been traditionally very close; the ultimate

and valorized sexual motivation has been a distinctive feature of romantic love, even though the connections between love and sex have been frequently confused and highly debated. In the chapters of Parts II and III of this book, I have made special subheadings to describe and discuss the various interpretations of relations between sex and love in historical and modern cultures. There has been a variety of cultural opinions and a diversity of views. Over recent decades, however, the word *love* often began to be used as synonymous to *sex*, and the same goes with the words *sexy* and *beautiful*. Sexualization of love and romantic relationships has been a noticeable tendency among the modern generation of Western people. At the same time, love became a less idealized and more practically and sexually oriented experience of love affairs. I want to make it clear in the context of this book, when I say *love* I really mean *love*, not *sex*.

How has romantic love been related to marriage in human history and across contemporary cultures? Again, in the chapters of Parts II and III of this book, I have made separate sections to depict and talk on how people in various historical and modern cultures thought of love in connection or disconnection with marriage. Despite the earlier historical discordances, love has finally conquered marriage. Over recent decades, however, love became an independent value, which no longer expects marriage as final destination, at least among the modern youth generation of Western people.

What are romantic ideas, feelings, and expressions of love across cultures? Do some cultural practices work better than others? Will certain cultural norms dominate and lead us to the new universal cultural reality of love? Or are traditional cultural practices more persistent and therefore resistant to this sort of deep transformation? These are some questions addressed in the book.

The crucial question is whether romantic love is only a Western cultural construct, or given its remote origins in ancient China, Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, and the Islamic world, whether it is a universal in human societies. The basic conclusion has been so far that love is a universal emotion experienced by a majority of people, in various historical eras, and in all of the world's cultures. However, some methodological issues and specific questions remain on how love manifests itself in different cultural ways and how love functions in various cultural contexts. We will see in this book how culture impacts people's conceptions of love and the way they feel, think, and behave in romantic relationships.

This book summarizes classical knowledge on romantic love and culture with a major focus on recent studies and cutting-edge research that has advanced the field. I believe that such a comprehensive review will set up the background and perspectives for further scholastic exploration of romantic love in cultural contexts. Adding a cultural dimension enlightens the diverse concept of romantic love.

This book is intentionally descriptive with a primary attempt to describe the diversity of heterosexual love and compare the version of romantic love with other types of heterosexual love. The compilation of a diversity of love expressions and romantic love manifestations in various cultural contexts tries to be interpretive and non-judgmental.

I make every attempt to not compare the culturally specific versions of love in various societies with the “normal” Western type of romantic love, using the *emic* approach and describing the concept of love in terms of its cultural aspects and functioning, rather than in terms of Western romantic scheme. There is a need to understand its emic manifestations within a variety of cultural settings. So, the purpose is to demonstrate how cultures and cultural contexts, in historical as well as in modern societies, determine experiences, expressions, and practices of love.

In this book, I follow an interdisciplinary approach to the topic of romantic love and present the opportunities and possibilities, which a synthesis of various disciplines may offer in the study of love. I review the views and research findings about the nature and culture of romantic love that scholars from different fields can talk about across the specialized boundaries of their disciplines. This book has explored various sources and cultural perspectives on romantic love: philosophical, historical, literary, anthropological, and sociological. I am aware, however, that I have not been able to cover all sources on the theme available from those disciplines, due to page limitations. Because of volume limitations, I omitted many psychological studies, which are enormous in quantity and multiple in quality and coverage.

As for practical applications, the value of cross-cultural studies has increased over recent decades. People and cultures migrate around the globe much more frequently than ever before. They bring their ideas, cultural norms, beliefs, and cultural attitudes into their personal communication; they transform the ways they think, feel, and act in their intercultural relationships. Transnational cultural flows and global processes occur at an expedited pace and on a larger scale than ever before. Many scholars study political and economic forces and cultural discourses, observing how members of different cultural groups negotiate, accommodate, and communicate to each other on a macro-level. Apart from those studies, the topic of this book is on a micro-level that occurs in daily cultural encounters in close interpersonal relationships. We consider how people think, feel, and behave in personal relationships that we call *romantic love* and in relations to other types of love, sex, and marriage.

In a practical sense, such romantic exploration is vital in the era of extensive migration, when cross-cultural mingling of people living in certain locales and areas of the world takes an unprecedented pace. Cross-ethnic personal relationships, dating, mating, and love are growing in some regions and cities. Cross-cultural pollination takes place, and therefore, a better understanding of each other in terms of cultural beliefs regarding love is important. From this practical viewpoint, the better comprehension of cultural similarities and differences in love will help facilitate a better understanding within multicultural couples and families.

# Acknowledgements

I honestly acknowledge the implicit inspiration, which my wife Tatiana provided me many years ago when I fell in love with her. I promised her many years ago to write a book about love and she has periodically asked me *when* for many years. I was very busy with other projects for all those years, but still I promised, and finally I did it, secretly from her to make it a surprise.

I also acknowledge the explicit encouragements and continuous support, which Morgan Ryan, my editor, provided me during the time of my writing. Thank you for being lenient, patient, but still persistent in reminders. This allowed me to do quality work within a reasonable limit of time available.

I appreciate all technical and editorial assistance that Nicholas Evans provided me during the final stages of the work with this manuscript. It was a very valuable help to complete everything on time and with quality text, references, and illustrations.

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## About the Author

**Dr. Victor Karandashev** taught in Russian universities for many years and published six books and several articles. In the late 1990s and 2000s, he conducted research on international psychology in several European countries, including universities in Norway, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, and the UK, as well as was a visiting professor and a Fulbright Scholar in the USA. He coedited three volumes of *Teaching Psychology Around the World* (2007, 2009, 2012). He has presented his work related to international and cross-cultural psychology at several national and international conferences. During recent years, he was actively engaged in the study of romantic love and has had several publications on the topic. Currently, he works as a Professor of Psychology at Aquinas College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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# Abstract

This book presents a historical, literary, anthropological, and sociological review of cultural perspectives on romantic love. It comprehensively describes how cultures affect societal mores, norms, and traditions and the connection between love, sex, and marriage, as well as people's experiences and expressions of love. The evidence brought from the cultures around the world, in historical and modern perspectives, suggests that love is a universal emotion experienced by a majority of people, in various historical eras, and in all the world's cultures. However, love manifests itself in different ways because culture has a profound impact on people's conceptions of love and the way they feel, think, and behave in romantic relationships.

**Part I**  
**Romantic Love: Conceptualizations**  
**and Approaches**

# Chapter 1

## The Concept of Romantic Love

### 1.1 What Do All These Love Words Mean to People?

It seems that love is a universal and biologically based emotion understood by all races, religions, and cultures; when a man or woman is in love, they are aware of this from their gut feelings, without needing to express it in words. Nonetheless, its interpretation varies and depends on the cultural contexts in which people live. In many world languages, there are multiple words that denote love and related concepts. In other words, this universality in understanding does not imply universality in meaning. Among the most well-known internationally are: English *love*, French *amour*, Spanish *amor*, Italian *amore*, German *Liebe*, and Russian *любовь*. These words may have various implicit connotations; they carry many different meanings and reflect plenty of forms and categories of love.

Since people usually understand each other in this regard, cross-cultural and cross-language barriers do not seriously matter for them. Verbal and nonverbal communication makes this possible. People are very curious about how to say “I love you” in other languages: *Je t’aime* (French), *Ich liebe Dich* (German), *Jag alskar dig* (Swedish), *Mina rakastan sinua* (Finnish), *Ik hou van jou* (Dutch), *Ti amo* (Italian), *Te quiero/Te amo* (Spanish), *Seni Seviyorum* (Turkish), *Doset darom* (Farsi), *Ya tebe kahayu* (Ukrainian), *Mikvarhar* (Georgian), *Miluji te* (Czech), *Ya tebya liubliu* (Russian), *Ikh hob dikh* (Yiddish), *Ngo oi y ney a* (Cantonese/Chinese), *Wa ga ei li* (Taiwanese), *Hum Tumhe Pyar Karte hai* (Hindi), *Mahal kita* (Tagalog), *Naan unnai kathalikiraen* (Tamil), *Ndinokuda* (Zimbabwe), and *Mi aime jou* (Creole). Diverse words express love in many languages... (“I love you” 2012).

Sometimes the words are different when they are addressed to male or female; keep in mind these differences are not related to discrimination. For example in Thai, *Chan rak khun* (addressed to male) while *Phom rak khun* (addressed to female). Or in Hebrew, in *Ani ohev otah* (to female), *Ani ohev et otha* (to male).

The meanings of expressions of “I love you” depend on the situational and cultural context. For example, in Spanish it can be said *te amo* or *te quiero*. The dictionaries will say that either *amar* or *querer* (and even some other verbs) can be translated in some contexts as “to love.” Yet, it depends on the situational context as well as where in the Spanish-speaking world people are.

Literally *te quiero* in Spanish means “I want you,” but it does not always mean that one wants you. While in English one can change from “I like you” to “I love you,” Spanish speakers usually have three transitions:

1. “Me gustas” (I like you)
2. “Te quiero!” (I love you in a soft and general way like “Luv ya”)
3. “Te amo” (I love you, very strong and intimate) (Techmaga 2006).

But there can be some subtle differences; the following excerpt from an online forum shows the convincing illustration of that:

**Nootch76:** What does *te quiero* mean? I was just wondering what this means when someone says this to another in the Mexican culture. Love, lust or what?

**Garcilaso:** *Te quiero* simply means “I love you.” Of course it depends on the stress and the intonation, but to imply other connotations like in English I want you I think other verbs would be used, such as *te deseo* or the like.

There are sentences where *te quiero* won’t mean “I love you,” of course. *Ahí te quiero ver*, meaning something like “I’d like to see you there” in that context. *Te quiero enviar una postal*, “I want to send a postcard to you.”

**Encantame:** *Te quiero* is appropriate for any love — spouse, friend, parents, siblings.

*Te amo* (verb *amar*) is usually reserved for your lover and not your friends or family, although I’m sure there are different countries/different ways. For gringos is best to stick to this pattern and we won’t have to worry about doing it wrong.

**ChrisAnvers:** I always thought that this *te amo* was more usual in literature, no?

**Encantame:** Well, it might be in literature, but it is also used in real life.

It’s not one of those things you don’t hear except in a snooty book or poem. If you don’t hear it much, and hear the other more, it’s probably because you can say *te quiero* to a lot more people compared to *te amo*, so just the usage opportunity alone is going to be noticed, as you can say *te quiero* to anyone including your lover, but *te amo* is reserved for the intimate kind of love.

So you just ain’t going to hear it as often. It’s definitely words for that special person. ... Speaking in generalities, again, customs may be different in some areas.

**Lopezssn:** *Te quiero* implies affection, love, care, not necessarily lustful. You can say *te quiero* to your mother, father, sibling, etc. It also depends on the region. It is similar to *te amo*.

*Me gusta* on the other hand when speaking about a romantic kind of like (not ice cream or candy) implies desire, lust, sexually appealing, sensually appealing. *Me gusta ese chico, chica, muchacha*, etc., *muchacho*, etc. Example: *Sabes, me gustas mucho*. You wouldn’t hear that statement from one friend about the other.

... There are subtle intricacies that come with experience.

**Araspac:** Literally *te quiero* means “I want you,” but how it is intended depends on the look in their eyes when they say it!

**Aligoam:** As many other have already explained, *te quiero* in Spanish, though meaning literally “I want you” translates as “I love you” and it is for family but also for love. We make no differences. I say *te quiero* to my daughter, but I also say *te quiero* to my husband.

*Te amo*, though it means literally “I love you,” is more rarely used. I would say, only when you’re feeling specially romantic.

I could translate “I want you” to Spanish in several ways, but I think the best one could be *bete quiero para mí* or even *quiero que seas mío-a*. Of course, when using it to communicate sexual desire, you can also translate it as *Te deseo*.

**Camicat:** Language must always be interpreted according to context i.e. according to the conversation. ...

**Jazzeerun:** *Te quiero* or *Te amo* literally means “I love you.” You may also say *te extraño*, I miss you.

**Ibaquerena:** *Te quiero* can be both for people close to you or for friends. It all depends on the importance you give to the words. You can tell a good friend *te quiero* and it may just mean the “I love you” that some friends tell one another without any romantic connotation. On the other hand, you can tell your wife *te quiero mucho* and it may mean “I love you” in the sense a lover would use it. *Te amo* is mostly used among people who are learning Spanish from a textbook or in telenovelas.

**Medaly:** My husband is from the Canary Islands and I am from Argentina. If I were to say *te amo* to my husband, rather than taking me seriously he would think I have turned “telenovela” on him. I would probably end up laughing on the floor if he were to say something like that to me.

*Te quiero* is the most common way to express romantic love (and human affection in general) in the real world. *Te amo* belongs to the world of telenovelas and romance novels.

**Lissah3:** But my husband from Venezuela always said *te amo* to me. Do you think that means maybe he never meant it?

**Medaly:** Well, he probably does mean it. Still it is not that common to use it outside of telenovelas and boleros.

**Marijosé:** *Te quiero* and *te amo* mean the same but are used in different contexts. (Erichson 2015).

How should we compare all these love words? Do they mean the same? Do they express romantic love? Kövecses (1991) provided a systematic linguistic examination of romantic love. Analyzing love terms, which people use in everyday life, he revealed the metaphors, the metonymies, and the concepts related to love. Then Kövecses also described the ideal model of romantic love, as it emerges from these linguistic expressions. Five major issues in the study of love are addressed in light of the analysis: (1) the definition of love, (2) the nature of love, (3) the issue of how many different types of love there are and what these are, (4) the role of language in the study of love, and (5) the relationships between “folk” and scientific theories of love. Powerful emotional feeling is highlighted as the key aspect of romantic love.

The cross-cultural and cross-linguistic studies may shed a light on the nature of romantic love, yet the evidence of romantic love is difficult to obtain even where it is culturally elaborated and given a rich vocabulary. In the following chapters, the similarities and nuances of love words in different languages and cultures will be discussed in more detail. Subjective evaluation and self-reporting or imprecise objective criteria contribute to this difficulty. In addition, all emotions in their descriptions and behavioral expressions are culturally bound and conditioned, which raises the problem of their translation from one culture to another. Shweder (1993) discussed the difficulties of translating intercultural concepts of basic emotions into English in equivalent terms. Therefore, researchers cannot be sure that people are feeling and talking about the same things.

Love words may bear different connotations in different cultures. For instance, when Shaver et al. (1991) studied emotional experiences of young people in America, Italy, and the People's Republic of China, they found that Americans and Italians associated love with happiness and assumed that both passionate and companionate love were intensely positive experiences. However, students in China viewed the love in darker colors. In the Chinese language, there are few "happy-love" words, and love holds more connotations with sadness. The Chinese men and women typically related passionate love with such ideographic words as infatuation, unrequited love, nostalgia, and sorrow love.

Differences across cultures are quite distinctive in terms of passionate and companionate love experiences. Passionate love is commonly associated with the terms "arousal," "desire," "lust," "passion," and "infatuation." Companionate love is associated with "love," "affection," "liking," "attraction," and "caring." In particular, Shaver et al. (2001) found similarities and differences in the meanings of "love" between Indonesians and Americans. Men and women in Indonesia (like their counterparts in America) were able to distinguish passionate love (*asmara*, or sexual/desire/arousal) from companionate love ("*cinta*" or affection/liking/fondness.). However, the authors noted some differences in the American and Indonesian lexicons: "The Indonesian conception of love may place more emphasis on yearning and desire than the American conception, perhaps because the barriers to consummation are more formidable in Indonesia, which is a more traditional and mostly Muslim country" (p. 219.)

Multilingual cultures of South Asia are also characterized by diversity of love interpretations, perhaps different from American or European. The words such as *shringara*, *ishq*, and *love* each originated in distinct philosophical and esthetic climates and took on several guises in their extensive and diverse history. Still, these words and related expressions are all alive and utilized in contemporary South Asian lexicon (Orsini 2006). Do these concepts overlap, or do they occupy different areas of meaning?

We do not have answers to many of such questions, which are important for the understanding of romantic love in cultural contexts. How can we be certain when someone has fallen in love in a non-Western society when the distinctions made in European languages between different aspects of amorous affect may be culture bound and, in any case, offer few clear guideposts? (Plotnicov 1995).

Researchers have interviewed people from many cultures, conducted surveys, and taken a social categorical approach in order to determine whether or not love should be classified as a basic emotion. They were also interested to learn what people mean by the terms “in love” and “love” as well as other subtlety and nuances of lexicon. It was found that love belongs to basic emotional terms and is widely used in many societies (Fischer et al. 1990).

Shaver et al. (1996, 1991) concluded from their cross-cultural research—exploring English, Italian, Basque, and Indonesian languages—that ordinary people can identify five distinct emotions: love, joy, anger, sadness, and fear. Fehr and Russell (1991) used the prototype analysis to study how people classify emotions and found that throughout the world, men and women identify happiness, love, anger, fear, sadness, and hate as basic emotions.

They also revealed that people usually draw a distinction between passionate love (i.e., “being in love”) and companionate love (i.e., “loving”). Therefore, psychologists admit that love (passionate or companionate) is one of the basic emotions.

## 1.2 Romantic Love and Other Types of Love

During recent decades, the concept of romantic love has been widely used in literature to distinguish the heterosexual love between a man and a woman from other forms of love (familial, parental, brotherly, conjugal, and friendship). Yet, the word *romantic love* has been employed in a quite vague and general meaning—frequently as synonymous to passionate love and closely related to sexual desire. However, it should be noticed that the specific meanings of this notion have evolved historically and may have multifaceted interpretations in various cultures. Therefore, the purpose of this book is to explore the concept of romantic love in diverse historical and cultural contexts.

Historically, philosophical thought defined love mainly in terms of abstract virtues. In particular, Lewis (1960) contemplated on the four basic kinds of human love—affection, friendship, erotic love, and charity. In accord with these ideas, Singer (1984a, b, 1987) recognized four broad conceptual traditions in the definitions of love: *Eros* (desire for the good or the beautiful); *Philia* (friendship-love); *Nomos* (submission to a god’s will; in human terms, obedience to the desires of a loved one); and *Agape* (a divine bestowal of love upon creation).

The term *romantic love* was originally coined by nineteenth-century literary critic Gaston Paris to denote a particular constellation of attitudes and patterns of behavior that characterized a body of literature arising in Provence in the twelfth century (Paris 1883). *Amour courtois* (*Courtly love*), as a precedent of romantic love, had the following general attributes: an elevation of the status of the woman, a suffering caused by passionate attraction to and separation from the beloved, and a transformation of the lovers which elevates them onto a separate plane of existence, the world of lovers, in which life is experienced more intensely (Paris 1883).

Due to historical connotations with courtly love, the researchers of the twentieth century continued to relate the concept of romantic love to passionate love. In particular, Kephart (1966, 1967) defined *romantic love* as a strong emotional attachment to the opposite sex with a tendency toward idealization and a marked physical attraction. Berscheid and Walster (1969/1978) introduced romantic love as the psychological study of interpersonal attraction.

In terms of cross-cultural studies, Rosenblatt (1967) studied romantic love in relation to marital issues in 75 societies. He developed the first scale for measuring the importance of romantic love and defined and employed the 11 criteria of this phenomenon as follows.

(1) idealization of potential spouse, (2) ethnographer states romantic love is important, (3) marriages are not arranged, (4) evidence that faith and loyalty to a spouse is common and volitional, (5) high incidence of elopement in societies where arranged marriage is the norm, (6) spouses spent time together and give each other “non-obligated” gifts, (7) belief in predestination or a “soul mate,” (8) evidence of suicide over unrequited love, (9) clear evidence that people gain happiness and fulfillment from marriage, (10) non-compelled mourning at the death of a spouse, and (11) jealousy that reflects “strong attachment” (Rosenblatt 1967, p. 475).

Many scholars distinguished the concept of romantic love from conjugal love and agape. *Conjugal love* was considered as an affection existing between a man and woman who have been married for a number of years (Waller and Hill 1951). There is less passion but more spirituality, respect, and contentment in the enjoyment of each other’s company. *Agape* was viewed as a third kind of love characterized by spontaneous self-giving love which strives to develop the partner to his or her maximum potential, without considering the advantages or costs to oneself (Fromm 1956).

*Passionate love* and *companionate love* are the two most well-known kinds of love. Several authors (Bercheid 1985, 2010; Berscheid and Walster 1969/1978, 1974; Hatfield 1988; Hatfield and Rapson 1993; Liebowitz 1983) contrasted them as two types or stages of love. Like other scholars (e.g., Hatfield and Rapson 1996), Jankowiak and Fischer (1992, p. 150) distinguish between romantic love, which is defined as passionate and erotic, and what they call companionate love, which emerges with an enduring relationship. I believe it is also important to distinguish romantic love from passionate love.

### 1.3 Sexual Desire as a Feature of Romantic Love

Sex and love are not equivalent. Sexual activity generally refers to intense, limited, brief, and reiterated acts, whereas love denotes milder, broader, and long-lived forms of relationships. Love is a more complex array of feelings than pure sexual activity; love has a more diverse range of its expressions (Brown 1987). Wilson (1980) argued that there is no intrinsic connection between love and sex, and sexuality can be disconnected from romantic love.

From the earliest scholastic exploration of the concept, romantic love has been associated with sexual interest, erotic fantasies, and sexual longings, but these associations differed in different cultural contexts and for different individuals. In Western tradition, romantic love and sexual desire have been two phenomena, which were usually closely linked with each other but at the same time different.

In addition, sexual desire is a motive seeking for pleasure for a lover's self, while love is a motive looking for a pleasure of a partner. Desire is self-directed emotion, while love is an other-directed one. Love places the good of the beloved above one's own.

The romantic lovers experience both feelings, often in tension with each other. Dualism and opposition between desire and love are common in Western culture. According to the concept of romantic (true) love, a lover should control and constrain self-regarding desire and subordinates such a desire for well-being of the other.

Sex can enrich love for the mutual interest of lovers. "When the beloved returns one's love, and when neither of the two lovers' well-being is threatened by sexual embrace, then love and desire may both be fulfilled without harm" (Reddy 2012, p. 1). In Western concept of romantic love and cultural ways of feelings, "the idea of sublime love tends to predominate over that of sexual ardor... Love breaks with sexuality while embracing it" (Giddens 1992, p. 40).

In many Western cultural contexts, fulfilled romantic love is more gratifying than sexual desire alone and is the ultimate goal.

In Eastern culture, in particular a Buddhist cultural context, people have not considered love and sex in terms of their dualism; they lacked the opposition of true love and sexual desire (Reddy 2012). Longings for sublime sexual partnerships were natural feelings. That conception did not separate desire, as striving for personal pleasure, from true love, as selfless care and devotion to another. Physical and spiritual, seductive lust and devotion of true love, were indistinguishable in that culture.

In the context of these non-Western cultures, sexual partnerships were viewed as capable of reaching sublime heights, but the contrast between sublime sexual affect and profane sexual affect was conceptualized in different ways. The conceptions of South Asian and Japanese sexual partnerships differed from each other and had quite different categorical schemes for understanding what Christians divided into "bodily" and "spiritual" (Reddy 2012). That will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters, but there is no evidence that members of these elites viewed sexual release as inherently pleasurable. Pleasure was possible only if the spiritual dimension was involved. For this reason, there was no need for a notion of "true love" capable of taming desire. In neither of these Eastern contexts, the conceptions, practices, and rituals of sexual partnerships implied an opposition between true love, on the one hand, and desire, on the other.

In particular, according to Buddhist conception, sexual desire, as all desires in this world, brings frustration and suffering. The ability to appreciate and to share another's emotional sufferings is a characteristic of true love. As consolation for the sufferings, lovers fulfill longings of each other and offer spiritual compassion.

The longings for specific sexual partners are the manifestations of spirits and encouragement of the gods. An enduring partnership brings the completeness of love feelings, although fleeting sexual encounters also can be spiritual. Compassion as an ability to grasp the other's suffering is a distinctive emotion of love affairs; the personal relationships and feelings are considered as spiritually meaningful. Subtle and refined love poetry has an incantatory force and attracts a beloved, so the skills in composing little love verses have been valuable qualities of lovers (Reddy 2012).

In the early twentieth century, Freudian sexual revolution had a significant impact on people understanding romantic love and sex. The Freudian theory of love was anti-romantic as he degraded romantic love to sexual desire and considered romantic love as sublimation of sexual desire (Freud 1947, p. 231). He thought of love as a primal and regressive search for physical gratification and protective union, and he declared that bourgeois romanticism represented nothing more than an "over idealization" of the lover, resulting from a frustration of sexual longing. In Freud's view, *romantic love* is only a sublimated expression of darker sexual impulses (Hutcheon 1995). Such sexual impulsion contained within a framework of the proper degree of interpersonal discipline might be the key to a long-lasting affectionate relationship between a man and a woman. Singer (1987) stated that Freud apparently viewed love as a fusion of sexuality with affection or tenderness and as libidinal energy—both "aim-inhibited" (and thus available for culture-building tasks) and that which is directed toward its original aim of a love object.

Freud might be right in his assumption: Sexual attraction is the core component of many romantic feelings. However, the following question and dilemma remain: Should we simplify and disenchant the romantic love degrading it to sexual desire (as Freud did), or should we amplify, idealize, and elevate sexual attraction making it beautiful, idealized, decorated, embellished, and really romantic? I am more in favor of the second way of thinking and state of mind.

Anyway, sex is the key component of love. H. Ellis' *Study in the Psychology of Sex*, published in several volumes (1897–1910), presented the notion of romantic love as a mixture of sexual desire and affection. He concluded that the love is best viewed as a mixture of lust and friendship which includes tenderness and affection. Ellis viewed sexual activity as the healthy and natural expression of love. Although Ellis believed that sexual desire is an important component of romantic love, he viewed romantic love as more than just sexual desire. Thus, distinction of romantic love from sexual desire was a paramount scholarly achievement in early twentieth century.

Over recent decades researchers usually studied love and sex separately or they subsume one by the other. Many scholars think that "sex is really love"; others believe that "love is really sex"; still the others view these two experiences as connected (Aron and Aron 1991).

Both sex and love have important and related roles in intimate relationships, considering sexual desire as a fundamental component of romantic love (Regan 1998; Regan and Berscheid 1999). The titles of many scholarly books on the topic contained both words—*sex* and *love*—with content priority on sex.

Researchers may have been slow to connect sex with love. Men and women can experience love without sex, as is the case of partners that are in a long-distance relationship and are separated for a long time. It is also possible to have sex without love, as in the case of encounters between prostitutes and clients. However, for most people love and sex are connected.

Currently many researchers consider romantic love as closely related to sexual attraction (De Munck 1998; Fisher 2004; Hatfield and Rapson 2005; Hatfield et al. 2007; Regan 1998) and found empirical evidence for these links. Scholars typically consider sexual desire as the key feature of romantic love. Berscheid (1988, p. 373) described romantic love as a mixture of things, including a strong erotic component, yet it is different from similar emotional states such as infatuation or lust. Sexuality is not identical with love; however, it can become one of the ways that love is experienced and expressed in relationships. Therefore, many authors distinguish romantic love as different from mere needs driven by sexual desire, or lust (Ellis 1960; Fromm 1956; Jankowiak 1995) and passionate love (Garis 1984, Lindholm 1995), yet view these as closely related.

De Munck and Korotayev (1999) studied the cultures around the world and revealed that the importance of romantic love as a basis for marriage is accepted only in societies that allow both males and females to give or not give love freely. Empirical evidence allowed them to conclude that:

- (a) Where premarital sex and/or adultery are permitted for only one sex (in this sample, males), a condition of sexual inequality exists, and therefore romantic love is rated of low importance as a basis for marriage,
- (b) Societies in which premarital sex and/or adultery are prohibited for both sexes (a condition of sexual equality) rate romantic love higher than societies in which sexual inequality exists. (p. 273)

Therefore, besides the non-marital sexual freedom of women, people have to recognize sexual equality as an important factor of romantic love.

Hendrick and Hendrick (1986, 2002) have found positive relationships between love and sex. Higher erotic (Eros) and altruistic (Agape) love are related to more idealistic sexuality, while game-playing love (Ludus) is associated positively with casual and biologically oriented sexuality. When interviewed about the links between love and sex (broadly construed as more than just intercourse) in their relationships, people described several themes including “love being the most important thing in the relationship,” “love coming before sex in both significance and sequencing,” and that “sex is viewed as a profoundly important way of demonstrating love” (Hendrick and Hendrick 2002, p. 478).

Romantic love generally involves a mix of emotional and sexual desire with their emotional highs—exhilaration, passion, and elation—in such a way that love embraces sex, and the sex broadly defined (not just sexual intercourse) includes various ways of physical affection.

Sex and physical involvement includes kissing, caressing, and other affectionate touching, all of which can be more important than intercourse. All these manifestations express the importance of physical contact in romantic love relationships.

Sometimes, a man and a woman feel a strong sexual attraction to each other; they believe that they are “in love.” Due to strong sexual attraction they really feel passionate love. Is it romantic? Maybe, but not necessarily. They do not know yet whether they have values and interests in common, genuine admiration for each other, compatible personalities, and authentic interest to each other as persons. The feeling of commitment may be just an illusionary and short-lived emotion. Some may consider the hope for their enduring sexual pleasure as the most desirable and view the promise to bring sexual pleasure to a partner as commitment. Yes, sex is an important part of life and love for some people, maybe for many, but sex is not the only quality in love relationships; there might be something more—the feeling of security, care, affection, etc.

## 1.4 Romantic Love as a Passion

Berscheid and Walster (1969/1978) defined passionate love as a state of total absorption of two lovers when moods fluctuate between ecstasy and anguish. Hatfield and Rapson (1993) further elaborated the concept of passionate love and described an experience associated with physiological processes, pleasure, pain, and relationship initiation. They defined passionate love as:

A state of intense longing for union with another. Passionate love is a complex functional whole including appraisals or appreciations, subjective feelings, expressions patterned physiological processes, action tendencies, and instrumental behaviors. Reciprocated love (union with the other) is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy; unrequited love (separation) with emptiness, anxiety, or despair (Hatfield and Rapson 1993, p. 37)

Is passionate love romantic? As many people believe, it is. In current scholarship romantic love has been often replaced by passionate love as a synonym or used in such conjunction as *romantic/passionate love*, assuming that they are just the same (Fisher 2004; Hatfield and Rapson 2005; Hatfield et al. 2007; Regan 1998). Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) also equated romantic love with passionate love and concluded that it “constitutes a human universal, or at least a near-universal” (p. 154).

Passion is definitely the most salient feature of romantic love; this most fundamental aspect of love transcends place and time. “The earliest Western literature abounds in stories of lovers, fictional and real, caught up in a sea of passion and violence...” (Hatfield and Rapson 2002, p. 308). The Eastern stories tell the same: Cho and Cross (1995) identified the themes of passionate love, obsession, casual love, devotion, and free choice of a mate in Chinese literature dating back thousands of years.

Hatfield (1988), Hatfield and Rapson (1996) suggested that passionate love has existed in all cultures and all historical periods. It is essentially a “human universal” that, as a key feature of romantic love, has been a cherished part of the Western world’s cultural heritage. The great love stories of Lancelot and Guinevere, Heloise and Abelard, Romeo and Juliet present the well-known

symbols of passionate love. The stories were typically tragic because they challenged the moral and societal codes of their cultures. The characters were pioneers attempting to put sexual desires and corresponding passion above everything and extoll the romantic love. They strived for ideal in opposition to real and pragmatic. The romantic love was always ideal; they wanted more than a society allowed, and they wanted more than a partner could provide. In this regard, romantic love is an idealistic dream; it is seldom a reality. It is idealistic not only in terms of old mores and traditions restraining from romanticism, like in former times, but also in terms of modern realities that still often do not allow fulfilling the dream of romantic love.

In modern views, passion is also considered as a key characteristic of love. Many people rate passion as a central and prototypical feature of romantic love (Regan et al. 1998). *Eros* and *Agape* types of love (Lee 1973, 1976; Hendrick and Hendrick 1986, 1989) are typically associated with romantic love. *Eros* is a passionate, intense, romantic love focusing on physical attributes in a partner and sensual satisfaction, while *Agape* is a selfless, altruistic, all-giving, non-demanding, and spiritual love. Passion of *Eros* is a self-directed and ego-centric emotion when a beloved one serves to please a lover (from looking at, admiring, or interacting with him or her), while *Agape* is an other-directed and other-centric love when pleasure of the beloved is more important.

Romantic love may be understood as passionate love, yet it can be conceptualized as something more and beyond. The degree of passion is not the only constituent of romantic love and sometimes may be not the most important. A calm Nordic lover may be no less romantic than a hot Latin lover, but they might display and experience less passion just due to a different temperament, and therefore, intensity of emotion.

Romantic love might be passionate, but *passion* itself is not the only feature of this type of love. The degree of *passion* depends on the temperament of a lover and can take a tone of *affection*. Romance is the fanciful, expressive and pleasurable feeling from an emotional attraction toward another person. There is often more emphasis on the emotions than on physical pleasure.

One manifestation of passion is *obsession*. Love literatures and documents from many cultural contexts brought the evidence of such states (Reddy 2012, p. 9) when lovers ruminate about and become preoccupied and even obsessed with beloveds. Despite differences in vocabulary and interpretation, it is a common feature of love. Lovers in the grip of preoccupation and rumination consider the beloved as a potential partner in a multifaceted, open-ended relationship.

### **Love as an Empowering Emotion**

People in strong passionate love believe that this feeling can overcome any obstacles and help to cope with any problems. Thousands of novels and romances throughout history have provided multiple evidences of this beliefs and real deeds. People in love feel resilient physically and psychologically in many other regards. They are more positive to other people, often more creative, tend to write poems. They can do much more for the beloved than for any other person in their relationships. Love brings them more power.

## 1.5 Romantic Love as Idealization

According to several dictionaries (In love 2011; Romantic n.d.; Romantic 2016a, b), *romantic love* is characterized by strong affection and preoccupation with love, unrealistic and idealistic attitudes toward a partner, and the feeling *l'amour toujours* (French), that love will last forever and never end. Lindholm (1988) acknowledged that romantic love is a passionate love and occurs within an erotic context; in addition, he postulated the idealization of the other and the expectation that love will endure into the future. Dueñas-Vargas (2015) described such a situation as follows: “José Maria had been a victim of Cupid’s arrows the instant he laid eyes on Soledad. Physical attraction, characteristic of erotic passion, was transformed in romantic love into an intuition of the qualities of the beloved, perceived as necessary for the matrimonial union. In the diary in which he recorded his romance, the young man wrote about his love at first sight” (p. 2).

Passion, being an intense emotion, precipitates the radiation and transference of positive attitudes from one quality of a partner to another, well-known as a *halo effect*. Therefore, what is beautiful is good and what is good is beautiful. Thus, passionate feelings idealize a partner’s beauty and personality, as well as an image of the current relationship. Romantic lovers manifest a strong tendency to amplify positive and overlook negative characteristics of their partners. They tend to glamorize and misperceive them, exaggerate their virtues, and blind themselves to their failings. Murstein (1988) noted that “in the absence of much real knowledge of the other, each member of the couple may project fantasized real qualities onto the other. The qualities of the other are apt to be exaggerated, and much attention is paid to the beloved” (p. 29).

Romantic love, from this point of view, is nothing but an illusion and sometimes a delusion, derived from the arts, used to persuade lovers that their sexual desires are actually ethereal and transcendent. It includes passionate lovers’ egoistic interests, lust, and infatuation, but still takes the interest of a partner into account.

As a word of caution, French writer de Beauvoir (1908–1986) stated that many problems in romantic love stem from idolizing, submitting to, attempting to merge with, possessing, devoting oneself to, and justifying oneself in the beloved. She said that love can be more harmonious relationships through reciprocal recognition of two freedoms. In accord with these propositions, French philosopher and novelist Sartre (1905–1980) believed that the ideal of love is unattainable and therefore suggested accepting the other as they are (Cleary 2015, p. 161).

Many couples suffer feelings of disenchantment shortly after marriage. Partners bring to their relationships their doubts, fears, insecurities, and weak and unclear self-esteem. Romantic love is not omnipotent. Love requires the efforts to sustain and develop and overcome disappointments.

## 1.6 Love as a Longing for Affiliation

A *longing for affiliation* in a general sense is a salient characteristic of romantic love. It includes the motives for both sexual and spiritual unions. A sexual desire for a beloved is actually a longing for such mutual fusion of the bodies, which may be displayed in the holding of hands, hugging, kissing, cuddling, and further sexual activity. In romantic love, sexual desire displays itself as an experience of longing for love, while in sex it expresses as lust, craving for sexual release. *Longing for affiliation* combines this dichotomy of love and sex. In a psychological and spiritual sense, it means a strong motive for a close connection of two minds and fusion of souls.

Reddy (2012) employs a very similar term, *longing for association*, and suggests that this emotion brings lovers (and sexual partners) together in more or less enduring relationships.

Men and women as opposite sexes have strong motivation for affiliations with each other in romantic love, not only sexually but also psychologically. Johnson (1983) believes that masculine and feminine psychologies are complementarily interrelated in the feeling of romantic love. From his view, throughout human history the feminine values of feeling, relatedness, and soul consciousness have been virtually driven out of Western culture by patriarchal mentality. Therefore, many men unconsciously look for their lost feminine side, for the feminine values in life. They attempt to find their un-lived feminine side through a woman.

On the other hand, from the same patriarchal version of reality, women tended to idealize masculine values at the expense of the feminine side of life. Many women had a constant feeling of inferiority because they felt that to be feminine is “second best.” Women often believed that only masculine activities, thinking, power, and achieving had any real value. Thus, as Johnson (1983) asserts, Western women found themselves in the same psychological dilemma as Western men: developing a one-sided, competitive mastery of the masculine qualities at the expense of their feminine side. Actually, I believe, both masculine and feminine qualities are equally valuable and complementary to each other, but men and women, having their own strengths, still lack the other side. Romantic love in this regard is the opportunity for both to find the united *We*, and Johnson convincingly illustrates this thesis in his Jungian interpretation of *Tristan and Iseult* as a source of psychological insight.

Romantic love means not just loving someone; it is rather a specific psychological phenomenon of being “in love.” A person being “in love” believes that he/she has found the ultimate meaning of life, revealed in another human being; they have found the missing parts of themselves and are now finally completed. “Life suddenly seems to have a wholeness, a superhuman intensity that lifts us high above the ordinary plain of existence. For us, these are the sure signs of ‘true love’” (Johnson 1983, p. xii). Therefore, psychologically our lover provides us with this feeling of ecstasy and intensity. Johnson (1983) pointed out a central ideal of love:

When we are “in love” we feel completed, as though a missing part of ourselves had been returned to us; we feel uplifted, as though we were suddenly raised above the level of the ordinary world. Life has an intensity, a glory, an ecstasy and transcendence (p. 52).

Johnson compares romantic love with primal religious experience—a fundamental part of our collective unconsciousness. According to this cultural understanding of romantic love, we place unreasonable expectations and even demands on our romantic partners because we believe that they have “the responsibility for making our lives whole ... making our lives meaningful, intense, and ecstatic” (p. 61).

*Longing for affiliation* of masculine and feminine psychology in one *We*—in a union—is the central characteristic of romantic love. This concept is free of such Western-specific notions as *passion* or *drive* and is therefore suitable in a wide diversity of cultural contexts for talking about this affect. I believe that the cases of various cultures presented in the following chapters support this idea.

The allure of romantic love as a merging of two is powerful. In this union, a couple hopes to find completeness in each other. Once a complementary individual is found, a lover gains a sense of fullness and less anxiety about being alone. Mutual love also relieves the anxieties regarding self-esteem and self-worth because one is accepted, desired, and valued by a partner.

## 1.7 Passionate Love as Addiction

Passion is sometimes just a madness of love, the irrational psychological state, and the feelings that overshadow mind. As Shakespeare commented (1623), “Love is merely a madness; and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punish’d and cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too.”

Simenon once described the difference between sexual passion and romantic love. *Passion*, as he said, is a malady. It is possession, something dark. You are jealous of everything. There is no lightness, no harmony (Garis 1984). Love is haunted by obsessive and possessive sexual desire.

Giddens (1992) believes that the idealizing and unrealistic aspects of romantic love are delusions that enmesh people in destructive fantasy relationships and prevent them from serious exploration of personal freedom and sexual variety. “Romance,” he says, “is the counterfactual thinking of the deprived” (p. 45).

The modern studies showed that extreme passionate love resembles some features of an abnormal state of mind and feelings. The research findings revealed the irrational, obsessive nature, and destructive power of romance (Money 1980; Tallis 2004; Tennov 1998). Such state of love often engages intrusive thinking about the person who is the object of desire, the acute longing for reciprocation from an object of admiration (Tennov 1998).

Some studies demonstrated biochemical similarities between the state of romantic love and its overvalued idea, typical for subjects in the early phase of love, and those with neuroticism and obsessive–compulsive disorders (Marazziti et al. 1999). The concept of lovesick is probably cross-cultural.

Liebowitz (1983) claimed that romantic love is experienced as a giddy feeling, comparable to an amphetamine high. He stated that phenylethylamine (PEA), an amphetamine-related compound, produces the mood-lifting and energizing effects of romantic love. He found that “love addicts,” the same as drug addicts, are craving for romance as for a particular kind of high. Most romantic experiences lose their intensity with time due to normal biological processes.

Liebowitz offered the explanation of the chemistry of the emotions which criss-cross lovers’ consciousness as they plunge from the highs to the lows of love. The “highs” include euphoria, excitement, relaxation, spiritual feelings, and relief. The “lows” include anxiety, terrifying panic attacks, the pain of separation, and the fear of punishment. Phenylethylamine (PEA), lifts the mood of a lover and energizes. The crash following a breakup is like amphetamine withdrawal. Liebowitz thought that MAO (monoamine oxidase) inhibitors may inhibit the breakdown of PEA (phenylethylamine), thereby “stabilizing” the lovesick like a chemical counteractant.

He assumed that non-drug and drug highs and lows operate via similar changes in brain chemistry. In an excitement state, naturally occurring brain chemicals, similar to the stimulants, produce the feeling of “rush.” In a relaxation state, chemicals related to narcotics, tranquilizers, sedatives, or alcohol produce a mellow state and wipe out anxiety, loneliness, and depression. In spiritual peak experiences, chemicals similar to the psychedelics produce a sense of beauty, meaningfulness, and timelessness.

D. Marazziti and her colleagues did interesting research on the neurobiology of love. The researchers studied 20 men and women who were passionately in love, 20 unmedicated OCD patients, and 20 normal controls—people who were either single or in monogamous, long-term relationships. They calculated the amount of serotonin in platelets—tiny cells in blood—and found that passionate lovers, like patients suffering from obsessive–compulsive disorders (OCD), are lacking in a neurotransmitter (serotonin) that has a soothing effect on the brain. Too little serotonin is related to anxiety, depression, and aggression. Drugs in the Prozac family boost the chemical’s presence in the brain and improve these conditions (Marazziti et al. 1999; Marazziti and Canale 2004).

*Mania* type of love (Lee 1973, 1976; Hendrick and Hendrick 1986, 1989) is less enjoyable and less romantic than *Eros* and *Agape* feelings. *Mania* style of love is characterized by uncertainty and emotional ups and downs. A manic lover is obsessive, dependent, and insecure (the downside), supportive, loving, and devoted to the partner (the upside). He/she is possessive and yearning for love with an expectation that it may be painful. *Mania* as love experience may look romantic to some, but actually it characterizes the immature stage.

Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides. And when it subsides, you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion, it is not the desire to mate every second minute of the day, it is not lying awake at night imagining that he is kissing every cranny of your body. No, don't blush, I am telling you some truths. That is just being "in love", which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. (De Bernières 1995)

In some cases, passionate love may look like a love war, as it is often presented in modern novels and movies. Partners battle to establish a relationship with mutual psychological benefits, striving for understanding and often for power or equality. Unrequited love is the typical challenge in passionate love, which many lovers struggle with.

## 1.8 Love as Suffering

Suffering is an enduring theme of the discourse about romantic love, beginning from early and later cases of love as a mental illness described by medical doctors of different epochs (see for references, Money 1980; Tallis 2004). The misery of love is as old as love itself. The courtly love concept (eleventh–twelfth centuries) also considered suffering as its core characteristic. The title of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), which was much admired by young romantics of eighteenth–nineteenth centuries, continued the suffering tone of romantic love into the modern era. The following chapters will present multiple example of that assertion.

Love as idealization, which is depicted in novels and movies create idealized expectations and illusions, many of which will never come true. Therefore, romantic love is vulnerable; the reality of a partner's behavior, personality, and relationships brings a risk of disenchantment. Disappointment and disillusion inevitably bring pain and suffering. The higher expectations lead to the higher dissatisfactions. This is why in the cultures with high value of romantic love, people are more often dissatisfied with their intimate relationships. The feelings of blue and suffering are natural to romantic lovers. Romantic love is like an emotional rollercoaster, and the swings of mood from elation to suffering and vice versa are the key characteristics of this type of love. The ideal of romantic love is alluring, yet it is fragile, vulnerable, and often involves disappointments and conflicts. The saying that "love is joy and pain" is just about that.

Danish philosopher-existentialist Kierkegaard (1813–1855) thought that romantic love is intrinsically disappointing due to its unstable nature and rendered it a fleeting and meaningless erotic encounter. Freeing oneself from erotic impulses would help to avoid disappointment in relationships. He believed that love relationships could be more secure through such commitments as marriage and faith in God (Cleary 2015).

Romantic love is difficult and brings both positive and negative feelings. Love is a powerful, but far from being an uplifting and beautiful experience, it is painful and calls upon men and women to make sacrifices, endure pain, and suffer disillusion and rejection. Despite the ecstasy of love feelings when they are “in love,” men and women frequently experience a sense of loneliness, alienation, and frustration over an inability to reach genuinely loving and committed relationships. They often blame other people for this failing and are not aware that perhaps they themselves need to change their own unconscious attitudes and the expectations of relationships and other people.

As we will see in the following chapters, economic, social difficulties, and cultural differences place pressures on natural attraction of lovers and can ruin romances. Passion might be of not equal strength and not always mutual; unrequited love happens quite often and causes emotional suffering. Incompatibility of personalities and multiple individual difficulties, insecure attachment, inability to understand a partner, etc., can bring turbulence in love relationships and derail romances. Description of love often includes expectations of suffering. It calls upon the lover to sacrifice self for beloved. Love can cause pain and suffering by being unrequited or failing to endure.

I think all men carry with them the memory of that one girl who did not want them –Men suffer with love because always there is the girl you can't have. The one who you love desperately, and she does not love you. And you end up with a broken heart. Just because men don't cry all the time like women do doesn't mean they don't get broken hearts too. (twenty-eight-year-old man) (cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 257)

Women also often live with painful unrequited love or come. They may suffer from the disillusion brought on their mistaken interpretation of men's behavior toward them.

They say men suffer from the women they can't have. Well, my daughter, women suffer from the men they *do* have. It is much better to have a broken heart and live your life dreaming of how it might have been than it is to get your heart's desire, marry, and find out that it is hopeless, what you thought was love is not love at all. (fifty-eight-year-old woman) (cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 258)

While love brings many disillusion, yet, some believe that love is worth all the pain.

The question of love doesn't have to be useful, love is good in itself. Love is so good, so good that even loving a person and she doesn't love you, even hurting, hurting you don't want it to end, because love is good, is delicious, is a sentiment that God left for the world, (thirty-year-old-male mechanic) (cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 258).

On other hand, the search for love conveys the rewards, and some men and women thrive on the excitement of love's emotional ups and downs. For some people, love, with all its drama, sequential bouts with *passion* and broken hearts bring life the energy that makes it worth living.

Have you ever been in love? I have been so many times, and been hurt so many times. And when it ends it is the worst pain in the world. But even so, all the pain is worth it for those few minutes. Because love is the most delicious dish there is to eat in the world, it is what makes life worth living, those moments of love, (twenty-one-year-old female secretary) (cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 258)

Brazilian proverb, for example, declare, “To love is to suffer.” Hagene (2008) in particular noted that in predominantly Catholic Latin America, the Christian notion of love assumes self-abnegation and suffering. In the literature on women in Latin America, which she cited, suffering and self-sacrifice are often underlined as part of their identification as women.

The social conditions of romantic love in many countries have been greatly transformed over the last two centuries. The power of socioeconomic status, religion, and race as factors of what is considered as socially appropriate in relationships between men and women has declined. These changes should ease the life and love and decrease the suffering from conflicts with these obstacles. The modern social expectations in many cultures are that our partner selection can be made according to love and choice free from any external constraints.

The love emotions being liberated still continue to bring a misery, as Illouz (2012) suggests the ways men and women experience these sufferings these days are quite distinctive. She explains this with increased “commitment phobia” on the part of men, which alongside the emergence of new forms of masculinity, lies at the root of the misery experienced by many women of the middle class in modern societies looking for a long-term relationship (Illouz 2012).

The study of de Munck and Kronenfeld (2016) in the USA identified a substantial bunch of terms associated with romantic love, which refer to the cluster of suffering: being frustrated, hurt-hurts, helpless, sad, lost, vulnerable, angry, and jealous.

## 1.9 Romantic Love as Entertainment

Romantic love is fun and entertaining. The origins of this conception of love came from ancient Roman poet Ovid (43–17/18 B.C.) who noted that what the lover wants is clear enough: sexual enjoyment. He emphasized the game of love and taught his readers, both male and female, how the idealizing imagery of romantic passion can be used with style and grace by intelligent seducers to help them gain sexual access to those whom they desire while avoiding the attention of others whom they find unattractive. Professions of love serve to conceal a seducer’s deliberate machinations and thereby render lust more attractive. In his *Amores* (“Love Affairs”) and *Ars Amatoria* (“The Art of Love”), Ovid gave advice on how to woo and make love. He talked little about emotional involvement and more about how to seduce an enticing woman. The lover should be attentive to his lady, but the lady’s character is less important for attraction (cited in Murstein 1974, pp. 75–76). Ovid saw the idealizing content of romantic love as an attractive and necessary convention.

The character of Don Juan was the classical depiction of this type of lover who is fully engaged in entertainment. Embodied in Mozart’s Don Giovanni, he was a legendary libertine and a womanizer who enjoyed a fast turnover. Once he seduced one woman, he moved onto the next conquest. He was involved in the entertaining love life and embodied his living in the moment. He was highly erotic, loved

pleasure, and focused exclusively on sexual enjoyment. As a person of nature, Don Giovanni was selfish, egoistic, and child-like; he wanted his desires to be satisfied instantly, with little or no regard for others (Cleary 2015, p. 49).

The idea of love as entertaining was further developed in *Ludus* type of love (Lee 1973, 1976; Hendrick and Hendrick 1986, 1989). *Ludus* love style tends to avoid emotional intensity and commitment. The ludic lover wants love to be a pleasant pastime for everyone involved and may “balance” several love relationships at the same time. *Ludus* love style may look beautiful to some, but actually it characterizes the immature stage of love that can last for a short or for a long time.

Romantic love is an excited feeling and entertaining experience for many men and women, not only for ludic lovers. It is fun and a possibility to go beyond everyday routine. One of the most typical plots in romantic movies depicts the people’s routine work or family life when characters just do not guess that there is another reality—the reality of excited emotions and fantastic experience—or they do not believe that such a reality can be achieved. However, unexpectedly, circumstances of the life bring them a chance and they enter a romantic “fairy tale.” The same way as children, adults love fairy tales; therefore, they continue to enjoy their adult fairy tales of romance and will continue to dream about these. Otherwise, the life would be boring for many of them.

## 1.10 Romantic Love Assumes Being Exclusive

For many people, romantic love is a unique true love—one for a lifetime, or at least for a while. It excludes other possibilities of the same feelings with another person. This is why they search for a true love with one unique partner. The most romantic men and women hope to find the one and only love partner for the rest of their lives.

The idea of romantic love explicitly assumes exclusivity of a relationship. The popular saying is that if someone loves more than one boy/girl at the same time, it is not a true love. The ultimate romantic ideal is to have one unique and best partner for the lifetime. “They lived together happily ever after” is the most well-known slogan of romantic lovers. It sounds so romantic to find a soul match, one unique and irreplaceable love for a lifetime. Many people in different cultures over the centuries have had such a dream and pursued for it. Being embraced by a happy passion, they believed that mutual passionate love will be the enduring state of mind and soul for the rest of their life. As many literary and real personal stories have revealed, they were mistaken; enjoying their current passion, they often overestimated its enduring power. Passion was likely to fade over time. After that a romantic lover might have a possibility to find another unique partner and embrace another unique and true love. Thus, romantic love would still be exclusive, but for another while. Another possibility might be, despite fading passion, to develop an enduring intimacy with the same partner. Many people actually develop intimacy to assure the endurance of love. Such intimacy can be still romantic, even without strong passion.

Yet, one more possibility is that commitment becomes the dominant feeling, despite faded passion and lack of intimacy. Such self-sacrificing love may be so romantic. Probably due to individual differences, some men and women prefer a romance of passion switching from one partner to another in attempt to revive excitement of passion, while others prefer a romance of intimacy or commitment attaching to one partner in whom they have invested themselves. This is a matter of different love styles.

Being exclusive romantic love becomes inevitably possessive. If a partner is exceptionally unique, therefore, love for them is a unique experience which will never be the same with anyone else. Then any real, imaginary, or possible poaching of a partner threatens a lover's happiness and well-being forever. Therefore, romantic jealousy seems a natural accompaniment in many relationships. Perhaps only self-sacrificing *agape* can go above such possessive jealousy.

Jealousy can arouse passion, so some men and women employ this instrument to manipulate a partner's feelings to attract them. This is a game of romance that some lovers find entertaining and actively use.

## 1.11 Romantic Love as an Action

The modern concept of romantic love is much focused on the emotion of love and its expression, rather than on doing something for the sake of love and lovers. As people in early historical cultures believed, true love is expressed in actions, in doing something good for a beloved one. According to Medieval culture of "courtly love," knights have to perform feats and various services for ladies to demonstrate their love. Among the lower class in the former times, a man, according to his gender role, should maintain the house, provide food, and protect the family from physical or social harm. Wives should keep house, cook, and raise children. It was a more typical definition of love in early centuries, in rural areas, in preindividualistic cultures, and in many parts of the world, including Western countries. It was identified as an old-fashioned, rural style of thinking about love and marriage. The everyday duties that the partners did as part of their gender roles implicitly expressed their love. Loving couples lived with care about each other and mutual cooperation. They might execute these gender obligations just as duties, but when men and women loved each other they did these with loving feeling and with special care. Even sexual intercourse might be performed as a physiological act to reduce one's body tension, as a duty of procreation, as a duty for a spouse's sexual satisfaction, or as an act of love.

Gift giving can also be considered as an action expressing *agapic* love, especially in Western consumer societies. The research on dating among American college students revealed that gift giving might be an expression of *agapic* love for some men and women (Belk and Coon 1993). Their gift to a beloved is motivated by the desire to bring joy to her/him, without expecting anything in return.

## 1.12 Romantic Love as Pursuit for Happiness

Men and women pursue a happiness and personal fulfillment in romantic love. Happiness is important to the human condition, and people usually strive to achieve it in various ways. Love, as many believe, is what can bring people their happiness in relationships; therefore, they dream and seek for that desired realm. Multiple findings suggest that love, satisfaction, and happiness are all related to one another to some degree (Hendrick and Hendrick 2002). In particular, researchers examined the links between happiness and several relationship variables and found that people who were in love were significantly happier than people not in love. In addition, happiness scores were correlated positively with passionate love, friendship-love, and relationship satisfaction. These data indicated some link between happiness and love (Hendrick and Hendrick 2002). It looks, however, that not only experiencing romantic love, but just being in a relationship can be linked to happiness (Hendrick and Hendrick 2002). Marriage also brings happiness. Myers and Diener (1995) noted that “Throughout the Western world, married people of both sexes report more happiness than those never married, divorced, or separated” (p. 15).

Nevertheless, marriage may be unhappy, sometimes miserable, but love tends to increase happiness significantly (Brogaard 2015). A seventy-year longitudinal study of two social groups—physically and mentally healthy college students, and a second cohort of disadvantaged non-delinquent inner-city youths (Vaillants 2012)—showed that the ability to be intimate with another person was a strong predictor of health and happiness. Those individuals who were uncomfortable with intimacy and commitment were among the most unhappy and discontented. Unrequited, obsessive, and irrational love do not lead to happiness. The real factors of happiness are wholehearted and reciprocated love for a caring and lovable partner. Rational love leads to happiness.

Our capability to reach happiness in love and through love is real and I would totally agree with the following statement of Johnson (1983):

As a society, we have not yet learned to handle the tremendous power of romantic love. We turn it into tragedy and alienation more often than into enduring human relationships. But, I believe, if men and women will understand the psychological dynamics behind romantic love and learn to handle them consciously, they will find a new possibility of relationship, both to themselves and to others. (p. xiv)

Romantic love as pursuit for happiness needs obstacles that would postpone the dream of happiness to come true. When romantic love leads to fulfillment and physical consumption too quickly, it ceases its romanticism. Psychologically, the waiting of the beloved, dreaming of union, and unfulfilled expectations are often sweeter than reality. So, for the sake of endurance of romantic love, it is much better that fulfillment is suspended and obstacles are created. For their romantic passion to persist, lovers must be kept away from one another, so that their dreams flourish and idealization spirals upward. Another’s absence, rather than one another’s presence, inflames lovers.

The romantic love cannot be easily accessible. As French novelist and playwright Honore de Balzac (1799–1850) once noted, “*The duration of passion is proportionate with the original resistance of the woman*” (Balzac 1829/2010).

Romantic love is typically the story perennially facing obstacles, never having to get down to the nitty-gritty of daily life. Dealing with a mess to clean up, clothing in disarray, bad breath, hair disheveled, and other daily routines seems less romantic. Romance would fall back to the lumpen earth.

“So many people you can take to bed  
 So few you feel like waking up with  
 Who in the morning when goodbyes are said  
 You feel like waving to and smiling to,  
 and then you wait to hear from them all day long”<sup>1</sup>

Once love has conquered the obstacles, it seems to conclude being romantic love; the lover has to become committed to this concrete person, with all his/her limitations. Upon consummation, romantic illusion is frequently shattered, and the reality of the human condition sets in. The most typical ending for the Western tales of romantic love, at least in novels and movies, is not “growing old together.” The implicit expectation is that a man and a woman continue in romantic love forever. As Novak (2013) said, “Romantic love has become the favorite food and drink of the Western soul.”

Dreams are usually more beautiful than reality; romantic love is more inspiring than the daily routine of relationships. Thus, romantic love is like dreams or fairy tales that various media over the centuries and across cultures inspired in people. Therefore, men and women, as children, aspired to fulfill these fairy tales. In many cases for them, the pursuit of happiness, as the process, brings better feelings than happiness as a final point of destination, which has been achieved. Then, what is next? This is why a majority of romantic stories end with love embrace, or other kinds of union, yet do not continue to the reality of “happily ever after.” Many authors know that reality is less fascinating, and therefore, they do not bother with it.

If people expect marriage to be the best and happiest experience of their lives, it is difficult or impossible to hold a marriage together if things go “for worse” rather than “for better.” The pursuit of personal happiness and unrealistic expectations could undermine self-discipline and the feeling of responsibility.

Is romantic love a childish feeling? Yes, in some regards it is. Romantic love entertains an idealized perception of a partner and a relationship, the same way a fairy tale is an ideal imaginary world for children; reality is different. Children grow out of beliefs in fairy tales when they become adults. Do young men and women grow out idealized fairy beliefs in romantic love? Should they?

Romantic literature and films create romantic dreams for people. Romantic love is a dream, and people like to dream. Therefore, pursuit for romantic love is

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<sup>1</sup>Translation of Edward Asadov by Anne Mackenzie, retrieved from <http://www.stihi.ru/2014/07/15/1033>.

natural and inevitable. Hollywood creates such dreams and people admire them; people watching these dreams pretend that they are living in them. Watching a loving couple in a movie, a person pretends himself/herself in the position of one of the characters and dreams about such a perfect relationship. This is why people love romantic novels and movies.

Then, being raised on these movies, people try to live according to them and find such perfect matches and dating and marital relationships. Sometimes it works or sometimes it does not. Romantic stories in novels and movies provide great examples of relationships, and therefore, they inspire and motivate people to pursue the best in their relationships. On another hand, these stories create ideals and illusions, many of which will never come true. So, people are in a risk of disenchantment. This might be the negative side of romantic stories and romantic love that are too idealistic.

### 1.13 Romantic Love and Marriage

Throughout most of human history, marriage for love was an alien idea. *Courtly love* developed during the Middle Ages, valorizing and idealizing the intense feeling of love toward another person; it was a love of passion between a man and a woman, but they commonly were not married to each other (Singer 1984b). So, *courtly love* of twelfth century, as a precedent of romantic love, actually invented adultery as an extramarital type of romantic love (Capellanus 1957). Such adultery has been passionate and romantic in many cases.

Romantic love was not considered as a prerequisite for marriage until the modern era (Singer 1984a, b). The idea of love for marriage and in marriage had been traditionally neglected or restrained and rose on the horizon of people's minds only in the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries when they began to dream about romantic love as a prerequisite for marriage. Still it was frequently noticed that passionate love is short-lived and would fade after the first years of marriage. It was again admitted that romantic love (in terms of passion) is incompatible with marriage.

Passionate love and marriage to the same person is a relatively recent cultural development. According to Gillis (1988), what has changed about love and marriage over the course of history were the details of the script of the role of lover, the importance of love as a prior condition for marriage, and the propriety of particular actions as declarations of love (Gillis 1988, pp. 102–103). Gradually the idea that passionate love between man and woman may occur within a courtship context came to life and led to *love marriages*. The growth of love marriages spread widely in the Western world in the nineteenth–twentieth centuries.

In the twentieth century with increased mobility of population, more opportunities for men and women to mingle before marriage raised the importance of love feelings prior to marriage. Romantic love marriage became more frequent among youths. Many women, however, did not consider these new romantic ideas for

marriage relevant to their lives; they enjoyed the love experience in their youth years: beautiful gifts and flowers, cinema theater with a young wooer, and walking together and looking at the moon. However, they often settled for something more pragmatic in marriage.

In the 1960s, according to the study of Kephart (1967), American college men and women still did not view the importance of romantic love as a necessary precondition to marriage. Women, and in lesser degree men, thought that the absence of romantic love would not discourage them from a marriage. The substantial social changes, especially profoundly affecting the lives of women, have occurred in American society since the time of Kephart's first survey.

The studies conducted in America in the 1970s and 1980s reassessed the role of romantic love in marital relationships. The results demonstrated that by those years (1) a majority of both men and women already viewed romantic love as a necessary prerequisite for a marriage; (2) significantly more men and women indicated that they would not marry someone unless they were in love with him or her; and (3) romantic love was considered to play a major role in the establishment of a marital relationship as well as in its maintenance (Simpson et al. 1986). The romantic love in modern time is typically valorized in the context of youth relationships or other types of premarital relationships.

Cross-culturally, relations between love and marriage are often viewed in the context of the dichotomy of love marriage versus arranged marriage, with certain Western ethnocentric favor of the former type of marriage. It seems that love marriages are typical for the contemporary Western world. There is popular belief that men and women have the freedom to select their own mates on the basis of romantic and passionate love. Such mate selection is an individual choice and cannot be constrained by parental input.

On the other end, it is widely assumed that arranged marriages are based only on social and economic factors imposed by parents, and the interest of love is neglected and considered unimportant in selecting a mate. This view depicts a script, according to which the prospective newlyweds do not know each other and have no influence on with whom they are expected to live, mate, and raise a family. De Munck (1998) debunked such a dichotomous perspective on arranged versus love marriage questioned against such an ethnocentric view. He found that actually in practice in Sri Lanka, for example, love influences mate selection, and that love and arranged marriages are not mutually exclusive types of family relationships. Western and Eastern cultures just take into account different complexes of values and variables of love. In particular, de Munck demonstrated how various social customs and courtship practices in Sri Lanka guide the course of love to a socially and personally "correct" other so that kinship, love, and sexual desire are harmonized.

De Munck (1998) and Moore (1998) provided two convincing examples of how romantic love is conceptualized and shaped in Sri Lanka and China with culturally specific aspects. In both societies, romantic love may be important for men and women in their mate selection, but these feelings have to be subordinated to family interests to a much greater degree than in the Western societies. Moore (1998) showed how universal aspects of romantic love and corresponding emotions

are modified and molded by Chinese cultural processes and norms, in particular filial piety and inappropriateness to display love publicly explicit. He compared “Westernized” Chinese courtship with “traditional” courtship patterns and described the uniquely Chinese cultural as well as universal features of romantic love and their role in marriages.

Additionally, the division between love and arranged marriages is not always clear. Romantic love can be accommodated into an arranged marriage (De Munck 1996, p. 698), and many so-called arranged marriages began with desire (Inhorn 2007, p. 142) and became love marriages.

## 1.14 Is Companionate Love Romantic?

Companionate love is described as valuing intimacy, commitment, and equality (Hatfield and Rapson 1993) and is defined as:

...a complex functional whole including appraisals or appreciations, subjective feelings, expressions, patterned physiological processes, action tendencies, and instrumental behaviors (Hatfield and Rapson 1993, p. 106).

Companionate love has been described as a strong and enduring affection and attachment, more peaceful, comfortable, and fulfilling. These feelings presumably are built upon long-term association. In particular, Hatfield (1988) characterized companionate love as “the affection we feel for those with whom our lives are deeply entwined,” (p. 191) with the attributes of friendship, understanding, and concern. It is more related to *Storge* and *Pragma* types of love (Lee 1973, 1976; Hendrick and Hendrick 1986, 1989). *Storge* is a friendship and companionate love which is based on care, concern, similar interests, attitudes, and values. A storgic lover wants a steady, secure, and comfortable relationship with a love partner who can be both a lover and a “best friend.” *Pragma* is a rational love which focuses on searching for a suitable mate and appropriate partner. A pragmatic lover wants to make a good match. Pragmatic means just being practically oriented. This type of love may be romantic to some who value these aspects of love. What might be more valuable: Whether your partner would constantly admire you and say how passionately he or she loves you, yet doing little in the kitchen, or would your partner rather make dishes caring about your well-being, saying less about his/her passion? What is more important in love: to feel and express yourself, or do something practically?

Many people may not consider companionate love as a romantic love; they see it just as habitual peaceful living of partners together. However, not all marriages, or unregistered partnerships, are just a matter of habits, and not all peaceful married life is a companionate love. Yet, companionate love is still a love holding and developing new important feelings, besides fading passion and idealization. I believe that companionate love, featuring such feelings as intimacy, responsibility, and care, is very romantic. If you look at the old couple, gently taking care of each other, expressing tenderness, and sharing intimate thoughts and feelings with each

other, wouldn't you claim "how romantic it is"? So, romanticism can embrace many features in a variety of love relationships.

Popular romance novels and movies still maintain the myth that only young people can enjoy romance, and for many, the idea of late-life romance seems comical, sometimes disgusting. Many researchers of love also still neglect age and hardly illuminate the lifelong implications of romantic attachments and companionate love; they prefer to study the experiences of college students. Many scholars recognize that sex is a possibility for older adults. However, they have difficulty admitting that loving is encompassed not only by the frequency of sexual interests, activities, and passion, but also love in later life can bring the psychological experience of infatuation, affection, compassionate feelings, and more evident symptoms of romantic love. Over 110 in-depth interviews, 90 of them with older adults living in nine states of the USA showed vivid evidence of romantic feeling in later life (Barusch 2008).

Many people "hope to combine the delights of passionate love with the security of companionate love in their intimate relationships-and this, of course, takes some doing" (Hatfield 1988, p. 207). The successful amalgamation of passionate and companionate love is possible and requires training in intimacy skills. Hendrick and Hendrick (1993) found that friendship-type love was the most frequently mentioned account theme.

The companionate features of love clearly are very important ones (Fehr 1994). Maternal love, parental love, and friendship were the three most prototypical examples of love. Romantic love was ranked fifth, but passionate love and sexual love were ranked quite low on the list. As Fehr (1994) suggested, passionate love is specialized, whereas companionate love is more general, covering more types of love relationships

Several studies revealed that prototypical features of romantic love and love (in general) are trust, care, honesty, friendship, and respect (Fehr 1994; Manoharan and de Munck 2015). Recent results suggest that romantic love is typically conceptualized as a synthesis of prototypical "caring" love and non-crude attributes of sex (Manoharan and de Munck 2015). Furthermore, the studies reported that about 50 % of the college students named their romantic partners as their closest friends. Both friendship and passion were important in these young adults' romantic relationships (Hendrick and Hendrick 1993; Sprecher and Regan 1998). While the feelings of commitment and relationship satisfaction are associated with both passionate and companionate love, satisfaction was related stronger to companionate love than to passionate love.

The romantic couples who have lived together for many years feel something different from romantic love. Johnson (1983) calls it "stirring-the-oatmeal" love—"it represents a willingness to share ordinary human life, to find meaning in the simple, unromantic tasks ... to find the relatedness, the value, the beauty, in the simple and ordinary things, not to eternally demand a cosmic drama ... or an extraordinary intensity in everything" (p. 195). Even though this perspective on love may look unusual from the view of some romantic lovers, this is true love because it can be everlasting.

What do different cultures tell us about variety of love, the ways to experience and express it? The following chapters will explore and review such a broader perspective. The concept of romantic love is just typical of people's images and associations; maybe in a time its connotation will change and extend to companionate love as well, and in addition to romantic passion people will talk also about romantic intimacy and romantic commitment. As we will see in the following chapters, the notion of love has been always in flux and I believe will continue to change.

## 1.15 Platonic Love

Romantic love is opposed and contrasted to platonic love, which precludes sexual relations, yet only in the modern usage does it take on a fully asexual sense. Platonic love can be described as "close affection between two persons, attracted to each other, but without sexual intimacy" (Gooch 1989, p. 360). Heterosexual platonic friendship/love involves a non-romantic personal relationship between a man and a woman accompanied by different feelings. This type of relationship is "nonromantic in the sense that its function is purposefully dissociated from the courtships rights of the actors involved" (O'Meara 1989, p. 526; see also Kaplan and Keys 1997). Platonic love is purely spiritual and emotional and presumably free from physical desire. It is exclusively expressed in a non-erotic way and lacks emotional closeness, even though as the story in the film *When Harry Met Sally* evidenced, in certain circumstances it can be mixed. Sometimes people can experience both types of love. Platonic does not mean that loving, sexual attraction, and passion are absent in the relationship. They are just well monitored and regulated (Kaplan and Keys 1997). According to Davis and Todd (1982) and Monsour et al. (1993), passion, fascination, and exclusiveness are the dimensions, which distinguish a romantic relationship from a platonic heterosexual friendship. The sexual overtones, mutual fascination, and passion are just minimal or do not exist in many cross-sex platonic friendships (Kaplan and Keys 1997; Sapadin 1988), and both partners are free to engage in other cross-sex friendships and in romantic relationships. There is, however, a potential for a change in the relationship from a platonic to a romantic one.

## 1.16 Romantic Love as Transcendence

Simenon disengaged the sexual desire from romantic love, the latter he described as engendering a powerful and expansive sense of self-loss through merger with the beloved other. Love is beautiful. Love is being two in one. It is being so close that when one opens his mouth to speak, the other says exactly what you meant to say. Love is a quiet understanding and a fusion (Garis 1984).

Similar to this opinion, Lindholm (1995) contrasted his view of romantic love with a view, which understands love as contingent upon sexual desire. He argued that the experience of self-transcendence is the essence of romantic love; “it is above all a creative act of human imagination, arising as a cultural expression of deep existential longings for an escape from the prison of the self” (p. 57) (Lindholm 1995). Essentially, romantic attraction is an individual’s attempt to escape from the social contradictions and tensions of relationships through the transcendental love of another person. As such, he believed it is experientially akin to the experience of religious ecstasy (Lindholm 1998).

Aron and Aron (1986, 1996) proposed the similar transcendent conception of love based on the concept of self. They suggested that humans have a basic motive for self-expansion as the growth of self that incorporates physical possessions, power, and influence. According to these authors, the feeling of love is pleasurable because it creates an expansion of self-boundaries. When a man and woman are falling in love, they mutually incorporate one another into the expansion process: “You and me” becomes “us.” Aron and Aron (1996) noted that love promotes self-expansion, and being in love should result in such positive experiences as higher self-esteem and stronger self-affirmation, as well as the partner’s affirmation. Happiness and an optimistic outlook should also correlate positively with love.

*Agape* type of love (Lee 1973, 1976; Hendrick and Hendrick 1986, 1989) as a selfless, altruistic, all-giving, non-demanding, and spiritual love is essentially such self-transcendent love, and it is typically associated with romantic experiences and feelings. Love can display itself as lust in some circumstances, but when lust overtakes a man or a woman, they become self-centered and regard love as a means and way of self-gratification. On another end, when they experience love as a true and genuine affection, they are no longer self-centered, and their love embraces the desire for self-sacrifice. People in romantic love are capable of overcoming their self-centered motivations for the sake of each other.

## 1.17 Complexity of Romantic Love

Romantic love is the complex phenomenon consisting of biological, psychological, and social-cultural components. The love includes physiological stimulation, perceptual mechanisms, and interpretative processes and is situated at the connection where the body, the cognitive, and the cultural converge. Personal experience and social regulation both play their important role. Romantic love is a combination of beliefs, ideals, attitudes, and expectations, which coexist in our conscious and unconscious minds.

Discussions of romantic love in scholarly literature over recent decades (Berscheid 1985, 1988; Brehm 1988; Buss 1988; Caraway 1987; Davis 1985; Hatfield 1988; Hatfield and Rapson 1993; Knox 1970; Liebowitz 1983; Levinger 1988; Lindholm 1988; Money 1980; Murstein 1988; Orlinsky 1977; Shaver et al. 1988; Sternberg 1988; Tennov 1979) allowed researchers to identify the key attributes of romantic love and define it as a constellation of emotions, cognitive

processes, and behaviors. These experiences of romantic love include the following set of components, the most frequently noted in the literature:

1. A cognitive preoccupation with the object of love, including vivid imagination and intrusive thinking about the beloved (or fascination). In the case of unrequited love, imagination helps to imagine reciprocation.
2. Idealization of the beloved that includes a tendency to emphasize the positive qualities and minimize, ignore, or rationalize the negative ones of a love object. It is a remarkable ability to emphasize what is truly admirable in the object of love and avoid dwelling on the negative, even to render the negative into a positive quality. As Rubin (1970) noted, romantic love is the idealization of the other within an erotic context.
3. A desire for physical and emotional merger and union with the beloved one and the longing to maintain physical proximity, physical and psychological intimacy, including physical and sexual attraction to an object of love as a potential sex partner.
4. Exclusive focus of emotion and motivation on one particular person and the unstated presupposition that love is directed toward someone whose real or idealized qualities distinguish him or her from all other people. Romantic love assumes inability to react to more than one person at a time
5. Longing for reciprocity of feelings and a desire for being exclusive with a beloved one. This is related to the fear of rejection, unsettling shyness in the presence of the object of love, and the feeling of uncertainty. An aching of the “heart” in the case of uncertainty is strong, while buoyancy when reciprocation seems certain. Buoyancy as a feeling of “walking on air” is quite typical for being in reciprocated love.
6. Acute sensitivity to any behavior that might be interpreted favorably and an ability to see hidden passion in the seeming neutral behavior of an object of love.
7. Emotional attachment and dependency: A mood is dependent on reciprocity of feeling and actions, and physical and emotional proximity to the beloved. As Brehm (1988, p. 255) noted, “happiness is coming closer to the beloved; unhappiness is falling away from the beloved.”
8. A strong empathy, caring, and concern for the beloved and wanting to satisfy his/her needs. It is not necessarily altruism in the broader sense since it may involve self-interest and personal need.
9. Reordering of life priorities and hierarchies of values and motivations; maintenance of the relationship becomes of central importance often at the expense of other concerns, interests, responsibilities, and activities in life. Intensity of feeling that leaves other concerns in the background: “The only thing that matters is how you two feel when the rest of the world goes away.”
10. Intensification through adversity is a typical plot of love. All romantic novels are usually the stories of how love grows through adversity and how lovers come through it. Adversity of life increases the lover’s feelings up to a certain point. Sometimes, however, too much is too much, yet “the flower that blooms in adversity in the rarest and most beautiful of all.”

The strong empirical support for many of these features of romantic love was obtained in the analysis of more than five hundred cases conducted by Tennov (1979, p. 173) in the USA. Harris (1995) in her field study conducted in Mangaia, Cook Islands, applied several of these key attributes of romantic love attempting to identify those among Mangaian lovers and argued the contention that romantic love is absent on Mangaia. More details of that study will be presented in the following chapters.

The romantic love descriptors summarized above have the potential to bring coherence and meaning to many research findings and unite a body of empirical data into a certain framework. A definitional consensus from the love research allows studying love in cultural contexts with more precision in literary, anthropological, sociological, and psychological studies. Such a comprehensive, specific, and descriptive conceptual definition of romantic love is an important premise for a proper operational definition of romantic love for the study of love in cultural contexts for scholars of any discipline.

Romantic vs realistic love is probably among the top controversies, which readers will encounter in the following chapters. Romantic love, being opposite of pragmatic (realistic) love, is greatly affected by the *halo effect*: “What is beautiful is good” (Dion et al. 1972). In particular, many passionate lovers reaching their great satisfaction in sex begin to believe that this will be the major constituent of their future relationships with a partner, so they are happily willing to continue relationships forever and even marry. This enchantment overshadows all other aspects of the partner’s personality and various realities of relationships: financial security, social status, living conditions, household chores, etc. I recall the old saying popular among young romantics in the Soviet Union: “с милым рай и в шалаше” (“a tent is a castle for those in love,” or “a tent is Paradise with the man you love”), which means that when you are with the one you love, you can be happy in any place, any living situation (even if less than ideal). Reality can often break such idealistic beliefs, even in the movies. Romantic love is vulnerable, and these idealized expectations can be broken by the reality of a partner’s behavior and relationships disenchanting a passionate lover. According to a motivation principle, the higher expectations lead to the higher dissatisfactions. This is why in the cultures with high value of romantic love, people are more often dissatisfied with their intimate relationships. The feelings of blue and suffering are as natural to romantic lovers as the feelings of joy from enchantment from an idealized image of partner and relationship. Romantic love is like an emotional rollercoaster, and the swings of mood from elation to suffering and back are the key characteristics of this type of love. It is not surprising since the suffering was a key descriptor of courtly love, as a precursor of romantic love, in eleventh- to twelfth-century writings. Thus, romantic lovers should be prepared not only for the joy of love, but also for its disappointments and psychological aches. As we recall many love songs, lovers actually are aware of these controversies, and still prefer to love. “To love, or not to love?”—this is a question that many ask themselves, but still continue to love; the expectations of joy from the idealized image of a partner and relationships probably outweigh the risk of suffering, which may come from the

possible disenchantment from a partner, his/her behavior, and inadequate understanding of relationships. A romantic lover expects too much from a prospective partner. Some girls, for example, are looking for “a prince,” thus having heightened expectations. Some are lucky to find a good match to their dream; others mature and become more pragmatic, adjusting their expectations to the reality, and find the best possible or good enough partner out of available candidates. Still, others are looking for “a prince” for the rest of their lives as a spinster.

In particular, Johnson (1983) showed that people in the Western cultures usually grow up to believe in the irrational assumptions of the fairy tale script of romantic love built from literature, films, and other entertainments. He explored the cultural archetype of romantic love to uncover its psychological essence and meaning. He differentiated romantic love from sincere love—“Romantic love is not love but a complex of attitudes about love—involuntary feelings, ideals, and reactions” (p. 45).

