

**Phillip Anthony  
O'Hara**

Global Political Economy  
Research Unit,  
Australia  
oahara.gperu@gmail.com

**Paper by invitation**

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# Political Economy of Love: Nurturance Gap, Disembedded Economy and Freedom Constraints within Neoliberal Capitalism

**Summary:** This article critically evaluates the forms of love capital being accumulated by people in capitalist economies, through the lens of some of the core general principles of heterodox political economy (HPE). We start by situating love historically in the neoliberal culture and then examine the six main love styles as well as the five critical factors through the process of circular and cumulative causation. We then scrutinise the contradictions of neoliberal capitalism involving the nurturance gap, disembedded economy and freedom constraint which inhibit the generation of holistic love capital. The path dependent nature of love is then linked to relational phases and instabilities, especially involving serial monogamy in the United States. Some of the core principles of HPE provide a vantage point for scrutinising the problems involved in stimulating holistic love capital in the contemporary environment.

**Key words:** Historical specificity, Circular and cumulative causation, Contradictions, Path dependence, Love capital, Neoliberalism.

**JEL:** A13, B50, I31, P17, Z10.

*Panoeconomicus* has published a long and productive discourse recently on the nature of neoliberalism, especially in relation to the generation of the Great International Crisis of 2008-2014. Howard Stein (2012), for instance, writes about the nature of and reasons for the continuation of neoliberalism even though it is implicated in the generation of these instabilities. Gary A. Dymksi (2011) recognizes that the thirty year-strong neoliberal policies of increasing the power of capital, especially finance capital, has not had a positive influence on global performance. Kosta Josifidis, Alpar Lošonc, and Novica Supić (2011) argue that the Great International Crisis is not simply cyclical but also structural, and they posit certain policy parameters for renewal, some desirable and others not. Phillip A. O'Hara (2013) puts forward a policy framework for moderating deep recessions, debt crises and financial instabilities. Lošonc (2006) scrutinizes neoliberal environmental policy, especially relating to water resources, which he critiques for ignoring community property rights that are essential for public goods provision.

Timur H. Gür, Naci Canpolat, and Hüseyin Özel (2011) generalize the opposition to neoliberalism by introducing Karl Polanyi's thesis of the disembedded econ-

omy, in which neoliberalism is seen as a radical response to the Keynesian welfare state of the 1950s-1970s. Having gone too far in the “deregulation” and rule-of-capital direction, neoliberalism needs to be replaced by a more embedded set of institutional and policy practices where, at the very least, the “fictitious capitals” of land, money and labour are suitably reproduced in the long run.

But one area not studied in detail in these *Panoeconomicus* papers is the social cement of the family, friendships, community and work environments, which are being eroded not only by the Great Crisis but also by neoliberalism in general. As certain feminists and social economists have recognized, part of Polanyi’s embedded system involves transactions such as reciprocity and redistribution, which are alternatives to the market. Trust is a crucial part of this equation, as is distributional equity, wise counselling (social, financial, personal), community governance, children’s security and play, unemployment benefits, skill upgrading, and the provision of pensions.

At a wider level these questions involve what sort of society we want as we go forward with policy measures for long-term stability and progress. Do we want to encourage competition to the exclusion of cooperation in social life, or have some balance between the two? Do we want to encourage *reciprocity and redistribution* and/or *markets* or some balance between the two? Do we want love or hate to inspire institutional rebuilding and personality development? With the international conflicts, wars and military-industrial complexes that we see in motion, it is clear that hate does impact upon people’s lives significantly. What policies would we put into practice to stimulate love?

If changing experiences of love, hate or indifference involves changes in utility, happiness, economic activity, social welfare, power, distribution of income and productivity then they obviously are essentially economic questions or have economic dimensions. For instance, love is likely to have declined in direct proportion to the depth of crises in various areas during the 2008-2014 instabilities; and neoliberal policies since the 1980s have likely impacted negatively on love where these policies have affected community and familial life.

Love (or the lack of it) is, in fact, a critical aspect of human life, but statistical bureaus and governance analysts have so far failed to devise adequate time series and cross-section data on these practices to inform social and economic policies. Political economists and economic sociologists have also given the subject little attention. It has mostly been left to sociologists and psychologists to do the necessary empirical and theoretical work to help understand the nature and tendencies of these practices.<sup>1</sup> But this work is comparatively recent, and while we have some cross-section data for some nations and areas, there is not a great deal for serious policy work, and very little historical data to inform debate. Nevertheless, some basic stylized facts about

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<sup>1</sup> A problem with some of the literature is that it seeks to study love but instead investigates sex. Anthony Giddens (1992) tries to reinvent the wheel in that he ignores the major literatures on love and thereby passes over some potential insights (despite the subtitle to the book). Eva Illouz (1997, 2007) similarly tends to ignore much of the theoretical and empirical work on love, although she has an interesting discussion of “contradictions”.

love are capable of being delineated from a careful mining of the literature, which are discussed in this paper.

The purpose of this paper is to present the core stylized facts, research results and metadata about love within the framework of the edifice and hypotheses of heterodox political economy (HPE). A social science that purports to comprehend the workings of contemporary human practices should provide important insights into the nature of love. This is especially the case for HPE, since various trends within its thought seek to understand the reproduction of everyday life, including the dominant institutions, such as the family and community. One could, therefore, assess the usefulness of HPE according to the extent that it is capable of providing useful insights into love. This paper seeks to advance this objective. Special reference is given to how some of the core general principles of HPE: (a) help to contextualize the data, research results and stylized facts on love; and more generally (b) in the process help to comprehend the nature, significance and limitations of love and intimacy in the contemporary environment of neoliberal capitalism.

Heterodox political economy is an emerging field of study drawing from the various schools of post-Keynesian, neo-Marxian, Veblenian, feminist, social, comparative and international political economy. It is somewhat of a hybrid or mutation that has sprung from these schools as an evolving, integrative framework of analysis. It has sought to transcend narrow allegiances towards a more inclusive frame of reference. Its boundaries are open and receptive to pluralistic influences. Fred Lee (2009) has written a history of HPE, drawing on some of the schools and influences, while O'Hara (e.g., 2009a, b, 2012, 2014) has been synthesising and applying its core general principles to various problems such as policy and governance, climate change, subprime crisis, terrorism, corruption, growth and development, the family and community. HPE is not restricted in its field of vision, but is rather an emerging *method* (or series of methods) of analysis, with some core general and also lesser principles to guide analysis. The core principles examined in this paper include historical specificity, circular and cumulative causation, contradiction and path dependence.

Some of the schools have made attempts to understand love, the most important being the work of James R. Stanfield and Jaqueline B. Stanfield (1997). Drawing from the social and institutional schools, they examine the lack of nurturance in contemporary US capitalism as being a product of insufficient reciprocity in interpersonal lives and the dominance of exchange and self-interest. This is a magisterial paper, the main results of which we integrate into the current analysis. Feminist political economists have tended to examine love in terms of caring labor, such as Julie A. Nelson (2006) who links it to the interface between work and nurturance; while Nancy Folbre and Nelson (2000) recognise the problems of trying to substitute more impersonal paid carers for loving care. Frederic B. Jennings Jr. (2009) views love from a Kaldorian perspective of being a complementary good where “[r]ewards and losses are mutual and these social effects are aligned, not opposed”. He rightly seeks to transcend equilibrium theory and recognizes that systems and organizations need to be re-designed to favour cooperation and reciprocity.

Kenneth Boulding (1969) explores a Christian ethic through Agape or universal benevolence, indicating that this can be developed through exchange, reciprocity and redistribution. He then seeks to stimulate debate about how this may be applied to various social problems, such as war, development, discrimination, education and alternatives lifestyles. Various other attempts have been made within political economy to understand love, such as Romesh Diwan's (1982) exploration of love through a Gandhian economics, which lies exclusively in the social domain with little explicit attention to interpersonal love. Jean K. Thisen (1987) develops a "universal theorem" of love where it reaches a peak "at a 50-50 per cent profitability level" (p. 36), including a series of equations concerning reciprocity, a Jesus Christ "law", and an examination of wedding markets. Margaret Stout (2010) outlines a program to develop a public economy based on collaboration, self-governance within institutions, and social bonds between people. This new system is meant to affect people in their multiple walks of life, including the personal. A more recent "political economy" paper by Freddy Cante (2013) treats love as a moral value, also as a form of power, and recognises it can dissipate when privatisation and/or monopolies emerge, but he evades all the literature on the subject of love except that of Boulding, and looks more at the social rather than personal aspects of love.

Various streams of political economy have thus mostly sought to comprehend the *social* dimensions of love, whereas a comprehensive political economy of love requires that the interface between interpersonal *and* social more explicitly come into play. In seeking to utilise the principles of the broader mutation of HPE to these multiple dimensions of love, therefore, we need to scrutinise some of the core cultural, social, and psychological literatures on the subject. For this reason the study commences with the principle of historical specificity where culture and other factors are linked to love, and where the dominant contemporary neoliberal system is situated. We then connect the principle of circular and cumulative causation to the core empirico-theoretical social and psychological perspectives of love, especially the notions of love styles, triadic love, social spread and freedom. From this we develop the notion of holistic love capital, after which the contradictory limitations of neoliberalism are evaluated based on the problems of individual versus society, markets versus nurturance, and freedom versus constraint. The final major section examines the principle of path dependence through various phases of relational development and instability. Special attention is given here to how the styles of love and the major factors involved change through time in neoliberal-based systems of political economy.

