

**Migratory Narratives of Love:
From Solidarity to Community**

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Foreword

Narratives of Love is not an academic report. Rather, it is a guide to rebuild quality public spaces which can allow us to be happier. That sounds ambitious, and it certainly is. Narratives of Love aims to open a new space of work that can only materialize if we are able to understand what is happening to us and by reacting in the right way - not only narratively but also vitally.

All of us who have worked on this manuscript know that this change is complicated. **Love is possibly the greatest power there is. For this reason, from time immemorial, social systems have generated narratives to discredit the concept, reacting to previous narratives that exalted it.** Stripping away learned narratives from oneself in order to establish new ones is one of the most complicated tasks.

We are not the only ones promoting these types of reflections and actions. In fact, this work is the sum of a lifetime of knowledge with dozens of meetings with exceptional people, which intensified during the last year and a half, resulting in the co-creation of an independent, enlightened and secular collective knowledge.

Narratives of Love is a four-handed writing. Repeating in what would be the third installment of the trilogy of New Migratory Narratives, I meet again with the wonderful Violeta Velasco, an infinite source of knowledge and inspiration. Thank you Violeta for your generosity, without you this would not be possible.

There are many people who have directly influenced this work by participating in the shared gatherings that took place for over a year. To all of them, thank you for enriching this project with your knowledge and enthusiasm.

This work also reflects, unfortunately, the precariousness in which these types of approaches find themselves when it comes to being developed. These pages have been financed by Fundación porCausa's own funds, which did not allow us all the necessary time

with all the people we would have liked. Here we make special mention to **Cesar Astudillo, Pablo Perez Ruiz and Valeria Racu**, who have philanthropically accompanied us in the writing of some parts. We also give immense thanks to Diana Moreno for her illustrations and to Alberto Reberón for the design.

Also present in this work are all the members of the porCausa team who have helped in the editing of this content. Special mentions go to Vanesa Martín, Cristina Fuentes Lara, Gonzalo Fanjul and Patricia Macías.

The Narratives of Love are the product that best represents what Fundación porCausa is and wants to be, through the result of its work but also through its way of working. If you like this work, we ask you to help us to continue producing free access materials of this kind and to continue working with love but also with resources. You just need to become a donor to the organization through our website (www.porcausa.org) or by writing to porcausa@porcausa.org. Any regular support, no matter how small, represents a huge contribution for us. And if you are already a donor, encourage someone around you to join us.

Lucila Rodríguez-Alarcón, director and co-author.

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Introduction

Covid-19 has plunged us into deep sadness. Our western society was already full of fears derived from a narrative that began to take shape in the wake of 9/11 and was reinforced during the 2008 crisis. This generated a detachment from information that added to the change in the communication paradigm by introducing a new way of telling reality. Collective union through hatred of a third party emerged strongly while the more humanistic options became reactionary. And in this context, the arrival of the pandemic has shown that our individualistic model can only lead us to an unacceptable loneliness at this time.

We need a narrative change that allows us to make a common front, because the fear and sadness we feel are collective and so must be the solution to get rid of them. We need to believe again in our capacity for change as human beings. And we need to dream again of a much better world, leaving aside the current catastrophic stories that keep us in the space of "I'll stay as I am".

To achieve these changes, Fundación porCausa proposes the narratives of love. A love that is not romantic but fraternal, that makes us see each other as equals, that unites us in our differences, that promotes diversity. A love that builds among peers. This love is expressed in a new framework, which we choose ourselves, while we stop reacting to other exogenous frameworks that do not interest us. This frame does not distinguish between one and the other, there are no migrants, we are all migrants. We will tell fantastic stories that will make us move forward in the construction of a strong community, in which we collaborate because it enriches us. We will leave aside the narratives of aid, because this always takes place in a space of inequality and we will start talking in terms of co-creation and commons. In this narrative we will remember to use the tools that make us feel love, such as laughter and music.

The narratives of love are not an unfounded proposal but the result of much study and a very deep social and anthropological research work that closes more than five years of work of new narratives of the Foundation porCausa.