As Johnson (1983) explains, when we are in love, we become “entranced, mesmerized ... with a mystical vision—but of something separate and distinct from [our] human selves” (p. 51). We perceive our romantic partners as idealized, god-like versions of who they are. And we feel euphoric with this vision instead of the other person. The paradox of romantic love is that “it never produces human relationships as long as it stays romantic” (p. 133) because we fall in love with our own fantastical creations instead of the other person for whom they really are.

We implicitly assume that romance is such an essential component of a relationship that “if a direct, uncomplicated, simple relationship offers us happiness, we won’t accept it” (p. 134). However, romantic love, especially a passionate one, frequently fades, and many people do not really know how to build a sincere human relationship. They learned from fairy tales what love should be. They know that a relationship without romantic love is worthless and therefore continue to believe that their “true love” must then be out there waiting for them. When romantic love has arrived, people believe that fiery romantic love will be everlasting.

Real love is realistic in a certain sense, and therefore, it is opposite to romantic love. The individuals make more realistic choices and decisions in love too. They see a partner with their good characteristics and shortcomings and weigh both. More realistic and modest expectations lead to lesser disenchantments and therefore to a higher likelihood of relationship satisfaction for realists and pragmatists. Modest expectations are not necessarily a bad thing. People who expect that marriage will always be joyous and that the earth will move whenever they have sex might often be disappointed.

Can romantic love bring any benefits to people? Psychologically it is possible. Romantic love is better than just passionate love in terms of psychological benefits. Passionate love is possessive and assumes the attitude to a partner as an object of desire. Eros and erotic attitudes are the driving forces of a passionate lover. Therefore, the respect and esteem toward a partner is not necessary; the admiration of appearance and any other characteristics triggering sexual desire is enough. Historically, a woman was a typical object of desire in men’s dominating cultures.

Sometimes women, being guided by passionate reasons, also manipulated men as objects. Passionate lovers often care little about satisfaction of a partner in the relationships, except in cases when their performance and corresponding partner's satisfaction boost their self-esteem. "Was everything good, my darling?"—"Yes, my dear it was great!"

Different from passionate love, the romantic love is based on mutual respect and elevation of a partner's position. The partner is not merely an object of desire, but a person, who deserves the respect and attention to his/her mind and soul. A romantic lover cares about partner's personality, well-being, and real satisfaction. Agape and altruistic attitudes, in addition to Eros, are the driving forces of a romantic lover. Wanting to respect and admire their beloved one, a romantic lover elevates a partner through idealization. Such respect and admiration boosts self-esteem of a partner and brings him/her a happy satisfaction along with feeling of self-worth. Additionally, this idealization encourages a partner to be a better person than he/she currently is. Thus, the idealized image of how a romantic lover perceives a partner provides the latter a stimulus and the target for his/her self-development and self-improvement. Therefore, romantic love inspires a partner and provides him/her a self-developmental strategic perspective. Instead of the humanistic thesis "accept yourself as you are," romantic love encourages a partner to develop him/herself and provide aspiration. As Russian writer Mikhail Prishvin (1873–1954) noted,

The person you love in me, is, of course, better than me. But if you love me, I'll try to be better than I am (Prishvin n.d.).

## Chapter 2

# Cultural and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Romantic Love

### 2.1 Is Romantic Love Universal Across People, Societies, and Cultures?

Some researchers (following Stone 1977) suggested that courtly love was a precursor of romantic love and the concept of romantic love itself, as the bunch of idealistic emotions originated relatively recently in the upper class with the growth of modern industrial civilization and the Romantic Movement of early modern Europe. Other scholars identified its presence in the various folk notions, religious and social ideas of antiquity, wide class, and geographical distribution (MacFarlane 1987). Many maintained that love had multiple, complex, and competing descriptors throughout history. What happened in the modern era was a shift in connotations of love (Gillis 1988).

Western societies in the recent two centuries have been preoccupied with romantic love as the idealization of love. The character of a French novel or hero of an American movie has been always a romantic lover. What about other societies? As we will see in this book, some scholars viewed romantic love as a Western invention and considered the idealization of love as a peculiarly Western phenomenon. In particular, Goode commented (1959) that the implicit understanding (among anthropologists) is that love as a pattern is found only in the USA and in the societies whose cultures derived from the Western European tradition, and romantic love is a relatively recent and localized cultural notion.

Until recently, the ethnographic records and data available on love were scattered, incidental, and patchy in quality and content. Earlier studies maintained the Western ethnocentric bias and claimed that romantic love was a European contribution to the world cultures. In particular, Stone (1989) suggested that romantic love does not exist in non-Western countries, except possibly for the elite of those countries who have the time to cultivate romantic love. Some scholars contended (Doi 1973; Hsu 1985) that romantic love is almost unknown in some cultures such as China and Japan.

On the other side, poets, philosophers, and some social scientists proposed that romantic love is a human universal or a universal human potential manifested minimally in all societies. In the historical review presented in previous chapters, this controversy was comprehensively discussed. Many anthropologists found evidence of the occurrences of romantic love—or at least passionate love—in many cultures. Passionate love is an emotion experienced by many people in the world's cultures (Fischer et al. 1990; Shaver et al. 1996). Evolutionary psychologists contend that passionate love is innate in human nature and is based on biological processes that are universal, applying to people of all cultures. In particular, Fisher (1992) analyzed the occurrence of love (as well as monogamy, adultery, and divorce) in various cultures from a natural history perspective. She related being in love with infatuation and defined the notion of love as being “awash in ecstasy or apprehension... obsessed, longing for the next encounter... etherized by bliss” (1992, p. 37). She contended that “above all, there was the feeling of helplessness, the sense that this passion was irrational, involuntary, unplanned, uncontrollable” (1992, p. 40). Obstacles to the relationship seem to make the passion more intense. She concluded that this feeling must be universal among humans.

Many scholars over the recent decades attempted to answer the question about universality of romantic love providing various arguments in support. However, the question is too general to get a comprehensive response. Romantic love may exist as a literary phenomenon, an anthropological fact, psychological emotion, or sociological prevalence. Therefore, we have to answer this research question in reference to these specific areas of human reality. The following chapters should present a plethora of diverse evidence from these realms. As we will see, romantic love has existed throughout history in many cultures. It was present in the literature and life of ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, ancient Persia, feudal Japan, and other cultures. However, only in the recent couple of centuries in modern Western societies and some other cultures, romantic love became a mass phenomenon.

Another difficulty in answering the question about universality of romantic love was the lack of a comprehensive commonly accepted definition of romantic love. So an important advancement by Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) was when they employed a clear operational definition of romantic love in their study in terms of the key aspects of romantic love (idealization, desire, commitment): “any intense attraction that involves the idealization of the other, within an erotic context, with the expectation of enduring for some time into the future” (p. 52). The definition was somewhat limited. A more comprehensive synthesis of romantic love features was offered by Harris (1995), based on earlier academic descriptors: (1) desire for union or merger (physical and emotional), (2) idealization of the beloved, (3) exclusivity of the beloved, (4) intrusive thinking about the beloved, (5) emotional dependency, (6) powerful empathy for the beloved, and (7) reordering of motivational and life priorities.

I believe that the features of romantic love presented in the chapter above will help to further extend the descriptive definition of romantic love. These will guide us and help to purposefully search the presence or absence of symptoms of

romantic love in historical and modern cultures that are reviewed in the following chapters. However, we should note that there is no universal or uniformed definition of romantic love applicable to all people. As it is presented in the following chapters, the notion of love was in flux over the history of human cultures. The concept of love is a personal construct, a social category, and cultural idea that people create in their minds, souls, emotions, and behavior. There is no one particular concept of love that can be applicable to all people (Beall and Sternberg 1995; Berscheid and Meyers 1996). In particular, Rubin (1988, p. viii) suggested that the meaning of the concept varies subjectively with people and asks rhetorically whether it is “an attitude, an emotion, a set of behaviors... an individual orientation or a dyadic bond?” From this social constructivist view, Sternberg (1998) thought about love as a very personal form of social construction, as a story that an individual creates by living it.

The following chapters intend to demonstrate that the experience of love is largely subject to the historical and cultural context in which it operates. Romantic love is a social and cultural construct; it is a product of literary imaginations, scholarly connotations, and people’s dreams and associations, yet sometimes it is a matter of real relationships. There might be multiple connotations of the concept of love with other emotions, cognitions, and behaviors. The word love quite often is used as a synonym of sex—“to make love,” for instance. Quite often scholars and lay people talk about love actually meaning passionate love. However, passionate attitudes and behaviors have varied dramatically from one culture to another or from one temporal period to the next. Hatfield and Rapson (1987) suggested that passionate love is “universal,” and not the “inventions of the twentieth century,” probably because the “predisposition... is ‘prewired’ into primates.” The genetic basis, however, does not deny “the power of cultural, demographic, economic, social, and historical factors in... shaping the manifold ways in which that emotion is expressed, repressed, and suppressed” (p. 135).

There are several points in debates about romantic love in cultural contexts.

1. The traditional central point of the discussions over the universality of romantic love admits two positions: whether romantic love is a uniquely European cultural idea that has been transferred to other parts of the world by colonization, or it is the natural stage of cultural evolution of indigenous societies.
2. We should distinguish between cultural universals—those that can be found in all cultures—and human universals, which characterize all humans. Romantic love may be rather an absolute cultural universal (that exists in all cultures), but not necessarily in every social group and individual. Therefore, in cultural analyses we also should distinguish between absolute universals (that admit no exceptions) and statistical universals (that admit exceptions and present typical patterns of feelings and behaviors). Romantic love may be a statistical human universal and present in certain social groups of societies and in certain pattern of emotions and behaviors. We cannot draw the conclusion that every person falls in love in those cultures.

3. There can be two different approaches to the concept of romantic love: categorical and dimensional. From the categorical standpoint, the question is whether romantic love is present or absent in various cultures. Many scholars followed this approach and strived to demonstrate in their studies, presented in the following chapters, that the notion of romantic love is an indigenous idea, which was present before Western colonization or other types of external influence. The others still argue that the concept of romantic love has been alien in many cultures for quite a long time. The dimensional approach admits romantic love as a multidimensional concept, so in some cultures one or several dimensions might be present, while in other cultures, French and American cultures among those, we can observe the dense accumulation of all these dimensions. In this book, I follow the dimensional approach and the next chapters examine love in historical and modern cultural contexts in attempt to identify the presence or absence of these dimensions in various cultures.
4. Another point necessary to be distinguished in these debates of universality of love is what realities constitute the presence or absence of romantic love: (1) in literary circles as innovations or traditions, (2) in the minds and dreams of a cultural elite, (3) in the real feelings of people still not being able to express it in behavior, (4) in the real behaviors of people, but still being marginal for society, or (5) in social circles and groups of people. The elite of the societies, middle class, and commoners might have different opinions and behaviors due to the complexity of their mind and social context in which they have been lived.

Cultures and people from different cultural groups may hold their own understanding of love and define it in terms of a combination of various aspects and dimensions. The rich texture and subtle nuances of love need to be understood within a cultural context (Dion and Dion 1996). Cultures in different historical periods have defined love fairly differently. For example, the connections between love, sex, and marriage were interpreted variously. Being separate realms of relationships earlier in history, they became later intertwined with each other.

In eleventh–twelfth centuries in Europe, sexual passion, being embellished by idealized imagination, invented and constructed a concept of courtly love, the version of passionate romantic love outside of marriage. It was entertained by the elite of some European countries for several centuries.

Only later in eighteenth–nineteenth centuries romantic love began being considered as a foundation for marriage relationships. Historians (Stone 1977; McFarlane 1987, and others) described the transformation of the conception of love in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the *sentimental revolution* of the modern age. Associated changes in affective life began in the last third of the eighteenth century and were due to positive changes in material life of people, the development of the market economy, and corresponding growing individualism of Western society. Increasing geographical mobility and urbanization extended the opportunities and possibilities for mating and meeting a more diverse pool of potential partners. People of a new capitalistic class developed novel cultural

lifestyles, manners, and practices. In the nineteenth century, the middle class and various professionals—doctors, lawyers, professors, scientists, writers, journalists—who were interested in cultural activities, reading, theater, and art, substantially grew. Emerging in literature, the romantic emotions captured their thinking minds. Science and education made the cultural elite of some societies more open-minded and receptive to new ideas in mental life and sentiments. Love received a higher value and became associated with relationship happiness.

Over the eighteenth–twentieth centuries romantic love changed the forms of its expressions due to socioeconomic development and cultural contexts. While in the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries, music, dance, poetry, books, personal sentiments in beautiful writing or saying, tokens of appreciation, small gifts, and flowers were the sentimental expressions of romantic love, the twentieth century brought the elements of consumerism in making things romantic. Love as it was depicted in Hollywood films was associated with a dinner in a restaurant, a honeymoon travel, expensive gifts, jewelry, and a luxurious bouquet of flowers.

I pursue to demonstrate in the following chapters that different societies and cultures have had their typical or popular understandings of the love that have been useful for people communicating within their societies. Although it looks like there have been some typical notions about love across cultures, the set of associations, interpretations, connotations, and emphases on certain concepts differ greatly across time and space. People construct their concept of love during their socialization in childhood, youth, and later, using culture as a guide in their way of thinking and feeling. Assimilation of love ideas and norms can occur explicitly, in talking about the topic with parents, peers, and teachers, or implicitly, through accidental observations that form common sense. Once the basic schema of love is shaped, people use it like a frame to interpret events, behaviors, and expressions.

Scholars and ordinary people in Western cultures often assume that their notion of “love,” romantic love, must be the best, and any other kinds of love between partners are cold and trivial by comparison. It is important, however, to admit honestly that this Western approach to romantic love is not always working well, and other cultures can provide alternative visions that are no less valuable. People are actively engaged in forming the culture of love in a society, deciding what is right and wrong, what is acceptable and what is not, and what is moral and immoral. Cultures are different in how they view various experiences and expressions of love and which they consider acceptable, or maybe ideal. Cultures may also consider certain kinds of feelings, which people have toward each other as respectable. For example, in a repressive culture, like in Medieval Christian culture, passionate sexual feelings may be understood as natural but considered as evil. On the other hand, in a permissive culture, like in ancient Rome, passionate sexual feelings may be valued and encouraged. Various examples of cultural influences on the conception of love across times and parts of the world will be reviewed in the following chapters.

While considering the presence of romantic love in various cultures around the world, in history or in the modern world, we should critically evaluate and address certain questions. How does a researcher determine the concept of romantic love

and whether it is genuine? If a researcher assures that romantic love has existed in a non-Western cultural setting, how can we be sure that these examples are endogenous and not due to diffusion from the West? What is the relationship between the experience of romantic love and the cultural environment that either nourishes or inhibits its expression? Is romantic love possible in a cultural context lacking a concept for it? Where romantic love is a phenomenon of adulthood, what do we make of those who lack the experience? Romantic love may be a cultural universal in terms of its existence as an idea or a possible reality in many societies, but it is not necessarily present in every individual and social group. Cultural context can predispose to love, but a complex of biological, psychological, and environmental factors still play their important role.

Men and women experience love in the cultural context of broader patterns that include emotional norms of expression, styles of courtship, and types of marriage as well as class, gender, ethnic, and religious factors (Stearns and Stearns 1985, p. 825). The mainstream culture of romantic love in the countries may exclude or incorporate differences in class, geographical regions, ethnic origins, and educational and religious background. Therefore, it is important to recognize the limitations in any applications of our knowledge about culture of romantic love to a general population of a country. That can be quite diverse, so researchers should exercise and entertain caution when they extrapolate their results obtained from a limited sample to an entire population. This is important for psychology and sociology when they collect data from hundreds of participants, and even more important for anthropology when they collect data from one hundred or fewer informants, or for literary studies when they sample from a limited number of writings. The studies in these disciplines aim to solve different tasks—prevalence, incidence, or presence of romantic love notion in people's minds and culture. For example, Seidman (1991) took particular care to limit his discussion of romantic love to non-immigrant white middle-class Americans in the northeastern USA.

Research interest in sexual rituals and marital mores has been traditional among anthropologists. Yet, over recent decades they became increasingly more involved in theoretical reviews and observations of the notion of love. Since the 1980s, anthropologists have taken up the topic of romantic love, focusing primarily on passionate love and its biological, cognitive, and social parameters (De Munck 1996).

In light of the body of knowledge recently acquired, the statement that love is a recent European invention with no historical tradition outside of the West is incorrect. Anthropologists working in non-Western societies around the world have demonstrated “long traditions of romantic love” (Smith 2001, p. 130), which are found and valued in many societies through stories, songs, poetry, films. Further in the book, I will review a plethora of evidence in support.

The growing literature has disproved the early scholarly opinion that romantic love is alien in non-Euro-American contexts. Anthropologists have explored the folk conceptions of love in diverse cultures such as the People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Turkey, Nigeria, Trinidad, Morocco, the Fulbe of North

Cameroon, the Mangrove (an aboriginal Australian community), the Mangaia in the Cook Islands, Palau in Micronesia, and the Taita of Kenya (see Jankowiak 1995a, for a review of this research). In all these studies, people's conceptions of passionate love appear to be surprisingly similar. Therefore, many anthropologists and evolutionary psychologists believe that passionate love and sexual desire are cultural universals.

Jankowiak and Fischer (1992), in their cross-cultural study of romantic love in 166 societies, discovered that romantic love is a "near-universal" feature of the societies, which they studied. In that study, they defined romantic love as "an intense attraction that involves the idealization of the other, within an erotic context, with the expectation of enduring for some time into the future" (1992, p. 150). They distinguished romantic love from the companionship phase of love (sometimes referred to as attachment). The latter is characterized by a more peaceful, comfortable, and fulfilling relationship accompanied by a strong and enduring affection built upon long-term association (p. 150). They examined such indicators of love as follows: (1) young lovers talking about passionate love, (2) recounting tales of love, (3) singing love songs, and (4) speaking of the longings and anguish of infatuation. The researchers found romantic love being present in 147 out of 166 cultures (88.5 %). For the remaining 19 cultures, there were no evident signs indicating that people experience romantic love. The results showed that romantic love is nearly universal in the world.

Literary studies have also demonstrated the evidence of universality of the notions of romantic love in the literature in many cultural contexts. In particular, Hogan (2003) reviewed many narratives and stories of world literature about human emotion and concluded that "romantic union" may be a universal generic prototype.

Gottschall and Nordlund (2006) replicated the findings of Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) in a different cultural medium, through a systematic content analysis of the seventy-nine folktale collections drawn from all inhabited continents, from different historical periods and from societies vastly differing in ecology, geography, ethnic composition, religious beliefs, and degree of political organization. These were the collections of traditional tales, originally transmitted through the oral tradition. All non-English tales were translated into English. Collections were grouped into 7 major cultural areas and 11 subgroupings, based on salient geographical, linguistic, and cultural affinities and was guided by anthropological convention. A list of the words that are regularly associated with romantic love, generated from a thesaurus used as key words in content analysis. There were fifty-nine keywords (love, longing, romantic, dear, beloved, married, adore, affection, and so on) and their relevant variants (e.g., love, loved, lover, loving). Gottschall and Nordlund (2006) were able to identify the attributes of romantic love in diverse varieties of cultures. The process of "falling in love" was distinctively depicted in tales from cultural regions of West Africa, Japan, North and South America, the Middle East, Polynesia, China, and Europe. The instances of intrusive thinking were present in the cultures of Hawaii (where a young woman

professes to love the King so much that she thinks of him day and night and even in her dreams, and another woman weeps bitterly because the thought of her absent lover never leaves her); Punjab in northern India (where an enamored youth cannot eat or sleep for love of a beautiful princess); and the Western Yugur steppe of China (where a boy suffers from “lovesickness” and is eventually cured). Whenever lovers were separated for long time, intrusive thinking was accompanied by pain or even despair. The emotional dependence took a great intensity in a Maori tale of creation where the Sun weeps so hard over his separation from his mistress Earth that his tears eventually turn into oceans. In many stories, the researchers found examples of emotional commitment, empathy, and exclusivity that were very strong. Lovers often were prepared to sacrifice their own lives for their loved ones (as in a Japanese tale) or continue their relationship beyond death (as in a tale from the Heiltsuk Nation of British Columbia, where two lovers swear that the one who dies first will return to bring the other to the kingdom of the dead) (Gottschall and Nordlund 2006).

Despite universality of the concept, cultural attitudes toward romantic love are highly diverse, with some cultures simply rejecting romantic love “as an evil and frighteningly emotional experience. In others it is tolerated but not celebrated or asserted, and, in still others, romantic passion is praised as an important and cherished cultural ideal” (Jankowiak 1995, p. 17).

Depending on these societal attitudes, romantic love can be controlled by some cultural variables, including social organization and ideology, and therefore, people may be more or less predisposed to love experiences, feelings, and expressions (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992). For instance, they may fall in love less often when their society disapproves of the romantic love. There might be gender, social, and individual differences in this regard. People from the upper-level classes read more literature and therefore might be more affected by the romantic love ideas expressed in fictional literature, novels, and visual and plastic art. They tend to idealize the social world and sentimentalize with others, and they have more free time than those from lower-level class to cultivate romantic relationships.

There is definite evidence that society and culture have a profound impact on people’s definitions of romantic love and on the way they think, feel, and behave in romantic settings (Hatfield et al. 2007). In my opinion, culture is what transforms passionate love into romantic love. Passion is universal and based on biological principles of sexual selection, while romance is culture-specific and based on historical and cultural traditions. Universal features of passionate love primarily relate to evolutionary bases of mate selection important for people’s survival, while romantic love is a luxury, which some cultures create, elaborate, and embellish.

The following chapters will review how the notion of love is represented and interpreted in various historical and modern cultural traditions of the world.

## 2.2 Cultural and Individual Preferences in Expressions of Romantic Love

There are three major psychological aspects of love: *emotional, cognitive, and behavioral*. Love is an emotion, which affects and is affected by cognitive processes and manifests in certain behaviors. There are multiple ways to express romantic love besides saying “I love you,” even in an embellished way.

Do love feelings always coincide with love enthusiastic expression? Does a passionate and energetic Latin lover love more intensely than a quiet and reserved Nordic lover, or do they just express their emotions differently? People express their love explicitly as well as implicitly. Passionate words, kind tones of voice, smiley facial expressions, and special gestures are explicit and direct ways of love expressions to a romantic partner. American culture, for example, stresses the importance of verbal expression of love to another, so Americans many times say to each other how they love. “I love you”—these are the very typical words for them which they use on daily basis.

Sometimes, however, people do not have to be straight in their expressions because some things can be implicitly interpreted and understood without words. Actions and doing something good to a partner are implicit and indirect ways of love expression. In Filipino and Filipino-American families, for example, the verbal expression of love is much more reserved for special occasions. They do not need to explicitly share their feelings for each other because it is known and understood. Perhaps Filipinos and Filipino-Americans do not find it essential to express love in overt ways because it can be construed as excessive, showy, or too American (Nadal 2012). Instead they show their *Mahal* (Tagalog word for love) in indirect ways. They express their love indirectly, through doing. Romantic partners may reveal their love by sharing a laugh or listening to each other’s problems in nonjudgmental ways or by working through hardships and keeping their promises to remain by each other’s sides. Then for Filipino, Filipino-American, Chinese families (Nadal 2012; Moore and Wei 2012), and other families with similar cultural values, love is rather in actions. Sometimes one might have to look more closely to notice it. Their love is not minimal or invisible, but instead, the love is omnipresent and understood, and there is no need to flaunt it.

Within these two major approaches—explicit and implicit—there is a variety of ways to express romantic love feelings. These might be flowers or other gifts, writing letters or other special types of messaging, special looks and words, special gestures and affectionate touching, hugging and cuddling, or a suggestion to spend quality time together (a special date coming together to a movie, to a restaurant, or to a dancing party). These might be various acts of service and help or being considerate and listening attentively. Some romantic lovers can be even more inventive. The typical connotations of the word *romantic* are that it is something non-routine and not pragmatic, but beautiful like in fairy tales, novels, movies, and songs. People borrow the forms of romantic love expressions from all these sources.

For examples, Chapman in his popular press book (1992/2015) outlined five ways how to express and experience love that he called “love languages”: words of affirmation (encouraging messages), quality time (time spent engaged in shared activities), gifts (tokens of affection), acts of service (help with necessary tasks), and physical touch (hand holding to sexual intercourse). According to Chapman, each person has primary and secondary love languages. People tend to show love to their partners using their own preferred love language, but partners who enjoy higher quality relationships tend to express love according to their partners’ preferred love languages. Despite the popularity of this theory in public, there had been a lack of research done to test the credibility of Chapman’s theory until Egbert and Polk (2006) developed a new measure derived from Chapman’s typology and then tested its construct validity by comparing it to established empirical measures of related constructs.

In the following chapters, we will present diverse ways of how men and women in various historical periods and cultures have expressed their love. The experiences and expressions of love naturally varied depending on a situation: (1) first encounter, (2) meeting again, (3) unrequited love, (4) risk of losing the beloved one, or (5) the beloved one will never return. These feelings can be joy and elation, jealousy, nostalgia, etc.

### **2.3 Romantic Love and Culture**

Culture can be broadly defined as a stable and dynamic set of norms, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes shared by a group of people. Culture can be conceptualized as part of the person (internal culture) and as a set of conditions outside of the person (external culture) (Berry et al. 2011). The terms of French culture or Chinese culture refer to the ways how people make a living, the organization of society, and other aspects of the ecological and social context. This is external culture that is shared by a group of people and transmitted across generations. Internal culture refers to the ideas, philosophies, and beliefs of the members of a culture. Knowledge, language, religion, and beliefs of a person’s social environment become internalized. The features of one’s culture become part of oneself in the processes of socialization and enculturation (Berry et al. 2011). This approach to the study of a culture explores the behavior patterns typical for people in a particular culture in terms of prevailing external conditions. As Schmid (2010) argued, love should be recognized and interpreted in the context of its comprehensive culture and society. The notion and sense of love developed and cultivated by the people can only be understood in connection with the social and cultural environment.

In addition, another approach complements the study of cultures. It assumes that a culture is the shared meanings that are constructed by its members in the course of their interactions. The focus of these studies is the cognitions, emotions, and experiences. For the benefits of the study of romantic love, it is worthwhile to study both external and internal aspects of culture.

Culture is a dynamic social system; some of the mores, ideas, and beliefs held by members in a culture can change over time, but usually remain stable for a while. Nevertheless, over the big historical periods a culture may undergo a substantial change; multiple economic, political, and intercultural influences can have a profound effect on such transformations. Although it is difficult to define when quantitative and qualitative societal modifications transform the essence of a culture into another type, I believe people living on the same territory in different historical times may hardly be named as the same culture. Modern Greece is probably a substantially different culture than ancient Greece; ancient Rome is not a culture of modern Italy; and nowadays, France cannot be considered as a culture of courtly love. In this book, I consider societies and people living on the same territory in different historical periods as different cultures.

Cultures and cultural groups are usually linked to ethnicity, race, religion, country, nation, nationality, and geographical location. In combination with these links, the cultures can be mapped in a hierarchical or topological layout. The names and notations of the cultures can be on the global geographical level (*Western, Eastern, Slavic, or Latin American*), on the religious level (*Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, or Secular*), on the country level (*Japanese, American, French, or German*), or further on regional, national, and local ethnic levels. The relations between cultures are neither dichotomous nor mutually exclusive and can overlap with each other. The cultures are structured in a topological morphological manner in multilayer and spatial relationships with various combinations of the above mentioned criteria. *Catholic Latin American* and *Polish Catholic* cultures (still *Slavic* in origin) are complex combinations of different criteria for classification of cultures. So, many cultures are actually very complex and representative of a mixture of various cultures.

A typical mistake, which some research admits, is to associate a culture with a country. How to distinguish culture from nation or country? Nations are not natural, timeless entities but historically contingent political, social, and cultural communities, whereas cultures are loosely tied to national territories; they rather represent complex geographical, political, religious, ethnic, and cultural formations. The terms *nation* or *country* are geopolitical and mean a nation-state, e.g., Germany, Austria, or Switzerland, yet, Germany, Austria, and German-speaking Switzerland have many shared cultural elements that comprise their common culture. On the other hand, Switzerland has at least three distinct cultural or ethnic groups, which can be considered cultures: German, French, and Italian. What culture do people living in borderland and transnational worlds have? How do new cultural meanings and identities take shape in such circumstances? How do intimate dynamics of everyday cultural crossings work?

In many studies, cultures are titled by simply using the name of the country or nationality and their results are extrapolated to the whole nation. Such extrapolation should be done cautiously because it may be sometimes inadequate, especially in the cases of big multicultural countries, such as the USA, Russia, India, China, and Brazil. Another confound variable is nationality. Should we consider Chinese living for a long time in the USA as Chinese or Americans by culture?

The concept of mixed culture describes such a cultural phenomenon when a person has a cultural heritage different from the culture in which they were raised or in which they currently live. In this mixture, the characteristics from either culture remain distinct and still coexist. For example, a person might be Asian American in the USA, but Asian American in Korea; another person might be considered a Jew Russian in Russia, while a Russian Jew in Israel.

Different cultural groups have their own set of prescriptions for behavior, beliefs, and attitudes that can be explicit or implicit; people can learn them by observation and pass them on by word of mouth, or they can write them down as laws or rules for the group to follow.

According to Markus and Conner (2013), culture is made up of four components:

- Ideas, e.g., what is good, right, and natural;
- Institutions, e.g., government, media, science, and education;
- Social interactions, e.g., family, home, and school;
- Individuals, e.g., thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

Culture is located in patterns of ideas, practices, institutions, products, and artifacts. In this culture cycle, the individuals—their thinking, feeling, and behaviors—are shaped by the interaction with others, by social institutions, and by commonly shared ideas. Conversely, their actions and behaviors shape the other three aspects of their cultural world.

Romantic love can exist in any or in all of these four spheres, and it circulates in this circle the same way. It comes as a special feeling, exclusive thinking, and devoted behavior of an individual toward another; lovers interact with each other. This kind of relationship serves as a role model to others, as well as inspiration to writers and artists. Consequently, the idea of romantic love transfers from an individual level to the sphere of ideas. When this idea of valorizing romantic love spreads wide in the minds of legislators, it can be confirmed by a legislation institution, for example, as a right for free choice in marriage based on love. The culture cycle presented above may serve as an excellent basis for an interdisciplinary approach to romantic love.

The emphasis in the study of love in cultural contexts should be on studying how people's feelings, cognitions, and behaviors may be implicitly and explicitly shaped by the worlds, contexts, or sociocultural systems in which people live. In the following chapters, we will observe how romantic love circulated in the historical and modern cultures among the four constituents: *Ideas*, *Institutions*, *Social interactions*, and *Individuals*.

In the study of love, it is important to know whether romantic love is a norm or deviation from the norm in a given society and culture. Norms are social patterns that govern behavior; they are conceptualized as context-specific regulators of behavior and therefore may help to understand how cultural patterns vary across situations and contexts both for individuals and groups.

Morris et al. (2015) distinguish different types of norms. Norms exist in the objective social environment in the form of behavioral regularities, patterns of sanctioning, and institutionalized practices and rules. In addition to the objective

aspects of group regularities, sanctioning, and institutionalization, norms exist in subjective assumptions, perceptions, and expectations. Subjectively they exist in perceived descriptive norms, perceived injunctive norms, and personal norms. The *perceived descriptive norms* act as interpretive frames that shape what people see in a situation and how they perceive their society's norms. The *perceived injunctive norms* represent the patterns that evoke social approval or disapproval. Another way norms exist subjectively is as self-expectations or *personal norms* (Morris et al. 2015). Acceptance of romantic love in various societies may exist in the forms of one of these norms.

Romantic love may be considered in various realities and in different normative fields of societies. It may be considered as a reality of dreams that novelists, poets, musicians, and artists present in their creative work. They may not be present in the minds of the majority of people, but they already exist as ideas worthwhile to spread. The analyses of literature, art, and music are important in this regard. Besides, romantic love may be considered as a reality of life where nobles or intellectuals live, or at least some of them. For commoners, these romantic ideals might be still alien. But over time these ideals can capture the mind of more and more people. According to anthropologists, the problem with verifying romantic love's presence anywhere lies not with population sample size but with the quality of data and the criteria of judgment. Yet, in sociology and psychology generalization to the whole culture or country should be made with caution. We should always admit the limited capacity of the sample to be representative.

The ideas of romantic love can evolve in three stages as follows: (1) fictional ideas, (2) real feelings, or (3) behaviors. In the first case, romantic ideas exist in the pieces of art, music, and writing—in the mind of their creators. They may be acknowledged by other people as a fantastic dream, or other reality of life, but not accepted as their own feelings toward their real partners. In the second case, people may try to feel this way toward their partners, even though their reality may not allow them to express and behavior in the corresponding terms. They may feel romantically, but act pragmatically. In the third case, people express their feelings in their behaviors and are capable to act romantically.

As we will see in the following chapters, several cultural factors may affect the status and understanding of romantic love in cultural contexts.

## 2.4 Interdisciplinary Approach to the Study of Love

Scholars from several disciplines study romantic love from different, yet overlapping perspectives and complement each other in their cultural and cross-cultural investigations. Philosophy, literary studies, history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and communication studies, each contribute their valuable knowledge and methods and can be integrated into interdisciplinary approach.

What are the areas of specialization of various disciplines in the study of romantic love and how can they contribute to the whole picture of what love is?

Philosophers over the centuries observed and contemplated about love. The nature of love has always been a mainstay in philosophy. Philosophical schools suggested theories such as the materialistic conception of love as purely a physical phenomenon (an animalistic or genetic urge that dictates our behavior) or theories of love as an intensely spiritual affair that in its highest form permits us to touch divinity (Moseley n.d.). The philosophical treatment of love transcends a variety of subdisciplines including epistemology, metaphysics, religion, human nature, politics, and ethics.

Philosophy strives to contemplate the host of abstract issues about the nature of love, the functions that it serves in the society, and the ethical and political issues. Philosophers ground their inferences on analyses of arguments, logics, and the thoughts of ancient philosophers and historians. The reasoning and generalization of facts obtained from researchers in other disciplines, and sophisticated interpretations substantially advanced philosophy of love (e.g., Singer 1984a, b, 1987; Solomon 1988; Secomb 2007; Naar 2013; White 2001).

History of love substantially contributed to our understanding of romantic love (e.g., Abbott 2010; Coontz 2005; Hunt 1959; Lee 2007; Licht 1972; Manniche 1987; Murstein 1974). Historians investigate the love “fossils” remaining from former generations of humankind and cultures. Different historical periods and ages really can be considered as different cultures, even on the same territory. Every culture gradually changes over time and transforms into another, qualitatively and distinctively different one. The modern Italian culture is probably substantially different than that of ancient Romans. The modern Greeks culturally are not the same as their earlier ancestors from Ancient Greece with their mentality and devotion to Gods, even though they can find something in common. Culture is a dynamic system; the sociocultural ideas, practices, institutions, economics, and ecological factors are constantly changing over time. With these quantitative modifications, a culture may be considered as the same culture for quite a long period of historical time. However, such quantitative modifications gradually transform the culture into a qualitatively different one in some regards. So, the cultures of medieval England, of the Victorian era, and of modern England can be considered as qualitatively different ones. This is how we treat the concept of culture and cultural contexts in the following chapters.

In an attempt to reveal how older cultures understood, experienced, and practiced love, historians study old literary and art sources as well as everything that is conserved underground. Quite often they have little left to reconstruct the past validly, so they rely substantially on interpretations of what they found. So, the history provides very important sources of knowledge, but we cannot rely enough on the works of historical science of love. Some pieces of information are still missing.

Literary studies contribute to the love studies exploring people’s minds and dreams in the forms presented in novels, poems, and other writings (e.g., Ashton 2010; Allen 1992; Hardin 2000; Eifring 2004; Kaler and Johnson-Kurek 1999; Selinger 1998; Suzuki 2010; Zaerr 2012). Artists do the same in their paintings and sculptures, while musicians do so in songs and other musical forms. These types of creative works on the one hand reflect what people typically think, feel,

and how they behave. On the other hand, they depict imagination and construct what people wish and dream about. The realities of life and relationships are quite often different—more beautiful, embellished, valorized—than it is depicted in novels, poems, and romances. This is actually the source of the word *romantic*, which means “characterized by or suggestive of an idealized view of reality” (Romantic 2016a).

The literature reflects only part of the truth—the ideas which are in the minds of a minority or majority of the population in a certain culture. What is more important in this context is that these ideas exist, at least in the people’s ideals and imagination. The language, words, and phrases, which the authors employ in their writings, also reflect the different interpretations that people apply to their feelings and thoughts reality. However, according to the four constituents of culture cycle presented above (Markus and Conner 2013), the dreams, ideas, and ideals come to the real behavior of people, sooner or later, depending on a cultural context. So, novels, poems, and songs bring us the knowledge about an important part of reality of love.

Cultural anthropology contributes to the study of love investigating and presenting in a descriptive way the life of people in various cultures—their norms, traditions, customs, and rituals. Anthropologists observe people’s lives and relationships, interview informants in a given culture, and present a unique case study of love manifestations (e.g., Abu-Lughod 2000; Danielsson 1986; De Munck 1996; Endleman 1989; Fisher 1992; Lindholm 2006; Hirsch and Wardlow 2006; Jankowiak 1995, 2008; Smith 2001; Trawick 1990). In a single case study, an anthropologist cannot validate the prevalence of romantic love in the whole culture, yet presents a vivid example of its existence and presence in a culture. The series of anthropological studies should accumulate a more comprehensive picture of a culture and phenomena of romantic love.

Sociology strives to draw a large, general, and more representative map of love in the culture(s) based on a variety of sources of information, including various statistics available, surveys, interviews. Sociologists study attitudes that people have about love and the prevalence of romantic ideas (e.g., Goode 1959; Rougemont 1974; Fowler 2007; Illouz 2012), providing something that resembles the “epidemiology of love.” For instance, Illouz (2012) argues that the romantic experience is affected by transformation in the ecology and architecture of romantic choice: the samples from which men and women choose a partner, the importance of choice and autonomy, and what people imagine to be the spectrum of their choices. She believes that love is shaped by social relations and institutions and that it circulates in a marketplace of unequal actors.

Psychologists investigate mental reality within the individuals and reveal the internal picture of love: the feelings, thoughts, and how they affect behavior in love relationships. They also study the love attitudes, but go deeper into the mechanisms and processes. Researchers and practitioners in psychology have proposed several theories of love and use observations, surveys, and experiments to collect empirical evidence in their support (e.g., Bercheid 1985, 2010; Berscheid and Walster 1969/1978, 1974; Hatfield 1988; Hatfield and Rapson 1993; Liebowitz 1983; Sternberg 1998; Tennov 1979).

In recent decades, neurophysiology, psychophysiology, neuropsychology, and clinical and behavioral research have revealed the role of biology in passionate love (Hatfield and Rapson 2009). The studies of biochemistry, hormones, and neuroimaging are especially on the rise.

Evolutionary psychologists contend that passionate love is innate in human nature and is based on biological processes that are universal, applying to people of all cultures (Fisher 1992, 2004). According to evolutionary psychology, the cultural universals exist in what qualities in a mate attract men and women. Men tended to care more about the physical appearance and youth of their partners than did women; women tended to be more interested that their mates possess high status and the resources necessary to protect themselves and their children than did men (Buss 1990, 1994, 1996). In another study, Buss and Schmitt (1993) showed that tendencies of men to be more random and women's tendencies to be more selective have been observed to be universal across human societies. Besides these cultural and gender universals, Buss (1994) found a big influence of culture on mate preferences. Additional analyses of overall data allowed Wallen (1989) to conclude that, in general, the cultural perspective may well be even more powerful than evolutionary heritage in understanding mate selection.

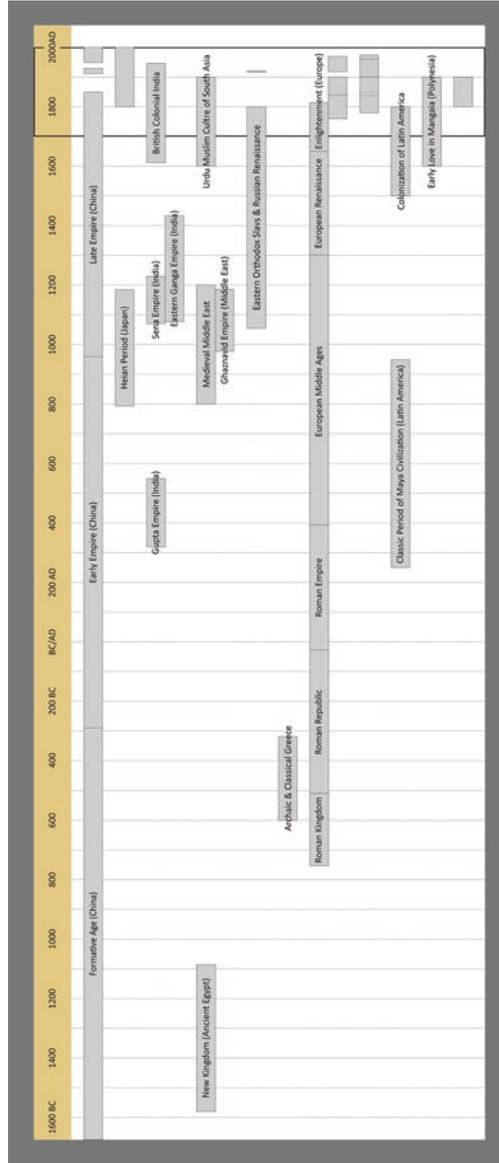
Does culture still matter? Biology and culture interact generating a complex nature of love. Passion is universal and based on biological principles of sexual selection, while romance is culturally specific and based on historical and cultural traditions.

All these disciplines described above study different, sometimes overlapping, areas of love feelings, processes, mechanisms, manifestations, prevalence, etc., and they are important to complement each other bringing a comprehensive picture of what romantic love is. Some of them—anthropology, history, literature—employ more qualitative methods, while others—psychology, sociology—more quantitative methods. Literature, art, and music explore the possibilities of romantic love and create their ideal images. They answer the question: Is romantic love possible? Anthropology, psychology, and communication science explore the realities of people's feelings and behaviors. They answer the question: Can people live according to romantic feelings and behave romantically? Sociology explores the incidence and prevalence of romantic love in certain societies, and they investigate statistics. How many romantic lovers live in different societies and cultures?

Quantitative and qualitative methods can complement each other in the study of romantic love. The quantitative methods allow reducing the bias of sample selection and present relatively representative cultural samples. On the other hand, the qualitative methods permit to pursue the research aims that cannot be represented in numbers. There are research questions that resist rigorous scientific methodology, whereas other questions can be tested with precise formulations.

In the following chapters, we will see how philosophy, history, literary studies, and anthropology contributed to the study of romantic love. The size of this volume will not let us review in detail the modern sociological, psychological, and biological studies of love.

# Part II Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Romantic Love



Historical cultures of love: Timeline

## Chapter 3

# The Ancients Were Open to Love

### 3.1 Love in Ancient Africa

#### Love and Sex in Egypt

Egyptians were rather open in their attitudes to sex and erotic love in various representations. In ancient Egyptian theology, religion and sexuality were transparently related. Egyptians held casual attitudes toward sexuality and clearly did not have sexual taboos or guilt. There are textual and artistic evidences of representation of penises, breasts, sexual positions, premarital sex, adultery, masturbation, and homosexuality.

Sexual references were easily incorporated in numerous aspects of Egyptian culture. In texts, the act of intercourse was denoted as “spending an hour together,” “to know,” “entering a house,” “to sleep with,” or, the most common word for sex, *nk*. Egyptian love poetry presents the erotic textual evidence, written in male and female voices and uses comparison and references to natural phenomena as a metaphor for love. Visual arts such as wall paintings and graffiti also powerfully portrayed sexuality. Egyptians evidently practiced and enjoyed recreational sex, evidenced in the medical papyri. Some artistic expressions attest to this recreational side of Egyptian sexuality (Howell 2007).

Egyptians used personal adornment for sexual attraction. Hair, skin, clothing, and jewelry were specially treated. To increase their female sexuality, women artfully used clothing to both reveal and conceal; they even had net dresses. Dresses clung to the body to enhance the breasts, waist, hips, and buttocks. The best linen was very fine and semitransparent. The voluptuous curves were present in Egypt. Clothing and jewelry demonstrated status and desirability as always throughout history. In the Egyptian culture where nudity was common, one dressed to attract the opposite sex. Both genders applied mascara in an attractive manner and used rouge on the cheeks and lipstick to enhance appearance. Perfumes were made from aromatic plants and flowers and mixed with fat to prolong the scent.

Interesting to note that throughout history, men and women have responded to similar stimuli of personal adornment (Howell 2007). The goal of women was to attract the most desirable male possible. Wealth and family connections also used to supplement physical appeal. Men won their mates by their appeals of physical appearance, wealth, power, family connections, education, and prospects for advancement.

Thus, ancient Egypt was a culture where sex, love, and life were naturally related. This was evident in many textual and pictorial references—particularly in the role of sexuality in myth, the portrayal of gods with highlighted genitalia, the overt or covert erotic imagery, and love poetry.

### **Romance of Love in Ancient Egypt**

Besides erotic paintings and texts addressing the beauty of sexuality, Egyptians created probably the earliest love poems (Manniche 1987). During the New Kingdom (1580–1085 B.C.), love poems made their first appearance in Egypt; they were easily fit into existing lyrical forms of that culture. The poems were in prose; there were no rhymes, but there was a certain rhythm. The poems are loaded with symbolism, and there were many plays-on-word.

These poems were about love, not about copulation, and thus, they were different from the coarser mythological tales. These poems are typically spoken by one of the lovers, or by a third party, “the poet,” who lends his or her anonymous voice. There was a collection of poems written 3000 years ago which described the happiness and despair of a person in love (Manniche 1987)—the evidence of passionate love, as a precursor of romantic love. Another scroll of papyrus presents the poems in which “the poet” speaks, not the lovers themselves, encouraging the young man to hasten to his beloved. Being with the object of one’s desire is presented as the most important thing in the world. A number of poems describe happy and uncomplicated love; the lovers always make full use of their senses, watching, smelling, and touching the beloved one. It looks like a true love. Unfulfilled love, the anguish and longing were also part of the life of the loved one. Love might appear disguised as illness. The text described the young man retiring to dream and suffer for his loved one—the clear indication of romantic feelings. The Egyptians experienced the same urge as expressed in these poems of varying dates (Manniche 1987, pp. 74–94).

Papyri of ancient Egypt, dating to the New Kingdom period, presented the delicate love lyrics and showed quite bright aspects of the private life, personal thoughts, and joy of love in that society. Those vibrant love poems were remarkable for their innocent sensuousness; they illuminated the attitudes of the Egyptians and the romantic charm of a long-lost civilization and culture (Fowler, Ed., Trans., 1994). The poems and songs were surprisingly direct about love and romance in ancient Egypt, using metaphors, repetition, and other poetic techniques familiar to poetry nowadays. Women’s voices were strong in Egyptian poetry—as lovers making choices about their beloveds. This confirms that women had a higher position in ancient Egyptian culture than in other societies at the time. Women might even write some of the poetry.

Ancient African civilizations of the Nile Valley (Kemet, Kush, Cush) appreciated positive and negative aspects of love and romance. The great god kings

(pharaohs) built marvelous temples and tombs for their beloved as symbols of their feelings for their queens. These love expressions were common in the ancient dynasties of Africa; love was evident in the life of people. Love poems written by workers to their beloved spoke of mundane everyday things as in this excerpt:

I'll go down to the water with you,  
and come out to you carrying a red fish,  
which is just right in my fingers. (Love, Romance and Why We Aren't Happy, n.d.)

Love poems depicted activities such as retrieving the best fish for your beloved as well as presented examples of worship of the beloved:

I wish I were your mirror  
so that you always looked at me.  
I wish I were your garment  
so that you would always wear me.  
I wish I were the water that washes  
your body.  
I wish I were the unguent, O woman,  
that I could anoint you.  
And the band around your breasts,  
and the beads around your neck.  
I wish I were your sandal  
that you would wear me!  
To hear your voice is pomegranate wine to me:  
I draw life from hearing it.  
Could I see you with every glance,  
It would be better for me  
Than to eat or to drink. (Love, Romance and Why We Aren't Happy, n.d.)

Women were often the musicians who played the music that accompanied the poetry. They were frequently the authors of the poetry dedicated to their beloved men.

The majority of the societies in ancient Africa were essentially communal and matriarchal; therefore, women had much influence and control of their romantic and family lives. In dynastic Nile Valley societies, the spiritual beliefs of the society generally tended to empower the women. This status of the woman was also embodied in the central role of such goddesses as Isis, Hathor, and others.

The "Festival of the Great Meeting" was a famous spiritual rite of Nile Valley society where people rejoiced the annual reunion between Hathor and her husband. The people celebrated this event singing, dancing, fine dining, and sacred drinking (generally wine).

The spirit of the African peoples' celebration of love and life nicely is described in this poetic excerpt.

So seize the day! hold holiday!

Be unwearied, unceasing, alive

you and your own true love;

Let not the heart be troubled during your sojourn on Earth,

but seize the day as it passes! (Love, Romance and Why We Aren't Happy, (n.d.)

It is a grand and worthy representation of love.

### **Love and Marriage**

The mating and marriage in ancient Egypt seemed quite simple in its initiation. After the bridegroom obtained the consent of the girl's father, the couple just moved in together. Historians do not have any evidence for wedding ceremonies in the Pharaonic period; therefore, they doubt whether such a rite ever took place. Various expressions were used, such as "to make N. a wife," "to found a house," "to live with," but not a specialized word for "to wed." There was no written or otherwise documented evidence of romantic love involved in marriage.

There were no particular legal steps to sanction a marriage; however, the union had legal consequences regarding the property of the two parties. Husband and wife each had a claim to the property acquired in common, the man to two-thirds and the woman to one-third. They were free to terminate their union, but divorce had a problem of dividing up the property. The woman could not receive her one-third if she brought about the divorce, for instance through her adultery. So, a woman should give an oath before the authorities that she did not know any other men. Where the husband repudiated his wife, the formal steps allowed her to recover her property. The husband also often preferred a public settlement to be free of further claims from his ex-wife, for example, if he wanted to marry again (McDowell 1999, p. 152). Thus, it seems that marriage in ancient Egypt was mostly pragmatic.

## **3.2 Early Chinese History of Love**

### **Love and Sex**

In the Formative Age (prehistory—206 B.C.) and the Early Empire (206 B.C.–A.D. 960), Chinese attitudes toward human sexuality were open and positive. Taoism was China's genuine religion and early philosophy that taught that long life and happiness could be achieved if man learns to live in perfect harmony with nature. To achieve this in his or her own existence, a person should aim at the harmonious interaction of passive force *yin* and active *yang*, the same way as in nature.

Ruan and Lau (1999) maintain that the concept of *yin-yang* was of paramount importance. According to the Yin-Yang philosophy, all in life are touched by two

principles: *yin* (the female force), which is thought to be passive, negative, weak, and destructive, and *yang* (the male force), which is considered to be active, positive, strong, and constructive.

The interaction of passive force *yin* with active *yang* energizes the *ch'i*, the vital essence and breath of life, and helps to strengthen both elements. As in nature, they are strengthened by contact with and absorption of each other. Tao is the interaction of one *yin* with one *yang* that results in generative process. The opposing yet complementary forces of *yin* and *yang* could be observed in many processes of nature.

The Chinese have long used “Yin” and “Yang” to refer to sexual activities and sexual organs. Thus, “Yin Dao” (the passageway of Yin) means vagina and “Yang Ju” (the organ of Yang) means penis. The phrases “Huo Yin Yang” or “Yin Yang Huo He” (the union of Yin and Yang) describe the act of sexual intercourse (Ruan and Lau 1999).

According to Taoism, there are elements of both passive force *yin* and active *yang* in man as well as in woman. The sexual disciplines of Taoism were easy to understand and pleasurable to follow. Sexual intercourse was one of the main highways to heaven. The Chinese produced the world’s earliest known, most comprehensive, and most detailed sex manuals (Ruan 1991; Tannahill 1992). The Chinese sex manuals were in circulation since at least the second century B.C.

*Yin-yang* harmony was the primary concern of all the hand books, and intercourse the first stage in its achievement, inter course that was a human reflection of the mating of earth and heaven, when clouds rose mistily from the land to meet the rain descending from the skies. “Clouds and rain” is still, today, the standard literary expression for the act of intercourse, an echo of nature beliefs far more primitive than those of Taoist times. (Tannahill 1992, p. 170)

The handbooks progressed from general principles to practical details. They emphasized the importance of the man and woman being in a receptive mood. The important issues were tenderness, consideration, exploration, expressed through soft caresses, reassuring words, and gentle kisses. These manuals contained many practical advices regarding sexual intercourse and everything related, but little about romantic love.

Thus, we see that in the early Chinese history, women enjoyed a rather high status in society, and attitudes toward passionate love and sexual desire were generally positive (Murstein 1974, p. 467). Texts dating back to 168 B.C. made it clear that the ancient Chinese assumed that love and sexual pleasure were the great joys of life (Ruan 1991).

The attitudes toward sex were not uniform, changed during various epochs, and continued to change later. By the time of Confucius (551–479 B.C.), the position of women weakened and attitudes toward love gradually altered. Confucius’s doctrine and prudish aspects of Chinese society ultimately triumphed over the mild and indulgent philosophy of Taoism. The Confucianism doctrines evolved and became popular in Chinese society during the last two centuries B.C. and brought opposing ideas to Taoism. Confucianism brought rites and ceremonials, administrative controls, class distinctions, authoritarianism, and other social institutions. Yet, Taoism

and Confucianism ideologies did not conflict altogether. Indeed, it can be reasoned that they kept the Chinese world in motion through their *yin-yang* interaction: Taoism as the *yin* creed, flexible, and intuitive, and Confucianism as the compelling, uncompromising, unmistakable *yang*. Until the twelfth century, the Chinese people were willing to follow both, using Taoism in their personal lives and recognizing Confucianism as principles well suited to societal life (Tannahill 1992, p. 183).

The people's voice about love and sex was expressed in *Shi King* (Shih Ching, Shi Jing)—the oldest repository of Chinese verse. It was first compiled in the early sixth century B.C., collecting 305 poems and folk songs dating from around the sixteenth to the sixth centuries B.C. Confucius carefully edited the collection and included many poems about love and sex; some were explicitly sexual ones, while many included great lyrical beauty and love. Thus, the founder of China's great ethical tradition shared the people's profound respect for human sexuality and love (Ruan 1991).

### Love and Marriage

In the time of Confucius (722–479 B.C.), the advent of property consciousness and the feudal system weakened the position of women. Confucian model of the marriage stressed patriarchal family ancestor worship and filial piety. A woman was considered inferior to a man, and obedience should characterize her behavior: In childhood, she obeyed her father; in adulthood, her husband; and when widowed, her son. Buddhism with its prominent religious influence in China since the first century A.D. also suggested that women were inferior to men, were the personification of all evil (Murstein, 1974, p.467).

The early and later Han dynasties (206 B.C. 220 A.D.) officially sanctioned the ethic of filial piety. Individual interests were subordinated to those of the extended family and, to a lesser degree, to those of the clan (Murstein, 1974, p.468). In Confucian philosophy, the two strongest relationships in family life were between father and son and between elder brother and younger brother. Under the influence of Confucianism, romantic love between husband and wife was considered detrimental to the supremacy of filial piety. Husband–wife relationship was strictly held to be supplementary and subordinate to the other family relationship. Love was irrelevant. A filial son would devote everything to his parents at the expense of his marital and other relationships. Courtship, in ancient China, was for men to seek concubines or mistresses; it had no place in conventional marriage (Hsu 1979; Baker 1979; Coontz 2005).

The traditional Chinese gentry's husband–wife relationship was neither strong nor the emotionally meaningful in the family. Spouses did not choose each other; therefore, it mattered little whether or not they were sexually attracted to each other. The purpose of marriage was to assure the continuity of the family line under favorable circumstances and the accumulation of property, including politically and economically useful family alliances. Another primary duty was to procreate.

It was believed that husband was biologically destined to seek satisfaction with a variety of women; therefore, concubines were the natural accompaniment of marriage among the wealthy people. The woman was not biologically so destined, so her main function was to produce children. And she supposed to remain faithful to her husband (Murstein 1974, p. 469).

Bearing in mind the unequal status of husband and wife, their relationship could be described as “correct” rather than cordial. Each knew the order of things and tried to follow their prescribed roles. The development of mutual affection was uncertain. The wife usually felt a stronger attachment to her father or brothers than to her husband, just as the husband remained more deeply committed to his mother.

Even if the partners were highly attracted to each other, the custom did not allow expressing the slightest degree of public affection, following the Confucian ideal of a person of reserved, dignified, superior conduct (Hsu 1971; Murstein 1974, p. 470).

The Confucian model had little influence on the peasant class—the vast majority of the Chinese population. Among peasants, the purposes of marriage were much more personal, but still economical; an additional field hand at harvest time was important. The peasant patriarch did not have economic strength of the gentry’s patriarch, so he could exert less authority over his family. Unlike the gentry’s wife, the peasant wife had to work hard to sustain the family, so she exercised correspondingly greater power in family decisions (Murstein 1974, p. 471).

Love was not of the crucial importance in marriage. To the Chinese, love between a man and a woman meant a state of sexual excitation. The elders recognized sex as a powerful impetus to action, but they did not believe that the young and the inexperienced men and women could handle passion and still bear the family’s welfare in mind. Therefore, the choice of a marital partner was a matter for parents to decide. Such a decision was their responsibility and a family elder had to provide a spouse for any girl in his household (Murstein 1974, p. 472).

### **3.3 Love in Ancient Greek Culture (Sixth–Fourth Centuries, B.C.)**

#### **Love and Sex**

The concept of love was of special importance as a value and idea discussed by philosophers of ancient Greece as a special type of passionate and spiritual attraction, mutual admiration, and attachment between two human beings. Greek culture also highly valued physical beauty.

Greek mythology held many myths concerning their gods and heroes; these included plots of love figures and love stories. They were part of the religion in ancient Greece. The goddess Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of female beauty, love, and sexual pleasure (the Romans knew her as Venus). As Licht (1932/1972) noted that only in the culture of Greece could the idea ascend “to build temples and set up statues to a goddess in order to glorify that practically unmentionable part”; the ancient Greeks worshiped their “Aphrodite Kallipygos,” the goddess “with beautiful buttocks” (p. 201). Plastic art and poetry depicted her as beautiful and sensuous, the smiling sweetly, with ever fresh charms, embellished with a diadem. Especially glorious were her large moistly gleaming eyes, her delicate neck and bosom, and her sweet mouth. All charms were combined in this Greek

goddess of love. She wore the seductive girdle, in which the enchantment of love was contained—devotion, longing, and infatuating passion. She was powerful in the area of sexuality; neither god nor mortal man could resist her powers. She had many male lovers, both mortal and divine. The goddess of beauty was at the same time the goddess of love. She was the queen of souls and united that which is at variance. She made love worth craving for and instituted it among men and gods.

From Plato onward, Greek philosophical thought distinguished an Aphrodite Urania, the goddess of pure and wedded love, from Aphrodite Pandemos, the goddess of free love and its joys. Aphrodite bestowed upon gods and men the joys of love. Love and beauty were for the Greeks inseparable. In spring took place most of the festivals in honor of Aphrodite, which were held by night, in blooming gardens and bowers, with dances, music, and unbridled abandonment to love, “the sweet gifts of gold-adorned Aphrodite.” Such festivals were celebrated everywhere in sensuality-loving Greece (Licht 1932/1972).

Eros, the son of Aphrodite, was the god of love directed toward male as well as female beauty and embodied Greek personification of sexual desire (the Romans knew him as Cupid). Being young and playful, he was described as cunning, unmanageable, and brought frenzy and confusion to his victims. For Plato (424/423–348/347 B.C.), the famous ancient Greek philosopher, Eros remained a self-centered love with focus on conquering and possessing the object that represents a value for a man. It appears that even Greek religion was saturated with erotic and romantic love.

Greek literature, poetry and prose, had love among the central themes. The first Greek lyric poet who sings of the love between man and woman is Mimnermus of Colophon (late VII B.C.). Sentimental and always in love, he praised the joys of sensual pleasures and complained of the rapid fading away of youth and of happiness in love. The greatest Greek lyric poet, Alcaeus of Mitylene, wrote many love songs. Sappho, “the sweetly smiling, with violet curly locks” was glorified in his poems, but he found no hearing from the beautiful poetess, whose heart would have nothing to do with a man’s love (Licht 1932/1972, p. 244). Other Greek poets—Simonides of Amorgos, Sicilian, and Stesichorus—wrote many stories of adultery, unhappy love, and affection.

The notion of a mysterious bond between love and death depicted in the ancient Greek literature also demonstrated romantic elements. Flacelière (1962) brought three examples of those writings: Orpheus and Eurydice, Admetus and Alcestis, Protesilaus and Laodamia. In the discussion of these myths, Flacelière recognizes the idea of “triumph of love” over death. Alcestis gave up her own life to save her husband’s. Orpheus found himself in the underworld because he went there to search for his dead wife Eurydice. Protesilaus died suddenly, shortly after his marriage to Laodamia; they implored gods to allow them to be reunited, and Hades permitted this—but only for a few hours. Flacelière (1962) concluded that lovers know in their hearts that their love is stronger than death.

Probably the beginnings of the Greek love romance date from the period of transition to classicism (150 B.C.–100 A.D.), characterized by Oriental influence. Parthenius of Nicaea had written several poems of an erotic kind and of unhappy

love. The typical example of the prose of love of that period was depicted in *Romance of Ninus*. In the Ninus fragment, the youth of the two lovers was first spoken of, then the wooing of the girl, the separation of the pair (here by war, elsewhere by pirates, etc.), and lastly, their happy reunion after dangers of all kinds. This, with more or less important variations, was the theme of all the Greek love romances. It is worth to note that Parthenius wrote in prose a still extant collection of *Stories of Unhappy Love*, a kind of book of reference, in which he collected thirty-six examples of unhappy love passion from different sources (cited in Licht 1932/1972).

The topic of romantic love saturated not only literature, but also the love letters of Greeks. For example, one in the *Pseudolus* of Plautus is written by the girl Phoenicium to her friend, since it probably derives from a Greek model. “Now as to our loves, manners, customs, jest, sport, talk, sweet kissing, close embracing of loving mates, soft little kisses with tender lips, gentle pressure of projecting breasts. From all these pleasures there comes a parting, a separation, a destruction, for me and in like manner for you, unless there is refuge for me in you and for you in me. I have taken care that you should know all that I knew; now I will test your love, and pretence of it. Good-bye!” (cited in Licht 1932/1972, p. 293). Thus, Greek love was evidently romantic.

Greeks admired the beauty of females as well as the beauty of males. At some point in the twentieth century, the ancient Greek society had the connotation of a homosexual society, and the term “Greek love” referred to this homosexual love. It is not clear, however, whether the homosexuality in Greece was prevalent. Murstein (1974, p. 56), for example, maintained that among the very wealthy, it was a minor phenomenon. Still, he showed that homosexuality in ancient Greece was in many respects quite different from twentieth-century homosexuality. The Greek scholars idolized the spiritual, not the bodily, relationship between lovers. This profound spiritual love was deemed possible only in homosexual relationships.

Psychologically, homosexuality was not characterized as the inability to respond to the opposite sex. Most homosexuals were bisexuals. A passionate love between two men, however, was idealized as a relationship in which the older lover inspires the younger to nobility and virtue. Homosexual love existed mostly among the upper classes—those who had the freedom and leisure for pursuits like philosophy or discussions at a symposium. Sex with another male, though, tended to be one-sided: An older, more experienced man could acceptably have an erotic attachment to an adolescent, whose face or genitals he might fondle; but the young man was supposed to respond only with *philia*—an attachment of admiring friendship—and not with physical attraction (May 2013). The love between them elevated the mind and emotions of both. This love was regarded as the expression of the highest type of human feelings (Hunt 1959). Sexual intimacy was not opposed to friendship-love.

Licht (1932/1972) treasured the poems of Sappho as the greatest poetic geniuses of all time. In her verses only the heart speaks, “loving and eager for love, and the figures and ideas which she evoked with the refined and never-failing

feeling of genuine emotion remained for centuries the model, often imitated but rarely again attained, of the erotic poets” (p. 244). However, it was homosexuality which filled up the life and poetry of the Lesbian prodigy. The homosexual love of the Greeks did not indicate a decline but an advance of their civilization. It created for them intellectual values which last beyond all ages.

Can we say that those relationships were romantic? In some sense, they probably were: There was idealization of spiritual relationships and admiration of the partner. Yet, they were not since the partners were not equal. Even though the notion of romantic love arose much later in centuries, we may consider this Greek love as containing the elements of romanticism.

It was also common for men to be heterosexual and to have wives at home, though marriage was seldom for love. Plato thought that women were inferior to men in body and in mind (Branden 1980/2008). Men could become romantically interested in women, but it was not their wives who excited their passion. Considering the insignificant role allotted to the wife, the Greek husbands created a hierarchy of mistresses for other types of relationships. It was an integral part of Greek life. Prostitution was recognized, and the married man who wanted a sexually stimulating companion has various opportunities (Murstein 1974).

A man more likely fell in love with a courtesan—a highly educated woman, trained to be mentally stimulating as well as sexually exciting, an intellectual as well as sexual companion. The top-level courtesans of the day were the hetairai, beautiful, talented, witty, and often knowledgeable about classical literature. The true courtesan’s allure never depended exclusively on physical attractiveness. Men liked hetairai because they excelled at all things which men prevented their wives from learning. Wives were not allowed, as courtesans were, to join men at the supper table where they could pick up something about culture and public affairs to maintain an intelligent conversation. The majority of wives did not know much about love, and their husbands had little concern about “worker” satisfaction. Throughout most of history, courtesans had a better time than wives did (Tannahill 1992, p. 101). So, if romantic love would have a chance, it would be more likely with courtesan than with wife. However, many Greeks looked with contempt upon a man who fell in love even with a courtesan. Apart from selected courtesans, they never permitted the average woman to develop into a worthy object of passion. So, it seems that truly romantic love almost never intervened in these relationships.

Love with the ideal sense of elevating admiration could exist only among men. Otherwise, “love” was primarily viewed as a pleasurable, enjoyable game and amusement, of no deep importance or lasting significance. Passionate sexual love, when it happened, was usually considered as a tragic madness and affection that carried the man away from that calm evenness of disposition that the Greeks appreciated. Love madness included its tendency to idealize a person of admiration and, in the case of love, resulted in disappointment; it can demonize a partner and relationship.

Greek philosophy substantially contributed to the topic of love. Aristotle was an advocate of friendship-love: devotion to the welfare of another person whom we experience as our “second self.” He believed that it is more conducive to our

flourishing than stormy passionate love (May 2013, p. 5). The *Enneades*, the writings of Plotinus of Lycopolis (III century A.D.), deal with the problem of love. He regarded sensuality as a sin, or at least a hindrance to spiritual knowledge. Plotinus thought that the wise man must allow himself to be penetrated by the idea of the pure and beautiful. Through familiarity with forms of the beautiful in the sensible world and by freeing himself from the corporeal, he may arrive at the highest happiness, which consists in the union with the idea of the purely spiritual.

### Love and Marriage

The idea of “marrying for love” was absent from thinking of the Greeks. A wife was considered as an intrusion to a man’s freedom. Yet, it was held that a man owed it to the state and to his religion to have children. A wife was also needed for the purposes of housekeeping.

In the period of the sixth through fourth centuries B.C., in Athenian marriages, the father was the powerful figure in the family and could choose his children’s spouses without consulting them. The children owed him the filial piety due a god. With the influx of slaves, he could allow himself to play games, prepare for war, and engage in philosophical discourse with scholars. Most of the time, he did not do manual labor.

On the other hand, women did not have many rights and never had any kind of formal education. She was highly skilled at household arts, but rarely sewed, and did little cooking because this was a male prerogative. She supervised the servants and bore children.

The Eastern habit of segregating women transferred to the ancient Greece, and because of this status, a woman could go out into the streets only being veiled and only for religious occasions, festivals, and special purchases. Otherwise, she should stay isolated in her apartments, could not dine with her husband and his guests, and could not go from one apartment to another without permission. Her inferiority was considered as genetic and thought that environmental factors could not modify.

The wife was respected due to her duties as supervisor of the household staff. She was loved by her young children, yet to her husband she was an uneducated partner, uninteresting, and the thought of marriage barely excited him. It was unlikely that a husband would love his wife.

Exceptions to this attitude toward women certainly existed. In particular, Socrates believed that women were not inferior to men; they just needed more physical strength and energy of mind. He was drawn to his wife Xanthippe because her free spirit was so unusual, and even attractive, in comparison with the dull expression of the typical Athenian housewife (Murstein 1974, p. 50).

Aristotle told that marriage should be a relationship involving reciprocal affection and tenderness besides being an alliance producing offspring. Yet, he reasoned that an inferior being (woman) should love a superior being (man) rather than vice versa, so as to counterbalance their natural gifts (*Nichomachean Ethics*, quoted in Murstein 1974, p. 50). Happily, he achieved this suitable balance in his marriage.

However, in general, the ideal marriage was described as an alliance between a man working out of doors and delivering to his indoor partner and a woman

who supervised the servants and slaves. The sources typically did not mention any emotional interaction between husband and wife (Murstein 1974, p. 51).

Most sources and writings from Classical Greek period, which scholars found, were authored by men (Gonzalez-Reigosa and Kaminski 1989). Because few written records of women's lives and loves are available, then, unfortunately, researchers know little about love of women in ancient Greece. The majority of women lived segregated from men and was not well educated; few could read or write. Therefore, the history of love in ancient Greece, which scholars currently hold, may be biased, and the notion of prevalent homosexuality in that culture is exaggerated.

Some historians who have recently analyzed women's lives in ancient Greece suggest that women may have been the objects of love more often than was previously believed. For example, Brown (1993) who has analyzed various Greek comedies contends that men's love for women may have been at least an ideal, although not one realized much in fact.

### 3.4 Love in Ancient Roman Culture

Roman culture generated two opposites in attitudes to love. They created the first ideal of domestic felicity and mutual respect between men and women and established the forms of marriage, but they considered sex and love, passion and caring interpersonal relationships as polar opposites. The basic concept of romantic love, the union of sex with love, was viewed cynically (Branden 1980/2008, p. 9).

Grimal (1967) argued, however, that Roman morals on the whole did not exclude sentimental love. As he claimed, in the middle of the second century B.C., under the Hellenistic influence as well as a natural evolution of Roman moral customs, the sentiments of love became more subtle and freed themselves from traditional taboos and rules. The love, freed of all restraint, became more introverted, more concentrated, and also more respectful (p. 295).

For Romans, at least for some of them, the feeling of love became a psychological reality, separate from mere instinct. That was possible only to the extent that women assumed dignity. Romantic love was based on mutual respect—especially on respect for the woman on the part of her partner. And as Grimal (1967) argued, because of the Roman cultural tradition to treat women with respect, even with religious awe, the Romans were destined to discover love.

Grimal (1967) noted that among all the divinities associated in Roman religion with the love relationship, first place was given to a goddess, Venus, instead of a god. It was implicit recognition that love was essentially a "woman's affair." The woman was bestowed by full devotion value on sexual union. Besides, the god of love was not on the list of Roman divinities and did not have a character among the gods comparable to the Greek Eros.

The peace generated by the Empire was a favorable cultural climate for love. The romances were those of the aristocracy since aristocratic customs were more

subject than others to traditional moral regimentation. They did not apply to those who were practically excluded from public life. The lower classes, which were not familiar with religious and family traditions, had freer morals. The women had less to lose, and the men were less restrained and did not find sexual satisfaction in their own homes.

However, even these simple folks thought about love. They knew that pleasure did not last and that “as soon as Venus has joined the bodies of two lovers, she separates them” (cited in Grimal 1967). But they also knew that sensual pleasure was only the beginning in the union of two human beings. Roman poets proclaimed that it is hard to think that the love affairs of even the humblest denizens of Campania did not have a romantic side.

### **Love and Sex**

During the late Roman Empire, both men and women were interested to experience passion, excitement, and glamor in sexual relationships in extramarital adventures. Adultery was widespread in both sexes and taken for granted. It was considered as a sport to relieve the boredom of life. The aristocrats of Rome indulged in the cynical, frenzied sensuality. The reputation of the Romans for sensuality is evident when compared with Athenians. That was Roman decadence: a mixture of love and hatred, and desire and hostility (see in Branden 1980/2008, p. 9).

Sexual life of the Romans assumed the psychologically cruder forms than that of the Greeks. The Romans were mostly farmers and rough soldiers, and a few were of their best and most gifted became statesmen. Historically, the Roman culture had seldom any interest in art, history, or philosophy and therefore could not produce a lofty and spiritualized sexual life. The Roman with his primitive character directed his sexual instincts into simple channels. For many centuries, marriage meant to the Romans a severe, pure, and prosaic union under the firm authority of the husband who had little feeling for subtler possibilities of sex. Besides marriage from early times in Rome, there was a coarse type of prostitution, directed more or less exclusively to the satisfaction of purely sensual desires (Kiefer 1934/2009). As Horace satirically noted, “I like a cheap and easy love!” (cited in Kiefer 2009, p. 16).

The Romans were more sensual than Greeks. Yet, apart from selected courtesans, Romans never permitted a woman to develop into a worthy object of passion. Seclusion and lack of education did not inspire the development of women’s intelligence and personality. The Roman poets Catullus, Ovid, Propertius, Tibullus, Plautus, and Lucretius (years) wrote a lot about love, but they accented the joys of sex more than those of mental excitement. They produced many works which impressively reflect the love life of their nation. Lucretius deplored the madness that sex engendered and described the sexual act dispassionately, as if he were watching the mating of fruit flies: “They greedily clasp each other’s body and suck each other’s lips and breathe in, pressing meanwhile teeth on each other’s mouth: all in vain, since they can rub nothing off nor enter and pass each with his whole body into the other’s body” (cited in Murstein 1974, p. 75).

Roman poet Ovid (43–17/18 B.C.), who lived in the time of Emperor Augustus, was a hedonist who advised to enjoy the delights of courtship, sex, sensuality, and

the amorous imagination for as long as they last; to cultivate them as a refined sport or art; to be cautious about the madness of “falling in love”; and to be unmoved by the mirage of a higher meaning to love. He wrote collections of love poetry; among his major works were *The Art of Love*, *Loves*, and *The Cure for Love*. He gave advices on how to woo and make love. Parry (1960) claimed that for all practical purposes, the origin of courtly love is to be found in Ovid’s writings. However, Ovid conceived love as sensual, and there was little or no trace in his work of the romantic affection of later times. He talked little about emotional involvement, but rather on how to plan the strategy of seducing an enticing woman. He taught that the would-be lover must be attentive to his lady, but it is not the lady’s character that is important (May 2013, p. 5; Murstein 1974, pp. 75–76; Parry 1960).

Love did not consider matrimony as its object. Ovid said that the love is not that of maidens or married women and stated that husbands and wives cannot love each other. He talked about extramarital love.

Ovid did not think that a man or woman should have only one affair at a time, but he did point out that the matter is greatly complicated if one woman learns of her lover’s affair with another. Trouble would also arise, however, if the lady’s husband learned that she was in love with another man, so it was preferable to keep such an affair in secret. Moreover, the fact that it is secret made it much more pleasant.

Ovid’s conception of love also presumed that love is a kind of warfare, and every lover is a soldier. Cupid was thought of as the generalissimo, and under him are the women whose power over the men is absolute. A man should deceive a woman, if he can, but he must never appear to oppose her slightest wish. To please her, he must watch all night before her doors and undergo all sorts of hardships. For love of her, he had to become pale and thin and sleepless. No matter what he might do and from what motives, he had to persuade her that it is all for her sake. If in spite of all these demonstrations of affection she still remained obdurate, he should arise her jealousy and pretend to be in love with another woman, and when the first one thought that she had lost him, she would perhaps capitulate and he clasp her sobbing to his breast (cited in Parry 1960, p. 5).

Pictorial art in Rome, however, produced no great works which told of love as clearly as Greek vases/coarse and undisguised sensuality was expressed in numerous wall paintings in Pompeii and elsewhere (Kiefer 1934/2009). The Roman character was fundamentally practical, but lacked the intellectual and spiritual bases in that culture. Roman love/sex ran a parallel course to this development. Thus, the Roman sexual life was sensual, yet unspiritual, and therefore unlikely held the romantic features.

Both Greek and Roman conceptions of sexuality and love have had a profound impact on Western cultures of thought perpetuating a clichéd distinction about the immorality of Rome and the restrained virtue of Greece. It also fed into another division, the split between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Since the very inception of the term, “Greek love” has stood for the attraction between men, whereas the key signifier of the sexuality of Rome came to be the orgy (Blanshard

2010). This cliché, even though it influenced the modern public opinions, misrepresented the complexity and diversity of relationships among Romans and Greeks. It was just a simplified binary division. Actually, Romans might be among the pioneers and inventors of romantic love.

However, the dominant philosophy of Rome, Stoicism, taught that passionate involvement was a threat to the pursuit of duty and should not be intertwined. Virgil, for example, described how the hero of Rome's epic *Aeneid*, Aeneas, simply turned away from the passion of his lover, Dido, to pursue his duty of founding the Roman republic. Roman intellectuals looked upon passion as a sort of madness, the same way the Greeks did (Branden 1980/2008, p. 8).

### **Love and Marriage**

The Romans, like the Greeks, did not marry for love. In upper classes, marriages were typically arranged between families for financial or political reasons. A man married to acquire a housekeeper and to have children. In Roman culture, however, the family took on a new significant role as a political and social unit—mainly for the reasons of preservation and protection of property. The cultural and political importance of the family gave a new importance to the relationship between husbands and wives. Cultural mythology maintained a devotion to the Roman family and it exalted the virtues of virginity in unmarried women and highly valued fidelity in married women. This substantially elevated the position of women.

Passionate love could stir in pragmatic marriages in Rome. But such love was demeaned as contemptible; it equated with lust and believed to erode marriages. “Nothing is more impure than to love ones wife as if she were a mistress,” the Roman philosopher Seneca told (cited in Abbott 2010). The oversimplified view of historians was that the Roman concept of marriage was alien to romantic love. It had restricted independence of women; husbands denied them any autonomy whatever and deprived them of any life outside the home; the women did not manage or even possess any funds of their own. But reality, according to Grimal (1967), was quite different. Roman marriage can be painted in much brighter colors and considered as subtle, flexible, and humane institution. According to the legends, the wife was seemingly respected and honored and was virtually the total mistress of the home. The Romans protected their spouses from illicit passion and to guard them from evil spirits. Roman religious culture was open to the influence of the laws of human existence and wanted married couples to have the blessing of divinities influencing fertility.

Marriage probably did not have the same significance for different social groups, e.g., for aristocracy and poor social class. Historians have little information about marriages among the proletariat. One characteristic was apparent: The union of two young persons, being based on their free consent, was in no way the result of personal choice. They were destined to continue a family, and their marriage could not rely on their own individual fancy. A marriage was the means of concluding alliances between families, of establishing or consolidating friendships. That was an idea of Roman marriage, at least for the aristocracy (Grimal 1967).

As a general rule, men married later than girls: at the end of their adolescence and were legally permitted to marry at their fourteenth year. The age and maturity difference between husband and wife was considerable. The husband wanted to form the character of the girl, the future lady of the house, according to his desires. He wanted her innocent, undefiled, and under his own moral influence. One may assume that young people accepted this without enthusiasm since at this age they were keen to get out of love more than just docility and passivity of a little girl.

Were these marriages romantic and happy? Grimal (1967, p. 81) was convinced that girls who married at such a tender age did not feel any aversion toward their husbands for that reason. Many couples were quite happy. The husband often had respect for his wife and gave her the time she needed to look her best and preferred to avoid finding her occupied with tasks or in a state of mind that would not be a good omen for their reunion. On another side, a wife in her fervent declaration of faith were well aware of her husband's standing, shared his pride and his ideals (p. 94).