## 1. Historical Specificity of Love: Collectivist and Individualistic Economies

Core elements of the heterodox political economy literature argue that history is an important part of its edifice. Every aspect of political economy needs to be embedded in historical context, since history is linked to culture, and culture changes through time and space. The *principle of historical specificity* (see e.g., Howard J. Sherman 1995, p. 62) recognises the need to situate human relationships through the process of change, as well as revealing *path dependence*, namely, that the past matters for the

present because it sets up structures that change through time and are commonly irreversible. Changes are thus unlikely to move from one equilibrium point to another since the past affects change and the process of moving affects human evolution.

This is critical to an understanding of love, since an analysis of intimate relationships needs to be embedded in the historical culture in question. The current state of love in the world is multifarious, affected by different cultural relationships - Western, Islamic, tribal, Christian, atheist, and so on. One can generalise through these cultural differences and reveal commonalities; and these generalities are important for comprehending the biological, genetic, species and cross-cultural foundations of love processes (see Helen Fisher 1992, 2004; Elaine Hatfield and Richard L. Rapson 2005). We can also scrutinize love within different cultures through the contemporary world-system. Most scholars who study this isolate two main processes at play, those of *individualism* and *collectivism*.

Hatfield and Rapson (2005, Chapter 2) argue that there are transcultural elements of love embedded in current societies, and that the similarities are often more important than the differences. For instance, in a cross-cultural study they explored it was shown that the first four traits in mate selection tend to be similar across societies, ethnic groups and genders. These include “mutual attraction”, “having a dependable character”, “emotional stability and maturity” and “having a pleasing disposition”. In general, regardless of sexual orientation, there were only very slight gender differences, with men only marginally preferring (relative to women) their mates to have good looks and cooking skills, while women (relative to men) only marginally preferring ambition and financial prospects among their partners. While pan-European cultures have over the past several hundred years variously been under the influence of the enlightenment, the Renaissance, Western science and technology, more latterly the sexual revolution, and even more recently the Internet and cell phone culture, more collectivist cultures have often been affected by elements of these influences over perhaps only the past several decades.

Despite these similarities, Hatfield and Rapson also find cultural differences more important than gender differences. Typically individualist cultures value romantic love between two people, with passion often playing a core role, whereby people tend (especially in their younger years) to assume the relationship should dissolve if and when they fall out of love. Individualist cultures, such as the US, UK, Australia and Western Europe, tend to put rights and individual goals at the forefront, whereas collectivist cultures, such as Venezuela, Indonesia, South Korea and West Africa, more usually put duties ahead of rights. Cultures in between the extremes, such as Japan, India, Turkey and Greece, tend to fuse the values of individualism and collectivism. Collectivist cultures may generate love more socially through families, friends and others in the community, since they value the fundamental connectivity between people. Individualist ones may generate friends more easily along a broader spectrum of interests yet find difficulty maintaining close and/or long-term relationships. For these reasons, Anne E. Bealle and Robert J. Sternberg (1995, p. 427) believe that “cultures define the beloved, the thoughts, the feelings and the relations that should accompany love and therefore implicitly define how people should think about, feel and relate to one another”.

Despite some similarities between cultures and the process of US cultural hegemony, there is thus a core degree of cultural heterogeneity. Even in the model of love commonly associated with western capitalist societies differences remain. This is especially the case between Scandinavian-style capitalism where social cohesion remains fairly high as a degree of collectivism still operates, and classical neoliberal economies such as the US, UK and Australia, where cohesion has been diminishing as collectivism has been on the wane (O'Hara 2009c). This paper therefore applies much more to the neoliberal styles than the Scandinavian. The paper presents a critical analysis of the increasingly market-based style of governance associated with these neoliberal economies, where the cash nexus, *quid pro quo* and individual objectives have a tendency to rule most institutions. The state plays a secondary role compared to markets and corporations, while elements of collectivism (beyond the state) still operate in the crevices and beyond, perhaps within religious activities, family gatherings, friendly relationships, *certain specific* corporate networks and social movements.

We start to be more historically specific through scrutinising the role of circular and cumulative causation, which links to the dominant theoretic-empirical studies of love within capitalist societies. Then we scrutinise the contradictions of intimacy within neoliberal systems, which both inhibit holistic love and also direct it into specific paths. Finally we examine the evolution and transformation of love in relationships, particularly in the United States; and how this manifests at the individual level through interpersonal dynamics.

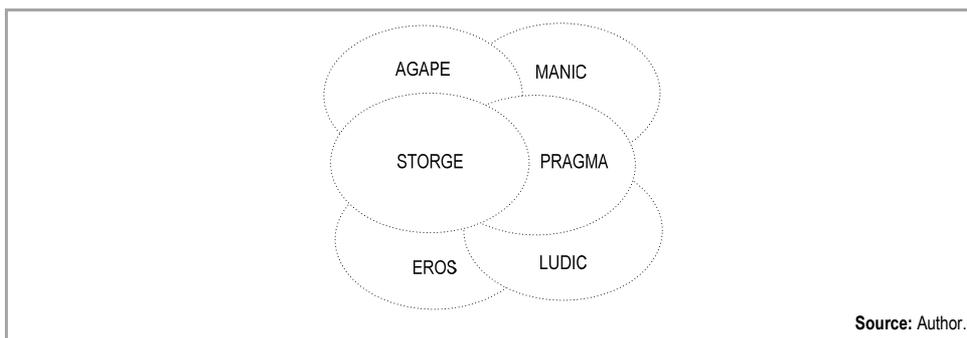
## 2. Circular and Cumulative Causation: Love Styles and Core Factors

The *principle of circular and cumulative causation* (CCC) is a critical one in political economy, drawing especially from the work of Gunnar Myrdal (1898-1987) and Nicholas Kaldor (1908-1986). The long tradition of CCC includes two main processes (see Sebastian Berger 2009), the first being the need to comprehend the *interaction between multiple variables* in the social economy; and the second being the *tendency for the variables to interact in a cumulative manner* generating instability and dynamic motion through historical time. The literature on love generally recognises the interactive feedback between variables, the multicausal nature of the love process, and the magnified and unstable impact through time.

While embedded relationships, nurturance and the social spread of trust and intimacy are limited in relationships under (neoliberal) capitalism, certain forms of love do emerge. John A. Lee (1973, 1978, 1988), for instance, developed the first fully-formed multicausal and cumulative theoretico-empirical analysis of love, based on his PhD, and extensive applied research in Western capitalist economies (UK, Canada and the USA). He has become what could be called the “guru” of love studies, since dozens of empirical papers have followed his schema (see Lee 1988, 2000; Clyde Hendrick and Susan Hendrick 2006). Lee and his followers reveal that there are six basic styles of love, but the critical thing is that these styles are often mixed, changing through time, and can adapt to the dynamics of different people

through time. Understanding the six basic typologies is just as important as scrutinizing their interdependencies and how the same people can utilise variations of love styles through time with different people.

The six styles (or “love ideologies” as Lee also calls them) include three generic styles of Eros, Ludic and Storge plus the derivative styles of Agape (said to link Eros with Storge), Pragma (linking Ludic with Storge) and Manic (linking Eros with Ludic). Most empirical studies do not following the distinction between generic and derivative styles, but much evidence points to concrete styles being combinations of influences. The general relationship of co-linkage and interdependency between styles is shown below in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Interdependent Co-linkages between Love Styles

It is important to comprehend the nature of the styles before the concrete linkages can be understood. *Eros Love* is the first style discussed by Lee, which is oriented around the idea and practices of physical beauty, which depends upon initial attraction, an ideal type of physical perfection, and revealing unashamedly the bodily aspect of interaction. Eros love often links to “love at first sight”, and is portrayed in films such as *The Blue Lagoon* (Randall Kleiser 1980). The powerful physical attraction need not be purely sexual, as there may be a core element of artistic beauty, and such relationships often develop and become quite successful. Nevertheless, a desire for early sexual union is typical of this style. Intense and open feelings of love are core elements, as is usually the search for “one true love”. Long absence is a risky element here as tactile contact is crucial for love development. Both genders tend to engage in Eros-type styles, although there was some apparently conflicting evidence about Eros vis-a-vis gender and culture.

Superficially similar to Eros is the *Ludic Love* style, where love is seen as a game, and numerous simultaneous lovers (or at least short-term serial lovers) is central to this style. The Ludic style is immortalised in the movie, *Adventures of Don Juan* (Vincent Sherman 1948; and the many versions of the Don Juan theme over hundreds of years). Fair rules of the game, low levels of dependence, and a willingness to relate freely to multiple lovers are key characteristics of the Ludos “ideology” (see Russell Vannoy 1980). Strategies may include flattery, playing the field, low levels of psychological intimacy, and not revealing information about the other lovers. Ludic lovers may also exploit asymmetric intensity of feelings if one of the part-

ners makes the mistake of falling in love deeply with a typical ludic. Casual meetings, basic levels of respect, and the idea that love should be fun are core elements of a ludic ideology. The ludic lover depends on meeting people for a continual supply of lovers, and often has a supply of good opening lines. It is more common among youth and males (including gays) in Western societies (see Lee 1978; Hendrick et al. 1984; Marilyn J. Montgomery and Gwendolyn T. Sorell 1997).

