



# “What?”— “I Mean Love”

Notes from the lecture inspired by the translations of LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN • by JUSTIN CARMEN



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## Setting the Stage

### 1. **Welcome...and a bit of flattery**

So, first things first. I expect that for many of you, being here together with me is probably quite an experiment. I am well aware that “saloning” is not a popular activity nowadays; therefore, I would not be surprised to hear that, for some of you, this will be your first experience with a philosophy salon. Inasmuch, the very fact that you are *here*, and together with me, is quite a statement. I do take this as a sign that you have an adventurous spirit. So, whether or not I am well acquainted with you already, or if we are still strangers so far, let me say that I have quite a bit of respect for you.

Of course, having said that, I think some stage-setting is in order. Salons are not a popular type of event nowadays, this much is obvious. However, and because of this, you may already be asking yourself, *what have I gotten myself into?* And, *what exactly is a salon, anyways?*

### 2. ***“A fashionable assemblage of notables”***

According to Merriam-Webster, a salon is “*a fashionable assemblage of notables, such as literary figures, artists, or statesmen*”. The definition hardly does us any good, however. It may only encourage concerns that assemblages of this type belong to a past time period and that, perhaps, they could hardly produce the same value as they once had. The textbook definition certainly reeks of aristocratic arrogance. Furthermore, neither are we aristocrats ourselves, nor are we governed by an aristocracy today. (While we often hear words like *technocracy* and *oligarchy*, we rarely hear *aristocracy*.) Despite this, I am here to challenge you.

For this event, I would like you to take yourself *seriously* as such a “notable”. Look around you. See the people sitting here with you. Then ask yourself, in all sincerity, *are these people worthy of note?* Are they not “notable”? And don’t our thoughts have value? I think any one of us could answer those questions in a similar way. Each and every one of us are “notable”, and our thoughts have value also.

### 3. **What is the value of a salon?**

Let us then, as notables, consider the question as to

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whether or not this type of assemblage might have value in today's world. Furthermore, let us consider how this event might serve you, in particular. After all, rather than "saloning", we could be doing any number of productive things: perhaps learning a new trade, for example, or working on our chosen craft. Perhaps our time might be better spent volunteering to help feed the hungry, or to shelter and clothe the homeless. We might feel more satisfied in attending a political rally and championing for the rights of individuals or identity groups; perhaps we should all be grieving and commiserating on what the global elites are planning for us next; perhaps it would be more adventurous if we worked to "solve" the stock market and become millionaires. While some of my examples have been chosen in jest, we should take this challenge to the value of "saloning" quite seriously. We do have a limited amount of time on our hands, after all—so, again, *why should we salon?*

First of all, I can say that we are here to have fun. Perhaps I should say that we are here to have some "serious fun". However, I also hope to show that there is an art to "saloning", and that this art is for the sake of being an active member of a public body. We have already agreed that each of our thoughts

have value. If this is so, then it must be on account that we uphold the ideal of democracy. Whatever "*we, the people*" think must be of the utmost importance. Also, it must be of equal importance that we share those thoughts in words, as well as hear the words of others. To put things in quite political terms, then, I would argue that "saloning" is for the sake of our own self-governance—certainly not as aristocrats—but as common citizens pursuing a social and economic self-governance. What "saloning" provides us, however, is the opportunity to put on the fashionable adornments of the notable. By wearing them, we can pursue the objective of this particular salon too.

4. **Love, the topic of our salon**

So far, I have said a lot about salons in general, but nothing yet about this particular salon, and nothing about the subject matter of this salon either. We have gathered here to speak *philosophically*. In particular, we have gathered here to speak philosophically on love. However, before we let ourselves become overly enthralled by the topic of our salon, let us ask ourselves a question, especially for the sake of our own self-preparation for our salon and, inasmuch, for the sake of respecting the subject matter

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of this salon. What does it mean when I say that we have gathered here to “speak philosophically”? Let us reflect on this question by way of the word *philosophy*.

5. **What does *philosophy* mean?**

No doubt, the word *philosophy* may conjure up some quite discomfoting associations. For example, and unlike *science* (or even *art* or *craft*), *philosophy* may refer to something that is neither material, nor even social or communal, but rather to something that is quite personal. The word often refers to someone’s own view of the world—their “worldview”. Of course, we also find the word *philosophy* used in business too, particularly in mission statements where the word may refer to the company’s guiding principles or values. The two usages are actually quite similar. Yet, neither of these can exhaust the ways in which the word is used. Within an academic setting, for example, the word *philosophy* may conjure up quite specific associations. As a discipline, the word may refer us to any one specific doctrine within the Western philosophical tradition. It is very likely that names like Plato or Aristotle come to mind. Perhaps we think of Plato’s theory of forms, or of Aristotle’s metaphysics. Of course, for those of

us who are a bit more familiar with the tradition, we might think of names such as Friedrich Nietzsche or Karl Marx. And yet, for those of us who are still more acquainted with the tradition, we may think of others, such as Giles Deleuze or Yak Hui.

However, and despite the above usages of the word *philosophy*, what I would like us to do is to put those associations aside—at least, for the time being. When I say that we are here to “speak philosophically”, then I am saying something about the form of our salon. Specifically, I am saying something about our method. We are here to *philosophize* on love. The Platonic dialogue will serve as our model. And because we take up the Platonic dialogue as our model, I would like to make four qualifications before we begin the salon, specifically regarding *ideas*, *descriptions*, *facts*, and *truth*.

6. **Ideas**

In the language of Platonism, we are here to present the *εἶδος*, or *ἰδέα*—that is, the outward appearances of the world. Much like how a sculptor works with his clay, or a painter with his acrylic and canvas, we are here to manifest the outward and “exterior” form of the world through description.

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7. **Description**

For this salon, we must assume that description is something which, by its very nature, is unique to each expression. Consider the common experience of the sunset. No matter how many times we assume that experience has been had, the profundity of that experience could never be taken away. Therefore, no matter how convincing the scientist's common material description may be, one's own description of that unique experience will forever be their own unique expression. Inasmuch, description is something which could never be common among any set of human animals (or even agreed upon between them). Any "agreement" on any one particular description could only "steal" that description from another. However, and because this statement might sound as if it is easily refuted, let me expand on that by way of a reflection on facts.

8. **Facts**

Just as with description, facts begin with empirical evidence; they follow from *actual* events in time and space. But, not to be mistaken, they are more than that. Facts also refer us to *the one and only*. They are what is true; and those *true facts* stand against the false. As such, facts hold power over us. They refer

us to events that are more than any one's own mere individual experience.

However, when considering the nature of facts as we are, we must equally consider their history; specifically, we must consider those mechanisms by which *the factual* came to be of utmost value in the lives of human animals. This history is not hard to recount; it has been recorded into the many and various projects of modernization—projects which demanded human mobilization on an unprecedented scale. This mobilization was promised by an industrialization of human activity—an industrialization which could not have been possible without standardization. During the early period of industrialization, the pervasiveness of standardization went unquestioned. This is attested for in the popularity of positivism as the guiding philosophy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Positivism, then, takes the *positum*, the sensuous, as the real. Yet, positivism goes further than empiricism. The sensuous is that which constantly proves itself upon any appearance of doubt. Such proof can only be had by way of a subsequent verification—a repeatable verification. The *positum* is that which *constantly* proves itself by way of comparison with *a ruler of the standard*.

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The standard provides for certainty whenever certainty is in question. The *positum* is verified data—“positive data”—the fact. In positivism, positive facts constitute the only genuine form of knowledge. Any agreement to such standardization is something of a promise to each other (all of whom share in *my* project) that *I, myself, will follow the ruler*. Anyone promising to compare their own individual experiences to the ruler does this in order to meet the demands of the project.

Now, while all of this may feel pedantic to those invested with the modern spirit (or to those who hold an ideal of progress, or of a common and shared *human experience*) I still feel it is necessary to make these distinctions, and, especially, to maintain description as something which is unique to each expression. I make these distinctions as a precaution. From my observations and, specifically, from observing the mechanisms of conversation, I have noticed that facts have also come to serve something of a perverse role—namely, that of a shield—one which protects the speaker and conceals the reason why the fact is being presented in the first place. Undoubtedly, any proclamation to “fact!” discloses more than simply verifiable phenomena. Behind any

factual statement is a value statement. “This fact is good!”, or “this fact is healthy!”, or “this fact itself is an affirmation of my life!”—and this is just to present a few examples. So, while facts are often used to appeal to something larger than us, and used to appeal to our subjection to that “something”—they may also stand as an obstruction to the *real* matter at hand. In those cases, facts may prevent any real meeting between *a you* and *a me* in the here and now—and certainly if we are not all *subjected* to the same project or the same guiding ruler.

However, and given this, you may be wondering, *are we then resigning ourselves to relativism here in this salon?*—with relativism being the idea that what is true is relative to each individual. To this question, I can confidently answer “no”. We are not resigning ourselves to relativism here in this salon. But to understand this, we must also agree to an understanding regarding the nature of truth.

9. **Truth**

Let it be said that for us, here in this salon, we submit ourselves to the understanding that the truth of any one description could only be “proven” in

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the fact that it provides traction and propels the dialogue further. For us, what is true is that which is *projective*. The “project” of this salon—namely, to philosophize on love—is the only *objective ruler* which we have to measure any one description as true. As we proceed, and as we hear testimony from others sitting beside us, let us try an exercise. Ask yourself, *does that description propel us towards our goal?* Because if we are to achieve our goal, then we must animate those descriptions which encourage the activity of philosophizing on love.