1. 9/11, the Great Recession and the covid-19

1.1. We are afraid and we are sad

One in five people who have gone through covid-19 have faced a diagnosis of anxiety, depression or insomnia for the first time, and are also twice as likely to have them as people with other pathologies. Suicidal thoughts have increased by 8% to 10%, especially in young adults (where the figure is 12.5% to 14%). Mental health has worsened among people living in more unfavorable socioeconomic situations and among people with previous mental health problems.

These are some of the data that the report of the Mental Health Confederation of Spain has put on the table in relation to the consequences of covid-19 at the psychological and psychiatric level. The shocking figures paint a picture of sadness, loneliness and anguish for many people as a result of the pandemic. The level of suicides among the young population in Europe, from high rates in the early 2020s, has increased by 300% since confinement. Clear increases in anxiety and stress levels have been observed, with several surveys

showing that around a third of adults report levels of distress. Among the younger population, that proportion rises to 1 in 2 people.

1.2. From 9/11 to covid-19

Although covid-19 has instilled a deep general sadness, fear and discouragement were already familiar feelings. An interesting date to situate the origin of this feeling is September 11, 2001, when the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York inaugurated an unknown fear in the contemporary West: we are in danger, even if we are at home. Although the discourse against terrorism supported a specific U.S. foreign policy, we can say that, beyond that, this narrative managed to infiltrate the most intimate feelings of the citizenry. The enemy took on a new face: superficially, this enemy has generally been dressed up as Muslim, but what is relevant is that it is located in the heart of the community. The other could now be our neighbor, the one we greet when throwing out the garbage or buying bread.

This change led to the weakening of the social fabric and the ties that bound it together, opening the door to security policies that would protect us from our own community, now the main suspect: the comprehensive check of our bodies when taking a plane was no longer a rarity and the installation of security cameras in public spaces began to seem logical to us. The claim that "we have nothing to hide" became the main argument to show our tolerance towards these practices.

The year 2008 was a new blow to this feeling of permanent danger. The economic crisis resulting from the collapse of the U.S. housing bubble was so far-reaching that it contributed to a certainty: you can lose everything at any time. The effects of this idea have been expressed in social behaviors as diverse as the thresholds of job satisfaction or the decision to start a family.

This combination of insecurity, danger and economic fear fitted into the formation of a radically new narrative environment, based on a series of transformations that came with the new century and that involved a shift in the paradigm of communication as it had previously existed.

The feelings of hopelessness and fear seemed to show a society that had definitely hit rock bottom. However, the outbreak of the pandemic in the year 2020 has created an existential vacuum that no one expected and that has greatly complicated the previous emotional panorama.

The painful shock implied by covid-19 has introduced society into a mourning process that has much to do with the one proposed by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, and that unfolds every time we suffer a loss. When a disruptive event threatens our normality, we begin by denying what is happening and clinging to the practices of the threatened normality. Once we find that persisting in denial proves unfeasible, we vent our anger at some designated culprit, who is almost never the one truly responsible for what is happening, if there is one. When after the release of our anger nothing changes, we try to "negotiate" with misfortune to see if we can at least partially preserve the previous normality. When misfortune proves not to be an interlocutor with whom we can negotiate, we settle into depression. Finally, when we

overcome this depression, we accept the loss and move on with what we have, forming a new normality. These classic phases of grief, which need not occur completely or in the order proposed by Kübler-Ross, have occurred variably in the societies affected by the pandemic, and many of the collective reactions we have seen over the past two years can be explained in this pattern.

In Western society we find ourselves not only at the end of a bereavement, but in the midst of a chain of such bereavements. We feel trapped between two walls: one, that of past duels that weigh us down like a backpack of disappointments; the other, that of anticipated new duels that provoke a permanent state of anxiety. In these chains of duels, the next disruptive event occurs very soon after settling into a new normality after the previous event. We have previously mentioned several such events, such as 9/11, the Great Recession and now covid-19. This chain of grief drains people's mental resources and causes them to fall into a state of "learned helplessness": whatever we do, misfortune will strike again and we will have no choice but to use the few resources we have left to adapt however we can, with no time or energy to consider what we want, to map out a desirable future scenario, and to devise a plan or project to achieve it. The chain of grief is a pattern that repeats itself in a familiar way in processes such as complicated aging or terminal illness.