Of some similarity to Ludic is *Storge Love*, or love as friendship, since both typically exhibit a lack of passion. Mama Cass Elliott's (1969) song, *It's Getting Better* (written by Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil), about a relationship that starts slowly and builds into a meaningful form of intimacy, is characteristic of this style. Affection, strong friendship and natural affinity are the primary traits of Storge love. In many cases Storge develops from living together in the same suburb, being a member of the same class, and most especially associating in rural areas. Durable companionship, building up a reserve of stability, having both empathy and sympathy with the loved one are primary elements of this form of love. Historically, Storge was quite common centuries ago during feudalism in Western Europe, when social customs, family, church and locality played a much stronger role in people's lives. But this style is common even now, ironically as social customs enable people to be more relaxed about lifestyle. Lee's (1978, p. 79) empirical research shows that this style is somewhat more common among women (especially lesbians) (see also Hendrick et al. 1984; Gregory D. Morrow, Eddie M. Clark, and Karia F. Brock 1995).

*Pragma love* has some similarities with Storge, the main one being a tendency to downplay passion and intensity. *Pragmatic love* is one that seeks out relationships with people based on compatibility and satisfying practical needs. In literature, it is characterised by the behaviour of Charlotte in Jane Austen's (1813) novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. Dating agencies and computer mating techniques use such pragmatic methods of finding common interests and habits between people. Like the Eros lover, pragmatic love has an ideal image, but it is wider in scope than Eros since it considers not simply physicality but also (or instead) "qualities of character, social standing and social attitudes" (Lee 1978, p. 126). Pragma is level-headed and typically seeks someone with a certain level of college education, a specific type or level of profession, having, for instance, basic social skills, a particular ideology or religion, and a certain appearance. Pragmatic lovers are searching for "the possible", someone to fit into their lifestyle, and perhaps seeing love as an investment in the future, considering the broad calculations of profit and loss through time (computation). Women have a marginal partiality to this style (Morrow, Clark, and Brock 1995; Rachel S. Lacey et al. 2004).

Quite different from Pragma are the final two styles of Manic and Agape. *Manic love* is based on obsession; being concerned primarily with being with the loved one, thinking about the loved one, and planning for the future with the loved one. Obsessional love is illustrated in the film, *Fatal Attraction* (Adrian Lyne 1987). The Manic lover exclusively concerns herself with the partner, or desired partner, and her whole life is obsessed with the role of The Other. It is a form of love many believe not to be love: "demonic ... [,] narcissistic, neurotic and pathological" (Lee 1978, p. 86), including extreme jealousy, tragedy, and potential conflict. Manic is common among those who are stressed, unsure of themselves, and unhappy. The

tendency to Manic is often linked with dissatisfaction with life as the Manic lover sees rivals in every crevice as jealousies abound, forever seeking reassurance, and worrying continually (Susan Forward and Craig Buck 1991). These relationships are often short-lived, expressing the contradictory similarities between love and hate, as one can easily turn to the other (Sternberg 2003). Empirical research indicates a tendency for youth to be influenced by this style, and also (marginally) women (Judith Fenney and Patricia Noller 1990; Kurt Frey and Mahzad Hojjat 1998).

Lastly, there is *Agape Love*, which feminists (bell hooks [*sic*] 2000), socialists (Eric Fromm 1957) and numerous religions (John Templeton 1999) believe to be the most authentic form. Agape love occurs when there is unconditional love, where the lover is deeply altruistic and compassionate, in “complete disregard for personal gain of any kind” (Lee 1978, p. 142). Agape lovers typically are concerned with the fate of humanity, and loving whoever is at hand, often spreading beyond one person to a group or community. The archetypical example would be the life of Jesus of Nazareth. He was committed to treating others with compassion, mercy and understanding, while advocating the Golden Rule: “In everything ... treat people the same way you want them to treat you” (Tod Lindberg 2007, p. 237). Obligation, passion and commitment dominate over egotism and the self. In modern (especially neoliberal) capitalist economies, at least, it is difficult to sustain altruistic love (except perhaps by parents for children), as the demands of a selfless association are too difficult to nurture (and are seen as undesirable) in an environment of conspicuous consumption, “being all one can”, and competing with others for jobs, lovers and friendships. In such a system, most people are concerned instead with costs and benefits, individual achievement, and quid pro quo (or at least reciprocity or dual-employment). Perhaps surprising, when controls were present for gender, age and culture, men had a slightly greater tendency towards Agape compared with females (Li-Wein Lin 2005). However, as Fromm recognises, this form in its ideal type is almost completely lacking in market-capitalist economies, and the empirical studies are exclusively concerned with altruism *within* couple relationships.

It may well be, as Lee stated, that Pragma has links to Storge and Ludic, depending as it does on friendship and lack of passion or compassion. Perhaps also Manic links with Eros and Ludic, since there is a general passion without specific links to compassion and intelligence. Agape may also link with Storge and Eros since it tends to include compassion, empathy and intelligence. Whether these are strong associations supporting Lee’s specific generic-derivative forms has not been empirically scrutinised in detail. What does appear likely from much of the evidence is that mixed typologies (of various combinations) tend to predominate. However, it has to be said that much of the empirical work underplays the circular and cumulative aspect of love styles, since the methods used are relatively new and the reality of mixed-styles and changing styles through time are often hard to link to the interview schedules and statistical tests.<sup>2</sup> These schedules and tests also tend to underplay the

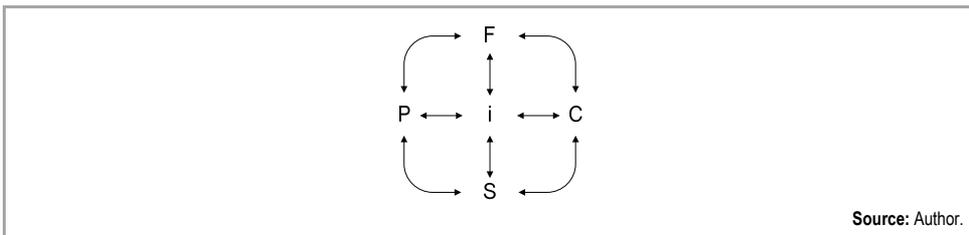
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<sup>2</sup> The most common interview schedules are variations (short and long forms) of the love attitudes scale (LAS) and the most common statistical tests are correlation, intercorrelation matrices and cluster analysis (see e.g., Hendrick and Hendrick et al. 1984). But note some criticisms Lee (1988) makes of some of the tests.

richness of Lee's analysis, for instance, by often reducing Agape to couple-concern and empathy rather than also involving communal love at the social level.

Gender differences in love styles are modest. In many studies of advanced neoliberal economies, especially the US, males have shown a (slight) tendency to be more Ludic and Agape than females. Some studies linking women to Agape (in couples) have been reversed once allowance is made for age, education, satisfaction and religion. Lin (2005) shows (for the general population of a US Midwestern agricultural state) that those who are male, older, religious, having less education and more relationship satisfaction tend to exhibit "couple-Agape". Some studies show men scoring somewhat higher than women in Eros (e.g., Terry Hatkoff and Thomas E. Lasswell 1979), while some others show women scoring higher than males (e.g., Hendrick and Hendrick 1991, 1992). It does appear to depend on circumstances and specific populations. Felix Neto (2007), comparing British, Indian and Portuguese students, sought to make more general conclusions that there are no discernable differences in Eros on the basis of gender or culture.

Apart from John Alan Lee's theory, which has been specifically applied to neoliberal-style economies such as the UK, US and Canada (as well as several other capitalist economies), the other theory which has elements of multicausality, cumulation, and empirical application is Robert J. Sternberg's triangular theory of love (see Sternberg and Michael L. Barnes 1988; Sternberg and Karin Weiss 2006). Sternberg's theory is complementary to that of Lee, and enhances the multi-causal and cumulative nature of the love factors. We have added to Sternberg's theory two critical factors: Eric Fromm's emphasis on Social Spread; and the notion of Freedom from Jean-Paul Sartre (1956), plus the associated emphasis on novelty-innovation discussed by Thorstein B. Veblen (1914) and Joseph Schumpeter (1911). These factors seem necessary to add to Sternberg's theory, and indeed, his analysis of *hate* (Sternberg 2003) does link specifically to the search for *freedom* and *social spread*, in addition to the other three factors (for terrorists etc.). We have thus developed a five factor theory of love which exhibits circular and cumulative dynamics. This is shown in Figure 2, below. We illustrate later that the CCC dynamics of love can link Lee's styles to these core factors.



**Figure 2** Love Circuit of Cumulative Interdependency: Five Core Factors

This circuit has many different forms, but we will start with the basic form of  $P \leftrightarrow i \leftrightarrow C$ , i.e., Passion  $\leftrightarrow$  Intimacy  $\leftrightarrow$  Commitment (Sternberg 1988), linked to additional factors Freedom ( $\leftrightarrow F$ ) and Social Spread ( $\leftrightarrow S$ ). The basic circuit shows that a significant degree of Passion in interpersonal relationships often leads to a degree of Intimacy, which through time may stimulate a short term feeling of love, followed by

a long-term Commitment. If this basic circuit is well developed then “consummate love” (Sternberg’s term) may emerge. But to evolve further requires a considerable degree of Freedom and Social Spread. If all five elements coevolve in a durable fashion (love capital) then a degree of “holistic love” can emerge. Holistic love, of varying degrees, is the most evolved form, since all five elements are transforming the lives of people.