Women in Rome gained legal status, freedom, and economic independence and got a higher cultural respect than before. They were in a better position to be involved in an equal love relationship since equality is an important premise for romantic love. The relationship of a superior to an inferior or a master to a subordinate could not be named as romantic love.

The historians also evidenced the cases of strong marital bonds. Long, harmonious, and affectionate unions between some partners happened. Passion, however, remained alien to the view of marriage (Branden 1980/2008, p. 9).

Marital love was the Romans' precious ideal. Augustus (63 B.C.–14 A.D.), the founder of Roman Empire and first emperor, recollected the tenderness that Drusus Caesar and his wife Antonia felt for each other. It was exclusively on account of his love for her, and it is said that he renounced all other sexual adventures (Grimal 1967, p. 296). A noble Roman made the discovery of the value of being faithful to one woman.

# Chapter 4

## Love in the Premedieval and Medieval Era

### 4.1 Eastern and Middle Eastern Cultures of Love

#### Early Indian History of Love

There were three sociohistorical developments in South Asia around the first millennium AD:

- the emergence of regional kingdoms with a strong geographic identity,
- the development of devotional religion (*bhakti*),
- the Islamic conquest and subsequent creation of an Indo-Islamic culture.

These large events, with significant regional variations, led to the emergence of literature in the regional languages and produced new concepts of love (Orsini 2006, p. 27).

The courtly culture evolved in these regional kingdoms and reproduced high literary forms (in Sanskrit or Persian as in the case of the Deccan) through rewritings of classical stories, all the while taking pride in local traditions and idioms. That shaped the hybrid cultural forms like Hindustani music, Sufi romances in regional languages, and Persian retellings of Indian love stories.

Sexual love and passion in ancient India carried multiple meanings and was valued positively many centuries ago, at least for certain classes of people in certain contexts: the king, the householder and his wife, as well as a courtesan. Ascetic or moralistic condemnation of love and sexuality was present but in one strand of tradition in South Asia. The early set of concepts, genres, and aesthetics about love evolved in the Prakrit dialects and in Sanskrit (Orsini 2006).

Ali (2006) examined the issue of courtship in its literary and political dimensions in the Gupta epoch (fourth–seventh centuries CE), the Golden Age of India, known for scientific and artistic endeavors that crystallized the elements of Hindu culture. Aesthetics and poetry of urban and courtly society presented the various

ways, both direct and indirect, in which emotions (*bhava*) can manifest themselves. Love became the focus of emotional and aesthetic sophistication. As Ali (2006) argued, in the courtly society, a desire and one's mastery over it became topics for talking about relations between the king and his courtiers and among the courtiers themselves.

Ali (2006) analyzed the concept of medieval love as it was represented in the plays of that time. The erotic love embodied in these plays was a very complex one, closely interweaving ideas of erotic excitation, conjugal and domestic harmony, and political and worldly accomplishment into an apparently seamless ideal. Such an ideal could not be captured by a single term love, but rather involved a range of affective states and emotions. At one level, courtship followed the "stages of desire." In this representation, erotic desire was viewed as a sort of sickness, often characterized in poetry as originating from the arrows of the God of Love, Kamadeva. Attraction was understood here as a kind of psychological and physical affliction, taking the form first of an enhancement of the eyes, followed by a fixation of the mind amid a strong will or desire for union with the beloved. Soon, however, it led to harsher physical symptoms which wearied the body, including loss of sleep, emaciation, turning away from other sense objects, shamelessness, madness and, finally, collapse and death. This suffering displayed typical progress of love feelings in the palace dramas, where the domestic situation formed an obstacle to the happy resolution of romance. These complaints, ubiquitous in courtly literature, revealed a central ambiguity about love, which was on the one hand exalted as a sublime suffering and, on the other, acknowledged as a potentially harmful, even agonistic affliction which could compromise one's capacity to act in the court. This is because love was always conceived as a hierarchical relationship and thus naturally invoked questions of mastery and control of both oneself and one's beloved.

According to Vatsyayana, love took the form of a battle because it resembled a contest and because of its innate contrariety, which was explained as arising: The man and the woman each tried to achieve his or her own desires by overcoming the other (quoted in Ali 2006, p. 56). Erotic love evoked a profound obsession among the courtly elite.

During the second century CE, the terms such as *raga*, *anuraga*, and *bhakti* in discourse signified dispositions of adoration, attachment, affection, and participation. The king or courtier should be able to attract affection, but he must control his own passions and avoid becoming excessively attached to anyone. An essential figure in urban courtly culture is the courtesan, a mistress of manners and a performer of discourses on love in a courtly setting. She was capable to attract attachments without herself falling in love.

Sanskrit also brought philosophical contemplations on the topic of love in the notion of *kama*, a term with several meanings: desire, attraction to sensory objects, pleasure, and lust. The *Sastras* (authoritative texts) provided the descriptions

of and prescriptions about courtly polity and sexual behavior. Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra* (second through fourth centuries CE), the oldest and most famous Shastric text on *kama*, instructed "on the importance of acquiring knowledge and of setting up a well-appointed house and a sophisticated daily routine; on the kinds of women suitable for love affairs (young girls, married women or widows and courtesans) and on the need for go-betweens. Then he proceeded to detail sexual advances (including embraces, kisses, scratching and biting and penetration), followed by instructions on how to acquire a wife, on the duties and privileges of the wife, on liaisons with other men's wives (overall discouraged) and on how to behave with courtesans" (Orsini 2006, p. 8).

An important aspect of the *Kamasutra*, for the context of our topic, was that it distinguished love and sex. Regarding love, the text did not mean such things as the sighing and yearning, the coquettishness, the simulated passion, the amorous tricks that were notable in Ovid's understanding of it. The sage Vatsyayana expressed sympathy to the emotions between man and woman that can obsess the mind of the lover to the exclusion of others. The sage reminded that the rules do not apply to people who are truly in love, and a man should marry "no other girl but the one who is loved" (cited in Tannahill 1992, p. 203).

The *Kamasutra* recognized four types of love. First was a simple love of intercourse that resembles a habit or drug. Second was like a separate addiction to specific aspects of sex such as kissing, embracing, or oral intercourse. Third was the love consisting of mutual attraction between two people, instinctive, spontaneous, and possessive. Fourth was the kind of one-sided love that often sprang from the lover's admiration for the beauty of the beloved (Tannahill 1992, p. 203). Satisfaction of the first two types of love depended less on harmony between the partners than on physical proficiency and adherence to the rules and techniques. True lovers, however, should just follow their instinct. In a certain sense, they were above and beyond the rules.

Thus, love was recognized as something different than sex. Was it romantic love in some sense? Actually, there was no poetry at all in the *Kamasutra*, no mellowing use of that romantic-spiritual language convincing lovers to believe that their own feelings were quite apart from the bodily desires of others. Tannahill (1992) claimed that this contrasted with the Chinese sex manuals which did not make the distinction between love and sex, yet treated them with a delicacy that accommodated both.

Sanskrit aesthetic theory maintained that passion (*rati*) was the emotion underlying the quality of love, called *shringara* and translated as the "erotic." Erotic love was beautifully treated, aesthetically and psychologically, in the short love lyric. Yet, food, season, bodily health, and sexual activity were closely connected within an integrated view of *kama*, all of which were presented in medical and literary texts (cited in Orsini 2006, p. 10).

### Love in Regional Kingdoms of the Senas in Bengal and the Gangas in Orissa in Eleventh–Twelfth Century

After the end of the Gupta Empire (320–550 CE) and the collapse of the Harsha Empire (606–647), several kingdoms emerged on the Indian subcontinent. They were ruled via a feudal system; smaller kingdoms were dependent on the protection of the larger kingdoms. The cultures of regional kingdoms of the Senas in Bengal and the Gangas in Orissa in the eleventh and twelfth centuries followed the beliefs of Vaishnavism, the large Hindu denomination, and had institutions and practices of Puranic Hinduism, according to the Puranas, the Hindu religious texts that presented narratives about the history of the universe, the genealogies of kings, heroes, sages, and demigods—the mythological beings with more power than a mortal but less than a god.

Temple and royal palace were closely allied with each other and often were physically close. Priests and temple women treated the images of gods and goddesses like royalty. Courtiers and palace women treated kings and queens like representatives of the gods and goddesses. Rituals in temple and palace followed similar schedules and etiquettes, and court life was aesthetically developed.

Kings, courtiers, and queens and their women trained themselves in local versions of a carefully elaborated code of behavior and feeling that reflected, at once, their status as sources of worldly rule and their sublime, elevated, even (in the case of royalty) godlike qualities. (Daud 2004, p. 77).

### The Realm of Emotion and Love

Eastern cultural tradition differentiated *this-worldly* realm and was concerned with material, earthly, and ordinary life, as opposed to spiritual matters. In this context, in both the temple and the palace they distinguished between a *this-worldly realm* of coarse, particular emotions—*bhava*—and the *universal realm* of refined moods—*rasa*. The mundane emotion that inspired less exalted sexual partnerships was called *rati*—a longing for association with a particular *this-worldly* sexual partner. The corresponding refined emotion called *shringara rasa* was often rendered as an “erotic mood”—a longing for association with a *heroic, sublime, god-like, or divine* sexual partner (Reddy 2012, p. 225).

Underlying this division between a mundane love-lust (*rati*) and a spiritualized love-lust (*shringara rasa*) was a conception of the physical realm and of the body that did not conform to the spirit–body dualism peculiar to Western thinking. In the prescriptive and poetic literature of royal courts, the courtly pleasures should be both ethical and aesthetic. Courtiers were expected to follow a way of life oriented toward enjoyment of the world, in contrast to that of renouncers or Buddhist monks. But this way of life was also supposed to be refined. “The enjoyment of pleasures was ... not understood as a straightforward release of libidinal impulse” (Daud 2004, p. 70). Pleasure could be derived only from the enjoyment of objects appropriate to one’s own refined mind-body.

Sexual practices in the courts and temples of regional kingdoms of the Senas in Bengal and the Gangas in Orissa did not oppose the concept of *desire* and the concept of *true love*. The Sanskrit term *shringara rasa* meant longings for sublime

sexual partnerships that were reciprocal and excluded coercion. These concepts did not separate desire, as an appetite, from love, as selfless care and devotion to another.

The South Asian cultural settings of that time did not imply the philosophic dualism of “soul” and “flesh,” as the medieval Christian thinking did. In Sanskrit texts, the realm of emotion and desire was governed by an opposition between *bhava* and *rasa*. *Bhava* consisted of transient things that in English would be called emotions—despondency and joy—and things that would not—recollection, cruelty, sweating, trembling. *Rasa* consisted of the sacred, spiritual nectar or extract of certain transient states, including sexual states. Thus, *rati* (everyday love-lust) was in opposition to the sacred nectar of *shringara rasa* (love-lust). The distinction between *bhava* and *rasa* was essential to religious understandings and rituals. It was also in the practices of the rising aristocracy of some royal courts in South Asia. Court ladies, kings, and their queens emulated divine behavior and divine “play” (*lila*) and the love liaisons that were a part of divine play.

### Spiritual Elaboration of Courtly Love

Men and women of the court practiced elaborate self-adornment relying on garments, jewelry, and makeup; mastered a wide range of courtly skills, including singing, playing musical instruments, painting, cooking, and, of course, Sanskrit poetics and eloquence. The material, verbal, and gestural accoutrements of sexual acts were essential to the enjoyment of a sexual partner, just as were the refined longings expressed in love poetry. Noble men and women of royal courts practiced a refined love-lust, and these principal preoccupations distinguished them from the everyday people outside. They emulated the gods in a sense that male gods were said to derive their power from their divine female and that male gods were often depicted together with their consorts in loving sexual embrace (Reddy 2012).

Taking into account the broad cultural environment of medieval kingship and Puranic Hinduism, Bengali and Orissan practitioners developed a distinctive form of bhakti worship and ritual that included ritualized invocations and enactments of sexual liaisons within the inner sanctum of the temple. Prayers, performances, and songs, saturated with the spiritualized love-lust of *shringara rasa*, became central features of temple worship... In royal courts, pursuit of ennobling romantic liaisons became, in parallel fashion, a common subject of poetry and drama. Poets and dramatists—and presumably the lovers themselves—did not find it necessary to prove that love was a form of heroic self-denial or self-sacrifice. They did not find it important to demonstrate that love had some higher, spiritual status that enabled lovers to discipline their lust. (Reddy 2012, p. 227).

The distinctive characteristics of South Asian emotions should be understood in the context of the social and cultural order within which these emotions took form, including literary tradition. Sanskrit poet Jayadeva (c. 1200) in his epic poem *Gita Govinda* portrayed the divine love of Krishna and his consort, Radha. This poem was considered an important text in the Bhakti movement of Hinduism.

In Bengal and Orissa in the late twelfth century, among devotees of Vaishnava bhakti, spiritual sexual practice was elaborated and had a number of similarities with European cultures that support the universal features of romantic love. As Reddy (2012) concluded, in courtly love and in Jayadeva’s conception of bhakti:

1. Love had an uplifting, even transcendent, religious significance.
2. Uplifting love was dyadic and exclusive.
3. Uplifting love might be adulterous, yet without transgression.
4. Love brought obsessive reflection, or rumination, especially on the absent beloved.
5. If the beloved returned one's love, the relationship brought health and well-being; unrequited love could bring distress, languishing, thoughts of suicide.
6. The lover placed himself or herself (at times), either metaphorically or really, below the beloved.
7. The fulfillment of the love relationship included innocent, even if adulterous, sexual intercourse.
8. There were signs of uneasiness about the spiritual status of sexual attraction and arousal in both traditions, and a related concern with secrecy (Reddy 2012, p. 284)

## 4.2 Love during the Late Empire in China

During the Late Empire (960–1850 A.D.) in China, the attitudes toward sexuality were increasingly closed and negative (Ruan 1991). When the Neo-Confucianists gained political and religious power, Chinese views concerning sexuality altered and gradually became more repressive. Erotic art and literature were often burned. Since neither spouse had chosen each other, it mattered little whether or not they were sexually attracted to each other. Their primary duty was to procreate. The husband was assumed to be biologically destined to seek satisfaction with a variety of women; therefore, concubines were a typical accompaniment of marriage among the wealthy. The woman was not biologically so destined; her chief function was to give birth to children, and she was expected to remain faithful to her husband.

The Chinese considered sex as a natural and powerful bodily function, so if the husband felt the need for a stimulating sexual partner, it was acceptable for him to take a concubine. Needless to say, the possibility of a lover for the wife was never entertained except, perhaps, in her fantasies. The status of the concubine varied. Sometimes, she was a servant who did the most menial work and was the object of the husband's sexual needs. In other cases, the concubine might enjoy a high status if there was a strong emotional and sexual interaction with him (Murstein 1974).

Displays of love outside marriage were restricted. Even in the event that the partners were highly attracted to each other, it was contrary to custom to express the slightest degree of public affection. An old Chinese saying stated, "When you ascend the bed, act like husband and wife; when you descend to the ground comport yourself like a *Chün tzu*—the Confucian ideal of persons of reserved, dignified, superior conduct" (Murstein 1974, p. 470).

It seemed that the Confucian model had little influence on the peasant class, the vast majority of the Chinese population. Unlike the gentry wife, the peasant

wife had to work very hard to sustain the family, and she exercised corresponding greater power in family decisions. So, there was no time to contemplate and entertain the notion of love.

Confucianism has been frequently described in Western literature as sex-negative, but according to Ruan (1991) that is incorrect. Several remarks of Confucius, which were popular in Late Imperial Period, implied a positive attitude toward sex and were in support of people's sexual desire and rights. Despite the restrictive norms concerning public displays of affection and limited opportunities to cultivate love in everyday Chinese life of that time, romantic ideas were in the air of intellectual aspirations. As Jankowiak (1995) noted, in Imperial China two literary currents were evidently present: (1) written in an elite literary language and (2) in the speech of everyday life. The first one represented the scholarly vision and highlighted poetry, history, and moral philosophy, while the second one produced love stories, which storytellers told in colloquial language in the marketplace and urban teahouses. The typical Chinese love stories of earlier times presented the personal anguish of people torn between filial duty and romantic desire. Real-life experiences of men and women involved in romantic relationships, described in those stories, and depicted many attributes common to romantic infatuation. These tales illustrated the pervasiveness of romantic love in China and its presence in the Chinese mind.

The salience of romantic infatuation in Imperial China life was also evident in the master-concubine relationship, but only wealthy men could afford a concubine. Such a relationship was sometimes characterized by greater emotional intensity than that between husband and wife. In the case of concubine, there was a better opportunity for romantic love than in the case of a wife, chosen for a man by someone else. Therefore, the emotional intensity of the husband-concubine relationship was often positive and great (Levy 1968, pp. 201–202).

According to the literary tradition of these stories, the Chinese always knew of the power of romantic attraction and attachment and how easily the feelings of helpless passion, jealousy, yearning for exclusiveness, and unrequited suffering can emerge. The conflict was inevitable between individual desire and social obligation, the destructive power of passion posed the threat to the filial structure and relationships. Therefore, older members of family tried to prevent such impulsive love.

### **4.3 Medieval Love in Heian Japan in Ninth–Twelfth Centuries**

Japanese aristocratic society developed during the Heian period (794–1191), and the culture of that period was interesting in terms of cultural values, practices, customs, and aspects of their lifestyles (Smits 1992). Buddhism was brought from China in the sixth century and, along with Chinese notions of sovereignty,

methods of government, and concepts of virtue, appealed personal devotion in the Heian period. Two religious traditions were present in Japan of that time, Buddhism and indigenous *kami* worship. These traditions were blended in the official religion of the Heian imperial government, their culture, and spiritual life.

### **Sex and Love**

Many ancient sacred rituals involved sexual intercourse with gods or goddesses in all guises and variations. In the case of ancient Japan, human bodies customarily replaced godly figures, and the act of sex in the temple was a sacred offering. Sex between strangers celebrated gods and goddesses and embraced their fertility and prosperity. There were customs of sexual encounters between men and women outside wedlock in ancient and medieval Japan that was institutionalized, ritualized, and consecrated. Even in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were still many instances of such practices of offering “sacred sex” during the festival of the guardian god or village fair in the shrine, when men and women were obliged to have sex, regardless of whether they knew each other or not. In many cases, sexual encounters were limited within the community during time of festival. The rule was that one had to have sex with anybody. Men and women pretended to be strangers and had sex in the presence of gods. According to local beliefs, these sexual encounters were perceived as sacred magic to enhance women’s fertility and men’s virility, thereby inviting prosperity to the entire village (Ryang 2006, p.11). This was only sex, not romantic love, since there was no exclusivity of relationship. However, it was sacred and elevated by a deity idea; it occurred in the presence of and with the blessing of the gods, so it was idealized in a certain way. Therefore, sex was extolled and connected to love. While being primitive, such a sexual play was a highly intellectual and artistic activity. Ancient courtship involved an exchange of poems along with sexual relations. The subsequent sexual liaison meant a marriage, albeit in a temporary and unstable form. The shift from matrilineage to patrilineage in Japan took a long time.

From a socio-historical perspective, the phenomenon of sacred sex was related with the weakness of the patriarchy and private property (Ryang 2006, p.10). The feminine element was equally valid and potent as the masculine. Woman’s sexuality was under control of gods, the divine, but not a patriarch. As Ryang (2006) believes, this is also related to the polytheism of many ancient societies. Japan is one society where even today polytheism and diverse religiosity are apparent.

### **Holistic View of Love**

The distinction of love and sex, along with the mind–body distinction, is among the keys for the conception of romantic love in many cultural contexts. In Western Christianized discourse, love and sex were considered separately; sex was traditionally repressed by society while love being elevated. In ancient Japan, human life was perceived as incorporating *mi* (body) and *tama* (soul) and the distinction of love and sex was alien; sexual repression was not the issue. Sex was considered as natural and even a sacred action of body and spirit.

Love in Japan of that time naturally assumed and included sexual consummation. Love and sex were inseparable; as a complex emotion, it was a cultural

endeavor and wholesome passion of that era. Both love and sex, inseparable and together, constituted an important component of life. For the ancient Japanese during the Heian period (late eighth to eleventh centuries) and later, love meant holism that from the outset included bodily fusion usually taking the form of sexual consummation (Ryang 2006, p. 5).

The Heian elite in Japan did not distinguish physical and spiritual, body and soul in the manner of European Christians. However, they understood differences between *this-worldly matters* and *the realm of the divine*. Due to this cultural philosophy in Heian Japan, aristocrats understood love holistically and perceived sexual partnerships as evolving from a range of feelings and behaviors that could not be broken into two different elements, the spiritual and the material. In this view, sexual relationships, being *this-worldly endeavors*, involved the inevitable frustration of all this-worldly desires, the same way, for example, as desires for success as a poet or as an imperial official. The genre of ardent poetry was used in exchanges between lovers, between officials of different ranks, between kinsmen, and between sisters or mothers and daughters (Reddy 2012, p. 291).

Sexual partnerships were viewed as a matter of interest to the gods, who could advance some partnerships, which they favored. Spirits might punish those who offended their sexual partners, neglected them, or slighted their dignity. However, as Japanese believed, such transgressions, if happened, did not arise from lust, and they did not attribute such offenses against lovers as insult, neglect, or deception to the sexual cravings.

In the Japanese cultural context of that time, people did not admit the dualism of *bodily* and *spiritual*, *love* and *sex*, as in medieval Christian ideas. Therefore, sexual relationships in the Japanese imperial aristocracy lacked the opposition of *true love* and *desire-as-appetite* (Reddy 2012). Similar to the Sanskrit term *shringara rasa*, described above, the Heian concept of *koi* or *monoomoi* meant longings for sublime sexual partnerships that were reciprocal and excluded coercion. These concepts did not separate desire, as an appetite, from love, as selfless care and devotion to another. In Heian spirituality, it was impossible to distinguish between a seductive attractiveness that inspired lust and a lordly grace and beauty that inspired devotion or true love. (The twelfth-century European *trobairitz* and *troubadour* distinctively contrasted the physical and spiritual realms) (Reddy 2012).

All desires were inevitably frustrating and that proper conduct toward a partner helped ensure the favor of gods and spirits. In Japanese texts of the Heian period, desire, and in particular sexual desire, was conceptualized in a Buddhist frame of reference, within which all desire in this world is inherently frustrating and brings inevitable suffering.

The worship of indigenous *kami* deities in Japan and solid matriarchal tendencies encouraged Heian aristocrats to respect their longings for specific sexual partners as the manifestations of spirits and encouragement of the gods. Love poetry could have an incantatory force and attract a beloved by its subtlety and refinement. Loving men and women attracted each other by the luxury of their dress and surroundings, the refinement of their movements and gestures, and their skill in composing little jewel-like love verses. Lovers fulfilled each others' longings

and offered spiritual compassion as a form of consolation for the sufferings of this world. Even fleeting sexual encounters could partake of the spiritual; however, a more enduring partnership brought the real completeness.

A distinctive emotion experienced and expressed by divine figures was compassion that required an ability to grasp the other's suffering. The ability to appreciate and to share another's emotional sufferings was a characteristic of an elegant, spiritually elevated gentleman and a lady. In the fictions, poetry, and autobiographies of the period, Heian aristocrats frequently mentioned tears; the references to tear-soaked sleeves were often repeated. Deep feeling of sadness was a sign of a higher spiritual endowment and a challenge to others to demonstrate their elevated empathy. The typical approach of the male suitor was to insist that the intensity of his longing for the beloved had plunged him into deep suffering and to beg for compassion. (Reddy 2012). This is an example of a truly uplifting love affair between two lovers having a mutual approach.

Each began by alluding indirectly to a sad, intense longing for the other and, as the other's welcome of such feeling became clear, moved toward open expression of it. Each sought empathy for sorrow and attempted to find consolation in suffering. The man was persistent, even insistent; the woman was retiring, reluctant, continuing her resistance even after both understood she was willing. A relationship established in this way was not merely lustful, nor was it imbued with the ethereal quality of *fin'amors*. It was spiritual and physical, because its physicality was transformed by the high status of the parties, of their dress and their literary talents and, above all, by their capacity to restrain their longings, in case they were inappropriate, and to comprehend the other's feelings. This self-consciously cultivated emotional capacity was displayed, in particular, through their literary talents, but also in their mutual embraces.

Deep feelings, skillfully expressed and skillfully appreciated by the other, lifted the parties out of the ordinary, closer to the heavenly. In this context, to make love to a partner was to permit oneself to enjoy her or his compassion to the fullest... With no need to prove that their love was not lust, in a world where all desire was frustrating and compassion was the stance of the gods vis-à-vis human life, Heian lovers displayed to each other, not heroism, but sad, intense longing and insightful compassion. (Reddy 2012, pp. 335–336).

It should be noted that Origuchi (1965–1966) attributed to love an active and action-oriented connotation, symbolizing the act of “taking” rather than passively “waiting to be given.” Love is an action, rather than a feeling or sentiment.

### **Spirituality of Love**

The nobility's love affairs and their personal relationships and feelings were considered as spiritually meaningful and had a celestial quality. A high-born, well-educated gentleman or lady being overcome with a longing for association with a splendid partner was often succumbed to a futile desire. They knew, however, that it could never be satisfied in this life, so such longing naturally evoked sadness. Nevertheless, they were aspiring to a spiritual connection, one perhaps favored by connections in past lives or by *kami* deities. The *wakas* (a type of Japanese poem) that they composed for their beloved ones expressed this sad longing and incantations aimed at eliciting the compassion and intervention of the gods and spirits. When a suitable beloved responded with compassion and admitted to longing in

return, the partnership was established. This relationship was something more than a futile, *this-worldly* effort to satisfy desire; it was rather “a collaboration that created a fleeting likeness of that salvation offered by the marvelous other lands of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas”.

Fine, fluid calligraphy on a piece of scented paper that was just the right color, powerful pivot words at the center of a poem so quickly composed that it must reflect deeply felt emotion, carefully worked patterns on a scented silk robe, the light of the sunset reflected off a carefully tended garden pond shining like jewelry, conversation from behind an elegant curtain in the thickening night—such things brought transitory relief from trouble and care. (Reddy 2012, p. 343)

Desire and fate were powerfully linked, while the capacity for empathy was tied to rank and to spiritual insight. All this ensured that the longing for association could flourish as a prestigious personal quality.

Longing was expressed through highly elaborate displays of compassion, clothed in prescribed forms of glamour and luxury, seclusion and movement, learning and reverence. These forms had been carefully developed, in turn, to enhance the expression of nuances of feeling. (Reddy 2012, p. 345)

### Sublimation of Love in Literature

The Heian period was a time of great accomplishments in the literature and arts. The *Manyōshū* or the Book of Ten Thousand Songs, compiled in the late eighth century AD, is an anthology of poems on a range of subjects from the bawdy to the heroic. Among those are 136 lyrical love poems written by royalty, priests, peasants, and warriors (Anonymous and Wright 1988). Many describe physical expression of mood, emotion, the passing of time, the anticipation of love, the memory of love, and the constancy of love into old age. By far, the most prevalent theme is the longing for love, longing for a spouse away at war, for a lover, and for a person glimpsed but still unknown.

The term *koi* stood for love and contained sexually explicit aspects of love. The “love” adored by *Manyō* poets was not simply an emotion but as a complex fusion of mind and body, emotional longing and carnal union, words and deeds, and as a set of social functions (Ryang 2006, p.15). The *koi*, as expressed in *Manyōshū*, contained a mixture of notions of bodily fusion and emotional union.

The feeling of *koi* in *Manyōshū* cannot be experienced by one’s own choice or decision; instead it is the captivating attraction to the other and the other’s magical pull. One is made captive to the other, and one is brought and bound to be. In this sense, *koi* is not controlled by one’s willpower—it is an inevitable fate.

*Manyō* poets expressed solitude as a salient feeling of love. Love resides and grows in a lonely heart. The sentiments of love involve the endurance of painful separation from the loved one and the deeply frustrating sense of longing for the inaccessible lover. For the eighth-century Japanese poets, *koi* meant the sadness of having to stay and live alone (Itō 1996).

The Heian period was a time of great accomplishments in the literature and arts. Japanese novelist, poet, and lady-in-waiting at the Imperial court, Murasaki Shikibu (c. 978–c. 1014), wrote the world’s first romantic novel, the tale of Prince

Genji, known as “the Shining Prince.” *The Tale of Genji* was a long novel about the life of Genji, a fictitious prince, and presented an image of a culture of elegant aristocrats, who were skillful in poetry, music, calligraphy, and courtship. Largely the book depicted the loves of Prince Genji and several women in his life. The novel did not contain scenes of powerful action, but it embodied sensitivity to human emotions and to the beauties of nature.

The analysis of the Heian Japanese vocabulary of love (Pekarik 1982) showed that there was only one term to name attraction for a person of the opposite sex, *suki*. Varying levels of intensity and types of attachment were described using this term and its derivatives. It appeared that there was no clear distinction between lust and love (with its emotional involvement). In the *The Tale of Genji*, *suki* provided the root for a diversity of descriptive terms. *Sukiwaza* (*suki*-act) and *sukigoto* (*suki*-event) refer to love affairs or casual relations. *Sukigokochi* (*suki*-feeling) and *sukigokoro* (*suki*-mind) described inclination to have such affairs. The word *sukizukishi* meant “promiscuous” and held strong negative connotation, but did not apply to a person who had many affairs. The term rather applied to a person who did not manage such affairs discreetly or who mistreated his partner by ignoring the respect due to their rank. Actually, many Genji’s improprieties in his love affairs were displayed in his unkindness and neglect rather than strong passion.

The Genji’s love was neither “true,” in the sense of courtly love, nor was it mere “lust.” He was no Don Juan, in a European vision, which offered convenient lies and claimed to love in order to satisfy his libido. His infatuations were sometimes fleeting and sometimes enduring, but they manifested divine beauty and sublime elegance. The spiritual aura accompanied his elegant demeanor, his literary refinement, and his overwrought sensitivity to others, even if an affair went badly, bringing suffering, and isolation (Reddy 2012, p. 342).

Other aristocratic writers produced a wealth of prose and poetry. Heian aristocratic literature was about the lifestyles and sensibilities of Heian aristocrats. Heian literature tends to reflect a general understanding of the basic teachings of Buddhism.

#### 4.4 Perso-Arabic Culture of Love

The South Asian cultural tendencies of that time were also influenced by the culture shaped under the Ghaznavids—a Persianate Muslim dynasty ruling large parts of Iran, much of Transoxiana, and North India from 977 to 1186. Many love words entered South Asia with the Ghaznavids in the eleventh century and gradually spread throughout North India within the vernacular of local inhabitants. In this Perso-Arabic culture, there were multiple motions of love, in both religious and secular traditions, and in different genres. Islamic understanding of love was colored by the strongly anti-ascetic character of Islamic teachings on sexuality.

While married love and the need for sexual satisfaction were valued, the woman’s power of sexual attraction was an especially feared *asfina* (chaos); therefore,

the cultural traditions placed restrictions on contacts between the sexes and required to cover certain parts of the body, both for men and women. As was the case in the Sanskrit tradition, the Perso-Arabic culture poetry produced the great ideas and stories about passionate love. Most of the genres of Arabic and Persian poetry practiced in India were part of the cultural baggage of Islamic conquest.

From the ninth–tenth centuries, Arabic literature elaborated several ideas of courtly love, such as “love for love’s sake” and “exaltation of the beloved lady.” Arabic poetry inspired the concept of “love as desire never to be fulfilled” (von Grunebaum 1952). Persian scholar Ibn Sina (c.980–1037), known in Europe as “Avicenna,” in his Arabic *Treatise on Love*, suggested that love has the “ennobling power.” The concept of a harmonious hierarchical order of the parts of the soul took the place of a concept leading to a doctrine advocating the suppression of the lower parts of the soul in the attempt to reach the perfection of the highest. On this basis, Ibn Sina (1945) stated his doctrine of love in which he made a great attempt to allot to the love of external beauty a role which remained positive, valuable, and honorable even when compared with the most exalted and unearthly love.

The romances (*masnavi*), which flourished in Persian courtly circles from the eleventh century, became extremely popular in India. Romances about love usually dealt with the conflict between love and ethics or between the code of love and that of family honor. In the cultures of India, there was substantial overlaying of secular and religious love. It was beautifully brought out by a song in the classic film *Mughal-e Azam* (“The Great Mughal,” Dir. K. Asif 1960). The palace girl Anarkali sings and dances in front of Emperor Akbar, his Hindu Rajput wife Jodha Bai, and their son Prince Salim on the joyful occasion of Krishna’s birth and the return of Salim from the war front. As she sings, she smiles mischievously and glances erotically at Salim, while Akbar and Jodha Bai merely enjoy her performance of “spiritual” love. In modern films, the mere use of Braj Bhasha in a love song is enough to evoke the whole structure of feeling pertaining to Krishna and the gopis (“cowherd girls”) (cited in Orsini 2006, p. 27).

### **Origins of Love in Arab Culture**

Many scholars believe that romantic love is a concept originated in Western societies (Giddens 1992; Luhmann 1986). However, the assumption that romantic love was introduced to Arab society by Europeans is incorrect. Actually, it had an extensive history in the Arab world (Armbrust 2009; Sharma 2006). Moors, the medieval Muslims of Northwest Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, whose Arab culture was considered elaborate among cultures of that time, demonstrated evidence of many elements of romantic love in the form of courtly love. As a matter of fact, the concept of courtly love, which first became known in southern France, was influenced by Arab culture during its ruling in neighboring Spain. Before the onset of religious fanaticism after Almoravids’ arrival from Africa in 1086, Arabs frequently contacted with southern France from 1031 to 1086. The minor kings in the Moorish territory encouraged literature; their poets often served as ambassadors to the southern France. Moslems and Christians lived side by side on practically an equal footing.

The period was the time of pleasure and luxury, of wine and love, as well as a period of culture. Among the Arabs the traditional manifestations of royal power was in the encouragement of literature, the kings had their court poets. The smaller towns and villages also had their own poets, who were trained in the classical Arabic tradition. Some went to Arabia to perfect themselves in the art, but in their poems they depicted the Spanish life with gardens of Andalusia and described the beauties of their own country (Parry 1960).

The Crusades brought more contacts and influences. In particular, the pre- and post-Crusade verse of William IX of Aquitaine differs in rhythm and rhyme, presumably, due to Arab influence (Langdon-Davis 1954). William probably became aware that the Arabs had a higher esteem for women and more refined courtship practices than the Europeans.

The concept of love was deeply rooted in Arab literature, language, music, and history and invoked strong emotions, intense themes of passion, romance, and sexuality. The romantic poem (*ghazaf*) is a cathartic outlet for romantic expression in the Arab world (Abu-Lughod 1985, 1999). Love stories such as *Majnun Layla*, *'Antar wa 'Abla*, *The Thousand and One Nights*, and *Hadith Bayad wa Riyad* are among the earliest and the best known stories of love, romance, passion, desire, and sexuality. Overall, written expressions of love and romance are consistent themes in Arab literature and history. The stories created vivid Arab illustrations of romance and love.

Moorish poet Ibn Hazm was from Andalusia (located on the Iberian Peninsula); in 1022, he wrote the masterpiece, *The Dove's Neck-Ring*, in which he discoursed on the ennobling aspects of love; he presents exclusive concern with sensuality and depicted the lover as a slave unto his lady, addressing her as "my lord" (*sayyidi*) or "my master" (*mawlaya*). Personages from Arab love stories, such as Aucassin (Al-Kasim) represent sensitivity to the beauties of nature. The Arab lover graciously tolerated rejection since the essence of joy is the suffering caused by rejection (Murstein 1974, p. 151).

Ibn Hazm defined the concept of love as a reunion of parts of souls which were separated in the creation. An outwardly beautiful form usually causes love because the soul inclines toward perfect images. This kind of love cannot be felt for more than one person. However, the other type, which is actually passion, can. True love does not ignore the physical aspect, yet the union of souls is a thousand times finer in its effects than that of bodies. True love makes the lover better in many ways; in order to show his good qualities and to make himself desirable, he strives to do his best (what he was incapable of doing before). A stingy man became generous, a gloomy man became bright-faced, a coward became brave, a grouchy-dispositioned one became gay, an ignoramus became clever, and a slovenly one in his personal appearance became handsome. True love and nobility of character go hand in hand (Parry 1960). A man may feel this type of love for a woman who is powerful and of high rank, or for a slave girl. Whether the beloved was of high or of low rank, the lover was always abject before her. "The surprising thing which happens in love is the submissiveness of the lover to his beloved" (p. 10). True love had an ennobling effect upon the lover and made a man of the

humble birth the equal of the noble lady whom he addressed. The lover, whether of higher or lower rank than his beloved, spoke of himself as her slave. That was a form of slavery which does honor to him. He loved her even when she tortured him. He finds contentment when she rejects him and joy when she shows him any kindness. There are evidences of the freedom which women, even married women, enjoyed in Andalusia.

Arab love songs and story tellers were another source of love inspirations during that time (Tannahill 1992). The figures of professional storytellers flourished in the cities of the Near East, telling his tales to passersby on streets. Their repertoire, especially the Persians among them, was amazingly diverse. They drew on the Bible and the Vedas, recounted the exploits of Greek heroes, Roman warriors, and Egyptian queens. Their word pictures, being wild, exotic, and glamorous, affected the Arab imagination.

The Arabs were newly adjusted to the romantic vision; they also saw the seductive slave singers, who were self-possessed, exquisite, highly trained, and cultured. These girls developed into fashionable elites that entertained a civilizing influence all the way from Persia to Spain (Tannahill 1992, p. 235). Their charming foreign accents were unable to cope with the archaic words of traditional Arab songs for lyrics. The simple love songs the girls themselves preferred rapidly captured the Arabs' ears as the storytellers' romances had captured their imagination.

Two forms of love songs developed as did two schools of love itself. The slave singer, a willing courtesan, was the primary target of the love-desire school. It was up to the lady to ravish the gentleman with her wit and beauty, while he courted her with style. He found his pleasure in the hunt itself and feeling perfectly free. Once his object was achieved, he set off in pursuit of a different quarry. The courtesan, being an object of hedonistic impermanent devotion, might also enjoy the game for its own sake. However, she was more interested in following profit-making. Most of the time she lacked the sincerity; money was of the greatest importance.

But "pure love"—the second school of love—was something quite different; it was a masculine game designed to satisfy intellectualized masculine emotions. The courtesan was a person, whereas the heroine of the "pure love" lyric was not a person at all, only a focal point. The respectable lady's face, figure, charm, and wit were unknown quantities to her poet-lover. It was likely that many heroines of these lyrics were not aware of the poetry that they inspired. They were figures, sometimes known to their admirers only at a distance.

Love was of the mind, sex of the body, and the Arabs did not confuse these two. What the "pure love" school did was turn to account for the segregation of women, so that instead of denying love, it supplied it. Chastity became so important that it would be a betrayal for the lover to satisfy his passion even if he could. Fidelity was expected to be observed for life, while absolute subjection of the lover to the beloved was required. "Pure love" came to be seen in the light of "ennobling love," as a creative, spiritual source of inspiration. It was this form of "pure love" that was later introduced into Europe.

The geographic proximity of the Moors and communication with the south of France provided the routes for the transmission of poetic forms and spirits of love. The idealization of the lady and the poetic form of expressing it were present in some degree in the Moors' culture. Yet, only the beginning of the second millennium witnessed the turn to appreciation of culture and poetry. The increased wealth of the nobility allowed them to entertain in grand style and to support the luxury of maintaining troubadours of love (Murstein 1974, p. 170). Thus, the notion that romantic love is a foreign concept in the Arab world is incorrect. These factors established a background to produce the phenomenon of court love.

### **Love Themes in Persia**

A Persian poet Hafez (fourteenth century AD) had important influence for both Persian and European culture for his love poetry. His lyrical poems, known as *ghazals*, are noted for their beauty and bring to fruition the love, mysticism, and early Sufi themes that had long pervaded Persian poetry (Bajoghli et al. 2009). His work influenced Eastern and Western poetry. Goethe and Nietzsche recognized him as a poetic genius. Hafez was also the most famous Persian poet in Iran. His love sonnets reflected the kind of love that appeals to the typical Persian. Browne (1928/1999) identified the following main themes in Hafez poems:

1. Love as an aid in turning away from the world; that is, in many of Hafez' poems, the lover was preoccupied with love. He lost an interest in sociability and does not care for social interactions, except for those with the beloved person.
2. The superiority of the beloved over her lover; the lover idealized his beloved. She was without flaw and in no way dependent on the lover's love or largess. The lover was symbolized as a beggar and the beloved as a king or queen.
3. The lover possessed an ambivalent attitude toward separation from his beloved. The lover as dominated by an anxiety related to both fears that the union is unattainable, and a sense of insecurity felt in every second of the time of union. Consequently, although the lover usually complained about separation, at times he welcomes it, as if he can tolerate separation more easily than the sense of insecurity he feels in the time of union.
4. The lover was preoccupied by fears of betrayal, and plagued by a constant anxiety that the beloved could be unfaithful to him.

## **4.5 Love in Medieval Western Christian Culture**

During the early Christian era, suppression of passionate love and sex was harsh. From the earliest times, the Catholic Church proclaimed passionate love and sex to be a mortal sin, punishable by eternal damnation, for any purpose other than procreation. The Church was actually uncomfortable even with procreative sex within marriage (Gay 1984).

### **Love and Sex**

In the second and third centuries, Christianity grew as a new culture and had its impact on the Western world, in particular on relationships between men and women. The concept of soul–body dichotomy, assuming that they are separate entities, became the key to this theological philosophy. The body is only a prison where the soul is confined. The body drags a person down to sin, to the pursuit for pleasure, to sexual lust. The central idea of this new religion was rejection of pleasure and human sexuality. While preoccupied with repressing biological urges, which returned periodically, early Christians projected the responsibility for sexual visions and temptations onto the devil.

Love often equated with lust, and theologians of Christianity taught that women were intrinsically lascivious and fickle seductresses. For Catholic priest and theologian Saint Jerome (347–420 A.D.), who struggled hard against temptation, women were sexually insatiable, and if a man extinguished their desire “it bursts into flame... it enervates a man’s mind, and engrosses all thought except for the passion which it feeds” (cited in Abbott 2010, p. 84).

Christianity suggested the ideal of consistently selfless and non-sexual love to men and women. Love and sex were proclaimed to stand at opposite poles: the source of love was God; the source of sex was the devil. Sexual abstinence was proclaimed the moral ideal. Marriage was Christianity’s concession to the depravity of human nature that made this idea obtainable. The Medieval Church was obsessed with the denial of sex. The Christian code suggested that sexual acts should be avoided, except for the minimum needed to keep the population in existence. Still it remained a regrettable necessity. Self-denial and avoidance of sex was encouraged even in marriage. The most damnable in the sexual act was the pleasure derived from it. The pleasure of a sexual act and sensation of desire for a person of the opposite sex were held sinful. Since the love of a man for a woman was held to be simply desire, then no man should love his wife. In fact, French theologian and Bishop of Paris, Peter Lombard (1096–1160), maintained that “for a man to love his wife too ardently is a sin worse than adultery...” (cited in Branden 1980/2008, p. 11).

Love and the attitude toward women changed in the Middle Ages. Two views of women coexisted. On the one hand, the image of Eve symbolized women as temptresses who were the cause of a man’s spiritual downfall. On the other hand, women existed in the image of Mary, the Virgin Mother, the symbol of purity who transforms man’s soul upward. The symbols of whore and the mother dominated the concept of a woman in Western culture since that time. The image of woman was dichotomous: a woman who one desires and the woman who one admires. Medieval Christianity was reluctant to integrate desire and admiration, to synthesize physical and spiritual values.

In particular, in medieval England, until the end of the twelfth century, Christianity influenced the understanding of love. Love was mainly understood as self-sacrificing and unselfish, implying a harmonious, compassionate, affectionate, and benevolent relationship between people rather than a romantic sentiment. It might include sexual attraction or not. Friendship was considered closely related

to love in the meaning of corresponding words (Kalyuga 2012, p. 76). But, romantic attitude was still alien to love.

### **Love and Marriage**

Marriage was still regarded as an economic and political institute and declared by the Church to be a sacrament. By the end of the sixth century, the Church's power extended the rigorous regulation of relationship between man and woman in all aspects. In the Church's attitude, the integration of love, sex, and marriage was not regarded as a noble ideal.

The church introduced a mutual consent as a feature of marriage, but still perceived "love" as a destructive feeling and sensation. Because property and financial considerations were paramount, they outweighed the love as the basis for marriage.

Medieval Christianity did not acknowledge the equality of the partners. The subordinate status of women accounted for the inalterability of love-based marriage. Since men controlled family property and pledged to protect and support their wives, and women, on the other hand, had no legal status apart from their husbands and pledged to serve and obey their husbands; therefore, the pragmatic marriage overrode marriage rooted in love (Abbott 2010, p. 85).

From seventh until the twelfth century, there was a discussion about what marriage was and what the role of sex and love was in marital relations. The question remained whether it is a moral contract authenticated by the ceremony itself, or it has to be confirmed by sexual intercourse. The judgement was that "consent, not coitus, makes marriage" (Tannahill 1992, p. 146). Marriage conferred the right (not the duty) to indulge in sexual intercourse, a right that existed only within marriage.

### **Marriage and Courtly Love**

Monogamy provided a good soil for emergence of romantic love, however, strangely enough—for extramarital romance and affair. Marriage was not considered a place for love. In the twelfth century, Andreas Capellanus (1174/1960) in his *The Art of Courtly Love* indicated:

... everybody knows that love can have no place between husband and wife ... For what is love but an inordinate desire to receive passionately a furtive and hidden embrace? But what embrace between husband and wife can be furtive, I ask you, since they may be said to belong to each other and may satisfy all of each other's desires without fear that anybody will object? (p. 100).

He added that it is "firmly established that love cannot exert its powers between two people who are married to each other (p. 106)."

Until the sixteenth century, most courtly love songs, plays, and stories assumed a darker ending—either passionate love was unrequited, unconsummated, or it spun down to family tragedy and the suicide or deaths of the lovers. In 1540, Italian philosopher Alessandro Piccolomini (1508–1579) wrote that: "love is reciprocity of soul and has a different end and obeys different laws from marriage. Hence one should not take the loved one to wife" (quoted in Hunt 1959, p. 206). It

was true to his times. However, Piccolomini began to change his mind later in his life. Shakespeare with his *Romeo and Juliette* contributed to this unhappy end tradition. Yet, that was just about time to change the mindset and bring romanticism to the onset of marriage, at least. Shakespeare wrote some romantic comedies in which passionately mismatched couples dashed toward marriage, but those plays were still the exception.

Love was still alien to marital relationships. In Europe, in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries, adultery became idealized as the highest form of love among the aristocracy. According to the Countess of Champagne, it was impossible for true love to “exert its powers between two people who are married to each other” (Capellanus 1960). Noblemen and kings fell in love with courtesans rather than the wives. Yet, marriage was sheltered from the ravages of love in extramarital affairs. Husbands *could* entertain passions, considered inappropriate in marriage, with mistress, but she had few or no rights. With a mistress, a man could indulge in erotic passion without seriously destructing his marriage or his wife’s status. Noblewomen and queens were more discreet than their husbands, but they also looked beyond marriage for love and intimacy. This distinction between love and marriage was common among the lower and middle classes as well. Many of the songs and stories popular among peasants in medieval Europe mocked married love (Coontz 2005).

Medieval Muslim scholars were more favorable toward sexual passion between husband and wife than were Christian theologians, but they also maintained that too much intimacy between husband and wife weakened the devotion to God. Secular authors in the Islamic world, like in Europe, believed that love thrived best outside marriage (Coontz 2005).

## 4.6 Courtly Love in Late Medieval European Culture

During the middle of the eleventh century, regional lords were in persistent conflicts and their resources were steadily expanding. Agriculture boomed and the trade brought wealth to the nobility. The decline in local wars brought more time for leisure, and literacy spread among the growing populations of the towns. The medieval version of romantic love in twelfth-century Europe was embodied in the ideas of *fin’amors* (“true love”) and the making of *courtly love*. Courtly love was a precursor of romantic love that pervaded the relationship between sexes in the eleventh–twelfth centuries.

Aristocratic inheritance practices of eleventh–twelfth centuries were important for the origins of courtly love because they shaped the roles available to women. The kinship became flexible, and women could inherit lordship and rule in their own name. Troubadours’ love songs to a *domna* (“female lord”) were idealized and figurative depicting charismatic women. Great women lords like Eleanor of Aquitaine, Marie of Champagne, and Ermengard of Narbonne, who ruled directly, promoted courtly love and had courage to war against their husbands when necessary.

### **Emergence of Courtly Love in South of France**

The twelfth century witnessed the flourishing of *courtly love*, a phenomenon whose importance has been intensely debated by medievalists. To some of them it was a prototype, a precursor of romanticism, which permeated the relationship between the sexes in the nineteenth–twentieth centuries. To others, it was a minor art form, never predominant even in the twelfth century, but inflated in importance by the nineteenth century writer Gaston Paris (1839–1903), who coined the term *courtly love*.

The concept of courtly love in the south of France in the eleventh century received special attention and flourished, elevating, and idealizing emotion of love. Love was viewed as an art having its rules; lovers take service in the army of Cupid, and in this service they become pale and thin and sleepless; one cannot love one’s own wife but has to love the wife of some other man, so lovers must keep the affair in secret; love cannot exist apart from jealousy. The lover’s lady is his feudal suzerain, and he owes allegiance to her. Her status is far above his; he seldom dares to presume upon the equality, and his addresses to the lady are full of the deepest humility (Parry 1960).

### **Courtly Love in the Context of Sex**

*Fin’amors* also developed in the contexts of the Gregorian reform, including wandering preachers, new, more strictly ascetic monastic orders, interest in piety, and the church’s strenuous energies to control marriage and reform all sexual conduct. Sexual pleasure was regarded as sinful and polluting. The church revitalized an older idea of sexual desire as a kind of appetite, similar to hunger or thirst, fashioned a conception of sexual desire-as-appetite, and attempted to outlaw sexual pleasure for all Christians. This move was the most ambitious piece of Gregorian reform. By the early twelfth century, it was viewed that even legitimately married Christian couples feeling a sexual desire-as-appetite for each other committed a sin. Even sexual touching—pleasant or not—was inherently polluting. An act of coitus, even in legitimate marriage, even being free of pleasure and therefore of sin, permanently tainted both soul and body.

So, courtly love might be considered as a response to this assault on sexual pleasure, but could be a secondary development (Reddy 2012). Certain twelfth-century aristocrats suggested that sexual partnerships might be a source of moral improvement and transcendent joy if they were founded on “true love” (*fin’amors*). This positive vision of sexual relationships was a new concept in Western literature. Reddy (2012) provided evidence why courtly love appeared in the original cultural context of the songs of the *trobairitz* and *troubadours*, who first popularized the courtly love ideal. He considered the incorporation of the courtly love ideal into the verse narratives of some chivalric romances and examined how widely the principles of courtly love were actually put into practice in the twelfth century.

The *trobairitz* (“female songwriters”) and *troubadours* (“male songwriters”) of twelfth-century southern France spoke of *fin’amors* (“true love”). Courtly love literature of the twelfth century developed in aristocratic speech and was initially

composed at courts by noble men and women, or by commoners in their service, and increasingly relied on written forms. *Fin'amors* established an ideal of behavior that was expressed in a form of literature that under the cover of literary fiction defied the church's claim that all interest in sexual partners arose from sinful appetite.

*Courtly love* was the concept that justified love by its sublime, heroic contrast with desire-as-appetite and described as an emotion capable to master this desire. Proclaiming the existence of *fin'amors*, troubadours rejected the church reformers' implicit assumption that sexual longings arose from desire-as-appetite. In their view, sexual desire interpreted as an appetite cannot adequately describe lovers' feelings. The *trobairitz* and *troubadours* acknowledged the existence of desire-as-appetite, but affirmed that "true love" also existed and could govern the dangerous energies of desire-as-appetite and prevent appetite from motivating selfish, harmful acts. From that time on, Western notions of romantic love had this imbedded dualism.

*Troubadours* treated *fin'amors* as feelings different from desire and set corresponding lyrics of courtly love. Their equation of the motivation of lust, or *concupiscentia*, with false promises and disloyalty anchored their distinction between *fin'amors* and *lust* in the everyday aristocratic speech (Reddy 2012). The idea of the test of love, the essential facet of the emerging code of chivalry, further developed *fin'amors* into "a heroic ethic of courage, self-denial, self-discipline, and devotion to the beloved every bit as demanding and rewarding as the spiritual career of Christian asceticism" (Reddy 2012, p. 166). *Fin'amors* became a shadow religion with its morality and rituals, offering lovers a justification for coming together safe from the prying eyes of priests and jealous husbands.

Courtly love restricted both women and men and described the rules for a game that was sometimes cruel and disappointing, but still worth playing. This game seemed especially worthy to those twelfth-century men and women who could not recognize their own experience of "sexuality" in the church's harsh theology. The way of thinking that love's mastery of desire makes a joy much better than the satisfaction of desire alone transformed courtly relationships. *Troubadours* and *trobairitz* offered men and women a way to accommodate *lust* (desire-as-appetite) within their relationship. They demonstrated aristocrats how lust could be integrated as motivation for fickleness and betrayal. Sexual partnerships were built within networks of complex, shifting alliances, and the longing for association was a multifaceted emotion to a potential partner in lordship. Love for them was an intensely engaging game of shared sovereignty, played according to the slippery rules of aristocratic speech (Reddy 2012).

### **The Art of Courtly Love**

The term was associated with troubadours and poets in the courts of the nobility. New poetic forms including poetry of love were introduced to France, probably from the cultures of Moslem Spain, where many of the romantic elements appeared earlier than among the Christians, which substantially influenced the *troubadours* and *trobairitz*.

Courtly love embodied the relationship between aspiring lovers and their noble ladies. Lyric poets and poet-musicians (*troubadours*) composed poems and songs expressing a code whose chief tenets were the ennobling power of love:

- the conception of love as a burning, rarely extinguished passion;
- the impossibility of love between husband and wife;
- the elevation of the beloved to a position superior to that of the supplicant, in imitation of the relationship between feudal lord and vassal;
- the idea of fidelity between lovers (at least while they were in love) (Murstein 1974, p. 149).

Other writers composed longer verse narratives that dramatized a love modeled on troubadour lyric. Plots were made describing the passing of tests of love by both male and female lovers. Reddy (2012) explored the depiction of courtly love and of the emerging ideal of chivalry in twelfth-century romances. In the romance narratives, men and women passed the tests applicable to their gender. Such tasks as rescue, trial by combat, or patient waiting or wandering were the men's tests, or the love "service," offered by a male aspirant to his beloved, proving the lover's devotion, rather than just mere appetite. A man unlikely would risk his life or did the duty of a lengthy quest driven simply to indulge an appetite. Women lovers' tests in the romances consisted of quiet fidelity, the rejection of a captor's advances, the overcoming of restrictions imposed by jealous husbands or domineering fathers. This way, women showed their selfless devotion and displayed that in their hearts; desire, fear, and the obligations of female duty were utterly tamed and subordinated to the higher duty of love (Reddy 2012, p. 169). In the romances, well-disciplined desire-as-appetite should be fulfilled at the proper moment, resulting in a joy much greater than desire by itself could ever provide.

The "ennobling power of love" referred to the process of loving rather than merely focusing on the beloved herself. A troubadour expressed himself in a chanson, a love song with a melody composed for the poem. It had a confessional and ritual character. Verses were regularly structured and set to the same melody and intended to express the simple message of the troubadour. As Murstein (1974, p. 157) claimed, the poetry of the troubadours expressed a literary revolt against the rigid social structure of medieval society and a thirst for individual achievement in love with the assumption of desire by the man and acceptance by the lady in accord with nature.

Nobles were often gone off to the Crusades, so their wives ruled the courts. The idea of courtly love endorsed an exalted passion between a man and woman—not between a man and his wife but between a man and someone else's wife. This passionate and spiritual love was obviously recognized for extramarital involvement. Thus, courtly love kept a dismal view of marriage, and this notion was accepted for hundreds of years.

Courtly love literature featured specific character types. There was the beautiful, aristocratic, and married woman with blond or golden hair, white, unblemished skin, rosy lips, and a slender and graceful body. Her lover was usually a knight, enraptured by her beauty, who pledges absolute fidelity and submission with the hope of winning her love and physical intimacy. It is obviously necessary to keep the adulterous relationship secret, especially from her husband. Despite the illicit nature of the relationship, the love, far from being sordid, is depicted as ennobling and the source of all that is good and true. The knight proves his honor through absolute faithfulness to the lady, demonstrates his courage through any martial contests she desires of him, and, except for adultery, manifests impeccable Christian values.

Gaining the lady's love, though, is not easy. The lady is cold and aloof. He grows pale in her presence and stumbles in his speech. He pleads for her mercy, kneels in her presence, and prays that she will grant him her favor. The knight thus adopts a manner similar to two important contemporary relationships, those of a feudal vassal and his lord and of a Christian and God. (Burns 2008, pp. 64–65)

The tradition of courtly love and its accompanying songs and poems were art forms that did not necessarily wish to represent reality. Nevertheless, at least we know that the concept was in the medieval mind. Courtly love functioned as a projective technique for eliciting the fantasies and wishes of courtiers and ladies. From the lady's point of view, it represented a desire for recognition, attention, and power over men. From the man's standpoint, it embodied their desire for a woman capable of exciting them. For both sexes, it represented a wish for freedom of action in heterosexual relations.

It is not clear whether this type of love was actual feeling or just the literary representation of reality of that time, although Reddy (2012) presented evidence that by the end of the twelfth century, the conventions of courtly love guided practice of aristocratic men and women.

Andreas Capellanus (1184/1960) codified the principles of courtly love in his book written approximately between 1184 and 1186. The book defined love as "a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of an excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace" (cited in Murstein 1974, p. 158). As Capellanus explained, love may be aroused in three ways: a beautiful figure, an excellent character, and extreme facility of speech. He contended that only excellent character can be worthy of the crown of love. In his book, he presented a series of fictitious dialogues between men and women of various classes in which the man attempts to seduce the woman through skillful wordplay, and the woman attempts to repel his advances by counterarguments. The book also described the 31 rules for lovers that the King of Love stipulated, according to legend. The courtly love embodied the relationship between aspiring lovers and their noble ladies and stated several rules. Some of those are similar to the cornerstone principles of modern romantic love. In particular,

- “free choice: love between a man and woman requires the free choice of each and cannot flourish when submission to family or social or religious authority exists;
- admiration and mutual regard: love is based on admiration about partner and mutual regard;
- love is important in life: love is of great importance to one’s life, not idle deviation.” (Murstein 1974).

The phenomenon of courtly love marked the initiation of the concept of romantic love, yet it was an immature and too unrealistic understanding of romantic love. Courtly love was greatly idealized and destined to remain unconsummated. A noble lover was motivated to perform virtuous and courageous acts to win the love of his ideal lady. A woman was an object of the ennobled desire, striving, and passion. The love of Lancelot and Guinevere as well as Tristan and Isolde, the most famous of the courtly lovers, ended in consummation and in guilt and despair. These were beautiful stories, but too distant and not very appropriate for real men and women.

According to the code, conjugal love is impossible because love thrives on freedom of choice; it is spontaneous, while marriage is an obligation. Hence, marriage and love are incompatible. The noble marriages, as typically well-known, had the potential to develop into a meaningful relationship based on mutual responsibility and communication between husband and wife. The nobility, who arranged marriages for political or economic reasons, often found satisfaction in extramarital affairs.

Courtly love enhanced the attitude toward women, poetically elevated their position in literature. The concept of a woman as an angelic person was an advancement in the original representation of her denigrated status in early Christian times.

Courtly love referred, however, only to women of nobility and did not apply to peasants. What about the marriage and love in low-level classes? No one thought of them as worthy objects of study; they were considered beasts of burden, incapable of finer emotions. Capellanus (1184/1960), who wrote an extensive manual on courtly love, did not recommend those techniques with serfs. If a nobleman sees a peasant woman whom he desires, he was advised simply to seize her, drag her behind the bushes, and rape her (cited in Murstein 1974, p. 136). This clearly demonstrated a much less courtly and romantic manner. The serfs wishing to marry needed to consult their lord. Their rights were often neglected in many respects. However, the decline of feudalism brought some easement to the marital restrictions imposed on peasants.

Courtly love flourished around the lifetime of Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122–1204) and then declined, especially after the Albigensian Crusade (1209–1218), in which Pope Innocent III authorized to exterminate the influence of the heretical Cathar sect in southern France and northern Italy. The sensual expression in troubadourian poetry was inhibited and the content of the poems was bowdlerized. “The lady of the troubadour was no longer a woman of the flesh; she became

either the Virgin Mary or a heavenly surrogate. The dichotomy between ‘mixed’ love (containing sensual and spiritual elements) and ‘false’ love (pure lust) was replaced in poetry by a division between ‘pure’ and ‘sensual’ love, with the poet demeaning the latter. To love women as sexual objects was wrong; to love the spark of God in them was good” (Murstein 1974, p. 163).

Nevertheless, Troubadourian tradition and their songs spread throughout France to the North, from the Germanies to the East, and from Italy to the West. Modifications in the old themes reflected the needs and perceptions of indigenous poets.

### **British Elaboration of Courtly Love**

When the lexemes *affection* and *amor* came into English in the thirteenth century, they obtained the meaning of passion and strong sexual attraction as well as the meaning of kindness toward a person; fondness, tenderness, and *amor* signified “love, affection, friendship” as well as “the tender affections, love towards one of the opposite sex” (Kalyuga 2012, p. 76).

In the period from the end of the twelfth century to the fourteenth century, English literature was gradually becoming less preoccupied with religious topics and grew to be more concerned with ideas of courtly love. During that time, romantic feelings were discussed in literature intensely. This was a substantial change in attitude toward love. Many new expressions for love and tenderness came to the English language, mostly from the French literature where the phenomenon of courtly love had been developed. According to Lewis (1936/2013, 1960), the courtly worship and idealization of a woman was the religion of devotional love. The key feature of courtly love was the suffering and longing due to separation from the loved one.

### **German Evolution of Courtly Love**

The minnesingers, the German lyric poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, modified the tradition. Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Parzival*, adapted from the Arthurian romance, was a typical example. He had little sympathy for adultery and believed that there is only one kind of faithfulness—that between husband and wife (Murstein 1974, p. 167).

In German evolution, the treatment of love became more complex and psychological. According to Murstein (1974, p. 168),

the troubadours did not concern themselves with *why* people loved. Love occurred at sight and derived from beauty, character, and speech. But that tells us precious little. In the best poetry of Walther von der Vogelweide, love is not akin to man’s worship of woman, as troubadourian poetry puts it. It is *mutual, natural*, and needs no reference to perfection. Walther says candidly to his beloved, “Perhaps others are better, but you are good.

Hartmann von Aue’s *Büchlein* presents the intrapsychic conflict between the body and the heart. Gottfried von Strassburg concerns himself with love as a phenomenon in relation to the totality of existence (quoted in Murstein 1974, p. 168). Heinrich von Morungen did not equate the nobility of lineage with the nobility of heart and noted that it was the nobility of heart that loved a noble lady.

Wolfram von Eschenbach, in describing the lovers Gahmuret and Herzeloide in *Parzival*, shatters courtly tradition:

Herzeloide comes to the tent of Gahmuret, who has just won her hand and estate in a tournament, even though he does not know her. As soon as they are seated, Herzeloide, in an *impulsive* expression of feeling, hugs him. She not only announces that she grants him her love, but asks for the boon of dedicating herself to his service. (cited in Murstein 1974, p. 168)

This was a complete reversal of the roles in courtly love. The traditional code of courtly love was rejected in a song by Neidhart von Reuenthal: a peasant girl wooed by a knight scoffs at him and lets him languish. This evolution went full-circle from Capellanus' advice for knights to rape, not woo, peasant women.

### **Italian Evolution of Courtly Love**

Being influenced by the Catholic Church, Italian poets evaluated the consequences of the Albigensian Crusade against heretics and turned away from the carnality of the troubadours. They developed an approach recognized as the *dolce stil novo* (sweet new style), which highlighted that beauty went beyond the sensual. Love was not just a *response* to the beautiful flesh of the lady, but her body was only a thin veil for the beauty of her soul. Love came from within the poet in response to appreciation of the soul. Love was considered as an intellectual longing. The *stil novisti* (poets of the new style) thought that they were superior in sensitivity and intellect to the common masses. They analyzed the emotions evoked by the lady in connection with the scientific knowledge of the times. However, science was not advanced enough to bring any meaningful inferences, so the poetry was best described as quasi-scientific, metaphysical speculation. As such, it represented a bridge between “troubadour gallantry and Renaissance intellectualism” (Murstein 1974, p. 168). There was a definite transition from troubadour poetry to *dolce stil novo* (“sweet new style”).

The troubadour fell in love with his lady because of her beauty and character. The origins of this beauty and character are never really dwelt upon; but in viewing the lady, the poet is smitten by love. In turn, he is filled with love for his lady. In the *dolce stil novo*, the main difference is that the lady seems to be much more than delightful flesh and blood. She is often referred to as a miracle from heaven, a veritable *donna angelicata* (“angel-like-woman”) (Murstein 1974, p. 169).

## **4.7 Evolution of Love in the Orthodox Slavs from Medieval Times to Renaissance (The Tenth–Eighteenth Centuries)**

### **Sex and Marriage**

The concepts of sexuality of the Orthodox Slavs in medieval Russia, Bulgaria, and Serbia were different from medieval Western Europe. The Orthodox Slavs in the tenth through eighteenth centuries evolved from Slavic paganism and the influence

of the Byzantine Empire; therefore, Orthodox laws regarding sexuality and sexual practices diverged from Roman Catholic laws (Levin 1989). What made the Orthodox distinctive in the medieval and early modern world was the absence of notions of romantic love and the beliefs that sexual intercourse was an obligation to one's spouse.

The Orthodox Church played a significant role in medieval Slavic society during those times. A dichotomy between church and people as well as between Christianity and paganism did not exist among the medieval Orthodox Slavs (Levin 1989). Patriarchal monogamy and exogamy were already established before Christianization. The Orthodox Church was sensitive and adaptive to the needs of Slavic society. The Church's normative rules reflected, rather than configured, community values. The Orthodox Church was profoundly distrustful of sexuality and saw sexual desire as an invention of the devil. Sex was considered as a threat to the soul of the individual, as well to the community. Although the Church participated in discourses about evil women, it still acknowledged many virtuous women. Through chaste marriages the parish clergy demonstrated that such behavioral standards could be upheld. The ecclesiastical hierarchy had a negative view of sexuality and thus set high ideals for sexual conduct.

As Levin (1989) argued, in a society based on the familial or quasi-familial ties, sexuality was very disruptive. Incest, homosexuality, bestiality, and rape—all of which threatened the family, the foundation of medieval Slavic society—were severely punished. However, the Orthodox Church was ambivalent even regarding sex in marriage. The ideal marriage would be celibate, as described in the tales of saints. The limits of marital sexuality were carefully prescribed for those who could not restrain themselves.

The choice of partners was regulated by prohibitions on interfaith marriage and remarriage. A couple, being married, “escaped all censure only if they produced a child through marital relations restricted to vaginal genital contact in the ‘missionary’ position, on a day not set aside for religious observance or bodily purification”—which could amount to 300 days a year (Levin 1989, p. 163). A woman had the right to a divorce if her husband insisted on sexual intercourse against her will. These protections, however, did not concern women's autonomy. Women in patriarchal Slavic society were subordinate to their husbands and could be subjected to physical beatings. The belief that lust was improper and disrupted the social order was what motivated the Church to protect women against men's advances. Community cooperation implied the public penance to enforce behavioral standards. Sex was “a public rather than a private matter” (Levin 1989, p. 297). Popular shaming practices confirmed the general population's acceptance of church teachings in sermons, didactic tales, and confessional questions. Thus, according to Levin (1989), sex in the Orthodox Slavs' tradition served the practical needs of community and stability; therefore, so it looks like people did not have time to cultivate and entertain romantic love. The majority of them were probably too pragmatic and too conservative for this.

Despite such non-romantic norms and practices of sex and marriage in early medieval times, as presented above, Slavic cultures over the centuries created

many lyric love songs. Being adapted to a variety of situations, these love songs, however, did not have a trace of romance. The love expressed in the Slavic love songs was “the natural, heartfelt, overpowering sensation of the human breast, in all its different shades of tender affection and glowing sensuality; never elevating but always natural, always unsophisticated” (Talvi 1850, p. 319). Mythological figures of that time also represented that love was a virtue in many Slavic cultures. In particular, Lada was among Slavic deities as goddess of love and marriage, summer and beauty.

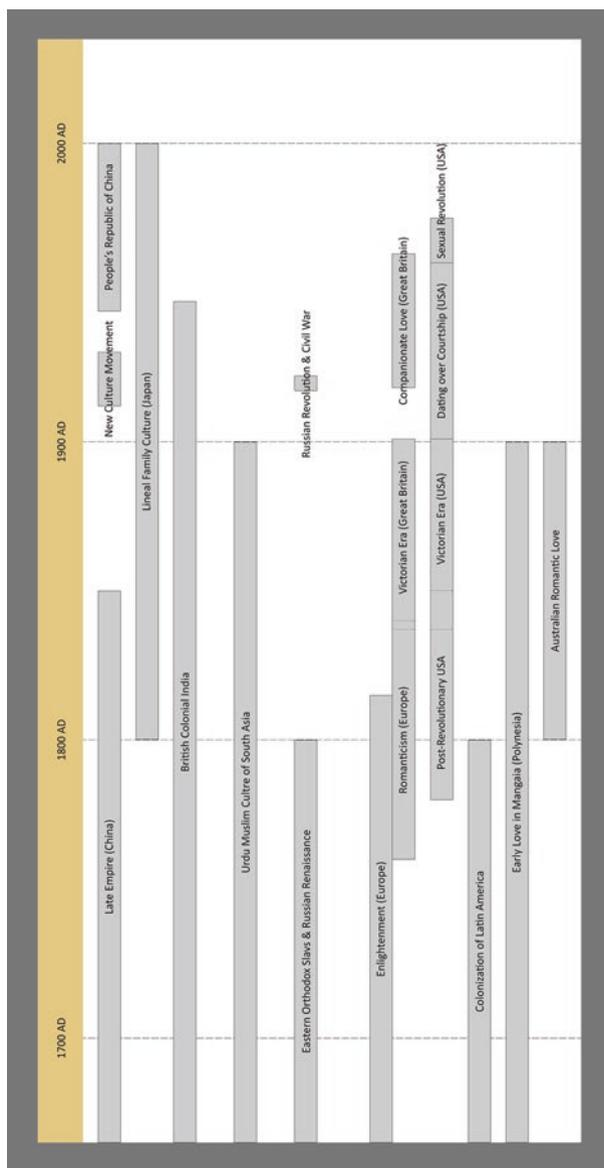
### **Love and Marriage**

The Russian marital relationships over the centuries were influenced by the conversion of Russia to Greek Orthodox Christianity in about 1000 A.D. and the absorption of the Oriental, Byzantine perception of woman. She was viewed as impure, sinful, inferior person, and received little education. The marriage was arranged and the husband was the father–protector of his wife and children. According to sixteenth century collection of rules of family conduct, he was responsible for everyday guidance of life and wealth of the entire family. If a wife opposed her husband, Pope Sylvester, who lived during the time of Ivan the Terrible, advised him to beat her.

Progress in these attitudes occurred in Russia slowly, the greater advances happened only in eighteenth century. Peter the Great decreed (1704) that parents could not force their daughters to marry. However, a wife still remained under the “tutelage” of her husband. The Code of the Russian Empire noted that the husband was obliged to “love his wife,” but the wife was instructed to “obey her husband as the head of the family, to be loving and respectful, to be submissive in every respect and show him compliance and affection, he being the master of the house” (Murstein 1974, p. 445). That conjugal love unlikely could be called as romantic one. The times and culture were not favorable to romance yet.

# Chapter 5

## Further Developments of Romantic Love in the Fourteenth Through Nineteenth Centuries



Formative times of modern romantic love: Timeline

## 5.1 Islamic Ideas of Love

In Islam, as in the West, for a long time love was considered as having as much to do with spirituality as with sexuality and passions. By the time that the world of Islam was extended by conquest to include much of India in its dynamic embrace, Islamic ideas of love became deeply colored by the Sufis, with their understanding of divine love as the core organizing principle of the universe (Shackle 2006).

The Sufi definition of love included its twin force: as “phenomenal love” (*‘ishq-e majāzī*) and “real love” (*‘ishq-e haqīqī*) in which the human is viewed as the mirror of the divine, thus offering the prospect of bringing sexuality into full alignment with spirituality. It is a natural part of the human living that this alignment can never be perfectly achieved. This Sufis’ twin definition of love had an enormously creative force in the past in Persian Sufi poetry of Rumi (1207–1273) and many others, as well as a vast Sufi-ising Persianate tradition of the courtly lyric in other languages such as Urdu.

In later centuries, Sufi ideas facilitated a subtle and varied poetic rhetoric which embraced a variety of spiritual, romantic, and erotic experiences. In South Asia, there came to flourish alongside this courtly poetry in Persian and Urdu a notable body of Sufi love poetry composed in South Asian languages. This draws upon indigenous cultural resources as well as the Persianate repertoire to express the key insight of Sufism into the interplay of phenomenal and real love. This tradition was very evident in the writing of Khwaja Farid, a nineteenth-century Sufi poet from the southwestern Punjab on the borders of the Great Indian Desert. His Sufi poetry was quite different from the folk poetry, since it sets out to use the evocation of love to transcend the conditions of human existence rather than simply to rely on the painful power of love in human affairs. Khwaja Farid mapped the lyrically abstract and ecstatic expressions of core Sufi teaching and experience into an elaborately conceived and emotional system of local reference to a desert which occupies so much of the territory. The desert as a landscape of love was often present in the Perso-Arabic repertoire as the shifting sand of love (Shackle 2006).

## 5.2 Love in Urdu Muslim Culture of South Asia: North India and Pakistan

Urdu language culture intensely developed during the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries in North India, based on earlier Persian and Sanskrit; therefore, it was multicultural and multiethnic in many regards. Urdu was growing and flourishing at its first stages and seeking new words and phrases from different languages to express life and love. Urdu language was called “the language of Indian Muslims,” though language had no boundaries. “Urdu is a sweet language like honey. Language and literature allow enjoying the musical rhythm and its expression of love and romance” (Gill 2013, p. 13).

Suvorova (2000) studied the romantic *masnavi*, the classical genre of Urdu literature, focusing on love-adventure poems written in Northern India from the

seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. As she noted, in Urdu, the romantic *masnavi* created two quite distinct strands, each having the specific ambience and conception of love. The first one was a chivalrous adventure story with an extensive and multilayered plot, marvelous encounters, parallel adventures in the worlds of humans and of fairies, a wealth of characters, and a customarily happy ending. The ideal of courtly love, juxtaposed to the villains' consuming passion, dominated as part of a code and etiquette of chivalry and courtly values. The second type of Urdu *masnavi* had a simple linear narrative about two ordinary individuals and focused on the emotional states of the lovers expressed in a distinctively lyrical style (Suvorova 2000). It is worth mentioning that the high value of love in Perso-Urdu poetry coexisted with a patriarchal society that placed family honor above individual desires, discouraged individual initiative in matters of marriage, and kept the sexes largely segregated.

### 5.3 Love in Japan in the Seventeenth—Early Nineteenth Centuries

Literature during the Tokugawa period (1603–1867) focused on liaisons between a man and a courtesan, and the famous head prostitute was typically every man's romantic ideal. The term that denoted sexual attractiveness was *iro* (color). The capacity to enjoy proper *iro* was a necessary element of an elegant life. However, it was not simply about sex, carnality, and pleasure; it was in accordance with the poetics and the beauty of life. One should know about tea, flowers, fragrances, writing, as well as *iro* in order to appreciate good life; it was an aesthetics of the Edo period (Ryang 2006, p. 33). In loving relationships of that period, sexual union was taken for granted, and sexual consummation was viewed as natural.

### 5.4 Conception of Love in Early Times in Polynesia (Mangaia)

The early records of courtship and marriage mores on Mangaia described the practice of premarital sexual experimentation with following more enduring heterosexual relationships in which the partners should renounce other sexual entanglements. Such trial and informal marriages were typical throughout Polynesia and were acceptable among commoners, while marriages, arranged by parents, were usual among the upper classes. However, it is unknown whether such formal unions were present or prevalent in lower-ranking couples (Gill 1876/1977; Gill 1894/1984; Hiroa 1934, pp. 88–96; Harris 1995, p. 104). In his ethnographic observations, Hiroa (1934) neither provided information about the affective content of heterosexual bonding, nor discussed Mangaian emotional life. Missionary William W. Gill (1876/1977) recorded an oral history of the emotions in

male–female relationships on Mangaia during 1852–1872. Some of the myths and songs recorded by Gill featured themes of love and provided a glimpse of intimate life in pre-European colonization times. For example, a myth entitled “A Bachelor God in Search of a Wife” (Gill 1876/1977, pp. 107–114) described the rivalry for the love of a woman between the god Tane and a local chief named Ako. The myth provided evidence of intense romantic feelings (on Ako’s part), a description of Ako’s courtship, and a reference to love at first sight (on Tane’s part).

The other examples came from historical songs that narrated love affairs, albeit against the ever-present backdrop of violence. A story, composed in the late 1600s, described the intimate relationship that evolved while warriors were in hiding after a military defeat. The song told the story of the leader of the exiles, Inangaro, a handsome and talented poet, who feigned love for a maiden of the opposing tribe in order to acquire provisioning but then fell truly in love with another woman, Kurauri, who brought food to his younger brother. The younger brother deferred to his elder sibling, and a love affair developed between Inangaro and Kurauri. When Inangaro’s first lover discovered his infidelity and betrayed him to her clan, the story came to the inevitably tragic end. A poem was supposedly composed by Inangaro for Kurauri and recited by her as he was put to death. The story was passed down through generations of Mangaians and later recorded by Gill (1894/1984, pp. 88–98).

Another song, presented in the chapter called “Unforgiving and Unfortunate Lovers” (Gill 1894/1984, pp. 168–172), told the story of a warrior named Vete who “fell violently in love with a pretty girl called Tanuau” and then turned on the young woman when she rejected him. The tale depicted Vete’s revenge, including a murder plot, grave robbing, and cannibalism. All these acts demonstrated the strength of emotion of which Mangaian lovers are capable.

One more historical song involved a warrior, Oimara, and his lover from an opposing clan; the story resembles a Romeo and Juliet theme. Despite the defeat of Oimara’s tribe by his lover’s, the couple continued to meet each other. His lover secretly supplied him with food when he hid near her village. Oimara was killed, once the lovers were discovered, and his beloved mourned his untimely end with many loud lamentations.

These selected stories demonstrate that men and women in ancient Mangaia developed attractions and attachments with evident romantic characteristics. Those relationships exhibited proximity seeking (lovers’ striving to be together at great risk), rearranged life priorities (the willingness to risk death to continue a forbidden relationship), emotional dependency (the anger or sadness resulting from loss of love by rejection or death), exclusivity (the jilted woman’s anger when she discovered her rival), and a sense of empathy and concern (the willingness of women to provision fugitive lovers). These stories indicated that empathy and concern existed in a reciprocal relationship but ceased when love was betrayed or rejected. Both Vete’s and Inangaro’s first lovers turned on the beloved when access was denied to them, with both seeking violent revenge. It was usual in folk tales of love that the idealization of the lovers was presented in the narrative itself and extolled the physical attributes of the protagonists. The story of Inangaro described

him in several places as a handsome man with considerable poetic talent (Harris 1995).

