

AN EXAMINATION OF COMMUNITY LOVE IN SYSTEMS MAPPING; AS EXPERIENCED THROUGH THE WORK OF BELL HOOKS

MICHELLE HARRIS

"All About Love: New Visions" is a book by bell hooks, published in 2000. In this book, Hooks examines the idea of love and how it affects both our intimate relationships and society at large. She contends that love is a potent force that has the capacity to transform our lives and make the world a more just and compassionate place rather than merely an emotion or a romantic ideal. The notion that love is a decision and a practice highlights the fact that love involves continual effort and dedication. She makes the case that rather than passively hoping for love to enter our lives and relationships, we should actively cultivate it.

Hooks also criticizes society's view of love, which she believes to be seriously flawed and shaped by ideas of dominance and

power. She draws attention to the ways that capitalism, racial supremacy, and patriarchy have influenced our conception of love, creating unhealthful and oppressive dynamics in romantic relationships. To this end, Hooks examines how love affects social justice movements. She contends that to bring about social change and confront oppressive structures, love is necessary. According to Hooks, the basis of activism and the impetus for establishing a more egalitarian society should be love.

Through her analysis of how gender, racism, and class influence our experiences and conceptions of love, hooks also dives into the intersectionality of love. She stresses the significance of identifying and combating these interconnected oppressive structures to

PEACE CHRONICLE

foster wholesome and transforming love. hooks challenges conventional ideas about love and provides a blueprint for creating more compassionate, just, and loving relationships and communities.

Through the lens of Hooks' examination of how love is experienced in society, coupled with my own pursuit of systems mapping, I have ventured to create a systems map of love that gives a visual life to the interconnectedness that Hooks speaks of. Basing the main ideas from Hooks' book is the beginning of those fundamental areas of how love is experienced first from the self and then connecting that love to other areas of our lives.

I began to then carry those areas outward to include secondary levels of love to show what is given and received through the connection to that previous component of love. As an example, when we move from self to familial love and look at what is given or received through this familial love, we can see how it is connected. Moving from those connection we can see that this area of love is connected to feelings of support, values, and freedom.

From there we can move to look at one of those areas that familial love is connected to; for example freedom. By highlighting Freedom, we can see that it is connected back to other areas of love including, community love and romantic love. At this

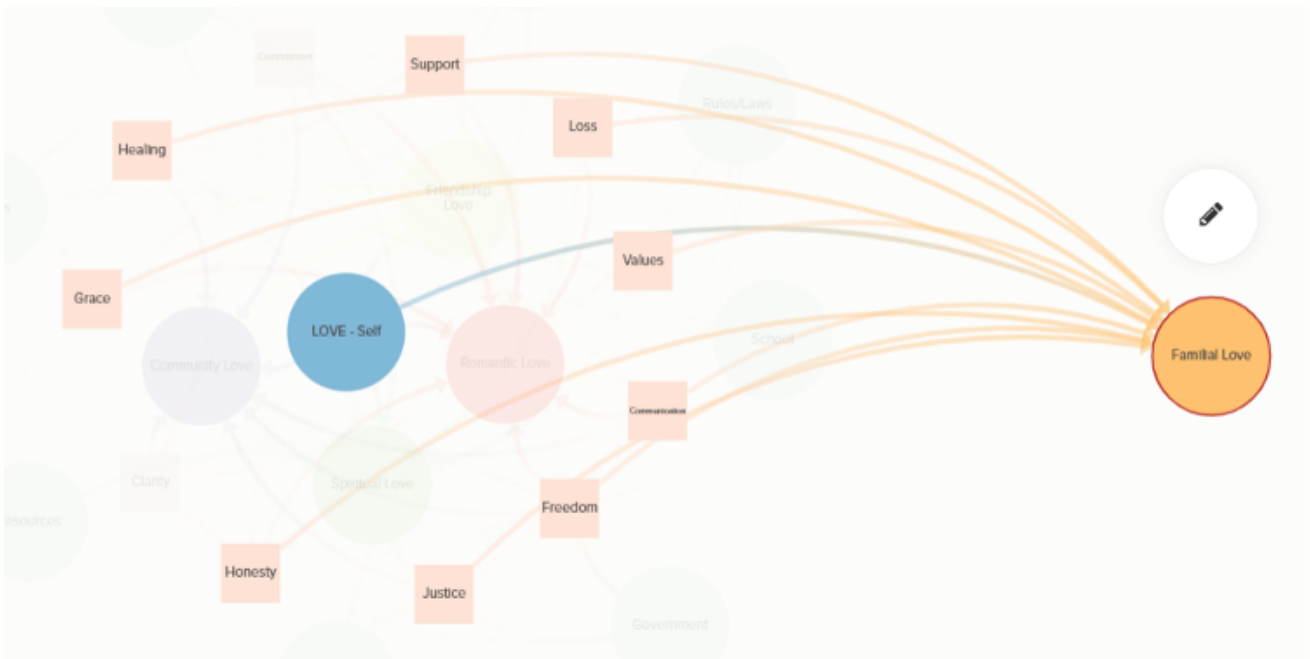
point we also begin to notice fourth level of factors that include larger societal systems such as school, work, and government.