Freedom (from Sartre 1956) and novelty-innovation (Schumpeter 1911 and Veblen 1914) are the most elemental components of love, the dynamic factors that enable love to grow and develop into new areas and experiences. Love often requires dynamic processes to enhance the experiential metamorphosis required for higher forms of consciousness and excitement. There needs to be an endogenous stimulus embedded in the structure of a human relationship that generates new knowledge and experience. Without this, love will often die or form a vicious circle of mediocrity. In a closed system eventually deterioration occurs, but with an open system (characteristic of political economy systems) new stimuli can enhance the love process and propel new phases of metamorphosis over the long term through transcendental freedom.

Social spread is Fromm’s (1957) idea that holistic love cannot exist between two people only, but requires a suitable social environment to stimulate progressive habits and values. He says that “love” purely between two people is more an addiction, and that “true love” concerns loving people in an environment of community. The degree of social spread is thus important in the wider equation of holistic love, because if love can spread beyond two people to a wider sphere then the two-people process can become more meaningful, and the social dimension is critical to heightened love experiences.

The next three factors emanate from the triadic theory of love developed by Sternberg (1986, 1987): Passion, Intimacy and Commitment. Passion is an intense feeling of connection between people (and/or other animals, places and things). It involves a high degree of arousal, stimulation and longing for union. Passion often develops quickly, and in sexual relationships often precedes Intimacy and Commitment. Excess Passion by itself can lead to addiction, so it is important that some of the other elements balance Passion for holistic love to develop.

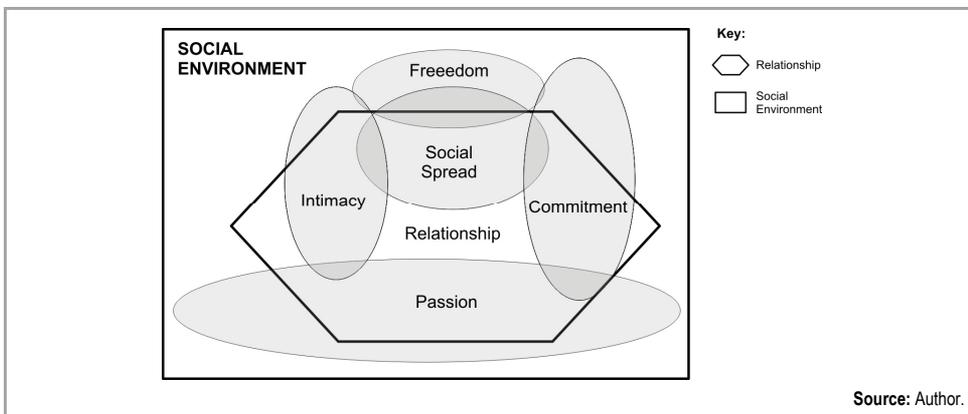
Intimacy is a core of love (as Sternberg 1998a, b recognises), since without it most of the essential feelings and processes of love cannot be reproduced. Intimacy includes the sharing of knowledge, life history, and goals. Meaningful communication is often a critical element, as are close bonding, trust, emotional support, and respect. Intimate linkages enable the development of feelings of attachment, and often lead to Passion and Commitment. Sternberg believes that relationships include both latent and manifest levels of Intimacy, the more successful ones having increasing levels of hidden Intimacy through time and declining levels of manifest Intimacy; while the failed relationships have major declines in hidden Intimacy and lower manifest levels than successful relationships. The latent Intimacies provide potential stores of trust, knowledge and shared interests that can be retrieved when required.

Trust is especially critical here for “uncertainty reduction” since “trust [i]s an exchange of actions or messages that gradually reduces uncertainty and increases mutual assurance that the relationship will endure” (John G. Holmes and John K.

Rempel 1989, p. 193). Trust provides a store of potential reciprocity in the future which reduces the instabilities of everyday life, and increases the potential for dealing with conflict. The durable bonding of trust enhances temporal changes in life situations, and moderates negative reactions to the other's behaviour. Paul J. Miller and Rempel (2004) demonstrate that trust generates a "tendency to charitably evaluate the motives underlying a partner's behaviour" (p. 695), promoting a cooperative, caring, considerate, responsive, tolerant, concerned, friendly and forgiving attitude. This strongly suggests that some minimal elements of Agape and/or Storge (along with Passion) are crucial for dynamic and successful relationships. Commitment has short and long term components. In the short-term one may conclude that "love is in the air", while in the longer-term one may consciously or subconsciously commit to a person.<sup>3</sup> Generically, Commitment means that there is a durable bond that enables the reproduction of the key elements of love. Sometimes Commitment may be the only thing enabling survival of the relationship, when hard times emerge, while at other times it may coevolve with the other factors.

The interaction between these five coevolving factors generates a non-equilibrium process of circular and cumulative causation (CCC). CCC creates phases of development as holistic love is never an equilibrium process. Change, amplification and metamorphosis are critical to love. Indeed, love is a critical part of life, and life is always in the process of evolving and becoming. People form different relationships throughout life, which change and become modified through action. Habits, norms and mores evolve and change through time; and because of this love also undergoes phases of evolution.

The five core factors involved in love styles can be examined via a series of Venn Diagrams, as shown in Figure 3, below (the six styles can also be scrutinized in this way).



**Figure 3** Five Elements of Holistic Love in Relationships

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the obvious fact that love can be not only for human beings but also other animals, cars, plants and other entities. There is of course the love of knowledge, non-animal-human substitutes and love on the Internet. The Japanese experiment with virtual love (or is it sex?) on the Internet and associated technologies (especially among youth) is especially instructive (see Dominic Pettman 2009 on "virtual" boyfriends and girlfriends in Japan).

This figure represents one *example* only of the *combined* activities within a couples' current lifestyle, including two main sets, the first being activities (or qualities) exerted within the "Relationship" per se (shown within the hexagon); and the second being the activities (or qualities) activated within their "Social Environment" (shown within the rectangle), which includes the relationship per se as well as activities of the five factors outside their relationship. Three things stand out in these particular Venn Diagrams. The first is that the most dominant activity or quality within the relationship is Passion: mostly exerted within the relationship. This Passion, however, is of the most general kind, with only slight links to Intimacy and Commitment. Secondly, there are modestly good degrees of Intimacy, Commitment, Social Spread and Freedom exerted in this relationship. And thirdly, some of the Freedom-seeking is generated by the couple together, but most is individually in their social environment (outside the relationship). Overall, it seems like a fairly healthy relationship except for one thing: there are few intersections between the sets in the relationship diagram, indicating a high degree of separation or fragmentation of activities or qualities. (More complex diagrams are possible with different structures of activities and qualities; and variations of the above figure.)

More generally speaking, Table 1, below, provides metadata for the various types of love, where the different types differ in their degree of love capital. Here the intersections (closely linked activities) and unions (somewhat fragmented linkages) both refer to those happening *within* the relationship.

**Table 1** Types of Love Capital: 5 Factor Approach

Type of Love Capital	Venn Equation	Description of Love Capital
Holistic love	$\{i \cap P \cap C \cap F \cap S\}$ & $\{i \cup P \cup C \cup F \cup S\}$	5 Factors operate to significant degrees [TSD] in union and intersection within relationship
Dynamic interpersonal love	$\{i \cap P \cap C \cap F\}$ & $\{i \cup P \cup C \cup F\}$	Sternberg's 3 factors + freedom operate TSD in union and intersection within relationship
Consummate couple love	$\{i \cap P \cap C\}$ & $\{i \cup P \cup C\}$	Sternberg's 3 factors operate TSD in union and intersection within relationship
Romantic love	$\{i \cap P\}$ & $\{i \cup P\}$	Mainly intimacy & passion operate TSD in union and intersection within relationship
Companionship	$\{i \cap C\}$ & $\{i \cup C\}$	Intimacy & commitment operate TSD in union and intersection within relationship
Fatuous love	$\{P \cap C\}$ & $\{P \cup C\}$	Passion & commitment operate TSD in union and intersection within relationship
Liking/friendship	$\{i\}$	Intimacy dominates
Empty love	$\{C\}$	Commitment dominates
Infatuation	$\{P\}$	Passion dominates
Experiential-yet-empty	$\{F\}$	Freedom dominates
Personally-empty love	$\{S\}$	Social spread dominates

Source: Author.

These different types and degrees of love have much real world application, as the various empirical studies demonstrate. While most of the studies tend to concen-

trate on specific styles, the reality is combined styles and core factors. The types of love actually experienced in reality quite often start with some of the less holistic factors, while gradually building a greater stock of durable elements. While many may rise to the level of consummate couple love, dynamic interpersonal love and to a much lesser degree holistic love, the extent to which these types are experienced is usually at the lower levels of intersection and union. In particular, in neoliberal economies, high levels of balanced-factor development of dynamic interpersonal and holistic love are rare, although certainly possible in the *crevices* where very special people or arrangements are able to eschew or “manage” neoliberal ideology and institutions.

Merging John Alan Lee’s “Love Styles” and the “Five Critical Factors” (Sternberg’s three Factors along with Freedom and Social Spread) enables one to scrutinise the notion of holistic love. Holistic love is associated with the higher dimensions of love where the core factors are well developed. This requires the effective reproduction of human relationships (set in a suitable geographical and ecological environment) where understanding and communication are well developed, and where the core factors of Social Spread, Freedom, Passion, Intimacy and Commitment are highly evolved. The stock of love is a form of capital, “love capital”, while the flow is a form of investment, “love investment”, but unlike most forms of capital using it does not destroy it but rather enhances it (much the same as with social capital). There are thus degrees of love capital, from low to medium to high levels.