Thus, the ethnography of Hiroa (1934) and a few pieces of early oral literature preserved by Gill (1876/1977, 1894/1984) confirm the major descriptors of the romantic love syndrome. As for sex, Gill (1876/1977, 1894/1984) generally refrained from direct references to sexual expression; however, Hiroa's ethnography clearly presented evidence of premarital sexual license. Opposite to Marshall's reports (1962, 1971) negating romantic love in Mangaia, Harris (1995) discovered that love was one of the historical motivations for choosing a lifetime. In the first half of twentieth century, a match arranged by parents to improve the family's landholdings, political power, or social standing was the cultural ideal, even though not the common form of marriage. Matches of personal choice outnumbered arranged marriages; nevertheless, parental approval was necessary for all permanent unions. The conflicts over mate choice and parental interference were quite frequent. Romantic love was at the center of many intergenerational discords. Love was not a cultivated or expected psychological experience; it was regarded as an intense emotional state that arises involuntarily and often unfortunately overturns the plans of parents and disturbs the web of relationships that binds individuals to their family and community.

## 5.5 Love and Marriage in Colonial Latin America

### The Cultural Life in Pre-Colonial Latin America

The culture of the Maya, a powerful pre-Colombian civilization, reached their cultural summit around 600–800 A.D. They had books, *codices* (singular: codex), written in a language with pictograms, glyphs, and phonetic representations. However, a majority of those books were destroyed during Spanish conquest and colonial era. The surviving Maya *codices* contained knowledge about astronomy, astrology, religion, rituals, and gods. There was little information about love, marriage, and sex in those books.

Under Spanish rule, native culture and religion were repressed. The Spanish did not recognize native codices and other forms of record keeping as legitimate. The libraries of native codices were burned. Therefore, what is known about pre-Columbian civilization nowadays is full of contradictions and riddles.

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the views of indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere on matters of sex were different from those of the fifteenth- to sixteenth-century Roman Catholic Church. The history of the pre-Columbian period evidenced that there were no concepts similar to the notion of sin, and some indigenous societies even involved sexuality in public ceremonies. They prohibited not sex itself, but sexual excess.

The Iberians brought to Latin America the Christian beliefs about sexuality through which women and the devil caused the banishment of man from paradise. The church posed the Virgin Mary as the impossible ideal for women since Mary

was both a virgin and a mother. The missionaries imported to the Americas a concept of sex linked to sin (Jefferson and Lokken 2011).

### **Cultural Life in Colonial Latin America**

During the colonial period, Spanish and Portuguese brought their customs and attitudes to America and were very successful in passing on their cultures. Spanish culture and letters were infinitely better developed than British America. Before their arrival, Latin American cultures had societal structures, typically based on castes and nobility. During conquest, upper-class customs and attitudes changed little in America. However, lower-class Spaniards who went to the New World were able to raise their status, but they represented a small minority in the New World. Colonial Spaniards had much control in the family: The father had the legal authority, while a wife had few legal rights (Jefferson and Lokken 2011; Lavrin 1989; Mabry, n.d.).

Latin America and the Caribbean were the first Western regions populated by African immigrants. Slave trading occurred before the earliest Spanish and Portuguese explorers. The typical routes from West Africa to the Americas were to Brazilian territories. Black Africans who were born and reared in Iberia also accompanied the explorers. In the following four centuries, millions of immigrants from Africa were brought to Latin America creating a very diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural background of that region of the world. African cultural forms affected Latin American history with languages and the blend of different peoples across ethnic divisions. Nowadays, the largest population of African people outside of the African continent is in Brazil.

Indian, African, *mestizo*, and *mulatto* were the colonial lower classes. *Indios* were seen as higher than Negroes. Black Africans were generally slaves. *Mestizaje* were the mixture of *Indios* and Spanish, and *Mestizo* became a class designation as Indians adopted Spanish ways and became *mestizos*, the people of combined European and indigenous peoples of the Americas' descent. Marriage of Spanish and Negroes was not encouraged but frequent; marriage of Negro men and Indian women was also not encouraged but common. The Spanish were not concerned with the domestic arrangements within the lower classes (Mabry, n.d.).

Portuguese colonies settled in Brazil in the sixteenth century. In regard to the class system, Roman Catholicism, slavery, and anti-Indian sentiments, Brazil was similar to Spanish America. However, urban life was much more common in Spanish America than in Brazil. Few women came to Brazil from Portugal. Therefore, as in Spanish America, European men took Indian women, free persons, or slaves, as lovers. Many *mamelucos*, the offspring of Europeans and indigenous peoples of the Americas, were born. Given the dominance of these men, however, Indian women probably would have become lovers to Portuguese men regardless (Mabry, n.d.). Africans and their offspring became the predominant strain in Brazil's population. Black Africans had captured and traded other black Africans long before the Europeans settled in the continent. The Portuguese learned this from Africans and from Europeans, and they had therefore traded slaves from their African trade posts (*feitorias*). Brazil became a black colony and

then a black nation. Brazil was both class conscious and caste conscious, like the European countries. Blacks were considered inferior. *Mulattos* (the offspring of Europeans and Africans) could become white in Brazil if they could find a high status occupation or marry up.

Historical studies in Latin America explored love mostly tangentially, yet they revealed some interesting knowledge about love and marriage, extramarital affairs, and romantic aspirations inspired by literature. Through numerous letters and other archival documents, they discovered the complexity of amorous relations, honor, sexuality, and illegitimate relations in colonial Spanish America (Dueñas-Vargas 2015; Twinam 1989, 1999).

### **Marriage in the Colonial Latin America**

Marriage in colonial Latin America was a contract between families, and the authorities of the religious state managed norms of proper mating. The formation of the couple was embedded in the race-based social structure of society. At every level of society, there were colonial families living within established norms, as well as families that differed from those norms.

Colonial society was grounded on the patriarchal extended family. This family structure developed in the colonial period and was modified to a certain degree in the following centuries, yet it remained central for Latin American social life until recently. However, it was usually less important in urban areas (Jefferson and Lokken 2011).

Marriage was an important contract between families that established the normative couple and the rite of passage to adulthood for both men and women. The family should create the environment for procreation and socialization of children. Therefore, it was nothing to be left to the capriciousness of the young folks who might not recognize the ramifications of their decision on other family members. A patriarch of the household had the right and the responsibility to arrange the marriages of his dependents: his children, his younger siblings, and the household servants. Any dependent in the house who wished to marry needed his will and permission. The church reminded its flock of the norms of good behavior and the duties of all parties in the family hierarchy, especially women. As descendants of Eve, women were viewed by the Roman Catholic Church as slaves to passion who caused the fall from paradise. Women were deemed worldly, rather than spiritual beings, and would not stay on the right path of their own accord. Therefore, women were under the constant vigilance of the patriarch to keep them on the straight path of righteousness. Elite wives and daughters were kept under strict surveillance, generally in seclusion in the home. When they did go out, they went on close supervision by an appropriate chaperone. The family was a knot in a web of social relations, and through these relationships, individuals found a good marriage.

The honor of an individual depended on the honor of the family. A dishonorable marriage was a stain on the honor of the whole extended family, passing both horizontally to cousins and more distant relatives, and vertically to future generations. An unfavorable marriage would call into question a family's social and racial status, presenting an obstacle to favorable marriages for succeeding generations. (Jefferson and Lokken 2011, 6).

Did romantic love play its role? Youthful passion threatened the order and structure of society, and therefore, the church and the community elders disfavored such feelings. Men and women might be attracted to mates who were not suitable or socially convenient for a variety of reasons. Attraction to another did not respect social rules. Love disrupted a family's strategies to maintain the social status and intruded in the business of making an advantageous match. Therefore, parents and the authorities were against youth romance and their right to choose one's marital partner. While there were exceptions to the rule, generally marriage had little to do with love or attraction (Socolow 1989).

Despite the power of European Catholic sexual and social norms, many people continued to follow mores and practices of the pre-Columbian era. The common people of colonial Latin America still believed that sex between two unmarried people was not sinful. Analyzing the records of applications for dispensation of impediments to marriage, historians revealed a high incidence of premarital sex, yet this did not deter couples from marrying. The examples gave some estimation of the frequency of premarital sex and its social significance among the common people. Young men of the popular classes seemed to put little significance to past sex lives of their chosen mates; they weighed other considerations in the choice of a partner more heavily (Jefferson and Lokken 2011, p. 30).

### **Extramarital Love in Colonial Latin America**

Passionate love, affection, and attraction resided mostly outside marriage. Colonial elites attempted to achieve the appearance of abiding the social and sexual rules imposed by the church; however, it was less effective to control sexuality among the common people. There might be differences in romantic and sexual relationships of people of different social classes.

Extramarital affective life in the colonial period might be very emotional. Historians documented strong affective life within the community of enslaved workers. Enslaved Africans and their descendants in early nineteenth-century Brazil sometimes visited their mates at a nearby plantation sometimes in risk of severe punishment. The feelings of the heart shall not be controlled. That indicated the deep attachment which some people felt for one another (Jefferson and Lokken 2011, p. 36).

The applications to marry, which historians analyzed, revealed that numerous men engaged in sexual relationships with partners who were married to someone else, practically being in adultery with a married woman. Despite the efforts of the religious workers, men often were not monogamous and were not expected to be. Some married women chose their sexual partners outside their marriage and engaged in an adulterous relationship by simply acting on an attraction. The evidence did not show that adultery frequently led to separation of the couple involved and did not terminate marriage.

Romantic lives embraced even priests, who were sworn to celibacy, but were overcome by their passions and violated their celibacy. Sometimes, they even took advantage of their position of power over their parishioners to make requests for sexual favors (Jefferson and Lokken 2011, pp. 37–44). In all these cases of

extramarital affairs, there was often an unclear distinction whether these were just sexual or romantic relationships, which we cannot totally equate.

### **Love in Colonial New Granada** (Since Nineteenth Century became Colombia)

Since the conquest of the Americas and early colonization, passionate love was perceived as morally illicit; it was mentioned in judicial and ecclesiastical sources as “lewd intercourse” and was typically associated with extramarital relations. In those times, men and women, who were incited by the heat of passion, lived in forbidden relationships, and their amorous attachments were unlawful. Throughout the colonial period, a culture of love characterized by temporary or permanent sexual encounters developed between men and women of different races, social conditions, economic levels, and religions.

Marriage was usually not the type of relationship for sexual expression or affection; it was rather an institution that served to support the bourgeois elite of New Granada. Passionate love was usually viewed as contrary to matrimony. The detachment and coldness of marriages were frequent among people, who wed until the eighteenth century in Colombia (Dueñas-Vargas 2015). Romantic devotion probably existed between couples but was not considered a requirement for marriage.

### **Love in Colonial Brazil**

In colonial period, Prior to the nineteenth century, the family was the central social institution in Brazil (de Azevedo 1968, cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 242), and the primary purpose of marriage was to create economic and social ties between spouses’ families. Usually, only the upper-class people married because legal marriage was necessary for managing the rights of property (Nazzari 1991, pp. 74–75). Although in the lower classes, legal marriage was desirable, but consensual unions were more typical (Bruschini 1990, cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 242). Chastity was valued by families, so girls were closely chaperoned and then married off as early as possible, often shortly after the first menstruation, to avoid any possibility of loss of virginity before marriage.

**Love Affairs in Colonial Brazil** Sexuality of upper-class white women was confined to marriage and was usually considered only within limits of inheritance and producing heirs. They remained in emotional isolation and were the ornaments for their husband’s honor.

Male sexual life was viewed as a biological imperative, a source of pleasure, and expression of power (de Alameida 1986; Bruschini 1990, cited in Rebhun, p. 243). Large slave labor plantations were widespread in Northeast Brazil until 1880, and slave owners frequently used female slaves for sexual purposes. They also employed them as wet nurses and nannies (Freyre 1983, cited in Rebhun, p. 242). Powerful men used lower-class women to please themselves sexually. After the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888, many upper-class men continued using their power to attract or coerce lower-class women into affairs.

Some of the sexual affairs with lower-class women might include a mutual attraction, but a traditional gender power asymmetry viewed female volition as irrelevant to sexual relations, so love was not necessarily in those relationships.

Upper-class men might experience strong attractions for women of their own class, but they often could not marry because their families selected for them another spouse. Women were also often married against their will and broke up their emerging attractions toward other young men.

## 5.6 Love in Colonial New Mexico

The Kingdom of New Mexico stretched geographically along the Rio Grande Valley and had been inhabited since the twelfth century by the sedentary Pueblo Indians and the nomadic Apache and Navajo. Spanish colonists coming in 1598 to New Mexico brought their cultural idiom and honor ideology, focusing on personal subordination to familial concerns. Conflicts and points of convergence among honor, Christian theology, and rituals of communal solidarity occurred over the years of colonization (Gutiérrez 1984).

### Honor Versus Love

Honor required that the strict parental authority assured that love or lust would not intervene in matrimonial affairs. An inappropriate marriage or sexual relationship with a person of unacceptable ancestry could threaten the status and future of a family. The ways to accomplish this was to arrange infant marriages or betrothals. In this case, children would have little choice but to accept parental wishes and the issue of love was unlikely to arise. A common strategy to minimize individualistic behavior among children was to segregate the sexes and confine women to limited social spaces. Supervision of female sexuality was strict, and high symbolic value was placed on virginity. Because women presumably were frail to the pleasures of the flesh and the desires of men, they were secluded. Premarital sexual segregation meant that when children married, they often knew little of their mates.

Parental supervision of matrimonial choice did not take into account the subversive notion of passionate love, stemming from concupiscence and glorified personal autonomy, because it contradicted with the concept of honor. The admission of love in colonial New Mexico, as a kinship-based society, would have dire consequences. Therefore, family elders strictly supervised youthful social interaction, while the nature and extent of control varied by social class. A misalliance would seriously threaten the wealth, power, and honor of the aristocrats if a son or a daughter placed personal desire over family considerations. Gutierrez (1985) provided examples of the denial of paternal authority over the selection of a mate among young people who defended their right to love at the end of the eighteenth century.

Among the lower classes, involvement of patrimony was usually minimal, yet the stability of the husband–wife relationship was important to familial reproduction and the creation of a social support network. Consequently, children frequently had more freedom to express their personal desire and participate in the selection of a mate. Having the limited population pool from which men and

women could select their marriage partners, the common dispensations in colonial New Mexico were for consanguinity and affinity. Besides, according to the ecclesiastical principle, every individual had an absolute liberty to marry freely according to his or her will. Enforcement of a person's absolute freedom to marry was the sole responsibility of the local priest.

Love affairs outside marriage also happened; it was difficult to be constantly attentive to a daughter's activities; some young women were able to escape the watchful eyes of elders. For the lower classes, the seasonal activities of planting and harvesting provided occasions for mingling of the sexes and kindling of illicit love affairs. "Desires sublimated under the heat of the sun might be inflamed in moonlight" (Gutiérrez 1984, p. 241). Domestic duties and recreational events provided another context in which love affairs could blossom.

Aside from covert attempts to gain the affections of women, some community life occasions—rites of sowing and harvesting, first fruits, religious feast days, or the celebration of a village's founding—provided the contexts where women and men could meet and intermingle with a minimum of supervision. During these ritual events of community solidarity, the sentiments of love, sexual passion, and physical attraction could be expressed without public sanctions. Stolen kisses might be less obvious at a dance, and surreptitious moments of intimacy could escape the notice of the merry people. A popular proverb reminded New Mexicans of the occasion to commit adultery that celebrations provided: "Keep your eyes off the wife of the guitarist" (Gutiérrez 1984, p. 243).

## **5.7 Love in European Renaissance and Enlightenment (Fourteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)**

The Renaissance period in Italian history is typically associated with such Italian figures as the scholar and poet Petrarch (1304–1374), the writer Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), the humanist philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), the artist Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), the poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), and the artist Michelangelo (1475–1564). They greatly advanced the culture of that period in many respects, and it is well-known that the topic of love was very pronounced in their creative work. In the cultural and social changes that the Renaissance period brought to people, the concept of love evolved toward a more joyful idea of loving relationships between man and woman, yet anti-sexual attitudes and antifeminism remained. The act of sex was still associated with the feeling of guilt. Sex was regarded as sinful but irrepressible. Nevertheless, from the Renaissance onward, the culture was increasingly secular.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe became the times of rationalism and enlightenment. Europeans postulated that the laws of nature manage the relationships between physical objects as well as between individuals. New scientific discoveries promised that further progress was possible and a religious

outlook gave way to reason. Reason rather than faith allowed people to attain objective truth.

The scientific discoveries affected the realm of emotions and interpersonal relationships. It was viewed rational to pursue happiness, maximize pleasure, and minimize pain. Such hedonism, however, did not mean being selfish and amoral, but gave pleasure to the greatest number. As for the attitudes toward women, men often regarded them as limited and childlike and their marital relationships were unequal.

The development of a bourgeois civil society/public sphere in early modern Europe is associated with the emergence of the novelistic forms, particularly autobiography (Habermas 1991; Trilling 1971). Historians of European culture are in agreement that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, something like a mutation in human nature took place. "One way of giving a synopsis of the whole complex psycho-historical occurrence is to say that the idea of society much as we now conceive it, had come into being" (Trilling 1971, p. 21). It was the rise of the social, a momentous step forward on the path of progress: "from the idiocy of village life to the modern forms of voluntary and public-spirited civil society" (Lee 2007, p. 75). It was accompanied by the development of the modern individual, who defines himself (less often herself), paradoxically, in opposition to society. For the first time in history, the nature of society was not continuous with the nature of the individuals who constitute it. An individual began the search for authenticity and autobiography, and novels were very suitable genres.

### Views of Love

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ("the age of Shakespeare"), love was described as a consuming passion, strong illness, or powerful force that is impossible to resist. Amorous melancholy in the medical profiles suggested that love-melancholy is as much a cultural and poetic concept as a truly "medical" one. Love-melancholy as a disease was vividly depicted in early modern romance in *fin'amour* themes, phantasms of desire, and the dark pleasure of poetry (Well 2007). The psychological and the physical aspects of the disease are displayed in corrupted imagination of the sufferer. This "violent and extreme love," in terms of specific psychophysiological processes, usually begins with the perception of an object that "setteth concupiscence on fire." (Well 2007, p. 1).

An increased amount of attention was paid to emotion and romantic imagination. There was a growing respect for marriage not only as a social unit, but also as a rewarding interpersonal relationship. The intellectuals of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries supported that marriage ought to be arranged by families based on "rational grounds," rather than grounds "other than the self-interest of the participants" (Hunt 1959). French philosopher Montaigne (1533–1592) encouraged the friendship-love which was devoted to the well-being of a partner. He thought that such experience is a more important feature of love than intense passionate feelings (May, p. 5).

To compare the affection toward women unto it, although it proceed from our own free choice, a man cannot, nor may it be placed in this rank: Her fire, I confess it to be more

active, more fervent, and more sharp. But it is a rash and wavering fire, waving and divers: the fire of an ague subject to fits and stints, and that hath but slender hold-fast of us. In true friendship, it is a general and universal heat, and equally tempered, a constant and settled heat, all pleasure and smoothness, that hath no pricking or stinging in it, which the more it is in lustfull love, the more is it but a raging and mad desire in following that which flies us... (Montaigne 1910, p. 75).

The tradition of the past remained, however, in the literature of that time. Predominantly in the plays of English writer Shakespeare, love was upheld as an important precondition to marriage. So, there was a growing interest to integrate love and marriage and to make the expression of sexual desire, tenderness, and affection acceptable to coexist. But, despite of this new accent, the Puritan culture in many European countries that succeeded Catholicism in dominating many Western countries remained repressive of romantic love in many respects. In Eastern Europe, it remained alien. In Russia, for instance, up to the eighteenth century, the concept of love was still influenced by Christian faith, and the literature of romantic love became known much later.

The eighteenth through nineteenth centuries evidenced controversial views of love. Sexual feelings were assumed closely related to a romantic love. If passion is the emotion evoked by the desire to merge with a partner emotionally, then sexual feelings are related to the desire to merge sexually. The question remains how closely are they related? Some believed they are the same. For instance, German philosopher Schopenhauer was a deflationist who saw passionate love, with all its ideals and illusions, as the machinations of a reproductive drive aimed at getting two people obsessed with each other for long enough to produce and raise the next generation (May, p. 5). Some scholars and novelists reduced love to sex; the others strictly distinguished them from each other. The French description of love was probably most well-known. For example, in the French erotic novel *Histoire de Dom Bougre* a cynical nun noted that “to be in love” actually means to be “in lust”: “When one says, the Gentleman ... is in love with the Lady ... it is the same thing as saying, the Gentleman ... saw the Lady ... the sight of her excited his desire, and he is dying to put his Prick into her Cunt. That’s truly what it means” (cited in Ellrich 1985, p. 222).

Others contended that the two were very different. On the other hand, the Marquis de Sade (1797/1968) opposed the equation of love and pleasure: “I do not want a woman to imagine that I owe her anything because I soil myself on top of her. ... I have never believed that from the junction of two bodies could arise the junction of two hearts: I can see great reasons for scorn and disgust in this physical junction, but not a single reason for love” (p. 148).

The later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were characterized by the extreme reaction of educated classes against Puritanism and Church’s power in society. The Age of Reason, in other words the Enlightenment, brought to the Western world the new science of cause and effect. From this point of view, the concept of a passionate spiritual relationship between a man and a woman seemed foolishly unscientific. The intellectuals of that time remained in the dichotomy between reason and passion. They ridiculed love and passion as a realm of

playbooks and romances. This new culture of the Age of Reason assumed inescapable conflict between reason and emotion and found itself obsessed with the passion that it tried to discount. That culture, despite its contempt for emotion and its insistence that man's intellect should govern his action, was obsessed with love in a special manner. "Love was a game, an amusement. Seduction and adultery were entertainment. Women were to be flattered, fooled, manipulated, toyed with, seduced, but never taken seriously" (Branden 1980/2008, p. 19). Romantic love could not be possible with such antifeminism. If the object of man's passion is not taken seriously, such passion cannot be viewed as romantic. In the English and European culture of that period, love as a premise for marriage was not a general dominant and prevailing cultural trend. Nevertheless, the exceptions did exist.

### **Love and Marriage**

These historical periods witnessed advances in the freedom of choice of marital partners. The end of feudalism reduced the need for military alliances among the nobility of various kingdoms and therefore brought more freedom for youth to choose a partner. The development of relatively speedy coaches and improved roads allowed young people greater mobility and provided more opportunities to meet suitable partners than it was possible in the days of the isolated castles. The London season marriages, masque balls, and a marriage market testified to this new freedom of movement. In addition, the field of eligible mates broadened for both the nobility and the bourgeoisie. Financial considerations in marital arrangements were still important in selection of a marriage partner (Murstein 1974, p. 200).

People in Europe finally turned their attention to the pleasures of everyday living and enjoyed taking moderate pleasure in sex, congenial company, and food. Greater freedom of choice developed due to more favorable attitudes toward marriage, sex, and women.

The sixteenth through seventeenth centuries improved the woman's status. The Renaissance permitted education in languages and in the arts to some of them. A young woman pursuing an education should not worry if she married at the ripe old age of seventeen, instead of fifteen, as it was typical a century before (Murstein 1974, p. 179). Women received the opportunities to realize some of their potential (aside from childbearing), but still respecting the traditional rights of men. The view of marriage still represented a duty, and many great figures of the period such as Montaigne, Erasmus, Rabelais, Marguerite of Navarre, and Luther believed that marriage should be primarily determined by none other than the self-interest of the participants. The Church required that both bride and groom would express their free consent; therefore, parents should obtain the agreement that offspring did not object to the choices made for them. If the parents disapproved of a marriage, they could block it by withholding consent (Murstein 1974, p. 179). Arranged marriages still dominated in that period, and parental influence in match-making remained paramount in the sixteenth century.

Many writers, however, called for freedom of choice and romantic love as the primary basis of marriage. The prominent Italian Renaissance author B.

Castiglione (1478–1529) in *The Book of the Courtier* (1528/1907) encouraged that one should love only a person one could marry. People of that time regarded love in a fashion more sincere than it was presented by troubadours in their formalized rituals of “courtly love.” For English poet and playwright W. Shakespeare, romantic love was the true basis of a relationship and a declaration of love was equivalent to a proposal of marriage. His lovers often fall in love at first sight, but they do not yield to passion until they have pledged their troth. Shakespeare advocated love as the necessary constituent for a marriage and even depicted in a story of King of England, Henry (1600/2008), who married for love rather than for purposes of state. Therefore, Shakespeare encouraged the young men and women to marry who they love (Murstein 1974, p. 182).

However, the relationship between husbands and wives was less romantic and unequal in marriage. Even Shakespeare, who suggested that romantic love is the only valid basis of marriage, thought that wife is physically and intellectually inferior to the husband. Yet, in spite of the problems in marriage, he believed it as a mostly blissful state (Murstein 1974, p. 184).

Until the seventeenth through eighteenth centuries, most societies around the world saw marriage as a vital economic and political institution and therefore could not afford to leave this issue entirely to the free choice of the two persons involved, which would base their decision on an unreasoning and transitory emotion of passionate love.

There is common opinion to believe that romantic love became the basis for marriage in seventeenth century novels. We should admit, however, that passionate love as a powerful emotion being accompanied by idealization of a partner and relationships existed much earlier. Yet, it did not play a significant role in marital choice. It was rather a disturbance and created a threat to the existing kinship bonds that defined one’s status in society. So, they controlled the dangerous passion. Despite this view, they still took into account the youths’ feelings. As Goode said (1959, p. 42), “Kinfolk or immediate family can disregard the question of who marries whom, only if a marriage is not seen as a link between kin lines, only if no property, power, lineage honor, totemic relationships, and the like are believed to flow from the kin lines through the spouses to their offspring.”

Rationalists of seventeenth–eighteenth centuries did not view “civilized” marriage in Western Europe as highly esteemed. The supremacy of reason was considered as a basis for marriage. Unequal relationships, inflamed passions, and romantic conceptions of love were poor foundations for marital happiness. The real reason for marital choice was procreation. It was believed that children could best be reared in a congenial home, and reason suggested that congeniality occurred when both spouses were of the same socioeconomic status. Since emotional satisfaction was not the purpose of marriage, the partners had little to complain about. More important was that the husband should carry the role of provider, while the wife, the role of homemaker and bearer of children (Murstein 1974, p. 209).

A woman’s rights movement began to arise and influenced the family relationships. Concern about inequality of the marriage contract was expressed. Even

though the husband was still recognized as the lord of the home, the wife was no longer viewed as a temptress; she was considered as a welcome partner, but the junior partner. Anyway, wives achieved a substantial degree of social freedom.

Marital sex was a natural part of the relationships. The sexual attitudes were positive; sex was deemed to be moderate, not too extensive, and consistent with health. Sex should be performed with a temperate affection, without violent transporting desires, or too sensual applications. Too frequent sexual activity was considered not appropriate since it could dull the sight and enervate the whole body (Murstein 1974, pp. 210–212).

Despite common acceptance of sex in marriage, passionate and romantic love was considered the realm of relationships outside of marriage, for leisure rather than for duty. In particular, the wealthy French nobility and the merchant class in the later seventeenth century could afford themselves leisure time for l'amour, and the most exciting kind of sex was non-marital. Theological influence on love relationships waned; interest in sensual dress and sex evolved. Upper-class men dressed in lace, buckles, and jeweled clothing. Women wore high-heeled shoes and bodices with laces in the front to make the bosom swell. People discovered and entertained the joy of passionate sexual feelings and tried to merge these with marriage.

Only in the seventeenth century, economic, societal, and cultural changes in Europe began to decay the traditional functions of marriage and encouraged individuals to choose their mates on the basis of personal affection. A gigantic marital revolution had occurred in Western Europe and North America during the Enlightenment, and in the late eighteenth century, the belief in free choice and marriage for love prevailed as a cultural ideal (Coontz 2005).

The same idealistic notions regarding love for marriage, as in Europe, were present during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in such Asian societies as China, Japan, and India (lands of the arranged marriage). In thousands of *haiku* poems, *Noh* plays, and heroic legends later, the idea that passionate love goes together with disenchanting hopes for marriage and suicide was embedded in the Eastern mind as an eternal truth. Classical tales recounted the couple's journey together to the chosen place, leaving forever behind them familiar scenes, agonizing mental conflicts, and the last tender farewells (Mace and Mace 1980). As Hatfield et al. (2007) noted, young Asian romantics knew that passion had little chance of flowering into marriage, so these tales of forbidden romance were sublime tragedies to them.

Since the Renaissance, the concept of romantic love developed in many parts of Western and Northern Europe, and partially, in Eastern Europe. In Russia, in particular, the change in the attitude to romantic love appeared after the reforms of Peter the Great in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Kalyuga 2012). People increasingly valued happy marriages. However, marriages were predominantly still arranged by families for economic reasons (for money and security), but many believed that couples might grow to love each other after they were married.

## 5.8 Romanticism and Love in Europe during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Between 1760 and 1840, many Western European countries experienced substantial economic transformations. Many people moved from agrarian field, where raw strength was important, to the cities, where they worked at the factories using machines. Speed and dexterity became more important requirements for the labor force. Therefore, women and children were able to involve in earnings more and often worked in 13-h work shifts. Family life reacted to such urban environment: The influence of the extended families declined, the nuclear family lost its cohesiveness, home care deteriorated, meals became irregular, and drinking increased. The Age of Classicism and Reason had also died (Murstein 1974). The various strata of society could not coexist smoothly anymore; reason and convention did not work as perfectly as before.

In that period of history in Europe, the general structural change from stratification to functional differentiation occurred, and the transition from a predominantly aristocratic (stratified) to an increasingly functionally differentiated society took place. The rejection of aristocratic notions of love and development of new bourgeois ideals of love were apparent in the literature of the Enlightenment. The new intellectual, literary, and artistic movement Romanticism emerged, which was embodied in painting and sculpture, concert music and ballet, as well as literary works. It was built in the writings of Rousseau, Goethe, and Thomson and had implications for love and marriage. Romanticism was probably the reaction and rebel of educated people to the scientific rationalization of nature that was popular in the Enlightenment period of European history. Therefore, romanticism addressed intuition, intense emotion, idealization, and dramatization of reality of life. Love naturally became the most popular topic and with emphasis on idealization was depicted as romantic love.

As Murstein (1974) noticed, romanticism resembled courtly love, yet it was a new and different host of feelings and expressions: It was romantic love. Courtly love fused the sensual and the pure. In romanticism, too, sexual love stood as the symbol of divine love and touched on the ultimate mystery of life. Romanticism, however, differed from courtly love: The romanticist sanctioned open rebellion against the mores of his time, while the troubadour adored his lady with discretion. The romantic lover expressed his love immediately, while a courtly lover did this artfully and traveled a succession of courtship stages. The romanticist was aware of his inevitable end and worshipped death since it represented total fusion with the universe, while the troubadour manifested cheerful optimism and awaited the happiness when he finally joins his lady.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the notion of romantic love modified its connotations from idealization of passion, sensibility, and chivalry to the new ideals of authenticity and the validation of one's self-portrayal. In the second half of the eighteenth century, that shift culminated in the literature of Romanticism, which discovered and explored romantic love in the new

dimensions of subjectivity and individuality. This idea of romantic love evolved first and foremost as a literary phenomenon (Landgraf 2004). In that historical period, the literature became the essential vehicles for the expression and the experience of love. In the German context, this shift was embodied in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), one of the early romantic novels depicted love in bathos and death. The work presented a collection of letters written by Werther, a young artist of a passionate and sensitive character, to his friend Wilhelm. Werther is in love with Lotte, who seems at one with nature. Werther knows that Lotte loves him "from the first soulful glances, the first hand pressure." Even though she is married to Albert, a friend of Werther's, Werther cries out in a letter to her, "And what does that mean that Albert is your husband?" Werther will have his beloved in Paradise. He borrows two pistols from Albert's household, and "They have passed through your hands, you have wiped the dust from them, I kiss them a thousand times for you have touched them." And then Werther takes his life.

Landgraf (2004) believes that Werther staged his suicide and turned his suicide into an artistic act. He borrowed the guns from Lotte's husband Albert. In a last letter to Lotte, he explained his suicide in highly poetic and philosophical terms. As an artistic act, his suicide performed the very paradoxical speech act required by the newly formed ideal of love. Many romantics were so moved by the novel that they committed suicide. In fact, a girl was pulled from a pond in Goethe's own garden with a copy of Werther tied inside her scarf (Murstein 1974, p. 245).

For the eighteenth century, educated individual love became the primary source for self-validation. This standpoint explains the persistently suicidal tendencies of eighteenth-century lovers. Those suicides did not represent "the ailing or failing of the individual but rather are the logical consequence of individuals searching for self-validation in love and the expression of love according to the newly found ideals of authenticity and immediacy." (Landgraf 2004, p. 40).

Europe discovered the literary letter as the primary medium for the communication of love; the epistolary novel became popular to express the experience of love. The literary letters mediated between self-reflection and ideals of authenticity and immediacy. A new discourse on this emotion revealed love as a heightened form of self-actualization and self-expression. Literature and personal letters gave to the eccentric subject the place to search for and find self-identification and self-validation (Landgraf 2004).

German sociologist Bohn (cited Landgraf 2004) suggested the following explanation of this transformation in the concept of romantic love. She argued that in an aristocratic culture before eighteenth century conversation was the main medium of communication. Conversational aptitude was vital in personal life and communication; a semantic of interaction insisted on politeness and indirectness and allowed all parties to participate. Thus, conversation was focused on social norms, not on the expression of individuality. The seventeenth-century aristocrats considered inappropriate "to indulge too much in personal matters, to profile your individuality, be it in intellectual, personal, or emotional matters" (Landgraf 2004, p. 37).

In the eighteenth century, writing delimited the bourgeois society and its love semantics. Bohn (1999, cited in Landgraf 2004, p. 37) beautifully explained that writing and reading altered the love semantics. Since writing entailed absence and distance, in that cultural context authenticity and immediacy acquired prominence. Rhetorical skills and conversational aptitudes lost their importance with shift of emphasis on authenticity, which no longer implied the presence of a person. Conversely, writing (especially letter writing) became the preferred medium for the expression of authenticity and immediacy. This development was evident in the rise of the literature of sensibility and the epistolary novel (Landgraf 2004).

Romantic literature greatly impacted relationships between men and women. The Romantic Movement in novel, poetry, and drama changed Western culture and people's relationships. Romanticism regarded an individual as an agent of free choice in life and personal values. As for love, men and women in their relationships were presumably motivated by their personal decisions and chosen values. Romantics convinced people to follow their passion and portrayed love stories in romantic novels, plays, and poems. They understood love as the desire for union between two individual souls; therefore, the choosing of the appropriate person was highly important for them. Women appeared as equal to men in intellect and in passion, though that view of women was not the prevailing one.

In the Romantic plot-novel the course of the characters' lives is determined by their chosen purpose, which they pursue through a series of relevant problems that must be solved, obstacles that must be overcome, conflicts that characters must resolve through a series of coherent, and integrated events leading to the climax of a final resolution. The philosophical implication is of course that our life is in our hands, that our destiny is ours to shape, and that choice is the supreme fact of our existence. (Branden 1980/2008, p. 26)

Many authors of nineteenth-century Romantic literature glamorized tragedy of romantic love in their plots and style. There was a deep parallel between Romanticism in the literature and meaning of romantic love in life, yet Romantic literature was too idealistic to integrate reason and passion. Romantic love needed psychological realism to maintain balance between the subjective and objective that human beings can live with.

**Love and Marriage.** Romanticism had many implications for marriage of that time. From a romanticist's view, the priority of economics over the relationship of the participants in the marriage of the wealthy Europeans was an infamy. Nature and destiny were more important than bourgeois conventionality: Lovers should be free to defy social laws and rebel against authority. For the public and growing bourgeois class in England and France, the stability of society rested on marriage. A romanticist had the stereotype of an egotist and unstable, and given to every imaginable excess. The evaluation was certainly unfair: It failed to appreciate several major contributions of romanticism. Even though emotionality and expressions were excessive, romanticism encouraged the idea of a natural relationship between the sexes with true feelings. Unconventional behavior, including the extramarital affairs of the romanticists, often induced ambivalent attitudes toward them; yet people were attracted by the emotional richness of the romanticists' writings and lives.

The romantic beliefs cherished egalitarian spirit more than the rigid class distinctions. The continued decline of Western aristocracy conjoined with the rising power of the bourgeoisie. Romanticism, therefore, promoted the idea of upward class mobility (Murstein 1974, p. 246).

Another positive aspect of romanticism was that it promoted the views on equality of men and women. The proponents of women's rights increased their voice in America, France, England, Germany, and Italy. Despite this, gender relations mostly remained unchanged, but instead a compromise between egalitarian and patriarchal views of marriage emerged. Many believed that men and women could not be compared as superior or inferior, but instead they were completely different in their natures and had distinctive characters. They ought to be appreciated on their own and dissimilar terms. Thus, women were no longer seen as inferior to men.

The romantic idealization of love relationship inspired the notion of woman as a worthy person as well as an object of desire; a man could not feel sincere love toward a woman as an inferior person; he should value and respect her. English novelist Jane Austen in her writings (1811/1996; 1813/1992; 1814/2004; 1815/1998; 1817/2005; 1818/2004) advocated the new respect for love-based marriage and presented the conflict between romantic love and the old dilemma of women's economic and legal dependence (Abbott 2010). In the eighteenth through nineteenth centuries, people were gradually adopting this new idea that love should be the most essential reason for marriage and that young people should be free to choose their marriage partners on the basis of love (Coontz 2005).

Is romantic love the best value and an ideal basis for marriage? Should passionate lovers renounce their marital ties and give full expression to their desires? A cultural ideal was that marriage should be based on true love, intense and deep, and a couple should maintain their ardor for their entire lives. When the ideas that love should be the central reason for marriage and companionship were first raised, the same values that increased people's satisfaction with marriage as a relationship began to undermine the stability of marriage as an institution. The very features that promised to make marriage a unique close relationship made love optional and fragile. The skeptics worried about the dangers of the love match (Coontz 2005). In the late eighteenth century, some people recognized what Giddens (1992) called "the intrinsically subversive character of the romantic love complex" (p. 46).

Many writers resisted its lure and dissected the romantic objectivity. In particular, French writer Stendhal in his philosophical discourse *On love* (1822/2010) claimed that passion is a subjective experience that leads to distortion of perception. By the way, this work was prompted by Stendhal's hopeless love for M<sup>lle</sup> M<sup>lle</sup> Dembowska (Stendhal 1822/2010).

He described four types of love: (1) physical love, purely sexual in scope; (2) love as a social game, removed from passion; (3) vanity love, a type necessary for high social standing; and (3) passion, the finest form of love. Stendhal also outlined the progression of love from admiration to "crystallization," when the lover attributes all sorts of perfection to the beloved. He provided fascinating and very

romantic analogy of this process. Once he observed that a bare bough of a tree which fell into a salt pit and lay there for some time acquired a covering of brilliant crystals when it was extracted. The shabby branch appeared at first glance to be a priceless *objet d'art*, but in reality it was worthless. He called this analogy to the experience of love as crystallization and thought that love is a fantasy, a projection of the individual's ego-ideal onto the often undeserving object. When reality intrudes, crystallization ends and love loses its enchantment.

French writer G. Flaubert was another realist disenchanting romantic love. In his *Madame Bovary* (1856/2004), he wrote the story of Emma, a woman with a highly romanticized view of the world, who craves beauty, wealth, passion, as well as high society. She read too much Rousseau and dreamed of being a romantic heroine. She is married to a country doctor and feels disparate between the romantic ideals and the realities of her country life. These feelings lead her into two extramarital love affairs; her aspirations are jarred by the reality of being seduced by a wealthy local man and then by a clerk. Eventually, her love fantasies gone, and she poisons herself.

Basing marriage on love and companionship represented a break with thousands of years of tradition. The romanticism of love is a great dream that inspired people, but might contradict with reality of life. Idealization of relationships, having positive expectations, could be disenchanted and even ruined. Was it still worthwhile? Skeptics advised that making love and companionship the core of marriage would open a Pandora's Box. They worried that the idea of basing marriage on love would produce rampant individualism. Critics of the love match argued that the values of free choice could spin out of control and a personal decision to choose a marriage partner might be unwise.

The idea of free choice celebrated in eighteenth century also lead to the destructive processes in family life. That time there were many demands to liberalize divorce laws. Many believed that incompatibility should be sufficient reason to declare a marriage contract broken. By the end of the eighteenth century, France, Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden had divorce on the grounds of incompatibility. The proponents of the love match tended to favor divorce reform (Phillips 1988).

The elimination of older social control on youth courting also had a vast effect on childbearing patterns. By the early nineteenth century, some regions in Europe had very high rates of out-of-wedlock childbearing. This increase of out-of-wedlock childbearing in the poorer classes confirmed the worries of the middle and upper classes that personal freedom and romantic love could have detrimental consequences. Middle-class families concerned that their sons and daughters could also succumb to these temptations.

Nevertheless, the new norms of the love-based, intimate marriage were adopted at different rates in various European countries. In England, the love match became popular as early as the 1760s and 1770s, while in France, the novelty of "marriage by fascination" was still commented on in the mid-1800s. Many working-class families did not follow the new norms of marital intimacy until the twentieth century (Coontz 2005, p. 147).

The eighteenth century was a clear tipping point in this innovation. In England, new sentimental images of wives and mothers appeared, and idealization of marriage reached new heights. In France, the common people more frequently talked about marriage as the route to “happiness” and “peace.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) was one of the most enthusiastic proponents of romantic love and harmonious marriage. Romantic ideals spread in America: In the two decades after the American Revolution, New Englanders began to change their description of an ideal mate, adding companionship and cooperation to their traditional expectations of thrift and industriousness (Coontz 2005). This innovation spread even to Russia, where Tsar Peter the Great westernized the marriage customs and outlawed forced marriages. Bride and groom were required to swear that each consented freely to the match. Russian romantic authors extolled “the bewitchment and sweet tyranny of love” (Pushkareva 1997, p. 121). During the eighteenth century, people began to emphasize the mutual obligations required in marriage.

As Coontz (2005) noticed, in contrast to the stories of knightly chivalry that dominated literature in the times of courtly love, late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century novels described ordinary lives and presented fascinating domestic scenes and family relations. Many writings about love and marriage read like syrupy love stories or melodramatic tales of betrayals (p. 148).

## 5.9 Victorian love in Europe (1830s–early 1900s)

In Great Britain, the 1830s are usually considered as the end of Romantic Age. In the subsequent Victorian period, the passionate and erotic aspects of Romanticism still continued in the arts. However, the Victorian era was quite conservative in many regards: Literature, drama, art, and music were popular entertainment, but romantic love was considered to be a delicate, spiritual feeling—the antithesis of crude, animal lust. The notion of “tamed” romantic love appeared by the middle of the nineteenth century in Victorian culture in Great Britain (Branden 1980/2008, p. 29). People wanted stability as well as security, and commitment to interpersonal human relationship seemed important in this respect. Romantic love in a “tamed” and domesticated sense was regarded as an important concomitant of marriage in the middle classes. The morality was basically Puritan, and the aspiration was for respectability; then, they domesticated and sentimentalized romantic passion—upholding the right to choose one’s partner freely but otherwise taming romantic love.

### Love and Marriage

Energetic passion of romantic relationships excited the fancy of the middle class. However, it was unacceptable to the powerful bourgeoisie because the romantics rebelled against the long-cherished institutions, such as marriage. Romanticism, being greatly appealing, waned during time of Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. A new type of relationships came to

European life—“Victorian love”—that was in better accord with bourgeois code, which stressed personal responsibility for one’s actions and respect for one’s parents.

Yet, the code ignored the growing desire of youth to gain the excitement and freedom of action that the romantics exemplified. Some writers criticized marriages of convenience as morally wrong and leading to perpetual personal unhappiness. Many educated people might identify with Jane Eyre in Charlotte Brontë’s novel when she refused the suit of St. John Rivers, whom she liked but did not love: “Can I receive from him the bridal ring, endure all forms of love and know that the spirit was quite absent? ... No: such a martyrdom would be monstrous.” (1847/1848, p. 434).

In the nineteenth century, men and women from the Victorian middle class attempted to fuse romanticism and conventional marriage; they sentimentalized the love-based marriage. Many Europeans and Americans accepted a new view of husbands as providers and of wives as nurturing in the home.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, women’s innate sexual purity received a new emphasis in public opinion. The older views that women were inherently more passionate and therefore had to be controlled were replaced by the idea that women were asexual beings. This cult of female purity encouraged women to internalize limits on their sexual behavior. This new emphasis on women’s intrinsic purity was unique to the nineteenth century and resulted in substantial diminishing of sexual motivation in a *good* woman, “the kind of woman a good girl would wish to be and the kind of woman a man would want to marry” (Coontz 2005, p. 159). The new view of women as intrinsically asexual improved their reputation and put them on a pedestal. They were viewed as sexual innocents whose purity should inspire all decent men to control their own sexual impulses. Women were elevated to the position of earthly but powerless angels. The increasing humanism of the period presented women as a more exciting object of veneration than before. The deification of woman helped to maintain a positive and respectful image of a healthy, educated middle-class woman who was not allowed to work or spend much time away from her home.

Yet, Victorian love often failed because it was not easy to suppress sexual behavior; to excite oneself by talking constantly about passion and then forego the sensual pleasures was doubly frustrating. For many Victorians, it was difficult to integrate passion and middle-class morality (Murstein 1974, p. 250).

As for Victorian sexuality, man was perceived as a rather base physical animal, yet, through thrift, self-control, and perseverance, he could rise to the pinnacle of success; that is, he might become a successful Christian businessman. Victorian gentlemen without “decent” livings did not marry. A young man presumably should work hard and acquire his fortune before thinking of marriage. As a result, he sometimes waited so long that he decided not marry at all. Then, regulation of the sexual urge proved to be a problem (Murstein 1974, p. 251).

Another problem of relationships between men and women remained because of the legal and economic inequalities of a woman’s position and the acceptance of these inequalities by both sexes. Poor women were treated as beasts of

burden; wealthier ones, as pampered household pets. The gender role stereotypes in Victorian husband–wife relationships dominated over reality. Women gained increasing competence in the social and educational domains, and yet, they were expected to play subordinate roles. Nevertheless, Victorians no longer regarded marriage as only an economic arrangement or a means of populating the world. They paid more attention to the quality of the relationship (Murstein 1974, p. 264). Improvements in contraceptives had a substantial effect on sexual attitudes and behavior. Women felt a better sense of freedom in sexual matters, compared to former times when fear of pregnancy inhibited their sexual responsiveness. It also freed them to take jobs and gradually become a vital factor in the labor force.

The final years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century marked the close of the Victorian era. The myth of impassioned but controlled gentlemen and asexual, pure women collapsed. Prostitution and venereal diseases became rampant in Europe. The migration of young people from farm life detached them from the supervising eyes of parents. Urbanization helped to overcome the old sexual morality based on domesticity; it was easier to avoid community pressures in the towns.

The perception of the purpose of marriage changed due to the economic well-being of the middle class and the declining religious influence; the attitudes shifted from satisfaction of familial and religious obligations to satisfaction of individual needs. Several other assumptions concerning marriage became apparent that (1) mistakes happen in marital choice, (2) people's needs may change with time, and (3) one cannot always feel completely devoted to one's spouse for a lifetime. Therefore, divorce became more acceptable as the instrument of release from interpersonal difficulty, although it followed by some stigma.

Thus, Victorian love tried to fuse the ideas of romanticism with the traditional conservatism of a guilt-ridden theological concept of marriage. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the new concept that marriage should be based on love and deep intimacy was working in the family relations between men and women. Establishing sentimental aspects of married love in the Victorian era was a social experiment. The Victorians, for the first time in history, tried to make marriage the pivotal experience in people's lives and married love the principal focus of their emotions, obligations, and satisfactions. Victorian marriage harbored the hopes for romantic love, intimacy, personal fulfillment, and mutual happiness that were expressed more openly and urgently during the early twentieth century. The people took idealization of love and intimacy to new heights during the nineteenth century. They meant to strengthen marriage by encouraging husbands and wives to weave new emotional bonds (Coontz 2005).

Middle-class men and women in Europe and North America became evidently more constrained in their premarital sexual and socializing behavior. Women's innate domesticity and purity received a seeming consensus in that time. Men's virtue was identified with such "private passions" as supporting one's own family and showing devotion toward one's wife and children. More middle-income people could afford houses that included a living room or parlor and separate bedrooms for parents and children. These architectural changes provided more space

for joint family activities as well as greater privacy for the married couple. These and other material changes encouraged more affectionate relationships within the nuclear family. Homages to love, marriage, home, and hearth were presented in thousands of short stories and poems in the nineteenth-century European and American literature.

On another hand, Victorian love failed. In several European countries, prostitution rose and women resented against this pale substitute for freedom; the out-of-wedlock births continued to increase among the poorer classes during the first half of the nineteenth century (Coontz 2005, p. 162). Many people from the middle class ignored the harsh realities of life for the lower classes and blamed working people not being sufficiently committed to domesticity and female purity.

During the nineteenth century, however, many young people began to believe that love was far more sublime and far less reasoned than mutual esteem. Fewer and fewer people saw anything “strange” in the idea that falling in love, or failing to do so, was something that you “cannot help” (Coontz 2005, p. 178). Over the century, lovers, especially men, became ever more eager to obey passionate love, embracing the romantic excesses. Gradually, even women became less fearing of romantic love as “a dangerous amusement”; they instead found that falling in love is a kind of self-fulfillment. The exaltation of romantic love, however, made some people, especially women, more hesitant to marry. Many nineteenth-century women went through a “marriage trauma,” worrying about what would happen if a spouse did not live up to their high ideals. They believed that marriage must be based on true love and implied that it was immoral to marry for any other reason. The dilemma, which many considered, was “Which was worse, love without money in a marriage or money without love?” (Coontz 2005, p. 179). Jane Austen in her novels (1811/1996; 1813/1992; 1814/2004; 1815/1998; 1817/2005; 1818/2004) usually arranged for her female characters to find love and financial security in the same man. But reality was more controversial; the contradictions between the goal of marrying for love and the practical need to find a male provider were difficult to resolve. The questions were as follows: Is it respectable to enter a loveless marriage? Conversely, how can an economically dependent woman truly choose a love match? There were rising expectations about love and marriage. Yet, despite society’s glorification of romance and married love, the day-to-day experience of marital intimacy was still quite limited compared to the norms that would prevail in the nineteenth century.

The relationships between husband and wife were romanticized in the nineteenth century, while ongoing commitments to parents and siblings prevented the nuclear family from becoming completely private. Husbands and wives still felt stronger ties to their birth families than they would do later in the twentieth century. Nineteenth-century advice books depicted the sentimental bonds between brothers and sisters as those between husbands and wives. The unmarried sister or widowed mother who lived contentedly with a married couple was a typical figure in Victorian novels (Coontz 2005, p. 183).

Many people believed that love develops slowly from the admiration, respect, and appreciation, of someone’s good character. The 1828 edition of Webster’s

dictionary defined love as an “affection of the mind” that is “excited by beauty or worth [or] by pleasing qualities of any kind, as by kindness, benevolence, charity.” The first definition of love as a verb was “to be pleased with, to regard with affection. We love a man who has done us a favor” (cited in Coontz 2005, p. 184). Many Victorian husbands genuinely cherished their women.

Women, on another side, had to adjust their expectations and wishes to the reality; they had few rights in marriage and few options outside it. Personal happiness was a desired goal of marriage, yet many women needed to marry in order to survive and support themselves. They needed economic security and wanted a home; this motivation tempered many Victorian women’s romantic dreams and directed them to settle for marriage that might promise less intimacy and mutual respect than they dreamed for.

Thus, the “good morals” of Victorian women and the inequality of gender roles made many marriages of that time stable and seemingly peaceful, but the economic and legal forces limited people’s romantic aspirations and affected their personal lives creating a great deal of personal discontent. The reality of different constraints on men and women challenged their ideal of intimacy and led to a “sense of estrangement” between many husbands and wives and made it hard for couples to share their innermost dreams, no matter how much in love they were. Some Victorian husbands and wives experienced satisfaction and joy in their sex lives, but in many cases, couples could not escape psychologically from their ideal of passionless marital relations. The beliefs in sexual differences between men and women inhibited their emotional intimacy, while the cult of female purity and true womanhood made physical intimacy difficult to satisfy. Only men were supposed to have sexual desires, yet they were expected to combat their “carnal” urges and control their impulses. Many men patronized prostitutes (often seeing this as a lesser evil than masturbation), but they often did so with the feeling of guilt (Coontz 2005, pp. 188–189). As one middle-class man recalled, he “learned to associate amorous ardors with the vulgar ... and to dissociate them sharply from romance.” (quoted in Pugh 1983, p. 88). The societal cult of female purity generated in men’s minds a distinction between good sex and “good” women, and therefore, many men could not contemplate about a woman they respected in sexual terms. Many women had the idea that a normal female is not supposed to experience sexual passion and they expected the wedding night with anxiety. Even women who enjoyed physical intimacy with their husbands felt guilt and shame about their pleasure and passion. Many men also thought it unnatural if a woman enjoyed sex “too much” (Coontz 2005). Thus, both husbands and wives experienced the dichotomous thinking and ambivalent feelings concerning marital love.

Intense friendships with a person of the same sex were common, but the sexual aspect of a person’s identity in such relationships was less salient. The nineteenth-century Victorians were aware that sexual relations between two people of the same sex did happen. Quasi-romantic friendships occurred among women as well as among men.

## 5.10 Love in Post-Revolutionary America (Late Eighteenth Century to Nineteenth Century)

The attitudes toward love, marriage, and sexuality in America were dominated by the Puritans and later Victorian cultures and the anti-romantic commonsense tradition. Americans were free to marry for love; many religious confessions and groups were quite liberal in this regard. Individualistic culture of the USA was more open than many others for freedom to love that was the essential premise of romantic love.

### Love and Marriage

From the times of the first colonies until the Civil War, the marriages in America were quite diverse for different populations of early Americans: Indians, New Englanders, and the mid-Atlantic and Southern states. Marital attitudes and practices varied substantially from colony to colony, since many nations, classes, and religions brought their own traditions and customs.

In the Puritan philosophy, the basic tenet was that all must undertake to do God's will; this could be achieved by an industrious, rational life, and mastering one's passions. To keep busy every minute of the day was the best way to avoid overwhelming by passion. Couples, forever kissing and dallying, were criticized. The Puritans were overzealous prudes, trying to control their own and everyone else's sex life and leisure activities. They permitted the expression of passion and sexual interest to the extent which did not let man forget God. Therefore, passionate love did not play an important role in marital choice because it might make man forget God. When a boy liked a girl, he tried to justify his feeling on rational grounds. He thought that "she was a good Christian; both would help each other to find God; she was thrifty, pious, and industrious." (Murstein 1974, p. 301). In earlier times, from the first settlements (ca. 1500) until the Revolutionary War (1775–1783), a woman's inferior role in America was taken for granted and attributed to her physical and mental inferiority.

Love was a rational, volitional act, and even though it was not considered as a prerequisite for marriage; nevertheless, it was assumed that a decent Puritan marriage inevitably leads to love. For a Puritan, the absence of love to one's spouse, despite his or her shortcomings, meant to acknowledge one's failure to be a good Christian. It was important not to fall in love with someone outside the Church or with a person with much less financial means. Another advice on matrimony decried the emphasis on physical attraction and argued for equality of age and social status as determinants of a good marriage (Murstein 1974, p. 303). As for courtship, among the Puritans, a man wooing without the consent of the lady's parents was subject to a fine.

Benjamin Franklin (1745), in particular, advised to rely in marriage on common sense and avoid excessive emotionality because it interfered with rational behavior. As to matrimony, he believed that it "is the most natural state of man, and therefore the state by which you are most likely to find solid happiness. A

bachelor was the odd half of a pair of scissors, and marriage was the obvious solution to the incompleteness of both sexes" (quoted in Murstein 1974, p. 303). But Franklin was no prude; he could, on rational grounds, advise a young man to take an old mistress rather than a young one because they were so much more grateful. He also was not a traditionalist and encouraged young people to feel free to reject their parents' advice on matrimony. But actually, most parents did not force their children to wed against their wishes (Murstein 1974, p. 316).

Yet, Franklin (1745) believed that passion is not a good reason for marital choice. Marriages often turned sour, he said, because they "are often occasioned by the headstrong motives of ungoverned passions." The wise swain should inspire his beloved with sentiments of rational esteem, and sex should occur in a moderate, rational manner. Franklin (1745) admired women, but he did not regard them as equal to men in intellectual matters. His views were in the earlier tradition of the enlightened sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European male who believed that women, while not intellectually equal to men, should be treated kindly and educated to be companions to their husbands (Murstein 1974, p. 304). The top-most qualities of a good wife were piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. To the farmer, however, being industrious and vigorous were the more important features.

In the eighteenth century, wooing became more stylized than in Puritan days. A woman should be surprised and even "disapprove" initial declaration of affection of her lover. As the suitor poured forth his heart in following visits, the woman was not supposed to let him know that she cared for him. He still should continue to court her and prove his honest intentions.

The poor were less formal in their courtship. The young man and woman saw each other briefly while on errands or at church. A custom of "bundling" made the relationship closer: Unmarried couples occupied the same bed, without undressing, for the purpose of carrying on a courtship. With their parents' permission, the young man could spend the night with the young lady in order to get to know her better. The custom of "bundling" flourished in the middle of the eighteenth century along the Northeastern and Atlantic seaboard (Murstein 1974, p. 317).

The marital relationships in the Southern states of the USA had cultural specificity. Courtship was at first strongly regulated; in the South, the chaperone system prevailed. Men and women were proud of their manners and gracious living, and the role of the plantation mistress was different compared to the wealthy northern wife. The southern mistress had many servants, most of them black. She had greater power over her slaves and indentured servants than her northern counterpart, who hired only household help.

Yet, the southern lady's executive role in domestic affairs did not entail emotional well-being. The lack of close feelings for a spouse often selected by her parents, the isolation of plantation life, and the knowing that her husband may possibly have liaisons with black women did not make her happy. Husbands in the South were more patriarchal than in the North and freely indulged in sexual encounters with "bad" women (blacks). On the other hand, they venerated the

purity and gentility of the “good” white southern woman. She became the living symbol of the loftiest aspirations of southern life.

The position of black and interracial close relationships between black and white had special accents in the antebellum period (1781–1860). Both white and black marriages, as well as heterosexual relationships between white men and black women, were profoundly altered by slavery. Many young southern white men were initiated into the mysteries of sex with a black woman. Some of them found the casual sexual relationships and the variety so pleasing that they were reluctant to marry with puritanical white women. After marriage, they often did not give up their easy access to the “children of nature.” For a woman slave, the benefits of satisfying the sexual needs of her white master were greater than working in the fields. The position of concubine was eagerly sought after, but was commonly reserved for the light-colored women. Marriage between slaves legally did not exist because a slave did not have a legal entity. The black man and woman just cohabited. They could change a partner, or the master could switch partners for them without their consent. The status of black man was weakened. In most cultures, the usual masculine role for the man was to protect and control his woman (or women). The American slave could not do this, and if his master desired his wife or woman, he did not have a power to protest. Southern court would not consider a charge of adultery by a black against a white man. Inversely, any black male attempting to molest a white woman could be castrated. Thus, the authority of a black male over his family was weak because of this inability to act effectively in a masculine role. Black families became matriarchies (Murstein 1974, p. 308).

Such treatment of the black families, the exploitation of black women by their white masters, and the psychological castration of black men’s masculinity left a residual effect in the quality of intimate relationships within the black community for very long time. The “Negro matriarchy” was noticeable in many close relationships in America for very long time.

New advancements in American family life came in the nineteenth century with more leisure time and greater physical comfort; people felt that happiness, rather than simple survival, was possible. People began to believe in positive feelings such as friendship, sympathy, and empathy. The ideas of affectionate marriages, loving, and sentimental relations gradually became popular in American family life, especially in northern states. The images of loving family appeared in magazines and poems; novels promoted and advocated romantic courtship, love, and sincerity. In the nineteenth century in America, romanticism and sentimentality put emphasis on emotional attachment and the cultivation of feeling. New ideas about human equality and liberty undermined older notions of hierarchy and order. Americans applied the political ideal of “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” espoused in the Declaration of Independence to family life. Husbands were to rule, but with affection and with their wives’ interests at heart. Wives obeyed, not out of force, but out of love. This was the new ideal, but old habits died slowly. The new romantic attitudes first took hold among the urban, educated

wealthy, and middle classes, and later spread to rural and poorer Americans (Family Life, nineteenth century Families, n.d.).

Men and women had more freedom, and courtship became more elaborate. They attended dances, church socials, picnics, and concerts, and got to know one another well. Economic considerations, however, did not vanish: Wealthy women and men were still in different circles of relationships than poorer men women.

After the wedding, couples went on honeymoons to have a romantic interlude before settling down to daily life. The nuclear family, consisting of a father and mother and their children, became the ideal. Fewer and fewer Americans lived on farms; men more often worked in offices and factories, and assumed sole responsibility for the financial support of the family, becoming the breadwinners, a term coined in the early nineteenth century. Married women were considered pure and innocent and were not supposed to work for wages. They were supposed to devote themselves to domestic duties and children.

Many nineteenth-century American families, however, did not fit into a nuclear family ideal. Because of high housing costs, extended families, including grandparents and other relatives, often lived under one roof. Immigrants adhered to traditions of extended families, and poorer families often included grandparents, grandchildren, and occasionally aunts and uncles in order to maximize sources of income and save on rent. Men, women, and children worked long hours for low wages in dirty, cramped surroundings in the sweatshops of major cities. Most poor women had to work. Taking in boarders, such as young men and women working in local factories, was another way that families earned money, although they gave up family privacy (Family Life, nineteenth century Families, n.d.).

American families in the nineteenth century made a variety of compromises in the face of economic challenges. The majority of Americans still lived on farms where everyone in the family worked, even if it was in and around the house. In the West, due to the difficulties of pioneering, all members of the family often worked. Despite hardships of life, many Americans sought the private, comfortable family life and affectionate relationships with domestic wives, breadwinning husbands, and well-educated children.

### **Love and Sex**

Protestantism prevailed in America and had huge political and cultural authority. Throughout the nineteenth century, Puritan dissenters and divines intensely influenced Protestants. In popular American culture, the Puritans acquired a reputation of being associated with sexual renunciation and asceticism. "Puritan" stood for a style of sexual prudishness that presumably was dominant from the colonial period through the late nineteenth century. Victorian culture continued Puritan intimate cultural traditions. According to a recent study, however, the popular stereotype of the sexually repressed Puritan was immensely misleading (Seidman 1991). Sex for the Puritans had value, but only within marriage. They believed that sexual expression is acceptable within marriage, and the relationships in a married couple would not be considered complete unless consummated in sexual union. Besides,

marriage for the Puritans involved mutual affection and respect. Sexual expression outside of marriage was condemned.

The same way, in white middle-class Victorian culture (1830–1890), the role of sex was not denied. Victorians did not conceal sex in a veil of silence and did not wish to repress the sexual longing. Instead, they consistently acknowledged the presence and power of sexual thoughts, feelings, and discrete sexual acts. Yet, marriage was considered the only legitimate sphere of sex. The ideal of a marriage based upon love was thought to function as a brake upon the propensity of sexual feelings to incite bodily desire. Love raised marriage above a mere sexual or social exchange and rendered it a spiritual union. Love was supposed to begin with the longing of the soul for spiritual elevation and completes through communion with a congenial spirit. The mutual attraction that Victorians described as love was basically a spiritual, mental, and moral one. The Victorian Americans were against extreme sexualization and sensualization of love. They believed in romantic and spiritual longings.

However, the Victorian sexual culture was not entirely successful. The Victorian century suggested that the effort to confine eroticism to marriage and to spiritually transform it was not so effective in practice than in theory. By the beginning of the twentieth century, eroticism was brought back and accepted as a legitimate means of displaying love. Social developments, including a more consumer-oriented society, changing gender roles, the rise of a new middle class, massive urban migration, and ethnic immigration, reinforced this transition (Seidman 1991).

### **The Changes in Marriage Relationships and Gender Roles in the Late Nineteenth Century America**

American marriages and premarital relationships of that time were different from European life. For Europe in the nineteenth century, such phenomena as unsupervised dating, weak parental role in marital choice, and mobility in marriage were unusual. However, foreign visitors noticed the lack of ardor in American marriage and apparent coldness of American men and women. These emotional aspects of their life, according to Murstein (1974, p. 310), might be in part due to the repressive effects of the Puritan and Anglican heritage, or it might also be due to more natural relations between the sexes. American women had more freedom, but there was less passion and more friendship between men and women. European passion of that time might be explained as an artifact of restrictions in the choice of marital partner. Besides, in Europe, passion was rarely directed toward the marriage partner and was more typically focused on extramarital affairs.

In the nineteenth century, faith in traditional gender roles faded, but justification of why women should stay in the house was found. As in Europe, the emphasis of the explanation was not on her inferiority, but rather on her greater spiritual superiority and on the need to protect so pure a person from the degrading experiences of everyday life (Murstein 1974, p. 311). The modern social psychologists would call this “benevolent sexism,” as a chivalrous attitude toward women that feels favorable but casts them as weak creatures in need of men’s protection.

According to that time of the nineteenth century, since a woman was spiritually superior, she would have a much stronger religious sense than a man. If her marriage was unsatisfactory, if her husband mistreated her, she could do little legally or socially. Then, she could find solace in religion, the great tranquilizer. Submissiveness of the wife was emphasized as obligation, even in the case when she was right and her husband wrong. These were the merits of domesticity.

Thus, the literature of that time convinced a woman that she had the best of both worlds. Man really valued her as his better half, and if she was submissive to her husband, it was not out of fear, but rather because she was closer to the ways of Jesus and could readily “turn the other cheek.” Free choice in marriage became an American standard in the nineteenth century, but the choice of partner for only individual and personal reasons was not yet acceptable. Physical passion, as a determinant of marital choice, was still taboo. Normatively acceptable traits were kindness, purity, being a good Christian, and industrious. The image of the “two birds within one nest” became the symbol of sentiment in nineteenth-century Europe and North America. However, some already advocated the rights to satisfy individual needs and preferences, in spite of norms. Growing secularization and individualism of the American middle class probably promoted the development and manifestations of romantic love in nineteenth century (Lystra 1989).

## 5.11 Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century Australia

In the nineteenth century, the concept of romantic love shared many similarities in the USA and Britain (Illouz 1997; Lystra 1989; Rothman 1987; Seidman 1991; Shumway 2003; Cancian 1987), Canada (Ward 1990), and Australia (Teo 2005). Romantic love in Australia was viewed as an emotional, moral, physical, and spiritual attraction and thought to be a prerequisite to courtship. Companionate marriage was deemed as an ideal goal and was bound up in class consciousness and the demonstration of “gentlemanly” or “ladylike” behavior (Lake 1990; Russell 1988).

Love in nineteenth-century Australia had the greater spiritual meaning based on a wider belief of that time in progress in all aspects of society, including love and moral character. Love was thought as having an ennobling and morally and spiritually uplifting effect, especially upon the male lover.

Physical attraction was an important feeling; lovers wrote of their yearning for contact, kisses, and embraces. However, physical attraction should be presumably enhanced by a lover’s “character” and shared moral values (Holmes 1995, p. 4). The process of mutual and exclusive disclosure of the self was understood as the foundation of romantic intimacy and the focus of courtship. It was expected that romantic love might bring great unhappiness, bitterness, and despair as well as ecstasy and a feeling of empathy and completeness. Marriage was considered as the aim and fulfillment of romantic love, and everything that was associated with married life might be interpreted as an aspect of romantic love. Some lovers wrote

that they did not expect that love brings constant happiness after marriage. They understood that the emotional elation and physical thrill of “infatuation” in courtship may alternate with the steady and mundane serenity of married love. Bouts of boredom or apathy could be expected in the cycles of domestic life (Teo 2005).

Despite much similarity of Australian concept of romantic love with white middle-class British–American culture, there were essential differences. Unlike nineteenth-century American lovers who viewed romantic love as something mystical or mysterious, Australians tended to have more concrete and prosaic ideas about love. Romantic love in Australian culture was less sacral than in American culture. The oral and written communication of romantic love among Australians was less intense, sublime, or spiritualized than in the USA. The private correspondence among Australians revealed expressiveness of emotional feelings, while the public communication of romantic love was less pronounced than in the USA.

In the nineteenth century, the types of gifts acceptable between courting couples were those of personal sentiment and little monetary value: hand-made cards, portraits, locks of hair, flowers, cakes, books of poetry, or songbooks compiled by one of the lovers. More expensive presents were acceptable only after the couple were engaged (as mentioned in family papers archives, cited by Teo 2006).

## Chapter 6

# Love During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

### 6.1 Chinese Love in the Nineteenth–Twentieth Centuries

Romantic ideas first came to Chinese literature and inspired public opinion. Chivalric fiction and scholar-beauty romance were two popular literary genres, but they were separate and different until the nineteenth century. In contrast to the knight in shining armor in medieval European court romance, a stoic hero in traditional Chinese chivalric fiction had little interest in women; he did not waste time in amorous dalliance, but conserved his energies for feats of courage. The chivalric fiction accepted a hostile attitude toward women. Men feared female sexuality, repulsed it as a corrosive and corrupting agent, and consequently defended their masculine honor and bonds. At times, “the prerequisite for becoming a hero was to have slain a morally “lax” woman, with the assumption that heroism and *eros* are fundamentally incompatible” (Lee 2007, p. 51).

The novel of Wen Kang’s *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* (A tale of heroic sons and daughters, ca. 1870) was among the first to unite two distinct genres—chivalric fiction and scholar-beauty romance—into a new hybrid genre. It gave a portrait of the Confucian romantic who was wholly respectable in orthodox eyes and yet was nonetheless sympathetically attuned to the configurations of sentiment that the cult of *qing* (love, passion) has done so much to render visible and legitimate. Meanwhile, at the end of the nineteenth century, the character of the swashbuckling and murderously puritanical swordsman became less popular. Instead, sentimental heroes and heroines become typical in popular fiction. They accomplished their feats of valor usually after bouts of passionate longing, heartrending disappointment, and melancholic regret. The trend toward the sentimentalizing of heroes was also evident in their signature gestures of shedding hot tears and chanting love poems (Lee 2007).

In the 1890s–1940s, discourses of sentiment dominated the field of literature and popular culture. In the boom of the popular press, the topic of sentiment

appeared mostly in entertainment magazines, newspaper supplements, novels, and translations of foreign fiction, especially in such a literary genre as the novel of sentiment and a popular style of romance known as Mandarin Duck and Butterfly fiction. Butterfly fiction, being named for its frequent invocations of the traditional symbols of romantic fidelity, mandarin ducks, and butterflies, became the standard cultural fare for a fast-growing, moderately educated urban population. It was the general label for all genres of pulp fiction, but above all, it was the sentimental genre of thwarted love that was most successful. Sentimental novels and short stories continued to be written in both classical and vernacular prose in the following decades (Lee 2007).

In the early twentieth century, the Western Romanticist ideal of free love and the Freudian theory of sexuality transformed the idea of sentiment, inherited from the late Chinese Imperial time. In the late 1910s and early 1920s, social, intellectual, and cultural movement toward national independence, emancipation of the individual, and rebuilding society, known as The May Fourth movement, promoted this transformation and pushed the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School and their poetics of sentiment to the margins of culture. In place of the Butterfly glossing of sentiment as virtue, the May Fourth generation proposed “love” as a symbol of freedom, autonomy, and equality. The May Fourth representation of “free love” was as a battle between tradition and modernity, East and West, feudalism and enlightenment, hypocrisy and authenticity, and old and young. Women writers such as Feng Yuanjun and Ding Ling portrayed the passion, ardor, and rebellious courage of young women in love. The intensity of feeling infusing May Fourth fiction was well matched by a new form of essay known for its searing attack on the aridity and hypocrisy of traditional Chinese culture. The early 1920s were the heyday of free love fueled by the spirit of the May Fourth. Countless stories and essays lashed out against the authoritarian family system, the subjugation of women, and the lack of individual freedom and autonomy.

Early twentieth-century discourses of sentiment were based on European Romanticism and the late Chinese Imperial cult of *qing*. Love was declared as the major principle underlining all social relationships: between parents and children, between husband and wife, and among fellow Chinese. During the May Fourth period, the Confucian family and its code of conduct came under relentless attack as the epitome of hypocrisy. Filial piety, in particular, was denounced for its formality and disregards for the psychological and emotional life of the inner self. As for arranged marriage, for the modernizing elite endeavoring to make emotion the mainstay of personal identity and social life, it was unacceptable for marriage to be dissociated from the emotional experiences of the marital partners. Romantic fiction invented a self-centered, self-coherent, and ethically autonomous individual (Lee 2007).

Love stories were saddened with melancholy because free love is a profoundly contradictory ideal. Existentially, free love was torn between the quest for autonomy on the one hand and the need for recognition on the other hand. Experientially, lovers are caught in between their embeddedness in a resilient web of social bonds and their romantic identity as autonomous individuals.

The romantic hero with whom the most of the May Fourth generation identified was Werther. Set against the background of the eighteenth-century cult of sensibility, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* showcased a new moral outlook in which the romantic feeling was the source of all that is good, truthful, and beautiful. Werther, the sentimental hero of the novel, attains greatness and achieves immortality not through the worldly pursuits that he so despises, but through “a certain nobility and purity of feeling” (Taylor 1989, p. 295). His extreme sensibility, melancholic temperament, and languid deportment were imitated the world over, at least in early twentieth-century China.

In the late 1920s and 1930s, however, free love was under attack from radical quarters for its bourgeois limitations and from conservative quarters for eroding social morality and the institution of marriage and family. In this period, sexuality came out of the shadow of romantic love and became an acceptable social topic. Nevertheless, more and more voices emerged to condemn free love/free sex as the threat to social mores. Political ideologues called for a total commitment to the nation by subordinating the romantic love to imperative of revolution. The attitudes toward love and sex became conservative and restrictive.

In the People’s Republic of China, established in 1949, Communist officials imposed strong controls on love and “inappropriate” sexual activity. A puritanical sexual “primness” became definitely established. The new values denied romantic love and affirmed the importance of the collective over the individual. That was a basic value in human affections.

### Love and Sex

Chinese should carefully distinguish between free choice and free love. Even casual flirtation was considered as inappropriate behavior. In choosing a spouse, physical attractiveness was immaterial, and love was described in an official booklet as “psychosomatic activity that consumes energy and wastes time” (cited in Murstein 1974, p. 482).

Love did not play a major role in the life of the young Chinese during that period. For the Chinese woman, the bed implied slavery, and physical love had a negative connotation. The Great Leap Forward demanded, in Communist parlance, the “renunciation of the heart.” Party policy constructed an altruism which assumed that men and women work hard during the day, without being “deflected or confused” by love, sexual desire, or any strivings for private happiness (Gil 1992, p. 571). “True happiness was based on spiritual rather than material enjoyment, on public rather than private interest, on collective welfare rather than on individual happiness” (cited in Murstein 1974, p. 482).

However, in the 1990s, a rapid transformation of attitudes toward love and sexuality occurred—the topic was no longer a taboo on the mainland of China. Many young people, due to globalization, availability of international cinema, the Web, and world travel, adopted more “liberal” or “worldly” views of passionate love, sexual desire, and romantic and sexual diversity. (Hatfield et al. 2007).

### **Love and Marriage**

For centuries of Chinese history, the pyramid of the nuclear family, the extended family, and the clan were the bases of the state. In the late nineteenth century, the progress of industrialization gradually undermined the foundation of the old family system. When a son was leaving his father's household to take a factory job, he practically weakened the family ties. The cultural contacts of young people with Western world sometimes pushed them to question the validity of traditional familial forms. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many college students and intellectuals traveled and disseminated the ideas of individual liberty and sexual equality to the hinterlands.

The movement of 1919 called for "family revolution." Its objectives were sexual equality in the home as well as in industry and marriage on the basis of free choice and love rather than by parental arrangement. Confucian orthodoxy was an apparent backbone of the opposition to progress. The Civil Code of 1930, for the first time, allowed women to inherit property. It also confirmed that marriage could take place only with the free will of both participants, set minimum betrothal ages at 15 for girls and 17 for boys, and granted the right of divorce to both wife and husband (Murstein 1974, p. 478). The relationship between husband and wife was becoming central for marriage, with a reduction in the importance of relations with parents.

However, the method of marital choice, as well as marriage customs, changed little throughout most of China. There were no tradition of dating, parties, and informal social gatherings to meet a potential mate. The opportunities for casual meetings that existed were mainly in the cities. The agrarian population, the overwhelming majority of the overall population, continued to arrange marriages in the traditional manner.

The Marriage Law of 1950 added new provisions to the earlier Family Code. At first, there were widespread opposition and resistance to its implementation in the villages. Since 1953, however, efforts focused on education and persuasion rather than on strong-arm methods. This approach, conjoined with the large rise in literacy, resulted in substantial acceptance of the new law (Murstein 1974, p. 480).

The status of women improved immensely. The law guaranteed equal economic opportunity and freedom of divorce. Many Chinese women worked full time, and the woman did not belong exclusively to the household.

The traditional Chinese focus on family welfare rather than on individual interests was retained. However, the power of parents to regulate the marriages of their children really diminished; in the films, plays, and literature of the 1950s, parents held on to stubborn ideas to arrange marriages, while their offspring strived for the freedom of choice (Murstein 1974, p. 480).

The Chinese carefully distinguished between free choice and free love. In choosing a spouse, physical attractiveness was immaterial, and love was described as "a psychosomatic activity that consumes energy and wastes time." Love did not appear to play an important role in the life of the young Chinese. For Chinese women in different social strata, physical love had a negative connotation (de Beauvoir 1958, pp. 153–154). Although "free choice" in marriage seemed contrary

to a conformist regime, “free choice” referred to the object of the individual’s marital intentions, not to the style of his married life. Extramarital adventures and preoccupation with nuclear family interests were frowned upon, and concern with family matters was deemphasized comparing to the concern for the state (Murstein 1974, p. 484).

## 6.2 Evolution of Romantic Love in India During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

*Shringara*, *‘ishq*, and *bhakti* were three keywords essential for understanding love in South Asia. *Shringara* is a metaphor for love in various expressions, including erotic, esthetics, and romantic. The Persian word *‘ishq*, which spread also to other languages of the region, means love. *Bhakti* is the love word that means attachment, devotion, and service to a beloved as a foundation of unselfish love. In Hinduism, *bhakti* refers to devotion and the love of a personal god. A history of love in South Asia considered these concepts among the most important to characterize the love that developed in distinct and philosophical and esthetical climates and interpolated variously in different periods (Orsini 2006, p. 2).

The enhancing value of *shringara*, *‘ishq*, and *bhakti* as cultural ideals in early modern India during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries went along with a patriarchal system which organized practices concerning marriage, sexuality, and property. There was substantial regional, social, and caste variation notwithstanding, particularly at the opposite ends of the caste and social spectrum (Brahmins and low-caste, princely households and laborers).

Extended family households constituted this patriarchal system, men and women lived in separate spheres, and polygamy was accepted in order to beget sons (Orsini 2006, p. 30). While in ideal terms a husband was all-important for a woman, in practical terms he was peripheral to the daily life of a young bride, as work on the earliest nineteenth-century women’s autobiographies has shown (cited in Raychaudhuri 2000). As for the emotional consequences of this patriarchal system for women, T. Raychaudhuri describes early socialization of girls and preparing them for their life in the husband’s household. Women recalled their child marriage as an event with feelings of a mixture of festive wonder and fear on leaving home. Women were not supposed to talk to their husbands during the daytime, especially in the presence of others, and infertility brought the feared prospect of a co-wife or rejection.

In this patriarchal system, female sexuality was firmly controlled, while men had more freedom in this regard. Social sanctions for sexual misbehavior worked through informal mechanisms, which allowed a measure of laxity (especially to cover up family scandals). However, the most effective ways of control were internalized values.