If we then carry any of those connections out to larger societal areas such as Government, we see that freedom also becomes connected to justice and clarity. Moving back inward we find what any one of those areas is connected to and are able to see how all of the areas are intertwined to lead back to the basic area of self-love and all of its connections to other areas as well. This intersectionality shown through the systems map is a visualization of Hooks' ideal in the book.

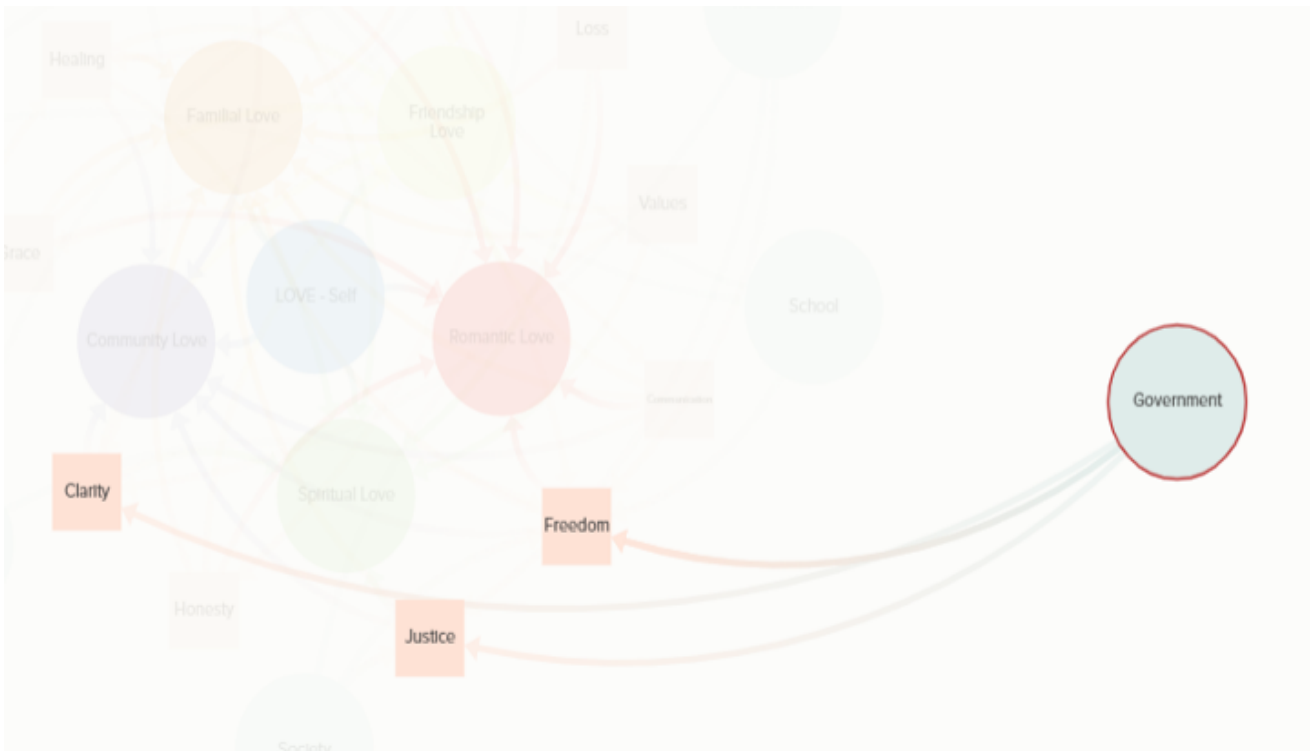
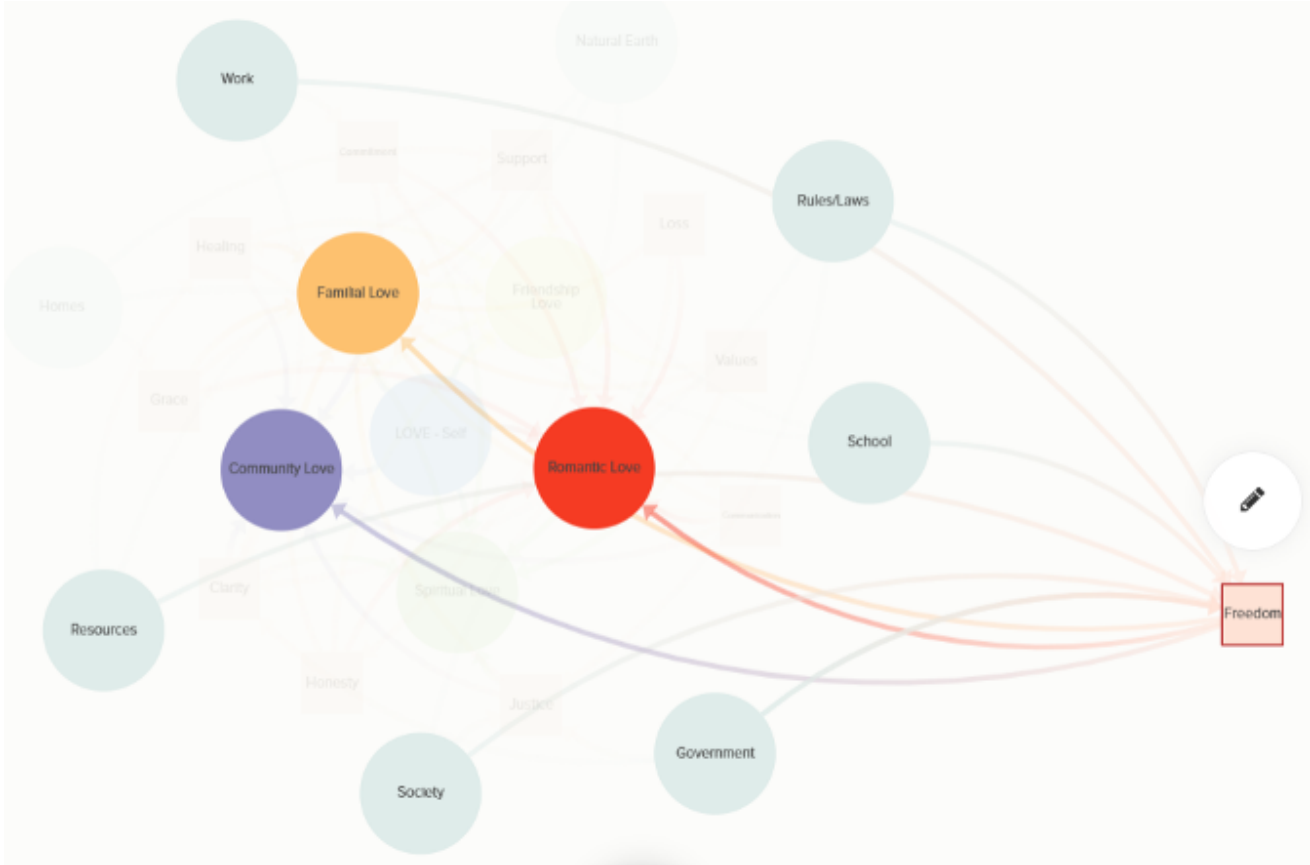
According to Bell Hooks, love is a powerful force that unites all people on the planet, refuting the idea that love is just a personal, individual feeling and offers a social definition of love that cuts over divisions and promotes sincere connection. Through the use of the above systems mapping, we can clearly see those connections and how they bridge intersections of where love is found and shared.