Table 2, below, provides metadata for the Index of Love Capital (ILC) according to the various styles and core factors. The table seeks to scrutinise the typical degree of love possible with a high level of development of each specific style of love. It is based on groups of people engaging in each respective style of love together, and the typical degree of development of the core factors associated with each style, after a typical period of “successful” development of the respective style. Each of the “ideal type” dimensions is given a scale of 1-10, with a possible maximum of 50 points.

**Table 2** Index of Love Capital (ILC)

	Social spread	Freedom	Passion	Intimacy	Commitment	ILC	ILC position
Eros	3	4	8	6	6	27	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Ludic	5	8	2	1	1	17	5 <sup>th</sup>
Storge	5	5	3	5	6	24	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Pragma	4	4	3	5	5	21	4 <sup>th</sup>
Manic	1	1	6	4	4	16	6 <sup>th</sup>
Agape	8	5	5	4	6	28	1 <sup>st</sup>

Source: Author’s estimation.

Overall, Agape lovers have the highest level of love capital, including a high level of durability and a good balance between the various components of the index. However, it is difficult for Agape love to develop in a market economy, in terms of Social Spread. The second highest level of love capital is typically exhibited by Eros lovers, since they are generally mentally positive and have a good balance of all the major components, once they develop. Close behind them are Storge lovers, who are historically more likely to survive than Agape lovers, in terms of quantity of people rather than the individual love capital index, and have a good balance of all factors

except Passion. Pragma lovers perform less well since they tend to lack Passion and have high ratings in none of the variables; yet they tend to have good levels of Intimacy and Commitment. The two styles comparatively lacking in love capital are Ludic and Manic, with Ludics being high in Freedom but very low in three major variables, and Manics having no variable at a high level, although Passion is at a good level.

Each of the love styles has a competitive advantage and also a limit. For instance, Agape excels in Social Spread and is good in all other variables. In reality, in market economies it mostly exists in its underdeveloped form as Agape behaviour between lovers pure and simple. Eros is especially high on Passion (general, bodily, personal) but is typically not well garnered on Social Spread. Storge has a good balance of measures but excels in none. Pragma has a good balance of variables but is very low in Passion. Ludic excels in a *certain type* of Freedom and is good on Social Spread, but is the lowest of all in Intimacy and Commitment. Manic has a moderately good balance of three variables but virtually no Social Spread nor Commitment to Freedom.

Generally, each style works well (except Manic and Ludic) with someone of the same style. The Index of Love Capital provides a good general understanding of the stock of love for people associating with others of the same love style. To investigate further why the styles often require linkages between styles and changes through time, we scrutinise the contradictions within and between them. While some styles may work well with someone of the same style, they are likely to operate better when linked to certain other styles as well.

For instance, Timothy R. Levine, Krystyna S. Aune, and Hee S. Park (2006) undertook an empirical study of love styles for undergraduate students in upper-division studies at a western US university. They found that Agape was linked to factors such as “humour” and being “smart”, as well as the usual ones such as being “understanding”, “compassionate” and “sensitive”. While the most important characteristics of Eros lovers are “looks” and “sex”, very close behind are variables normally linked to Agape or Storge, namely “compassion” and “caring”, which were much more important than “romance”. Storge lovers relied on typical factors such as “communication”, “compassion” and “personality”, but also on another characteristic not usually necessarily linked with any of the styles, namely being “smart”. Pragma was linked not only to factors common to itself, but also some linked to other styles, such as “romance” (usually associated with Eros) and “honesty” (linked to Agape or Storge).

Perhaps the reason why typically Ludic is difficult to reproduce in the long-term is the fact that, in this study by Levine et al. (as with most), it was shown to be a strongly negatively correlated, especially with being “smart”, “sensitive”, “romantic” and having “personality”. Manic is also a similarly negative style. However, Manic is much more widespread than the ideal type would indicate simply because it usually links into other styles such as Eros, individual-Agape, Storge, Pragma and even possibly a little Ludic. This seems to support our hypothesis that the least widespread styles are those which are either incompatible with neoliberalism (social-individual Agape) and/or those which fail to effectively link with other styles and factors to en-

hance its reproducibility through long historical time (especially Ludic; occasionally Pragma).

While Lee's love style approach is largely complementary to Sternberg's triangular theory, one specific criticism that Lee has of Sternberg's analysis needs to be mentioned. This is "Sternberg's acceptance of the bias towards some kinds of relationships as more truly love than others[.] ... The very names adopted--fatuous, empty, consummate--signal the bias. For Sternberg, mania is 'infatuated love gone berserk'" (Lee 1988, p. 65). A similar criticism is made of the work of Fromm (1957) and Clive S. Lewis (1960) by Lee. Given the empirical evidence gained (referenced throughout this current paper), it would appear that Sternberg has good reason to be somewhat critical of Manic and Ludic love styles in their *extreme* form; and hence the current paper uses the phrases "fatuous, empty, consummate" (as well as "holistic", etc.) in Table 1 (etc.), to recognise lower and higher-order love experiences. But this current paper *does go out of the way* to situate Manic and Ludic in love dynamics in as sympathetic a form as possible, given the evidence available.

### 3. Contradictions of Love Styles: General and within Neoliberal Capitalism

The principle of contradiction states that every phenomenon has its internal dynamics that generate positive and negative processes that are forever in motion, and which periodically manifest in anomalous outcomes. Examining contradictions reveals the inner dynamics of the phenomena and how change, conflict and instability are core elements of every real thing through time (O'Hara 2007, 2012). In this context, it is true that some love styles are relatively compatible with others, while some are more conflictual or fundamentally contradictory. All of the styles are inherently contradictory, in the sense of being unlikely to lead to durable long-term association in themselves. Styles thus require linking together, co-evolving and changing through time, in order to stimulate successful relationships.

Table 3 below generates metadata for the Index of Contradiction between love styles. The matrix is based on empirical studies and assesses the *typical* extent to which each style is in contradiction with each of the styles. Each is given a possible 6 points, with the index being out of 36. Because we are here interested in the linkages, we develop this Index at the margin, assuming 50 percent development of the specific individual styles. In other words, once each of the love styles has been developed to a (say) fifty percent level with another person of the same style, what are the contradictory relationships beyond this level, for the same style as well as the others?

**Table 3** Index of Contradiction between Love Styles (ICS) beyond 50%

	Eros	Ludic	Storge	Pragma	Manic	Agape	$\Sigma$ ICS
Eros	6	4	2	3	5	1	21
Ludic	2	6	3	4	5	1	21
Storge	2	5	6	3	4	1	21
Pragma	2	4	3	6	5	1	21
Manic	2	5	3	4	6	1	21
Agape	1	4	2	3	5	6	21
$\Sigma$ ICS	15	28	19	23	30	11	
Position	5 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	

Source: Author's estimation.

This table provides an understanding of the styles that are complementary and also helps comprehend the contradictions between the styles. The table shows that beyond a certain level of development of each style, diminishing (total) returns set in, thus requiring elements of the characteristics of other styles to develop a greater quality of the love experience. For instance, while Agape has the highest potential for holistic love, beyond a certain point of its development (say, 50 percent) it is enhanced by acquiring the characteristics of other styles. This is especially true in market capitalist societies where Agape is difficult to sustain, and may require other styles to be more consistent with the surrounding socioeconomic conditions. Beyond this level, it would benefit most by some influence from Eros, thereafter from Storge, some point after from Pragma, then Ludic and finally Manic. The exact point at which the other styles require movement from one to another style probably depends upon specific circumstances. It is likely possible to transcend diminishing (marginal) returns if Eros, Storge and Pragma are introduced into the situation at an early phase of evolution.

Agape is thus shown to have the lowest degree of contradictions with the other styles, and indeed requires a degree of Eros (followed by other styles) to be successful, since without interpersonal passion and intimacy it tends to lack an internal process of development. Agape can also benefit from elements of Storge, since friendship builds practical forms of trust and intimacy necessary for success. Pragma has an inner contradiction in itself, namely the two elements of its motion - similar class, values or background versus concern for money and success - since while class, values and background may be positive up to a point, too much of a concern for money and success may limit its viability. Nonetheless, Agape may benefit by certain values in common and background factors - as well as money and success, especially in a market-capitalist economy. Combining Agape with Eros, Storge and Pragma may be sufficient for a high level of Holistic Love, while certain additional minimal elements of Ludic and Manic may assist in the process.

Eros has the second lowest contradictions with the other styles, and is in fact the dominant style, but usually requires some other elements for success. It usually requires some elements of Agape, Storge and possibly Pragma to become dominant. The style with the third lowest degree of contradiction with other styles is Storge. Many of the empirical studies downplay Storge as a style being utilised in reality, because it is necessary for most styles while it may not be the dominant element in most. Pragma has the fourth lowest degree of contradictions, since it tries to link to commonalities associated with class, culture, habits and tendencies. However these positive traits of similarities are moderated by the negatives of concern for money and success. These two dialectical twins help explain why in many empirical studies Pragma is relatively less common than otherwise may be envisaged. In modern capitalist economies, the "common habit and interest" side of it may be dominated by concern with money and success, which may lead often to dissolution. Hence, if Pragma is moderated at a certain stage by elements of Agape, followed by Eros and then Storge, holistic love may develop considerably. Afterwards some minimal level of Ludic or Manic may assist.