1.3. I do not believe anything and I believe it all

This generalized state of mind translates into a society that cannot stand the world in which it lives, opting to distance itself from everything it finds painful and cannot solve, and giving credence to theories that simplify reality by providing simple answers and solutions.

Conspiracy theories have not emerged during the pandemic. They have a long history. However, in recent times there has been a significant upswing, understandable in the light of post-truth and the changing paradigm of communication, and which in the context of covid-19 has found a juicy breeding ground in which to thrive.

The media crisis, fueled by the work of fact-checking that has revealed the abundance of fake news to which we are exposed, has opened the door to the possibility that, indeed, the reality we have hitherto believed may not be true. This new panorama has facilitated the emergence of various denialisms and discourses that, although often implausible, provide explanations of reality that satisfy more and more people.

In faith there is a fundamental component of decision that the current communication landscape clearly shows: knowing that the information circulating may not be true, people nevertheless decide to continue consuming those media that agree with their ideological position and their desires. There is a decision on what to believe that justifies not checking the veracity of the information we consume, and that this uncertainty does not ultimately modify our information habits. This decision factor introduces a new question: Why do people ultimately choose to give credence to this type of discourse, such as the denial of the pandemic itself? Because reality as it has been told to us up to now is no longer bearable. There are several reasons why we find the world unbearable, but a relevant one is the pessimism from which it has been told to us: we think of the world and the future from a dystopia.

Conspiracy theories validate subjectivity and report sensations of control and certainty in the face of a complex and frightening world. Complex realities are explained to us from reassuringly simple schemes and solutions. Alone and forgotten, we become the chosen ones with access to forbidden knowledge that they do not want us to know. This access to forbidden knowledge gives a sense of power that many are not used to in a context of lack of agency, hopelessness and loneliness.

Individualism and loneliness

No one doubts the recognition of each of us as subjects with bodily, intellectual and emotional autonomy. However, the significant value that our society places on the individual is extraordinary and is at the root of one of today's social problems, especially mobilized during the pandemic: loneliness.

Individualism is considered by the social sciences as a kind of ideology whose genesis can be historically traced back to Modernity and whose nature underpins the ideal environment for fear and powerlessness. Basically, it posits the hegemony of the subject over the collective. The social structure is, therefore, no longer at the margin, but subordinated to the individual, who shapes it through his free decisions. This way of understanding the human being as an isolated atom among so many others, for whom the community is irrelevant and even annoying, has been developing and taking shape until it became the standard-bearer of specific ideological, economic and political positions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One of them, especially relevant to understand where we are now, would be the neoliberal policy of the 1980s when, in the context of the Cold War, the community was equated with communist ideology. The individualist paradigm was at that time fed by policies of disintegration of the organized social fabric and explicit discourses that can be summarized in Margaret Thatcher's significant statement: "There is no such thing as society, there are individuals". The imprint of these discourses and policies is a narrative that views people in terms of competition and threat, whose union and organization, unnecessary, can be replaced by the market. All this, transferred to the 21st century, shows us a society that, having forgotten community ties and mutual support, is plunged into a profound loneliness. The pandemic, with the restriction of movement that it implied, is a final example that explicitly manifests the sadness and hopelessness that social isolation brings.

Like so many other cultural configurations, almost all of us tend to view individualism as something natural, inherent to human beings. Our self-enclosed bodies seem condemned by nature to fend for themselves in the world. However, far from that, holistic societies have hardly valued the individual apart from the social, understanding that the collective is what ends up influencing the lives of the subjects and not the other way around. Regardless of how we perceive it, the reality is that no living being can survive in solitude, least of all the human being. From the moment we are born, completely defenseless, we need others to survive. And everything we are, our way of thinking, of relating to others and even of feeling, is shaped by society, even if ideologically we want to reject it. Individualism is therefore not something that works fully in reality, but rather a particular way of understanding human beings, their capacities and their connections with others: accepting it implies weakening, forgetting or ignoring many aspects of our potency as a collective.