Every human being yearns for and searches for love. It encompasses all of our relationships, including those with friends, family, and strangers. It is not just confined to romantic partnerships. She emphasizes that love has the power to overcome barriers and foster harmony within families, communities,

PEACE CHRONICLE



PEACE CHRONICLE



PEACE CHRONICLE

and nations. People are drawn together by the shared experience of love. We can create more compassionate and inclusive societies if we acknowledge and accept this fundamental feature of our nature. She contends that genuine understanding and empathy may be built on the foundation of love, which can overcome boundaries of race, class, gender, and other types of discrimination.

Furthermore, hooks highlights the interdependence of love and justice. She asserts that love is not separate from social and political struggles, but rather an integral part of creating a more equitable world. Love, as hooks describes it, is a transformative force that compels us to challenge systems of oppression and work towards justice and liberation for all. In this context, love becomes a shared responsibility. Hooks urges people to pursue justice and equality, cultivate empathy and compassion, and actively exercise love in their daily lives. She contends that by doing this, we can create connections and develop a more empathetic and interconnected world.

In the end, hooks' work emphasizes the notion that love is a crucial component of human existence. It is a force that unites us rather than something that separates us. We may endeavor to create a more inclusive and compassionate society that cherishes the well-being and dignity of every person by realizing the unifying power of love.