The British colonial climate, however, brought a number of changes to the cultural values associated with marriage and love in the patriarchal system. Colonial

bureaucracy sent young educated men to live apart from the extended family, either alone or with their wives, bringing new degree of intimacy between the couple (Orsini 2006, p. 31). Therefore, the general process of cultural reorientation began and considered forming individuals who would fulfill their human potential, and that had significant consequences for the relations between men and women and the “*formation of the couple*.” It was a paradigm shift in ideals (Kaviraj 2006).

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), a Bengali poet, philosopher, composer, and novelist, substantially changed Indian culture in many respects. He also transformed the concept of love in Indian literary tradition. Briefly, this transformation was as a change from *shringara*, conventionally translated as erotic love, to *prem*. *Prem* was a Bengali *tatsama* word (i.e., “identical with” the Sanskrit *prema*). In literary vocabulary, in both Sanskrit and traditional Bengali, the term *prema* had a much wider and indeterminate connotation. *Prema* meant an indeterminate form of love and could be linked to all kinds of relations and *rasas*. This was an immense aesthetic transformation that represented a shift from an erotic conception of love to a primarily emotional one, and Tagore’s poetic and narrative art played a determining role in the constitution of the language of modern love in Bengal (Kaviraj 2006).

Although the writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remained sensitive to the aesthetics of *shringara* and *ishq*, they nevertheless distanced themselves from explicitly sexual and sensual ideal of love. They also chose to depict a new ideal of *prem*, an ethical and aesthetic ideal of romantic love. The novelists in the nineteenth century contemplated about plotting romantic love in the Indian social setting (cited in Orsini 2006, p. 32). The sensual heroine of erotic poetry was replaced by other, more spiritual figures. Courtesans embodied the figure of sexual corruption or as golden-hearted victims of society.

By Tagore’s time, the *shringara* ideal declined and *rupa* (in Hindi, beauty) transformed into emotional beauty. The same way, erotic love altered into a more emotional and romantic love. A transformation of the emotional world of art had been accomplished in Bankim’s literature. “Bankim’s novels, through their tragic endings and through a technique of negative implication, had already celebrated and idealized the new kind of romantic love. In Tagore, the evolution of the new aesthetic structure of love moves one step further: this new universe of emotions, and the social world the emotions can create and in which they can feel at ease, can be subjected to further literary elaboration” (Kaviraj 2006, p. 171).

Yet, such substantial change in the nature of love and marriage happened in the context of other relations surrounding the couple. They were also undergoing changes consistent with this shift. According to this change, the task of a good parent was to help daughters understand themselves, to help them “listen to their heart” in relationships, rather than to find a good match for them (Kaviraj 2006).

In the time of Tagore, the literary reflection on the nature of love fundamentally redefined the concept: Love did not mean a universal desire that men and women feel for each other, particularly the attraction of physical beauty. The notion of love converted into an emotional bond that one individuated “soul” feels for another, and both feel it is precious and unique. Sexual attraction was viewed

as a subordinate part of this feeling of emotional companionship. Thus, love was considered as individuation and romantic love, or its Indian equivalent *prem*, was established as an ideal by the beginning of the twentieth century.

However, this new romantic ideal of love remained mostly on the pages of novels and on the screen. The love relationship appeared to exist largely in a discursive space: They talked about it more than practiced. Consensual marriage and economic independence before marriage were much resisted. In practice, consent did not mean leaving the initiative to the young man and woman but rather asking their consent to a match arranged by the family. Nevertheless, the romantic ideal came to invest also arranged matches, translating into romantic love *after* marriage, or a romantic *retrospective* view of one's arranged marriage. Evidence indicated "a new intensity of emotion in conjugal relationship for which there is little precedent in the pre-modern past" and which became part of life experience of the educated middle classes (Raychaudhuri 2000, p. 372).

In Bengali culture, the same way as in others, there was a strong historical connection between this emerging literary aesthetic and a new social ethics of real relationships. The new individualistic ethics was initially read, then imagined, and finally practiced in actual personal relationships only by an adventurous and privileged minority within the modern elite. Since such relationships were practiced by a minority among the elite, and the majority in Bengali society carried on practicing arranged marriages, these feelings and behaviors remained merely individual and extraordinary (Kaviraj 2006). However, this new imaginative influence on the society was immense.

Although the patriarchal system made few allowances for imagination and for the emergence of the modern couple, when the colonial state made allowance for marriage based on individual choice with the Special Marriages Act of 1872, community concerns publicly claimed precedence over individual choice in the emerging Hindu nationalist discourse (quoted in Orsini 2006, p. 33). Although the call of duty and community was shown to be stronger, the narrative gave ample room for the romance to take place.

### 6.3 Love and Marriage in Japan in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century

#### Romantic Ideals of Japanese Love

In the period following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and further into the twentieth century, Japan dramatically changed with the rise of the industrial economy and capitalism. The government made a conscious effort to attain compatibility with the West. The diverse sexual and initiation practices became subjected to the scrutiny of the legal institutions of the nation-state.

The English language concept "love" (*rabu*) was introduced in public discourse that time by Christian theologians, literary scholars, and popular magazines. The notion of love as sexual consummation and appreciation of *iro*, symbolizing

beauty and poetics, typical for the previous period, became less popular. Post-Meiji literature posited *rabu* (love) as a spiritual relationship that excluded physical union between the individuals involved. Further, this *rabu* was translated neither as *koi* nor *iro*, but as *ai*.

Over a long period of time *iro* steadily depreciated as a denominator of unspiritual, unsacred, base desire, as opposed to *ai* as sacred, spiritual, and noble love. *Iro* became inferior to *ai*, referring to the activities of sex workers, while *ai* became a symbol of the romantic sentiment. The courtesan was no longer the heroine of the poetics and the romantics (Ryang 2006, p. 34).

Female students (*jogakusei*) became a new social group representing the ideal of romantic relationships in the modernizing nation (Ryang 2006, p. 34). These female students provoked inflamed desire and made heads turn through their looks, the uniforms they wore, and hairstyles they adopted. Even the bicycles, as their preferred mode of transportation, became romanticized. These students became carriers of love. Their bodies were the objects of myth and romance; behind their uniforms, they represented the frail and not-yet-ripe fruits of womanhood.

### Japanese Marriage and Problem of Love

Japanese society was an example of a lineal family culture that developed under feudalism, endured over the centuries, and suddenly experienced the strains of adjustment to capitalist and industrial economics and new ways of life. Individualism in this society traditionally was frowned upon as being detrimental to the interests of the *ie* (Japanese family system); the family structure and the family's importance were attested. The patriarch possessed great power over the members of the family, as well as responsibilities toward them. Nonetheless, his absolute power was tempered by customs and traditions and was used for the collective well-being rather than for personal reasons. Respect for authority was deep-rooted in most Japanese over times.

The Civil Code of 1898 strengthened the family by curtailing non-monogamous practices, and at the same time, it set up the samurai pattern of marriage as the ideal for all Japanese people. This pattern extolled premarital chastity for women, formalism in family relations, and subordinated individual desires to the family welfare. Sex segregation and role differentiation in childhood and adulthood was a normal state of relationships between men and women.

The Civil Code intended to entrench Confucian ideology in the family, but the doctrine of reciprocal obligations placed its harshest demands on children and women. Children owed their parents complete obedience; the woman was supposed to obey her father in childhood, to be a loyal and submissive wife to her husband, and when he died, to venerate her eldest son. Women were regarded as being intellectually inferior. Men, on the other hand, were perceived as noble, courageous, intelligent, and dignified. Such disparate sexes were, in the best samurai tradition, carefully segregated and educated apart from each other.

The marital relationships were on a social and emotional distance. The passive-masochistic role of women was not conducive to love and sexual enjoyment for

either partner. Men, as the superior sex, could indulge themselves in brothels in order to maintain the purity of the home. Love was regarded as the immature and childish emotion of an inferior person toward a superior one. Therefore, a self-respecting man preferred not to show his affectionate feelings to his wife. Even if he felt positively toward her, it would be expressed only in the privacy of the home. To berate his wife in front of guests was considered acceptable for a man to demonstrate that he was truly the master. The social lives of husband and wife in the idealized samurai tradition were completely independent; a man seen on the street accompanied by his wife would be considered a sorry figure.

The Civil Code of 1898 underscored the low status of the wife by asserting that her right was only third in priority after the man's parents and children. The code was to identify samurai customs as national laws and to spread their influence among the lower classes. The rural classes, however, did not emphasize chastity for women or the segregation of the sexes; their poverty and working conditions of the farmers did not make these customs practical. Nevertheless, samurai customs became the national ideology and, in many cases, the practice. The Japanese family, in the years before and after the enactment of the Civil Code, reflected the firm position of the patriarch (Murstein 1974, p. 488).

The distinction of masculine and feminine roles in family meant that a woman could manage her household affairs with little interference. Since she usually handled the financial matters of the house, her role was more active than the official Confucian ideology suggested. Parent-child relationships were viewed as more important than husband-wife relationships. For example, at night, the baby slept between the couple and the Japanese never regarded this as an intrusion; the philosophy of family collectivism was stronger than that of parental privacy. Confucian ethics demands the subordination of personal pleasures to the raising of children.

The absence of social interaction or expression of affection between husband and wife influenced their relations in the marital bed. With one or two children in their bed, the husband and wife could not have complete privacy during the act of sex. The husband waited his chance until the lights were turned out, grasped his wife in sexual embrace, and had orgasm as speedily as possible. He had little concern about the sexual satisfaction of a wife who was culturally defined as self-abnegating.

The pent-up sexual tension of wives deflected to the emotional bond that was normal for a woman as mother and led to a feeling of love toward a child as the object for which society endorsed open emotional expression. The wife stayed at home, the children at her side. The husband, on the other hand, was free to dine out with friends (Murstein 1974, p. 490).

Growing up completely segregated from each other in school and at play, Japanese young people enjoyed few opportunities for premarital contact. Since marriage was of immense importance to the family, the choice of partner could never be left to immature youth, but had to be primarily the responsibility of parents.

In the first part of the twentieth century, women played an important role in the agricultural and the industrial labor forces. Yet, in the 1920s-1940s, as Japan

industrialized, the “domestication of women” became national policy, with social welfare legislation, tax policies, and informal hiring practices all giving special advantages to families consisting of a salaried husband and a full-time housewife (Coontz 2005, p. 390; Masahiro 1998).

### **The Early Twentieth Century: Sovereign Love**

In the early decades of the 1900s, the economy moved from state-nurtured capitalism and colonial expansionism to wartime mobilization. The Japan modernization was founded upon the principle of the resurrection of the ancient sovereign. Life and death of people were dedicated to the Emperor as the sovereign; the notion of love has also changed accordingly. Japan’s incursions into China during the early 1930s caused a long state of emergency when the power of the sovereign was unrestrained and universally visible. Many wartime extremities happened during that period and should be understood in the context of this power. In domestic life, healthy women were encouraged to have more children (on average five) in order to achieve the national goal of populating Japan with 100 million babies of the Emperor (Ryang 2006, p. 4).

In the time of the Taisho era (1912–26), *jogakusei* (female students) were seen as adorable, cute, and benign. However, wartime sovereign love encouraged a rapid shift from girlhood to motherhood for the sake of achieving efficient reproduction of a strong Japanese nation. So, *jogakusei* fully blossomed as an object of romance much later, only in the postwar era.

During that period, Japanese men and women loved each other via the Emperor’s love and reproduced children for Him. As Ryang stated (2006, p. 5), the notion of sovereign is important for comprehension of love in that Japanese context.

After the Japanese Empire collapsed and the man-god Emperor was viewed as a mere mortal, love between the sovereign and subjects also collapsed. Instead, love between citizens was upheld as the moral ideal: “Right” love should lead to “right” marriage, “right” sex, and “right” family.

### **Japanese Move to Modern Love**

After the end of World War II, the ethos and practice of the wartime state of emergency was gradually brought down and reconfigured. Under the postwar US Occupation (1945–52), Japan was granted democracy. The economy moved to economic liberalism and to affluent late capitalism. The political system transformed from prewar emperor-worshipping militarist totalitarianism to postwar democracy. Culture went through radical changes moving to modernity accompanied by a generational shift and various transformations in kinship structure and family composition (Ryang 2006, p. 4). The national education system was reformed; hundreds of schools became coeducational.

The legal, moral, and educational reforms instituted during the occupation had the effect on severing sex from love. Sex was installed in the bodies of prostitutes and love in the bodies of unmarried and marriageable women. This concept was strongly manifested in education. New sex education guidelines were established and manuals created. Purity education (*junketsukyōiku*) promoted by the Ministry

of Education elevated female premarital virginity as the utmost criterion of love. The object of enlightenment was the population of female students (*joshigakusei*)—young, educated females. The burden of purity, however, landed solely on the body of female students. Women were taught to be good guardians of their own virginity, then to be healthy wives that would reproduce multiple children, and finally to be loving mothers to them. The role of men and their health in these relationships was minimal. Those books taught little about that.

In Ryang's view (2006), the US Occupation of Japan in 1945–1952 substantially changed the nature of romantic relationships in postwar Japan. Reforms that took place in those seven years abolished institutional mechanism that sustained sovereign love. It should be noted, however, that those reforms were not simply the impositions of Western morality that reconfigured love and romance in postwar Japan (Ryang 2006, p. 70). As we saw in the previous chapters, a substantial change in the romantic life of the Japanese already took place at the beginning of the Meiji period (1868–1912). The introduction of the term *ai* (love) in the literature of that time was one example of emerging romantic ideas; another example was the arrival of *jogakusei* as the new female embodiment of romance, which replaced prostitutes and courtesans. After the end of the World War II, new reforms became a natural continuation of that early tendency.

### Love Marriages Versus Arranged Marriages

It seemed that Japanese marriage in the middle of the twentieth century turned to a new page. The number of marriages based on love rather than parental arrangement began to rise (even though less than in the West) in the 1950s, when individuals placed higher value on domesticity, a pattern that the Japanese called *my-home-ism*. Women in the postwar period usually got married between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five. Although the frequency of love matches rose fast in Japan after 1940, it was only after 1965 that the number of love matches exceeded the number of arranged marriages.

Nevertheless, during the 1950s, marriages in Japan remained culturally different from the West. The Japanese nuclear family ideal was more centered on the children than on the couple. Besides, a couple's privacy developed slowly after the wedding because of restrained free choice of marriage partners and because of strong bonds that remained with parents. In Japanese culture, older parents are likely to live with one of their married adult children. (Coontz 2005, p. 390; Masahiro 1998).

It was stated that marriage shall be based on the mutual consent of both sexes, and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife. Laws enacted considering choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce from the standpoint of individual dignity, and the essential equality of the sexes.

Parental consent for marriage was not required after the age of 20; below that age, the consent of one parent sufficed. The power of the samurai marriage and patriarch family substantially weakened. "Love" marriages were becoming popular. There was a large shift away from the traditional patriarchal conception of

husband–wife relations. The rural areas were more conservative. The gains in greater role flexibility and role status by Japanese women did not lead to greater emotional closeness between husband and wife, as in the USA. The expressive or interpersonal functions of women and men, however, were more dependent on cultural learning and traditions and yielded slower than do the instrumental roles (Murstein 1974, p. 498–499).

#### **6.4 Love and Marital Attitudes in Russia in Nineteenth Century and the First Part of the Twentieth Century**

Being inspired by the socialist writers of Western Europe, a progressive view on the marital attitudes started to develop in Russian culture in the second half of the nineteenth century. The intellectuals and highly educated people began to reject the authoritarian and property basis of husband–wife relationships and suggested the importance of the emotional quality of marriage, freedom of choice, and the ethical necessity for equality of the sexes (Murstein 1974, p. 445). Romantic ideas inspired the literature of that time.

A Russian feminist and revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952) was aware of issues of gender inequality, unhappy marriages, and sex trafficking. She developed a radical theory of sexual liberation and asserted that a woman who lacks economic independence becomes a “dependent being” in a love relationship. Therefore, she is likely to engage in a marriage where she is dominated and restrained by a possessive partner. Kollontai believed that the old social system locked women’s productivity into a traditional family structure, but can be improved. In her idea of “red love,” Kollontai proposed a vision of an unfettered love that is evolved through companionship, rather than seeking to dominate one another.

The family legislation of 1917–1926 substantially advanced equal legal status to women and stressed the notion that marriage is a private affair in which the state plays the role of a bystander and intervenes only to ensure that the welfare of the weaker members of the family (usually the wife and children) is not endangered. The new regime recognized only civil marriage, while religious marriage was acceptable as an old custom for those so interested. Men and women were declared equal before the law. The Socialist Revolution enhanced the treatment of women; she obtained full legal equality with men; the government granted her special protection, (maternity leaves and benefits) taking cognizance of her special situation to assure and encourage her professional aspirations. Women achieved an eminence in professional life, yet were not yet fully emancipated from the kitchen.

Too much weight was accorded to the “free love” theorists in the period immediately following the Socialist Revolution. There were few proponents of “free love,” but the idea mostly disappeared by 1930 and shifted to the new philosophy of marriage when an amalgam of traditional Russian romanticism and “Communist Party ethics” came to literature and life. This romanticism was

reminiscent of the nineteenth century: the thrill of a touch, the searing look, the excitement of a pounding heart, and the shy downward gaze of a modest maiden. The emotion of love was highlighted rather than physical contact. The “new healthy” approach to sex assumed a dismay of exposing the body or expressing love in public. No decent man should engage in sexuality for its own sake since that might be considered a cardinal sin of exploiting a woman. Although sex itself was not evil, it could preoccupy an individual and distract from his commitment to the socialist goals of the country. For example, a student’s goal was to achieve high grades; romance and sexual adventures should not hinder him. However, if he was about to graduate from the university and intended to marry a girl, some people would not object if they live together for a few weeks or months. This was the official representation; we can assume that adhered to actual behavior, and there was reason to believe that discreet premarital sexuality was prevalent in college dormitories (Murstein 1974, p. 463).

## 6.5 American Flourishing of Love in the First Part of the Twentieth Century

The histories of romantic love over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are well-documented in America. Rothman (1987), Lystra (1989), Seidman (1991), Cancian (1987), Shumway (2003), and Illouz (1997), for instance, examined diaries, love letters, etiquette and advice manuals, magazines, and popular literature and films to review the American understandings of romantic love. They recognized the substantial changes in the culture of romantic love that affected emotional experiences of love in the period from the nineteenth to the first part of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, Americans understood romantic love as an intensely private and spiritual experience (Lystra 1989, p. 249). The ultimate aim of romantic love was the complete disclosure of the individual self to the beloved in order to achieve intimacy in marriage. However, in the early twentieth century, this notion of romantic love changed and conceived love as inseparable from sexuality, pleasure, and consumption (Illouz 1997). The ultimate fulfillment of love was not in establishing long-term partnership and marriage, but rather in achieving happiness and the experience of “romance” as the main motivation.

Besides, the rituals of romantic relations changed from nineteenth-century *courtship* to the twentieth-century practice of *dating*. *Courtship* usually occurred in the private sphere, and a woman could control this process. She might place obstacles in the relationship to test the love, patience, faithfulness, and loyalty of her suitor in order to assure her security and happiness in marriage. Men also attempted to test women’s affections. Due to these rituals, emotional pain, endurance, and postponed pleasure were the expected and accepted experiences of romantic love which provided more pleasurable emotions. (Lystra 1989, pp. 9–10).

*Dating* rituals replaced courtship among middle-class white Americans between 1870 and 1920 and turned the gender positions upside down. Now, men

lead the relationship, and they took women “out” and “bought” them a good time. Dating was controlled by men rather than by women and involved the practices of consumption and new technologies of transport and mass-market entertainment—the car, dance halls, movie theaters, restaurants, hotels, and tourism. (Rothman 1987, pp. 289–294; Illouz 1997, pp. 54–56.). In the early twentieth century, men and women commodified their experience of “romance” which was influenced by advertising that romanticized and glamorized consumer goods. Romance acquired an exchange value in dating and eventually began to refer to consumption practices—gifts of chocolates, corsages, candlelight dinners, romantic holidays, and sunsets. Advertising of that period featured romantic couples who were “made-up, well dressed, and expensively bejeweled” (Illouz 1997, p. 37), and they engaged in dancing, dining at restaurants, drinking at sophisticated cocktail lounges or bars, going to the theater or movies, or going on holiday at “romantic” destinations, and so forth. These have become clichéd images of romance. These “romantic” rituals and symbols acquired more value than the disclosure of feelings, as it was in the nineteenth century. The experience of “romance” was increasingly separated from “love” (Illouz 1997, p. 35).

The promotion of romantic consumerism impacted emotional states and people’s sense of well-being. The people increased their sense of yearning, the feeling “that one’s life cannot be complete without this or that acquisition” (Stearns 1997, p. 105). Products became associated with pleasure and sensuality; feelings of love and experiences of romance became inextricably intertwined with the consumption of commodities and services. All this transformed the way Americans expressed their emotions.

Romantic love in the nineteenth century was experienced through the rituals of courtship and viewed marriage as its ultimate goal. Courtship encouraged patience and a focus on the future and was taken under surveillance by others—family members and the community.

Dating transformed the understanding and goals of nineteenth-century romantic love; it was an immediate experience and focused on the present. It took place in “islands of privacy” in the public sphere, rather than in the private sphere, and therefore was relatively free of social surveillance and control (Illouz 1997, p. 56).

Romantic love became secular and consumerist, rather than a spiritual experience. While in the nineteenth century personal gifts such as a lock of hair, a sketch portrait of the beloved, or handmade cards were favored, in the early twentieth century, gift giving became an expected part of the expression of romantic love. The American culture of romantic consumption transformed traditional reticence into expensive gift giving to declare love for someone. Emotions and romantic love were supposed to be conveyed and expressed through gift giving. The understanding of romantic love changed: By early twentieth century, American men were aware that gifts were integral to dating (Teo 2006). The same script of romantic consumption was widely broadcast and advertised and presented in films, romance novels, and magazines. “Ego expressive” commodities such as shampoo, perfume, deodorant, and cosmetics took their value in romance (Illouz 1997, p. 37).

Later in the twentieth century, especially with the popularization of self-help books, another topic came to the arena of romantic love: The search for *intimacy* replaced *passion*. Psychologically, *intimacy* was conceived as the deep communication, friendship, and sharing that last beyond passionate love. The route toward intimacy was communication and self-help books taught and guided how to reach this. The most well known at the end of the twentieth century was John Gray's (1993) *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships* (1993) translated into many languages worldwide (Shumway 2003).

### Love and Sex

Despite Freudian interpretation diminishing love, in the twentieth century in America, romantic love became an ideal type of relationships. Victorian sexual attitudes continued to decline their influence; the equality of men and women in intimate relationships was gradually recognized. Many white, middle-class men and women in the early twentieth century viewed their time as a transitional period. A far-reaching public discourse about intimate life began. It covered a range of topics, including prostitution, love, marriage, divorce, sex, and homosexuality, and occurred across a wide range of media: in medical–scientific and religious texts, in newspapers, magazines, journals, books, as well as in the movies, theater, and art galleries. Liberal reformers were a major party to this debate. The writings were quite liberal, even radical, in their approach to sex (cited in Seidman 1991). The American outlook was also greatly influenced by Hollywood movies.

In the twentieth century, sexual activity became part of dating because consumption reinforced the implicit message that dating was about sensual pleasure, and the goal of romance was for feelings of happiness (Seidman 1991, p. 4.). Love was hedonistic: Pleasure was the goal, and emotional pain was increasingly unacceptable in the experience of romantic love. While among the middle classes gift giving and consumption practices on dates were taken for granted (sex in return of dating was not necessary), among working-class women, sexual favors were often expected and dispensed in return for dating (Illouz 1997, p. 35).

Sexual satisfaction was figured prominently as a central criterion for ascertaining love. It functioned as a typical criterion for a happy and successful marriage. Sex became a site for demonstrating and maintaining love; the erotic aspects of sex acquired legitimacy. The culture of romantic love in the early decades of twentieth century in America created a sexual culture that highly valued the sensual and expressive aspects of sex. As early twentieth century, American anthropologist Linton (1936) ironically noted regarding Americans' naïve idealization of romantic love:

All societies recognize that there are occasional violent, emotional attachments between persons of opposite sex, but our present American culture is practically the only one which has attempted to capitalize these, and make them the basis for marriage... The hero of the modern American movie is always a romantic lover, just as the hero of the old Arab epic is always an epileptic. A cynic may suspect that in any ordinary population the percentage of individuals with a capacity for romantic love of the Hollywood type was about as large as that of persons able to throw genuine epileptic fits. (p. 175)

Over the twentieth century, a substantial change has occurred in the way how men and women relate to love and sex. Many cultural advances have contributed to these changes; among those were the feminist movement, as the women's liberation movement, and the men's movement, as a response. The positions and stereotypes of people in the American society substantially influenced romantic love ideas and relationships. To be in romantic love in a "courtly" manner, a man (gentleman) should admire, respect, and alleviate the position of a woman (lady). These were ideal aspirations. Although very slowly, the corresponding stereotypes changed.

From the 1890s through the 1960s, the relations between the notions of sex, love, and marriage dramatically changed. The Victorians accepted sex as a part of marriage. However, they did not conceive sex as a crucial romantic or marital bond. Sex acquired a heightened importance and became the site where love and marriage succeeded or failed. Great expectations were attached to sex. Eroticism and the pursuit of sex for its sensually pleasurable and expressive aspects acquired legitimacy in a context of love and marriage.

### **Love and Marriage**

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, men and women began to socialize on more equal terms, throwing off the older conventions concerning male-female relationships and marriage. The new status of women enabled them to choose a spouse for love rather than economic security. People became better versed about birth control and sexuality; it was acknowledged that women have sexual passions. Many sexual tensions and fears extenuated, and people redoubled their pursuit for heterosexual romance (Coontz 2005).

Young people were especially enthusiastic in the rejection of Victorian gender segregation and sexual silence. An independent youth culture grew in the early 1900s with its dramatic features and burst upon the scene across Europe and North America during the 1920s. Young people gained the right to select their own marriage partners more than a century before. The word *date* began to be used in its modern meaning only since the 1890s, first in working-class slang; during the 1910s, this novel word was in use by the respectable middle class (Coontz 2005). A *date* took place in the public sphere, away from home. Dating gave young women more freedom from parental control and more options to explore their own sexuality. The new custom of dating spread rapidly.

Sex quickly became a common topic of the public discourse and conversations. Freudian theory about the power of the sexual instinct gained popularity. Poets and novelists, sociologists and psychologists celebrated sex. The growing openness about sex spread beyond intellectuals; popular culture became saturated with sex. At the same time, the new focus on sexual pleasure became the very important thing for a successful marriage. Once married, the woman was supposed to let down her sexual barriers. It was accepted that a certain degree of sexual exploration was okay for both sexes; women took more responsibility to enforce the sexual limits that respectable couples were still expected to honor. Yet, the twentieth century entitled a woman to more sexual consideration in lovemaking but increased the pressure on her to have sex whenever it was suggested.

Nineteenth-century writers stated that a loveless marriage was a tragedy; in the 1920s, some said the same thing about marriages in which sex was unsatisfactory. The sentimental marriage of Victorian era shifted its nature to sexual marriage at the beginning of twentieth century.

Free love versus marriage was the major controversy of that time. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, there was considerable resentment among some men about the obligations of marriage. A “bachelor” subculture of men who resisted these constraints emerged in Western Europe and North America (Chudacoff 1999). The controversy of hedonistic individualism versus duty to society was a dilemma to discuss.

The strongest enthusiasts of the free love movement believed that people should be free to live their life in their own way, without social regulation. Although some individuals thought that marriage was nobody’s business but their own, the vast majority believed that a person had a duty to marry for the interest of society. Women’s rights organizations were the most conservative in this regard; they pursue the goal to enhance the status of women within the established legal structure of society.

In the past, the love associated with marriage was actually a label for compatibility of temperament, station in life, or interests. Marriage prompted the partners into the role of loving husband and wife; love was more important after marriage than prior to it.

Now, the romantic ideal suggested that an unloving or unlovable person should be shed for a better matched one. The importance of attraction and of love prior to marriage rose along with the opportunity of men and women to mingle before marriage, while parental influence lessened (Murstein 1974, p. 377). In the 1920s, the opinion that marital privacy was more important than adults’ ties with their parents was firmly established (Coontz 2005). Romantic love marriage became more frequent among youths.

Yet, many American women with little education did not consider these new ideas relevant to their immediate lives. The typical woman did not aspire for equal rights with man; she chiefly wanted greater respect and consideration for her domestic role.

American marriage in the twentieth century expanded much more freedom in terms of choice, yet people themselves narrow their limits of this freedom. Most people choose someone who is of a similar religion, race, education, and socioeconomic status.

The freedom of dating and courtship changed. In particular, in 1949, Koller interviewed three generations of women and found that the youngest generation increasingly broadened the poll of possible options; more than one boy was likely to be considered for marriage; they less frequently met boys in the immediate neighborhood and more frequently saw boys of whom their parents did not approve. Age differences between spouses became smaller, and the length of engagements became shorter. Dating that preceded serious marriage courtship involved informal associations without a specific commitment to marry (quoted in Murstein 1974, p. 386).

The relationship between American husbands and wives changed substantially since World War I. Women received greater freedom and were less willing to accept the traditional patriarchal role espoused by their husbands. A woman's new role as a worker changed the traditionally segregated husband–wife roles; they became less differentiated; men and women developed new ways of relating to each other.

The cult of the “individual” grew in interpersonal relationships. Social interaction between the sexes and sexual permissiveness expanded, the divorce rate increased, and the birthrate fell. Sociologists Sorokin and Zimmerman (cited in Murstein 1974, p. 412) interpreted these phenomena in terms of sensate culture. Murstein (1974), on another side, suggested that the new individualism encouraged greater responsibility of the individual in the choice of a marriage partner. In the former times, communication between nubile individuals was limited, sparse, and supervised. In the twentieth century, “dating” as a new way of mating interaction, without serious commitment, became the means of evaluating a potential marriage partner.

Increased divorces, as well as high marriage and remarriage rates, represented growing expectations for compatibility in marriage, while a lower birthrate reflected greater concern for the welfare of each child. All these societal symptoms did not necessarily mean personal marital unhappiness. People just became more sensitive to the problems of psychological incompatibility and marital maladjustment. The sexual attitudes and mores in America changed significantly since World War I and slowly evolved in the following three decades.

The time of the Great Depression (1929–1939) radically changed the lives of many people in the USA and around the world. Unemployment dramatically increased across Europe and North America, and industrial production drastically fell. In the USA, millions of families lost their savings in bank failures. Everywhere, the Depression shifted attention away from social and intimate relationship issues to questions of survival. People who were thinking to divorce couldn't afford to set up separate households. Many married couples split up without going through the expense of getting a legal divorce. They weathered the difficult decade with their love intact or even strengthened by the hardships (Coontz 2005).

The Depression accelerated the influx of married women into the workforce. When a woman sought work because her husband lost his job, this threatened the ideas of masculinity and marriage that many men embraced over the previous two decades. Unemployed men often lost their sense of identity and became dispirited. Many turned to alcohol. The experience of the Depression undercut the societal support for working women that had emerged in the early years of the twentieth century (Cancian 1987).

The World War II reversed the tendencies in marriage of the Great Depression period. A “marriage fever” swept through many countries. In Europe, the war turned attention away from the marriage counseling programs of the 1920s, while in the USA, marriage counselors argued that the war made it more important to educate young people about marital relationships. Due to societal needs during

that period, women got more and better access to the job market, yet many came to enjoy the work they did during the wartime emergency and its economic benefits, and they wanted to remain at their jobs after the war.

While the Depression years were associated with men's economic failure, World War II had a much more positive impact on working women. For years afterward, women spoke nostalgically about their wartime work experiences, and many sought to rejoin the workforce in the 1950s (Coontz 2005, p. 222). However, the end of the war also brought a renewed enthusiasm for marriage, female home-making, and the male breadwinner family. A new "romanticized and idealized vision of family was a natural reaction to years of disruption" (Owram 1996, p. 12). Postwar social welfare states in Europe and North America provided important incentives for men and women to embrace the male breadwinner/female homemaker model of marriage.

Men and women chose their mates on the basis of affection, and people agreed that the personal happiness of husband and wife is essential for a successful marriage. Americans in that time embraced individual (not familial) values, in a reversal of the past, when the family existed for its members rather than the members existing for the family. Two other features of marriage were noted: the crucial importance of a satisfying sexual relationship and women's tremendous advance toward legal equality (Sirjamaki 1948).

With the end of the war, many men and women rushed to marry and start families. The postwar enthusiasm for marriage spread over the USA, across Europe, Scandinavia, Australia, and New Zealand too. The age of marriage fell, the rate of marriage rose, and the divorce rate dipped (Ponxetti 2003; Weiss 2000).

In the late nineteenth century, young working-class men and women gained more freedom from adult supervision. Women had much better possibilities for liberation; many middle-class girls began to attend high school that provided them better educational opportunities. Throughout Western Europe and America, clerical and service jobs proliferated and gave lower-class women the alternatives to domestic service and provided middle-class women more respectable places to work outside the home. Many working-class youths rejected the segregation of the sexes and the ideal of female modesty. A new generation of women was interested in pursuing their personal liberation.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the Western world witnessed many scientific discoveries as well as discoveries in human rights, including the right to love. The concept of romantic love was a widely accepted cultural value and was considered as the ideal basis of marriage. The concept arose in the context of a predominantly secular and individualistic culture that explicitly valued life and recognized the importance of individual happiness. Such a culture grew in the nineteenth century in the Western world. Industrialism and capitalism resulted in an explosion of material well-being and explicit recognition that human beings should be free to choose their own commitments. Human beings discovered the concept of individual rights, and individualism changed human relationships, including relationships between men and women. A woman gained economic independence and equality in relationships. Therefore, both men and women could

choose to “share their lives, not on the basis of economic necessity, but on the basis of their expectations of finding happiness and emotional fulfillment with one another” (Branden 1980/2008, p. 23).

## 6.6 Love in European Cultures in the First Part of the Twentieth Century

By the end of nineteenth century, there was still little of the emotional openness and freedom of sexual expression in Europe. However, in the early twentieth century, something had been unleashed and the “Freudian revolution” had a significant impact on those cultures. While leading to a more enlightened perspective on human sexuality, the Freudian theory and practice were deeply anti-romantic. He depicted love as a primal and often regressive search for physical gratification and protective union—and love’s maturation as liberation from its infantile patterns (May, p. 5). He declared that bourgeois romanticism represented nothing more than an “over idealization” of the lover, resulting from a frustration of sexual longing. In Freud’s view, “romantic love” is only a sublimated expression of darker sexual impulses. He opened the path to investigate human sexuality, but not romantic love.

Disillusion and a disappointing view of love were also depicted by French novelist and essayist M. Proust (1871–1922) regarded love between humans as a ruthless, fickle and often deluded mission to escape from ourselves into the security and novelty of someone else (May, p. 5). Love in Proust’s writings (e.g., *Swann’s way*, 1922; *Remembrance of Things Past*, 1913) is usually presented not in a happy way. For him, love assumes and leads to suffering. The plot of love in Proust depicts one partner as madly, passionately, and jealously in love, while the other partner uses him or her, in one way or another. The superficial passions based on mutual distrust, the uncertainty, the all-consuming desire to be with the beloved, and the jealousy is the common theme. Love is not expected to be joyful and infidelity is the rule (Faris 1992).

During the twentieth century, the immense changes in attitudes toward marriage, love, and sex occurred in many European countries. Sexualization of the love-based marriage took its turn, after sentimentalization of love in Victorian era, and represented a logical step in the evolution of this new love approach to marriage (Coontz 2005). The love-based marriage was often unstable because people, striving to find happiness in marriage, felt relatively free to leave a marriage that didn’t fulfill their anticipations of love.

Conservatives claimed that high expectations about happiness in marriage would cause an increase in divorce. They were right; people began to file for divorce more often than before because their marriages did not provide love, companionship, and emotional intimacy (Coontz 2005, p. 202). The widespread advocacy of love marriages coincided with greatly increased divorce.

In the beginning of the twentieth century in England, the previous patriarchal Victorian ideology of love still occupied many British minds of the middle class. Those ideas maintained that nature endowed men with an active and initiating procreative sex drive, while women's reciprocal sex motivation was supposedly moderate and focused on the joys of emotional nurturing. The polarization of these presumable sexual natures did not have sufficient scientific evidence but still dominated cultural ideology throughout the Victorian epoch.

The major transformation of marriage and love ideology occurred around the first part of the twentieth century. The ideas of companionate marriage replaced that Victorian ideology in Britain in the period of 1918–1963 (Szreter and Fisher 2010) and acknowledged female capacities for sexual pleasure as more equal with men's. It was viewed as a natural and respectable area of close relationships within marriage.

A milestone for the spread of this new ideology was the book *Married Love*, the best seller published by Marie Stopes (1918). It was the broadly read manual on how to attain and engage in companionate marriage (cited in Szreter and Fisher 2010). During the first part of the twentieth century, this ideology of companionate marriage was immensely growing, and by the 1950–1960s, it had become culturally and socially dominant. Most doctors acknowledged the capability of married partners to provide each other with mutual sexual pleasure and considered this natural for marital love. The presumed desirability of the companionate marriage ideal actively advocated and became a central point in the mid-twentieth-century public discussions on the topic. This emerging culture and shifting public image did not always correspond to similar changes in the real intimate lives of many women. Romantic ideas encountered challenges once women became wives and mothers, and it was especially true in the working-class cultural contexts.

Among the hot topics of that time was sexual intimacy before marriage. In American culture, the 1920s saw the emergence of an affluent and rebellious youth culture where premarital virginity was no longer a moral imperative. In Britain, by contrast, there was little evidence for a British version of such a sexual revolution, especially in working-class communities. Sex before marriage remained taboo that time despite the emergence of new forms of recreational “dating” in dance halls and cinemas (Szreter and Fisher 2010). Women had sexual ignorance and inhibitions and were fearful of pregnancy and social stigma. They believed that premarital sex must be avoided and wanted to be a virgin when they got married. Women, particularly in working-class cultures, even expressed the anxieties about intimacy before marriage.

Both men and women apprehended the consequences of expressing physical desire and were uncertain where to draw the line, yet they tested each other's desire, love, respectability, prudence, and reliability. They came very close to doing it, but they did not. As Szreter and Fisher (2010) provide excellent evidence of this culture through oral history and private lives, they conclude that the majority avoided sex before marriage and portrayed the generations who got married in the 1920–1950s as bound by “traditional” codes of virginity. However, in some circumstances, men and women saw sex during courtship as acceptable or

desirable and considered this as a means of securing the future of a relationship or for demonstrating commitment.

Romantic love ideas were in the air. Western culture of that time recognized that young people approaching marriage in the first half of the twentieth century did so with ideas about love, intimacy, and sex (Coontz 2005). New consumer culture emphasized romantic relationships and sexual love. Topics emerged in advertising and films, wherein marriage can be exciting and romantic. “Falling in love” was considered as the basis of the relationship with the focus on marriage as the site for love and passion.

Gillis (1985) in his work on romantic love in Britain showed the fragmented nature of romantic rituals throughout the British Isles and argued that although in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the ideals of romantic love were largely shared, the real practices differed significantly between classes and generations. Some regional working-class young adult cultures formed a barrier against emotional intimacy and mutual understanding or sympathy between the sexes.

Some studies that focused on working-class culture presented a different view of courtship, marriage, love, and romance before the 1960s (see for review Szreter and Fisher 2010, p. 167). They evidenced the “unromantic” and practical motivations for marriage in British working-class communities, particularly in the north of England. As Giles (2004) argued, working-class women wanted more stability and respectability than the possibility of sexual fulfillment or emotional excitement. While many girls had romantic encounters during their youth, they rarely married the objects of their passion. They rather chose marriages of material security at the cost of their own sexual desires, which were “suppressed.” It looked like British versions of “companionate marriage” did not work in all subcultures of England. Many young people had low expectations of the relationship and minimal criteria of suitability; men wanted an efficient housekeeper, while women sought a secure breadwinner, not a gambler, not an alcoholic, and not violent. The passion and romanticism was increasingly essential in the choice of partner in middle-class courtship subcultures, rather than in working-class ones.

In oral history testimony, a lighthearted anti-romanticism was evident (Szreter and Fisher 2010). The narratives in the northern working-class respondents paralleled, albeit in a somewhat different version, to southern and middle-class narratives. Although the social contexts of marriages differed between working-class and middle-class interviewees, versions of courtship narratives downplayed the significance of passion and romance. The middle-class and working-class narratives depicted the common ways in which family pressure and pragmatism drew them toward marriage to a particular individual. Moreover, while the processes of courting and getting married occurred in varying circumstances in the 1920–1940s, the “anti-romantic” themes were consistent in the retrospective stories. Anti-romantic and pragmatic accounts, which emphasized the social and economic drivers toward marriage, were typical.

However, it would be incorrect to view the anti-romanticism of British courtship stories as passionless; they did not expect women to suppress sexual feelings and desires (Szreter and Fisher 2010). The joys of building “a love nest for

two,” creating a happy family life together, and the private pleasures of intimacy were important. Thinking about passionate love, romance, and marriage did not oppose pragmatic choices; the individuals’ desires did not oppose those of parents, family, and community. People just tried to construct a balance between romance and realism; they still reserved a space for acknowledging the importance of love and intimacy. However, they needed the knowledge about the requirements for a good relationship and skills of how to manage all these relationships and to establish stable marriages; they needed education. Therefore, in the 1930s, marriage counseling was thriving in the USA and Canada as well as in most of Western European countries. Courses in marriage and family life, covering everything from dating to marital sex to birth control, were popular.

The period from 1918 to 1963 in England witnessed the rise of the companionate marriage as an ideal and a practice; the mutual companionship experienced social dominance in the 1960–1970s. The companionate model of marriage became ideologically dominant, yet emphasized tensions between the ideal and practical realities. For Collins (2003), the keywords of companionship were intimacy and equality. The ideal highlighted the importance of romantic love, sexual attraction, and mutual interests, while concealing realities of inequalities. As Langhamer said (2007), the experience of love was “rooted in material and cultural, as well as emotional, considerations” (p. 190). Caring and sharing were particularly important in this context; people highlighted the significance of successfully integrating the care for each other and for their families with a sense of emotional sharing. As Szreter and Fisher (2010) noted, romantic love, expressive sensual intimacy, and egalitarian sharing of marital responsibilities, as the key features of the companionate marriage ideal, were much apparent themes in people’s recollection of that time (p. 198). Presenting their experiences of love, people often maintained the idea of love opposite to a romance. Many wanted to achieve love in marriage, which was deemed as ordinary and workaday, yet passionate, satisfactory, and enduring. “Caring for each other in reciprocal and complementary ways was combined with a sense of sharing, while carefully respecting the other partner’s domain of authority. With such an understanding maintained, trust in each other and a capacity for generosity, give and take could all grow” (p. 225). These were the desired characteristics of love in marriage. Good and loving marriages involved maintaining a balance between caring and sharing. It seemed there were no class differences in these regards.

As for sexual love, pleasure derived through orgasm was rare in women’s depictions of the joys of marital sex. Instead, many women accented the giving of love as the primary purpose of sex, indicating love by caring for one’s partner. The individual sexual pleasure was of less importance. Sex was presented more vital for men; they presumably had stronger sexual desires than most women, yet with some variations between individuals. On the other side, many women thought that the provision of sex was a husband’s right, as well as a wife’s natural responsibility. It was pivotal for many men’s attitudes toward sex to provide love and show care and consideration and to give her the impression that it is not just sex (Szreter and Fisher 2010, p. 332). People appreciated appearance of a partner, but

specific shapes and forms of body were not what they admired in either sex. They perceived the physical appearances chiefly from the style of dress since it provided the clues about personality characteristics and social status. They did not consider the physical body as being important, with the exception of the hair; the body's shape and sexual characteristics were not viewed as culturally or aesthetically significant. Besides, in that culture, husbands and wives rarely discussed sexual matters openly. Yet, many couples viewed their sex lives as satisfactory and fulfilling. They admitted that public discourse on the topic in those years had essential effect on the development of their views and practices. So, culture really mattered.

The families in Europe during the middle of the twentieth century was mostly still regarded as patriarchal and kept women in a subordinate status to their husbands. The traditional gender and sexual values and heterosexual domesticity lingered. However, new ideals of romantic love as the reason to marry, the passionate and friendly companionship as the basis of marital relationships, were actively promoted. A new conviction grew that reciprocally pleasurable sexuality was important for marital durability.

The economic and cultural optimism increased aspirations for fun, enhanced a romantic model of marriage, and led to the growing acceptability of premariatal sex. Even Christianity, despite its traditional resistance of sexual culture, more than ever before began to endorse the importance of mutual satisfaction in marital sex. It was considered legitimate not only for reproduction, but also valuable in nurturing the marital bonds (Herzog 2011).

The ideas of romantic love and sex grew their pervasiveness in the films. Despite the conviction that women should be dutiful housewives, the competing images and stories conveyed the allure and excitement of being an object of desire. Movies and magazines imparted new ideals of female attractiveness and emphasized the importance of love for sex. Then, women tried to navigate how to be both wholesome and sexy.

In the 1950s, the questions of love and sex began to be more open than before and publicly discussed. The surveys on love gained popularity. For example, a survey conducted in Italy in 1954 asked men questions such as "What is love? What are its 'symptoms'? 'Would you forgive a woman who sinned and lied for the sole purpose of making you happy? Can love exist without passion and vice versa? Do you believe in love at first sight? Are you favorable to free love? A survey conducted in France in 1958 asked women questions like these: 'What do you dream of?' 'Whom do you find sexy?'" (cited in Herzog 2011, pp. 108–109).

Notably, the medical and religious authorities were not the only sources to inform people what was right and wrong in love and sex. People began to learn about these topics from statistics, surveys of opinions, and the percentages of individuals engaged in certain types of activity. They learned how many people diverged from general trends. They measured themselves against the findings and sometimes doubted their own experiences and wondered whether their own practices and attitudes or those of their partners could be improved. While some people thought that their lives matched the new norms, many others had difficulties to navigate their lives in this new world of cultural influences.

## 6.7 Romantic Love in Latin America

Romanticism became the esthetic ideal for Brazilian literary imagination for most of the nineteenth century. German, English, and French literature brought important sources of Romantic innovations and had the big impact on romanticism in Brazil. Through translation of the writings of German novelist and poet Goethe (1749–1832), English poet Byron (1788–1824), and Scottish novelist and poet Scott (1771–1832), the romantic ideas were imported in the country. Brazilian writers produced new literary forms, tones, and topics; love was among these. The romantic period (1830–1880) in Brazilian literature brought several examples of romantic stories. The best illustration of this genre and theme was probably the shamelessly romantic *Iracema* (1886, cited in Vicent, 2003) of Alencar. After initial publications it was reprinted annually for a century. It was set in the early colonial period and dealt with the romance of a Portuguese soldier, Martim, and the beautiful Indian maiden Iracema. Romantic plot was depicted in the context of the problems of the mixed couple, other taboos, transgressions, and a lingering war between Indian tribes and the final decease of the lovely Iracema. Their son Moacyr, the product of the Portuguese/Indian union, was a sign of great importance as romantic representation of the new Brazilian nation symbolizing the blended culture of colonial Brazil (Vicent, 2003, p.141–142). Romanticism accorded with a growing sense of nationalism that began with independence and offered an important emotion to a people coming to shape a new nation and a separate culture.

### Sentimental Revolution of Love in Colombia

The last third of the eighteenth and first part of the nineteenth century in Colombia (New Granada) was the time of revolutions, great social aspirations, as well as the time of changes in the emotional lives of men and women. Marriage was still a matter of family alliances and had to be between socially equals; economic interests, status, and prestige were involved. However, such criteria as romantic attraction, love, and compatibility were gradually accepted for young people's choice of a mate. Courtship was recognized as an important period of emotional understanding, a chance for discovery of mutual interests, and recognition of true feelings. The same tendencies, which occurred in Europe during that time, transformed values, customs, the status of women, sexual habits, and marriage in New Granada (Dueñas-Vargas 2015).

The evidence demonstrated that among emotions associated with matrimony, romantic love became more important than before. This was different from the passionate love in New Granada of the earlier colonial period, which generally assumed that lovers in extramarital relations crossed color and social group barriers. Romantic love became essential to marriage after the eighteenth century. A husband's obsession with his wife and the conjugal love that grew over time were new phenomena of the nineteenth century. Romantic love was tangled to the cult of domesticity, and the separate spheres became marriage's ideological framework (Dueñas-Vargas 2015, p. 4).

Sentimental revolution of love in New Granada, the name adopted by Colombia, took place in nineteenth century. Soledad Acosta (1833–1913), a well-educated Colombian writer and journalist, was among the major proponents of women's rights and romantic love. Certain codes and rituals expressing love and courtship were spread among the educated elite of New Granada around the middle of the nineteenth century. For many, it was a period of "intense introspection, obsessive self-analysis of the state of the soul, mutual revelation, and verification of the beloved's true feelings. Erotic desire was not directly expressed. It remained hidden in the deepest corners of her mind" (Dueñas-Vargas 2015, p. 1).

Romanticism accentuated the sublime aspect of love in a literary movement, in a way of feeling and a state of mind, in which imagination and sensibility prevailed over reason. Jose Samper, the happy husband of Soledad Acosta, commented on romanticism, "It awakens strong passions, playing on the heartstrings; it stirs the fertile curiosity of the unknown; it opens the way to understanding, surprised at its primitive innocence and beautiful and vast horizons; and it stimulates souls, richly blessed by divine breath, to appeal to and pursue the supreme marvels of the ideal and to rise to the remote and lofty regions of the everlasting"(cited in Dueñas-Vargas 2015, p. 2).

The ideas about love were changing, as well as the forms in which society exercised control over them. In New Granada, the phenomenon of romantic love bloomed around the middle of the nineteenth century, but was usually limited to the cultured elite, who had the time and material wealth to cultivate these sentiments. It often occurred between young, sensitive people prone to melancholy and delicate young ladies of sublime sentiments. The boundaries between art and life were obliterated in the poetry of the romantics; the world of the spirit and sensitive relations inspired poetry. The favorite literary themes were the grandeur of nature, the homeland, religion, women, and love. Romantic love was a divine mystery that bound the couple to heaven forever. In romantic love, erotic desire was sublimated in order to ensure an enduring relationship.

Analysis of the personal diaries and private correspondence (Dueñas-Vargas 2015) of members of New Granada's bourgeois elite of nineteenth century revealed intense emotional attachment existed that time between couples and allowed to better understand love feelings in a wider cultural context. This personal correspondence explained friendships and close relations between the sexes within cultural norms of that time, as well as presented the emotional profiles of families or couples in their social and interpersonal interactions and their expressions of romantic love within marriage.

The involvement of culture of love in marriage, however, remained limited. Affiliation with familiar kin groups and connections among family networks were still widespread in the nineteenth century. While the sentimental revolution and secularization took place in New Granada, the church prevailed and imposed uniform sexual norms. The populace, however, was not always guided by Roman Catholic morality in its private life and often followed their affective preferences (Dueñas-Vargas 2015). Elite families, the church, and the state strived to pursue the goals taming love within marriage.

With gradual disappearance of the colonial aristocracy at the beginning of the nineteenth century, various groups formed the society and developed modern bourgeois New Granada during the nineteenth century. Bourgeoisie referred not only to economic class, but also to new cultural practices, emerging lifestyles, identifiable dress, and speech codes, the refinement of manners, and new ways of interacting in the intimacy of the home.

In the mid-nineteenth century, various new professionals—writers, journalists, attorneys, and professors—were interested in cultural affairs. The expansion of books, newspapers, the community of readers, and museums in Bogota, the capital of the country, exhibited the active cultural life of the city. The romantic emotions embraced literature and the intimate lives of cultural categories of people. Love became a prominent theme in women’s publications, newspapers, and personal correspondence. The language of romantic love became commonly used in theatrical performances and in the city conversations. Love attained a high value and became associated with domestic happiness. Overall, the social and cultural changes that occurred in New Granada from the end of the colonial era until 1870 transformed the meaning of love in the sense of “purifying” it and making it compatible with the sacred aims of marriage and family (Dueñas-Vargas 2015).

### **Love and Marriage in the Nineteenth Century Brazil**

Should romantic love precede marriage? This idea had limited applications in Northeast Brazil during the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries. Selection of spouses was largely controlled by parents, and the personal opinions of the future mates mattered much less. It was expected that spouses would develop mutual economic interdependence and affection that should ideally exist among relatives and treat each other with respect. There was little room for love or sentiment. Love was not necessary for a good marriage.

In the nineteenth century, the traditional feminine virtues such as self-sacrifice, submission, dedication, and renunciation of personal desire were perceived as proofs of love, and love as the feeling holding marriage together (Rebhun 1995, p. 246). In the 1880s, ideas of hygiene were codified into law, and Brazilian hygienists promoted the love-based, monogamous nuclear family.

In the eighteenth to the early twentieth, century Brazilian literature and public opinion represented romantic love as an extramarital passion with an irrational and transcendent ardor. It was clandestine, with separation and obstacles, and moments of ecstatic reunion. However, it was typically frustrated, tragic, and fated to a sad end. The marital relations were portrayed as calmly routine, if affectionate (Rebhun 1995, p. 243). As in European concepts of that time, when marital love was viewed a social duty while in clandestine love affairs, and couples attempted to reach the purest heights of spiritual and physical union (Borscheid 1986), in Brazil, the unfulfilled passions of these frustrated infatuations were also glorious, but tragic.

In the late nineteenth century, Brazilian families in Bahia in the northeast part of Brazil (Borges 1992) gradually shifted from a patriarchal model toward more *companionate* marriage and more conjugal relationships. In many parts of the

world, a similar shift occurred during that period. Brazilian culture, however, seemed to resist this change, probably more than in Europe. Brazilian families preserved many traditional features, including extended kinship affiliation. In some way, the Brazilian families became similar to the families in Europe or the USA, but retained traditional customs, such as the preference for marriage within a specific ethnic or social group or the habits of a “life in the family circle” (Borges 1992).

Later, in the twentieth century, when Brazil developed an increasingly capitalist and consumer economy, a massive population movement into cities occurred and the family lost its role as a unit of production. Consequently, its economy depended less on inherited wealth; parents lost economic influence over their children, so it was difficult to compel marriages. Young people began to choose their own spouses and married on the basis of their personal desire; therefore, marriage gradually became an amorous union between a man and a woman (Nazzari 1991; Rebhun 1995, p. 243).

The European ideals of romantic love and practices of courtship significantly impacted Brazilian ideas about marriage. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, the assumption that parents should arrange marriages changed toward the notion that couples should choose their partners themselves. In the 1850s, the number of cases of elopement and abduction throughout Brazil increased, reflecting the conflict between the individualistic norms of a younger generation and the patriarchal traditions of their parents. Courtship and elopement became the primary means of bringing about marriages. Gradually, customs of supervised courtship became established as the norm. However, Brazilian customs of courtship and marriage still varied in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Families were arranging matches, or proposing candidates to their children, well into the twentieth century. The prevailing customs of urban courtship from 1870 to 1945 were complex and defined the restrictions on romantic love. The change in customs was due to the influence of Europe and especially of European sentimental literature (Borges 1992). The old ways *namoro è antiga*—old-fashioned courting—were different from the newer forms of *flirt* and *paquera*—superficial relations not leading to marriage. In the twentieth century, Bahians began to call the older customs *namoro português*, Portuguese courtship, to distinguish them from the scandalous *namoro americano*, American courtship. Borges (1992) vividly describes this traditional way of courtship in Bahia and the role of romantic love in this ritual (pp. 192–194). The elaborate stages of courtship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries heightened the boundaries of families and the position of young women in families.

However, this transformation of the nature of marriage leading to an opportunity for young people to choose spouses gave more freedom to young men than young women. The ability to leave the family or defy parents remained a largely male liberty. In rural areas of the South and in impoverished Northeast region of Brazil, the system of economy remained mixed, and integration into a family, lines of personal contact, and social networks remained essential for economic survival. Girls living with families helped their mothers with household labor. Marriage did

not change a woman's daily routine much; she just moved in her new residence, and sex was added to her domestic obligations. Unmarried girls or women could not live alone—being unchaperoned would echo badly on family honor. Women living alone were at risk of sexual harassment and verbal and physical assaults (Rebhun 1995, p. 243).

Many young couples resided with the parents of a groom (or sometimes a bride) until they were able to afford their own house. Marriage was still economically vital; it brought a wife worker into the family and created social and material alliances between families. Economic exchange and cooperation in some regions of Brazilian society still followed the lines of personal relationships. For the poorer families, the compulsory cooperation ensured family survival.

### **Love and Marriage in Brazil in Early Twentieth Century**

The concept of love was changed over time in response to social change, and the idea that romantic love should precede marriage was gradually widespread in Northeast Brazil. The concept of love, the descriptors of what kinds of sentiments and expressions mean “true love,” changed. Love more often became the basis of marriage, and the notion of marital love gradually moved closer to the concept of extramarital passion. However, marital love was still understood as maternal and familial love. These concepts were profoundly influenced by Christian religious beliefs, especially by the idea of *agape* as benevolent and selfless love.

Love as the basis for marriage was still more a manner of public speaking than a social reality; the notion of romantic love did not strongly impact personal emotional experience. Not all couples married for love and not all marriages became more amorous than they were in the past. Not everyone was able to follow their feelings; however, lovers resisted arranged marriages and often maintained lifelong covert courtships despite being married to others (Kuznesof and Oppenheimer 1985). Nevertheless, love became the topic of public and private discourse in relation with marriage. (Rebhun 1995, p. 247).

The opportunity for young women to work outside the home substantially increased in the 1950s, when the urban market in domestic labor grew rapidly, and women realized that they could be paid for doing laundry, washing dishes, and child care. Daughters began to resent the requirement that they work in their fathers' home. In the 1960s, daughters considered doing domestic labor at home, or turning over earnings from labor outside the home, as a voluntary decision, whereas parents continued to perceive it as compulsory (de Oliveira 1985, cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 244).

There were many young women who eloped with the first man who promised them an opportunity. These young women fled partially to escape what they viewed as their parents' oppressive demands for their labor and partially because of their romanticized ideas of liberty and love with their new spouse. In some cases, they fled sexual or other physical abuse at home, but many of these young women were mistaken about the consequences of their actions: Their new husbands treated them little better than their fathers did.

The ideas of young women about love were often central motivations in their elopements. Their romanticized dreams, influenced by popular culture, television,

magazines, soap operas, and traditional folklore, made them believe in love as a union of souls in tender intimacy and expect devotion and protection from male suitors. This vision was far from reality.

I always thought that this enchanted prince would come for me, fall in love, and go live together in a castle. And I would stay in the castle, and him out in the world fighting the dragons to protect me. But as it turned out, who has to fight the dragons is me, here in this [sarcastically] castle of mine, him out there in the world chasing sluts on the street. I think what I married is not the prince but the frog, (thirty-five-year-old housewife) (cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 245).

## 6.8 Love in New Mexico

The market growth and the development of a capitalistic production brought economic changes in New Mexico since the 1770s. Gradually, the values stressing individualism were embedded in the cultural ideologies of the region. Due to growing individualism, the history of marriage formation in colonial New Mexico was accompanied by an increasing preference for spouse selection based on romantic love over arranged marriages (Gutiérrez, 1984). By the 1800s a love born of passion was judged as sufficient reason for choosing a particular conjugal mate.

### Evolution of the Meaning of Love

The word *amor* (love), as a verb or a noun, appeared in New Mexican colonial documents over periods of time with different meanings. Throughout the whole period, 1690–1846, it referenced to Christian love as a sentiment that must be displayed out of duty to God, neighbor, and self.

The word *amor* in the second meaning—natural love, stemming from concupiscence—before 1800 was used only to refer to illicit sexual acts, that is, seduction, concubinage, and adultery. After 1800 derivatives of the word *amor* were no longer used to refer to illicit acts and were replaced with the more frequently used expressions *amistad ilícita* or *copula ilícita*. The word *amor* acquired a second meaning—a love born of passion.

### Love for Marriage

Love became a motivation for the selection of a conjugal mate and for marriage on the basis of a personal attraction. It was an irrational and spontaneous desire, a subversive sentiment which made a person oblivious to status and to generational and sexual hierarchies. It was an emotion that drove children to abandon all reason, to ignore the matrimonial concerns of their parents, and to marry only on the basis of attraction. An 1851 Mexican medical dictionary warned of the dangers inherent in such uncontrolled human urges when it discussed aspects of sexual life (*Medicologia*, 1851, cited in Gutiérrez, 1984, p.253).

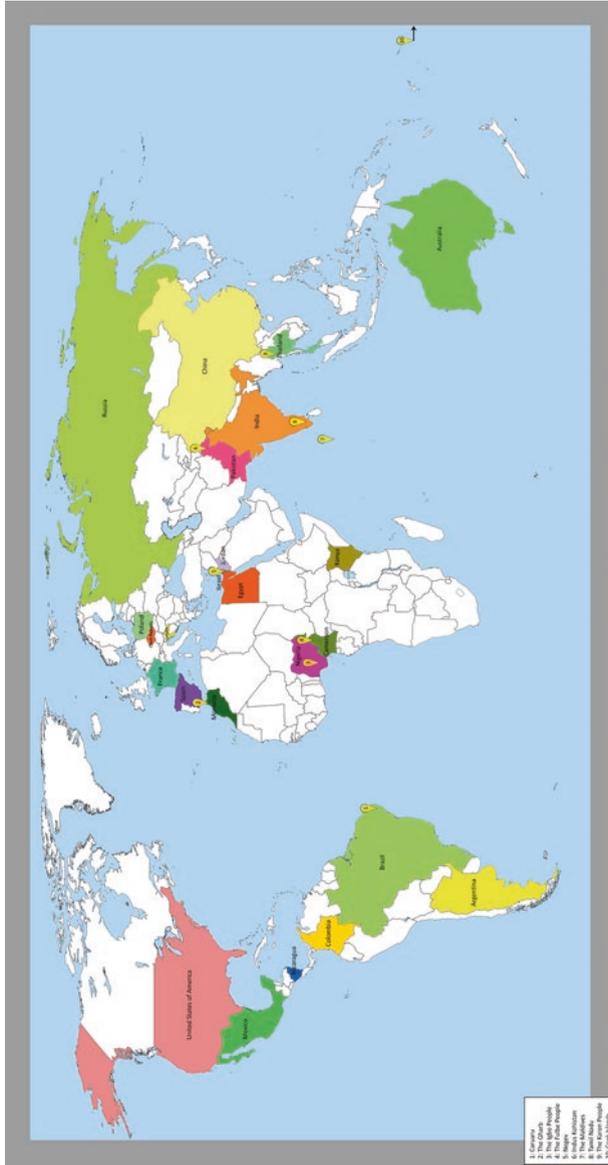
The conflict between honor and love considerations, between parent and children over marital choice, was frequent that time. Of course, marriage for honor and marriage for love might be inclusive options. For example,

a young man and woman aroused by a genuine love for one another and desiring matrimony but fearing that parents would object, might devise a ploy to maneuver an acceptable solution within the established limits of family honor preoccupations. A woman might allow her virginity to be taken, claim that her honor had been sullied, and demand marriage simply as a way of forcing parents to consider a mate that otherwise might never have been acceptable. The discourse in such a case would be totally in the idiom of honor, but only because there would be no other way of manipulating the parental value system (Gutiérrez, 1984, p.258).

Change in the manner of marital selection however, did not occur among all social classes. Some New Mexican aristocracy continued to arrange marriages for its children in this period. Lower-class families did not significantly alter their patterns of marriage selection. Socially autonomous workers, such as artisans, merchants, wage workers, and other high mobility people were among those who openly expressed sentiments of love as their reason for marrying. Acceptance of romantic love for the selection of a spouse positioned the sexes on more equal footing, even though women were still less emancipated.

Another evidence of increasing prevalence of love marriage in New Mexico might be the differences in age between partners. If love was the motive for marriage, by necessity a person would want as a mate a compassionate equal. The chances of creating an egalitarian relationship would be greater if the bride and groom were of approximately the same age. The most obvious change that occurred in New Mexico between 1690 and 1846 was a large rise in the proportion of men and women marrying someone of the same age or just one year older or younger. This increase began in 1780, rose to a high in the decade 1800–1809 and then declined at 38 % of all marriages. The conclusion is that the age difference between husband and wife decreased substantially after 1780. This change presumably was due to the increasing importance of individual choice in matrimony (Gutiérrez, 1984, p.256). However, romantic love was still comparable with familial honor values concerning spouse selection for the rest of twentieth century.

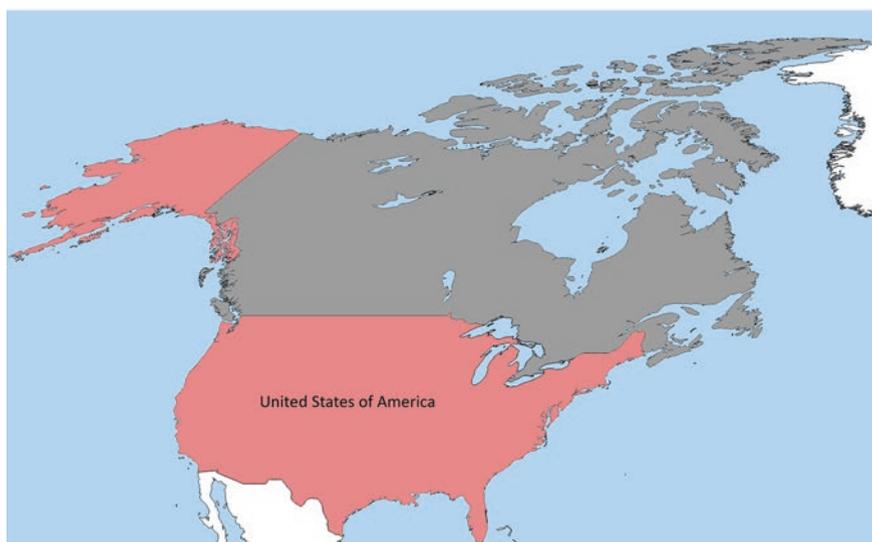
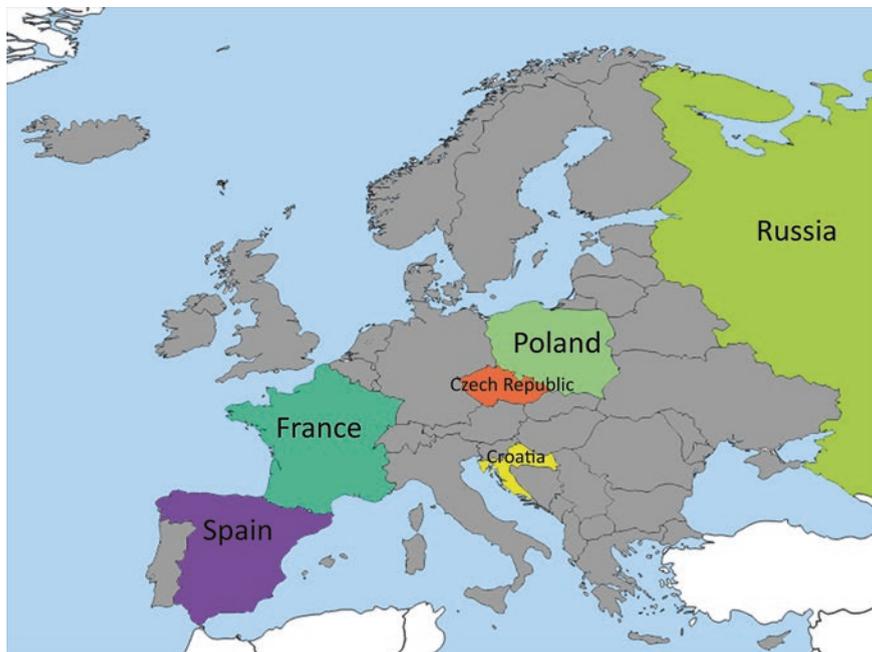
# Part III Modern Love Around the World



Modern cultures reviewed in Part III: Modern Love Around the World

## Chapter 7

# Love in Modern America and Europe



Cultures reviewed in Chap. 7: Love in Modern America and Europe

## 7.1 Love and Sex

The development of a culture of eroticism was linked to efforts in the 1960s and 1970s to legitimate sex for its pleasurable and expressive qualities alone. Sexual fulfillment had become a condition of true love. Sex became a sphere of sensual pleasure; individuals expected sex to be sensually and expressively pleasurable. This substantially heightened the psychological and sensual significance of the erotic aspect of sex. The sexualizing of love and eroticizing of sex were two prominent tendencies of that cultural development that led to a crisis of intimacy. Companionship and sexual pleasure became the key concepts of ideal marriage.

In many European countries and in the United States of America, the “sexual revolution” of 1960–1980s had been constructed as an autonomous domain of pleasure. The “eroticization of female sexuality” and the decline of the double standard occurred (Seidman 1991). Throughout earlier centuries, male sexuality was considered as carnal and female sexuality as romantic or maternal. These notions were gradually replaced by a concept of female sexuality that included erotic desire. Women could claim equal rights with regard to giving and receiving sensual pleasures. Researchers have documented the steady decline of differences between male and female sexual behavior and attitudes. Since the 1960s, surveys showed (Rubin 1990) that many men have become more sensitive and less detached while many women have become more self-assertive and less dependent than their predecessors. As Rubin (1990) highlighted, women have been not just permitted but encouraged to experience their sexuality, to take pleasure in its expression, and not conceal it as some private shame. For men, this brought the possibility for sex with a woman as an equal who made a free choice and had a free emotional exchange (p. 93).

Despite this movement toward gender equality, many people still lacked a sense of self and the autonomy essential to maintain a loving and sexually fulfilling relationship. This society is still in transition to relationships that engage more equality between the sexes. As a consequence, many men and women are still confused about their gender roles, love relationships, and sexuality (Firestone et al. 2006).

Another cultural change in sexual patterns was the rise of a homosexual identity and subculture. “The homosexuals” stepped forward as human figures possessing their own distinctive psychological nature. The 1960–1970s observed a great transformation of homosexual life; gays and lesbians wanted social inclusion and legitimation. This movement formed an elaborated gay subculture which provided these individuals with affirmative identities and lifestyles. This development demonstrated a trend toward a more sexually pluralistic society.

Expanded tolerance toward homosexuality, the dramatic increase in cohabitation, greater acceptance of premarital and nonmarital sex, public receptivity to the “playboy” lifestyle, and the proliferation of pornography, all took place in the United States, despite the resistance of many Americans. Thus, these changes reflected long-term trends.

The movement to sexualize love in late twentieth century developed the culture of eroticism. Sex demonstrated love. The pleasurable and expressive facets of sex were to show love. Sex became related to a self-fulfillment more than to romantic love. The pleasurable and expressive qualities of sex assimilated an independent value, and sexual expression no longer relied exclusively upon romantic feelings. Eroticism came apart from its role in maintaining romantic love. The gap and division between sex and love started to grow. Eros became unbound, and romantic intimacy turned out to be less important (Seidman 1991).

## 7.2 Love and Marriage

The long decade of the 1950s, extending from 1947 to the early 1960s in the United States and from 1952 to the late 1960s in Western Europe, turned out to be an exceptional moment in the history of marriage. These years became the golden age of marriage in the West. The ideas that marriage should provide both partners with sexual gratification, personal intimacy, and self-fulfillment were taken to new heights in that decade. Marriage was the place not only where people expected to find the deepest meaning in their lives, but also where they would have the most fun.

By the 1960s marriage had become nearly universal in North America and Western Europe, with 95 % of all persons marrying, as people married younger, life spans lengthened, and divorce rates fell or held steady. This was a unique period in Western history when marriage provided the context for every piece of most people's lives. The norm of youthful marriage was so predominant during the 1950s that an unmarried woman as young as twenty-one might worry that she would end up an "old maid." Many men and women enjoyed the experience of courting their own mates, getting married at will, and setting up their own households; married couples were independent of extended family ties and community groups. This was even true for different socioeconomic and ethnic groups (Coontz 2005, pp. 226–228). So when instability of the love-based marriage reasserted itself in the 1970s, people were surprised.

In the 1960–1970s, sex became a private matter of two people, while the new impetus of interest in sexuality arose. The changes in women's sex attitudes were among the driving forces in this regard. Formerly, a woman could not achieve full sexual equality; although she and her partner might have "fun," she was mostly responsible for a baby. Therefore, couples who enjoyed free premarital sex usually intended to marry (Murstein 1974, pp. 441–442).

It seemed that marriage by the 1960s also reached the perfect balance between the personal freedom of the love match and the constraints required for social stability. Most social scientists anticipated that the love-based marriage and male breadwinner family would accompany the spread of industrialization across the globe and replace the wide array of other marriage and family systems in

traditional societies. American sociologist Goode (1963) explicitly expressed this view in his seminal book *World Revolution and Family Patterns*.

Goode (1963) surveyed the family data of that time in Europe and the United States, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, India, China, and Japan and concluded in all these countries the evolvement of a conjugal family system and the “love pattern” in mate selection was evident. The people’s material and psychic investments focused on the nuclear family and the emotional demands which each spouse can legitimately make upon each other, elevating loyalty to spouse above obligations to parents.

Ideology of the love-based marriage, according to Goode (1959), proclaimed the right of the individual to choose his or her own spouse. It also asserted the worth of the individual as opposed to the inherited elements of wealth and ethnic group. This ideology was especially appealing to intellectuals, young people, and women. Goode provided the figures and surveys to conclude that the love-based marriage of that time was gaining ground around the world. Most social scientists concurred with Goode that the 1950s family represented the wave of the future. They believed that evolution of marriage culminated in Europe and North America, and the other cultures of the world would soon follow the same pattern.

However, quite drastic changes began in the opposite direction. As Coontz (2005) noted, “It took more than 150 years to establish the love-based, male breadwinner marriage as the dominant model in North America and Western Europe,” but “it took less than 25 years to dismantle it” (p. 247). Things just got out of control in the 1960s. The “traditional” marriage was overturned by radicalism of late 1960s and early 1970s. Yet, in the 1970s and 1980s various changes in the realm of relationship occurred and people, who did not intend to challenge traditional marital norms, transformed the nature of marriage. The stride of change in marriage attitudes and behavior accelerated in the mid-1970s; many of these transformations probably occurred after unmet needs in marriages. Many men and women originally tried to find fulfillment at home, but when they did not meet their heightened expectations in marriage, their discontent evolved accordingly. When people hoped to achieve personal happiness and tried to make this happen within marriage but did not succeed, they became critical of the lack of intimacy and unsatisfying relationships with a spouse. Wives were especially likely to regret their choices. This personal dissatisfaction with ideals of marital intimacy of the 1950s, along with economic and political changes in the 1960s and 1970s, most likely overturned 1950s gender roles and marriage patterns (Coontz 2005, p. 250).

The age of marriage rose, yet divorce rates accelerated and doubled between 1966 and 1979. Yet, at the end of the 1970s the impact of high divorce rates was accelerated by a drop in the number of remarriages and appearance of new alternatives to marriage. Between 1970 and 1999 the number of unmarried couples living together in the United States increased sevenfold. While in the 1970s most couples married if the woman got pregnant, in the 1990s marriage was no longer regarded as the obvious response to pregnancy or childbirth (Seltzer 2004). In 2003, the U.S. census reported that almost 40 % of cohabiting couples had children under 18 living with them (Smock and Gupta 2002). Many women postponed marriage

longer than they postponed motherhood. Rates of childbearing by unmarried women climbed, and the number of children born out of wedlock was all the more noticeable because the birthrate of married couples continued to fall (Coontz 2005, p. 261).

Some public media publications undermined male family responsibilities and encouraged men to enjoy the pleasures of relationships with a female without becoming emotionally involved or financially responsible. New tensions arose between men and women; women complained that modern men were afraid to commit to relationships. On another side, women saw more opportunities in the workplace before and after marriage, and their aspirations grew. Many women postponed marriage to complete college, while others spent a few years enjoying the life of a single working girl before settling down to marriage. While women remained single longer and gained their experience at work and school, their personal aspirations and self-confidence elevated (Coontz 2005).

The better access to effective contraception let women control on their own when to bear children and how many to have; therefore they could reorganize their lives and their marriages. The contraceptive revolution of the 1960s in some regards led also to the so-called sexual revolution. Reducing the risk of unwanted pregnancy allowed a woman, if she wanted, to separate sexual activity from childbirth. This left more freedom for her to enjoy sex and love.

Promiscuous sex increased, but the surge of sexuality grew mostly among lovers and good friends who were not necessarily engaged to be married. The plethora of premarital and extramarital couples experienced the pleasure of sex. The former myth, that sex can be enjoyable only within marriage, diluted. Men and women became more equal and more interested in sex than ever before. Yet, sex involved not only physical but mainly psychological aspects, and a genuine interpersonal relationship was paramount. In particular, sexual adequacy in a woman was very much related to the quality of her intimate relationships (Murstein 1974, pp. 441–442).

The growing number of childless marriages or families with one to two children weakened the connection between marriage and parenthood. Couples were rethinking how their marriages should function. Since there were less small children striving for their attention, many couples reexamined the quality of their own relationships in terms of intimacy and romantic love feelings.

By the late 1970s all these changes enormously transformed people's attitudes toward personal relationships. Surveys from the 1960s to the 1970s revealed a substantial decline in support for conformity to social roles as well as a greater focus on self-fulfillment, intimacy, fairness, and emotional gratification (Coontz 2005). More people than before thought that autonomy and voluntary cooperation were higher values than was obedience to authority. When husbands and wives both worked, they often argued over how to rearrange the division of housework. Acceptance of singlehood, unmarried cohabitation, childlessness, divorce, and out of wedlock childbearing increased everywhere in North America and Western Europe (Inglehart 1990; Coontz 2005).

In three decades, marriage lost its role in sexual lives of young people, in their adult roles, and in their transition into parenthood. People married later, divorce rates increased, and premarital sex was the norm. The division of labor between husband as breadwinner and wife as homemaker diffused. In the 1980s–1990s, all these changes transformed the role of marriage in society at large and in the personal lives of men and women. The notion of male breadwinner marriage declined all across North America and Western Europe. Marriage began to lose its capability to influence sexual behavior, living arrangements, and child rearing.

In the late 1990s, these changes began to slow and brought the hope that the storm had passed and marriage would soon return to “normal.” By 1998 the divorce rate was 26 % lower than in 1979. Birthrates for unmarried white women stabilized in the 1990s, and those of black and Hispanic women actually declined. More out-of-wedlock babies were born that time to cohabiting couples than to women living alone. Attitudes toward promiscuity and adultery turned significantly more disapproving (Thornton and Young-Demarco 2001).

By the beginning of twenty-first century, overall married people in Western Europe and North America were happier, healthier, and better protected against economic setbacks and psychological depression than people in any other living arrangement. Selection effects can explain this; people who are already good-natured, healthy, socially skilled, and emotionally stable are more likely to get married and stay married than individuals with fewer of these qualities (Inglehart 1990). Yet, Coontz (2005) believes that marriage itself adds satisfaction, over and above these selection effects. It remains the high expression of commitment in the culture and comes with exacting expectations about responsibility, fidelity, and intimacy. The commonly held expectations cherish the predictability and security that make the feelings and living easier.

### 7.3 Romantic Love Ideals

As we talked in the previous chapters, the American promotion of romantic consumerism during the twentieth century substantially impacted romantic ideals and people’s emotional well-being. Feelings of love and romantic experience became linked to the consumption of commodities and services—parties, nightclubs, break-dance, restaurant gatherings, drinking at bars, traveling to ‘romantic’ places, and so forth—which changed the way Americans expressed their emotions. These new things and events have become stereotypical images of romantic love.