The highest level of contradictions is evident for Manic, followed by Ludic. Ironically, the empirical literature often shows that while Ludic is mostly linked with youth and declines through the other stages of life; Manic is actually quite common, certainly more so than might otherwise be thought possible. The typical life cycle of relationships in neoliberal economies often show Ludic tendencies in young people suddenly declining when relationships become more durable. Males tend to be more Ludic (especially when young), and perhaps surprisingly more “couple-Agape”. The reason why Manic is quite common in reality, although never discussed in this context in the literature, is simply that it can benefit from elements of Social Spread, Freedom and Intimacy. Hence when Manic links with Agape, then Eros and Storge and even a little Pragma and possibly Ludic, the problematic levels of jealousy, instability and uncertainty can be moderated to enhance durability. This is likely why some empirical studies show Manic to be almost as common as Storge and Pragma, especially among young women (Hendrick et al. 1984, p. 193; Morrow, Clark, and Brock et al. 1995, p. 383); and it is sometimes able to moderate “the obsession” through elements of friendship, intelligence and compassion.

It is understandable, then, why life cycles of people in advanced capitalist economies tend to be higher in Ludic (especially for males) and to some degree Manic (especially for women) in the younger years, and as this evolves towards greater durability Eros and couple-Agape often become more important. An element of Pragma and Storge may evolve as marriage and parenting start to impact. Then even in older ages Eros tends to be a prime concern, while friendship often starts to become stronger (in relative terms), and a little bit of Ludic may even impact when children move on.

An increasing tendency over the past few decades is for “money and position” (one of the two core elements of Pragma) as well as individual objectives (rather than the supposed “organic family” of the 1950s-60s) to take precedent in *relationships*, and as a result serial monogamy has become increasingly institutionalised in the United States (to a much lesser extent in Europe). According to Andrew J. Cherlin (2010), serial monogamy is “the US way” of trying to resolve the contradiction (as he calls it) between their *belief in ongoing relationships* and their *emphasis on personal goals*, despite the inherent fragility of the arrangement.

Love in neoliberal political economies is thus affected not only by the specific contradictory relationships between the different love styles and core factors, but also by the more specific contradictions of neoliberalism. The contradictions of neoliberalism affect love in such societies in specific ways, directing its motion and inhibiting its development. The core contradictions of neoliberalism are the inner tendencies that enable it to grow and develop. There are primary and secondary contradictions at play, which have a dynamic interdependency of linkage. Through time these contradictions become modified, and the degree of conflict changes (see O'Hara 2001, 2007). The core such contradictions are markets versus nurturance, individual versus society, and love freedom versus constraint, discussed below.

### 3.1 Contradiction between Markets and Nurturance

The general contradiction of the disembedded economy states that market capitalism has a tendency to destroy non-market institutions in the process of destructive creation (Karl Polanyi 1944; Stanfield 1986). In so doing it transforms these institutions into market forms of remuneration for relatively quick monetary gain. This, indeed, is how capitalism works to stimulate the propensity for innovation and accumulation. The problem is that these non-market relations of reciprocity and redistribution are critical for long-term socioeconomic reproduction in the form of public goods.

Consequently, market capitalism has a double movement, whereby it creates markets out of these non-market opportunities, while at the same time variously having to create public goods that protect the system. When it moves too much in the market direction then periodic financial instability and low growth are highly likely. Governance and institutional changes respond eventually by recreating mostly government redistribution schemes to ensure reasonable reproduction. These include lender of last resort facilities, discretionary and automatic fiscal and monetary policies, sickness and health insurance for workers, accords between capital and labor, employing caring labour, foster homes, and unemployment insurance. Periodically it encounters too many of these protective responses to the market which may reduce profit and accumulation. Hence market capitalism undergoes waves of deregulation followed by regulation and/or welfare/civil society that is a critical part of its momentum (see O'Hara 2012).

All these processes impact on love, intimacy and friendship. The destructive creation of market capitalism progressively substitutes market relations for personal relations; wage labour for non-market relations of intimacy and love. It also creates conspicuous consumption, including the “trophy” wife/husband, in place of authentic instrumental functions of institutions. It stimulates competition between people in the realm of intimate relations, in place of caring, sentiment, and sociality. It turns human relationships into alienated experiences based on money, quid pro quo, and equal exchanges. It transforms love into sex, sex into commodities, and leaves little time for people to regenerate their intimate connections. In short, it generates a perpetual nurturance gap, with likely cyclical, wave-like and geographical differences, in the extent of the problem.

The double movement ensures that *many* non-market relations of intimacy are transformed into commodity production. And when protective responses are called into play the state plays a major role. The state, however, while critical in the provision of these protected responses, is no substitute for protection based on family, community and friendship. At best we are left with a bureaucratic embeddedness, and at worst people are left to exist in an array of market-based regulations and requirements, or to fend for ourselves. The nurturance gap is a perennial problem of societies based on accumulation and competition when exchange (especially) substitutes for intimate reciprocity (Stanfield and Stanfield 1997).

The market process, both in creative destruction and protective response, drives a wedge between love and sex by destroying the former while stimulating the latter. To use a useful hyperbole, “love is transformed into sex, sex into orgasm, and orgasm into number of times”. As household activities decline, communities disap-

pear, extended families evaporate, global economic relations escalate, human relationships become superficial, external beauty and sex is emphasised, and people have little time for intimacy. These indeed are core tendencies imbued in its motion.

However, cultural differences propel uneven development, as the nations of northern Europe still experience a degree of embeddedness as community, sociality and trust remain quite high. Scandinavian style social-capitalism has managed to protect society against the ravages and destruction of love and intimacy to some degree. American and UK-style capitalism, on the other hand, is bearing the relatively full brunt of a disembedded economy through markets and states (O'Hara 1995, 2004). Neoliberalism has pushed both styles of capitalism further into disarray, but the Scandinavian-style has managed to protect itself much more than average.

### 3.2 Contradiction between Individual and Society

The notion of holism says that every person needs to have a good knowledge and experience of an array of political, economic, social, psychological and technical processes for personal development. It also says that a well-rounded personality requires a holistic lifestyle, including work, play and emotional bonding. Love thus involves knowledge and experience, but also both a loving person and a caring society. A prime contradictory process, especially under neoliberal capitalism, is for two people to project their love onto another person without a strong social element. Fromm (1957) emphasised that love needs to be a dominant tendency in both person and society. Thus emerges the notion of a "loving person" who relates empathetically with others, in tandem with a culture that generates a positive environment for people to enhance trust and genuine intimacies with others (Social Spread).

In Fromm's perspective, as market-capitalism advances the potential for love declines, both because individuals exist qua individuals, and also since the culture eschews caring, intimacy and spiritual oneness. Thus the individualist form of love stimulated by market capitalism is inauthentic and tends to privatise the experience rather than link it to the common good and the community. Love in most capitalist societies is seen as intimacy between two persons, often spreading to parents and children and sometimes to extended families and a few good friends; whereas "real love" resides in the oneness of the individual with those around them, including the community as a whole. These community externalities - including social trust, extended friendship, and concern for strangers - tend to be sporadic under neoliberal capitalism due to the social alienation that is pervasive.

*Agapic-Eros-Storgic love* is thus inhibited in neoliberal societies due to the materialistic culture, the trend to eschew ethics that go beyond the market and property, and the emphasis on work and money. People increasingly specialise, both in education and work. Specialisation is seen as stimulating a comparative advantage, whereas the costs of doing so are not including in the analysis. Work and money are seen as more important than sharing and giving. A large number of loving people are unlikely in this psychological, social and cultural state of alienation based on exchange and *quid pro quo*. Nevertheless, certain niches or pockets of *expansive Agapic-Eros-Storgic love* may be feasible in the crevices where these oppressive forces have less impact, or where special people strive energetically to generate wholeness

out of existential desperation. However, these pockets are very restricted, while the empirical research into capitalist economies otherwise following Lee's work, (as mentioned) completely ignore Agape love in its *combined* individual *and* social context, defining it purely as concern and compassion for *the* (singular) loved one.

None of the empirical studies that I have seen examine Agape love in the individual-*and*-social context discussed by Lee in his many works. More troubling, none of them even discuss this disparity between Lee's view of Agape and their own "evidence" of "Agape" love. Lee (1988, p. 48) argued, for instance, that "the agapic lover in a relationship is likely to see the partner as only one of many people in need. The partner may have to be content with a small portion of the lover's time and energy, for so many others are in need". Some examples of empirical studies that ignore this perspective include the following. Lacey et al. (2004) argue that "Agapic individuals tend to put *their partner's* needs and wishes above their own" (emphasis added). Hendrick and Hendrick (2006, p. 153) say that "This [Agapic] style is sacrificial, placing *the loved person's* welfare above one's own" (emphasis added). Also, Levine, Aune, and Park (2006, p. 466) argue that "Agapic is also characterized by gentle caring and tolerance for *one's partner*" (emphasis added). Lin (2005) recognised Lee's emphasis on the social individual yet strangely centred the empirical work on "their *current partner*" (p. 36, emphasis added). This reinforces Fromm's crucial point about the decline in *real* Agape (and Lee's point about what Agape "actually is"), as even the scholars did not find any evidence of it, given the divergence between the theory and the stunted real loves of people within neoliberal capitalism.

### 3.3 Contradiction between Love Freedom and Constraint

A primary contradiction of love draws from the existentialist work of Sartre (1956), the most well-known French philosopher, who sought to comprehend concrete human relations of the type with which love is a supreme example. These contradictions emanate from the conflict between the ontological principle of love as freedom and the concrete form it takes as structure and capital.