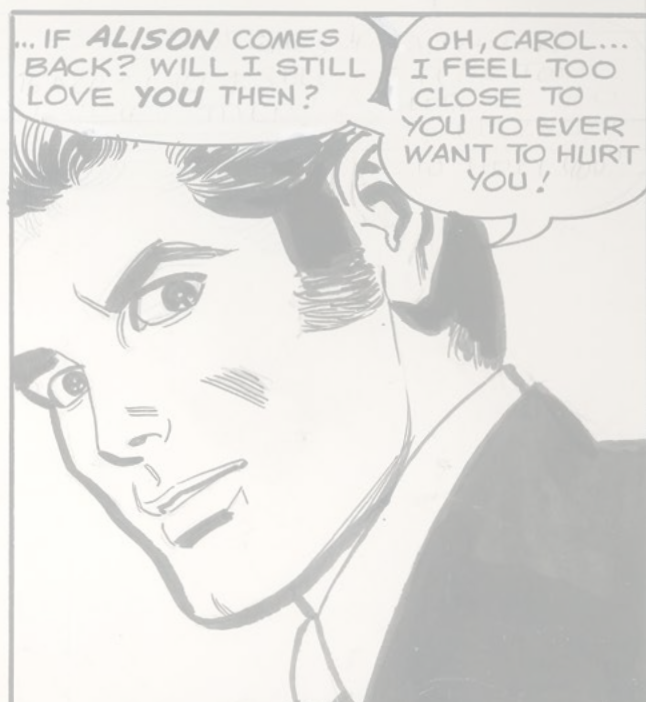
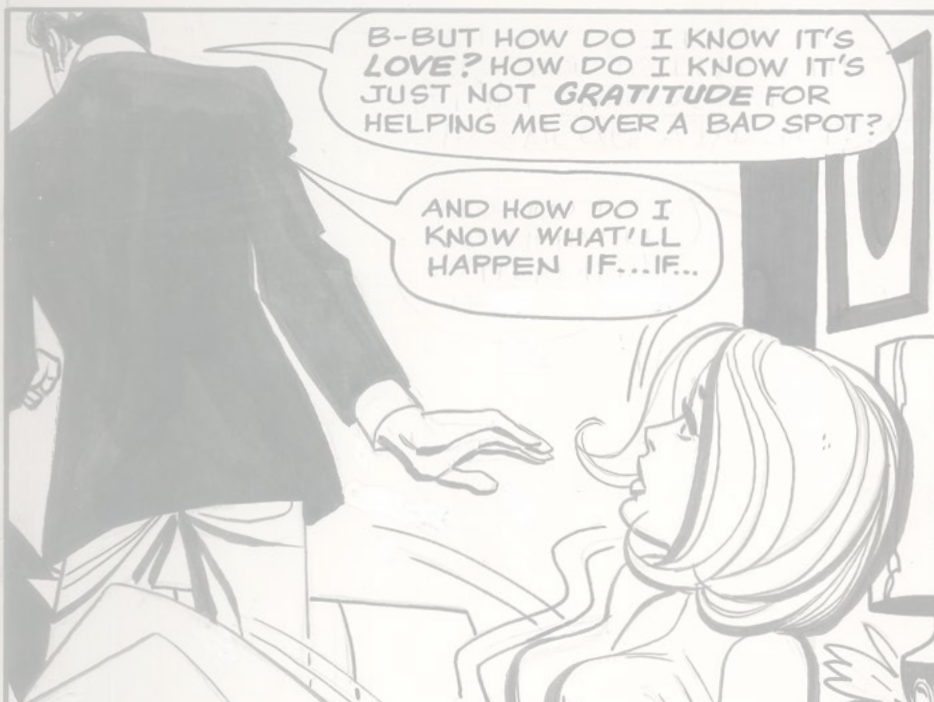
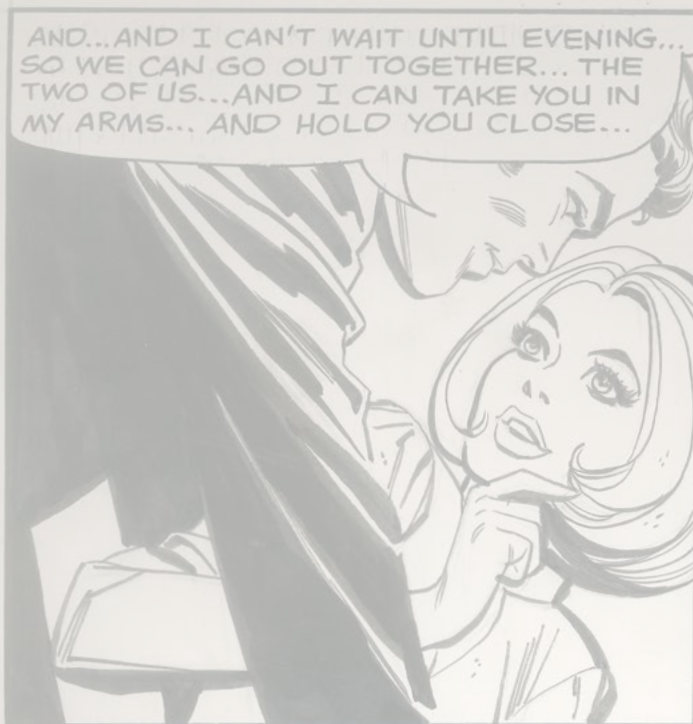
10. **Closing remarks**

One final note before we proceed—the distinctions which I have drawn between *ideas*, *descriptions*, *facts*, and *truth* are for the sake of encouraging healthy salon protocol and etiquette. However, and at the same time, these qualifications are equally relevant to understanding the very subject matter of our salon. Of course, there can be no doubt that love is likely first experienced as an “internal” phenomenon before all else. It might appear as if we only *know* love through internal introspection. Furthermore, and given my distinctions, love could never be factual. We are not in possession of an “objective” love standard, for example. All the same, I am sure

that each of us can attest to the *reality* of love. After all, love is likely one of the most real experiences that anyone can have.

Insofar as this is the case, we are presented with quite a peculiar question: is love *only* real in the personal and intimate realm, or is love also real in the public realm as well? Why are there two “realms” of human interpersonal commerce, anyway? For myself, I can assume that this is because of how separating life into two divisions, into *a public life* and *a private life*, was useful at some point in the history of the human animal, and that perhaps this division is still helpful to those of us living today. Though, I do wonder if this division will continue to be helpful in the future, or whether some future human animals (living in some future world which is still inconceivable to us) will have achieved a more holistic way of life—specifically, one where “the inner” *feelings* and “the outer” *reality* map onto each other in harmony.







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## Structure of our Salon

- Setting the stage: what is a salon and what does it mean to philosophize?
  - Ideas
  - Descriptions
  - Facts
  - Truth
- About your facilitator
- Around the table: who are each of you
- About Ludwig Wittgenstein
- Lecture: love as an external phenomenon
- Lecture: love as an Internal phenomenon
- Guided discussion

## Salon Materials

- Handout: Opusculum 01
  - Visuals
  - Recording the salon?
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## About your facilitator

As for who I am, my name is Justin Carmien. I grew up in Northern Indiana, where I experienced both a somewhat well-off and also a somewhat poor childhood. On my father's side, my great-grandfather, John Raber, ran for the congressional office of Indiana's second district in 1964. After losing to incumbent Republican leader of the House of Representatives, Charles Helleck, my great-grandfather contributed to the community in another way—he established Raber Golf, an eighteen-hole course located just outside the village of Bristol, Indiana. This business has remained under family operation up until today. My father, for example, oversees lawn and machine maintenance. Then, on my mother's side, my grandfather was a middle school art teacher and my mother a nurse. After my mother divorced my father, she moved me, together with my sister and brother, to a trailer park. There I spent some formative years of my life—from the age of eleven to fifteen.

In my adult life, I pursued a career within product design and marketing. I began by starting a publishing company here in the United States and then later moved to Denmark. During the last four years of that career, I served as a

member of a leadership team. Together with four other design managers, I ran a department of forty employees. During those later years in Denmark, I established my cooperation with Spinderihallerne, a municipality-run community and historical center in the provincial town of Vejle, Denmark. There, I partnered with international community developers to host salons on philosophy. The topics of those salons ranged from free will to aesthetics. However, my main philosophical interest is metaphysics—particularly a reading of metaphysics which I have named *first economics*. *First economics* philosophy is founded upon the writing of German philosopher Martin Heidegger, specifically Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, as well as Heidegger's interpretation of Friedrich Nietzsche as a value metaphysician. I understand that this kind of metaphysics not only describes the "artist phenomenon" of the craftsman, it also describes the metaphysics of the "politician phenomenon". *First economics* philosophy promises the discipline of metaphysics as a political answer. I would also like to use this opportunity to say that I am also quite entertained by the contemporary generalist intellectual Bonnitta Roy, whose philosophy I understand as the closest one to my own.