Besides these consumerist aspects, romantic love in North American culture is associated with a complex of feelings, cognitions, and behavioral patterns. In particular, interdisciplinary model of love proposed by Fisher (2004) identified 12 psychophysiological characteristics that Americans often associate with being in the state of passionate love. They are (a) “thinking that the beloved is unique”; (b) “paying attention to the positive qualities of the beloved”; (c) experiencing feelings of “exhilaration,” “increased energy,” “heart pounding,” and “intense

emotional arousal induced by being in contact with, or thinking of, the beloved”; (d) feeling even more connected to the beloved in times of adversity; (e) “intrusive thinking”; (f) feeling possessive and dependent on the beloved; (g) “desiring ‘union’ with the beloved”; (h) having a strong sense of altruism and concern for the beloved; (i) reordering one’s priorities to favor the beloved; (j) “feeling sexual attraction for the beloved”; and (k) ranking “emotional union” as taking “precedence over sexual desire.”

In the 1990s and in the beginning of twenty-first century, romantic love changed its accents. Although many still yearned for *passion* and enjoyed its elation, arousal, and crazy madness, the search for *psychological intimacy* and *compassionate love* took the priority for many Americans.

De Munck et al. (2010) found that Americans perceive love as realistic and enduring relationships, but they are concerned with the loss of independence that comes from being involved in a romantic relationship. A recent study of De Munck and Kronenfeld (2016) in the United States revealed a cultural model of successful romantic love consisting of normative scenarios. Based on the opinions of informants from a small rural town in upstate New York and New York City, they identified that for successful romantic love relations, a person should make passionate and intimate love, not only physical love; feel excitement regarding a meeting with their beloved and feel comfortable with him/her; behave in a companionable, friendly way with one’s partner; listen to the other’s concerns; offer to help out in various ways if necessary, keeping a mental ledger of the degree to which altruism and passion are mutual. The authors view their cultural model presents as a flexible, generic set of normative scenarios that people see as exemplifying romantic love and that is triggered at specific times or in given situations. Their findings support the recent tendency of North American love toward being more intimate and compassionate.

The major processes that influenced the understanding of romantic love in the twentieth century Europe were relaxation of sexual morals and the “sexual revolution” of the 1960s to early 1970s. Furthermore, some expressions concerning love began to refer implicitly to sexual desire.

In Europe in the 1970–1980s, there were evident tendencies toward earlier onset of coitus and serial monogamy. Among the younger generations relationships became shorter. The tendencies were increasingly toward more romantic liberality; the egalitarian erotic relationships became the new ideal for most Europeans. During the sexual revolution of the 1960s–1970s in the West, progressives had thought of sex as both ecstatically thrilling, while conservatives thought that dangerous forces had been unleashed and that disinhibition would cause the social fabric to unravel. While Western Europe underwent a sexual revolution through dramatic, explosive, and fast transformations of sexual attitudes and behaviors, Eastern Europe experienced a sexual evolution through more conservative and gradual changes (Herzog 2011, p. 205). By the late 1980s and 1990s in Soviet Union, there was more representation of sexual topics in magazines, other public media, and discussion of the topic on TV. People became slowly more open to the theme of sex on the public scene. Private sexual life was the same as before:

naturally open to occasional premarital and extramarital affairs. Czechs, Poles, and Croatians noted uncomplicated acceptance in their societies of premarital sex for both men and women. Infidelity after marriage also happened, with some greater latitude for men than for women. Egalitarian erotic relationships inside and outside of marriage became the new ideal for most Europeans (Herzog 2011).

By the 1990s and the early twenty-first century, major changes occurred in the ways in which people thought about and experienced sex (Herzog 2011, p. 205). Social scientists and journalists described the processes as dedramatization of sex. The thought of sex as an ecstatically thrilling experience typical for 1960s–1970s in the West faded, and in the 2000s sex had lost its explosive importance, and increasing numbers of respondents to surveys no longer thought of desire as an unruly force exploding either within or between individuals.

Radicals tried to liberate sex, conservatives tried to contain it. A generalized weariness of sexual liberality led to alienation of sex from love. The pornographic and erotic images spinning persistently in media distorted the connection between love and sex: “even when two people were in bed with each other, they were really just having sex with themselves or with their own fantasies”. The growing number of people were more concerned with “the ego-trip of being a hot object of desire than with the physiological sensation of orgasm” (Herzog 2011, p. 206). Orgasms themselves were starting to function more as trophies of self-reassurance in a battle with another body, rather than as the pleasurable byproducts of interaction with another person passionately desired in his or her individuality (Herzog 2011, p. 206). The value of romantic love diminished.

For instance, Giddens (1992) believes that romance as idealization is no longer needed in modern society and will be soon replaced by a new, pragmatic, form of relationship. He called this new form of erotic tie as “confluent love”. Romantic lovers would certainly not recognize it as love at all. Confluent love is active, contingent, and based on each partner’s calculating maximization of erotic satisfaction. Confluent love becomes a “pure relationship” without entangling ideals, commitments, or moral obligations; it is a wholly utilitarian matter. The confluent love, as Giddens (1992) argued, developed as a result of increased sexual plasticity, the blurring distinctions between male and female identity. It is considered as a positive development of love that enables active, self-aware, and pleasure-seeking individuals to make their own choices and negotiate with one another openly, rather than being trapped in delusory, unhappy, and addictive relationships. Some scholars doubt in such a perspective that Giddens depicted. Lindholm (1998) argued that such negation of intense and idealized personal romantic relationships in favor of pragmatic ties of mutual sexual satisfaction may have unexpected negative personal consequences, including a lack of commitment in love, a pervasive feeling of isolation, and depression.

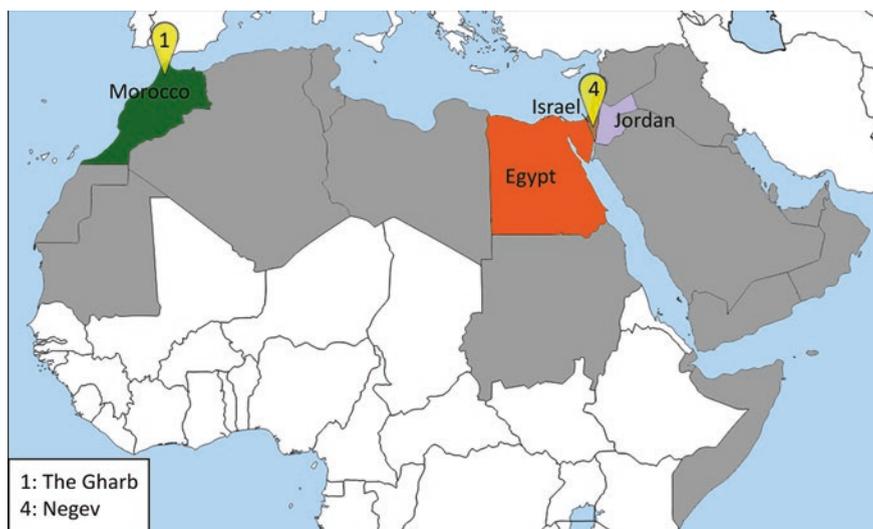
On the turn of the millennium, some major reconfigurations occurred in the nature of sex and love and their relations. Since the invention of Viagra in 1998, the performance capacity became more important than experience of desire and love; internet pornography and cybersex do not really need a unique object of

sex—any fancy stimulus and fantasy may suffice. It looks like the idea of romantic love became excessive.

However, it appears that love might be in the process of making a major comeback. Liberality and romance could be compatible and mutually reinforcing. So, one of the noteworthy trends at the turn of millennium was an appropriation and redirection of feminist concerns for rather more conservative purposes (Herzog 2011). According to some researchers, companionate aspects of romantic love, rather than passionate and purely sexual ones, have had prominence over the past 20 years (Fehr 1994; Manoharan and de Munck 2015).

## Chapter 8

# Romantic Love in the Arab World



Cultures reviewed in Chap. 8: Romantic Love in the Arab World

### 8.1 The Concept of Love in Arab Societies

The topic of love in the Middle East has been missed from cross-cultural studies and the sociology of emotions for quite a long time, specifically framed within an Arab context (Oghia 2015). What does romantic love mean in the Muslim Middle East? The romantic themes were rooted in the ancient Moor's culture and are still apparent in modern literature written by Arab authors, in particular by the influential twentieth-century artist and mystic poet Gibran (1997). Arab music also acts as

a salient and cathartic avenue for emotional and romantic expression of love (Racy 2003). Romantic love revealed its roots in various cultural outlets and established a historical and cultural foundation in Arab societies (Oghia 2005, p. 282). The Arab poetic tradition substantially influenced European notions of courtly love.

Rougemont argued that the tradition of courtly lyrical poetry in twelfth-century France had its origins in the convergence of Persian Manichaeism and Middle Eastern Sufi rhetoric transmitted by Muslim Spain (De Rougemont 1940/1974, pp. 102–107). These Eastern sources of romantic imagery and practice drew on Arabian models in the odes of oral poets of the late pre-Islamic period. That native Arab romanticism rhapsodizing about the qualities of the remembered beloved was a wellspring of passionate language for the Western society. The tale of Layla and Majnun is a perfect example of the Arab poetics of love, the well known of the early Arabic romantic stories. It was that of the star-crossed lovers, whose unsummated passion has inspired both the scholarly and the popular imagination of the Arab world for many centuries.

Ahdaf Soueif (1999), an Arab novelist, once poetically described the multitude of meanings that “love” possesses in Arabic:

“Hubb” is love, “ishq” is love that entwines two people together, “shaghaf” is love that nests in the chambers of the heart, “hayam” is love that wanders the earth, “teeh” is love in which you lose yourself, “walah” is love that carries sorrow within it, “sababah” is love that exudes from your pores, “hawa” is love that shares its name with “air” and with “falling”, “gharm” is love that is willing to pay the price. (pp. 386–387).

Inhorn (2007) and Trawick (1990a) describe that love, or *hubb* as it is called in Arabic, is a highly extolled virtue, which is explicated in many spiritual teachings and has saturated Middle Eastern life in popular culture and affective relations between spouses, families, and other close relatives.

In terms of popular culture, as Oghia (2005) argues, the Middle Eastern region is abounding with love stories in music, literature, and poetry. The popular Arabic songs and movies depict *hubb* as longing, attraction, desire, as well as heartbreak and suffering. The world of popular culture in the Middle East is profoundly permeated with *hubb* and affective relations. In the Middle East, spouses, parents and children, close kin, and close friends refer to each other by the derivative term *habibi* (male) or *habibti* (female), literally translated not only as “my love” or “my loved one” but also as “my dear” or, when between friends, “my chum.” It is the common term of reference in the Arabic-speaking world, which is derived from the word *hubb*, or love, and reflects this emotion, connecting it into entangled relations of affection and care.

The conjugal love and affection, however, receives no specific ideological enhancement in the Islamic scriptures, yet expectations of sexual fulfillment and fidelity are mandated (Musallam 1983). It may look like Islam inhibits strong, loving marriages. Charrad (2001), however, convincingly argued that “Far from fostering the development of long-lasting, strong emotional ties between husband and wife, the law underplays the formation and continuity of independent and stable conjugal units. This shows in particular in the procedure to terminate marriage, the legality of polygamy, and the absence of community property between

husband and wife” (2001, p. 35). Charrad also noted that the legality of polygamy allows a man to marry a second wife in the hope of having heirs, particularly sons. However, despite Western stereotypes of widespread marital polygamy and “images of harems [that] have captured the imagination of Western observers” (p. 38), polygamy is statistically insignificant in most Middle Eastern countries, practiced by only a few, generally less than 2 %.

Marriage, according to the cultural norms, is a highly valued and upheld institution throughout the Middle East. Although Islam allows divorce, it clearly extols the virtues of marriage, regarding it as Sunna, or the way of the prophet Muhammad. Many marriages in the Middle East are characterized by “conjugal connectivity” (Inhorn 1996). According to Joseph (1994), socialization within Arab families highly values connectivity—the intensive bonding of individuals through love, involvement, and commitment. He noted that connectivity exists independently of patriarchy and occurs in many cultures where individuation, autonomy, and separation are not supported. In such cultures, especially in the Arab world, relatives in family are usually very involved with each other. It is natural for them to expect mutual love and to exert significant influence on each other’s lives; as their priority is in family solidarity, they tend to subordinate their needs to collective interests. An individual is largely embedded in the familial structure that forms his or her sense of self and provides the feeling of security.

Working in Egypt and Lebanon, Inhorn (1996, 2007) studied the relationships of the couple, a social dyad for which there is no term in Arabic. She suggested that men and women are negotiating new type of marital relationships, which are based on “loving connectivity experienced and expected in families of origin but that has heretofore been unexpected and unexamined within the conjugal unit” (p. 144). Nevertheless, societies in the Arab world impose cultural restrictions on romantic relationships and love.

## 8.2 Love, Sex, and Gender Roles in Arab Islam

Modern Muslim authors share their ideas on the position and influence of Islam on love, sexuality, and couple relationships. In particular, Bouhdiba (1975/1985) believes that the attitude of Islam to love and sexuality, at least in the western part of the Arab world, is tolerant and favorable when sanctioned by marriage. Sexual pleasure in marriage is sanctioned by the religion and described as a foretaste of paradise and a proof of God’s love. According to Bouhdiba, the true basis of Islam is a unity through love, whether attainable or not. Mernissi (1975/1987), on the other hand, argued that despite Muslim praise of legitimate sexual pleasure, conjugal intimacy may threaten the believer’s single-minded devotion to God; hence, the loving couple is dangerous to religious society.

Islamic accounts often conclude that human beings rarely attain the divine aspirations of love and sexuality. Bouhdiba believes that the rhetoric of love and erotic passion may unleash excessive lust and view women as the objects of male desire.

By confining woman to pleasure, one turns her into a plaything, a doll. By doing so one limits love to the ludic and one reduces the wife to the rank of woman-object, whose sole function is the satisfaction of her husband's sexual pleasure. Marital affection is reduced to mere pleasure, whereas in principle pleasure is only one element of it among others (Bouhdiba 1985, p. 214).

In the Arab Muslim household, the adults follow the sharply gendered roles; a mother holds a privileged yet closely confined role—child rearing. This position includes unequal responsibility for control of one's passions; the male is allowed freer rein while the female is blamed in instances of fornication. A mother-child bond is the strongest tie in the society. There are sharply contradictory expectations from the males. They are nurtured in such households of women as both idealized nurturers and sex objects.

The male child lives in the mother-centered household among women, and later in life he holds many connotations and erotic implications of this early immersion in a society of mother, aunts, and sisters. For example, a mother takes the boy to the public steam bath. Such experiences and images of physical intimacy with women will evoke in the context of adult sexual activity. So, as Bouhdiba (1975/1985) claims "the Arab woman is the queen of the unconscious even more than she is queen of the home or of night" (pp. 220–221). This is the challenge of the ambivalent perception of femaleness. The idealized image of the virtuous and pure mother/sister can coexist with a man's fantasy of a fallen woman—lustful and seductive. Arab man might be still obsessed with these erotic implications seeking a woman in every possible form: dancer, film star, singer, prostitute, passing tourist, etc. Bouhdiba (1975/1985) believes that such dissociation of the ludic and the serious in a man's mind is a stumbling block to the sexual emancipation of both women and men in the contemporary societies of North Africa. Modern women seek to move beyond the traditional roles assigned to them, and men resist this change. The conservative resistance against women's emancipation in the Muslim world is not just a regressive or repressive attitude; it is rather a defense mechanism against changes in both sex roles and the touchy subject of sexual identity.

Mernissi claims that the Muslim social structure works a defense against the disruptive power of female sexuality and women's erotic potential, controlling women's behavior to sustain the stability of society (1975/1987, p. 44). As she argues, from the time of the Prophet, a society needed to veil and isolate women in order to keep men safe from the seductive potential of women. *Female* sexuality was emphasized as the driving force in erotic relations for both partners in heterosexual encounters. The male was anxious about his powerful longings for physical intimacy and the loss of his autonomy; therefore, he projected desire onto the female, casting her as the agent of unrestrainable lust. This is why some Muslim scholars feel that Islam mandates separation of the sexes based on a similar fear of women's seductive capacity. Thus, being in love with a woman was said to be the cause of all evil, and the beloved woman controlled a man's actions by bewitching him.

### 8.3 Familial Investment in Mate Selection in Arab Culture

Goode (1959) earlier also noted the importance of familial investment in mate selection. Because the kinship ties are linked to social status, stratification and another kinship line, then for Arab families, kinship networks are very valuable. This is how the Arab families operate. Romantic relationships act as ties to other kinship networks and preserve “private property through inheritance, socialization, and the achievement of other goals that transcend the happiness of the individual to guarantee communal interests” (Barakat 1993, p. 107).

They value compatible religious and social backgrounds, geographic and political bases over personal desires, feelings, and individual choice. Love is a central thematic narrative of many Arab cultural outlets such as Egyptian cinema; however, such narratives are often constructed as a tension between an individual choice of a marriage partner or an arranged marriage that is “patriarchally controlled” (Armbrust 2009). They hold the foreign versus local discourses, such as Western ideas of romantic love being in direct contrast to the more traditional practices of courtship, relationship formation, and marriage—specifically within an Islamic tradition (Armbrust 2009; Oghia 2015).

Arab conceptualizations of love adhere to and deviate from Western romantic discourses. Family has the powerful influences on courtship, romantic relationships, and ultimately marriage among Arab individuals. However, love is becoming increasingly important to Arab youth (Barakat 1993), and marriages based on romantic love are increasing (El-Haddad 2003). Thus, the research indicates the growing value that certain Arab societies place on love. It is a binding force that assists individuals when they form and maintain their romantic relationships.

These studies also suggest that love, romance, and dating are special topics in the Arab world because traditionally, courtship and marriage have “been a family and community or social affair instead of a personal, individual one” (Barakat 1993, p. 107). A large proportion of arranged marriages or “family-facilitated” romantic matches are common in Arab society, as well as familial endorsement of romantic partners (Barakat 1993). The established cultural customs and practices remain normative.

Since patriarchy directs the socialization of Arab children, the youth agency and individual choice are limited for the benefit of the family (Olmsted 2005; Abu-Lughod 1999; Joseph 1993), and love is constructed within the family as inherently connected to patriarchy (Armbrust 2009). Romantic love might challenge the dominant discourse of patriarchy through choosing a romantic partner that could potentially undermine kinship solidarity, disrupt social capital, and erode social network connections (Abu-Lughod 1986/2000; Joseph 1996).

The dichotomy of honor and shame is an instrument of power that is infused within patriarchy (Abu-Lughod 1999). This system controls through family socialization in such a way that individuals know who is and who is not an acceptable romantic partner, whom a man or a woman can and cannot love. Not being controlled, a romantic relationship is a powerful agent that can challenge and destabilize patriarchy (Sabbah 2010).

In addition, Al-Thakeb (1985) noted, “Love and dating in Western styles are considered likely to lead to premarital sexual relationships, [which could damage the family’s honor and reputation]... there is a large segment that believes that love is to come only after marriage” (p. 578). This further highlights the importance of upholding family honor because if shame is brought to an individual, it is not just hurting the future of the individual, but endangering the family’s access to social capital that is available and the social image of the entire family (Abu-Lughod 2009; Joseph 1994).

However, the modern transformations in the Arab family include the declining influence of the extended family and the generational gaps between grandparents, parents, and children (Oghia 2015). Reflecting on these changes, Barakat (1993) indicated that, “Increasingly, marriage is seen as an individual choice that does not depend on parental approval. Love, which could serve as a reason for opposing a marriage in traditional communities, is increasingly becoming a prerequisite in the minds of young Arabs” (p. 107). Thus, clashes are held in the discourses about love, romance, sexuality, social expectations, and personal choice. As a result, men and women are increasingly trapped in confrontation between social norms and obligations that require respecting familial expectations and cultural traditions, and their own ideas, preferences, and personal desires.

In Arab culture, the families still regulate behavior in the interest that social capital would be held within kinship networks and be protected. They do so by managing relationship development and mate selection. Yet, the relationships based on romantic love do challenge the dominating views linked to patriarchy, honor, and shame. Besides, unlike the typical Western contexts, romantic relationships in the Arab world traditionally did not relate to happiness; they are rather related to pragmatism: uniting families to secure and safeguard social capital and resources.

#### **8.4 Romance, Love, and Marriage in Morocco**

Moroccan culture presents many stories of love and romantic longing. Davis and Davis (1995) reported their observation in Zawiya, an Arabic-speaking town in the Gharb, an agricultural region of northern Morocco, in 1980–1990 where romantic love is still extolled. From their informants, they heard the examples of passion and obsessive love and recorded young adults describing their beliefs and experiences concerning love and marriage. Possession is one of the key characteristics of those stories, especially in the legend of Aisha Qandisha. Males are the usual victims of Lalla (Lady) Aisha; she may appear either as a seductive and attractive woman or as a hideous hag. Aisha often appears to men in dreams and may leave them impotent for life. Several of the accounts D. Davis and S. Davis have heard in Zawiya of males overwhelmed by sexual or romantic problems were attributed to possession by Aisha Qandisha.

Milder forms of suffering caused by failed or unrequited love are often attributed to magical influence. In accounts of Davis and Davis (1995) concerning infatuation, there was an assumption that the feelings of love are overwhelming and pathological, and that they imply supernatural influence. Blame for the male's inability to deal with his love reasonably, or to put it aside, is laid on the female beloved. Moroccan popular culture is permeated with the concepts of magical influence and poisoning.

Marriages in earlier generations in Morocco were predominantly arranged alliances between families, and the young people were supposed to agree. In 1980s–1990s many of the young males selected a potential mate and requested their parents' approval. Girls may also have someone in mind, but it is not culturally acceptable for them to make such suggestions. These trends were apparent in the semirural town of Zawiya in 1980s. In selecting marriage partners many boys and girls, especially older youth and those with more years of education, want to make the choice themselves. The involvement of families in marriage decisions serves to temper the young men's impulses, and the objects—the young women themselves—are perhaps the best insurance against mistakes.

There is strong evidence of the romantic love ideas in current experiences of Moroccan young people living at a time when marriages arranged solely by parents are being replaced by those desired by the couple and approved by parents. In these matches, and the relationships preceding them, young men are more likely to feel love so strongly as to be “possessed,” while young women always have a practical eye open, even when strongly drawn to a suitor.

When a boy and girl love each other and want to get married, but the parents were opposed, some think that they should follow the parents' wishes; others believe that they should pursue what they want, but in a way to reach a compromise and make it socially acceptable, including entreating relatives to convince the parents. As for the frequency of pure love marriages, informants suggested that very few in their experience marry exclusively for love.

Even though both boys and girls hope to marry someone with whom they are compatible and with whom they understand each other, their experiences of romantic love in Morocco are different. Females usually feel less intensity of romantic passion than males. From childhood and adolescence, they are socialized to behave responsibly and taught to avoid sexual dangers. They learned about practical importance to form a stable marriage. Adults often encourage young women *not* to rely on only their feelings. Because of the ideal of female purity, they may feel shy to report such passionate feelings to anyone and can admit this only to their best friend.

As for the young women's personal experiences of love, when girls discussed magical influences on them related to love, they usually mentioned a spell cast to keep them from marrying, not something done by a male who wanted to possess them. Only a few young women talked about love with a kind of intensity described in early and current Arabic songs and poetry. Some young women report romantic experiences that are similar to young men, but still with somewhat less intensity and certainly with an awareness of the consequences of their

actions. Girls often tell practical reasons for avoiding sex and their preferences for the ideal of platonic love when there are no kisses and no sexual relations. Some young women described marrying their husbands because they loved them, but in a matter-of-fact rather than passionate way. Another young woman said that she married her husband because she loved him, but her description is hardly rhapsodic; her concern with the practical was evident.

## 8.5 Love in the Bedouin Culture

In modern Bedouin culture, the high value of love in poetry exists along with a traditional patriarchal society that places family honor above individual desires, the similar way as in South Asia. The Bedouin culture tends to keep the sexes largely segregated and discourages individual initiative in matters of marriage. Among Bedouins, as Abu-Lughod (1986/2000) observed, the love poetry is typically recited by individuals (both men and women) whose autonomy was denied and who were in distress and usually in intimate contexts where no “superiors” in the family and social hierarchy were present. The love poetry expressed feelings of vulnerability, attachment, loss, anger, and bitterness related to this state, but these were different from what these individuals voiced in ordinary conversation. The poetic feelings of love expressed their strength, autonomy, and mastery of passions and their support of the values of honor and modesty.

Such romantic poetry is cherished as a declaration of freedom from domination by the system. It is valued while it carries subversive messages and is associated with those denied autonomy in Bedouin society. Thus, in this patriarchal and segregated society, poems, songs, and stories about love give voice to deeply held human feelings and also offer important expression to feelings and desires that the dominant culture considers impermissible and disturbing to the society (Orsini 2006, pp. 22–23).

There is evident discrepancy between the amorous feelings expressed in poems and the rigid sense of modesty that is engaged in daily communications in modern Bedouin culture. Abu-Lughod (2000) explored the interplay between the moral sentiment of modesty as a form of deference and an indicator of hierarchy associated with relations of power on the one hand, and the poetic sentiment of love as a discourse of defiance, autonomy, and freedom on the other. She refused, however, to consider the poetic sentiments as illuminating a more authentic self. Contemporary ideas about emotion are far from reducible to a monolith that can be facily contrasted to non-Western understandings (Lee 2007); the structure of love is more complex and intertwined than Western scholars interpret it.

### Types of Love

Wickering’s (1997) Bedouin culture revealed a diversity of love construal. There are two kinds of love: *ilhud* and *ralya*. *Ilhub* is the most common noun for “love,” the most common verb “to love,” and is understood as a sickness, a death-defying

condition, carrying passion, desire, and pursuit. This is a state of passion, longing, and a desire for that which one does not possess, but which drives out all but desire for the object. It is an illness, fierce that inhabits the body.

The word *ralya* means “precious,” “dear,” and “valuable” and stands for an emotion that one feels toward family members, one’s marriage partner, and friends. It is a feeling of support, security, of being held, cherished, protected, and safe. The feelings of *ralya* connect a social network of duties, obligations, and rights in kin relations, as well as in friendship. *Ralya* is love to those who are present, with whom one has familiarity and social contact. Life is sustained by kin bonds of *ralya*, which provide food, clothing, shelter, and protection—the needs of survival. *Ralya* is love in the context of routine and rituals of everyday life, such as meals, visits, and talks. It is inscribed in relations with people with whom one shares an intimacy and a routine familiarity. Others in relations of *ralya* are the same as oneself, knit closely. *Ralya* represents duties, rights, and obligations of those relationships (Wickering 1997, pp. 78–79).

According to Wickering’s interpretation (1991), *ilhuh* takes an individual out of the familiar, secure, and known toward chaos, risk, danger, and possibly death. It is a passion for otherness. In *ilhuh*, the other is different, distant, outside of routine and obligation. In patrilateral cross-cousin marriages, union is made of sameness. In the stories of tragic love, a desire subverted obligations; it is a flight away from rules. The relation between *ralya* and *ilhuh* makes love a paradox. Desire toward unity with the other destroys unity with that which is the same. Love supports life, and it unhinges it as well. The conflict between the two is the stuff of excitement and tragedy (Wickering 1997, p. 80).

Wickering’s (1991) field observations showed that emotions were physical and corporeal for Bedouins. Both *ralya* and *ilhuh* were seated in the heart, which also contains fear, the other emotion of most concern to the Bedouins. Unrequited love brought a loss of appetite and, if the pursuit of desire is blocked, then depression, lethargy, and slow wasting are followed. “There is no cure for love,” say the lyrics of a popular Bedouin song.

The passion of *ilhuh* draws one toward another whereas fear stimulates aversion. The same word for fear, *xayif*, which represented a response of avoidance and heart pounding, was also used to signify the strength of feeling in *ralya*.

*Ralya* and *ilhuh* are both forms of love, each related to the other, neither one dominant. Nomadic movement brought people together and took them apart; there was a tension between presence and absence, between relations of *ralya* and *ilhuh*. Bonds of *ralya* make kin and hold them close. In small kin groups those in relations of *ralya* are present, familiar, intimately acquainted, and visible, both physically in the household and daily activities, and emotionally, expressed in metaphors of the physical body.

*Ilhub*, on the other hand, reaches out with desire into distance, breaks order, and subverts kin ties to form outside attachments. The emotion of *ilhuh* is predicated on absence and distance; it creates desire and longing for one who is outside of relations of *ralya*. Those in potential relation of *ilhuh* are veiled from each other, expected to maintain a public distance.

Spring pasture brought normally “distant” people together in the mountains. In one poem a young man had time close to his lover. In the last line of the poem, the man was standing on a mountaintop watching his family go one way and his lover, the other; he sang “my eye flies east and my heart to the west.” Sentiments of *ralya*, with responsibility, affection, and deep blood ties, flew with his eyes to his family, and with longing and passion, his heart went with his lover. Stories of love were almost always set in the mountains. The mountains were far, and far people met there, brought together by *ilhub*.

Coming from the Western culture of love, Wickersham (1997) at first assumed that the nature of the lover relations should involve sexual intercourse as a central expression. However, the lovers often had very little opportunity to meet alone, sometimes only seeing each other in a group or surreptitiously during a community gathering, nor was sexual desire an explicit aspect of the ways in which people talked of their lovers.

Sex was a common topic of conversation. Sexual desire seemed to be a straightforward need. When someone talked about their lover, however, it was a desire just to see the other, to be in physical proximity. Desire, more so than sex, was a prominent feature of these Bedouin love relationships.

The modern social context of life has changed. Many people are settled, or semi-settled in the community near the beach. The issues of love in cross-cousin marriages, in tension between *ralya* and *ilhub*, and between nearness and distance, however, remain.

Now physical proximity of people’s contact with each other is closer. Girls are more likely to meet those with whom they must veil, those who are far from them. This proximity offered more potential for relations of *ilhub*. Yet, such proximity also increases the visibility of a girl’s actions to others. Fathers and brothers take a closer vigilance. Women feel constrained by pressures to stay close to home, to avoid talk. However, sheep and goat herding still offer an opportunity for girls and women to go away from the community and out of sight. It is on the pasturing trips that girls and boys meet each other (Wickersham 1997, pp. 81–82).

Abu-Rabia-Queder (2007) in her study of educated Bedouin women from Negev, a desert region of southern Israel, described their subjective experience and how they cope with “forbidden love” and loveless marriage. She presents the stories of Bedouin women who were the first in their tribes to study in higher education institutions and the problems that they encounter with the issue of love connections with men from “forbidden tribes” and other difficult marital situations arising from their education and employment opportunities. Abu-Rabia-Queder describes several types of marital situations created by this encounter: “tragic heroines,” “matchless women,” and “women ahead of their times”. The common theme described was that these women had to sacrifice their emotions for the sake of their independence. She describes their ways of struggling in terms of splitting mechanisms that shift between attachment and detachment of body-mind, reason-emotion and public-private spheres on two levels: behavior and consciousness.

## Chapter 9

### Love in South Asia



Cultures reviewed in Chap. 9: Love in South Asia

## 9.1 Romantic Love in India

There are several main historical, cultural, and societal aspects of relationships in South Asia which determine the concept of love. Some of them are myths, others are stereotypes, and others are realities, although rapidly changing.

Trawick (1990a, b) noted that India both exceeds and shatters Western expectations. There are such stereotypes that India is “more spiritual” than the West; its people “impoverished,” “non-materialistic,” “fatalistic,” and “other-worldly”; its women “repressed” and “submissive”; its villagers “tradition-bound” and “past-oriented”; their behavior ordered by “rituals” and constrained by “rules” of “purity” and “pollution” (1990b, p. 4). Scholars and specialists in South Asian culture use them repeatedly. However, as Trawick (1990a, b) learned in her field study that these words explain little of what she experienced in India.

India has often been called a “traditional” society meaning that Indians live in a world resembling the Western past. On each of her visits to Tamil Nadu, Trawick (1990b) found that this is not true; things were changing fast. By the way, the notion that the whole world is always changing is part of “traditional” Indian wisdom.

The general attitudes and highlights of the concept of love in India and similar cultures in South Asia are very well summarized in the comprehensive volume edited by Orsini (2006). Among the most salient are the following:

- the existence of love as a cultural ideal and a hidden practice in a society in which love and marriage have been, for the most part, kept separate;
- the gap between fantasies of individual fulfillment through love and personal destinies;
- the overlap between religious and secular idioms of love;
- the existence of several literary repertoires (the devotional song, the ghazal, the film chapbook, folk stories about famous lovers, and so on) providing mental paradigms which individuals draw upon when they make love;
- the awareness that love is not independent from other social values and practices (you cannot be a romantic lover without a ten-rupee note in your pocket) (Orsini 2006, p. 38).

The rural and urban dimensions of the modern-day love are different. The urban India, a consumerist middle-class culture, has made “romance and consumption–leisure–pleasure integral to a middle-class lifestyle, created by and reflected in the mass media through a wide range of practices including advertising, cinema, and photography;” yet beyond a small liberal minority this ideal is perceived as best implemented *within* the patriarchal family (Dwyer and Patel 2002, pp. 52–53).

The semantics of *prem* in a Rajasthani village, presented by Gold (2006) gives evidence of multiple strands of love (Gold 2006). In women’s songs love—whether the word used is *prem* or *pyar*—calls for the pleasure of emotional, physical, and sexual intimacy between husband and wife. However, recently it was noted that the old yearning for conjugal intimacy had a subtle shift, indicating a new

unwillingness to submit to the demands of the joint family; the message of songs of complaint to the husband is neither “come home,” nor “stay here,” but “take me with you.”

Mody (2006) reminds us of the limitations on love in modern urban India despite the existence of legal provisions and the currency of *love* as a cultural ideal. The contemporary rural reality and notion of love may look different from the urban reality. The research showed (Mody 2006) that it is among upwardly mobile urban groups that love unions are frowned upon and that fear of persecution forces couples to choose secrecy or elopement. Besides, the increasingly pervasive and interventionist moral regime of the Hindu Right put inter-religious marriages under serious threat. The romantic love in Indian society is still typically present mostly in the literary or filmic imagination, during times when no one else is looking, or between the dreams and expectations about the future spouse. Oral repertoire and films provide probably the best representation of the modern cultural ideals of love in India.

Indian films exemplify “symbolic snapshots” of love ideals in contemporary society. They have drawn upon the wide array of expressive traditions to describe love. Furthermore, they themselves have become the primary archival reference for words, tunes, stories, and images of love (Dwyer 2006). Indian films substantially determine the modern “love-capes” with glamorous visual language of Bollywood films.

Based on traditional repertoires, these films combine varied aesthetics and discourses of love and actively produce a new discursive and visual repertoire. The narratives, songs, and dances, and the plotting of the narratives through certain stages, from impulsive attraction to mature and nurturing love, display the eroticism while feature discourses about pure *prem* and *duty*.

The languages of love in Hindi films, as R. Dwyer argues, are made of “a whole set of visual codes (landscape, setting, physical appearance, costume, symbols, and so on) as well as those of language itself, a blend of registers of Hindi, Urdu, and English.” The landscapes of romance are depicted in the films: the parks and gardens in full bloom, with waterfalls and rivers marking the eroticism of water, beautiful mountainous areas, and even the tropical paradise beach. Episodes of films feature the remote and fantastic places creating privacy for the romantic couple, a private space where they are away from the surveillance of the family that controls, prevents, and decides romance, love, and marriage (Dwyer and Patel 2002, pp. 55–59).

The space and time of romantic love are connected with the rainy season depicted by clouds, thunder, wind, rain, and birdsong finding echo in the breast of the character. Love is also associated with spring for the erotic possibilities of the depiction of dancing and frolicking at Holi. Winter on snowy peaks produces the peculiarly filmic motif of the log cabin, where the protagonists take refuge and discover passion. Even when a romance is about an urban couple, the film shows beautiful landscapes as locations for love, particularly in the song sequences. Only occasionally and more in recent decades, the city was the locale for romance (Dwyer and Patel 2002, pp. 64–65).

Indian films are quite erotic in display of the heroine's body: it is typically the wet sari, a typical female garment, the wet shirt, or bare trunk of the hero,

which not only reveals the heroine's body to the point of nudity but is also associated with the erotic mood of the rainy season and of sweat. It also allows a display of those parts of the body that are seen as most erotic in India - the trunk (breast, waist, hips and back); the limbs, although they must be covered, are not seen as particularly erotic but can be vulgar when displayed (Dwyer and Patel 2002, pp. 81–99).

An innocent expression on the heroine's face offsets the eroticism of her movements. Hair also plays a role: it might be erotic when long and loose, or when ordered, groomed, and tied back (Dwyer and Patel 2002).

Oral repertoire is also a valuable source of knowledge about love in India. The epics, tales, and songs have been the key components of South Asian culture. Romantic epics presented the stories of transgression and celebrated individual action that threatens group solidarity. The central character is typically a strong-willed woman who takes the initiative and relies on trickery and cunningness. Passion takes the form of adultery, acknowledged as a human inevitability and, in the case of women, explicitly justified when the husband is impotent, inattentive, or simply away from home for too long. In an irreverent inversion of the didactic moral fable, adultery is deemed "appropriate" only for those who are able to think and act cunningly, while heedless passion is condemned (cited in Orsini 2006, p. 13). An intense yearning for love, affection, and security figures is prominent in women's songs. A positive valuation of sexual pleasure is present; the same veil/wrap (*orhni*) that looms heavily as a sign of women's segregation, submission, and modesty becomes in these songs an instrument of seduction, a sheet to lie upon and a cover to help the woman slip unnoticed to a rendezvous with her lover.

Romantic aspects are widely presented in poems and proverbs of love in many languages of India from ancient, classical texts to folk songs from all over India. The pieces explore all aspects of love—sensuality, matrimony, anger, jealousy, and faithfulness. Awde and Shackle (1999) presented many beautiful examples of the works, which are taken from 37 different Indian languages with side-by-side English translation.

The impact of modernity, economic changes, the gradual demise of joint families, and the increasing influence of film and television have not really produced a radical shift in emotions, relationships, and sensibilities.

## 9.2 The Challenges of Romantic Love in Indus Kohistan, in Northern Pakistan

In modern Western societies, people are expected to choose their social relationships for themselves. Tribal societies provide the contrast, because traditions and religion suggest the relationships and how people have to communicate. Social anthropologists occasionally have noticed that in small-scale societies the

social constraints are most often rather harsh (Jahn 2009). It is the case in Indus Kohistan—a high mountainous region in northern Pakistan. The Kohistani people are invariably Sunni Muslims and have a reputation as being “fanatical,” “violent,” “lawless,” and “fundamentalist.” Their desire for tenderness, closeness, and confidence is paired with an absolute readiness for violence in matters of love.

Jahn (2009) did his fieldwork there in 1998–2000 and his observations allowed a unique insight into cultural context which is difficult to enter. The love stories, which he heard, many of which were of explosive nature on the personal level, confronted him with ideas and experiences that profoundly changed his thinking and experiencing about love. Striking was the observation that in the Kohistani society, with its structures and values so radically different from the Western world, some “romantic” aspects of love seemed rather familiar to him. The experiences of romantic love that he collected there informed about gender segregation and falling in love, about the difference between marriage and affection, between sex and love, about honor and the deadly danger of feuds.

There is no chance for researcher to observe real behavior within families, especially between spouses. The kind and degree of emotions, closeness, sympathy, tenderness, passion or love—or their opposites—that spouses in the course of years may feel or develop, may be speculatively evaluated by circumstantial evidence or by comparison, but it is hard to be certain about. The only source was the male discourse about it. Any form of direct contact with Kohistani women is prohibited; therefore everything what Jahn learned about love in Indus Kohistan was restricted to the male perspective.

### **Marriage and Love**

Arranged marriage and patriarchal family structures are common in the Muslim world; the same is true for Indus Kohistan—an honor-bound society. Women are totally banned from the public sphere, while the men are usually busy outside for most of the day. At major social events, men and women gather and celebrate separately, thus contact between the sexes is dropped. Any type of contact, even eye contact, with non-relative men must be avoided.

Marriage is to be arranged by the parents, and the affected couple is not entitled to have a say; the marital arrangements follow the lines of interest respectively the moral commitments of the family. Absolute respect and obedience is expected toward the paternal relatives. And if necessary, threats of extreme violence are a usual way to remind everybody about the fulfillment of duties.

The ritualized distance between the prospective spouses is demonstrated before marriage when the bridegroom’s lawyer visits the bride’s family in order to apply for the bride’s consent to marry. The bride would be prepared by other women of her household not to give away her consent too easily. A simple “yes” would be judged as an offense toward her parents. Only after hours, sobbing and in tears, she would give her consent.

The wedding ceremonies usually last several days being accompanied by multiple rituals, expression of respect to family and parents. Any expression of joy, any positive emotion would be interpreted as weakness, as lack of autonomy, and no

effort is spared to avoid that impression. This kind of ritually demonstrated show of distance increases to almost total indifference. Husbands avoid any demonstration of joy, tenderness or gentleness toward their wives, because such would be seen as “weaknesses” that they cannot afford.

According to the patrilocal rule of residence in Indus Kohistan, after the wedding the bride leaves her paternal household and moves into her husband’s household that consists of the husband’s parents, the families of his married brothers, and his still unmarried siblings. “Giving back” the wife means that the divorced woman would return into her paternal household.

In the Kohistani villages, the traditional one-room houses have become obsolete. In the wealthy households not every couple occupies its own bedroom. Spouses actually spend little time together, and when they meet, they are almost constantly observed and controlled by the other members of the household. In these social circumstances and the limited living space within the households, couples have very little to their disposition to develop the kind of togetherness that has become so common in the Western world. In matters of sexuality, a couple’s opportunity for some privacy is also somewhat limited. It would take them only one or two minutes and then the thing would be done. It would be very difficult for them to do it in another way, because almost always some family members would be around.

Considering the above-mentioned conditions and limitations, it is difficult for the Kohistani spouses to create strong and positive emotional bonds and strengthen the close relationship within the set of household relationships. It takes a long time until couples even start talking to each other in the presence of other family members, but if couples are alone for a moment they would talk to each other directly.

According to Jahn’s informants, marriage and love do not fit together. In Indus Kohistan, it seems to be very difficult to love one’s own wife. Spouses knew about their duties and the mutual respect prescribed by religion would be very high. It seems that love and marriage in Indus Kohistan do not fit together very well. Those cultures and milieus which prefer arranged marriages, and this is true for most part of the Muslim world. But love is something different.

Love is the counterpart to marriage, which is dominated by rivalry among the spouses. In marriage, the man strives for absolute dominance. Male offspring is the main purpose, because sons are the most important comrades. But from love, sex is uncoupled. Lovers pursue no further interest and love affairs are a means in their own. Lovers meet as equals. Instead of mistrust and rivalry, positive emotions and tenderness dominate (Lindholm 1998).

### **Romantic Love**

Romantic love is dangerous in the Indus Kohistan culture. The nightly love meetings are life threatening. If one of the woman’s brothers or her father would find out about the lovers’ meeting, they would have made every effort to kill both lovers on the spot in order to re-establish their family’s blemished honor. They shoot

their women to death when they have a forbidden love affair. But men and women still love at their risk. How do they feel and think?

We say that silver has two colors: You see some dark and some shining yellow, too. But in the face of my beloved, I can see seven different colors! The outer edge of the eye is black, eyelids are red, the inner of the eye is white in which the iris is shimmering in its own special color, and the pupil is dark. The lips too are red, and the teeth show a brilliant white. And we Kohistani people also say: 'Do not say that my beloved is not beautiful! Never say so! Because you cannot see her with my eyes!' (cited in Jahn 2009).

Ibrail Shah's love for a woman from his neighboring village continued for about 25 years. At the first nightly meeting "we have sworn to remain faithful to each other." How many meetings did they have within those 25 years? There have been several per year. Never, he assured, their meetings would have been about "dirty things," because "sex makes love smaller." Cautiously and tenderly they touched their bodies, they caressed hands while they confided their sorrows to each other. They also exchanged small gifts. Unfortunately, they had to stop meetings. Due to some quarrel it would not be possible to visit his beloved's village anymore, and since then any opportunity to get into contact was lost.

Men told Jahn (2009) about many love affairs. "Did you kiss each other?" "No, no kisses. We did not do such things, no dirty things. I just held her hand." They would have talked for quite a long while "about everything." Their hearts would have been wide open, without secrets. "We were very close to each other. It was a true love" (cited in Jahn, 2009). Barkatullah felt very much attracted by a girl he did heavily fall in love with. But unfortunately, there would be no opportunity to meet her again soon, because her village was very far off. Noor Ali reported that he had three love affairs in his life. One time, he admitted, he would have done "dirty things," but the other affairs would have been cases of "true love."

Jahn (2009) stresses that for the Kohistani people—as for Muslims in general—sex is generally not at all seen as "dirty." Sex is "dirty" only in extramarital relationships, because it dishonor and disregard religious rules and it is not to be compatible with the idea of love.

In matters of sex only the man's desire would be relevant.

One Jahn's informant told the following story illustrating what love means to them, how strong feelings of love are. True love is something pure, free from "dirty" carnal desires, which would dishonor and disregard religious rules. Its essence is of chaste passion and dedication.

The lover meets his beloved in her house at night. She made sure that all her family members were out. She was alone. But a friend of the lover found out about the secret meeting, and climbs up on the roof to observe them through the funnel. He wants to know if it's a case of true love, as his friend had told him, or if it's a meeting to do dirty things. He hears his friend calling for some water to wash his hands. The beloved immediately brings a filled jug and starts pouring the water over her lover's hands while looking into his face. Her lover looks back. She doesn't put down the jug even as she has emptied it. His hands are long dry, but he doesn't stop wringing them. And they keep on looking and keep on looking into each other's face all through the night. They stay in place and do not move at all. The meal on the fire is burnt and there is a bad smell all over, but they don't even notice. They also do not feel the cool of the night. They just look into each other's face. Now the spy on the roof knows that it is a case of true love.

Not all adventures of love remain undiscovered, some may have serious consequences. There is no difference if lovers were engaged in adultery consciously or if a man and a woman just become victims of rumor. Adultery is regarded as the greatest possible disgrace. The “merciless” code of honor demands their death in most cases.

Nevertheless, the forbidden love affairs are popular. It is understandable that the romantic emphasis of love at least partly roots in the acute risk of death for lovers when they meet. The intensity of such a moment is even more increased.

Anyway, the Kohistani love affairs show that even in tribal community men and women find ways to choose relationships on their own. However, they pay a high price. Love can come true only secretly, and beyond the established norms and moral values, because obviously there is too little space for it within the social network system of the family household.

### 9.3 Love in Tamil Culture

In her field study conducted in Tamil Nadu family in the 1980s, Trawick (1990b) evidently demonstrated how love saturated Tamil society in South India. Their culture said them in a thousand ways that love was the highest good. Yet, in the ordinary course of affairs, people did not often talk about lovemaking, just occasional indirect references to love. However, acts of love, including actions through words, are common and wrapped in cultural significations.

#### The Concealment of Love

Presenting the ideology of love, Trawick (1990b) described the following properties of love as *anpu*. The notion of *Containment* (*Adakkam*) means that love is by nature and by right hidden (p. 93). Of the hiddenness of love means “Love grows in hiding.” For instance, a mother’s love for her child—the strong and the highly valued—has to be kept contained and hidden. A mother should not gaze lovingly into her child’s face, even while the child is sleeping, because the loving gaze itself could cause harm to the child (“the evil eye”). A woman can show affection for others’ children, through affectionate words and looks, but she avoids such display of love for her own children, especially in public. Mother’s love has to be contained in the sense of being hidden as well as being kept within limits. According to Tamil culture, letting love overflow its bounds could be harmful not only to the recipient, but also to the giver as well.

Other kinds of love have to be concealed as well. For instance, some spouses may display the convention of mutual avoidance in public—rarely looking at or talking with each other—despite honoring each other, while others may exhibit in the presence of others a relationship of total mutual abrasion. It does not mean that sexual display itself is considered dangerous, or that physical expressions of love are forbidden. Males and females who are not spouses could show loving affection for one another with a casual freedom, but spouses, who are supposed to love each

other most and to focus their sexual feeling entirely upon each other, are expected to keep both feelings hidden.

They admitted that the sentiments of sexual love do exist, and sexual pleasure is one of the four goals of life; yet, sexual pleasure was supposed to be experienced only through marriage. Marriage was not, as it was in some countries, a strictly economic arrangement (Trawick 1990b, p. 92).

The first glance is considered significant in Tamil tradition: souls mix through the eyes. The first sight of the potential spouse is a powerful emotional encounter and a transfer of spiritual and sexual powers. A woman can lose her chastity through such a glance. The eyes, like the sexual organs, contain love, and the husband is the one to whom the eyes were given, followed by the heart. In the darkness of both, his image would be kept, as the wife would be kept hidden within the house—in principle, out of love. Thus, when people spoke about “being like husband and wife,” they meant being physically and emotionally very close and going to bed together at night. Nevertheless, any hint of the existence of such a relationship in public communications between husband and wife, or by one about the other, was avoided.

Conventions for hiding love also assumed the custom of a woman avoiding mention of her husband’s personal name. Only a very Westernized woman would refer to her husband as “my husband.” If a woman had to refer to her husband, she would do so through a relationship he had with some other person, as “the father of so-and-so” or “the teacher of so-and-so.” One function of name avoidance, then, was to wrap the husband in a protective silence, whose nature and intent were nevertheless known to all, the same way some men would avoid speaking their wife’s name, referring to her simply as *aval*, “she.” The custom of avoiding direct reference to the loved one was fuzzy around the edges. Only in the case of reference to the husband was this custom more or less strictly adhered to by more or less all women. In other cases, the application of this custom appeared to be a matter of the speaker’s own will.

Another way of hiding love was to openly downgrade the loved one. If a child was highly valued, to directly display one’s high valuation of it brought it danger, and so one had to make a pretense (which everyone knew to be a pretense) of not caring for it at all. The same attitude could also receive less conventional forms of expression.

The women in some low castes may have the traditional custom of speaking of their husbands in the critical, derogatory terms. This could be motivated by the desire to protect the mates to whom they are in reality strongly emotionally bonded, or even perhaps, by a desire to demonstrate that they love their husbands. Many men who made a habit of speaking harshly to their wives before others may also follow a similar motivation. Thus, while the exterior of the relationship among spouses is often harsh, the interior of this relationship has sometimes an opposite quality of love and caring attitudes.

### Descriptions, Metaphors, and Meanings of Love

Love is often described as a force that is tender, gentle, and slow; a loving heart is a soft heart. Food metaphors for the tenderness of love are frequently used. Of all the different kinds of food, sweet ripe fruit, whose coming into existence was a gentle and gradual process, was probably the most symbolic of love in Tamil culture.

People in Tamil Nadu culture use several important words and corresponding principles to describe their ideology of love (Trawick 1990b, p. 90). They have the word *anpu*, which means something similar to English “love,” and various related words, *pācam* (“attachment”), *ācai* (“desire”), and *pattu* (“devotion”).

*Love as habituation (parakkam).* Love as attachment is a sense of oneness with a person and it grows slowly, by habituation (*parakkam*). In the Tamil family, which Trawick (1990b) observed, the term *parakkam* was used frequently, unlike the term *anpu*, and regarded as a central and multifaceted aspect of people’s thinking and behavior. An individual could become habituated to any state of affairs, and once a situation became *parakkam*, he or she would feel comfortable with it, while being deprived of it would seek it out.

As Trawick (1990b) suggested, *parakkam* is the behavioral side of love that comes along with an emotional component, the same way as weeping consists of both tears and sorrow. *Parakkam* is the reason for the growth of the feeling of love; love is the reason for the continuation of *parakkam*. To get *parakkam* with someone means to know, to spend time with, and to be familiar or intimate with this person. *Parakkam* implies friendliness, easiness, and grace; people to whom a person is habituated are not feared. *Parakkam* is an easy and gentle action that slowly and gradually builds the powerful bonds of love. Love itself is powerful, yet gentle and tender. Tender feelings flow easily between people. Only feelings of love could melt the heart.

*Love as cruel.* Love in Tamil culture is not only tender and slow, but also might be cruel and forceful. According to Trawick’s observations (1990b), the bond of affection could be cruel because when the bond is broken the newly unbound person suffers pain. When a person becomes habituated to something, it becomes part of them, and when they lose it, part of them is severed. *Anpu*, in its meaning of a higher and unselfish form of love, could be cruel in its very enactment, in and of itself.

Love is cruel also in a sense that it is sometimes deemed necessary to violently force people to do what is in their own best interests to help them overcome *parakkam*.

Actions demonstrating the cruelty of love could also hide its tenderness. For instance, physical affection for children might be expressed not through caresses but rather roughly, in the form of painful pinches, slaps, and tweaks. Frightening a beloved child, like deceiving it, was also a favorite pastime in Tamil family (Trawick 1990b).

Among adults, this style of love may take the form of heated noisy quarrels, which then blow over quickly and often end in laughter. According to the Tamil saying, “You do not fight with those you do not love” (cited in Trawick 1990b, p. 102).

Love was in large part a matter of mutual habituation and interaction; therefore, perhaps intense love required intense interaction. On another side, the true sign of love's absence might be the absence of any interaction at all.

Necessity of sharing in love is related to the culture living in scarcity; therefore, the joint family was, in part, a lifestyle adaptive to scarcity of resources. However, there was a problem in a joint family: it would fracture along the lines dividing nuclear units—each pair of spouses with their respective children. Love, which naturally was given to one's own, had to be redirected across those lines. The stronger the love, the stronger the force was needed against it, to drive it outwards. Consequently, in Tamil family described by Trawick (1990b), “mothers deliberately spumed or mistreated their own children, forcing their own and their children's affection away from the closest blood bond. A mother might do likewise with a grown daughter, harshly scolding her so that she would desire to marry, and so that once she did, her heart would go to her husband and she would be happy.” As one mother told, “it is wrong to make a child laugh, because for every moment of laughter that the child enjoyed now he would have to suffer a moment of tears in the future..., sweet pleasures have to be limited, balanced by bitterness.” (p. 103).

*Love as dirtiness (arukku)*. *Dirtiness (Arukku)* was one more descriptive word related to love. To the members of the family, which Trawick observed (1990b), *anpu* was a good and powerful force. One who had love was in a real sense “higher” than one who did not, and a loving heart was a pure heart. Yet, love was often at odds with the requirements of physical cleanliness and purity. This did not mean that love was intrinsically impure, but rather that in the presence of love, conventional purity did not matter. Love was a bond, and therefore an obstacle in the quest for purity, which meant the breaking of all bonds. Love as desire was even worse, because it provoked restlessness, which prevented the peacefulness necessary to the maintenance of a pure heart (Trawick 1990b, p. 103).

The term *anpu* as love in Tamil is multifaceted: it could mean lustful infatuation; it could mean clinging possessiveness. Yet, more often it referred to a generosity of spirit. However, *anpu* never meant extrication of oneself from others or from the processes of life. In this household, described by Trawick (1990b, p. 105), the defiance of rules of purity conveyed a message of union and equality and was a way of teaching children and onlookers where love was.

*Love as humility (panivu)*. Love in Tamil culture is complex in expressions of pride and humility, servitude and domination, possession and renunciation. All these opposites are overturned in acts of love: the humble becomes proud, the servant becomes master, the renouncer becomes possessed, tenderness might be enacted as cruelty, and hierarchy may take ironic forms (1990, p. 106). Love can turn acts of humility into acts of pride; it also can turn acts of servitude into acts of dominance. The transformation of servant into master was not dependent upon reference to God or any sentiment of religious devotion. The servitude of love, for instance, was more than potentially dominating; it was actually so. Wife's absolute control as servant over her husband and family was epitomized in her role as family food dispenser (Trawick 1990b, p. 111–112).

The notions of *Opposition and Reversal* (*Eitrttal, Puratci*) played very important role in definition, description, and enacting of love. Love brought about reversals of all kinds. The closest bonds were concealed by denial of bonds. Tenderness could be transformed into cruelty; humility would be an expression of pride, servitude—a means toward mastery. These reversals had their reasons, some of which were by no means culture bound. Apparently reasonless reversals also took place. In Tamil saying, “Love does not know head or tail.” This aspect of the ideology of love in Tamil culture means that “to show affection for someone, you demonstrated in a conventionalized way that you had forgotten what category they belonged to” (quoted in Trawick 1990b, p. 113). *Mingling and Confusion* (*Kalattal, Mayakkam*) take place in love relationships; love, then, mixes someone up. A person, who feels head over heels in love with another, is suffering from dizziness, confusion, intoxication, delusion, and loses the ability to think clearly. Then one could not be blamed for acting strangely and could easily be misused by others. The intoxication of love was particularly dangerous for just this reason. Young men, and to an even greater degree, young women, were vulnerable to this state of mind, which could be produced by hypnosis or potions or spells as well as by the smell of certain flowers or, as above, by music (p. 114).

Love, as it was understood by Tamil family (Trawick 1990b, p. 113), reversed opposites and erased distinctions completely. Even though Westerners generally may see nothing novel in this idea, for the Tamil family such a “mixture” was a consciously recognized attribute and the overarching ideal of love. This sort of total mixing, the sharing and trading of homes, of children, of selves, was necessary for the existence of love. “In order for you to understand my heart, you must see through my eyes. In order for me to understand your heart, I must see through yours.” (p. 116).

## 9.4 Love in Maldivian Culture

Until recently, the Maldives stayed isolated from external influences in many aspects of their life including love, yet now people have access to different forms of media and a more diverse range of materials and ideas including cable television, imported DVDs, music, and the Internet. The spread of love ideas in the Maldivian society is not only due to Westernization, but also due to influence of their close neighboring cultures. Bollywood has expanded its influence in the Maldives. Indian films and TV soap operas often become the source for words, tunes, stories, and images of love in South Asia (Dwyer 2006; Orsini 2006).

It is understandable that Bollywood has a stronger influence than Hollywood, because of the Maldives’ geographical proximity to India and the similarity of cultural patterns. Indian movie stars are often more popular than their American counterparts. The local transnational media flows within and between non-Western countries. In the Maldives, Hindi love songs are borrowed and performed by Maldivian pop stars, changing the words into Dhivehi. The influence of Indian

popular culture is very strong these days. Most young people understand Hindi fluently just from watching television.

Fashion, beauty, love, and romance, presented in Indian films, have easily entered popular media in the Maldives over recent years, because the Indian culture is similar to their own. Indian films offer modern images, yet follow conservative values. Indian cinema strictly divides love songs and sexual relations; being sensuous, they keep love within firm boundaries: nudity is absent and kissing is rare. Such public displays of affection as kissing are inappropriate in the Maldives; sexually explicit materials are banned from television. Therefore, Hindi music and media are well appropriate because they fit with Maldivian sensibilities. Such similar values are important in this cross-cultural exchange.

However, the Islamic island culture of the Maldives is different from Hindu culture in India. Love and romance are two of the major themes in Indian films, television dramas, and songs. In Hindi films, romance is traditionally set in a paradise setting: gardens, parks, valleys, and mountains. They rely on aesthetics developed in Urdu and Sanskrit/Hindi poetry and calendar art (Dwyer 2006, p. 294). Maldivian video clips follow the style of love and sexual interaction, presented in Indian films and music, yet draw on the beauty of the Maldivian landscape: the white sand beaches, the turquoise water, and the swaying palm trees on the islands (Fulu 2014, p. 71).

These images and ideologies of love and romance in the Maldives have changed people's expectations about marriage. Many young people have embraced the fairy tales of romance of "happily ever after." Now many assume that marriage, as a reflection of love, will last forever.

### **Love and Marriage**

In the Maldives' culture, marriage is a vital aspiration for both men and women. Women often marry at an earlier age than men and frequently to older men. Such marital relationships meet their need for security and stability, which men are culturally expected to provide. Historically, marriage in the Maldives has been based on love and attraction rather than being arranged.

Compared to other South Asian countries, the marriages in the Maldives are different, because the social or economic factors do not play an important role in choosing a mate. The choice has been frequently based on personal attraction and love feelings rather than family alliance, yet the wedding ceremony was not used to publicly display these emotions. As a middle-aged Maldivian man explained (Fulu 2014, p. 68), the weddings were usually small events because the marriage was not expected to last forever. One could marry a number of times; therefore, marriage was not viewed as a serious matter. In the Maldives, divorce is acceptable and getting married means no change in status for the groom. Marriage can be dissolved at will. Hence, in the Maldives, an elaborate wedding ceremony would be dysfunctional.

Maloney (1980) compared the low-key weddings in the Maldives with the elaborate ceremonies in other Muslim communities in South Asia, such as Sri Lanka and India. In those Muslim regions, people infrequently divorce because marriage connects two families and therefore wedding is considered an important life event.

The Bollywood love stories and Western-style white weddings spread in the Maldivian society; the ideologies of love and relationships have become part of their culture. Young people acquired heightened expectations that marriage should last forever. In recent years, white weddings on Maldives have been on the rise, and expectations of marriage have been changing: weddings have become a place where love is demonstrated and consumed with more elaborate rituals.

The wedding hall is ornately decorated and filled with iconic romantic trimmings: flowers, lace and love hearts. The imam announces marriage as ‘a contract prescribed in the Shari’a to maintain human lineage’ and a contract that ‘joins the lives of two persons of opposite sex and binds them to one life together’. He instructs the couple to love each other, to be honest with each other to be faithful to the couple to love each other, to be honest with each other, to be faithful to each other, to willingly help each other and to live in peace and friendship. The ceremony highlights the importance of love, caring and friendship in Maldivian marriage. The imam emphasizes the equality of men and women at the beginning of his speech; however, he also set the terms of the marriage along traditional gender roles with men and women occupying different power positions, the wife obeying the husband and the husband treating the wife with kindness. (Fulu 2014, p. 69)

Discussions of love in the Maldives are often related to the position of women. While some women and men are attempting to enhance gender equality, there is still some social opposition, partly because such equality would destabilize existing power relations and threaten the positions of dominance. It is despite the fact that historically Maldivian women played a strong role in all aspects of society. Gender equality and women’s status are now being challenged. There are currently conflicting trends in Maldivian society around this question. The younger generation is more accepting of women’s rights, but at the same time, it is probably because of religion that there is a conflict. Interestingly, those trying to constrain women’s sexual and social autonomy also employ Islamic discourse to support their position. In response to the promotion of women’s rights, some conservative Islamic groups are trying to push women into the domestic sphere “for the love of women.” Women are adored and respected. One of the wonders of the world is a token of love for a woman. They emphasize men’s love for women (Fulu 2014, p. 96). As in other Islamic societies, the religious discourse is to conserve ideals of gender inequality. The notion that a woman’s place is in the home is a common theme among men.

## Chapter 10

# Love in Latin America



Cultures reviewed in Chap. 10: Love in Latin America

## 10.1 The concept of love and its connotations in Latin America

The topic of love in Latin America might have the typical connotation with the concept of the Latin lover. Who is he? The concept of the Latin lover appeared back in the writings of Ancient Rome and underwent literary evolution (Johnson 2009). In modern time, the term “Latin lover” was coined for Rudolph Valentino (1895–1926), an Italian-born American actor who starred in several well-known silent films. He became an early pop icon and was known as a sex symbol of the 1920s. This concept is a stereotype of a male of Latin or Romance European origin, commonly characterized as romantic, sensual, and passionate. Is it true for Latin America? Taking into account the popular media images, Argentine tango, and Brazilian carnivals, this might be true; however, Schuessler (2014) thinks differently:

this a stereotype promoted by people from the United States. There they see the Latin Lover as someone exotic and attractive. In the US, the figure of the Latin Lover was converted into that of a sex symbol, whereas in Mexico it is the reverse. Here the sex symbol is the blond – we Mexicans have always found them attractive. Moreover, the blonde *gringas* are seen as the ultimate sexual conquest. And we see this a lot in the novels of José Agustín, Ricardo Garibay, a little in those of Carlos Fuentes, such as *Frontera de Cristal*, in which bedding a *gringa* is the maximum sexual conquest that a Mexican macho can aspire to. I think this comes from the way many *gringas* come to have sexual flings with the beach boys in Acapulco. And of course, the *gringos* do the same...

The romantic love literature in the twentieth century’s Latin America has been prolific (Kenwood 1992; Sommer 1994). Colombian novelist G.G. Márquez (1927–2014) is the well-known Latin American writer of love (Faris 1992). The quotes below give a vivid illustration of his concept of love.

1. “It’s enough for me to be sure that you and I exist at this moment.”—*One Hundred Years of Solitude*
2. “The only regret I will have in dying is if it is not for love.”—*Love in the Time of Cholera*
3. “Think of love as a state of grace; not the means to anything but the alpha and omega, an end in itself.”—*Love in the Time of Cholera*
4. “It was the time when they loved each other best, without hurry or excess, when both were most conscious of and grateful for their incredible victories over adversity.”—*Love in the Time of Cholera*
5. “There is always something left to love.”—*One Hundred Years of Solitude*
6. “She had never imagined that curiosity was one of the many masks of love.”—*Love in the Time of Cholera*
7. “Only God knows how much I love you.”—*Love in the Time of Cholera*
8. “They were so close to each other that they preferred death to separation.”—*One Hundred Years of Solitude*
9. “There is no greater glory than to die for love.”—*Love in the Time of Cholera*
10. “The girl raised her eyes to see who was passing by the window, and that casual glance was the beginning of a cataclysm of love that still had not ended half a century later.”—*Love in the Time of Cholera* (Jackson April 19, 2014).

Comparing to novelists, there has been not much scholarly research on the concept of romantic love in Latin America published in English; therefore, the currently existing findings on love in that cultural region of the world are rather piecemeal.

Sociocultural conditions of Latin America coming from colonial and Catholic traditions have substantially influenced the gender relations, love, and marital partnership in many countries of that cultural region. Traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity are *machismo* and *marianismo*.

*Marianismo* was the folk cultural idea in Latin America that venerated for such feminine virtues and traits as being modest, pure, faithful, submissive, motherly, and self-giving, including feminine passivity and sexual purity. This ideal was formed under direct influence of Catholicism, the dominating religion in Latin America. The proper female behavior of *marianismo*, following this tradition, is derived from the traits possessed by the Virgin Mary (i.e., her moral righteousness, her suffering, and her spiritual importance). Stevens (1973) defines *marianismo* as a “cult of feminine spiritual superiority, which teaches that women are semi divine, morally superior to and spiritually stronger than men (p. 91).”

According to these cultural ideals, women should be kind, docile, and unassertive; they are supposed to take care of the house by cooking, cleaning, caring for kids, and serving the husband. The role of mother is emphasized more than that of a wife. Women have to be obedient to their husbands; such cultural norms of close relationship make it difficult to find equality in a partnership. The women in Latin American culture are still traditionally socialized this way. Spirituality and pureness are the central features of *marianismo*. Men are morally imperfect, so the ideal woman is created to counterbalance the male’s less than holy role in Latin American society.

*Machismo* was the folk cultural idea in Latin America that assumed masculinity that asserts the dominance and superiority of males in society being legitimized by cultural values and norms. The term *macho* came from colonial times and could refer to positive connotations, being courageous, valorous, and having gender pride. At the same time, *machismo* was often characterized by hyper-virility and aggressive masculine behavior expected of males in Latin societies.

The notion of *machismo* often implies the descriptive concept of patriarchy. In classic patriarchy, males obtained services and status in their relationships with women in reciprocation for maintenance and protection (Stern 1995). However, another sociocultural factor that affected gender relationships in Latin America was the high frequency of female-headed household. It was a common family form for centuries in that cultural region (Dore 1997; Hagene 2010). Large numbers of women have not depended economically on husbands, even though they have been traditionally subordinated to men. As Dore (1997) claimed, female subordination was reproduced in the family, and their headship was viewed as a source of autonomy for Latin American women. Therefore, female headship and relative economic independence do not destabilize the male domination. Based on the case of Nicaraguan sample, Hagene (2010) found that their motivation for subordinating themselves to men was more emotional than economic, originating from their longings for close relationships.

What is the cultural meaning of the *machismo* concept? The Mexican writer Paz (1961) analyzed Mexican society and the central concept of manliness which incorporates the rules of manhood embodied in *Machismo*. Men are to be stand-offish, defensive, and assertive with his power, all the while residing in solitude. According to Paz, “The speech of our people reflects the extent to which we protect ourselves from the outside world: the ideal of manliness is never to ‘crack,’ never to back down. Those who ‘open themselves up’ are cowards (p. 29).”

Expectations of manliness impede a man’s ability to communicate with the world around him, including women. “He is power isolated in its own potency, without relationship or compromise with the outside world” (Paz 1961, p. 82). The role of solidarity in a man’s life makes a real union between man and woman unfeasible.

The notion of *macho* implicitly assumes physical strength, self-confidence, heightened sexual power, and bold advances toward women. *Machos* follow conservative gender roles and believe in their superiority over women. The men, for example, can pursue extramarital affairs, while the women are expected to be faithful.

The stereotype of macho exaggerates sexual potency and presents an image of conqueror, ruthless and demanding power. They are the negative sides of this archetype.

The playboy macho stereotype depicts men for whom acting in a sexually aggressive manner toward women is permissible, and sexual, physical, and mental abuses of females are acceptable. Men therefore are permitted to gain pleasures chasing women and engaging in adultery.

There is another side of *machismo* image that is often overlooked: It is *caballerismo*, which consists of positive aspects and traits such as protectiveness and leadership. Men can actually be much more nurturing, caring, and compassionate than one might expect, but according to traditional gender roles expectation, they should make an image for outsiders. When being the proper man, they can go to the positive implications of *machismo* and be a good role model.

*Machismo* can have both positive and negative effects on love relationships. However, according to some Latin American novels (Márquez 1981/1983; Rulfo 1955/1994), miscommunication and separation, the core elements of the classical macho, hinder the development of love between men and women.

Women are in the cultural dilemma to accept the personality of the “suffered virgin” or throw off male society and hence become a social outcast. In either case, the possibility of romantic love is limited. However, the cultural attitudes in sex and love relations are changing due to women’s liberation and laws against domestic violence. So *machismo* is becoming less acceptable in some counties and social groups of Latin America.

The most well-known image of Latin American love is presented in their telenovelas. It is the television genre that Americans see as wholly Latin American. It is tightly related to the theme of romantic love that is certainly is repeated time and again in Latin America, particularly in Mexico.

It's the same every time because in Mexico and Latin America you can't have love without passion. And this love includes ardent sexual desire. So I think in the most representative Mexican popular songs we find this fervent, blood-boiling passion of Latin America that is identified with the region, thus it is seen by the world as a characteristic of Latin America, for better or worse. (Schuessler 2014)

The concept of love is also widely present in Latin American romantic music, and the way it is portrayed, there is quite often painful and cruel. Many Latin American music styles, the *Blues*, the *Tango*, and the *Ballenato* from Columbia, all generally speak to failure in love. It is a universal tendency (Schuessler 2014).

In particular, Archetti (1999) commented a quite interesting observation when he examined the complexity of models of masculinity in Argentina by analyzing classical tango texts that substantially represent Argentine masculine identity. The narrator of tango texts is generally a man (son) who passes his free time with friends in a café (his second home), desires romantic love from a woman, and idealizes maternal love, the only feeling considered enduring. In the lyrics of tango songs, there is a psychological dilemma regarding the man's unconventional desires for a young unmarried woman from the lower middle class and respect for social and familial norms, incarnated in the mother. In the tango, the central masculine figures are the romantic lover (a transgressive masculine image), the cynical *bacán* (someone who is suave and generous), as well as *compadrito* (the elegant seducer of women and arrogant rival of other men) and *compadrito* in crisis (the man who, deceived by one woman, may still be redeemed by the love of another).

## 10.2 Love in Brazil

The modern Brazilian society is a mixture of the cultures of Native Indians, Africans (which were brought to South America as slaves), and Europeans (who are mostly of Portuguese descent, but also include some Italians and Jews). The dominant religion is Christianity; the Catholic Church has its high authority and prevalence in the country.

### Importance of Love

Different from North Americans, who value individualism, self-reliance, and solitude as important components of their national identity, Brazilians favor cooperation, interdependence, and connectedness; saying "Life is only worth living in community" might be viewed as their motto. They organize their lives around and about others, maintain a high level of social involvement, and consider personal relations of primary importance in all human interactions. Brazilians are typically a gregarious people, a loving company that fear loneliness; this is an essential aspect of their culture. They live in a crowded style; they enjoy the social and physical contact of shared meals, beds, and living spaces (Vincent 2003; Rebhun 1995). The frequently quoted proverb *Amor 'ta na convivência* (Love is in familiarity) means that association itself constitutes love. Therefore, for many of them, love is the accumulation of presence.

When they become used to that, they experience *saudade* in the absence of a loved one. The Portuguese and Brazilian term *saudade* refers to the mingled sadness and pleasure of remembering people, places, or events now distant in time or space. This feeling is a mixture of *nostalgia*, *homesickness*, and *to miss* (Neto and Mullet 2014; Rebhun 1995, p. 249). Most of Rebhun's informants never were alone in their lives, and they felt intense *saudade* for people not present. The relations among kin and friends are characterized by *convivência* and *saudade*. Being with others is very important for Brazilians that they perceive the desire to be alone as a sign of depression and unhappiness (Vincent 2003; Rebhun 1995).

Love is an important aspect in the lives of Brazilians; it guides them from the family love, vital for their emotional and economical sustainability, to the passionate love that penetrates their lives with the rhythms of their music, dance, and poetry. The word *parentela* signifies the vital network of associations centered on the extended family and spreading to all other associations. The close extended family connections are essential for Brazilians and bring them affection and emotional support. From their early childhood, they develop a sense of identity within a family group and beyond.

Love is a topic of great importance to Brazilians in general. In her field research among lower-working-class women and men in the town of Caruaru in the Northeast Brazilian state of Pernambuco, between 1988 and 1990, *Rebhun* (1995, 1999) revealed interesting information about the ethnography of love in Latin America. She carefully examined relations between romantic love and historical processes, outlining some of the principal forces that have shaped Brazilian marriage, family, sexuality, and gender roles. In particular, rapid social and economic change of that time period substantially impacted friendship, courtship, marriage, cohabitation, sexuality, infidelity, and their accompanying emotions. There are a number of distinct terms for different types of love in Brazilian Portuguese; we will review these in detail later in this chapter.

### **Status of Women**

Veneration of mothers as devoted, self-sacrificing, and semi-divine has a long history in Mediterranean Portugal and Brazil cultures (de Aragao 1983, cited in Rebhun 1995). Ideally, a mother is a man's most devoted admirer. Few mothers actually live up to this ideal, but most raise their children to believe that they do. There is a deeply experienced competition between mothers and wives or girlfriends for men's love. The mother-son bonds are often stronger than the husband-wife affiliations, which are characterized by more pragmatism and less romantic love. Those women who are disenchanted by the lack of their husbands' love still can turn to their sons for the veneration and companionship. "I raised my boys almost alone because my husband was young, beautiful, a lover of women, and a truck driver. When I saw how he really was, I dedicated myself to my sons.... I love them and they love me" (thirty-four-year-old housewife, cited in Rebhun 1995). In turn, men are often disappointed when their wives fail to give them the uncomplaining devotion they expect from their mothers. Motherly love is an important kind of love to compare other types of love, because it is a measure of the true love for many Brazilians.

### The Language of Love in Brazil

The contemporary language of love in Northeast Brazil has been affected by the history of love and marriage in that region—particular patterns of conquest and slavery—as well as by the broader European economic and social changes that resonated in this Portuguese colony.

The notion of *amor* (love) in Brazil implies a wide variety of sentiments, attitudes, and beliefs, characterizing family relationships as well as the emotions involved in sexual relations. The sentiments and meanings of the word *amor* are transitory, shifting, and contradictory. People often are not clearly aware of what they feel; they fool themselves and make mistakes when they try to figure out what others feel. The heart, as a Brazilian popular expression puts it, is an unknown country (*terra desconhecida*).

The informants of Rebhun (1995) provided various definitions of love and their estimations about its frequency, course, and outcome. They used several terms to describe love feelings and relations including *amor verdadeira* (true love), *amor da mãe* (mother love), *consideração* (consideration), *amor* (love), *paixão* (passion, infatuation), and *lóvi* (modern love) or *amor da novela* (soap opera love). Some kinds of love are considered true, while others are false illusions.

### Lóvi Type of Love

Brazilian soap operas (*telenovelas*) are extremely popular. They present fictional couples looking deeply into each others' eyes and declaring, "Ai *lóvi* *iú*." This English phrase is now everywhere in Brazil, and the term *Lóvi* is also called *amor da novela* (soap opera love).

*Lóvi*, a mixture *amor-paixão*, is a type of love characterized by mutual economic and emotional interdependence and is expressed in verbal tenderness and declarations of love. It constitutes a merging of souls and bodies (Botas 1987, cited in Rebhun p. 255). *Amor-paixão* is a combination of the various types of love, including the romantization of *paixão*, the merging of souls, the self-abnegating devotion of *agape*, and the veneration of marriage as the basis of stable society.

*The amor-paixão type of love* (or *lóvi*) is suitable for the urban culture of modern Brazil and the current style of life. It emphasizes the primacy of personal emotional experience and appreciates the couple as a social unit. The companionate love based on *obrigação* (obligation) and *consideração* (consideration) worked well in the culture where men and women were economically, socially, and personally interdependent; they could live without the work performed by the other. *Lóvi* emphasizes the emotional intimacy and expressive side of love, and it is considered the important basis of marriage concealing the economic interdependence of the sexes.

The importance of *lovi* in modern urban discourse and life in Brazil manifests a change of accent in romantic relationships from companionate to passionate love as well as a shift from the image of mother to the image of a wife as a primary object of love for men in the context of marriage. *Lóvi* notion assumes devoted monogamy that is difficult to accept for men, raised to act powerful and

independent, and less prone to emotional intimacy. Some men reject *lôvi* outright as feminine frippery, while others are torn between the modern expectations of more equal relations and traditional *machista* views on sex, love, and marriage.

Some men are in favor of the idealization and tenderness of *lôvi*, but it is difficult for them to take it seriously and commit permanently to one woman. Other men favor the union of *lôvi*, yet they believe that it is hard to attain due to problems in communication between the genders, disappointments, and disillusionments of long acquaintance.

### Passion and Love

Brazilians consider themselves as hot-blooded and passionate Latin Americans. That stereotype is embodied in the folk saying, “There is no sin below the equator,” the seventeenth-century phrase, attributed to the Dutch occupation of Northeast Brazil, which is still widely cited, sometimes by Brazilians themselves (Parker 2009). The conflict between the stable, companionate love underlying mature marriage and the tumultuous emotions of sexual attraction that are reflected in the Brazilian language brings distinction between *paixão* (passion, infatuation), as the tumultuous emotions of sexual attraction, and *amor* (love), as a stable, companionate love feeling. However, Rebhun’s informants expressed a variety of opinions on the nature and distinction of these two sentiments and stated that the difference between what they call *paixao* and *amor* is confusing. They argue on which one is true love and find it difficult to fit these concepts to their personal experiences because the subjective experience of *amor* and *paixao* is often similar, especially in the early stages of a relationship, when the two feelings intertwine together. Sometimes when informants attempted to distinguish their descriptions of *amor* and *paixao*, they used similar wording.

*Amor* is when you feel a desire to always be with her, you breathe her, eat her, drink her, you are always thinking of her, you don’t manage to live without her. There are moments when you will adore staying with her, and there will be moments when you will hate to stay with her. And about *paixão*, you feel an attraction as if it were a rocket: I want to hug you, to squeeze you, to kiss you. But this is not love, it’s horniness, a very strong sexual attraction for a person, (twenty-five-year-old male informant of Rebhun 1995, p. 254)

Lovers often ask themselves whether what they are feeling is true love or merely *paixão* because people cannot always identify what they really experience when they love. Sometimes they know that they love someone only when it ends. Sometimes informants of Rebhun (1995) acknowledged they thought they hated someone and it turned out they love them and did not know it, or did not want to admit it.