An example of this individualism taken to its ultimate consequences is captured in the documentary *The Swedish Theory of Love*. Directed by the Swede Erik Gandini, it portrays a society that, far from the exemplary vision of the welfare state usually associated with the Nordic countries, shows cities in which a large number of people live and die alone. This situation is framed in State policies that in the 1970s were committed to eliminating people's dependence on their peers, thus eliminating family responsibilities or the overload that care can entail within the capitalist system. In this way, a guarantor State is strengthened, creating residences, day-care centers and all kinds of assistance to ensure that people's needs are met in the different stages of life. The consequences of these policies of detachment of the individual from his or her support network are devastating. The documentary shows us the story of people who have been found several months after their death or of a large company that is in charge of searching for family members once the person has died, in order to hand over their belongings. This company has grown disproportionately in recent years and appears in the film as a large brown building with hundreds of windows where bureaucrats are in charge of drawing the family trees diluted by time.

2. What we need

2.1. Human beings cooperate by nature

Individualism is an absurdity in a species that is social by nature. Everything we are is the fruit of our relationship with others. However, a fiction has been constructed about human beings and their bellicose nature, development from war or survival from competition, which supports this ideological model.

When the natural sciences developed in the 19th century, Darwin's theory proposed that species evolved, no longer randomly, but through adaptation to the environment and natural selection. Natural selection posits that evolution is the result of the survival of the fittest and strongest individuals, winners in a natural environment in competition. The social sciences were infected by this hypothesis and applied it to human societies, thus developing social Darwinism: as with animals and plants, people live in constant rivalry in our struggle to survive, and social action from this point of view would be mediated by violence and force, the keys to success. However, scientific empiricism brought other conclusions when it began to observe the workings of nature and human societies, and while anthropology quickly moved away from these principles, it was Kropotkin who first responded to these approaches. Remembered primarily for his political activism, Pyotr Kropotkin was a geographer and naturalist, and it was precisely the observation of cooperation in his work in Siberia that pushed him to advocate anarcho-communism as a possible and desirable model. What he proposed was that survival, conservation and interaction, both human and animal, are based on mutual aid, especially in wild environments where competitiveness makes survival practically impossible.

Without falling into simplism or idealization, we can say that cooperation is a cornerstone of social organization, especially in societies without centralized power. The more extreme the

context, the arid desert or the North Pole, but also a city devastated by an earthquake or a war, reciprocity or mutual aid are the most common strategies because hierarchy is a luxury that no one can afford. However, we do not have to go that far: in our own society, in our daily life, cooperation prevails, although we do not usually point it out or flag it, but we take it so much for granted that we do not even see it. If someone who is fixing a broken pipe says "pass me the wrench", his colleague will not, as a rule, ask "what do I get in return?"... even if they are working for Exxon-Mobil, Burger King or Goldman Sachs. Beyond the basic rules of education, this example underlines something that is present in our lives, albeit veiled, and that is part of us whether we want it or not: we are gregarious and cooperate because it is effective and because it comes from our soul, even if it is unconsciously.

2.2. Collective trauma heals with a community

We can conclude that the human being is a social being, and that individualism fed from so many fronts has created a generalized dissatisfaction in which the need for community comes to the surface. In the face of collective problems we need collective solutions. However, as is logical in an environment of loneliness, the general response of our societies in recent years has been mainly individual: therapy, yoga, going for a jog, going to the gym, etc. Responses that have been reinforced by confinement during the pandemic.

As we commented above, we can contemplate a coherence in the triumph of hate speech, which in the midst of so much helplessness and loneliness is revealed as a powerful form of union against a third party. The cohesion offered by hate is unstable since it needs to be constantly recycled, but its binding capacity is unquestionable, particularly in discourses that revive identity narratives. It assumes a quick solution but also an external one, it arises from environments outside us and not within society, and it focuses, looks, demands and seeks the solution in the other, the object of hatred. At the same time, this union does not generate empowerment beyond that which comes from belonging to a group with which you feel identified: you are not an agent of change, it does not give you initiatives because the script is already written. In contrast, love and fraternity do imply a community solution that is born from the same community and for the community, and that as a tool of agency and empowerment lies in the collective as well as in the individual.

As we will explain below, to penetrate this model people have to believe again in agency and empowerment, and that humanity is worthy of these qualities because it is amazing and good. The general view of our species today, however, is far removed: ecological destruction, wars, digital alienation and so many other discourses, harangued by the nostalgia for the past so much in vogue, arouses guilt and a sense that we are not worthy of anything. This harmful narrative cuts out only the most negative aspects of human action, failing to do justice to our capabilities and, above all, our potential to change things.