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## “What?”—I Mean Love

### 11. Philosophizing on the meaning of love

I would like to start our salon by thinking about our title—specifically, that it is both a question and an answer. The question simply asks “*What?*”, and then the answer begins with “*I Mean*”. The word “*Mean*” is followed by “*Love*”. As should be clear, love will serve as the primary object of our considerations throughout our salon. We are here to philosophize on the *meaning* of love. And while philosophizing on meaning might appear like a strange and awkward activity, there is good reason for it. After all, when philosophizing on meaning, what we are *really* philosophizing on is what one *means to say* when they say the word *love*. We are interested in which phenomenon the word directs our attention towards when, for example, someone testifies that, “I love you”. It could be said that we are interested in philosophizing on *the phenomenology of love*.

### 12. Ok, but that sound a bit erotic!

Of course, philosophizing on “*the phenomenology of love*” may sound a bit erotic. And, to be sure,

when philosophizing on the meaning of love, we do have the possibility of venturing into aesthetic descriptions such as *the erotic*. All the same, we could equally venture into descriptions of *the beautiful* (or *the sweet* and *the cute*, for that matter). However, when philosophizing on the meaning of love, we also have the possibility of venturing into descriptions altogether besides aesthetics. If, for example, we consider what one means when one says, “I am *in* love”, then we are considering love as a *disposition*. To be sure, the preposition “*in*” refers to a location, even if that location is not one which could be found on a map. Furthermore, in asking about the meaning of love, we also have the possibility of venturing into descriptions of love as a *feeling*—and even here there are two possibilities: either a *bodily sensation* or a *non-bodily sensation* (and, not to be mistaken, there is a distinction which can be made between feelings and sensations). Insofar as this is the case, and as we can see already by now, the ways in which we *mean* love can be quite numerous; therefore, we can assume that the phenomena to which this word refers to may also be quite numerous. However, and by way of philosophizing on the meaning of love, we might just be able to hit upon the *real* love phenomenon.

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13. **Ludwig Wittgenstein**

In order to philosophize on the meaning of love, I am going to call on the assistance of a quite revolutionary thinker—the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. I can say that Wittgenstein is “revolutionary” on account that he has influenced the way in which many people have thought. I would even say that Wittgenstein’s studies have opened a new playground for thinking, which is the same as saying that he created a new logic. However, even so, what should be admitted is that despite Wittgenstein’s discoveries, he is *not* often considered a philosopher of love. So, you might be asking yourself, *why has Justin chosen to call on the assistance of Wittgenstein?* I want to address this question already now.

14. **The discordance between science and religion**

Firstly, let me share a few remarks on Wittgenstein’s biography, and then I will use those remarks to reflect on my own life story. A comparison between the two should answer the question as to why I have called on Wittgenstein’s assistance in order to philosophize on love, and here in this salon.

As for Wittgenstein, what should be noted is that he was writing in the first half of the twentieth century.

He seems to have been responding to the major scientific advances of his time. In fact, he was quite critical of the pursuit of the scientific industries and of their ability to uncover the ultimate truths about reality. In one of his notes collected and published posthumously in the book *Culture and Value*, we read his lament that,

“It is all one to me whether or not the typical Western scientist understands or appreciates my work, since he will not in any case understand the spirit in which I write.”

Of course, for those of us having grown up in the United States during the 1990s, we remember that physics had then served as the explain-all science of the time. Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Neil DeGrasse Tyson all enjoyed success and celebrity during this decade—likely because they took part in a rather polarized debate, with science on one side and religion on the other. For myself, having been impressed by this debate early in my adult life, I found myself wanting to answer the apparent discordance between religion and science later in my adult life, and on my own terms. And, to be honest, I still feel the pain of when the American people were



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critiqued for their “anti-intellectualism” and for their “anti-scientism”. Perhaps I felt as though these judgments were directed at me, since I found scientific description as an obstacle to the *real* problems of both private and public life.

15. **Zettel**

Wittgenstein’s writings and, in particular, the notebook clippings collected and translated into English by G.E.M. Anscombe and published as *Zettel*, have proven invaluable in my pursuits. Of those notes, I have spent the most time thinking about the more phenomenological studies. I understand that phenomenology is quite well suited for placing scientific descriptions and explanations (and, especially, those provided by physics) within the whole of the phenomenal experience. However, and in addition to this, *Zettel* also presents Wittgenstein’s best style. Rather than adopting the overly-burdened language of the Western philosophical tradition, he uses ordinary language to approach philosophical elucidation. His verses are easy to read, simple, and also poetic. Yet, at the same time, the meaning behind each sentence is vast. Inasmuch, the phenomenological studies in *Zettel* are perfect for guiding a salon that focuses on the phenomenology of love; this is true despite the

fact that love is not the most common phenomenon considered in this book, or in any other of Wittgenstein’s published studies for that matter.

16. **The science of love**

Having said that, and before we dive into an investigation into our intimate experiences with love—including our own testimonies, and what those testimonies reveal about the very nature of world—I want to continue to challenge the understanding that the industrialized sciences, and these sciences alone, are equipped with the tools and methods for discovering the *real* underlying structure of reality. So, let us put science to the test, so to speak. Let us see if we can use any one of them to discover the meaning of love, and, more importantly, the *real* phenomenon to which the word *love* directs our attention. While this may seem like quite a peculiar task, it is easily done all the same. After all, love could be a phenomenon of consideration within either biochemistry, neuroscience, or anthropology, just to name a few examples. Of course, we should also expect that researchers within the field of psychology might have something interesting to say about love. Therefore, let us continue into these disciplines.

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## Love as an External Phenomenon

### 17. The principal question of our philosophizing

We are about to philosophize on the meaning of love by way of various scientific logics and the corresponding evidence which has been produced on account of those industries. It is not arbitrary that we begin here. This starting point will allow us to pose our principal question regarding the meaning of love: *does the love we express in a personal testimony and love as meant in any particular science come to the same thing?* And furthermore, *does love within biochemistry or neuroscience come to the same thing as love within the logic of anthropology or psychology?* I will now reveal my conclusion already: there is good reason to doubt this. Therefore, let us begin our first consideration.

### 18. The chemistry of love

Firstly, let us try a consideration of love *physiologically*—that is to say, as an observable and “exterior” *physical* phenomenon. To do so, let us imagine a researcher, perhaps a biochemist, investigating the

chemical secretions of the human body (including hormones, pheromones, enzymes, and other biological protein catalysts). He is doing this by observing a living human animal as his subject. Now, imagine this biochemist presenting his test subject with pictures of a loved one, and then asking his subject to testify to their love. In this case, we could say that this biochemist is investigating *the chemistry of love*, quite literally. In our scenario, we can imagine the biochemist concluding that, in certain cases, this-or-that enzyme, once met with this-or-that substrate, produces this-or-that metabolic change—maybe the researcher observes an increased heart rate, or deeper breathing in his subject, *et cetera*.

### 19. The neurology of love

Let us now consider another laboratory situation—one which is similar to the above laboratory situation, but different. As before, consider a researcher presenting his subject with pictures of a loved one and asking them to testify to their love. However, in this case, the researcher is observing brain activity, and, in particular, neurological changes in the brain and the central nervous system. Once presented with a correspondence between the stimuli and the neurological changes in the human body, the

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researcher might be tempted to map the internal love experience onto the brain, thus giving the internal love phenomenon a location in physical time and space. Of course, this type of exercise has a certain appeal, since it seems to close the gap between the mind and the body. The promise here is that *the mind* might become one and the same with *the brain*. However, and despite the apparent appeal, there is reason to be suspicious. Let us reflect on this for just a moment.

Of course, we must admit that even if a neuroscientist could map the internal love experience onto an external body, then this correlation still could not tell the neuroscientist all that is interesting about love. No doubt, a neuroscientist could say “look”, while pointing to the brain, “there is love”. But, all the same, who in everyday use would gain anything by adding a location within the central nervous system onto their meaning? In fact, they would probably refute the relevancy of this researcher’s findings to their meaning. Certainly, a temporal and spatial location is not what one *means to say* when one says, “I love you”. Furthermore, even just thinking that one could possibly mean “my heart rate has increased”—or that “I am experiencing heavier breathing”—when

one says “I love you”, feels absolutely ridiculous, and quite rightly. Therefore, it seems that, at best, physiological investigations (whether by way of the logic of chemicals or neurons) could only produce a quite *narrow* definition of love.

## 20. The sociology of love

Of course, physics is not the only science. Perhaps it might be more productive for us to look towards one of the more *social* sciences to help discover the meaning of love, and to help describe the *real* love phenomenon as well. Therefore, let us continue to think of love as an “external” phenomenon—one which is present in one or more subjects under observation—but this time, let us think of love through the more *socio-logic* of anthropology. If we do, and if you allow me an example from my own personal experience, then I would like to call on an example from the rave scene. “Yes” I am thinking of warehouse parties, DJs, techno music, and also ecstasy, cocaine, crystal meth, and special K. However, and for myself, the rave experience was not only this. And, after all, it was quite a bit more.

The rave scene which I experienced had its own unique economy—one which, I must admit, existed

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parasitically off the economy of the greater United States; but, all the same, it was an economy with its own commercial and interpersonal mechanisms. While much of that commerce is irrelevant to our philosophizing on love, I would like us to consider the expression *PLUR*—an acronym commonly used in the rave scene to refer to *peace, love, unity, and respect*. Let us imagine a researcher who is investigating the rave experience, and with the specific interest in documenting the experience of love within this scene. We can picture this researcher surveying a selection of ravers in order to discover the most common descriptions of love, and, in particular, the experience of love as it relates to the expression *PLUR*.