In principle, love is the seeking of freedom; searching for the realisation of one's potential in an environment of liberality, expression, and wholeness. In love we seek to express our humanity, to generate creative endeavours, and delve into the pleasures that are denied us elsewhere. Here we exist in the nakedness of intimacy, sexual interaction, and a caring attitude. The love that we create must be free from constraint for it to blossom in a natural fashion. This opening up of human potential is the basis of the feeling of freedom. This is what we seek and feel which reveals our inner potential. Being-for-Other reveals things about us that we are unable to realise when Being-for-Self. In it we achieve varying degrees of transcendence from the mundane reality of everyday life.

There is a conflict between this ontological freedom and the structures with which we try and embed, maintain and develop the potentiality of this freedom. We invest resources into making the love process durable, pinning it down, putting constraints on it; trying to maintain the process in a bounded environment. We link the love process to Being-for-Other people who are geographically bounded and of a particular nature (friends, relations, work colleagues). Love has to deal with the con-

straints of an individualistic society based on *work and business/human capital*; which does not recognise the anarchistic needs of a creative love process. We demand that our lover commits to us, becomes engaged to us, marries us, lives with us; shares our habits and tendencies; plans children with us; invests in household capital with us.

The creative love process setting freedom in motion is in conflict with the process of investing in “real life love capital”; the durable structures of freedom are *often* in conflict with the durable structures of everyday habits, work and association. We try and link the freedom of love into the alienated existence of structured lives in a capitalist society. The freedom of love can never completely actualise in the reality of bodies, geographies and everyday lives because love has the principle of spontaneous generation. Thus the real question arises about the notion of “freedom in structure”: how do we maintain some of the creative freedoms of love in society, more particularly a neoliberal “weak society”. As Sartre (1956, pp. 478-479) said of this contradiction, “the lover can not be satisfied with that superior form of freedom which is a free and voluntary engagement. ... Thus the lover demands a pledge, yet is irritated by a pledge. He wants to be loved by a freedom but demands that this freedom as freedom should no longer be free. He wishes that the Other’s freedom should determine itself to become love ... and at the same time he wants this freedom to be captured by itself, to turn back upon itself ... so as to will its own captivity”.

We thus have a dual contradiction. The original contradiction between the ontological principle of love and the reality of different bodies, Others and stresses of everyday life; and the additional contradiction between love in real *society* and love in neoliberal capitalist *economy*. Being under the influence of these multiple contradictions (in the concrete they multiply), as Sartre alludes to, we are more likely to “awaken” from the transcendence of the love dream into the reality of a life of stresses and strains; gender, class and ethnic divisions; competitive struggles; and other problems in the world of *business*. In some respects, therefore, the love honeymoon that some people awaken from is not the superficial one of passion versus intimacy, but often love freedom versus the alienated reality of everyday life. We may thus keep in mind the romantic ideal of our early months and years together, in contradistinction to the reality of awaking from it and never being able to bring it back. Love in a complex individualistic society is thus unlikely to be holistic or ongoing as people perpetually awaken from their dream as alienated beings existing in real life. Durable transcendence is not often possible under current conditions.

Thus, in a closed system love will gradually decline and become subject to less potential, until the energy dissipates entirely. Only when relationships are open in the sense of being subject to continual Agapic-Eros-Storge forces can love be sustained. It needs continual negentropic energy in the form of time-dependent novelty (an aspect of “Freedom”), which is embedded in creativity, nurturance, compassion, intelligence and Passion. These forms of novelty generate love energy, taking the form of new cooperative experiences, holidays, friends, shared knowledge, trust, and sociality. The combined effects of these processes may sustain and develop a degree of holistic love. Stephen A. Mitchell (2002) recognises how strong the contradictions

are between “freedom and safety”, indicating again how important it is to link commitment and intimacy with passion, freedom and social spread.

Sartre’s notion of freedom linked to love, surprisingly, has been almost completely ignored in the vast literature reviewed for this paper. The only references to his analysis that I came across--*while scrutinizing the theoretical and empirical material on love*--were a few short papers, such as those by Susan Linich (2001), Chris Stevens (2008) and Christina Smerick (2009). This is perhaps surprising since Sartre’s view of love is different and important. Numerous empirical papers make similar points to Sartre, and a number of important books adopt his core thesis without any reference to him. For instance, the interrelated contradictions between security and adventure, passion and friendship, and static versus dynamic lifestyles are the core of Mitchell’s (2002) neo-psychoanalytical view of love. Laura Kipnis’s (2003) remarkable book about “enforced compliance rather than a free expression of desire” explores similar territory.

#### **4. Phases of Love through Path Dependence, Evolution and Instability**

We briefly noted earlier in the paper that love, being of a relational nature, is subject to the effects described by the principle of path dependence. The principle of path dependence states that history matters, and that practical factors impinge on relationships which are difficult to abstract from through historical time. Good relationships are not equilibrium processes, but are forever changing and moving forward, being modified and evolving through phases of metamorphoses. Good relationships need to be continually moving, being reformed, and subject to new forces and complexities. While good relationships require Social Spread and Freedom beyond the basic elements of Passion, Intimacy and Commitment, recognising the deficiencies in these core elements in neoliberal economies, and scrutinising the more stunted forms of love, can be a useful exercise for recognising the specific forms of change and evolution experienced in reality.

Path dependence implies that many practical things happening in a relationship are difficult to erase from its motion. This gives rise to greater complexity, often a richer experience, and ways of learning and transforming. Sometimes these are good and sometimes these have negative effects on the relationship. For instance, something one party does which the other party does not like may lessen the degree to which the second party “loves” the first party. This may include the first party having sex with another, having a bad habit such as snoring, or forgetting a meeting date. Practices such as these are forever negatively impinging on people in relationships, often resulting in relational dissolution.

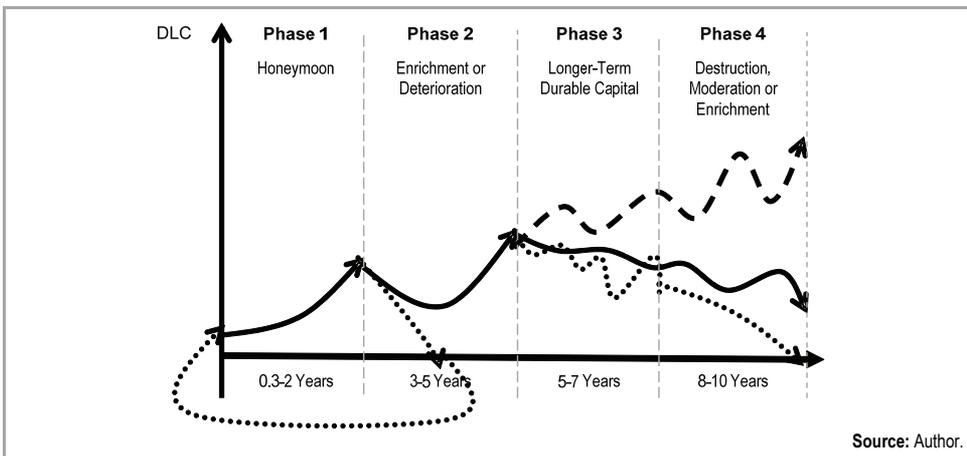
Path dependence can also have a positive effect, such as having an enjoyable and enriching time together that parties never forget, and which stimulates durable bonding, Intimacy, Passion, trust and hence love. This may also include things such as having a good holiday together, having good friends to enhance enjoyment, and investing in a house which stimulates bonding and intimacy. Path dependence is really the thing which makes for a richer, loving relationship when it is of a positive na-

ture. When the net balance of positives and negatives is itself positive and growing love is developing and becoming more durable through time.

Path dependence often generates *lock-in relationships*. People regularly have a preference for stability in their lives, for it is from stable relationships that they are able to plan and commit for the future. It is common for people to accept a partner when the first reasonable one comes along. This is especially the case if they are lonely, and also if they are able to “get along well”. The desire to reduce uncertainty and thereby enhance lock-in associations, may well contribute to stability, regularity and predictability in certain aspects of life. It also leads to having a stable partner, and reduces the need for continual searching and experimenting with others.

Relational lock-ins can have many quite different consequences. If the choice of the lock-in is a good one, then positive results are likely to follow (Agape, Storge and Eros), at least for a time. But if the lock-in is premature, resulting from bad choices or unanticipated changes, then the relationship may well be negative (Ludic, Manic). Even negative relationships can be hard to break if the parties are addicted to each other, and habits are not easily changed. This can lead to unhappy times, conflict, disagreements, and especially complicated dynamics if children are involved.

Research shows that relationships change through time, and that there are various uncertainties that impact on intimacy. For instance, many relationships within neoliberal economies undergo a series of typical evolutionary changes and instabilities in the degree of love capital (DLC). Figure 4 below provides a stylised view of some of the major ones. A pre-relationship stage (not shown) is that of being an acquaintance, where people get to know each other and develop knowledge about their “fit” for each other (Tony White 2005). The Honeymoon phase (Phase 1) is a common characteristic of many early-phase relationships, especially for Manic and Ludic (and to some degree Eros) lovers. Here sexual intercourse is typically very regular, perhaps every day or two, people often tell each other “I love you”, and the physical (Ludic, Manic, Eros) and emotional (Manic, Eros) passion for each other is very strong.