Making people feel useful and powerful is directly linked to stopping this narrative of blame and flagellation, but also to redefining the spaces for action and change. Heavily fueled by NGOs, narratives about changing things often lead us to very abstract realities or seemingly distant from our daily lives: wars on other continents or structural issues such as world hunger or climate change that, in their immensity, are unmanageable. A boney polar bear on a block of ice thawing in the Arctic may shock us at first, but the possibilities of influencing it are so remote that we will probably throw in the towel. This kind of rhetoric establishes a

desert between realities and people, achieving little long-term involvement and, ultimately, insensitivity. As Kume Appiah recounted, a person might be momentarily horrified at the news of the destruction of everyone in China by an earthquake, but would sleep soundly that night. Conversely, he could not sleep a wink knowing that the next day his finger would be cut off. Speeches are more easily apprehended if they allude to close and recognizable spaces, going back to the local makes people feel useful and powerful. But also, when we have a shared, nearby space, it becomes everyone's responsibility, activating powerful communities and not single individuals.

2.3. A purpose against learned helplessness

At both the individual and community level, there is a powerful antidote to learned helplessness, conspiratorialist mentalities, and the hopeless individualism of "every man for himself": a sense of purpose. As Viktor Frankl noted, "life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but by a lack of meaning and purpose." The search for purpose in a volatile, complex and ambiguous world becomes an essential way to overcome learned helplessness.

The different adaptive responses that people exhibit in the face of trauma demonstrate this. When we suffer an adverse event, if we analyze to what extent this trauma affects our level of well-being or happiness in the long term, we can find three possible patterns. In scenarios of post-traumatic decline or collapse, we never regain our previous level of happiness. In situations of resilience, we recover the previous level relatively quickly. And in cases of post-traumatic flourishing, paradoxically, our level of happiness following the end of the crisis actually exceeds the previous level. Individuals and societies that achieve this post-traumatic flourishing do so because they are able to integrate the crisis they suffered as a necessary learning experience to discover a new purpose, a new reason for being in the world; and, in pursuit of the realization of that purpose, they undergo a profound and positive transformation.

In a case such as the present one, where what we are dealing with is a collective trauma, perhaps the most global in the history of humanity, the individual purpose has to develop within a space of collective healing, and therefore it is indispensable that there be a collective purpose. In this sense, it is inevitable that individuals tend to join purposeful collective projects. And this is important to keep in mind when designing our narratives and understanding how other existing narratives work. In such a space, hate speech and denialism represent a quick and easy option for collective purpose. Against them the collective alternatives of love have to be able to offer similar satisfaction with a plausible, sustainable and enriching purpose in the short and medium term.

2.4. Utopias

There is a marketing technique that consists of creating futures that do not exist in order to generate needs that we do not yet have but that, thanks to this strategy, we end up having. This technique that is applied to products can also be applied to ideas and social

construction. In this framework, futures marketing is operating through a depressing and dystopian narrative, generating the need to stay as we are and protect what we have, even if it is meager, because what is coming is going to be worse. The Spanish saying *Virgencita, que me quede como estoy* becomes surprisingly real when we contemplate social immobilism in the face of an increasingly threatened welfare state. This evokes the classic political strategy of trying to prevent the population from feeling that they have nothing to lose, because in such a case the risk of a popular uprising becomes feasible and certainly dangerous. The current dystopian narrative seems to be oriented to this end: faced with the dark future that lies ahead, and even with the situation we are in, the little we have becomes a lot to lose, because the alternative to such a scenario seems that it can only be worse. A striking example is the narrative associated with young people in Spain, where the acceptance of practices of symbolic remuneration for several years, or salaries of 800 euros for working days of up to 12 hours, have become recurrent and habitual images. And these episodes are in turn accompanied by an infinity of fatalistic narratives that determine the resigned acceptance of this immovable reality: "the best prepared and worst paid generation", "the first generation to live worse than their parents". Ultimately, this rhetoric swells a popular culture that is committed to constructing dystopian futures that show us a dying world and fierce struggles for survival: the entire narrative machinery is working to make us incapable of imagining an alternative future that motivates us to reactivate our capacities.