Let us imagine this scenario and, in doing so, let us consider the *purpose* of this anthropologist's investigation and the potential *use* of his findings. Firstly, we can say that this researcher's investigation might produce a novel description of love, and perhaps that description would be more articulate than what any individual raver could produce alone. In this case, the researcher would have created, for the first time, a comprehensive description of love as it was experienced in the rave scene. However, we can also picture this research project from the

perspective of the raver. Consider that the researcher's description might have been quite correct from their perspective; however, and at the same time, this new and comprehensive description might have also destroyed the *essence* of *PLUR*, again, from their own perspective. In this case, it might be that the researcher's description had less *utility* for the raver. After all, it is likely that the expression *PLUR* did the job just fine, and that no further articulation was necessary to convey what the ravers meant to say to each other. Therefore, we can equally interrogate the researcher, and much in the same way that he is interrogating the ravers. For example, we might ask, *with what purpose did the researcher create this comprehensive description?* And, perhaps more precisely, *who is the description for?* It is possible that the novel description produced by the researcher has merely replaced one set of words with another, and that this new set may only be useful to the researcher in translating their "discovery" back to other researchers. In this case, we are presented with a question, *would the anthropological method have produced a description of the real love phenomenon as it was experienced in the rave scene?* Or would it be more correct to say that this research project produced a description of love as it was *experienced*

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in the rave scene, and yet also as it was *understood* within the context of the research project? If we then take into account our own interpretation of the researcher's "discovery", we seem to be presented with the possibility of an infinite regression.

21. **Explanation over description**

Of course, *description* is only one type of result which a scientific investigation might produce, and we can easily imagine situations in which description is not even the most interesting one. Let us consider, for example, a situation where our researcher is less interested in a description of the *real* love phenomenon and more so with what *function* love serves within a tribe, community, or a "society". In this case, our researcher takes for granted that love is *there*; love exists, even if no one knows exactly what it is. However, rather than discovering the essence of love, our researcher is curious to know *why* it is there. What purpose does it serve? In this case, he is interested in *explanation over description*.

Let us imagine our researcher seeking to explain love in this way. Plus, let us imagine him setting out to investigate his "subject" (in this case, not an individual-subject, but rather a tribe, a community, or a

"society"). Now, in order for us to be convinced that our researcher is adequately equipped for his investigation, we also have to imagine that he has come prepared with a hypothesis. Perhaps his hypothesis states that the purpose of love is to guarantee successful and efficient human structures—whether those structures are romantic, familial, or communal. Of course, if we also imagine our scientist in a period of time which followed the Darwinian revolution in thought, then our researcher will likely consider this talk of "purpose" quite unscientific. After all, in order to talk about "purpose", we have to admit that there is a plan or a final goal which love accomplishes. Yet, such "purposes" and "goals" might also be possibilities which only exist for the human animal. It is very likely that Nature, for example, has no such goals—and perhaps our future has not been *intelligently designed* such that any purpose is possible. Charles Darwin conceived of an understanding which removed such teleological expressions from evolutionary explanation. Following the Darwinian revolution in thought, evolutionary explanation became more "objective". Therefore, if our researcher is operating with such an understanding, then it is likely that his hypothesis makes use of "the more objective" Darwinian language. In such a case, his hypothesis



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likely states that “human animals which exhibit love are *more likely to* safeguard successful parenthood”, rather than “human animals experience love *in order to...*” Of course, I have to admit that this reflection on “the Darwinian revolution” in thought is a bit of a tangent from the principal objective of our salon. Furthermore, we are not explicitly philosophizing on the meaning of love with this consideration in mind. However, perhaps this deviation has taken us to a place where we can stop for a bit of reflection. Let us recapitulate the proceedings so far.

Let us ask: *where has this exploration of scientific description taken us?* With physiology, whether that of biochemistry or neuroscience, we have love as *a physical token of an internal experience*. With neuroscience, in particular, we have love as *a location within the brain or the central nervous system*. With anthropology, love is *translated* from one culture to another. And finally, with evolutionary explanation, love is taken for granted; biology’s *description* takes the form of *explanation*. Of course, we must admit that any one of these sciences do give us a description which answers the original question of our title—“*What?*” Any of these sciences can produce a description which replaces the answer “*I mean love*”.

They produce a more articulated answer. This is the case even if those descriptions are not what any of us had first expected when we set out to discover the *real* love phenomenon. However, what must be obvious to anyone already by now is that these sciences, insofar as we have considered them, have only provided us with quite narrow definitions of love, with each according to their own logic—and furthermore, these definitions do not seem to add anything to those meanings which we encounter in our everyday lives. Perhaps these scientific ways of thinking strike us as quite bizarre. Therefore, and while this quick exploration of the industrial sciences is surely not exhaustive, let us move on from physiology and the sociological sciences. Let us do so in order to try a different approach. After all, we have still not exhausted every type of logic by which the sciences operate. Perhaps most pronouncedly, we have not yet considered love from *the logic of the psyche*—psychology. So, let us try looking into *the mind*.

## 22. The psychology of love

Now, we may suspect that of all the sciences, psychology may have the most interesting things to say about love. Psychology may, after all, tell us about what can be meant when the word *love* is used. Fur-

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thermore, we may suspect that those meanings will satisfy us in a more fulfilling way, as we quest after the *real* love phenomenon.

In order to consider these suspicions more thoroughly, we must firstly define the science of psychology, and secondly, we must define the object which this science studies. There is reason for why I have put emphasis on such definitions, specifically those regarding this particular science. After all, when we colloquially refer to *psychology*, what we are likely thinking of is *psychoanalytic practice*—that is, a set of practices by which a psychotherapist interrogates into the mind of their patient. In this case, psychology is not so much *the science of the mind*, but rather a science of methods by which a doctor treats his patient's conscious and unconscious mind. By treating the mind as such, the psychotherapist seeks to discover artifacts from childhood, or perhaps elucidate on coping mechanisms following trauma. A psychotherapist may operate with psychological objects much in the same way a mathematician operates with variables in an algebraic equation. Grief, remorse, shame, *et cetera*, all may be moved around in the "equation" in order to reach a desired result. In this case, the desired result may be a patient's own self-enlighten-

ment, or their rehabilitation back into public life. The patient's ability for "normal" engagement might be the gauge by which to measure the success or failure of the psychotherapist's work. On a more disciplinary level, then, psychology has attracted many who are interested in child development, adult development, and family structures and dynamics.

Now, what we must admit—if we are to accept this definition of psychology (namely, as a science of methods)—is that psychology is quite unlike the other sciences we have been considering up to this point—particularly biochemistry and neuroscience. After all, these sciences are not *merely* sciences "of methods"; rather, they contribute to the description of the very nature of the physical world instead. Because of this, many scholars of psychology have found "a science of methods" to be an unsatisfactory definition. This has led many to propose a "substance" of which psychology studies. In the last century, for example, psychology was popularly understood as *the study of animal behavior*. B.F. Skinner is the psychologist most widely associated with this understanding. However, at the end of the twentieth century, when behaviorism had already lost its explanatory power, scholars of psychology readily

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abandoned this definition. This is due, in part, to uncertainty regarding the definition of that which is being studied in psychological behaviorism. As *the study of animal behavior*, psychology is nearly indistinguishable from other sciences that also study animal behavior, such as sociology for example. However, since abandoning behaviorism, psychology has been without a proper subject of study, even up until today. Furthermore, and insofar as we understand the scientific project as one which seeks to describe the very nature of the physical world, scholars today still feel as though their discipline fails to contribute to *proper* scientific understanding.

Regarding this challenge, an acquaintance of mine, and working psychologist and professor at James Madison University, Gregg Henriques has written a paper titled *The Problem with Psychology*. In this paper, Gregg identifies the challenge. However, he also gives reason for proposing a “unified theory of psychology” in order to address it. To explain his theory, Gregg has appropriated educational tools from other explanatory models—including Big History and metamodern developmental theory as well. Notably, Big History is a field of study interested in explaining the evolutionary history of the universe—from the

Big Bang to complex animal cooperation. However, Gregg proposes to go beyond mere “external” phenomena and include the phenomena of the animal’s consciousness into the Big History narrative.

Of course, it should be said that this form of explanation requires a very high level of synthesis. Much like early mythmakers, it also requires a position beyond oneself. At the same time, this position is not uncommon in the history of philosophy. G.W.F. Hegel, for example, constructed something of a modern explanatory mythology when we wrote his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In this work, Hegel sat in the position of “the omniscient world observer”, together with his reader, and introduced a new logic for expanding on the individualist worldview, common to the Enlightenment period of thought, which described people as individuals and society as a collection of free-born atomized individuals. Hegel’s *Phenomenology* was successful insofar as it ushered in a sociological form of description of natural phenomena. This tradition carried on to other revolutionary thinkers, such as Karl Marx, Martin Heidegger, and the many “postmodernist” thinkers. In this light, we can see how the success of Gregg’s project to unify psychology under a modern mythology will hinge

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on a similar revolutionary logic. Given the nature of his project, this logic must include both physical and psychical phenomena—and if his explanation is to be scientific (which is, after all, the project for the scholars of psychology), then the physical and psychical phenomena must be measurable according to the same criteria and with the same tools. However, after reviewing *The Problem with Psychology* and other papers written by Gregg, I have concluded that he has not succeeded in this project. What is worse, he has erred in his approach.