**Figure 4** Typical Phases of Degree of Love Capital (DLC) Evolution and Instability within Neoliberal Economies, 1980s-2010s (esp. USA)

The real test of a relationship is whether people can successfully undergo a positive transition when the “in love” feeling dissipates (although such feelings are unlikely for Ludics), and the bodily chemicals settle down to a more normal experience. It is at this point that most relationships break down, especially Manic and Ludic (and to some degree Eros) ones. Indeed, increasingly in the disembodied economy people go through serial bouts of termination at this stage, especially in youth but often throughout their whole life. In this way, relational instability is a normal part of life for such people; and we call it the *Relationship Instability Hypothesis* (RIH) (adapting Hyman Minsky’s (1986) term to relationships). Terminating relationships in this phase may also be due to incompatible styles or the stress of everyday life. Often it is due to insufficient investment in holistic love, as other activities (such as work) take precedence, or participants having few love skills. All styles have the potential to deteriorate in this phase since love is mostly a trial and error process, and often requires the building of appropriate love skills.

If there is more to the relationship than sex or passion, and people have an emotional affinity with each other, things in common, and the experiential process continues somewhat, then Phase 2 (Enrichment or Deterioration) may come into play. This is especially likely for those who manage to variously link Eros, Storge, Agape and possibly an element of Pragma. This is the phase of “developing durable bonding”, which, if it lasts beyond a year or two, often leads to 3-5 years of close association. Early on in this phase people often get involved in a de facto situation and possibly marry. Children regularly emerge on the scene in this phase, and a period of familial development and fulfilment often follow. During this second phase love may evolve; experiential discovery and learning may enhance holistic love. Successful investment in love capital during this phase may be due to compatible styles, a good mix of styles, and the development of appropriate skills.

During Phase 3 (Long-Term Durable) a number of possible scenarios emerge in advanced capitalist economies. Firstly, the building of familial and love capital continues to grow, usually where the bringing up of children generates positive forms of reciprocity, Freedom, Passion, trust and sociality. The life process can be enhanced as relative stability and development stimulate new knowledge and experiences. However, often the love and family environment begins to perpetuate mediocre results characterised by conformity and sameness. In this phase, the relationships may continue but at a lower trajectory. Long-term relationships often tend to lack Freedom, Social Spread and innovation due to entrenched habits, pressures of work, marriage, children, and incompatible styles. Entropy may thus settle in to some degree.

Even for those relationships with children which seem to be working well, Shoshana Grossbard and Sankar Mukhopadhyay (2012, p. 2) present research findings from their studies on the USA (longitudinal data, 1997-2008) that: “(i) presence of children is associated with a loss of spousal love; (ii) loss of spousal love is associated with loss of overall happiness; but (iii) presence of children is not associated with significant loss of overall happiness. If children reduce feelings of being loved by the spouse but do not reduce reported happiness even though spousal love induces happiness, then it must be the case that children contribute to parental happiness by

providing other benefits. These other benefits from children could be either material or emotional (what economists have called 'psychic benefits'). (Could these "other benefits" be a form of "love"?). This indicates that there may be trade-offs between love and other phenomena (such that overall happiness is not diminished). This is what we found in general, that love may be traded-off for money, safety, stability or any other activity. But are these alternatives to love a suitable substitute for love in a neoliberal world that is losing love at an escalating rate?: especially if the trade-offs are not specific choices made by people but are primarily inspired (or forced upon them) by the culture in which they live and are brought up: the neoliberal economic environment.

Phase 4 (Destruction, Moderation or Enrichment) shows three trajectories: growing love capital, moderate decline, and destruction of the relationship. Some few especially dynamic or loving persons may find their love expanding. Most are not so lucky. Quite a few find satisfaction falling off only modestly as they engage in novelty, freedom, changing styles and so on. Many eventually self-destruct. Here sexual intercourse drops off rapidly, time invested in developing close bonds decline, and often they stay together (for a time) "for the children", eventually realising the failure of their project. As mentioned earlier, a recently growing trend, especially in the United States, is serial monogamy with each major relationship lasting about 8-10 years (e.g., see Shawn Haley 2000), which is consistent with our *Relationship Instability Hypothesis*. Serial relational instability thus often becomes embedded in the process of change in an individualistic society as entropy becomes institutionalised into relationships.

With serial monogamy, one or both partners have new intimate connections, yet they often stay in touch, mainly due to their desire to see the children (if they are present). Their new relationship thus potentially undergoes one or more of the earlier phases, and the family connections become quite complex. For children, if there are any, they now have more time with a main single parent, in between relationships, and through time possibly three (or four) parents, probably much geography to traverse in the process of keeping up with the biological parent (usually the father), and a more complex life. This can be a positive thing for the children as they likely are relieved at the decline in familial conflict (since the separation), and it may set them up to learn how to survive in a complex environment. On the other hand, multiple separations can lead to a difficult environment, likely fewer resources, and more ephemeral linkages to people (O'Hara 2009c, Chapter 9).

The contradictions of relationships in neoliberal economies are also manifest in other ways. Marriage is being deinstitutionalised. Fewer people are marrying, and if they do it is later in life. Divorce rates are more than double what they were in the 1960s. More people are living alone, and in de facto relationships (O'Hara 1995, 2004). As serial monogamy becomes institutionalised, the "individualized family" is becoming more common. What Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (1998) describes as a "post-familial family" is in process, where its members have "individually designed lives", "lives of their own", lives "scattered between several different locations", where its members "confront each other as individuals eager to assert their own interests and pursuits, their own wishes and rights" (p. 64), with uncertainty and weaker bonds.

In the current environment of neoliberal capitalist economies, relationships are becoming more complex. Single parent families (especially women) are very prevalent, homosexual and polyamorous relationships are also common in some nations. Even among these relationships, change and periodic instability are the norm as partners try to juggle all of life's challenging roles of partner, parent, worker, capitalist, student, consumer, uncle, aunty, grandparent, friend, and so on. Serial monogamy is more common, especially in the US, not only in and out of marriage, but also in and out of cohabitation; as people put more emphasis on individualised rewards and personal development, rather than group rewards.

Cherlin (2005, 2010) argues that there are now greater numbers of children, in the US at least, having to bear the brunt of serial relationships and marriages, through lives that are more unstable and more uncertain. Changes in economic conditions and greater numbers of single parent families (many being in-between serial marriages) have led to three classes of children: the well-off, the not so well off, and the under-resourced; with the extremes having increased in relative numbers over recent decades. Thus the greater proportion of people having concern for their own individualised preferences, in an economic environment that is more unstable and market-based, has led to a decline in love capital in the US, and a lesser potential for children to also have fulfilling long-term love experiences ("path dependence").

In most neoliberal democracies these different roles have created more challenges and potential instabilities during the 1970s-2000s, through several severe financial crises and deep recessions; and this fact of change and instability is a critical aspect of love and sex in neoliberal society. The recent Great International Crisis, for instance, the worst systemic crises since the Great Depression, placed severe limits on the ability of people to enhance their degree of holistic love, while at the same time necessitating greater love in the uncertain environment (Catherine Hartford 2010).

In general, as a number of scholars have recognized, neoliberal policies and practices have been negatively affecting familial life while at the same time putting extra pressure on households to solve their own problems (Harriet Fraad, Stephen Resnick, and Richard Wolff 1994; David H. Ciscel and Julia A. Heath 2001). This is part of the neoliberal project's main contradiction/tendency of expanding the power of markets, corporations and individual objectives at the expense of social, community, ecological and interpersonal assets and capabilities.

Love under neoliberal economies tends to undergo several phases of evolution; the social dimension usually fails to emerge; Intimacy is inhibited by work, study, unemployment and other pressures; while competition and individual concerns limit the generation of Freedom, Social Spread, Intimacy and Commitment. Current institutional arrangements tend to limit compassion, friendship and Intimate connections that would enhance the life experience of people, thus stunting the growth of love.

## 5. Conclusion

We found in this paper that some of the core principles of political economy provide a window through which love can be viewed and critically scrutinised in a neoliberal

context. These principles include historical specificity, circular and cumulative causation, contradiction, path dependence and evolutionary change (O'Hara forthcoming). Through historical specificity we were able to situate love culturally by recognising the forces of individualism and collectivism throughout the world. Using circular and cumulative causation we were able to link love styles with core factors and degrees of holistic and other forms of love. The styles and core factors were then linked to the contradictions of neoliberalism, including markets versus nurturance, individual versus society, and freedom versus constraint. These contradictions help to explain why love takes the form it does under market systems of capitalism, especially inhibiting nurturance, compassion and intimacy. Path dependence and evolution provided insights into the different phases of metamorphosis that relationships take through time. The recent trend towards serial monogamy, putting self above group, and the post-familial family have led to more flexible, ephemeral, and unstable relationships.

Overall, this paper seeks to contribute towards love being a core area of analysis in political economy. Seeing heterodoxy as an emerging mutation from the existing schools of thought, this paper adds weight to the importance of a transdisciplinary field of inquiry that represents more a series of methods and principles than fields of content. Love is perhaps the most important quality of human endeavour, which is often left out of the theoretical, empirical and policy issues that heterodox political economy investigates. This is a great shame since there is much to offer from a political economy view of the matter. Seeking to incorporate love into the corpus of inquiry enables one to recognise that the costs of taking a crude economic view of social phenomena not only include environment destruction and financial instability but also insufficient nurturance, intimacy and freedom. Love should be a core part of people's lives, but under neoliberal conditions holistic love is unable to develop sufficiently, resulting in stunted personalities and psycho-cultural malaise. Efforts need to be taken to establish love as a core component of theory, empirics and policy, for otherwise this area of human endeavour will continue to be stunted by the power of the vested interests and the restricted experiences of people as they go about their work, study, leisure and networks of often ephemeral relationships.

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