Dystopias disaggregate (the way things are, I'll either do my own thing or play the ostrich), while utopias collectivize.

And within the apocalypse, the only glimmer of hope we are offered is the hero narrative. A hero is a person who fights against a force greater than himself and who, overcoming obstacles, finally triumphs over others, all by himself. He thus transcends humanity by accomplishing this feat, like Heracles in *The Twelve Labors* or Defred in *The Handmaid's Tale*. In migratory narratives, for example, the story of the hero is found in the many stories of overcoming; in the immigrant who turned out to be a computer genius, participated in the creation of one of the covid-19 vaccines or in the one who returned a wallet full of money to its rightful owner even though he was living on the street.

The very idea of the heroic struggle produces exhaustion, but, in addition, the recourse to the hero poses several problems. Heroism is individual, the collective does not exist in it. Certainly not in the collective imagination, and therefore hardly in our imagination beyond *Fuenteovejuna*. The heroic narrative places us alone or in small groups in front of and above the collective, the world and the structure from our uniqueness.

In short, the market narrative has constructed a fiction of unique and differentiated beings and has equated the communitarian with undesirable anonymity and sheepishness. Self-improvement and differentiation from the rest have ended up building people who single-handedly execute and self-impose social mandates. And as Byung Chul Han says, do not rebel against you. This strategic individualism has inserted itself into the only cracks in the dystopian narrative that surrounds us to block at the root the possibility of changing things.

In this framework, the need for utopias as the antithesis of dystopias becomes imperative, and, in its configuration, the warmth of the communitarian becomes hopeful in the face of the hero's superhuman loneliness. Having said this, let us remember that we speak in narrative terms, but there are material barriers, political, economic and social factors that operate and determine the scenario unquestionably. In no way do we want to fall into the narrative of overcoming that we are warning about but placing the focus on the collective. However, the limits imposed by the social structure in combination with this dystopian narrative establish a blockage that we believe is practically impossible to overcome. Faced with this, a narrative that transmits that it is possible, dismantles the model in one of its basic axes. We live in such fear of losing what we have that we have adapted to the dystopian space, in the classic "the known bad is better than the unknown good". Unfortunately, in the known bad, not only can we not move forward, but we lose rights, and each lost right becomes a right that is very difficult to reconceive and recover.

3. With which narratives

3.1. The narratives of love are the new framework

3.1.1. What we understand by love

In our definition of love, we move away from the much-maligned romantic love and take up the concept of fraternal love evoked by authors such as sociologist Adrian Scribano, writer bell hooks or Pope Francis, to give a few examples. Love thus understood would be the feeling that unites people to give rise to the creation of something, material or immaterial.

This fraternal love is unconditional and unquestionable and occurs between human beings, regardless of who they are, how they are, where they are from. These people therefore perceive themselves as sisters, that is to say as equals, and are united in a space of co-creation to which they accede with the same condition, that of twinned human beings.

We also consider that, as advocated by bell hooks, love is a voluntary act, it is an intention but also an action. It is never simply a feeling or an emotion but an active verb. That is why in this paper we focus not so much on what love is, but on what it does. Love is the set of those processes, those relationships, those dynamics that build, that create, that offer alternatives and incite to reimagine. Love provides the space to redefine our most internalized conventions, to break with an equilibrium and open horizons to changes and new realities. In this sense, love is not spontaneous or passive, but a vital political act for democratic practices, a tool for change and union that calls for public freedom within diversity and collective difference.

Another factor that distinguishes fraternal love is its inalienability and the inability to commodify it. Love is not a substitutable good, it cannot be packaged or delivered in a pre-planned and ordered manner. Love is absolutely outside the profit-oriented rationality of the market economy.

3.1.2. Why the word is vilified

Why does it sound bad to talk about Love? Today it is common to find serious people discussing hate speeches, acts of hate or its incentives. The term hate is naturalized in the

social scene and has become part of the analysis fields. Talking about love, however, is different. The very title of Narratives of Love aroused skeptical looks and even a chuckle from colleagues and collaborators. It resonates with hippie, flower-power, namby-pamby, corny or goody-goody with its more negative connotations. And these perceptions deserve some reflection since love, if we adhere to its meaning, however diffuse and polysemic it may be, is something that everyone desires. So why is it ridiculous?