It is my understanding that Gregg is looking for reassurance that the time he has spent studying has been valuable. He also understands that his “unified theory” will exist in a crowded marketplace of ideas. He branded his theory accordingly. However, as Gregg has appropriated other explanatory models into his own, he has constructed quite a Frankenstein’s monster of a product. In doing so, he has betrayed the very nature of logic, which aims to “release complexity” from the world (Bonnitta Roy). Of course, I can also admit that I do feel some bitterness when reflecting on Gregg’s project. This is because I spent valuable time with his theory, but without getting much in return. After prospects of

a joint collaboration between the two of us, I genuinely tried to understand him. However, not being presented with a logic which can bridge physical and psychical phenomena, I am convinced that psychology remains a science of methods, not a knowledge system about the nature of the world. In this way, it is unlike physics, but more so like engineering; and it is unlike biology, but more so like medicine and bioengineering. Of course, in saying this, I am also aware that any one of us are equally susceptible to faltering in the same way as Gregg—this includes even myself. His project stems from a want of *the universal mythos* and from the want of personal intellectual success and from turning personal philosophizing into a marketable product. We should learn from Gregg Henriques.

Concluding on these reflections, I can now draw my conclusion regarding “the psychology of love”. It is my understanding that until the scholars of psychology can answer for themselves the scope of their discipline and the proper subject matter of their studies, psychology will stop short of answering after content itself. Regarding the subject matter of our salon, this includes the meaning of love.

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23. **Closing remarks**

Now, after having said all that I have, and specifically with regards to the industrialized sciences, I also hope not to be mistaken. None of what I have said suggests that any of these sciences are of little or no value—quite the contrary. The fact that we have inherited these sciences today is a testament to the value which their contribution has brought to the lives of living human animals. Psychotherapy, for example, is useful for rehabilitating individual human animals back into public life. Therefore, rather than placing this science into the category of *the unscientific* (simply on account that it does not contribute to the general project concerned with describing the physical world), I would thus prefer to reject *the general project to describe the physical world* as the standard by which we measure *the scientific*. The same can be said of biochemistry or neuroscience, specifically regarding our ambition to discover the *real* love phenomenon. If these sciences cannot discover the *real* love phenomenon, thus telling us all that is interesting about love, then this should also be fine. Obviously, this does not *necessarily* say anything yet about the value of a biochemist's work or neuroscientist's work—these scientists are likely more interested in healing the human body or with

producing artificial intelligence, and certainly more than understanding interpersonal human commerce anyway. Neuroscience, in particular, may very well lead us towards digital and machine prosthetics in the future, thereby advancing “the human project”. All the same, I hope that I have given you some logical tools for going forward in our salon. Specifically, I hope that you are better prepared for considering the principal question put forward in number 17). Repeating that question once again: *does the love that we express as a personal experience (particularly as an “internal” phenomenon) and the love meant in any particular science come to the same thing?* Furthermore, *does love within physiology come to the same thing as love within the logic of neurology, or anthropology?* It appears as if there is reason to doubt this. Therefore, and for the time being, let us rest our case on the industrialized sciences. We do so while being fully aware that each of these sciences may have many more things of greater interest to say about love. However, we must allow ourselves adequate time for philosophizing on love as an “internal” phenomenon. By doing so, we might just hit upon that real love phenomenon which we have been questing for.



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## Love as an Internal Phenomenon

### 24. Wittgenstein's "reader"

We are about to philosophize on the meaning of love. Unlike before, we will do this by observing love as an "internal" phenomenon. This is an exercise which any one of us can do for ourselves. However, and in order to help guide our self-introspection, I will present a series of phenomenological studies—specifically, those undertaken by Ludwig Wittgenstein, which were then reproduced in the aforementioned collection, *Zettel*. Perhaps it is worth saying that I do not turn towards Wittgenstein because I understand that introspection is difficult, or because I think that we lack the ability for introspection. I do not intend to use Wittgenstein as a crutch either, for example. Rather, and quite to the contrary, I turn towards Wittgenstein because I trust that each of us are quite well-equipped for this exercise. In the book *Culture and Value*, there is a note which reads,

"Anything your reader can do for himself leave to him."

Wittgenstein's notes will guide us. However, they can only take us so far. This is because his studies do not deliver polished answers. Rather, his notes have been constructed in such a way that they encourage the activity of philosophizing. Therefore, let it be said that we are not *repeating* Wittgenstein here in this salon. Instead, and by way of Wittgenstein's reflections, we will reach our own conclusions—whether those conclusions come to anyone immediately, and here in this salon; or if they come from elsewhere, and at a later time. Insofar as we understand this, and for the rest of this salon, we will philosophize *alongside* Wittgenstein; we will be his "reader". Let us then proceed onto considering eight sections from *Zettel*. These sections will allow us to philosophize on the meaning of love, and to also perhaps even allow us, if we are successful, to discover the *real* love phenomenon as well.

### 25. Love as feeling

Let us begin our first consideration. Love is often considered a feeling; there is no doubt that we *feel* love. Therefore, this definition is a good starting point for departure. However, even though we do talk of love as a feeling, we may also be suspicious of this qualification. After all, we do feel something

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when we are in love, but does this then mean that love is that “something” and nothing more? Perhaps when investigating this “something”, a definition of *feeling* might be helpful. What is a *feeling* anyway? Therefore, let us try to understand our feelings in a more thorough and satisfactory way. To do so, let us proceed to consider a passage from *Zettel* on feeling. In this passage, Wittgenstein is reflecting on the constitution of feeling by comparing the feeling of love to the feeling of pain. He discovers and records a bit of a humorous reflection,

“Love is not a feeling. Love is put to the test, pain not. One does not say: ‘That was not true pain, or it would not have gone off so quickly.’”

For myself, and after having reflected on Wittgenstein’s conclusion regarding love, I have also reached my own conclusion regarding feeling. If I were to understand love and pain as belonging to the same category, then I must also admit that my *feeling* is itself quite a broad category. Furthermore, my *feeling* is a somewhat imprecise description and perhaps, in some cases, the phenomenon which I point to with this description has been incorrect. Therefore, I have been encouraged to look for a more precise language.

## 26. Love as a bodily feeling or sensation

Through further comparisons between love and pain, I am tempted to describe pain as a *bodily feeling* or a *sensation*, and one which has a specific location in my body. At the same time, I am equally tempted to describe love as a bodily feeling also; however, it differs in that, for me, it is one which has no specific location in my body. In this case, I have two complementary categories: *bodily feeling with a specific location*, and *bodily feeling without a specific location*. Perhaps there is some truth to this twofold categorization. However, and if you will, consider these categories more thoroughly. To do so, let us try considering other types of bodily feelings which seem to have no specific location in the body. Let us consider *sadness*, for example, alongside Wittgenstein,

“It is quite possible that the glands of a sad person secrete differently from those of someone who is glad; and also that their secretion is the or a cause of sadness. But does it follow that the sadness is a *sensation* produced by the secretion?”

Wittgenstein has introduced a new word for us to consider—*sensation*. Is sadness a sensation? Or is it more correct to say that we have certain sensations

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while being sad, but that those sensations do not constitute sadness wholly? If so, we can ask further, *what type of thing could sadness be, if not a bodily feeling or sensation?* We can apply the same questions to love.

27. **Love as a disposition**

Let us continue to consider bodily feelings and sensations by further *comparison* and *contrast*. After all, Wittgenstein's method seems to be quite useful in investigating the "internal" objects of our phenomenal experience. Next, I would like us to reflect on the difference between *having* a sensation and taking pleasure *in* something,

"If anyone asks whether pleasure is a sensation, he probably does not distinguish between reason and cause, for otherwise it would occur to him that one takes pleasure in something, which does not mean that this something produces a sensation in us."

Let us take notice of Wittgenstein's method. He is interrogating the very nature of the world—we are certain of this. But unlike the industrialized sciences, he is conducting his investigations through both

our intimate experiences and our own testimonies of those experiences. In the above section, we may have been presented with the uncanniness of the phrase, "to take pleasure *in* something". What is our language saying? What does our language tell us about what we *mean to say*?

Not to be mistaken, the preposition "in" refers to a location. However, what must be obvious to anyone is that this location is not one which could ever be found on a map; rather, this location must refer to a spatial-temporal location—not where one is presently *at*, but where one is presently *in*. One speaks of being *in* love in the same way. Someone who is *in love* is presently dwelling in a place of love. Perhaps we could call this dwelling place *a disposition*. In this case, and when standing in the spatial-temporal dwelling place of love, I am *posed to* and *predisposed for* love.

28. **The location of love**

Perhaps we feel that we are getting closer to discovering the *real* love phenomenon; however, and at the same time, we may also feel as though we are moving into a realm of mere language and poetry. Of course, this talk of love as "a dwelling place" feels

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quite poetically expressed. Therefore, we may feel a bit queasy and also perhaps a bit restless on that account. If so, then this is likely because we expect that our philosophizing should retain a semblance of scientific investigation. We want rigor! Because of this, and in order to address this expectation, let us consider the nature of dispositions further. Nevertheless, if we wish to address our expectation in a satisfactory way, then we must consider the nature of dispositions according to the normal ways in which we might consider something scientifically—namely, according to the logic of time, space, and causality (—in other words, that general domain of thought which we know as *mechanics*). Therefore, let us consider dispositions according to mechanics—again, *alongside* Wittgenstein—but this time as he reflects on grief,

“‘Where do you feel grief?’—In the mind.—What kind of consequence do we draw from this assignment of place? One is that we do not speak of a bodily place of grief. Yet we do point to our body, as if the grief were in it. Is that because we feel a bodily discomfort? I do not know the cause. But why should I assume [grief] is a bodily discomfort?”