Generally, *paixão* is shorted-lived while *amor* is more enduring and lasts much longer. Now, *amor* and *paixão*, they walk together, but before the end of the road, *paixão*, it stops walking. But *amor* goes the whole distance, no matter how difficult the road, *amor* walks with you, and if you fall, *amor* carries you (twenty-six-year-old man informant of Rebhun 1995, p. 253).

Informants characterized *paixão* as prone to more idealization than *amor* and therefore more at risk of disenchantment and disappointment.

*Paixão* is that fantasy, that you see the person and start to imagine how they are. But with time the impression changes and one becomes disillusioned, and goes looking for another person to idealize, always thinking, "This is her! This is the only one!" But it never is, because it is imaginary, (twenty-eight-year-old male informant of Rebhun 1995, p. 253)

*Paixão* is a temporary sentiment. It doesn't last forever. It is only something that we beautify about someone. We idealize them, but that is temporary. At times *paixão* is the deceiver because it seems like *amor*. But *paixão* is quick, it is also very greedy; it only wants for itself. *Paixão* is where jealousy exists. *Amor* does not have jealousy, it lasts forever. It is certain. But *paixão* is unsure, and uncertainty is what breeds jealousy. (nineteen-year-old male informant of Rebhun 1995, p. 253)

Brazilian men and women are able to differentiate the words *amor* and *paixão*; however, men seem more challenged and confused to distinguish *these concepts*. Many men admit that it is possible to feel true *amor* for more than one woman at a time, while women ardently reject this possibility and deemed *amor* as monogamous. Some married men do not believe that their infidelities threaten their marriages because what they feel for the "other woman" is *paixão*, whereas what they feel for the wife is *amor*. For many women, this male attitude implies the men's inability to experience true love. Women view *paixão* as youthful and *amor* as enduring and mature. Many women state that their feelings toward their husbands changed over the course of the marriage. Some women attribute this change to their own personal maturation, rather than to the maturation of *paixão*. Recently, the modern concept *amor-paixão*, as the modern conflation of sexual passion with marital love, is evolving in Brazil (Rebhun 1995).

### Way of Courtship

Regarding courtship in the Northeast, the Brazilian passion may compete with a stringent code of sexual morality. A girl's marriage at a young age remains common, especially in rural and recently rural areas; a family's honor is embodied in the chastity of women (Rebhun 1995). Men marry when they earn enough to buy and furnish a house. They have greater latitude to act out sexually, and they are largely forgiven for sexual indiscretions before marriage and when they are married. According to Rebhun (1995), many Brazilian men still continue the polygynous tendency and have long-term residential relationships with more than one woman at the same time.

The economic dynamics of relationships affect the transformation; the couple rather than the extended family is becoming the basic social unit. The current opinions that men and women have on their values and priorities in close relationships reflect the rapid changes they have experienced over their lifetimes.

While nowadays sexual mores have loosened in the big cities, in rural areas and small cities people still practice the traditional chaperoned courtship. Only couples who are officially engaged go out on dates alone; other courting couples go out in groups with their siblings and cousins. Chastity as honor remains important. Glances, smiles, and occasional moments remain a major part of courtship, forming their concepts of love.

In modern time, due to social and economic transformations in Brazil, it is easier for young people to rely on their feelings in the formation of their marriages.

However, traditional gender roles and practical considerations continue to play their roles in shaping marital relations (Rebhun 1995). Men are still freer than women to fulfill their physical and emotional desires. Young people discuss complex interpersonal situations trying to figure out what they feel, how to behave, and what the consequences of their actions will entail. Love marriages remain vulnerable idealistic things due to the inequities of social arrangements and the psychological faults of partners. They make choices, admit mistakes, and underestimate the consequences of their actions. While many informants of Rebhun (1995) may “lament their failures in love, nursing their hurts and snarling their angers, in the end they still strive for love. In their own way they achieve it” (p. 260). Many are disillusioned by their experiences, yet others hold on to the hope that one day they will achieve true love and perfect union.

The popular tendency of some Brazilian women to look for a romantic relationship with men from other countries reveals an interesting perspective on the Brazilian way of dating and romantic relationships. Women in one study (Pepino and Garcia 2014) expressed their perception of Brazilian men compared to men from other cultures. Their cross-cultural view highlighted the following comparative aspects. They noticed cultural differences on the evaluation of physical aspects of women. According to these interviewed women, the physical appearance and age of women are of paramount importance to Brazilian men, who would be more focused on sexuality, looking for a young and perfect body. They associate Brazilian men with sexuality and infidelity. They believe that foreign men would provide affection and companionship for women and show more loyalty and commitment in romantic relationships.

The women also mentioned cultural differences concerning body contact in the beginning of a romantic relationship between Brazilian and foreign men. Brazilian men seek physical contact in the first meeting, while foreign boyfriends are “slow” to take initiative in physical proximity. In the latter case, despite frequent meetings, the couple delayed to reach greater intimacy and sexual contact that resulted in a positive perception about the partner. They understood this behavior as a sign that the partner’s interests were not simply sexual and casual. However, the absence of physical contact in the beginning of a romantic relationship also produced anxiety and annoyance, because they (the women) were not sure whether the relationship was based on friendship or emotional–sexual interest (Pepino and Garcia 2014). Companionship, kindness, and thoughtfulness were also more likely attributed to foreign partners. Thus, women praised their foreign partners, at times, and criticized Brazilian men, which may suggest idealization of the partner from another country (Fletcher et al. 2008). In general, cultural differences were regarded as positive in favor of the foreign partners who were evaluated as being more educated and as better companions when compared to Brazilian men (Pepino and Garcia 2014). Let us remember, however, that these were the opinions of women who decided to pursue the relationship with foreigners. Their perspectives may not always coincide with many other Brazilian women.

### Marriage and Companionate Love

Nowadays, consensual unions are still common among the lower classes of Brazilian society, while legal marriage is typical in the upper classes (Ribiero 1982, cited in Rebhun 1995). Religious marriage conveys higher status than civil marriage, but it is not legally binding. Lower-class people follow the stereotypical upper-class white family in their unions. Many couples, even when the union is not legalized, still call their relationship as marriage and refer to one another as husband (*marido*) and wife (*esposa*). The language of love in modern Brazil reflects these historical and class influences on marriage. Men and women have different economic and sexual interests and often dissimilar expectations of the marital relationship, but they rarely discuss emotional issues openly. Therefore, misunderstandings, disillusion, and disappointment are common. The breakup of marriages and less formal alliances are frequent.

In marriage, Brazilians appreciate the companionate love that includes respect, friendship, and the performance of traditional gender roles. Courtesy is the rule between husband and wife. Loving couples cohabit with trust and mutual cooperation: “Love is trusting in that person, having refuge, being honest with that person, making a home together, working together, raising children together, supporting each other” (twenty-five-year-old housewife, cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 249). The physical labor that the partners perform as part of their gender roles reflects and constitutes their love. The proverb says, “Love and faith you see in actions” (cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 249). This saying makes the implicit assumption of companionate love explicit: Love is a form of keeping faith with the beloved. Cooking the husband’s food, washing his clothes, cleaning his house, having sex with him, and bearing his children are all love to him. He works in the factory, brings the money home, and pays the costs of the household, and thus, he shows his love for her (thirty-year-old housewife, quoted in Rebhun 1995, p. 249–250). This understanding of companionate love is common among young urban people, among older ones, and among rural people in the small city Caruaru. The situation might be viewed differently in larger, more cosmopolitan urban centers.

Many men and women defined their marriages in terms of *obrigação* (obligation) and *consideração* (consideration) (Robben 1989; Rebhun 1995). Married couples have obligations in relationship: the husband to provide and support a house, and the wife to do housework and raise children. They can perform these obligations just responsibly; however, beyond this, they may also add little embellishments of *consideração*. While *consideração* is not required in a marriage, lacking of this attitude is viewed as bad treatment. One male informant described it like this:

When a couple does not have *consideração*, they treat each other badly. What a man does bad to a woman is to not value her, not listen to her, he betrays her [sexually], he doesn’t let her take part in decisions, he only communicates them to her, he mistreats her even physically. What women do bad to men is to try to dominate him, to impede him from having her physically, to try to manipulate the man. (cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 250).

Many women commonly view true love as renouncing one's own interests in favor of those of the beloved. "For me, love is the renunciation of I. When you like another person, when you love, understand, you give yourself totally to that person, you forget yourself and remember to love the other person" (eighteen-year-old woman; cited in Rebhun 1995, p. 250). One can believe that love between a woman and man in this meaning resembles the qualities of motherly love with its features of self-abnegating, suffering, and generosity. Women often speak of their obligation to self-abnegation in love, but men usually do not see self-abnegation as something they are required to do. This men's attitude contributes to women's cynical opinion that men are incapable of true love.

Women's identities often are immersed in their families and social networks much more than men's; they typically sustain the emotional relationships that keep networks and families together. Many men and some women state that supporting a wife economically is enough proof of man's love. On the other hand, most women also want *consideração* as emotional intimacy. Sometimes men and women have different interpretations on what *consideração* means. For example, women say that talking over problems together is a part of *consideração* and a sign of affection. However, men may think that sparing their wives' worries over personal problems is considerate, and therefore, they do not understand their wives' discontent.

### 10.3 Love and Marriage in Mexico

In Mexico in the 1950s–1960s, marriage was typically a bond of obligation, held together by an ideal of respect and the mutual fulfillment of gendered responsibilities. The man's responsibility was to earn money, while the woman's was to cook, wash and iron the clothes, keep a house clean, and raise children. Love, if it existed, was the result of living well together, but not necessarily an ideal to pursue. Marriage was a system for society organization and social reproduction, not a project for personal satisfaction (Hirsch 2007).

Ethnographic research on love and marriage in a Mexican transnational community, conducted by Hirsch (2003, 2007), provided evidence of evolution in the Mexican marital ideal over recent decades. She demonstrated how the notion of courtship (*noviazgo*) has shifted its focus from devotion and respect to a pursuit to have fun and gain the confidence of one's future partner, from *respeto* (respect) to *confianza* (intimacy or trust). Intimacy and trust are taking priority over the notion of honor and the attitude to prepare for a respectable marriage to a respectable partner.

The younger men and women describe the new style of marriage, emphasizing making decisions together, talking, and enjoying spending time with their spouses and children.

There have been evident shifts in the gendered ideologies and practices of men and women. The gendered division of labor softens; men do not wash clothes or

change diapers, but they might at least get up to get themselves a glass of water during a meal. Many men turned from a traditional ideology of *machismo* to a more egalitarian identity. Masculine performances of power are interwoven with this apparently more equal division of labor: They often became involved in housework and child care (Gutmann 1996; Hirsch 2003, 2007). The transformations also occurred for many women; they were able to be more social, to work full time, to visit their friends and relatives, and to have greater decision-making power in their relationships and families. Many couples changed their way of speaking to each other; they are more open to talk their minds, communicate more civilly, and be considerate to one another and respect their mutual rights within marriage (Hirsch 2003, 2007).

As for the love, the most prominent generational difference in marital ideals is the importance that younger couples give to intimacy. Couples court to develop intimacy through shared secrets and kisses, and after marriage they build and maintain emotional and sexual intimacy, considering pleasure as the key force holding relationships together. However, the romantic ideas of early relationships do not always transit to later marriage life:

Veronica and Gustavo, for example, have been married for just over two years. He is a stone carver and she takes care of their two-year-old daughter. She told me, laughing, that they first kissed after only two weeks of dating and that he wrote her love letters while they dated. Once they married, she recounted, they had sex several times a day, keeping things spicy with the lingerie he bought her and the porn videos they occasionally watch. Gustavo, in his conversations with Sergio about their marriage, spoke as well about their intimacy, emphasizing not just its physical aspects but the fact that he wanted to marry her, rather than any of his previous girlfriends, because of the quality of their communication and the strength of their emotional connection. There are ways, though, in which Veronica's early married life differs little from her mother's experience. She and Gustavo live in a two-room shack, adjoining his father's house, which Veronica does not leave without his permission. She has no access to the money he earns - and is not even really sure how much it is. On Saturdays when the workday ends early, he will usually bring a kilo of deep-fried pork or rotisserie chicken for lunch - but sometimes he does not show up until the next morning, having left her lunch to get cold in the car while he drinks or plays pool with his friends. If she asks him where he was, he gets angry. Even if he wanted to leave her a message, though, he could not do so; his sisters hate Veronica - saying, among other things, that she is a whore because she worked as a waitress in a restaurant before they were married - and so they do not pass her telephone messages. (Hirsch 2007, p. 95)

Over the past 50 years, the transformation of everyday life in rural Mexico has even transformed the relationships. The lived experience of migration has also supported the development of a companionate ideal, especially in transnational communities living both in Mexico and in Atlanta (Hirsch 2007).

Similar to Mexico, tendencies have been observed in other developing countries (see for review Hirsch 2007) where marriage is still very much regarded as a relationship that creates obligations between kin groups and between individuals, while courtship at least has been transformed into a moment for young men and women to demonstrate their modern individuality and romantic ideals. Around the world, young people talk more and more about affective bonds and intimate

relationships to create marital ties, consciously contrasting their loves to those of their parents and grandparents.

At the same time, in all of the instances, literacy, fertility decline, the media, and the intertwining of sexuality, modernity, desire, and commodification do seem to play important roles (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006). However, as Hirsch suggests (2007), “it would be naïve to assume that the spread of the white wedding is proof of global cultural homogenization. The comparative ethnography of companionate marriage highlights the diversity in local interpretations of these global ideologies of love, companionship, and pleasure” (p. 101). The love ideologies intersect with economic, social, and cultural factors. Inequalities between countries, classes, and couples, as well as between partners intertwine with the problems of modern love.

## 10.4 Love in Nicaragua

### Gender Norms in Relationships

The gender order in Nicaragua entails a social hierarchy where men have a higher rank and more freedom than women. The relationship rights are unequal. Male dominance in relationship is typically explained in terms of *machismo*, the concept that is defined as a “system of manliness” (Lancaster 1992, p. 92). The typical characteristics of behavior include womanizing, gambling, drinking, and acts of independence and risk. These are the norms that men are socially expected to follow; failure to comply with these norms poses a threat of devaluated manliness. In marriage, *machismo* means that husbands expect wives to serve them, whereas the men can do whatever they like, often womanizing and drinking. The women often excuse infidelity of their partners, attributing it to the “male nature” and strong sexual urges. Women concern themselves with fulfilling the norm of chastity as constitutive of the “good woman.” Rumor and gossip enforce the social control in these issues (Hagene 2010). While the sexual norms expect chastity for women, for men conquests and womanizing are considered normal. Both men and women implicitly believe that men are sexual and women emotional beings.

Men as well as women might engage in extramarital affairs; however, only men can display them publicly. They may sometimes use these affairs as an implicit threat to their female partners, so that they would accept their behavior as it is, even though it might be a physically and emotionally painful experience for women.

The norms of masculinity upheld by women and men in the family context did not require the men to maintain their families, and in general, they did not, even if they had employment and an income. Husbands rarely contributed economically to the household. This gender order Hagene (2008) called “absentee patriarchy” referred to the male practice of “absenting themselves—or threatening to do so—for prolonged periods of time, implying a relationship with another woman” (p. 32). Women are left to provide for the family and do domestic responsibilities, while men have no particular material responsibility. Women work and do

not depend on husbands economically; most of the time, many do not have one. The men circulate between women as female heads of households. Women generally practiced monogamy, while their husbands often did not. Many husbands had two partners at a time, even engendering children with other women while still living with one. Montoya also observed (2002, p. 75) widespread practice of men's romancing several women at a time, while only one of these women could successfully establish herself as the "woman of *his* house." A woman informant of Hagene (2008) had a partner who fathered her children, but they did not live together, an arrangement called "visiting union." Hagene maintained that "generally men had several women at the same time (polygyny), whereas women tended to have one husband after another (serial monogamy), adding up to the term poly-monogamy. Formal marriage did not prevent husbands from having several partners" (Hagene 2008, p. 32). These were not just individual cases, but a widespread social practice.

Women stand out as autonomous and strong; they work hard to maintain themselves and their children, and they tended to domestic tasks. Nevertheless, they still strive to negotiate their lives in tension between autonomy and subordination as their facial and bodily expressions convey subordination. They do not benefit from their agency in love and intimacy and put forth a lot of effort in order to keep their husband, even though a husband's behavior sometimes hurts a woman's honor and emotional well-being. Hagene's informants, however, did not present themselves as suffering and passive victims, and their life stories often reflected a strong sense of agency. However, in the realm of love and sexuality, their strength and autonomy were ambiguous. Sexuality was usually downplayed in the narratives of women about love, despite that fact that sexuality permeates everyday discourses in Nicaragua. During conversation with informants, it was not seen as permissible to talk about this theme directly (Hagene 2008).

### **Male and Female Family Roles**

According to the sources cited by Hagene (2010), a significant number (close to 50 %) of households in Nicaragua is female-headed. Historically, women's economic dependency on men was considered to contribute to the gender roles asymmetry, but from Hagene's study, it appeared that female motivation to subordinate themselves to men was more emotional than economic. In her study conducted in 1992–2000, she presented the stories of love of women in the small town of San Juan in Nicaragua. Those women worked for an income, provided housing, housework, and child care, as well as emotional and sexual support for husbands that often have several women or families.

On the other hand, Montoya's (2003) study in the vegetable-growing collective in Rivas found a different form of patriarchy where the husbands apparently maintained their families, similar to the model of classic patriarchy.

The Sandinista Revolution in the 1980s issued new legislation pursuing less asymmetric relationships between the genders, more egalitarian authority in the family, child support, and divorce. However, these laws did not inspire the husbands in Hagene's study to contribute more of their income to their household.

### **What Is Love for People in Nicaragua?**

The words like *amor* (love), *amar* (to love), *querer* (to love/care for), or *ser bueno* (to be good), *ser tierno* (to be tender), and *ser cariñoso* (to be loving) were typical to express the meaning of love in people's conversations. There were variations among informants in Hagene's (2008) study regarding their implicit concepts of love.

### **Love as Action, or Customary Love**

Men often mentioned women's cooking and other housework as an action of love. One man pointed out that "he can never get to clean a glass or anything, because she will do it all for him" (Hagene 2008, p. 221). A woman voiced her view of love as action when she commented:

She remembered how he had cared for her after she had given birth to their son. We were sitting just in front of her out-door shower when she lovingly pointed at it, telling me that he had bathed her, combed her hair, and cooked for her. She did not say that this was expressing love, but her voice and dreaming smile seemed to indicate it. (Hagene 2008, p. 221)

In rural, agricultural settings, the practical perception of love has much meaning and can be considered as a version of love in accordance with the gendered division of tasks in the patriarchal gender order. This concept of love is prevalent in peasant communities, where men and women have complementary tasks and roles (Rebhun 1999). Emphasis is placed on work, cooperation, and the proper fulfillment of gender roles. In everyday practices, a husband can do his wife's tasks when she is ill, and it is equally taken as an instance of love. Doing each other favors indicates love in many different sociocultural settings.

Love converses less through sexual and verbal channels. There is not much emphasis on internal experiences, intimacy, and verbalization of love. People do not need much to talk and verbalize a sentiment; the communicative code of love is limited. Sex in this context, as Rebhun (1999) noted, is seen as part of the wife's housework routine. This concept of love refers to a habit that a couple develops through their day-to-day complementary practical cooperation. Hagene (2008) suggested that in this customary love, male infidelity in itself is not that problematic. It endangers the social aspect of the relationship rather than the emotional since the unions are driven more by social than emotional motives.

### **Love as Companionship**

This concept indicates love a companionship rather than complementarity. Companionship of men and women in Nicaragua is rare. As Hagene (2008) noted, in small town San Juan, men would be drinking and playing billiards or cards in places where for women it is better not to be present. Sometimes they might go together to parties, but often the wives stay home because they need to do housework. From Hagene's observations (2008), the setting of town San Juan was not conducive to companionate love. Public notions of masculinity seemed to militate against companionate love, although not all men took this seriously, and the years of the Sandinista Revolution implied some openings for the shared experiences of companionate love.

### **Realist Love**

This concept of love accents the social aspect of the relationship union. In such a case, a woman, for instance, may need a man to “give her value” in society, although this does not mean that she would take just any man; a man should have good qualities. In this meaning, Illouz (1997, p. 212) uses the notion *realist love* assuming that love comes as a result of particular qualities of the beloved. In these cases, people seem to not conceive love as an inner experience of emotional and physical intimacy, typical to a romantic view of love.

The issues of realist and contractual views of love represent rational, more than emotional approaches. People often describe their prerequisites for good relationships in this way (Illouz 1997). However, when they narrate stories about their own experiences of the initiation of a relationship or reasons to terminate it, then emotive and romantic themes still dominate. When people rank the prerequisites for an ideal couple, comprehension comes out on top, fidelity is very low, and at the bottom comes *amor, cariño* (love, care). When the opinions were based on the people’s own lived experiences, the emphasis was on body-based emotions (cited in Hagene 2008, p. 227).

### **Romantic Love**

Women and men in Nicaragua are familiar with the notion of romantic love through social media. This concept views love and sexuality being intimately interwoven, and exclusivity of a relationship assumes a need for fidelity. Personal, inner psychological experiences and expressive aspects of love have definite primacy; sex expresses deep intimacy, and emotional bonds are paramount. Verbal and emotional intimacy is highlighted, while economic and instrumental aspects are downplayed. The obligatory practical reciprocal aspects of a relationship thus diminish, while the voluntary forms of consideration persist.

People in San Juan have an opportunity to get acquainted with expressions and scripts of romantic stories. Many families, including the men if they are at home, watch (*tele*) *novelas* (soap operas) daily, in which *amor* is the major topic. The characters and plots of these *novelas* affect everyday conversations. However, many aspects of the social realities of the men and women in this small town—the practices of everyday life, gender-segregated leisure, and gender roles—were not conducive to romantic love (Hagene 2008).

### **The Reality of a Divided Love**

The women strive to establish and maintain a relationship with a husband, even when they experience emotional or physical violence at his hands. They often accept unequal exchanges and husbands’ infidelity, hoping that this self-subordination would gain them the fulfillment of their emotional longings. Thus, the women’s motivation to continue the relationship has been more emotional than economic (Hagene 2010).

Hagene described love among her informants in Nicaragua as sensations, images, metaphors, collective symbols, narratives, material goods, and popular theories which people use to make meaning of their experiences. Women typically expressed their feelings with such words as *amor compartido* (divided love)

or *traición* (treason) when commenting on their men's way of living simultaneously with other women and moving back and forth. This "sharing" took place against their will and felt painful. Many women lived in tension and controversies between subordinating themselves to this inevitable practice and their attempts to liberate themselves from this dependency; the latter would imply losing the man. The realm of love was vital in their lives where women frequently chose to subordinate themselves to men in the hope to gain emotional fulfillment. However, they experienced this challenge of their love life differently depending on their personal notions of love. Discreet practice of infidelity seemed compatible with the companionate notion of love, but not with the notion of romantic love. For some women, infidelity of their husband is a problem only if the man is not discrete. Then, people get to know about it and consequently tell them about it. So, it is better when the husband goes to other towns and quietly has his affairs. All women, regardless of their concepts of love, felt the public unfaithfulness in front of neighbors hurtful.

Hagene (2010) described several informative stories of the women who have lived through such types of love relationships.

A woman seemed to adapt to her husband's infidelity, even though it hurt her. She had started living with her husband when she was 18 years old. They soon had children, and she worked double shift in a shop to maintain them all while he was studying agronomy. 'To me it was happiness to be with my children and my husband', she remembered. 'My husband was not a saint, but if he was with me for a while, I was happy. Then he would go with other women, and I suffered, but when he came back, I was happy again'. She accepted her husband's womanizing until he went too far. Her story highlights how this was a highly ambiguous experience. She felt liberated, but at the same time she experienced a sensation of loss. (p. 34)

What constituted "liberation" at the same time implied a "loss," because she had not wanted him to go, but she could not take the "sharing" any more (Hagene 2010).

From those stories, it often appeared that some men were very good, amiable, loving, and tender when they conquered a girl and got married. The problems in relationships began afterward, sometimes years later. Many husbands escalated from mere womanizing to actually establishing parallel relationships. Women in companionate love were often tolerant to such discreet extramarital affairs. They accepted this discrete infidelity of their partners, even when it spilt over into (a version of) polygyny.

Romantic love, on the other hand, required trust, exclusivity, and bodily and verbal intimacy; so it seemed incompatible with infidelity; such unfaithfulness took on a different significance to women who were in romantic love and militated against honor love itself. The lack of trust was obvious in the women's narratives.

Men may have been emotionally involved with their lovers, but in their narratives on *amor compartido* (divided love), they focused more on the sexual aspect and their manly seduction skills. The men believed that emotional closeness undermines male power. Distrust was often present in men's narratives on relationships, but their focus on the sexual conquest rather than the emotional relationship

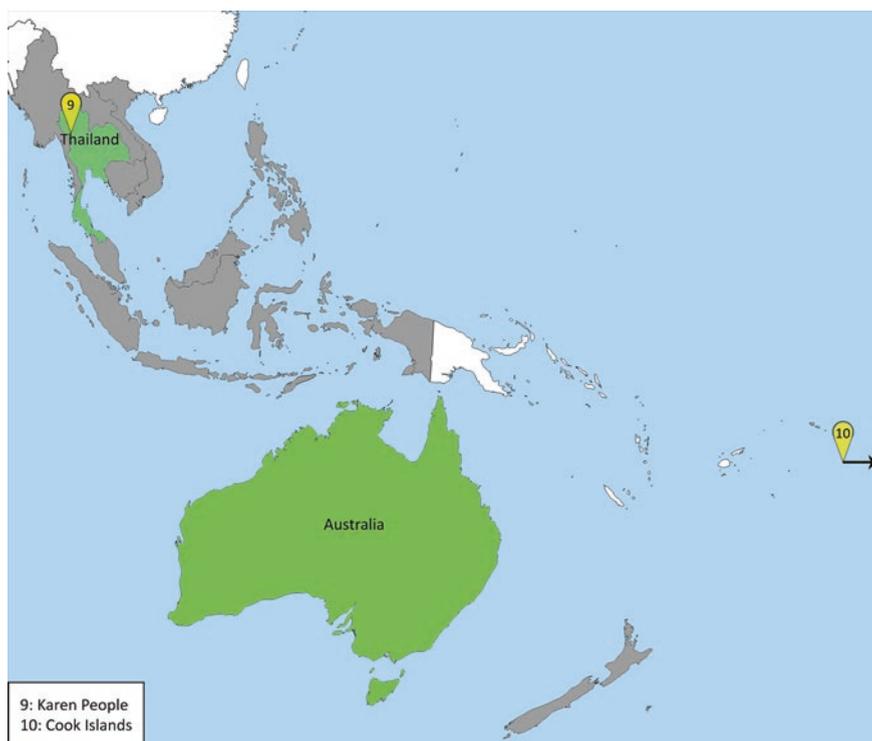
played down their own vulnerability. As Hagene (2010) mentioned, the lyrics of Latin American music (*boleros*, *tangos*, and *rancheras*) can well explain the dangers involved in emotionality for men. Suffering there has been presented as a male experience. So men are advised against the trap of love and risk of being vulnerable.

On the other hand, this type of love bears the issue of maltreatment and violence apparent in many of the women's stories (Hagene 2010). An informant of Hagene reflected on the experience of being beaten, compared to that of being left: "The blows hurt your skin, but you can defend yourself. It is worse when they leave you; it touches your heart, and you are left alone" (p. 37). It sounds like to be left for her was the worst possible experience and she referred to emotions—"the heart" and loneliness—rather than to social stigma or economy. Men's violence against female partners is a major social problem in Nicaragua, as in many other Latin American countries.

As a conclusion, Hagene (2010) contended that women granted their husband status and services in exchange for very little and often experience infidelity and violence. The women live their lives in tension between agency and subordination; they balance income-generating work, domestic and child responsibilities, and conjugal responsibilities. Despite little economic dependency, women, driven by emotional motives, accept unequal exchanges.

## Chapter 11

# Love in Modern Australia and Among the Indigenous People of Australia, Polynesia, and Southeast Asia



Cultures reviewed in Chap. 11: Love in Modern Australia and among the Indigenous People of Australia, Polynesia, and Southeast Asia

## 11.1 Love in Modern Australia

The romantic love concept in Australia developed, on one hand, based on the British influence on Australian society and culture (Teo 2004) and on the American influence of consumer capitalism on the culture of romantic love, on the other (Teo 2006). Australians are less sacral than Americans in romantic love and incline to more concrete and prosaic ideas about love. The Australian communication of romantic love seems less intense than in the United States. They might be expressive in emotional feelings in private communication, yet they might communicate romantic love publicly less than in the United States.

These differences in communicating romantic love, however, are less present in modern Australia than in the first part of the twentieth century. Australians gradually adopted an American understanding of romantic consumption as a critical expression of love. In particular, in the twentieth century there have been an increasing Americanization of Australian women's magazines. Although Australian men's magazines published articles about marriage and romantic relationships, romantic consumption did not feature widely in the first part of twentieth century. This topic was imported to Australia in American men's magazines, such as *Playboy*, during the late 1960s and introduced Australian men to a romanticized (and sexualized) culture. The popular magazines promoted romantic consumption, dancing and dining out, and romanticized ego-expressive commodities. It was associated with Americanization of expertise on romantic love, while British—and occasionally European—contributors continued to be featured as “experts” on love, romance, and marriage, but only if they were novelists, psychologists, or philosophers (Teo 2006).

The practice of romantic consumption became more extravagant in noticeable ways at the beginning of the twenty first century. For instance, as it was noted in an article, “Money Can Buy You Love” (*Sydney Morning Herald* on 14 February 2005), “Valentine’s Day... has become less about intimacy than the grand, expensive gesture: the jewellery, the mink coat, the impromptu hot air balloon ride”.

## 11.2 Love in Aboriginal Australia at Mangrove

The oldest people in Aboriginal Australia residing at Mangrove were once nomadic hunters and gatherers harvesting the products of land and sea. They lived quite distant from areas of white population, and since the late 1970s Mangrove has been a largely self-governed Aboriginal settlement. Protestant missionaries educated and prepared Aboriginal people for “assimilation” into the larger society. The mission experience also included lessons about romantic love and the movies. Hollywood films were shown on a regular basis beginning in 1960s (Burbank 1995).

The notion of love, however, has a longer history at Mangrove than Hollywood-introduced ideas about romance. Across Australia there is evidence both for and

against the idea that romantic love existed and was experienced by aborigines before contact with westerners. In particular, Berndt's work on *The Love Songs of Arnhem Land* (1976) documented the elaboration of love and sexuality in songs and rituals. From many tales of past love affairs and elopements was evident that romantic tradition elevated rather than subordinated personal feelings. A passionate tradition was also evident in the *jarrada*, the term of Aboriginal Australia that was frequently used referring to the women's rituals that included attempts to manipulate male/female relationships. The ceremonies were sometimes so successful that young women were running off with inappropriate partners. Nowadays, women's attempts to entice men through supernatural means are occasional, but many believe in love magic.

European expansion into the Australian continent definitely accentuated the love experience, and the Hollywood images and plots of romantic love brought an extra-Western locus. Overall, Aboriginal understanding of romantic love at Mangrove, the ways of speaking of love, indicate many similarities to the western concept of love. Specifically, romantic love was constructed by Burbank's informants (1995) at Mangrove as an attraction based on the erotic idealization of a specific individual. This attraction also incorporated ideas of commitment. The parallels of this description with a definition of romantic love used by Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) are evident: "By romantic love we mean any intense attraction that involves the ideal-ization of the other, within an erotic context, with the expectation of enduring for some time into the future" (1992, p. 150).

The concept of romantic love seemed, however, unsuitable for tradition of arranged marriages at Mangrove. Burbank (1995) argued that Aboriginal construction of romantic love served as the ideology of adolescent resistance to arranged marriage. Aboriginal youth might be against the restrictions of arranged marriage, but only recently a majority of Mangrove's adolescents were able to resist marriage to a partner not of their own choosing. Due to western ideas, romantic love became the ideological expression of actions when young lovers resist the arrangements of the senior generations and choose their own marriage partners.

### **Love in Australian Aboriginal Romantic Story**

Gottschall and Nordlund (2006) provide an excellent example of the charming romantic story from a collection of Australian Aboriginal folk tales. The story was originally documented by the anthropologist Smith (1970). A condensed version of its plot follows:

A male peewee (a species of small magpie) returns to his nest after a long day of food gathering and is surprised to find a beautiful female peewee sitting there. She is lost and very tired, so he offers her to take a nap in his nest. As he watches her sleep he falls in love with her. When she wakes up she is first distraught at finding herself alone with a stranger and starts to cry. He comforts her with kind words and then helps her find her way back to her parents in the south before returning back home.

Three months go by, and all this time the male yearns for his loved one as he watches other animals mate in his surroundings. One night he thinks he hears her voice in a dream and finally decides to fly south again to woo her with his song. When she doesn't appear he worries that she may have been claimed by another peewee, but then he reassures

himself. Her eyes spoke clearly of love for him when they first met, so how could she possibly forget him and marry someone she did not love?

Finally, to his great joy, the female appears again, and they sing a hymn to the Sun Goddess before spending the night together in silent communion. In the end they become husband and wife and raise a large family whose grown-up members migrate to other parts of the country. (pp. 41–44)

It is a perfect example of romantic love from a Native Australian tribe. In this story about bird love, several aspects of romantic love are present: idealization, exclusivity, intrusive thinking, emotional dependency, powerful empathy, desire for union, and rearranging life priorities. “The male peewee finds the female beautiful and desires her, but his feelings clearly go beyond mere physical attraction. He is concerned for her well-being, he depends on her for his own happiness, and her absence is accompanied by intense feelings of loneliness. He thinks constantly about her for three months, and since his feelings appear to be requited he is also convinced that she cannot love anyone else” (Gottschall and Nordlund 2006, p. 462).

### 11.3 Love in Polynesian Culture: A Case Study on Mangaia, Cook Islands

Polynesian culture is of especial interest for the study of romantic love from an anthropological perspective. Samoa and Mangaia, located in the Central Pacific in the South Seas, are two examples studied by anthropologists.

Common and central features of Polynesian relationship culture have been an obsession with sexual attitudes and behaviors. The premarital sexual license dominated and defined Western notions of island life and pervaded accounts, at once creating and drawing upon a myth of the South Seas.

Mead in her popular *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928/1961) created perceptions of Polynesians when she claimed that Samoan heterosexual relationships were casual, frequent, often overlapping, always sexual, and devoid of affectional ties. She maintained that Samoans lacked a capacity for strong emotion, specialized feeling (such as romantic love), and caring personal interactions (Mead 1928/1961).

Anthropologist Marshall (1971) conducted field research in the Cook Islands during the 1950s and also presented in his report the detailed and influential portraits of Polynesians as fundamentally sexual beings. He found that “copulation is a principal concern of the Mangaian of either sex” (p. 123). This report conferred almost legendary status on Mangaians, distinguishing them as the most sexually motivated people in the world.

While emphasizing sexuality, Marshall joined an academic tradition set by Mead and downplayed affection and caring in Mangaian male–female relationships, minimizing emotion in accounts of Polynesian life. Marshall’s report of

Mangaian intimacy conveyed the overall impression that the islanders are sexually obsessed and are apparently lacking the experience of romantic love. In the light of Marshall's research, Mangaian intimacy was reduced to no more than a series of one-night stands. Endleman (1989) summarized Marshall's data as follow:

Sexual activities [on Mangaia] approach being a national pleasure, in which both males and females participate enthusiastically.... There is no indication whatever of anything at all like romantic love involved, only sexual attraction. All the Mangaians place great value on erotic technique, none on any affection or caring between sexual partners, preceding sexual encounter. (p. 57)

This tradition initially established by Mead and reiterated by other ethnographers characterized Polynesians as emotionally stunted, yet actively sexual people (see Danielsson 1986; Marshall 1962; Russell 1961; Suggs 1962). The case studies of Polynesian societies presented the images that males and females in those cultures supposedly negotiated their intimate relationships exclusively on the basis of sexual attraction and performance and knew nothing of falling in love.

The anthropological studies of Gerber (1975) and Freeman (1983) on Samoa and Levy (1973) on Tahiti to a certain degree corrected this misrepresentation by filling in the emotional blanks in Pacific research.

The field study of H. Harris (1995) conducted in Mangaia, Cook Islands, was based on seven central attributes of romantic love and designed to investigate Marshall's contention that romantic love is absent on Mangaia.

### **The Mangaian Language of Love**

Mangaians have diverse language for love. "Maoris have heaps of words for falling in love, but the Europeans have only one" (cited in Harris 1995, p. 106). Marshall (1971) documented a substantial Mangaian sexual vocabulary as evidence of the islanders' concern with sex, but he did not mention a variety of terms for love that Mangaians used.

The research of Harris (1995) on emotion language indicated that Mangaians actually possess a rich lexicon of love. *Inangaro* is a multipurpose word translating broadly as "wanting, needing, liking, or loving." Although "*inangaro* is a big word having many meanings," when referring to a male–female relationship, it expresses "the real love from within... the feeling inside you, from your heart, for someone. It is the thing that makes people want to get married." The standard way to say "I love you" in Mangaian becomes *Te inangaro tikai nei au iaau*. However, to convey properly the experience of falling or being deeply in love, a speaker chooses from derivatives: *inangaro kino*, *matemate te inangaro*, and *pau te inangaro*, all of which convey a measure of certainty and sincerity about the depth of emotions (p. 107).

In various definitions of *inangaro*, there are also statements about reciprocity and intimacy, reordering of priorities, exclusivity, sexual interaction, and intrusive thinking that signal a correspondence between romantic love and *inangaro* and contradict Marshall's claim that love is absent on Mangaia. Harris (1995) further confirmed that Mangaian male–female relationships in the 1950s and still in the 1990s were marked by both emotional and physical involvements whose

attributes are consistent with the descriptions of romantic love in American psychological literature. She examined the features of the romantic love syndrome from a Manganian perspective and found that they are present as integrated and interactive elements, often relying on each other for meaning. Additionally, Harris (1995) discussed the particular cultural signature that distinguishes the Manganian version of romantic love from the basic pattern identified by American researchers.

### **Emotional and Behavioral Aspects of Love of Manganians**

*Sexual and emotional intimacy of love.* For Manganians sexual expression, or its possibility, is an undisputed component of an intimate heterosexual relationship, before as well as after marriage. A Manganian woman in her fifties remarked, for example, “when girls and boys like each other, they usually sleep together. They want to enjoy themselves.” What is distinctive about Manganian and many other Pacific societies is the stubborn retention of a thoroughly Polynesian attitude toward the pursuit of sexual pleasure in the face of vigorous and sustained missionary efforts to inculcate precisely the opposite disposition. Although Manganians are religious Christians, they follow the belief of their ancestors that sex is a natural and pleasurable aspect of life. Premarital sex, if practiced discreetly, is an appropriate part of the postadolescent, premarital period.

However, for Manganians the courtship process is a time not just for experimenting with physical intimacy, but for establishing a close emotional relationship as well. Courtships can remain chaste for weeks or months, and emotional intimacy may precede sexual involvement. Fundamental to experiencing intimacy is reciprocation of interest, desire, and emotion. Intimacy cannot be accomplished without a willingness of both parties to permit physical and emotional access. Many conversations occur during courtship and focus on the relationship itself and how each person feels, allowing the lovers, but especially the woman, to assess the depth and sincerity of emotion between them (cited in Harris 1995, p. 111).

*Emotional dependency in love.* Various features of romantic love are integrated and interactive elements. Emotional dependency, for example, requires content derived from the desire for physical and emotional closeness. Manganians recognize that certain predictable emotional states arise in response to the status of a love relationship; love brings both happiness and sadness. Separation or threats of separation from the beloved, non-reciprocation of affection, geographic distance, or parental interference cause distress. An intense response to separation from a beloved is called *atingakau*, or a broken heart. Its most common manifestations or symptoms are loss of appetite, inability to sleep, social isolation, and, in men, heavy drinking.

*Intrusive thinking about partner.* Intrusive thinking or cognitive preoccupation was mentioned frequently by Manganians when they talked of their love relationships, especially in the early stages. Lovers reported a strong tendency to think about a partner repeatedly, being preoccupied with the other. Cognitive preoccupation compels the individual to seek proximity by creating longing during separation that in turn hastens the reunion of the couple. It also demonstrates that the

intrusion of thoughts about the beloved interferes with other thoughts and with the normal conduct of daily life. The same intrusive thinking occurs during a forced separation.

*Exclusivity of a partner in romantic love.* One of the characteristic assertions of many Polynesian specialists of the Mead tradition is that there is such mental uniformity among Maoris that one person is as good as another, and therefore, no one is special or “right.” On another side, underlying all discussions of romantic love in Western psychological literature is a belief in the uniqueness of individuals and of lovers.

Harris (1995) found both direct and indirect evidence supporting a model that includes recognition of individual distinctiveness. Strong attachments arise between certain individuals and not between others, and lovers are often willing to face dire opposition from their families to preserve their romantic liaisons.

Because of a pronounced double standard and the tendency of young men to seek sexual opportunities whenever possible, ever cautious women look for a sign of “real love” (*inangaro kino*, etc.) and find it most often in the willingness of the man to forsake all other liaisons. Marriage is perceived as the ultimate expression of exclusivity.

*Idealization of a partner.* Perception of exclusivity of a love object is tightly connected with idealization—a tendency to emphasize positive qualities and minimize, ignore, or rationalize the negative ones of the beloved. On Mangaia, where the two sexes are publicly segregated, males usually initiate the secret courtships as premarital heterosexual interactions. In such circumstances men often reported falling in love by simply observing a woman and speaking to her on a few occasions. The following description illustrates this element of early idealization:

Maara came to talk to me. He had been waiting, waiting for me to return from Rarotonga. He didn't forget the time we were in school together. He said to me, “You know what? I've been looking at you. I've seen you going around.” Then he said that he loved me. He said he had fallen in love with me. Yes, seeing me all around, day and night, waiting for me. I asked him, “Why me?” He said he had seen how I was at school; how we laughed, how I shared with people. I'm just the one he's looking at. He said his heart was hurting for me. (cited in Harris 1995, p. 117.)

The woman relating this anecdote thought that her boyfriend was attracted by her good nature and character, yet actually, many men are initially influenced by physical beauty alone. Being charmed by an attractive face, flowing hair, and full hips, a man usually fills in the blanks about the woman's other qualities, supposing that these are as enchanting as her appearance.

Mangaian women are more cautious and tend to be less involved in this sort of idealization of men. They demonstrate a type of idealization that usually grows after the beginning of courtship and can be defined as ignoring or minimizing the partner's faults. Women recall their courtships and men in positive terms, fixing on talents, skills, and personality attributes: “he was a very good fisherman; he was the best planter; he was a fine musician; he was kinder than the other men.” Some women noted that although their suitor had a reputation of a womanizer, they suspended their mistrust and perceived him in a more positive image than their public reputation.

*Reordering of motivational hierarchies.* Lovers make many choices concerning their relationships, and new priorities are guiding their actions. They might be in frequent controversies between honor and respect to parents and their own desires to make a free choice in mate selection, based on their romantic ideals. In such cases, the young men and women often choose in favor of maintaining the love relationship, being at risk of losing their valuable family connections and support.

When they mention parental opposition to their mate choices, young people usually describe substantial emotional distress related to the controversy between love feelings and their long-term standing in the all-important family and lineage. The reports of fatal cases due to forced separation and even suicides demonstrate that placing love above life itself represents the ultimate reordering of motivational hierarchies (quoted in Harris 1995, p. 119).

*Care and concern for the other.* Being in love, many characterize as caring about someone and taking care of someone, a concern for the welfare of the beloved. Many Mंगाians, especially women, believe that being in love means worrying about the safety and well-being of the beloved and the desire to contribute to their happiness. Harris (1995) discovered that caring and concern in romantic love is also connected to the desire for union and intimacy. "Caring is not simply an abstract concern for the welfare of the beloved but rather a concern connected to the desire to prevent separation and loss of access. Caring is ultimately defined by how it contributes to maintaining access, increasing intimacy, and fostering reciprocation. Underlying a deeply felt anxiety over the welfare and happiness of a lover is an understanding that the safety and happiness of the beloved are fundamental to maintaining proximity" (Harris 1995, pp. 120–121).

Thus, Harris (1995) in her field study on Mंगाia was able to identify a basic pattern of feelings characterizing romantic love that are similar to American research. However, she discovered several additional features and included these in the description of romantic love as it occurs on the island.

First, Mंगाians view *inangaro* as an *involuntary* emotional state or feeling emanating from the heart (literally, the bowels). The *inangaro* is "not a choice, but suddenly it is a feeling" that overtakes a person (quoted in Harris 1995, p. 121). For love, being an involuntary process may hold a positive as well as a negative side. Sometimes relationships should have been but were not because "that feeling" just was not there.

For example, Ani was energetically courted by a "good and loving" man who wanted to marry her but for whom she did not feel *inangaro*. Instead, she fell in love with a man who turned out to be unfaithful to her after they were married, causing her considerable unhappiness. As she reflected on her life, Ani regretted not being able to love her first suitor, who, in hindsight, would have been a better spouse. (cited in Harris 1995, p. 121)

Second, Mंगाians easily recognize that physical beauty is a powerful trigger of relationships between men and women. Polynesians commonly have a great appreciation for the aesthetics of the human body and readily acknowledge that it is the essential beginning of passionate love.

Third, the occurrence of love at first sight prevails on Mangaia due to the decisive role of physical beauty and conceptualization of love as involuntary process. People describe their experiences of intense and sudden attraction to a person they have just met.

I was in the shop buying some food and I turned and saw him. I got a feeling inside me that I had never felt before with anyone. I had already had a boyfriend and a baby and other boys had come around too. But when I saw this man, I wished that he would be my husband, and this feeling was a surprise because I had never seen him before. Although I had that feeling, I didn't expect that the feeling would come true. (cited in Harris 1995, p. 122).

Many on Mangaia consider this feeling as nature's (or God's) way of bringing and keeping people together.

In America, "looks count," and "we fall for beauty" also counts (Tennov 1979, p. 253). However, these factors are recognized as a superficial and insubstantial basis for a relationship. Harris (1995) noted that Americans overall are ambivalent about love-at-first-sight experiences and believe that physical attraction cannot be the exclusive basis for a "serious" relationship, even though they admit that such incidences exist. Inversely, Manganians who spoke of an intense and immediate reaction to a person of the opposite sex were unconcerned. As Harris believes, a greater willingness to admit the power of physical attraction and incidences of love at first sight occurs in those societies that are not influenced by cultural discomfort and suspicion of the body (p. 122). She suggested that compared to the American pattern of romantic love, Manganian heterosexual relationship differs in emphasis more than content. The substantial differences between American and Manganian love are in the relative weighting of features. Highly dissimilar sexual attitudes have created two distinct patterns of heterosexual interaction. The Polynesian pattern emphasizes sexual expression while the American pattern minimizes sex.

## **11.4 Love and Life Among the Karen of Northern Thailand**

The Karen are the largest of the ethnic minority groups living in the mountain range of eastern Burma and northwestern Thailand. The large majority of the Thai Karen live in the northwestern highlands, in small villages at elevations ranging from 600 m to over 1000 m above sea level.

For centuries they have lived in close proximity to Burmese, Thai and other ethnic groups. They have adopted some of their customs, yet maintained their language, religion, dress code, and social relations which differentiate them from other ethnic groups of the region. Karen are known (Delang 2003) in terms of their relationship to the environment and their emphasis on harmony with spirits (animism, or spirit worship) and members of the community.

American Baptist missionaries and British administrators of the nineteenth century depicted Karen as moral people. While missionaries in other parts of the world discovered the "amoral" and stubborn customs of the natives, the Karen were found to be monogamous. The Karen family had a picture that resembled the

monogamous nuclear family as an ideal family where love and sexuality is confined to the monogamous marital bond (Hayami 2003).

The fieldwork of anthropologists in the 1970s–1990s in the Chiangmai Province provided glances into Karen intimate marital bonding, the family relationships, and community relationships. These studies highlighted strict sexual norms and importance of maintaining harmony in face-to-face situations. The Karen people hold a general predisposition of avoiding conflict and developed the communicative modes by which they avoid social conflict and face-to-face embarrassment, while still attempting to get their own way both in interpersonal encounters (Fink 2003; Hayami 2003).

Fink (2003) in her field study of the 1990s brought a comprehensive observation of teenage culture among Pwo Karen youths in northwest Thailand, depicting their premarital courtship and fashion, and highlighting the joys and anxieties of adolescences' pangs of romance. Teenagers, who have been exposed to city life as well as the Karen who have grown up with few links to the modern world, are obsessed with romance. Their romantic encounters imbue their life with meaning and excitement that many older Karen reminisce about.

Fink (2003) explored Karen teenagers' quest for romantic love and their rituals and events that provide opportunities initiating and deepening romantic attachments. The young Karens' longing for the sexual and emotional pleasures perfectly fit the notion of romance as sentimental and idealized love. However, Karen romantic culture does not resemble steamy scenes out of Western romantic novels.

There is no revealing clothing, no suggestive dancing, and virtually no physical contact between teenagers in love. While teenagers may find occasions to sneak off into the forest together, such behavior is not sanctioned by older villagers. Romantic behavior among the animist Karen focuses instead on singing courting songs, sipping rice wine together at celebrations, and engaging in verbal repartees. Some young men use music and love poems to woo their sweethearts, and members of both sexes spend hours fantasizing about sharing their lives with the person of their dreams. (Fink 2003, pp. 90–91)

*Boys* often visit girls' houses in the evenings. They also can travel to other villages to help others during the planting or harvesting, to purchase a chicken or pig for a healing ritual, or to buy salt and other basic commodities. When boys stay overnight in another village, they can visit the girls' residences, frequently in the company of a local male friend. The young people usually talk while the girls' parents are seated nearby. These visits can become boring if the girl or boy is too reserved. Consequently young people strive to develop their conversational skills, including light teasing and story and joke telling. Being chatty is positive and is valued in a romantic partner. Teenagers also spend much of their free time memorizing courting songs, so that they will be ready to participate in the courting rituals associated with funerals and weddings.

Many Karen romances begin at agricultural cycle celebrations, funerals, and weddings. Both teenagers and their parents pay special attention to these events. Funerals are unhappy social events, but the joyous gathering of people helps to dispel the fear that Karen people feel when someone dies. Pwo Karen, people

living in the western and northern parts of Thailand, are the animists that perceive funerals as dangerous moments when the souls of the living and the dead may become confused. A corpse in the village represents danger, but if a number of people are present, the spirits will not harm anyone. Therefore, the funeral must be fun to attract people to stay with the corpse and the family of the deceased all night. The tradition of singing courting songs draws a crowd and provides one of the few sanctioned venues for young people to meet. At the same time, the singing of courtship songs reaffirms the insistence of life even in the face of death. The animist Karen people have turned funerals into the primary occasion for youth to meet and socialize. Older people also enjoy watching how boys and girls develop their talents in composing songs and singing as they seek to attract the admiration and love of members of the opposite sex.

The funerals are the high points of teenagers' social lives, eagerly anticipating occasions due to elaborated courting rituals. The teens memorize the love and courting songs sung at funerals. They practice singing while weeding the fields; "wage labor is engaged into purchase eye-catching clothes and adornments which will impress members of the opposite sex, and even writing is sometimes only learned to help with memorizing love songs and sending love poems" (Fink 2003, p. 90). They dress for funerals more ornately than for other events; rather than wearing black and white in mourning, the teenagers wear their colored clothes and valuable jewelry. Teens pair off in dates and spend the entire night circling the corpse singing love songs to each other hoping to find their sweethearts.

Mischung (2003) and Fink (2003) described funeral singing as the most exciting for Karen youths and note the prominence of this oral tradition *hta*, which is one of the markers of Karen identity according to their informants. Mischung (2003) noticed that *hta* recitation allows one to communicate things that could not be expressed otherwise without disrupting interpersonal relations. Singing on these occasions by Karen youths in pairs demonstrates how teenage romance in Karen society takes a strange form, still evoking intimate feelings. The songs, all being expressed in verse, communicate love and longing. A typical metaphor is about birds meeting in the fields and flying off together. Songs may also refer to flowers, nature, the Karen lifestyle, and the pleasures they evoke. If the partners singing together are not in love, they still enjoy expressing their emotions. Some feelings of anxiety, however, are often inevitable, particularly when singing with a stranger. When the girls sing a particular verse, if the boys cannot remember the corresponding response verse, they will be ashamed. Likewise, if a pair of girls runs out of verses to sing, they will be embarrassed (Fink 2003).

However, recently many Karen communities in Thailand and Burma do not longer engage in formalized singing and courting rites at funerals. During their free time, the teenagers chat together and often tease each other, but there is no ritualized courtship.

Two other annual village celebrations related to the agricultural cycle also provide opportunities for courtship. *One is the* feasting the village that is held around the time of the lunar new year (in January or February). The second

similar ceremony, marking another point in the agricultural cycle, is held in July or August. Both events allow plenty of time for socializing and courting.

When a boy got to know a girl at a series of funerals, weddings, or village celebrations, he would send her a present of cloth or some jewelry. The gift may be accompanied by a love letter written in poetic verse. Then the girl has to decide how she will respond.

All Karen teenagers dream of marrying a person with whom they are in love and dedicate much time in their teenage years to preparing for the rituals where they will interact with members of the opposite sex. Animist Karen in Thailand and Burma adhere to strict sexual mores which prohibit sex before marriage and strongly promote monogamy. Hayami (2003) and Fink (2003) explain the “morally upright” Karen, the purity of their maidens, and the monogamous emphasis looking in the contexts in Karen social life.

In the courtship period Karen girls are allowed to decide whom they will marry. During the courtship and in marriage, females are treated as partners and have an opportunity to speak their minds, albeit in a more reserved manner than males. The feelings of the teenagers, as well as the opinions of the parents, are considered. During the courtship period teenagers seek to determine whether a potential mate is healthy and a hard worker. The teenagers are also influenced by the warmth, friendliness, and good looks of the other sex. Young men consider the ideal woman as one who is plump rather than thin. Many men are attracted to the heavier girls because they seem healthy, strong, and clearly have enough to eat (Fink 2003).

### **Love and Marriage Among the Karen**

The rites of romantic relationship are further formalized in courtship and finalized in marriage. While love marriages are the ideal, arranged marriages are also acceptable options and happen quite frequently. Some wealthier families arrange marriages for their children early in order to ensure that they marry someone of equal status. The boy or girl, however, may resent this possibility if there is no interest in the prospective partner. Karen generally maintain the ideal of a love marriage and typically have only one partner in their lives; therefore, young couples in love are prone to take extreme measures if their marriage plans are thwarted. Parents may block love marriages because of a difference in the socioeconomic status of the teenagers’ families. While the marriage may be arranged, the parents will rarely push it unless both the bride and groom are willing.

Weddings, like funerals, provide opportunities for teenagers to spend time together. The wedding celebration includes the family, close friends of the bride and groom, as well as everyone in both villages. Animist Karen marriages affect the whole community, as the new couple must establish a relationship with the village.

That night, the couple is allowed to stay together for the first time. Much teasing of the couple by the teenagers often occurs outside the house; however, ultimately they leave to engage in their own romantic pursuits.

Fink (2003) remarked that the tension-ridden communication between the families of the bride and the groom follows the festive occasions. The author commented some negative aspects of this emphasis on love-based monogamous marriage and indicated that the ultimate basis of sanction is the spirits, or the fear of causing their anger, and the changes due to school education and Christian conversion.

A girl begins weaving the outfits she will wear after she is married long before she gets engaged. She also weaves items of clothing or shoulder bags as gifts for members of her future spouse's family. Modern Karen men commonly wear manufactured baggy pants and t-shirts. Therefore, they typically wear the Karen shirts, which their wives weave for them, only in the first few months after their marriage.

Males as husbands must generally move into their wives' families' houses; therefore, the transition to marriage sometimes requires from them uncomfortable adjustments. After having a freedom and decision-making power in their own families, they have to obey the orders of their fathers-in-law and other members of their wives' families for the first few years of the marriage.

The new couple's household spirits linked to the wife's ancestors and other Karen women have a weighty word in family decision-making. Within first two years after the birth of the first baby, the new family moves to a small house of its own, close to the wife's parents' house. However, the new family is responsible for its own supply of food. Most of the time, the husband has to do the fieldwork alone, while the wife stays home to take care of the little children and prepare food. Karen women and men have complementary roles: each gender has its own responsibilities and duties, with males playing a more public role.

Animist Karen strictly follow monogamy, and this relates to a concern with the spirits. Once a man and a woman marry, adultery is not tolerated: it is considered offensive to the household and village spirits. In cases of adultery, both offenders are punished and may be banished from the village. To have two wives at the same time would also be impossible because of competing spirits.

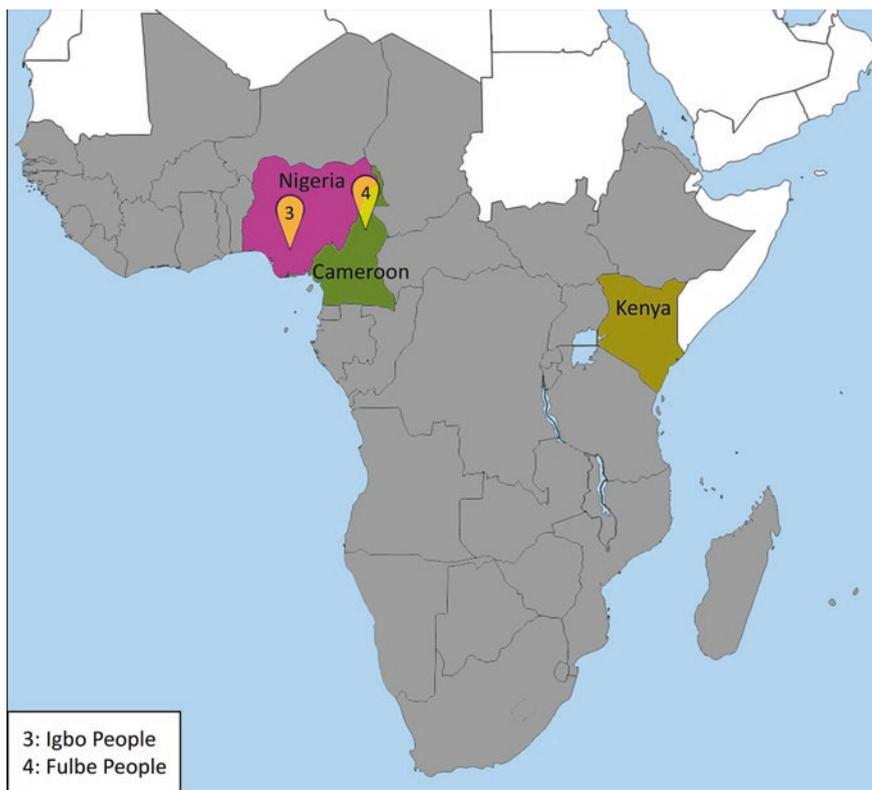
Hayami (2003) observes that within hill Karen communities, practices regarding sexuality and morality are embedded in communal rituals and practices which maintain the social and cosmic order of the land. This tradition, however, becomes challenging in cases of sexual activity across ethnic boundaries. The context of sexuality in hill Karen communities shifts towards these interethnic aspects, especially due to increasing mobility of youths from the hills to the lowlands. Young Karen women from the hills feel a necessity to negotiate between the two realms as they move between the city and the hills. Fink (2003) and Hayami (2003) acknowledged the relative autonomy of Karen women in the hills, but also noted that sexual morality holds double standards that operate against women.

The social and economic changes that have taken place in Thailand throughout the last decades have affected this ethnic group, and in particular, the aspects of their close relationships and the marital bonds in the Karen communities. Since the 1980s–1990s the mobility of Karen youths from the hills began to increase, both for education and for labor. In recent times, teenage fashion and courting

rituals in Karen villages closer to the towns, as well as among more educated and Christian Karen, have altered in response to greater exposure to the dominant culture. Many Karen have converted to Christianity, and Protestant missionaries commonly discourage Christian teenagers from singing the courtship songs. Church services, church choirs, and other activities for young people provide alternative opportunities for youth to get to know each other. Karen who have given up animism and are more integrated into Thai society court the opposite sex in different ways, and may have different gender relations once married.

## Chapter 12

# Marriage and Love in Africa in the Twentieth Century



Cultures reviewed in Chap. 12: Marriage and Love in Africa in the twentieth century

## 12.1 Marriage and Love in Africa

In the mid-twentieth century, Africa experienced intense changes in politics, family concepts, and interpersonal relations. The traditional black African village marriage coexisted with family innovations stemming from industrialization and urbanization. Despite differences in regional and cultural traditions of any one given society, there are some general and prevalent customs.

### **The Traditional Nature of Marriage**

The existence of polygyny, when a husband has two or more wives, was the key distinction of African marriage from most Western cultures. The advocates of polygyny commented that it satisfies a man's vanity and sexual appetite, provides every woman with a husband, and cuts down on illegitimacy. Besides, the possibility of polygyny still does permit the choice of a monogamous life for those who are willing.

Christians strongly opposed polygyny on religious grounds; advocates of women's rights considered it a symbol of servitude. As Murstein noted (1974, p. 503) under polygyny, women can take lovers if a spouse fails to satisfy their sexual needs. There might be intense competition among the cowives—not so much because of sexual jealousy, but rather because of a concern about the position of their children in the polygynous hierarchy of inheritance.

The ideology and number of polygynous marriages were on the wane in the second part of the twentieth century, although counteracted by the emerging adoration of everything indigenous to Africa. Thus, the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Congress strongly affirmed its support of polygyny (Murstein 1974, p. 503).

However, polygyny became much less popular in the second part of the twentieth century, especially among the urban population. Mass migration of men to the cities made it difficult to afford multiple wives in terms of costs of living, and small urban apartments were not well geared to accommodate multiple-wife families. Besides, Christian influence downgraded polygyny. Western concepts of love, of equality, and of companionship between the sexes had a great impact on people's ideals. Polygyny seemed incompatible with romantic love. So, many African students favored monogamy, but they constituted a small percentage of the total population. A majority of Africans might still remain refractory to the monogamic ideal. In addition, urbanization could affect different tribes, depending on whether they were matrilineal, and the role that polygyny played in their cultures. These effects might be quite complex (Murstein 1974, p. 512).

### **The Role of Love in Marriage**

As for love, it was not a central point of traditional African marriage for quite long time. Every woman expected to marry, bear children, and be a wife in a household. The bride and groom might be betrothed to each other as children, or they might meet at religious festivals, in the marketplace, or at neighbors' homes. Economic reasons and inheritance played an important role. While the boys and girls were generally not forced to marry someone they disliked, they often welcomed the

assistance of parents and relatives in making a match. The young man and woman might initiate the interaction that could lead to marriage, yet their parents usually played a main role in making a decision because the payment of *bride-price* or dowry was on them.

In some societies, the ideal wife should be a virgin, but others were not concerned with this. Tribal life depended largely on physical strength, so there was less emphasis on beauty in choosing a spouse. The ideal wife was expected to be fertile, strong, and eager to work for the economic prosperity of the household. Most importantly, she was supposed to be respectful and submissive to her husband, and must be a good cook. The emphasis on utility was greater than on appearance or personality. Little data were available about the ideal husband. Perhaps women were in less of a position to express any preference (Murstein 1974, p. 507).

### **Routine of Marriage Life**

Male and female roles were fairly rigid and traditional; each partner knew what duties were expected of him or her. Marriage was concerned with kinship rather than with the interaction of spouses, so affection was not much involved. The submissive behavior toward her husband was expected from a woman, yet the relationship was more egalitarian than the rules of behavior might suggest. It was often required that the woman expend a lot of energy in farming or trading in addition to her cooking and housekeeping chores. The relative ease of divorce in most societies allowed a wife to leave her husband because of his overly suppressive behavior. The husband had a risk of losing the bride-price if he drove her away by abuse. That saved the wife's status. Once again, the emphasis was on institutionalized roles rather than on the quality of interpersonal relations.

Africans largely attribute more power to outside forces than to individual efforts. Therefore, in the recent past, if a person loved someone, but his feelings were not reciprocated, he did not question his own shortcomings. He was more willing to consult a witch or wizard to cast a spell or give him a magic potion that would control the feelings of the one he longed for (Murstein 1974, p. 508).

### **Sex and Love**

Sex was considered natural and powerful and should be treated with ritual respect. Prudishness and phobias about touching the genitalia of children usually did not exist. Adults commented favorably on a child's finely shaped genitalia; in a very young age, these parts might be kissed as a sign of affection.

Attitudes toward premarital sexual intercourse vary in African societies; some openly tolerate it. Sex play, even leading to orgasm, is much more accepted so long as the vagina is not penetrated. The physical act of sex itself arouses little guilt in most Africans, but the symbolic significance and magical consequences are often sufficiently anxiety-provoking to demand a complicated set of rituals (Murstein 1974, p. 508).

### **Romantic Love and Marital Relationships**

Scholars documented the existence of romantic love in Africa for quite a long time in the twentieth century, before it became an accepted criterion for marriage (Bell

1995; Cole and Thomas 2009; Plotnicov 1995; Riesman 1973). Literature, media, and popular African magazines about love, romance, and modern marriage began to emerge right after World War II (Johoda 1959; Obiechina 1973). Those changes were taking place for several decades. On the personal front, elderly people told personal stories and popular fables depicting a long tradition of romantic love. Many men and women confessed that they would marry a person other than their spouse had they been allowed to “follow the heart” (Smith 2001). Love and sexual attraction were normally present in African societies, but they did not fit well into routine life.

Many changes occurred in the second part of the twentieth century in Africa and rapidly transformed traditional marital relationships. Western norms of individualism and achievement orientation were gradually supplanting rural mores; a wide range of occupations replaced the narrow and fixed occupational range of the village. Education probably played the key role in this transformation. Transformations in the social organization of African societies, the breakdown of a collective, kinship-oriented system of society, and increased mobility have changed the criteria and process of mate selection. The capability of families to influence their children’s marital choice and to control their marital relationship largely weakened. The African city dwellers, however, found themselves in between the competing philosophies of individualism and collectivism; they might feel guilty if they rejected their relatives, but still frustrated if they allowed them to dictate the norms.

Nevertheless, in many parts of West Africa, an individual choice in mate selection began to be socially accepted only recently. Considering the privilege of romantic love as a criterion in the selection of a spouse occurred initially in urban regions among elite and educated populations (Little and Price 1973). The studies from across Africa (Mair 1969; Little 1979; Smith 2001; Van der Vliet 1991) demonstrated that African men and women gradually came to prefer selecting partners for marriage based on the love feelings. Romantic love becomes a criterion in mate selection and increases its importance in conjugality. Smith (2001) provides a good example of this modern African love:

Chinyere Nwankwo met her husband Ike in the town of Owerri in southeastern Nigeria, where she attended a teacher’s college after completing secondary school in her village community. Ike was eight years her senior and a building contractor successful enough to own a used car, a prized symbol of wealth and success. On their first date he took her to the disco at the Concorde Hotel, at that time the fanciest in town. In addition to being educated, Chinyere was a beautiful young woman and consequently had many suitors. Her courtship with Ike lasted almost two years. During that time they often dined out and went dancing together. Among the more memorable events of their courtship were a weekend outing to the Nike Lake resort near Enugu and a trip to Lagos during which they attended a performance by Fela Ransome-Kuti, a famous Nigerian musician. During their courtship, each bought the other birthday cards, and for Ike’s birthday, Chinyere baked a cake. They went to many social events together and acknowledged to their peers that they were a couple. Not long into their courtship, Chinyere and Ike began sleeping together. Prior to

approaching Chinyere's people and his own family about their getting married, Ike proposed to Chinyere. They agreed together to get married and then began the process of including their families. (p. 134)

Both Ike and Chinyere said that it was because they fell in love that they decided to get married.

However, courtship and marriage have different value orientations. Modern courtship frequently allows putting a priority on the personal relationship, interpersonal intimacy, and expressions of love; it adopts an egalitarian gender dynamic. Nonetheless, marriage continues to function in tight links with extended family and community. Existing kin ties and obligations have great importance; fertility and the social roles of mother and father are privileged. Modern marriage still reinforces a patriarchal hierarchy. Thus, overall people in social and personal relations employ both modern and traditional value systems to negotiate their positions in relationships and pursue their goals (Smith 2001; Van der Vliet 1991). Even though mate selection, marriage, and family structure are changing in ways, which can be characterized as modern, those changes and the gender relations are highly sensitive to the value of parenthood and fertility. Corporate kinship groups are still important even in modern African contexts.

The relations between men and women substantially changed in the cities. The destruction of tribal authority and the growing emphasis on individualism and equality decreased the status of men and increased that of women. Advanced education was formerly a male privilege, but in the second part of the twentieth century, it became increasingly available to women. Nonetheless, stereotypes of the dominant husband and the submissive wife persisted in rural areas as well as among the educated population. The educated wives tend to be less submissive than uneducated ones that might create controversy in a relationship with a traditional, patriarchally minded husband.

Thus, African societies were in transition in the second part of the twentieth century. The dissonance of values in the old tribal societies with Western values and urban conditions created a complex social situation and risk of cultural conflict. Considerable turmoil in the minds of the people and social disorientation occurred. Western values were often questioned because of their association with "colonialism" (Murstein 1974, p. 516).

Nevertheless, Western ideas and patterns of family organization penetrated African social organization; African and Western concepts of marriage and romantic love adaptively fused. African cultures do not simply adapt and reproduce a Western system of close relationships and family structures, but produce their own new versions of relationships. Africans do not just abandon their traditions in favor of modern practices. They rather create their own systems of close relationships, marriage, and family organization that incorporate their cultural past and the present; they draw on traditional as well as modern moralities (Van der Vliet 1991). Modern African marriages incorporate new beliefs in longstanding social and cultural systems.

## 12.2 Love in Nigeria in the 1960s

Early cross-cultural research (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992; Rosenblatt 1967) discovered that Africa had a low incidence of romantic love under traditional conditions. Romantic love was absent or negligible among traditionalists because they had little or no schooling (except Muslims literate in Arabic). The Plotnicov's ethnographic data (1995) presented examples of romantic love from his research in urban life in Nigeria, conducted between 1960 and 1962. He used as a definitive criterion of romantic love: the ardent, fervent, and passionate desire for another without whom the lover experiences the feeling of being acutely incomplete, as if a vital part of her or him was lacking. In the illustrative cases of romantic love from Nigeria, the determination of the presence of love depended on the author's judgment and rarely on an informant's admission.

Romantic love was of little interest as a topic of conversation when Plotnicov did his research. The expression of lust, however, was an important part of men's culture among many male urbanites. Philandering was expected of men; some were devoted to it with the passion of pursuing a favorite sport, while others showed little or no interest. Lust was contrasted to romantic love as womanizing to a serious relationship. As typical for African societies, men who experienced romantic love frequently married in its absence.

While many had girlfriends before being or while they were married, only wealthy men could afford philandering as a regular pastime. Men tried to conceal their womanizing from their wives. Most wives seemed aware of these indulgences when they occurred, many had grounds for suspicion, and few hesitated expressing their disapproval. Over rounds of bottled beer in the local bars, men circulated stories of philandering and occasionally told how some wives made trouble when they learned the identity of a girlfriend.

The informants of Plotnicov (1995), Olu, Musa, and Isaac, never experienced romantic love. Of the three, Olu is clearly a staunch traditionalist (albeit a good Christian) who had no formal education, spoke no English, and always dressed in traditional style. Musa and Isaac had an extensive Western education, and both men were justifiably proud of their command of the Queen's English. They differed in dress: Musa preferring traditional styles and Isaac almost always wearing Western attire. Although Plotnicov called the latter two men modern-oriented, the terms such as modern and traditional apply imperfectly.

Plotnicov considered four other men as having fallen in love. They appear conservative, but they offered the clearest evidence of romantic love. The evidence that Plotnicov's informants experienced romantic love was convincing, although he was less sure about the involvement of Western cultural influences. Anyway, the Western-/modern-oriented men had no advantage in this over the cultural conservatives.

The examples of romantic love in African cities reflect Western cultural penetration and acculturation in modern-oriented men—who generally are younger, work at trades or occupations introduced from Europe, prefer living in cities to life in rural areas, and are fond of Western material and cultural products.

Plotnicov (1995) provided ethnographic examples as illustrative cases from Nigeria, where the presence of romantic love under traditional conditions was unexpected. He demonstrated that for the most part, these cases cannot be attributed to the influence of Western notions of romantic love or other exogenous influences. The circumstances of research permitted Plotnicov's observing a few instances of lusting and infatuation, but almost nothing of other behaviors or emotions Westerners associate with aspects of love.

Larkin (1997) stated that Indian films in Nigeria have entered popular culture and offered men and women an alternative realm, similar to their own, which inspired them to imagine other forms of fashion, beauty, love, and romance. According to Larkin (1997, p. 410), Indian films offer modern images that have some parallels to the west and explore the nature of social life, but it is rooted in conservative values. In particular, Indian television and cinema follow a strict division between the sexes and love songs, and sexual relations, while sensuous, are kept within firm boundaries (Larkin 1997, p. 413). Kissing is rare and nudity absent.

### **Love and Marriage. Companionate Love**

Traditional African social occasions are marked by gender segregation; public events do not provide opportunities to observe the expression of companionate love. Married couples, for example, even modern-oriented couples, never displayed affection in public. In one sense, lust, infatuation, and conjugal (or companionate) love represent positions on the same continuum. That is to say, these feelings are marked by different intensities of eroticism (cf. Berscheid 1988, p. 373) and attitudes about the permanence of the relationship.

Many aspects of traditional African social organization and culture suggest an environment of conditions that discourage the nurturance of companionate love. These include arranged marriages; gender segregation for work, recreation, and companionship (especially in Muslim areas); high rates of marriage and divorce with some people; and male attitudes about women. Husbands regard it as their right to use corporeal sanctions with errant wives, for example, and some said they had to treat them like children.

Men like Isaac, Musa, and Gande talked about women and wives in a detached manner, more like objects than as social persons with whom one is intimately related. Among other things, a good wife should be respectful and obedient to her husband (never talk back), seek his permission to go anywhere, and work vigorously and cheerfully.

### 12.3 Romantic Love in Igbo, Nigeria (Late 1990s)

Smith (2001) examined the ideas and expectations about love in contemporary (late 1990s) Igbo-speaking Nigeria in the context of patterns of continuities and changes in Igbo social organization in Nigerian societies, specifically with regard to the importance of kinship and fertility.

Traditionally, Igbos are patrilineal, and marriage is lineage exogamous. Marriages typically created alliances across nearby communities and were mostly arranged by families. Both men and women always had the right to refuse marriage partners, yet social pressure to meet community and family expectations made that difficult.

However, girls ran away to avoid a particular marriage, and men defied their parents and married the woman of their choice. A tension between arranged marriage and personal preferences always existed, and popular myths and fables recounted the stories of men and women who acted out of love. The idea of love preceded the growing acceptance that marriage should be based on it.

Young Igbo men and women in Nigeria are more likely than their parents and grandparents to choose their marriage partners. Notions of romantic love and emotional intimacy are among important criteria for selecting a spouse. Actually, in modern Igboland, the majority of young people choose their own spouses, and this expectation is almost universal among those still in school.

The selection of marriage partners is increasingly a matter of individual choice. Ideals of romance valorize patterns of courtship, and men and women put the growing importance of Christian wedding ceremonies. Nowadays, few marriages are strictly arranged; a young loving couple insistent about getting married can often outlast their elders. The vast majority of young couples initiate their own marriages. However, the practice of actually getting married involves the extended families and communities of both a man and a woman. Many young people still marry those from close to home. Nonetheless, the growing numbers of marriages cross traditional intra-Igbo cultural divides, and such marriages are increasingly acceptable (Smith 2001).

#### Romantic Ideals of Nigeria

The recent popular video film *Taboo*, produced by the country's film industry, is the story of a young Igbo woman from a royal family who falls in love with an *osu*. *Osu* are the descendants of ritual slaves and present the typical stereotype that he or she is polluting and dangerous. People feared the *osu* and despised them. The descendants of *osu* inherited its ritual duties and stigma. Many young and educated Igbos have seen *Taboo* and know about the dilemmas of *osu* who fall in love with *diala* (freeborn).

*Taboo* is a story about an *osu-diala* love affair, and the social consequences as the couple confronts entrenched prejudices. The daughter of an Igbo traditional ruler (*eze*) and a young *osu* man meet and fall in love at a university. Not surprisingly, the girl's father vehemently rejects the idea that his daughter could marry an *osu*. In a twisting plot, the young *osu* man ends up saving the *eze* from a fatal palace coup engineered by one of

his disgruntled wives. The osu becomes a hero, but he does not get the girl because he is killed in another valiant confrontation with evildoers, and the eze's daughter is left to mourn her lover. (Smith 2001, p. 137)

As Smith (2001) claims, in real life, few osu-diala love affairs could progress to marriage, but this film represented and reinforced a growing fascination of Igbo with romantic love. The sympathies of people are with the lovers. In *Taboo*, love does not conquer all, but it presents a space of freedom from traditional social conventions. The film *Taboo*, as well as other media, promote notions of romantic love and valorize individuality.

Ideals of conjugality and companionship shape Igbo notions of marriage. In urban residences, there is strong tendency to establish nuclear household organization; an emerging model of marriage emphasizes the personal relationship between husband and wife. Despite these pursuits, Igbo people continue to rely on and face strong obligations to their kin people and affine relationships; the sustainability of marriage continues to substantially depend on fertility. The young couple transits from the role of romantic lovers, which characterizes courtship, to the roles of mother and father, embedded in webs of kinship, which characterize marriage. At this stage, extended families still have strong influence; their approval and support remain important for marriages to succeed. Collective interest focuses on fertility in the marriage, and successful parenthood is valued as the essential attribute of full personhood (Fortes 1978). Many other aspects of the marital relationship depend on modern or traditional scripts that a couple prefers to follow (Van der Vliet 1991). The gender relations and romantic love ideas in premarital, marital, and extramarital relationships in Igbo-speaking Nigeria have experienced significant changes over recent decades.

## 12.4 Love Among the Fulbe of North Cameroon

Regis (1995) explored how Fulbe of North Cameroon think about and express emotionality; she examined their conception and articulation of passionate love. Regis noticed the differences in the expression of love between Cameroonians and Americans. The Fulbe lovers avoid revealing authentic feelings in an inappropriate context. On the other hand, American lovers enjoy their emotional involvements and declare their feelings through friendly discussions. For most Americans, love is one of the culture's highest ideals. Although Fulbe experience such emotional states as love, the culture does not recognize it as an ideal. It is not suitable in the social life of the community. Therefore, the Fulbe have motivation *not* to fall in love (i.e., to keep a level head on their shoulders), yet from time to time they fail.

### **How Emotional Expression Regarding Love is Viewed**

Regis (1995) reported her research conducted in 1990–1991 in a community of sedentary Fulbe in the Extreme North Province of Cameroon. The love feelings and romantic expressions among the Fulbe are greatly influenced by the cultural

importance of restraint and self-control in their lives. The Fulbe tend to follow their rules of when, where, and how to express emotions and master their ability to control emotions. The Fulbe take pride in their poised reserve. A man who cannot control his emotions is not a master of himself. Young Fulbe children are socialized not to express pain. They learn from their mothers not to share the pain of injury or sickness with others. Riesman emphasized that the demonstration “that one is in control of normal human emotions and above human needs is constantly taking place in [Fulani] formal behavior” between members of the same community (Riesman 1975, p. 63). Fulbe adults and children are taught to suppress pain and anger. A person who commits a crime in the heat of passion is judged particularly severely. Loss of temper, rather than being viewed as “mitigating circumstances,” even more disgraces the accused, who is viewed as mentally unstable. When grief over the death of a child exceeds culturally prescribed norms, the distraught parent is scolded by relatives and kin. Excessive parental love, such as anger, grief, and pain, cannot be publicly acknowledged. Excessive happiness, expressed through laughter or abandoned dancing, is frowned upon because it is said to involve a denial of death. Grief, anger, and pain are part of human existence everywhere, but the Fulbe try to conceal their experience of emotions. As children become adults, they strive to control and internalize their emotional experience.