Romantic love and the weight of heteropatriarchy

The first problem is the automatic link established between the concept of love and romantic love. From this derives the rejection of love within the feminist struggle. As bell hooks points out, the tendency to reduce love to a matter of patriarchal ideology has led to seeing love itself as the problem, which has been inhibiting the development of a more complex theorization of love. Love has been banished to the private sphere, with gender roles being assigned in this space. When social life is divided into public and private, and political and domestic, it generally includes that each sphere is attributed to one or the other: politics, in its relevant outward projection, and where love has little to do, is in the hands of men; the secluded world of the private, in the hands of the feminine. This categorization, which relegates the maintenance of life to the invisible, has been questioned in many spheres, especially in feminism. But above all we live in a world in which the public seems to be completely separated from love, and any attempt to include it has become a ridiculous vignette for some, beautiful for others, but ultimately unrealistic for all.

And as bell hooks would explain "Instead of rethinking love and insisting on its importance and value, the feminist discourse on love simply stopped." Although love is a crucial site of gender power asymmetries, it is also, from its other meanings as the one we use in this paper, a vital source of human betterment without which we cannot live.

Reviled because the power of love is frightening

Brotherly love is extremely dangerous to the status quo on which the current economic and narrative system rests, because it does not focus on individual status, but on building collective structures. When interpersonal relationships are relegated to efficiency and productivity, everyday practices are constituted as investments rather than spontaneous affections. In this framework, love can be seen as a practice that clearly contradicts the values that reduce everything to profit.

On the other hand, love is undoubtedly the unquestionable antidote to fear. The fraternal union between people helps to generate strong communities that share knowledge, that reject lies, that generate certainties and that share success. In addition to being participatory and solid, communities of this type are difficult to manipulate.

Faced with the loss of control over the individual, the system activates endogenous defense mechanisms turning the narrative involving the processes of love into something negative. One of the clearest examples of this is described by the author Barbara Ehrenreich when collective ecstasy begins to be called collective hysteria, turning a process of communion and co-creation into a collective disease that must be eradicated.

3.1.3. Why is it important to recover the concept of love?

It is necessary to rethink love as a process of production of the common and of new subjectivities. In this way, love is not necessarily spontaneous or passive, but can be an action planned and carried out in common. Fraternal love relationships matter not only for what they can produce personally but for what they can generate politically in terms of fostering alternative ways of relating beyond separation and competition.

Love must therefore be seen as a political issue and create solidarity infrastructures; it is vital to democratic thinking and practice. It is the labor of love that enables people to thrive; it produces externalities, empowering and resourcing people, and giving meaning, warmth and joy to life outside the romantic relationship itself. The emotional bonds that are part of loving and being loved encourage people to act as moral agents and, while partial, promote relational responsibility to others. Without the security of being loved and cared for, it is difficult to develop the capacity to move beyond concern for personal safety and well-being, to move beyond a politics that is not entirely driven by self-interest. And without a public conception of care it is impossible to maintain a democratic society.

"I believe that love is the most powerful force for change in the world. I often compare great campaigns to great love affairs because they are an incredible container for transformation. They can change policies, but they also change relationships and people in the process."

Ai-Jen Poo, activist in the Domestic Workers Movement in New York.

3.1.4. It is not love (although it may seem to be)

The humanitarian discourse

Derived from Judeo-Christian charity and associated with the entire colonial discourse, the narrative of development aid and humanitarian discourse is born. This narrative positions the other in a space that is alien to one's own. Within this framework, each of us, Westerners from a so-called developed world, relate to peers and perhaps to other people, who need help because their living conditions are worse because of our society and our model of life. We therefore have the responsibility to help those third persons and the capacity to change everything if we put our minds to it.

The narrative of otherness is enormously dangerous even if its vocation is generous and aims to benefit the other. In the specific case of the migratory narrative this is especially flagrant. Considering the other as someone absolutely different turns that third party into a potential competitor. At first, the discourse of help may work, but the moment our foundations of well-being are in danger, what was compassion quickly turns into prevention. This view of the other as different and to some extent inferior is the gateway to hate speech.