Compare the discomfort of grief to the pain of a physical wound. Then, think of the pains of love and compare them to the pain of a physical wound. Consider that,

“‘You feel sadness—so you must feel it somewhere; otherwise it would be a chimera.’”

“But if you want to think that, remember the difference between seeing and pain. I feel pain in the wound—but colour in the eye? If we try to use a schema here, instead of merely noting what is really common, we see everything falsely simplified.”

Of these last two sections just presented, the remark on “color in the eye” is a good one. For myself, I find it revealing that we use the expression, “my heart aches”, when talking about the pains of love. We feel the pain in our heart when we are in love. And while we would say that the feeling in the heart is a symptom of being in love, we would likely not say that love is located there itself. Yet, this seems to be the best expression we have for describing the spatiality of the “internal” love phenomenon.

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29. **Rejecting the description “bodily feeling”**

Now, if you can allow yourself to set aside any want to find a physical location in the body where we feel love (just as we don’t feel color in the eye), and furthermore, if you can allow yourself to consider dispositions (whether love, sadness, or grief) as something that you find yourself *in*, then you might also be tempted to outright reject “bodily feeling” as a correct description of dispositions. For myself, at least, I have been tempted to do so.

Let us try an exercise: recall those times when you have felt sadness. Wouldn’t it be correct to say that when you have felt sadness, you haven’t merely felt it in the body? Rather, you have felt it *in* the world—and that your body, also belonging to that world, has also felt the sadness of the world—or, I could phrase it in another way: when you feel sadness, your body is also receptive to the sadness of the world. And in those times of sadness, isn’t it true that depressing music feels good—if so, perhaps this is because that music allows the world to *be* (and to present itself in its *true form*) as the world that it is—namely, as a world full of frustration, disappointment, and unfairness. Isn’t *this* the real and true world which we live *in*? If you can suspend your desire for an objective

standard, then you can note what your language is actually describing. Dispositions, if you can accept their *reality*, belong to a category where “the internal” and “the external” are in union.

Of course, I can also imagine a friend (perhaps acting as something of an armchair psychotherapist) explaining to me that in those cases of sadness, the world itself is not frustrating, disappointing, or unfair—and that it is rather the case that I have *projected* my sadness on to the world. Though, in this case, and remembering back to the purpose of psychoanalysis—namely, to rehabilitate patients back into normal public life—I do wonder about how successful this type of reasoning really is. I mean, would it really be helpful to say that the world cannot be full of sadness, just as it cannot be full of happiness or fairness either? Because, after all, the world is merely matter and energy (perhaps atoms or strings), and that furthermore, none of our *feelings* matter anyway. One day our sun will swell into a red giant, and in that process, it will swallow the earth. Everything that we will have ever known to be of value will be lost. In this case, has my friend’s appeal to psychological *projection* been helpful? This question is asked rhetorically, of course. No one *here*



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can answer it; there is no universal answer. Despite this, it is true that, in certain cases, my friend's diagnosis might be helpful to me. Diagnosing me with a case of "projection" might, after all, help me cope with my sadness. Though, I could also imagine a situation where, following such reasoning, a feeling of anxiety would displace my sadness—after all, if astrophysicists are correct about the life cycle of a star, and that our sun is one such type of star, then we must quickly colonize space beyond our solar system! Again, we can ask, *would this reasoning be conducive to the pursuits of psychoanalysis?*

30. **The duration of love**

Let us, for the time being, assume that "disposition" correctly describes certain states of being, such as the ones we have been considering up to this point—namely *love*, *sadness*, and *grief*. Let us also assume that *real* love is one such type of disposition, and that when *in* that disposition we find other *love phenomena*—for example, testaments of faithfulness and other such behavioral acts which come along with commitment. If so, then we are considering *real* love as those things, and this means that love is explicitly not any of those other things which science may tell us. If we take up this understanding, then we must

also understand that the scientific investigations which we took up earlier had led us to a *false love*, so to speak. Now, if we can accept this, and if we take love in this way, then we can continue exploring the constitution of the "internal" love phenomenon according to the logic of mechanics—an exercise which we began in the previous section. And since we have spent a lot of time trying to observe the location of the "internal" love phenomenon, let us now see if we can observe *the duration of real love* too. This is an exercise which Wittgenstein seems to have considered as well. Therefore, let us repeat a passage from *Zettel*, this time by considering the phenomenal experience of being *in* hope,

"I whistle and someone asks me why I am so cheerful. I reply 'I'm hoping N. will come today'.— But while I whistled I wasn't thinking of him. All the same, it would be wrong to say: I stopped hoping when I began to whistle."

31. **Measuring the duration of love**

If we wish to take up the methods of scientific investigation in order to understand the nature of the "internal" dispositions such as love, sadness, grief, or hope, then we encounter the problem of mea-

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surement. Let us follow alongside Wittgenstein once more, in one final reflection, as he considers the possibility of observing “mental” phenomena,

“How do I observe my knowledge, my opinions? And on the other hand an after-image, a pain. Is there such a thing as uninterrupted observation of my capacity to carry out the multiplication...?”

How might we measure such an immaterial thing as a disposition—whether that disposition be *to love*, or *to know*, or *to have an opinion*, or some other ability (such as being able to do mathematical multiplication). To me, dispositions seem to be even *less material* than mental activity—if it even makes sense to talk about degrees of materiality. And regarding our subject matter, isn’t it true that people do not usually remember the exact time when they fell in love?—down to the millisecond. Now, despite my agreement with this statement, I have also imagined one example which does seem to jeopardize the argument. Imagine that someone is attempting to recall the exact time in which they fell in love. However, consider that this person is not merely pointing to memories or to photographs, but to video recordings. Imagine this person stop-

ping a video playback and saying with confidence, “There!—I remember that as being the time I first felt love”. This would appear to place love in an exact moment in time. In such a case, we could measure love according to the tools of scientific investigation. All the same, we have to ask, *what makes this scientific?* And furthermore, remembering back to my commentary on standardization at the inception of this salon, *what makes such an identification of place within the video playback a factual statement?* Certainly, if the same person were to be bitterly hurt by their loved one later in life (perhaps, say, following infidelity and divorce), then this person might have recourse to say, “Well, I *thought* that I was in love at that point in the video, and even if I *was* in love at that moment, it wasn’t *real* love that I was in.” In this case, which of the two testimonies qualifies as the factual one? It seems that testimony is only true insofar as someone has reasoned it as such.

If you agree with me on this, then it must also seem to you that there is a real difficulty in understanding dispositions through the logic of mechanics. However (and just because there is difficulty in understanding dispositions by way of the logic of physics), does this then also mean that we are at a loss for under-

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standing the nature of love (being one such type of disposition)? I would like to answer this question in a roundabout way, and by returning to number 28). Let us follow along with Wittgenstein in reflecting on the “falsely simplified”. This reflection will allow us a higher vantage point from which we can philosophize on our subject matter. From this position, you will see that we are able to produce *higher questions*—ones which might bring elucidation to the way in which we have been philosophizing, insofar as we have been philosophizing up to this point.

32. **“Falsely simplified”**

Let us ask ourselves, *why have we desired (and therefore believed in) something like a single and sole objectification which could capture the experience of love?* Consider how we are quite biased towards assuming that there must be something like *a singular language*, or logic, by which the entirety of the phenomenal experience may come into accord; we believe in something like a uni-verse—a *single verse*. Consider, for example, how you are likely compelled to physical description for describing this uni-verse, and how you are compelled to this description more so than any other descriptions of the world. And furthermore, that you are compelled to believe that love

must belong to *this* type of uni-verse. Love must be physical! And wouldn’t it be correct to say that something nearly tantamount to a god invokes you to follow this science? You are subordinate to the “rulers” by which physics operates (—recall, again, the problems which have plagued the scholars of psychology!) Conversely, why do you resist “to merely note what is common”, as Wittgenstein has observed? Because, to be sure, what you note as “common” is also likely to be (and, in many cases) quite misaligned with what I note as “common”. The evidence for this can be found in our political debates.

However, in order to continue thinking about these questions, we must first clarify what we mean when we say that something is *common*, and how that “property” compares to *being universal* or *being real*. Let us do so now.

