

Recognize the true meaning of love



SUSANNE STEFFENS

So much has been written on love by poets, playwrights, novelists, philosophers and scientists, but what exactly is love?

We live in a world where there is much love, but also much confusion concerning its meaning. The dictionary tells us that love is a feeling of deep regard, fondness and devotion. But what does that tell us? One could quote hundreds of statements about love, and they would all be true as far as they go, but none of them go far enough because they only provide the skeleton. They miss the vital essence of the meaning of love, and this you can only discover by studying the origins and developments of love as they are manifested in us as children, as adolescents and as adults.

How many of us haven't been in love? But how many of us have been able to describe just those feelings which go through us, the new image of the world

outside which we suddenly perceive?

A friend told me once that we understand the meaning of love when we understand that it is the only thing in the world of which one cannot give anyone too much. True. Love becomes the existence for many, a principal developer of one's capacity for being human.

Sigmund Freud was a great believer of these words, and if we look at the world today, we can argue that love only benefits ourselves, creating freedom and order. Love has a firmness and discipline of its own for which there can be no substitute.

So, why does love prevail in our society? Why is love becoming a tragedy where people love so platonically and shorn of the flesh and emotions? Why are 50 percent of today's marriages going into divorce, and unfaithfulness becoming more common than calling your mom? It seems that a cultural evolution is extending the biological evolution, where individuals are developing their own egoism instead of personality. We are about to create a world where love no longer has room, where we are only occupied by feeding our own needs and ambitions. We have gained conquest over materialistic goods and money, and hence lost the wisdom of real love and its liberty. Today's

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reality has become loving with a reason, and not with mind and heart, which has made the word love lose its power.

So, what should we do with Valentine's Day? Are there really people out there who know that this day they are about to celebrate is for real love only, the one thing in the world of which one cannot give anyone too much?

This Valentine's we should, instead of a celebrating, try to recognize what love really means, and an understand its importance for our species.

The art of living by loving would make us happy and make our politicians realize and respect others' liberty. Only then will we be able to go into a new stage of development and optimism, and celebrate this day of love. As hate is the destroyer of life, love is its guardian, and with this in mind take love seriously and know how to use it.

Susanne Steffens is a reporter for the Emerald.

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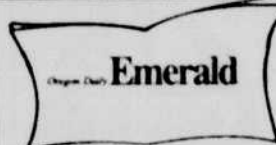
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