Shame (*semteende*) is the emotion that is expected to influence public behavior. The anticipation of shame and the fear of being called shameless is perhaps the principal deterrent to the public display of romantic love. The core meaning of *the* concept of *semteende* in Fulbe culture is related with deference and respect for the social group.

The Fulbe relations to the community in the language of posture, gesture, and ceremonial greeting accentuate that an individual should be available to fellow villagers and also should respect the power of others. Availability to others and the respect and deference for elders are expressed in many other Fulbe practices. The individual asserts both the egalitarian and hierarchical principles of the social order in his or her everyday bodily discourse.

In this communal context, an individual’s passionate involvement in a dyadic romance threatens these principles because the romance competes with the multiple relations of the individual to the community. Falling in love separates that amorous dyad from the power of the community. This is a reason why the family and others publicly react against those who fall in love. The Fulbe would agree with classical Freudian theory that there is a fundamentally antagonistic relationship between passionate emotions and societal obligations (Regis 1995, p. 143).

Love in the Fulbe is considered as a defiant emotion. During her field research in a Fulbe village, Regis (1995) often heard public criticism of people who were in love. Some of this criticism concerned people who acted unsuitably. For example, a man should not spend too much time around a woman’s home during the day but should be out in public socializing with other men. In everyday conversations among neighbors, women routinely deny emotional attachment to a husband.

The couples in the village, which were in love but did not act inappropriately, were not the object of critical gossip. Riesman (1971, p. 608), who also worked with Fulbe of Burkina Faso, noted that he knew couples that were in love, but these couples were careful and did not show their true feelings in public and did not allow these feelings to influence their public behavior.

Others, who were not able to hide their feelings, received the labels, by fellow villagers, as sick or socially impaired, and were accused of loving their partner too much. A man who is in love with his wife tends to stay home during the day or in the evenings, when he is expected to meet his friends. This violates the norm that men must be available to their fellow villagers.

A woman who is in love is extremely jealous of her cowife and is inattentive and careless in her work. She ignores the advice of parents on whom to marry. A woman in love, if she is married to someone else, is tempted to be unfaithful to her husband. Such a situation can be a difficult and risky in the social space of the village (Regis 1995).

Regis (1995) also examines the expression of love cross-culturally and suggests that the Fulbe is not the only culture that characterizes love in negative terms. Many other Islamic peoples share Fulbe misgivings about romance. The Fulbe attitudes toward the expression of love resemble medieval Islamic medical thought on passionate love, or "*ishq*": "It exceeds the limit of mere inclination and [normal] love and, by possessing the reason, causes its victim to act unwisely. It is blameworthy and ought to be avoided by the prudent" (Dols 1992, p. 319). In medical textbooks, passionate love was presented as combination of psychic and bodily ailments (p. 317). The contemporary Fulbe agree that full engagement in a feeling—grief, pain, anger, happiness, or love—is tantamount to possession with a loss of reason or sense.

The notion of passionate love as madness is tightly entangled in Islamic thought and shapes the character development of folk tales. The story of Qays and Lila and their ill-fated love became a classic in Islamic literature, like Romeo and Juliet in Europe. Both stories tell of star-crossed lovers, but the Islamic tale paints Qays as a "*majnun*," a madman (Dols 1992, p. 332). Rasmussen (1992) described the cultural values of the Muslim Tuareg of Niger and found similar ideas of love-madness. "Tuareg cultural values... discourage revealing personal sentiments directly, in particular love preference." The emphasis on reserve is particularly strong for women. It is therefore not surprising that they are the principal sufferers of *tamazai*, "an illness of the heart and soul" that is often attributed to possession by a spirit due to a "hidden love" or not acting on desires (Rasmussen 1992, 339). A person suffering from *tamazai* feels harassed by people and withdrawn from them. The Mzeina of South Sinai hold a similar notion about feelings of love (Lavie 1990).

Thus, one can infer that the madness arising as a consequence of ardent love is a pan-Islamic theme. The influence of Islam could certainly explain the similarities in Fulbe and Tuareg thinking (Regis 1995); yet the similar beliefs of Christian ethnic groups Igbo and Ijaw in southeastern Nigeria resemble the same comments about love.

These societies' views maintain that emotions are acceptable in moderation, but excessive love is madness, which can be caused by either a disproportionately strong personal will or by a love potion. According to these cultures, people in passionate love are influenced by a force beyond their conscious control, though this force is alternately conceived as external or internal (Regis 1995, pp. 147–148). Rasmussen (1992) emphasizes the element of exaggeration (rather than deviance) inherent in the syndrome. This makes it possible to see the similarities between cultural constraints on the expression of grief, pain, anger, and affection for children and that of romantic love. While these are normal feelings in moderation, when indulged excessively they are seen to cause an imbalance in people that prevents them from participating in the ordinary life of a face-to-face community.

In sum, no emotion should be taken up obsessively. That is, there is no tyranny of emotion, no passion that is allowed to possess the personality. In this way, love is no exception.

## 12.5 Love and Romance Among the Taita of Kenya, Africa

The early accounts of African life are full with tales of lust and sexuality, but do not mention anything about the presence of passionate love. It was mostly believed that the Africans were not capable of experiencing romantic love. However, there is other evidence.

Kenyatta, a native Kikuyu who was Oxford-educated, maintained that “among the Kikuyu, the largest ethnic group in Kenya, people have always been free to choose a mate without any interference on the part of the parents on either side” (Kenyatta 1938/1953, p. 165). He asserted that “love” was a strong motive in mate selection in traditional Kikuyu society. Kenyatta described that when a “boy falls in love with a girl he cannot tell her directly that he loves her or display his devotion to her in public, as this would be regarded by Gikuyu [or Kikuyu] as impolite and uncultured” (1959, p. 165).

Bell (1995) found a similar approach toward mate choice among the Taita of Kenya. For example, younger Taita women preferred becoming involved with a “chosen lover,” usually a member of their age group. Affection, physical attraction, or romantic love was often present in such involvements. Some of these relationships last a lifetime. In the missionaries' reports on the “native's” sexual behavior, this type of love arrangement was condemned or ignored.

The missionaries educated tribes in Africa on how to live according to the moral ideals of family and virtue. But this Christian obsession with “proper” family structure and sexual behavior prevented a clear understanding of romance among Africans. In many ways, this misunderstanding, first expressed in the early missionary accounts, continues as a predominant Euro-American image of Africa (Jablow and Hammond 1977, p. 16).

The Taita are highland farmers who have inhabited a mountainous area in southern Kenya for four or five hundred years. The Taita are a combination of several different East African ethnic groups. For many centuries, the Taita have practiced arranged marriages, and the interests of a larger family group were more important criteria in mate selection than an individual's preferences. The senior generation cared for evidence of health and an accommodating personality of a prospective mate for their offspring. Individual desire and feelings were deemed irrelevant. Everyone understood that the welfare of the family and not the individual were the primary objectives of arranged marriages.

Nevertheless, males had their mate preferences, and their ideals of female beauty played a role in the selection of a prospective partner. On the other hand, in female mate preferences, the Taita stressed that a husband should be intelligent and a good farmer and provider for a family. Obviously, a male's physical attractiveness was less important than how he interacts with his wife and how he treats her. Overall, males and females held different ideals of beauty and personality that influenced the choice of lovers they selected, or would select. Males emphasized physical attributes, whereas females focused on personality and social standing. Both Taita men and women prefer a lover who exhibits the proper cultural graces (Bell 1995).

Missionaries considered the widespread custom of females and males becoming involved with one another *outside* the institution of *monogamous* marriage as the primary evil in African society. They were preoccupied and favored monogamous marriage over polygynous marriage; therefore, they actively persuaded all to convert to the cultural and religious superiority of monogamy. They introduced into African daily life the rituals that glorified monogamous marriage and encouraged Western cultural features, including romantic expressions. The culture has adopted certain Western linguistic expressions such as *love* and *lust*. European missionaries influenced the indigenous ideals of marriage and love affairs, but despite the new marriage practices, polygyny remained a popular institution (Bell 1995). Yet, according to Bell, romantic love was always in Taita culture and love affairs (and not just sexual liaisons) were realities of daily Taita life. Taita informants asserted that prior to European contact, *ashiki* (lust) and *pendo* (love) were terms already in existence.

European influence framed and filtered the Taita's descriptions and accounts of lust, love, and romance, which glossed over indigenous human sentiments. This new terminology reflected feelings of private experience that were always present and warmly celebrated in Taita culture. East African folklore presented a few pre-contact tales of romance (Bell 1995).

Bell (1995) conducted a field study of the ideals of lust, love, and romance in the Taita (sometimes also referred to as the Wataita, or Wadawida) of Kenya, East Africa. He contends that passionate (romantic) love in Africa was before the arrival of Christian missionaries and has been a natural part of African culture for a long time, before European contact. Moreover, the notion of marriage for love might not be new to Taita culture.

### **Types of Love Among the Taita**

According to Bell's study (1995), in childhood as well as in adult courtship, the Taita people distinguish between three types of love that are common in their gender interactions outside of arranged marriages. All three have different styles of romantic expressions.

The first type of love is infatuation; it is characterized by irresponsible feelings of longing and deep attraction toward another person. It resembles the Western concept of passionate (or romantic) love. However, the Taita do not make this distinction. Moreover, the senior generation claims that this type of love passion is just misguided infatuation, "a kind of sickness." This love usually occurs in the early stages of life (10–12 years of age) and typically lasts only a few weeks or months, and then disappears.

A second type of love resembles lust, the condition arising when someone desires another sexually. The Taita believe that these close relationships, which are based entirely on sexual desire, are also a form of love, yet they acknowledge that this is not romantic love and it does not last for a long time. Cultural restrictions in mate selection influence the youth erotic fantasies. According to Bell's informants (1995), many young (18–24 year-old) Taita males feel a sexual desire for a woman (in their 30–40s) just slightly younger than their mothers, while young females (15–17-year-old) prefer males who are their age mates (18–22) but whom they rarely can marry.

The third type of love is called romantic love, the complex of feelings that combine passion and enduring affection. The romantic love differs from infatuation as a more permanent affectionate bond. At the beginning of the relationship, it is hard to determine whether it is driven by infatuation or genuine romantic sentiment. In this regard, the Taita concept of romantic love integrates the features of companionate love (or attachment love) and passionate love (or romantic love). The Taita people, however, do not refer to this type of love as companionship love but call it romantic love. Romantic love, the "love for life" or "love out of the heart," is love that the younger Taita can often observe between a father and a "favorite wife." It is based upon deep admiration and intense affection for one another. Young Taita people believe that it is "the best kind of love" and should be one of the primary life goals. Young males think that this love can be a motive for men to marry a second, third, or fourth wife. Young females speak over the "luck" of older siblings who married for love. When a couple involved in a romantic relationship cannot marry, they may continue their affair for years. Several parents informed Bell (1995) that they knew of many such affairs in the community. Love is considered a valid motive for entering into either a short- or a long-term relationship. In this way, lust, love, and romance are in the air on any weekend night in the hills of Taita, where people are seldom surprised when someone marries for love of the heart (Bell 1995). Not all Taita marriages, however, are concerned with alliance building or economic necessity. Marriages can and do arise out of momentary infatuation and long-lasting romantic commitment.

### **Romantic Love within Marital Arrangements**

Taita culture, as many traditional societies (Maybury-Lewis 1992), holds a patrilineal descent system that honors the larger lineage over the individual interests. Such cultures acknowledge and admit passion that *the* love stories are made of. They admire strong emotions, but keep such feelings separate from the formal marriage arrangements. They attempt to prevent personal passion from disturbing the social order. Unmarried Taita are not permitted to bring their love interests too far to avoid undermining their commitment to the family. Consequently, many Taita men do their best to meet their familial obligations in the first marriage and fulfill their duties to the lineage.

When these duties are achieved, romantic passion can become a primary motivation in selecting a new wife. As a matter of fact, several Taita informants of Bell (1995), who had arranged marriages, were romantically indifferent to their wife while passionately committed to their “outside lover.” Many Taita men admitted that they wanted to be involved with another woman, but few admitted that they were actually involved. When such “affairs of the heart” did appear, they often focused on someone unattainable.

One informant remarked that “it can happen that your heart is lost to one you can never marry, but you love that person for your life.” A middle-aged parent concurred, saying that “this notion is not a rare one.” Many older men expressed their love for a woman who “belonged to another man.” Some informants assured me that they had lovers elsewhere or that some of the children I had interviewed were the offspring of lovers who “played in the forest together.” (Bell 1995, p. 159).

Such affairs of love and romance are usual in other African cultures as well. In particular, Maybury-Lewis (1992) observed such romantic passions among the Wodaabe of West Africa and noted the commonality and acceptance of them. The Taita are very clandestine in their extramarital affairs, and they have elaborate rules similar to those found among the Wodaabe. Taita lovers are discreet and seldom display their feelings and affectionate relationships in public. Whenever they meet, they act as if they are strangers.

Overall, Taita try to balance family duties and individual desires, admitting that there are different motives for marriage. They are doing their best to allow individual desires to be expressed without undermining the prevailing social order. The first and the second marriages strive to honor family obligations; yet after that a man’s love interest can become the primary motivation for taking a new bride.

Bell (1995) interviewed many older people (sixty to eighty years of age) while traveling around the Taita Hills. They often noted that they had either experienced or knew someone who had been involved in a romantic encounter in their youth. For example, a woman, in her mid-seventies, reported that she was infatuated with three or four men at different times during her early teenage years. Her father had, however, arranged a marriage for her with one of *his* peers. She had eight children. Several old men remembered their affairs in sharp detail, as though they happened yesterday, rather than some forty or fifty years earlier. A woman, also in her seventies, stressed (through an interpreter) that “even when I was a young girl, women

were having babies before marriage. And others had lovers in the forest after marriage” (Bell 1995, pp. 160–161). In this informal survey, older people were quite open about their views on lust and love. All of the older people Bell spoke with agreed that this is no longer as serious a situation as it was when they were young. Time, apparently, has changed the attitudes toward love.

## Chapter 13

# Romantic Love in China and Japan



Cultures reviewed in Chap. 13: Romantic Love in China and Japan

### 13.1 Love in China

Many scholars of love and sexuality in East Asia assumed for quite a long time that the Chinese are uninterested in love. De Rougemont, for instance, argued that for “the Chinese the problem of love does not exist. [Their] needs are of the body, not satisfaction of the emotions” (1974, p. i). Other authors claimed that the Chinese may experience love as a tender attachment, but it is “largely associated with relationships between men rather than between the sexes”

(Beach and Tesser 1988, p. 331). Hsu claimed that “the Western idea of romantic love has not had much of an impact on young adults in China” (1981, p. 50). Grant concluded the opinion of several non-China historians stating that “in traditional Oriental cultures, sexual love based on appreciation of the uniqueness of personality did not exist.... [As for the] Chinese, [their] lyrics do not sing of the one and only beloved that lives once and will never be found a second time” (Grant 1976, p. 163). In accord with this assertion, Hsu emphasized that Chinese cultural tradition connects a person emotionally into a network with others, and therefore defuses the intensity of an individual’s emotional experience. Such dependency weakens the individual’s tendency to fantasize about love. The theory and research support the distinction that the Chinese people are situation oriented, while Americans are individually oriented (Chu 1985; Hsu 1981). In particular, Chu (1985) found that the Chinese in their mate selection do not list romance as a criterion for marriage. Based on these studies, researchers concluded that the Chinese people are culturally restrained in their internal life and emotional experiences; their feelings and desires are dependent on the social context, its values and expectations.

In particular, the anthropologist Potter (1988) explored the cultural construction of emotion in rural China and contrasted the privileged status of emotion in Western societies to the Chinese devaluation of emotion as a social force. Potter based her arguments on field research conducted among villagers.

Western culture assumes that emotion is an important basis of all social relationships and that any relationship that is not grounded on emotional authenticity is impoverished and doomed to dissolution. Therefore, people invest great effort to initiate, maintain, and fortify emotional ties; they place a high value on the expression and enactment of personal feelings. Western therapeutic culture is characterized by a pervasive attention to psychological processes that “must be defined, explained, expressed, analyzed, understood, and utilized” (1988, p. 184). The expression of feeling according to the cultural code of sincerity and authenticity is viewed as the means by which social relationships are created and maintained.

In Chinese culture, Potter (1988) believes the opposite is true: the Chinese do not ground the social order in the emotional life of individuals. She asserts that “there is no cultural theory [in Chinese society] that social structure rests on emotional ties” (p. 185). Even though the Chinese do have a rich emotional life and feelings do bear a relationship to social experience, emotions are not thought of as a fundamental basis of social life that creates, perpetuates, injures, or destroys social relationships. An important consequence is that “sincerity” does not refer to inner feeling but requires the proper enactment of civility. Social action, therefore, is attached to a culturally shared code of expression and conduct and is not necessarily consistent with inner feeling (Potter 1988).

Thus, a long standing scholarly tradition underestimated the intensity and frequency of romantic passion in Chinese society, despite the remarkable continuity of romantic love as a topic in Chinese literature (Jankowiak 1995b).

The brief survey of traditional Chinese literature, presented earlier in the book, indicated that romance was rarely the basis for selection of a marriage partner, but it existed for many centuries, and in some cases, successfully resisted powerful parental opposition. A content analysis of contemporary Chinese literature,

television programs, and personal accounts of romantic stories showed that the Chinese typically define love as an enduring attachment, yet the attraction phase of falling in love embraces high interest of people. The idealization of romantic love in contemporary Chinese literature and films is similar to Imperial China tradition, depicted earlier in the historical review. Since 1976 many new magazines published in China focused on the problems of romance, dating, and marriage (Jankowiak 1995b). Television and films also increased the production of programs exploring romantic love in daily life. The contemporary love tales reflect the implicit value of the romantic experience and a favorable disposition to become preoccupied with love itself. Chinese discuss, savor, and at times, glorify love's positive qualities (Jankowiak 1995b).

The Chinese folk definition of love accentuates enduring love and companionship, yet the themes of romantic love in literature, films, and personal accounts focus exclusively on the "attraction" phase of "falling in love" (*tan liang ai*). Popular magazine stories depict men and women's anguish, loss, and exuberance over encountering, losing, and again finding true love. Not many stories or films explore the attachment phase of love. The major notions of contemporary popular literature are the fragileness of love, the magic of romance, and the uncertainty of commitment (Jankowiak 1995b). The Chinese prefer love stories of conflict and anguish, crushes, and broken hearts, to those on the satisfactions and problems of maintaining a stable marital relationship.

On another side, the communist party officials feel that "the younger generation's willingness to lose themselves in the love quest is silly and counterproductive to the interests of society and its own ideals" (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 170). Unsurprisingly, those "in love" continue to ignore the party's proclamation. It seems the party's role in modern society is similar to Confucianism in the past: it counsels restraint and self-control in the face of the pull of romantic love.

### **Courtship and Dating**

In modern urban China formal and informal dating styles involve different conventions. Informal dating is pursued according to practical rules, based on common sense and situational standards. The parties sometimes provisionally form these rules to avoid the pressure of social expectations or the disapproval of one's community. Informal dating begins in secrecy and accidentally, accompanied by public denial of any intimate involvement. A man and a woman who truly love one another can be restricted by prior obligations (e.g., already married and parental or work unit disapproval), and therefore they do not publicly acknowledge or express their involvement.

Formal dating (or courtship) places its emphasis on normative rules and conventional standards for articulating romantic involvement. These rules govern dating into a semi-ritualistic sequence of private and semipublic meetings with incremental increases in the public expression of commitment, usually resulting in marriage. Courtship (a relationship oriented toward marriage) or just plain going out with no stated intent to marry can constitute the formal style of dating. Once a person meets a partner that fits their criteria, this person tends to fantasize about this partner and can become overwhelmed with romantic anticipation. Romantic passion may arise in either form of courtship, and it is associated with feelings of

emotional intensity, anxiety, expressions of romantic endearment, and the idealization of the partner.

The two styles differ in the domain of public expression rather than in the intensity of involvement. Attraction is the measure of the involvement.

Urban Chinese youth consider “dating” as a time for looking for a potential spouse, instead of an opportunity for friendship in the form of extended play with the opposite sex (Jankowiak 2013).

### **Feelings Involved with Courtship and Dating**

The discussions of Jankowiak (1995b) with his informants revealed that they recall dating, whether formal or informal, with mixed emotions. Some informants remembered it as a pleasant, enjoyable, albeit somewhat anxious experience that they did not want to relinquish; other informants were ambivalent and expressed relief that it did not last too long. More women (sixteen out of twenty-eight) than men (nine out of twenty-nine) felt that this phase was enjoyable. The women who did not enjoy dating had no control over their situation: they were either involved with a married man or someone who was reluctant to make a commitment; in both cases they had little real influence. In these instances, the dating process was remembered as a painful experience. Regardless of the form of dating, once the relationship had been positively discussed and the individual believed that he or she had found the ideal mate or true love, the engaged individual experienced passionate feelings. The romantic passion was strong and deeply memorable. For example, one thirty-three-year-old male intellectual fondly recalled the early stages of his informal courtship:

At first it was terrible. I didn't know what to do. I thought my wife was the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen and that she wouldn't want me. I worried and worried about this. Then I asked her if she wanted to see me again. I truly believed she would refuse. But she did not. I was so happy for days and days I thought of nothing else but how much I loved her. (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 172)

In romantic love of some informants of Jankowiak (1995b), the anxiety and excitement were much intertwined. A twenty-eight-year-old female worker, who had distantly admired her future husband for some time, recalled the initial phases of her formal courtship:

After being introduced I was not disappointed but feared that I wasn't pretty enough for him. When he didn't call on me for several days, I sank into a deep depression that only lifted when he asked to see me again. After a few more encounters we were all but married. It was a wonderful time. Everything was easy and happy. Although I am satisfied with my marriage, we seem more busy and distant. (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 172)

Another female worker of age twenty-four, remembered how slowly she responded to her future husband's overture for emotional involvement:

He came to see me every other day and gave me a few small [i.e., inexpensive] but thoughtful gifts. At first I didn't have any excitement in my heart, but slowly I found myself starting to like him. After a month or so I found myself becoming excited in anticipation of his arrival. In fact, I even might have dreamed of him. When he asked me to be

his girlfriend I was very happy. I knew that I loved him very much and that I wanted to marry him. (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 172)

Previous marital experience did not lessen the intensity of falling in love and romance. The behavior and experience of divorced men and women during their second courtship bore a resemblance to that of their first. For example, a forty-four-year-old male told that his girlfriend had “lost ten pounds because she was in love with me.” He added that “she told me she can’t sleep and misses me.” She stared at him and laughed at whatever he said, repeating in a very low singsong voice that he was “so intelligent and handsome.” Her demeanor resembled that of a young unmarried girl who had just “fallen in love.” Clearly, the courtship was a deep-felt, intensely emotional experience for her (Jankowiak 1995b, pp. 172–173).

Romantic love does not always lead to courtship. For example, a twenty-five-year-old woman described how she developed a secret and intense infatuation for her former instructor:

When I was eighteen years old, I knew a man who was thirty-eight. He helped me study. I was too young to start seeing men, so I had to keep my feelings secret. I remember that whenever we studied together I was acutely aware of his presence, especially his smell. He smelled like a man. When he talked, his saliva would hit me and I liked the sensation. I didn’t think about having sex with him, but I was aware that I was very interested in him and that I wanted to be associated with him. I still think of him. (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 173)

On another hand, courtship does not always engender romantic passion. For example, a forty-two-year-old, divorced male middle school teacher courted a woman who was not particularly interested in him. He described how he felt when he learned that his “girlfriend” was not emotionally involved:

I wanted this girl. She was thirty-four years old and kind of pretty. We had been writing for a few weeks and I asked her if she wanted to see me. After a few weeks she wrote back and asked me to come see her in Harbin (a city over one thousand miles to the north-east of Huhhot). I agreed. We spent the week together going different places. However, I knew she wasn’t interested in me when she refused in the park to have her picture taken with me. What’s more, every time she thought there was someone who might see her, she would raise her umbrella so that no one could see who was walking with me. I had hoped that our encounter would turn into something more significant. But I was cautious. I could tell she wasn’t that interested. I think I am doomed to live alone and be sad. (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 173)

Another woman first met her husband when she was thirty-two. Being desperate to marry, she admitted that never felt anything special for him. Her formal courtship was “a necessary path to marriage and to do what was expected of you” (p. 173). It did not ignite romantic passion or enduring love.

### **Emotional Effects of Potential Rejection or Abandonment**

A person in the state of romantic love is fragile; the falling in love may have negative (or destructive) as well as positive (or rewarding) aspects. Chinese informants of Jankowiak (1995b) described the glory of love and romantic involvement, as well as acknowledged the rejection in love, but they usually avoided this theme in general conversation. The possibility of rejection by a lover is a real

option, and abandonment by a lover is viewed as more devastating than divorce. Lindholm (1988) noted that suicide from a lover's rejection is a marker for assessing the predominance of romantic idealization in a particular society. The reaction of Chinese informants to a romantic rejection illustrates the reality of romantic idealization.

The presence of a romantic ideal and the fragility of a person in love in contemporary China were confirmed in the personal accounts of seventy-three informants (Jankowiak 1995b) who admitted that they would feel devastated and suicidal if the person they were engaged to left them. The salience of romance was heart-breakingly revealed in the cases when they experienced rejection or abandonment. A thirty-five-year-old informant described the intensity, anxiety, and essence of romantic feelings when he explained the potential psychological terror of such a situation:

You do not understand Chinese customs. We aren't like Americans. We don't have opportunities to meet women like in America. Maybe you go to work where there are two unmarried women on your floor. You see them day after day. Maybe you become a little excited by them. If you are given an introduction and she agrees to see you again, you are almost engaged. This may be the first time you have thought about a woman. You become sexually excited when you see her. All those little dreams you have had about sex center on her. She is going to be your wife. You feel happy, anxious, and sexually aroused. During that time she is the center of your life. After you are married you have accomplished that goal. After sex, it is not as profound as before. If she died, you would be sad but you would not be devastated. However, if that girl leaves you when you are courting her, it can be terrible. You feel like everything in the world has been taken away from you.

When Jankowiak asked, "Why is it that important?" he continued,

You just don't understand Chinese customs. It is not like America. You cannot run around. You must stay with one girl. That girl is the center of your life. She is special. When I was in Lanzhou I lived with four men. We annoyed each other. Then I met that dancer. She was pretty. She liked me. It was the first time I ever loved a girl. I wanted her. I desired her. I had to have her. When she left me for another man, I was crazy. I cried and cried, and I might have thought of killing myself (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 177)

Another informant, a female of age twenty-eight, explained the feelings of her gender and age cohort and noted that because dating was a monumental experience it demanded that

you put everything into it. So that the other person becomes your life. For him to leave you when you are involved with him is crushing. It is an abandonment that is difficult to get over. When you are married you have obligations. The mystery is over. You aren't the same people. (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 177)

The emotional investment and deep personal involvement in the dating phase are often enormous and painful.

The emotional torment is typical to the romantic passion due to idealization and uncertainty that later lead to a person's sense of illusion and deprivation. The idealization heightens the expectations and makes the experience keener. The uncertainty drives the tone of emotional intensity to extremes and exaggerates the sense of deprivation. Due to this, romantic love ignites anxiety. As a young woman noted, "I think love is a terrible thing" (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 177).

This uncomfortable experience of arousal eventually leads to either a commitment to marry or a decision to terminate the relationship. Then anxiety and the intensity of the romantic involvement go down since a crisis of doubt and uncertainty is over. What Jankowiak (1995b) noticed in the description of this emotional torment was the lack of cultural specificity. One could easily imagine an American or European being overwhelmed with such feelings.

### **Love and Sex**

Romantic love in modern China is often related to premarital sex experience, but sometimes it may have a purpose to manipulate a prospective partner for seduction. In the 1980s, it became evident that many single urban Chinese women under the right circumstances were willing to be sexually involved with lovers (Jankowiak 1995b). They engaged in premarital sex also because it inspired an implicit obligation to marry, which was reinforced in the case of pregnancy.

The power of romantic emotions could invoke equity and compel reciprocity. Some men with the primary interest in seduction manipulated these tacit factors during dating in order to appeal for greater sexual intimacy. For example, one twenty-four-year-old male, who seduced four women, explained his strategy simply and straightforward:

I always use the direct approach. I tell them that I am available and want to settle down. However, my mother wants me to marry a hometown girl who I do not love. I therefore insist that if she agrees to go out with me that we do so secretly, as I have a number of people who know me, and I don't want them telling my mother that I am seeing another woman. After a few additional meetings they agree to go out with me, and when I tell them that I love them they seem to fall in love with me. After that it is relatively easy to go to bed with them. (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 174)

The seducer often invokes the folk notion that romantic feelings are genuine and should be expressed through greater sexual intimacy. Along with the cultural expectations that people who have sex together will marry, he justifies his desires and reassures a woman of his honorable intentions.

Some women are not entirely fooled by this style, some try to obtain a specific benefit that they can achieve from a clandestine relationship. For example, a twenty-one-year-old female worker who was attending a number of private dance parties told that

I enjoy men, but I am too young to marry and I do not want to make a commitment. However, I still want to be around men. The best men are married. Because I know they will not leave their wives and that they will be very nice to me, I am not afraid of them. Certainly I kiss and dance with them; however, I do not go to bed with them (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 175).

Another woman, a thirty-two-year-old clerk, remembered that she agreed to sleep with her boyfriend only because

I was afraid that he would find someone else. I knew he was a good man, and I wanted him. I tried everything. I told him how much I loved him and how I knew we were meant to be happy. He was touched, and when he wanted to sleep with me how could I refuse? Besides, I thought, if I went to bed with him, that he would have to marry me, and he did. (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 175)

As Jankowiak (1995b) stated, Chinese men and women differ in the basis for the idealization of the other. The widespread expectation that romantic feelings and sexual intimacy will induce an emotional commitment can also lead to confusion and bitter disappointment.

### **Love Expectations and Marriage**

In modern cultures romantic love often constitutes a proper reason for wanting to marry. In China's large cities a new generation of youths in the 1980s took their ideas and actions to expand the customary notions of courtship and produced new expectations for emotional satisfaction within marriage (Wu 1987). The assumption was that if romantic love and dating could provide the emotional excitement, then marriage could too. Marriage, besides the purpose of procreation, was regarded rather as the primary institution for achieving happiness, contentment, and emotional security.

As Jankowiak (1995b) noted, the folk idea that love and romance *could be* combined in marriage was not a recent phenomenon; the idea was in the air and in tales for a long time. That the state legally endorsed free choice and love as a basis for marriage was new. The younger generation of urbanites, who demanded that love and marriage be synonymous, eagerly embraced this possibility.

Many of Jankowiak's (1995b) informants admit that the romantic intensity inevitably lessens in marriage, typically after the birth of a child when the couple redefines their roles from lovers to parents. Even though many in the younger generation do not believe that romance has to wane, they tend to deeply resent the declining of passionate love. The resentment is widespread. For example, Shanghai and Tianjin women complained that after "they were married, their relationship with their husband was robbed of its former glamour and romance" (Honig and Hershatter 1988, p. 176).

Jankowiak's (1995b) field study experience showed that, despite the possibility of such disillusionment, the Chinese still prefer to speak favorably of, and believe in, romantic ideals, even when they do not feel passion anymore. Although many married couples were disappointed in love as an illusion, their disenchantment does not much affect the younger generation who still believe in the value of love and the importance of remaining "in love." The pursuit and feelings of love, the illustrations presented by Jankowiak (1995b), did not display any significant gender difference in the experience of romantic involvement. Anxiety as a distinct aspect of romantic love as well as the intensity of the romantic experience itself does not vary by gender.

Nevertheless, Jankowiak reported differences in the content of men's and women's romantic fantasies and the timing of romantic involvement. The idealization of female beauty is in the focus of men's romantic fantasies; they demonstrated an incidental interest in the qualities of character and assumed that if a woman is beautiful, she should also have a nice and pleasant personality. Chinese men appreciate women as symbols of love, security, and safety; yet, their sexual and romantic fantasies do not represent this value.

Chinese men fall in love more quickly than women, sometimes with a woman they have seen but never had a conversation with. A college-educated informant mentioned that “every time I see a pretty woman I think I might fall in love with her, but then I discover she isn’t very intelligent. I feel disappointed and I am no longer interested in her” (Jankowiak 1995b, p. 181). A fantasy based on appearance can be misleading.

Actual marital histories (Jankowiak 1995b) discovered that, although men place great value on beauty and physical attraction in the domain of their romantic fantasies, in mate selection other considerations—women’s education, social status, compatible personalities, and virtue—weigh an importance.

Analysis of female fantasies concerning romantic attraction revealed that women emphasize the potential qualities of the involvement. Their attitudes accented more on doing together such things as traveling, discussing events, sharing feelings, and caring for a child. Even though female informants mentioned that being a handsome man is an important criterion in mate selection, still it was evident from conversations and observations that it was a relatively less important factor. Women were more interested in understanding men’s character and could not imagine themselves with a very handsome man whose character they scorned. It takes longer time to appraise character than it does physical beauty; therefore, women are slower in getting involved and making their decisions.

As Jankowiak (1995b) concluded, romantic love in China was not the product of Westernization. The cultural expressions of romantic love are frequently mediated by family obligation, formal and informal conventions of dating, strategies of seduction, and the prevalent political ideology. For many Chinese, romantic involvement is regarded as truly genuine and profoundly moving experiences of the life. It appears as an opposite view to the more instrumental and pragmatic values, which they express in their discussions of the ideal mate. The reconciliation of these competing values remains the challenge for many Chinese young and older people.

### **Universal Attributes of Chinese Romantic Love**

Recent studies (Jankowiak et al. 2015) indicated strong tendencies toward universalization of characteristics attributing to romantic love by many people in China, similar to Euro-American notions. They found that Chinese youths, regardless of gender, experience the following core attributes when “in love”: “I will do anything for the person I love” (or altruism), “I constantly think about the person I am in love with” (or intrusive thinking), “romantic love is the supreme happiness of life” (or self-actualization), my “love makes my partner stronger and a better person,” (or emotional fulfillment), and “sexual attraction is necessary for love” (biology).

Chinese male youth are perceived to be the most responsible for initiating and maintaining the relationship and they are expected to do anything for a lover; women are less prone to that feeling. Urban Chinese men in the romantic love appear more idealistic in their desire to make a grand gesture of self-sacrifice for their beloved. This gesture is consistent with the masculine image of

being responsible for the family's welfare and is expressed in the demonstration of a man's willingness to make a long-term commitment. Both Chinese men and women insisted on the importance of material factors for sustaining a relationship. For many Chinese women, there is no contradiction between desiring love and material benefits.

Chinese women place a strong emphasis on the value of being an independent self and, thus, are not willing to lose that image in the name of love (Jankowiak et al. 2015).

## 13.2 Romantic Love in Japan

### Japanese Language of Love

In the modern Japanese language, there are three words that are commonly used to denote the English word love—*koi*, *ai*, and *renai*, the last being the amalgamation of the characters *koi* and *ai* (Ryang 2006, p. 13). The word *koi* has been used through the centuries; it means sexually explicit aspects of love, crush, and longing. *Koi* primarily has a connotation of sexual love, infatuation, and erotic passion.

The word *ai* began to denote love only after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, as a translation of foreign words *love*, *liebe*, or *amour*, and accommodated encounters with Western literature. Depending on the context, *ai* could also be used with the meaning of *koi*.

By the 1960s, the term *ai* certainly has become “superior” to *koi*, since it represented long-lasting, steady, and pure love, rather than the flame-like, whimsical passion and painful infatuation of *koi*, a feeling of not being able to control oneself (Ryang 2006, p. 89). In modern Japanese usage, *ai* may also be applied to a mother's love for her children, but *koi* would not be used in this context.

Another new word, *Renai*, matched Western notions of romance and romantic love. The meaning of this term, however, is closer to that of *koi* rather than *ai* (Ryang 2006, p. 13). The Japanese, however, do not say “I love you” as often as people in the West do, and they generally do not express their love openly. They believe that love can be expressed by behavior and actions.

### Socio-Cultural Context of Modern Love in Japan

The 1960s was the time when Japan's economy was gradually gaining confidence after the devastation of WWII. Many urban nuclear families lived in modern, government-subsidized high-rise apartment complexes. The dream of owning “my home” became a more distinctive aspiration only later in the post-1970s. The family unit gradually headed toward disintegration; meanwhile, the idea of the “happy home” remained tenable. The postwar baby boom created a surge in the youth population. The rising middle-class ideal of the peaceful urban nuclear family life, however, was challenged by student radicalism in the street. The 1960s Japan presented a mixed picture marked by fierce clashes between the forces of stability and rebellion (Ryang 2006, p. 65).

By the end of the 1960s, Japan's economy made a decisive shift from labor-intensive to capital-intensive and joined the ranks of the industrialized nations. There was a drastic decline in the percentage of the population engaging in agriculture. On the other hand, the number of employees working for large companies drastically increased. Meanwhile, more women found employment (part-time or full-time) in the service sector. The anti-establishment movements on various fronts ceased. In the 1960s, Japan also experienced strong population growth. Although the majority of the country still lived humbly in their tiny apartments, there was a rise of middle-class consciousness and national pride, permeating every family.

### **Popularity of Romantic Ideals in Modern Japan**

In 1959, the Japanese society was captivated by the engagement of Crown Prince Akihito to a commoner, Shōda Michiko. An unprecedented match between the imperial heir and a non-aristocratic woman presented an essential example of love at first sight, born on the tennis courts. The media extensively covered their fabulous wedding ceremony and the Western-style royal parade. The 1960s foreshadowed a new era for romance and love (as opposed to arranged) marriage, which became available to all, even to a prince (Ryang 2006, p. 65).

Love was liberated from the Emperor's gaze and the imperialist state purpose. It became available to citizens as their personal choice, equally and freely. The self of people metamorphosed from the passive, non-participating subjects into the active, critically reflexive, decision-making, and self-determining agencies. The concept of love transformed accordingly creating the "loving subject" (Ryang 2006, p. 2).

The national romance of Miko and Mako, unfolded in the early 1960s, became a model of pure love. Miko (Ōshima Michiko) and Mako (Kōno Makoto) met in a hospital in Osaka, while both were receiving treatment as inpatients. Miko was still a high school student and Mako was attending a college preparatory school. The relationship between young lovers was nonsexual in nature. This love ended tragically and prematurely in 1963, three years after it began, with the death of Miko, a beautiful college student whose face was destroyed by the surgery undertaken on the incurable cancer on her facial bones. The death of a young woman, and the bereavement of her lover who stayed faithful until her death, became a national love romance. People were fascinated by this story of pure love, and its hopelessly sad ending glorified its purity. It presented the romantic ideal of that time and paved paths for many future romances, which followed this ideal. Their story was mourned, published, remembered, and widely presented in media.

The 1960s in Japan was a time marked by a belief that love was to be a prerequisite to sex (and not vice versa). The society's culture viewed presexual "pure" love as something praiseworthy and ideal. Premarital sex became a taboo on Japan's love scene. It was assumed that one had to be in love first, prior to having sex; virginity became a symbol of purity. The story of Miko and Mako exemplified what the Ministry of Education's purity education expected of Japan's young men and women (Ryang 2006). Miko was also a pioneering figure for Japanese

women, receiving a higher education and an ability to write romantically. From 1969, the percentage of women entering senior high school began to surpass that of men, while the female college attendance rate remained low.

### **Controversies of Modern Love in Japan**

Besides the public appearance of pure love in the 1960s, the reality of life after marriage needs to be recognized. While husbands worked hard for prolonged hours, wives were burdened by childrearing. Along with the nurtured ethos of purity in sexual morality, these aspects of the Japanese way of life alienated marriages from sex. The 1960s freed marriage from sex; that implied that after intercourse, which was necessary for reproduction, sex was no longer required. This process occurred gradually over the next decades. The sexual desires of wives were suppressed or displaced by watching soap operas, while husbands' sexuality was redirected outside the home. By the way, from the late-1960s on, overseas sex tours to South Korea, Thailand, or the Philippines became popular among Japanese men.

The late 1980s on through the early 2000s was the age of affluence and abundance in Japan. Ryang (2006) highlighted three cultural phenomena of modern love in Japan: first, underage prostitution by female high school students; second, adulterous affairs that captured the imagination and desire of married men and women; third, ambiguous denationalization of love and the mass adoration and admiration of Bae Yong Joon, a South Korean actor. These have been popular-cultural carriers of modern love over recent time.

The "aid-dating" (*enjokōsai*) is the underage prostitution by female high school students (*joshikōsei*). This phenomenon peaked in the early 1990s. These were sexual transactions between female high school students, the young women who embodied the sexual desire, and middle-aged men. In exchange for dating, broadly defined, the female students would receive the financial "aid" from their middle-aged patrons. Practically participating in prostitution, those precollege girls offered sexual services comprising a vast range of strategies and activities including commodification of their used school uniforms, handkerchiefs, socks, school athletic wear, school swimwear, and underwear, as well as a distribution of semi-nude, nude, and sex-scene photographs. As Ryang (2006, p. 96) commented, those 1990s aid-dating girls somehow mastered the skills of distancing themselves from their bodies to use them in the provision of sexual services. They, however, were not devoid of love. Girls were romantically involved with boyfriends, from whom they kept their aid-dating secret. It was only that love was far removed from sex.

The "Paradise Lost phenomenon" became popular the latter half of the 1990s due to the novel *Shitsurakuen* (Paradise Lost) by Watanabe Junichi, presenting a tale of extramarital romance. The novel describes an adulterous relationship between Kuki, a fifty-four year-old publishing company editor, and Rinko, a thirty-eight year-old calligrapher. They are both married: Kuki not unhappily on the surface, with a grown-up daughter, and Rinko, very unhappily to a successful medical doctor. The plot of the story is simple, describing numerous luscious and dramatic dates at five-star hotels in romantic places, attendances at exquisite

artistic performances involving traditional art forms, gourmet dinners complete with vintage French wines. Finally the story had an unhappy ending when Kuki and Rinko committed a tragic joint suicide. While supposed to be a love story, the underlying subtext is a story of male competition to demonstrate superior virility. Throughout the novel, surprisingly little is said about love. Dialogue between Kuki and Rinko is dominated by references to bodily pleasure, detailed descriptions of nudity, and sexual acts, which fill many episodes. Joint suicide accented the drama; it has been a recurring theme in the genre of Japanese love stories ever since medieval times (Ryang 2006, pp. 112–114).

Why did the novel become so popular? That was interest in the possibilities of arranging intimate, extramarital relationships—in reality, in fantasy, or in virtuality. These relationships captured the imagination of married men and women. There was burgeoning desire of married, middle-aged men and women to enter into adulterous affairs (*furin*) with a mature partner. The story inspired a possibility for married men to have extramarital sex not with prostitutes, but with a well-educated and beautiful woman who is younger, yet mature.

The third prominent phenomenon of modern love in Japan emerged in the 2000s and was described by the media as “Yongfluenza” among middle-aged Japanese women. It was the mass adoration and admiration of Bae Yong Joon, a South Korean actor. He was the lead male actor in a soap opera, *The Winter Sonata*, the extremely popular South Korean television drama, first aired in 2003. The story embodied a complex assortment of romantic elements from Japan’s past and present, including colonial dreams, wartime sovereign love, and the postwar pure love (Ryang 2006). It is a story of platonic love between high school sweethearts. They fall in love, and according to the drama’s depiction, it is innocent, youthful, non-sexual—what we might call puppy love. Bae has a gentle demeanor, soft speech, agreeable looks. All these features contrast with machismo and muscle-oriented sex appeal. His appearance is also different from the samurai-like determined and aloof grace. His attraction is comforting with a shy smile like a little boy (although he is in his thirties). He has non-dominant, caring mannerisms and a warm, yet assuring gaze. Thus, Japan’s love, which was nationalized during the postwar decades, is now in the process of denationalizing. The story of *The Winter Sonata*’s popularity indicates how this might be happening (Ryang 2006, p. 116).

As Ryang comments (2006), modern love in Japan takes a form of ambiguous denationalization. “While the Japanese state is not abandoning the fundamental principle of its foundation—Japan being the nation only of the Japanese—ideas relating to how ‘Japanese love’ should be and how the Japanese should love and marry, for example, are being redefined around and beyond the national boundaries, albeit in an uncertain way”. (pp. 7–8). Overall, Ryang (2006) characterizes the modern love in Japan as estrangement from self, sex, and society. Love thus faces a crisis. It is sought not in human connections, but in a materially distorted form of fetishism directed toward designer purses, imaginary adultery, or a good-looking Asian actor.

## Chapter 14

# Romantic Love and Culture: Reviewing Past and Looking Forward

This chapter concludes and connects multiple perspectives and scholarly methodology presented in the previous chapters. I will review some key points and positions expressed through the book in concise summaries. Reviewing the past, the chapter looks for the future of love research.

### 14.1 Romantic Love as a Complex Concept

Romantic love is considered among other kinds of love and in the connections with conjugal love, parental love, friendship-love, etc. Due to historical connotations with courtly love, the researchers of the twentieth century continued to relate the concept of romantic love to passionate love, even though there has been a gradual shift in recent generation to view companionate love with its intimacy also as romantic love. Actually, *romantic love* can be affectionate, as well as passionate.

Romantic love is the complex phenomenon comprising of biological, psychological, and social-cultural phenomena. The concept has evolved over the centuries from different cultural sources and traditions. *Romantic love* describes a special constellation of feelings between men and women, different from simply *sexual love*. Sexual desire is definitely present, but it is sublimed. *Romantic love* is an erotic and emotional attraction and attachment to a person of the opposite sex characterized by an idealized and glamorized view of an object (person) of admiration and the high expectations for and from a romantic relationship. The *romantically* involved *individual* perceives life and love events in a beautiful view—not routine, not pragmatic, and not real—like in novel or movie. *Romantic* love for a lover is the experience uplifted from a mundane and ordinary way of living; sexual attraction is mediated by various actions, feelings, and cognitions displaying its sublime nature.

Linguistic studies showed a diversity of lexical material and rich love vocabulary in many cultures. A variety of words has been used in different languages and cultures around the world to denote the major characteristics and subtle nuances of their cultural understanding of love. Love words bear numerous contextual connotations in different cultures, and the meanings of expressions of love depend on the situational and cultural context. Where the concept of love is absent, men and women may still have that special, intense feeling without being able to verbalize it with appropriate clichés.

Materials in this book have presented evidence that romantic love in its various forms and realities has existed in different historical periods and in the most modern cultures of the world. Nonetheless, love ideals, expectations, norms, rituals, and expressions demonstrated cultural diversity; cultures influence how people feel, think, and behave being in romantic love. Thus, love is universal, but still culturally specific.

Universally, sexual desire has been considered as a feature of romantic love, although their connections are interpreted differently in cultural contexts. Romantic love generally involves a mixture of emotional and sexual desire with their emotional highs—exhilaration, passion, and elation. Culturally specifically, however, in Western tradition, romantic love and sexual desire have been phenomena closely linked with each other, yet at the same time different. Desire is directed to the pleasure of a lover, while romantic love is directed to a partner's joy placing the good of the beloved above one's own. Dualism and opposition between desire and love have been common in Western culture, and it was assumed that lovers should control and constrain their desire and subordinates it for well-being of the other. Eastern culture, on the other hand, did not consider love and sex in terms of their dualism; they did not oppose true love and sexual desire. A longing for a sublime sexual partnership was a natural feeling of love. Physical and spiritual were indistinguishable in that culture, and only involvement of spiritual feeling made sex pleasurable. The ability to empathize the other's feelings has been a vital emotion of love affairs.

Romantic love is characterized by *affection* and *preoccupation* with an object (person) of love and engagement in an emotion of loving. *Passion*, as a strong affection, is a state of intense longing for union with another, and many scholars consider it the most salient feature of romantic love. It is primarily related to the biological nature of a human and mate selection.

A long cultural tradition also equated romantic love with passionate love. Passionate love has existed throughout ages and shaped the cultural archetypes of love, which people used in their everyday lives. In addition, authors of novels and movies as well as other creators of romantic dreams valorized the value of passionate love. It is understandable from a psychological perspective: The readers have been more interested in reading and viewers in watching when hot characters, turbulent times, and thrilling plots are depicted. Passionate love is thrilling. People generally like the excitement. Such passionate representation of romantic love shaped people's imagination and dreams for their lives and further formed their cultural archetypes of romantic love. The other kinds of love were imagined

as boring, less worthwhile, yet inevitable to live with. So, passionate love of youth and early adults—who were high in testosterone and estrogen and were saturated with sexy and erotic imagination—was considered as desirable and romantic. The older adults were excluded from this romantic realm with prejudice and were discriminated. Many youngsters believed that love and life were much less worthwhile after the age of 30; the people of that age are already too old. The love in the older age was ridiculed. The same way, some types of love present in other cultures were considered as non-romantic, according to Western norms. We could not expect anything else from the people raised on Westernized Hollywood movies.

Should we consider this type of love representation as a limitation of our mind and perhaps as prejudice and discrimination against the people with another cultural view? Some time ago, actors and models with “perfectly” shaped slim bodies and ethnicities were preferable for glamor romantic magazines and movies. Therefore, many people thought only of men and women with these types of body and ethnicity as capable for romance. Then, at some point, it was considered as prejudice and discrimination, and so the spectrum of body and ethnic representation was extended. More plump and diverse characters and models appeared in media.

In parallel with this example, I believe that equating romantic love with passionate love is a product of a similar tendency to represent passion as the key characteristic of love in romantic novels or movies. Popular romance novels and movies still convey the myth that only young and early adult men and women can enjoy romance. Their capability for passion is precipitating for this. Despite the popular beliefs that only passionate love deserves an icon of being romantic, *companionate love*, as a strong, enduring, and fulfilling *affection* and attachment, can also be *romantic*.

Actually, the strength of passion does not constitute romantic love. Temperamental lovers just feel love more energetically, and it was widely depicted in novels and movies and therefore became a prototypical image of romantic love. Maybe it is time to extend our mind and imagination and include the diverse typology of romantic lovers. The more cultural diversity of attractive loving characters will be presented in novels, magazines, and movies, not only in terms of physical appearance, but also in terms of types of love they experience, the more diverse images of romantic love men and women will acquire in their minds; love researchers will be among those. Let us remember romantic love is a product of our imagination and the latter is shaped by social media and good examples. I believe that variety of loves in cultural contexts presented in this book can extend our minds in this regard. Therefore, maybe it is time to extend the connotations of the notion of romantic love—people’s images and associations—and communicate not only romantic passion, but also romantic intimacy and commitment.

Evolutionary psychology explains why passionate love is universal and equally intense in different cultures. However, cultural attitudes to passion and behaviors varied dramatically from one culture to another and from one temporal period to the next. The cases of Chinese and European history provided evident examples of diversity of love attitudes in a historical perspective. Romance has been

culture-specific, based on historical and cultural traditions, and expressed in various cultural forms. Culture, values, and traditions have been the factors, which transformed passionate love into romantic love and influenced the expressions and experiences of love. Passionate love is primarily based on a sexual attraction, but idealization and culturally influenced way of loving valorize its value and transform it into a romantic love. Its cultural features are ones that pertain to cultural rituals of love and mating. Thus, the cultural perspective is as powerful as the evolutionary heritage in the understanding of love. The research findings, presented in the previous chapters, indicate that universal features primarily relate to the love experience, while culturally influenced features are ones that pertain to the expressions of love: cultural rituals of love. Romantic love is often defined through passionate feelings. However, it is actually something more and beyond. The degree of passion is not the only possible constituent of romantic love, and sometimes, it may be not the most important. Passion moves a lover toward a partner, while culture shapes romantic love making the passion beautiful.

Romantic versus realistic love is probably among the top controversies, which readers have encountered in the previous chapters. The essential feature of romantic love is admiration and idealization of a partner. The partner is viewed in an idealized image, with an exaggeration of positive characteristics and an extenuation of the shortcomings. A romantic lover transfers the positive attitudes from one quality of a partner to another and further elevates unrealistic and *idealistic attitudes* and expectations of a partner and relationship. What is beautiful is good, and what is good is beautiful. Romantic lovers tend to amplify positive and overlook negative characteristics of their partners, and they glamorize and exaggerate their virtues.

Being in romantic love, partners also idealize their relationship. They consider their relationship as unique, exclusive, and long-lasting forever. They believe that love will win and overcome any problem. The partners enjoy their active sexual life and believe that their passionate sex will be the key feature of their future life and will continue forever. The partner is considered as the best possible one, unique, and irreplaceable; therefore, the possibility of a romantic breakup seems dreadful.

Romantic love idealizes everything around. The life is in rosy glasses; it is beautiful and enchanted in the eyes of a lover. Romantic stories plotted in love novels and movies have been idealized and tend to transfer to imagination of real lovers. Due to such idealization, romantic love is a wonderful dream with multiple positive, sometimes illusive, expectations, which are perceived by partners as reality. Romantic idealization inspires a partner to become the better person, to improve being able to meet these positive expectations. Yet, the excessively idealized perception of a partner has the risk of possible disenchantment.

Another salient characteristic of romantic love is a *longing for affiliation*, striving for a sexual and spiritual union. *Longing for affiliation* of masculine psychology and feminine psychology in a harmonious union includes natural integration of love and sex and is a central characteristic of romantic love. The allure of romantic love as a merging of two is powerful.

Strong passion in romantic love can lead to irrational feelings which overshadow one's mind, and sometimes, it looks like a sickness of love. The studies presented in previous chapters showed that extreme passionate love resembles an abnormal state of mind, similar to addiction.

*Romantic love* is challenging and demanding; it can bring both positive and negative feelings. Romantic love as a diverse idealization of a partner and relationship is vulnerable to disenchantment, and even disappointment and disillusion which may fetch not only joy, but also pain. Expectations frequently exceed realities and possibilities. The feelings of bipolar mood swings, the risk of unrequited love, and *suffering* are natural to lovers. The ideal of romantic love is alluring, yet it is fragile. Additionally, the previous chapters demonstrated that economic, social difficulties and cultural differences place pressures on natural attraction of lovers and can ruin romances.

Nevertheless, *romantic love* is fun; it is an excited feeling and *entertaining experience* for many men and women and brings them beyond everyday routine. Adults enjoy the adult fairy tales of romance, depicted in novels and movies; they like to dream about these and live through them in life. Otherwise, life seems boring for many of them.

A romantic lover explicitly feels and thinks that this partner and relationship are exclusive. Many men and women believe that *romantic love* is a unique true love—one for a lifetime—and excludes other possibilities of the same feelings with another person. Assuming such *exclusivity*, a romantic lover becomes inevitably possessive and potentially jealous.

*Romantic love* includes *feelings, verbal expressions, and actions*. People can display their *love explicitly and implicitly*. As we saw in the previous chapters, some cultures place emphasis on explicit and direct ways of love expression to a romantic partner, while others on implicit and indirect ways. The modern concept of romantic love, as reviewed across cultures, is focused on the emotion of love and its expression, as much as on doing something for the sake of love and lovers.

A personal fulfillment and *happiness* is a natural pursuit of men and women *in romantic love*. Many findings presented in previous chapters support these expectations: Love tends to increase happiness significantly. Even though unrequited, obsessive, and irrational love does not lead to happiness, the rational, caring, and compassionate love does. Romantic love as a dream, however, should expect obstacles. Too quick fulfillment and physical consumption may cease its romanticism. The waiting of the beloved and dreaming of union are often psychologically more pleasurable than the love reality. Dreams are generally more beautiful than reality; romantic love is more inspiring than the daily routine of relationships.

In most societies though the history, marriage has been a social institution based on an array of familial considerations rather than on the personal emotions. Nowadays, many think of love in connection with a happy marriage, *although romantic love* was not considered as a prerequisite for *marriage* until the modern era. The increased mobility of population in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries and more opportunities for men and women to mingle before marriage raised the importance of love feelings prior to marriage. Nevertheless, many people did not consider

these new romantic ideas for marriage realistic to the cultural and social contexts of their lives. They enjoyed the love experience in their youth years. However, they often settled for something more pragmatic in marriage. The presence of arranged matches as a cultural ideal, however, tells relatively little about the involvement of passionate love in illicit relationships, such as elopements and extramarital affairs.

Relations between love and marriage have been often viewed in the dichotomy of love marriage versus arranged marriage. Anthropologists typically have regarded the presence of arranged marriages as evidence for the absence of love. However, the division between love and arranged marriages is not always clear, and both types may include romantic love. Love, however, plays different roles in these marriages. Modern Western cultural conception of love strange layout of -marriages considers love as a prerequisite for marriage, while Eastern conception of arranged marriage assumes love as a consequence of marriage evolving in a marital relationship. The arranged marriage should not be interpreted as a forced marriage and exclude romantic feelings.

The experience of *self-transcendence* and *self-expansion* is the essence of true romantic love. The personal growth of self, which lovers feel, includes physical possessions, power, higher self-esteem, and stronger self-affirmation. Their psychological self-boundaries expand through the sense of self-loss and merger with the beloved other; in such a way, they reach ecstatic elevation.

Overall, based on the review and detailed analysis of historical cultures and modern societies presented in many chapters of this book, we can conclude that the following distinguishing features of romantic love are essential for this notion. Multiple studies demonstrated that:

1. A lover is fascinated and cognitively preoccupied with the beloved, is engaged in active imagination, and is intrusively thinking.
2. A lover idealizes the beloved, emphasizes what is truly admirable, avoids dwelling on the negative, and renders the negative into a positive quality.
3. A lover has a pronounced desire for physical and emotional merger and union with the beloved and strives to maintain physical proximity and psychological intimacy.
4. A lover is exclusively focused on one particular person and believes that real or idealized qualities distinguish him or her from all other people, and therefore, the lover is unable to react to more than one person at a time.
5. A lover strives for reciprocity of feelings and desires to be exclusive for a beloved one; this is associated with fear of rejection and unsettling shyness in the presence of the object of love.
6. A lover feels heightened sensitivity to any behavior that might be interpreted favorably as an indication of love.
7. A mood of a lover is dependent on reciprocity of feelings and actions, and physical and emotional proximity to the beloved; all of these indicate emotional attachment and dependency.
8. A lover feels strong empathy, caring, and concern for the beloved and wants to do anything for the beloved.

9. A lover reorders life priorities, values, and motivations, and actively desires to maintain the relationship; the lover is ready to sacrifice other concerns, interests, responsibilities, and activities in life.
10. Romantic love grows through adversity; the adverse life events increase the lover's feelings up to a certain point.

The concept of romantic love and its descriptors, which were summarized above and illustrated in many chapters of this book, can unite the body of scholarly information on the topic into a systematic framework and bring consistency in research findings revealed in many cultures around the world. Such consensus would allow studying love in cultural contexts from diverse perspectives of philosophical, historical, literary, anthropological, sociological, and psychological disciplines. It would further help to ingrate their knowledge in a coherent, yet multifaceted picture.

## 14.2 Romantic Love and Sex

In its simplest form, sex is a basic instinct. Sexual interaction, physiological and psychological sexual release of tension, is pleasurable. Everything is just natural, realistic, and practical. Sex, having an initial reproductive function and bringing the basic physical pleasure just from mechanic and physiological interaction between partners, further elaborated into erotica with its esthetical aspect. It also evolved into passion, as pleasure from the anticipation of sex, not just from physical interaction itself. These feelings were already elevated categories, but still tightly related to sex. Then, the esthetical aspect of sex evolved further into a separate category. Nudity was not just for sex, it was able to bring a different pleasure. People enjoyed naked figures of Ancient Greeks and Romans in museums not just because they wanted to have sex with them, but enjoying esthetical pleasure of watching. This was a valorized psychological feeling of another cultural category. They admired the beauty of their bodies esthetically. Therefore, erotica as admiration of beauty was already a step-up to romantic love feelings.

As soon as any idealization and admiration of the partner's body and valorization of the process of sexual intercourse take place, so does the initial step toward beautification, erotization, and romanization of love. This is not romantic love yet in the usual sense we use this term. However, this is already the process of creating the romantic elements and building a romantic ideal since, I believe, the essence of the word *romantic* is *idealization*. Sex can be just sex or romantic sex.

Sex is usually mentally associated with a naked body and sexual intercourse, so what is sexy should be only the naked body and everything associated with it. The dressed body should be beautiful or cute and therefore associated with love, unless people mentally associate certain types of dress with sex. So, the recently popularized word *sexy* in a broad meaning actually means beautiful, or cute. A dressed body usually does not allow for sex; it should be undressed.

The further process of the development of romantic love is the mediation between burgeoning of sexual desire and the ultimate goal of the sexual act. The shortcut between these two points was short in a simple act of sex, yet culture has developed elaborate mediation between these two. Therefore, the expectation of the ultimate goal (sexual release) by the shift of motivation became not less, but sometimes even more enjoyable for a lover. The process of reaching the goal in courtly love became highly saturated by sexual energy and pleasure, and valuable itself. So Freud might be right in his statement that love is actually a sublimation of sexual desire. It might be correct in terms of the process of the development of romantic love. Everything that various cultures invented in this regard is actually the invention of sublimation of sex and the culturally specific mediation of the route between sexual desire and its satisfaction. A suitor brings flowers, says kind words to a woman, invites her to a restaurant, etc., with an implicit ultimate goal of sexual fusion, although the process itself can become rewarding itself, even without reaching that ultimate goal. Romantic love rituals and manners impose some restraints on a suitor in his/her sexual satisfaction; the more the restraints, the more the delay in sexual satisfaction, which brings more pleasure. This might be an implicit assumption of romantic love and its value in human and cultural development. *Arousal transfer is probably the best psychological mechanism to explain this shift of pleasure from sex to romantic images and love.*

Dreams about sex, expectations of it, and waiting for it often bring more pleasure than sex itself. This is why so many people embrace romantic love. The delayed pleasure might be more pleasurable than the immediate one. What about suffering in love? Can love be without suffering? Yes, it probably can, but masochists enjoy pleasure more after suffering; the contrast between misery of suffering and its following pleasure can bring especially high pleasure to masochists. Masochistic tendencies are probably implicitly present in many of us.

### 14.3 Culture and Love

The overview of historical and modern cultures, presented in previous chapters, convinced me that the history of love evolved in distinctions and relations between four important areas of relationships, creating various combinations of the quadrangle: sex, love, friendship, and marriage. History shows that in various periods, these concepts came closer to each other or considered further apart. My conviction is that the final point of destination, to which they are heading in modernity, is coming closer and closer together, merging in a perfect union of love, sex, friendship, and marriage, called romantic love. Romantic love has transformed sex and marriage bringing them to new heights.

I believe that culture has transformed passionate love into romantic love. Passion is a basic emotion based on biology of human nature, while romance is culture-specific and based on cultural traditions. Romantic love is a luxury, which some cultures create, elaborate, and embellish.

Scholars have attempted to answer the question about universality of romantic love providing various arguments in support. This enduring question, posed by many scholars in the past, continued to guide my explorations in this book. This controversy was comprehensively discussed in the historical review presented in the previous chapters. Earlier studies preserved the Western ethnocentrism and asserted that romantic love was a European contribution to the world cultures. On the other side, some philosophers, poets, and social scientists argued that romantic love has been a universal human emotion displayed to a certain degree in almost all societies.

In this book, the suggested dimensional approach to the concept of romantic love, rather than categorical, admits romantic love as a multidimensional concept. Therefore, in some cultures, one or several dimensions might be present, while in other cultures, we can observe the multiple dimensions. The review of world cultures in this book followed the dimensional approach and examined the presence or absence of these dimensions in various cultures.

Previous chapters demonstrated that in historical and modern cultures, love has existed in some social and personal realities, yet not necessarily in all: (1) in literary circles as innovations or traditions, (2) in the minds and dreams of a cultural elite, (3) in the real feelings of people still not being able to express it in behavior, (4) in the real behaviors of people, but still being marginal for society, or (5) in social circles and groups of people. The elite of the societies, middle class, and commoners might have different opinions and behaviors due to the complexity of their minds and social contexts in which they have lived. In the previous chapters, we observed how romantic love circulated in the historical and modern cultures in some or in all of the spheres of societal life, such as cultural ideas, institutional norms, social interactions, or individual lives. Love was perceived as descriptive, injunctive, or personal norms or deviations from the norms in a given culture. The ideas of romantic love evolved in three stages: as (1) fictional ideas, (2) real feelings, or (3) behaviors.

The previous chapters presented a variety of facts, documents, and contemplations from these areas of social and personal life. Romantic love has existed throughout history in many cultures around the world. It was present in the minds, fantasies, and experiences of some people in all historical periods, but the notion of love was in flux throughout human history. Only in the recent two centuries in many modern Western societies and some other cultures, romantic love has shifted, acquiring its high importance, and embraced the minds and emotions of a huge number of people. However, we cannot be sure that even within a culturally encouraging environment, all people feel romantic loves; some may fake the experience, and others remain uncertain or singled out for disappointment.

The Western ideas and practices of romantic love became increasingly cross-national in the twentieth century. The prevalence of the English language throughout many countries, the global circulation of Anglophone print and visual culture, and the attractiveness of American popular culture with its romanticizing of commodities, emotional experiences, and practices promoted cross-national influences, the global reach, international spread, and dissemination of the ideas of romantic love. This Western expansion of romantic cultural ideas was often attributed to capitalism and consumerism (Illouz 1997; Teo 2006).

As Illouz (1997) believes, in the twentieth century, the transnational influence of American capitalism made American practices of romantic consumption widespread due to the export of consumer goods, cultural products, and American strategies of advertising and marketing in other countries. The social media provoked yearnings for beauty, youth, romance, luxurious ego-expressive products, and “romantic” activities, encouraging the process of “consuming the romantic utopia.” As Teo (2006) argues, in recent decades, the American dominance in romantic love was established as expertise and entertainment. New communication systems and social media have made the culture of romantic love transnational through disseminations of cultural stereotypes, norms, language, metaphors, and symbols, which substantially influenced people’s emotions. However, as Teo (2006) concerns, when hegemonic cultural narratives of romantic love increasingly dominate worldwide, men and women in other countries have less knowledge and understanding of alternative cultures or expressions of love.

If this Western view of romantic love is progressive and advancing human nature in another country in a positive way, this may be a good trend, but if this dominating romantic trend overshadows and even suppresses and limits peoples’ cultural options for relationships, this tendency is repressing. It depends on how we interpret the nature of love evolution. Two standpoints on the historical and cultural evolutions of love are possible.

1. *“Main stream” cultural conception of love.* According to this conception, the evolution of love throughout history is represented as a “love ladder,” and some cultures and people have reached the higher steps on this ladder, while others are climbing behind. Western conceptions and principles of romantic love are the perspectives where all other countries and cultures are following. The notion of the “love ladder” assumes that all cultures are climbing from the bottom to the top: from arranged marriage to the love marriage, etc. The love now is better than love which people had before. Westerners have moved farther than others in this direction; the others are trying to follow this role model and climb behind.
2. *“Convergence/mergence” cultural conception of love.* There is no universal ideal conception of love, and the Western concept is only one among the others and not necessarily the best one. The concepts of love accepted in other cultures are not better or worse; they are just different. These various cultural conceptions of love evolve on their own, still pollenating each other and influencing each other.

#### **14.4 The Cultural Premises and Social Conditions of Romantic Love**

What social conditions, premises, and cultural factors in the past have supported and promoted romantic love ideas and practices? The studies of historical and modern cultures presented in the previous chapters showed that the structure

and functions of societies were among the most crucial determinants affecting love emotion and priorities, which men and women ascribed to love feelings. Patriarchy, matriarchy, or equality in family relations, as well as survival and economical function of family, substantially caused the cultural conceptions and restriction imposed on love experience and expression. Men and women in earlier agricultural societies depended on family alliances, societal connections, and group membership; interdependence substantially restrained their options. Gender roles were complimentary and prescribed by economic and social functioning; men biologically were stronger than women, so they did what they did better in terms of their physical capacity. It was assumed that men contributed more in the survival and economic functioning of family and therefore had a higher status. Living in the rural locales, they also had limited availability of potential partners. People were inevitably collectivistic and interdependent. Emphasis on the functioning of society was more important than on the internal emotional world of an individual, so men and women were aware that they had to suppress their emotions. The elite of societies had limited freedom to choose a marital partner based on love because they had to maintain their social and economic status by family alliances. Extramarital affairs were typically the only option for love. The men and women from low economic status in agricultural family had to work hard, so did not have time to cultivate love. Passions certainly sparked and naturally embraced their feelings for a while; otherwise, they also were limited in their choices.

The modern era brought industrial and capitalistic economy, differentiation in societal structure, urbanization, and geographical and hierarchical social mobility. The economic and societal functioning substantially transformed. Compared to agricultural culture, people in industrialized societies became more independent from family production and therefore had less pressure in their mate selection. Industrial production and commerce increased urbanization; men and women moved to cities, which increased their independence and the pool of potential mates. So, mobility of a society, geographical as well as hierarchical, brought people more freedom in many regards, including emotional freedom. Individualistic society in a psychological sense became possible only along with individualistic freedom and independency in economy. Industrialization made physical strength not essential for production, so men and women were gradually becoming equal in this regard. Being independent labor workers in the city, men and women had an equal possibility to earn money, which decreased the economic dependency of women on men. So, the perception of gender-related standards changed. Freedom from economic dependency and necessity to work hard allowed more emotional freedom. Men and women had a better chance and more time to think and feel; emotions took their priority in life value hierarchy; and society could afford such emotional freedom. Individuals no longer had to suppress their feelings.

All these economic and social transformations set the stage for the modern cultural elaborations and precipitated grounds for romantic love aspirations. Wealthy people and aristocrats probably always had time to think about love and embrace their feelings, yet they were socially restricted in their expressions due to family obligations. Thus, the occurrences of romantic love in earlier historic times were

possible among these wealthy social strata. The modern era, how I described its economic, social, and cultural transformations above, brought more freedom for romantic love to all other strata of societies.

Social freedom to make a choice of a partner and volunteer commitment to the relationships are among the most important premises for romantic love to flourish. It is freedom from economic dependency, social obligations, etc. Since in earlier historical contexts people concerned more about their survival, economic, and social status, they were bound by these. Romantic love is a psychological freedom to choose with whom to have a relationship, which many of them could not afford.

Romantic love assumes equal rights of both partners. So, romantic love is difficult to achieve when one partner has a socially dominant and another a socially submissive role. That was the case when women during many centuries had a subordinate role in relations with men. Reciprocal respect to each other is the key feature of romantic love, even though this respect can be in different realms. So, elevation of the status of women in history was a crucial premise for emergence of romantic love.

Throughout the book, we saw that many scholars believed that the attitude of equality toward a partner is the key premise, or characteristic of romantic love. On the way of history, as far as the respectful attitude toward a woman enhanced, the very important premise of romantic love formed. In reality, in many cultures throughout history, romantic love existed, but only among some partners who matched well to each other respectfully as equals. Over the course of history, the number of such couples increased and differed from society to society, from culture to culture, but still in any given society and culture, there are and there will be partners who entertain romantic love, or just practice other types of relationships.

Despite equal rights, a man and a woman are physically and psychologically different and better perform certain functions due to sex or individual differences. Consequently, they both may have dominant and submissive positions (in this case, I would rather say—in leadership and follower positions) in different fields of their life. The medieval knight admired the beauty of a lady; therefore, she was in a dominant position, while he was in a submissive position in this situation. The complementarity, rather than equality of positions, is biologically and psychologically natural. So, the extreme aspirations of some feminists to eliminate any differences between men and women are detrimental to romantic love from a psychological perspective. Complementarity of dominance (or leadership) and submissiveness (or the ability to follow other one's way) are natural interpersonal interactions in romantic love.

The word dominance has a definite negative connotation in public opinion, being associated with a feeling of superiority and assuming a lower position of a partner and inequality, which is considered incompatible with romanticism in a relationship. Striving for equality is viewed as an ideal of romantic love. However, dominance could be implicitly associated with leadership and care about the well-being of a partner and the relationship that we observed in some cultural contexts. Such leadership and care can be considered as positive characteristics of a

romantic lover, which a partner may appreciate. Some people may prefer to be a follower and being under care of someone, enjoying these qualities of romantic relationships. This aspect of relationship was overlooked by some feminists who called such an attitude as benevolent prejudice.

At any rate, we should remember that romantic love as a passionate spiritual–emotional–sexual attachment between a man and a woman holds a high regard for the value of each other’s person.

## **14.5 Perspectives of Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, Cultural, and Intercultural Studies of Romantic Love**

In the twentieth century, the studies in many areas of scholastic exploration have revealed many interesting findings and allowed for the descriptions and comparisons of love and romantic relationships in some cultural contexts. The research reports and their analyses presented in this book conveyed quite a global picture of universality of love around the world and cultural specifics of its manifestations. However, many studies were conducted only in occasional and local cultural conditions, and we can cautiously generalize their results to the whole population of the culture or country. In anthropology, for instance, a cultural approach is employed that provides an important connection between behavior and culture. But how can we make the data more complete for a culture? To overcome these limitations, more on-site studies should be conducted and reported to get a more representative picture of romantic love in a particular culture, especially those that are as multifaceted as Brazil, the USA, and India. Much research regarding the impact of culture on how love is experienced and expressed on the deeper aspects of romantic love remains to be done to get a comprehensive picture. I hope the book has provided some road maps for those future explorations.

Until recently, the social sciences have held ethnocentrism in their research. In psychology, America dominated the field in twentieth century. Researchers surveyed thousands of American college students about their romantic relationships and assumed that their research findings would be applicable not only to America and other Western countries, but even to other cultures in the world. However, the West is only a part of the world, although it is very large. In recent decades, social sciences started to be aware and learn more about other cultures and initiate collaborative work with scholars around the globe. We need to conduct open-minded, comparative cultural research.

In recent decades, scholars from various disciplines began to explore the impact of culture and ethnicity on love. Many have begun to collaborate in their research. Cross-cultural studies, apart from cultural ones, convey a comparative picture of romantic love, but often lack the depth of cultural analyses. Therefore, complementarity of cultural and cross-cultural approaches might be helpful to advance romantic love research.

There is great interest of researchers in several scholarly fields to explore romantic love. Literary, historical, sociological, anthropological, and psychological studies accumulated their own traditions and abundance of knowledge in this regard, providing a multidisciplinary approach. Cultural research and cross-cultural research on romantic love in these disciplines, however, are still occasional, dispersed, and piecemeal in coverage and content. However, interdisciplinary approach to the topic is even rarer. Psychologists often neglect literary studies, claiming that they analyze their own fictional reality, different from real romantic behavior and feelings of real individuals. Anthropologists sometimes neglect psychological and sociological studies with their survey methodology blaming them to be superficial in skimming people's everyday lives without a deep understanding of circumstances of their living. Psychologists, on the other hand, assume that anthropological studies are not representative enough for the population of a culture. In addition, specialists of different behavioral sciences and humanities areas tend to misunderstand or misinterpret the value of various methodologies. They are frequently so much ingrained with their own methodology and scientific problems that they have hard time to go beyond the horizon of their disciplinary borders. However, after writing this book, I am convinced that all these various love sciences can find a common ground to make our understanding of romantic love deeper, more comprehensive, multifaceted, and colorful. Larger interdisciplinary research collaboration on love is important, and studies of love should include a greater diversity of cultures, ethnicity/race, types of relationships, and age. Thus, I appeal to the perspectives of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, cultural, and intercultural studies of romantic love.

The goal for this book was to present a comprehensive review of all publications, earlier and most recent, on the topic of romantic love from a variety of disciplines. The bibliography of publications on love in literary studies, history, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and communication studies is impressive, and a detailed review of achievements within each discipline would be quite extensive. However, believing in the perspective of multidisciplinary approach, I attempted to integrate the knowledge from these various disciplines in one coherent picture, so the number of sources tripled, even quadrupled. Therefore, omissions were probably inevitable, but from all of these sources, I attempted to depict a comprehensive and coherent representation of romantic love around the world, in the past and in the present, in their cultural contexts. I believe I have accomplished this goal and was able to use multiple sources, yet it turned out that a number of sources on the topic were far beyond my time limitations and book capacity. Therefore, I apologize for any omissions of valuable publications in any of listed disciplines.

The book is intentionally descriptive, rather than interpretative. I strived to convey the informative message, the diverse and detailed descriptive materials, which future researchers can use in their investigations in developing their theoretical models and empirical investigations.

This book provides cultural, rather than cross-cultural perspectives on romantic love. So, few cross-cultural studies—particularly, cross-cultural psychology studies—are included in the text. A cross-cultural and comparative review of romantic love is another topic, and a plethora of sources for review is still awaiting the author.

## 14.6 Romantic Love Is What Culture Makes Romantic

The scholarly research should help us to predict whether romantic love has its future in this world of immensely fast change. There are pros and cons of such romantic beliefs. Many norms and relationship rituals, which guided the people in earlier epochs, sound strange to us and seem old-fashioned now; we cannot expect them to return back. Let us move forward, yet preserve what various cultures have offered to us from the past. The book planned to provide a comprehensive review of where the various cultures have been, where they are now, and predict where societies may be heading in their aspirations, disenchantments, and realities of romantic love. Has the allure of romantic love extinguished? I do not believe so. Idealization of life and love, despite pragmatic attitudes, is in human nature, and a dream of romantic love is so fascinating.

We must admit that there is no uniformed definition of romantic love applicable to all cultures. From the social constructivist view, the concept of love is a social image and cultural idea that people generate in their minds and souls. Romantic emotions and behaviors are literary imaginations, scholarly connotations, and people's dreams and mental associations, yet sometimes, they are a reality of relationships. Cultures and people from different cultural groups hold their own typical understanding of love that has been useful for them communicating in the cultural contexts of broader patterns. The patterns include emotional norms of expression, styles of courtship, and types of marriage as well as class, gender, ethnic, and religious factors. There is convincing support that society and culture have a significant influence on how people explain love and how they think, feel, and behave in romantic settings.

*Romantic love is a product of people's imagination and what we make romantic in our lives.* Our imagination in turn depends on how cultural archetypes and society mold it through the norms of love behavior, love communication, fashions, literature, songs, and movies. Courtly love of the twelfth century established certain principles, rituals of speech, feelings, and behaviors of what love is. Romantics of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries canonized other manners of behavior and other tokens of love, small gifts, poems, etc. American consumerism of the twentieth century molded still other symbols of romanticism in love: dinners, honeymoons, white weddings, etc. Passionate feelings have been considered as a typical prototype of romantic love for quite a long time.

How will romantic love evolve further? Will a new trend toward romanization of intimacy, compassion, and companionate love override the older passionate ideal of romantic love in people's minds? Will homosexual love be considered romantic, if it isn't already? It depends on us, on authors that write love stories in their novels, poems, songs, and on directors and actors that create dreams of people. Romantic love is what we make romantic; this is a product of our imagination and dreams. For some, *romantic* means (beautiful) flowers, for others—restaurants and dancing, and still for others, gifts. There are multiple societal and personal embodiments of romantic love. Let us make up our own romantic story.

*Romantic love is actually a set of mental associations*, which people develop in their minds around sex and a prospective sexual partner. These associations may come from human archetypes, or a culture may develop such ideas about what can be associated with romantic love. Men and women further use these associations in their love aspirations and expectations. So, red lips, a flirting look, flowers, kind words, and any other symbol can trigger romantic imagination and be associated with other idealized and romantically saturated images, such as sex and “happily ever after.” Thus, romantic love develops in a lover’s mind as a romantic image, a story, and a bunch of romantic associations. And culture precipitates this imagination with old and new ideas of what else can be associated with love.

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