33. **“The common” and “the universal”**

Consider if I were to pick up a tissue and throw it into the air. Imagine that each one of us watched the tissue make its way to the floor, as it was tossed through the currents in the air like a leaf. In this case, there would be no doubt among us that “that!” had happened. There would be a general consensus be-

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cause “that” would be common to each of us. Of course, once we began to describe what “that!” was, and thus attempting to give “that!” further definition, we would then have the opportunity to meet with disagreements on exactly what to describe. All the same, any of us could, at any time, point and say “that!” happened and we would each be in complete agreement about “that!” In this case, “that!” is real and it is also what is common to all of us. With this exercise in mind, we can now ask, *how does being common differ from being universal?*

34. **The common ancestral entity**

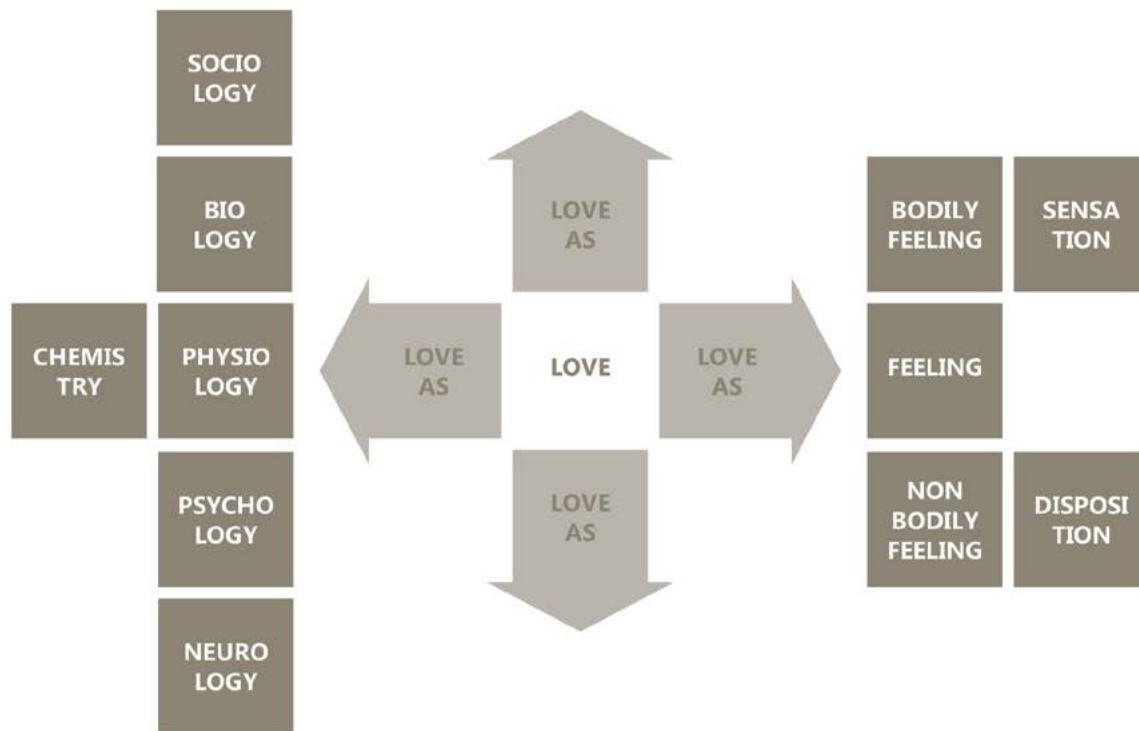
In considering this question for myself, I have come to the conclusion that what each of our logical languages attempt to do (such as that of physics) can only be possible on a *common ancestral entity*, so to speak. We can trace each linguistic object back through its ancestry—an ancestry which then traces back to a *single and sole* primordial phenomenon—namely, *the real phenomenal experience*. Therefore, it seems to be the case that the very method (that is, language or “universal” logic) by which we investigate a thing (that is, a phenomenon) comes to constitute exactly the object which we discover (and that means *what we describe*). **The object is tied to**

**the logic**; it cannot be separated from it. But even so, the phenomenon is **not** tied to the object—and, after all, I can strip the logic and its objective description away from the phenomenon.

Perhaps the diagram on the following page might help you to organize your thoughts around this vocabulary of *phenomenon*, *objects*, and *logic*. By way of a reflection with the diagram, I hope that you become acquainted with the understanding which I have been compelled to accept—namely, that our logics are *universal* in that their *logical universe* can describe the entirety of experience—and this is the case even if their descriptions may be quite narrow and, therefore, unhelpful in many cases. However, what is *common* is the phenomenal experience.

35. **Discovering the *real* love phenomenon**

Having now presented this, and insofar as we take up this understanding, we do reach something of a conclusion to our questions regarding *the real love phenomenon*. That conclusion begins by firstly admitting that the phenomenal experience is common; yet, it can never be expressed in words. At best, logic can only capture *the real* into a prison of language, thereby making it “approximately common”. And,



"What?"—"I Mean Love"

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after all, doesn't this jive with how we speak about love? We do say, "my love can't be expressed in words". Love is pre-intellectual and pre-cognitive. If so, this would also explain why we *find* ourselves in love. Once we *know* that we are in love, we have already been in that disposition for quite some time. *Being in love* is a prerequisite for *knowing love*—whether that love is between two people who are intimately involved, or within a family, or among the ravers of a counter-culture. Furthermore, and if this is indeed our conclusion, then we must also acknowledge that we have, after all, landed upon a quite common-sense definition of love; but one that is perhaps *so common* that we had forgotten it. Certainly, love (understood as that which is phenomenally common) can be obscured when confronted with modern scientific inquiries about the nature of the world. Those inquiries presume that nothing can *really* be common or shared because we are isolated from the real physical world, with each of us all trapped in our own heads. Our mental picture is only a representation of what is real.

Of course, I do expect that committed physicists will only be able to see this conclusion, and that they will continue to insist that the phenomenal experience is

merely some kind of "mental" phenomenon. I also expect them to maintain this view, even though we are not in possession of any science which can explain consciousness or mental phenomenon. All the same, I'm sure that even the physicists would admit that their experience of *real love* is not one which is experienced by an individual *I*, alone in *my* head. Rather, real love is felt together *in* the moment. Therefore, in order to understand what *real love* is, we must release ourselves from the tendencies and the biases which physical description encourages.

### 36. The politics of love

Now, perhaps it may occur to you that my conclusion regarding the pre-intellectual and pre-cognitive nature of *the real and common world*—that is, *reality itself*—does seem to "put physics in its place", so to speak—almost as if I am punishing that description by placing it in one corner of the room, alongside the many other logics which we have on offer. Plus, I can imagine that this may strike you as quite harsh and unfair. I can suppose that you may be wondering, *what has physics ever done to me to deserve such treatment?* After all, isn't it true that physical description has been essential in the project of modernization? Undoubtedly, all of us have benefited

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from the advancements which physical description has brought to medicine, communication, and transportation. Therefore, should I not rather be grateful to this science? Should I not flatter it?

Consider that today, we are told that the objects of quantum description are those which describe *the real world*. Yet, at the same time, to experience *that* real world is quite difficult—this should not be shunned aside. Because of this, I am not surprised to find detractors regarding scientific description and explanation. I do find myself sympathizing with *the conservative skeptics*—those who had doubted the coronavirus data reported on by the mainstream news and who had taken up flat earth theory, apparently in an effort to redeem the value of one’s own personal experience of the world. And while I might be willing to diagnose any one of “the conservative skeptics” with a certain paranoia, I would not call them ignorant or stupid. Furthermore, I certainly would not diagnose the American people with an “anti-intellectualism” on account of their “anti-scientism” either. There is reason for why they take up this type of political activism. Again, I sympathize. Because of this, I cannot bring myself to degrade them. Contrarily, if I were to partake in the critique of the American people on

such accounts, then I understand that this would say more about me than it would about those who I was critiquing. Perhaps, for example, I was someone who was frustrated, and who had no better tools than to slander and belittle my “opponents”.

Perhaps now you might notice that my preparation for this salon was not accidental. Remembering back to that preparation, recall how I had spoken about the ideal of democracy, and also about the possibilities for future governance conditions. I even teased the possibility that our future governance conditions might be quite unlike what we have inherited today. My interest in hosting this salon is, after all, quite political.

### 37. **Governance Futurism**

For sure, today’s political economy demands that we idolize objective facts, and of course, this is with good reason. Insofar as we live in a representative and technocratic democracy, we must. Our idolization provides for a healthy and productive democratic commerce. However, and as a consequence, our political economy equally discourages any dealings with the phenomenally “subjective” or “aesthetic”—at least, in public life. Yet, and because of this, we

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are delivered over to a political economy which animates the inexperienceable and impersonal, such that we are reduced to gossiping on factual events. We watch the news so that we can later gather around the office watercooler to talk passively and disinterestedly about politics. Or, we sign on to internet forums and relieve ourselves of the anxiety which is produced by being governed from afar.

For myself, it is no wonder why in the modern world, and in America especially, we find testimonies of alienation, estrangement, and the apathy towards governance and towards each other. These are symptoms which follow consequently from our political economy. We have encouraged and perversely enjoyed a separation of public life from private life, and *vice versa*. And for those of us operating in the private market, we cannot think of ourselves as politicians. Our politicians exist outside of us as someone who we apply pressure to, and most recently, *through* the market in the form of social activism. Yet, I wonder, does this exchange of power between the public and its politicians really satisfy our democratic ideal? I mean, who today would say that we truly govern ourselves through the mechanisms of representative and technocratic democracy? Of

course, these types of questions are known to be met with disgust. They seem to question what it means to be American. My grandmother seems to have taken it this way when she challenged me, many years ago—and I suppose you have a better alternative, Justin?!

Having now matured, I have the confidence to stand up to her challenge in an attempt to answer that question. I understand that if we wish to develop a truly satisfying experience in the life of the human animal, then we cannot simply push aside the subjective and the aesthetic experiences. Continuing to do so would only further encourage skepticism, doubt, and a distrust in each other and in our government. If we are to quell our fears of dystopian futures and cyberpunk surveillance states, then we must come to idolize the phenomenological experience. And if we honor the ideal of democracy, as a rule by the people, then we must, each for ourselves and in our own way, *become politicians*. The mechanisms of representative democracy and technocratic governance seem to me to no longer suffice.

38. **Reuniting the “internal” and the “external”**

In my closing remarks, I would like us to align our



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thoughts around four points. Firstly, the commonness of the phenomenal experience—especially as something which is utterly undisagreeable. Secondly, the nature of dispositions—especially how they describe the character of the world, and how they describe us too (insofar as we are *in* the world.) And furthermore, the phenomenal experience, in that it is not personal, but rather shared or communal. And in this communion, the “internal” and the “external” are as a singular whole. Lastly, I would like to remind us that the whole is not intellectual and it could never be expressed in language. The whole is *organic*. It is primordial, pre-intellectual, and pre-cognitive.

Reminding ourselves of these four points, and in understanding what they reveal about the nature of *the real world*, I would like us to consider the possibility of a novel approach towards political economy. Perhaps the ideal of democracy might be better satisfied by way of mechanisms through which we can have common experiences. I would like us to consider that such economic mechanisms might allow us to be *in* the world, and *in* the world together.

39. **Closing remarks**

While such a reunification and robust life may sound

interesting, and in some cases perhaps even worth exploring, the question still remains as to whether or not we want such a reunion, or if we prefer to continue with an industrialized economy and an industrialized interpersonal commerce. After all, we do like our personal space, and we do enjoy the freedom to feel ourselves in our own space, and this talk of “shared experiences” may sound quite socially uncomfortable to some—it even does so for me! But if this is your reaction, then you also owe it to yourself to interrogate and ask, *why do I crave such personal space?* If this is the case, surely something is already imbalanced in our current political economy. Therefore, after reflecting on this, you will be better equipped for nurturing your freedom while addressing the aforementioned alienation, estrangement, and the apathy we feel towards each other.

I do understand that to even fantasize about a reunited economy requires political maturity. For myself, I do not know if we are at such maturity yet. But this is one reason why I have brought us together, here in this salon. I understand that salons, like this one, must be the first step to gauging our maturity.

—Justin Carmien, February, 14th, 2022

## A LITTLE LOVE STORY

IT HAD BEEN A WHOLE YEAR SINCE HAL AND I AGREED TO TEST OUR LOVE BY NOT SEEING EACH OTHER.

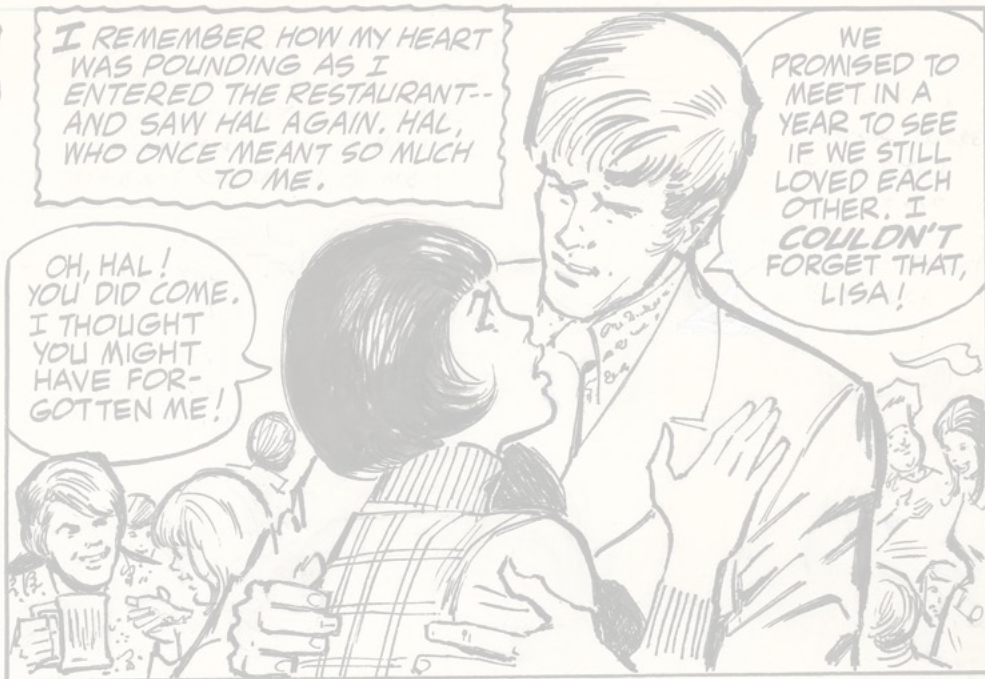
NOW, I WAS IN HIS ARMS. BUT THE WORDS HE SPOKE WERE NOT WHAT I EXPECTED. WHAT HE WAS SAYING WAS THAT THIS WAS...

# THE END OF THE AFFAIR

I REMEMBER HOW MY HEART WAS POUNDING AS I ENTERED THE RESTAURANT-- AND SAW HAL AGAIN. HAL, WHO ONCE MEANT SO MUCH TO ME.

WE PROMISED TO MEET IN A YEAR TO SEE IF WE STILL LOVED EACH OTHER. I **COULDN'T** FORGET THAT, LISA!

OH, HAL! YOU DID COME. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE FORGOTTEN ME!



HAL'S ARMS WERE AS SWEET AS EVER AND JUST FOR A MOMENT IT WAS LIKE OLD TIMES. BUT-- ONLY FOR A MOMENT.

JS-12

LISA, THIS IS ANNE. ANNE AND I ARE ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED.

ENGAGED?  
OH!

I'D HAD SO MUCH TO SAY TO HAL. I'D RE-HEARSED IT A THOUSAND TIMES. BUT MY WORDS WERE NEVER SPOKEN.

LISA, I KNOW THIS IS A CRUEL WAY TO TELL YOU, BUT AT LEAST NOW YOU KNOW THE TRUTH. DON'T HATE ME.

LISA, DON'T YOU SEE? IF YOU AND I HAD REALLY MADE IT, I COULD NEVER HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH ANNE.







BEFORE I GO  
I-I'D LIKE TO WISH  
YOU ALL THE HAP-  
PINESS IN THE WORLD!  
DO YOU BELIEVE  
THAT, HAL?

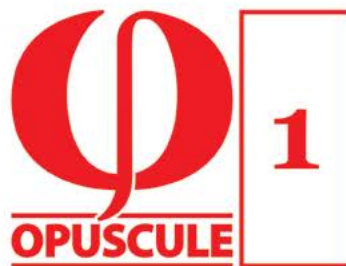
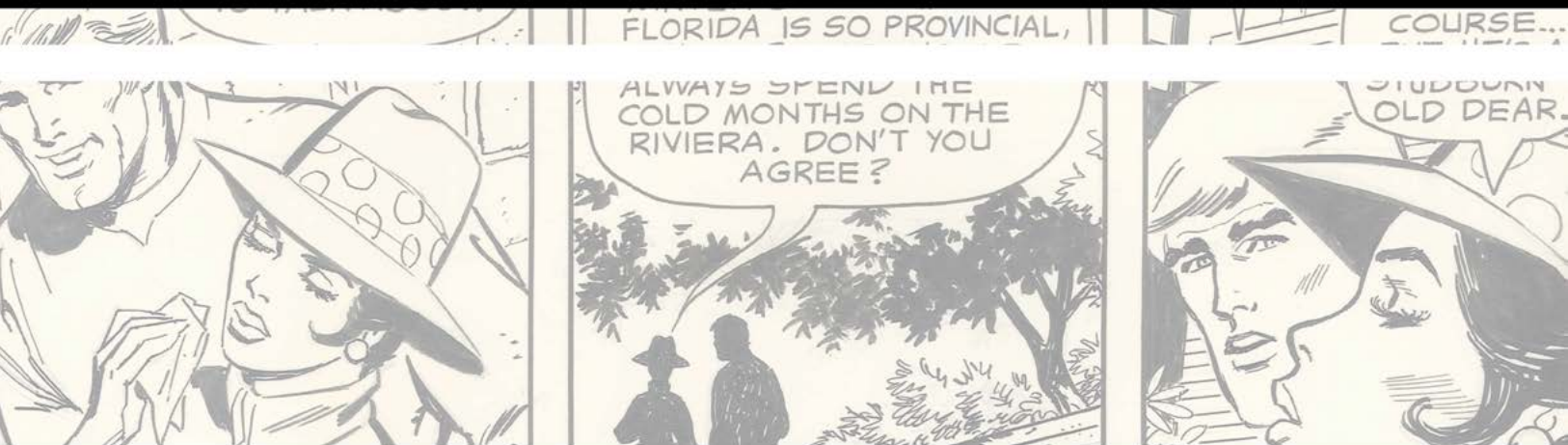
I BELIEVE  
IT, LISA.  
WE BOTH  
DO!

GOODBYE, LISA.  
AND, THANK YOU  
FOR UNDER-  
STANDING.

OH, YES, I REMEMBER! I REMEMBER HOW I DID  
LOOK BACK, HOW MY TEARS BLINDED ME. WE  
WOMEN, ALWAYS SO SENTIMENTAL ...

LISA, YOU'RE  
CRYING!  
DID IT TURN  
OUT AS  
BADLY  
AS ALL  
THAT?

NOT REALL  
I GUESS I'  
JUST A LITT  
SHOOK UP.  
I DIDN'T TH  
IT WOULD E  
LIKE IT WA



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