Sublimating the above, a recent historical study on the arguments used in Europe to support the migration closure policies implemented by France and Great Britain between the 1960s and 1990s concludes that the most commonly used arguments derive from this humanitarian discourse. In other words, the different governments used humanitarian arguments involving the protection of migrants, the fight against mafias and labor exploitation to justify border closure policies. In the few cases in which governments used arguments in which the immigrant was presented as a threat, they received strong social criticism and response accusing the narratives of being fascist or racist, and branding them as inadmissible.

In the 1980s, a series of transformations took place that defined mainstream aid narratives that were not previously prevalent. With the profusion of new media such as television, and with the consolidation of large NGOs, solidarity became a product, giving rise to major fundraising campaigns. Thus a marketing of pity is configured that provides immediate reactions among audiences but does not participate in the generation of a narrative of the common because it is based on the otherness of the person we help. And in 2010, after the Great Recession, with their social bases in check, the classic NGOs do not accept disintermediation and are unable to identify the necessary narrative changes, pushing recruitment campaigns based on solidarity to the exaltation of charity. They drag with them the media and between all of them consolidate the narrative of otherness that will open the door wide to the discourse of hate that bursts unchecked in 2015.

"Reappears "the temptation to make a culture of walls, to build walls, walls in the heart, walls on the ground to avoid this encounter with other cultures, with other people. And whoever builds a wall, whoever builds a wall, will end up being a slave within the walls he has built, without horizons. Because he lacks this otherness."

Pope Francis, "Fratelli Tutti"

The love of identity

As explained above, populisms, nationalisms or religious fundamentalisms employ a corrupt form of identity love. What is really fundamental for them is that there is a kind of "love of the same", "love of race", and that is what leads them to such exclusivity. Identitarian love is a love where the object (the homeland, the religion, the purity of the culture) has been taken away, and the "damage" must be returned as a way of confirming this love. The fantasy of this love thus requires an obstacle: the "others". This allows the subject to maintain the

position that, without these "others", a better life would be possible, and their love for the object of their identity would be returned to them.

3.2. Narrative solutions for a migration narrative based on love

3.2.1. Rules of the new narratives

Based on the premise that the discourse of hate cannot be confronted, but must be replaced by reconquering the public space with an alternative discourse, the authors of this report published in 2018 and 2020 two manuals of what we call at the porCausa Foundation the new narratives. Both manuals include reflections on the composition of audiences divided into lovers, ambivalents and haters, and what we call the new paradigm of communication that occurs from 2015 when hate speech burst into the digital age.

Siete puntos
clave para crear

NUEVAS NARRATIVAS

sobre los movimientos de las personas en el mundo

Fundación porCausa de Investigación, Periodismo y Migraciones

MAYO de 2019



These publications include a guide composed of three rules (create your own narrative, eliminate otherness, avoid the use of data) and four considerations (focus, consider subconscious thinking, return to the local narrative, use marketing) that must be applied to generate these new narratives.



3.2.2. Diversity as the main vector of narrative construction

"The future is not monochromatic, but is possible if we dare to look at it in the variety and diversity of what everyone can contribute. How much our human family needs to learn how to live together in harmony and peace without the need for us to be all alike!"

Pope Francis, "Fratelli Tutti"

When it comes to constructing a migration story, we can do so within the framework of the exceptional nature of what is narrated or within the framework of the naturalization of the process we are telling. Here arises the opportunity to work the narrative on the points that exist in common between the people who move and those who receive them, and to work the differences as parts that enrich the story by bringing diversity to the stories. To find the points in common we can work on values that go from the universal to the more specific, for example: being a woman, being an entrepreneur, being a mother, having dark hair, knowing how to dance, having a great smile, being a neighbor of a neighborhood/city/province, etc.

The important thing is to be able to situate the difference within a previously common space, diluting the otherness within the value of community union.

Within this work space, Oliviero Toscani's visual narratives for Benetton are very inspiring. Despite having received numerous criticisms for being considered utilitarian at times, Toscani's compositions unquestionably turned diversity into a trend, difference into fashion. Toscani perfectly combines this concept of similarity with difference and has absolutely referential works in this sense.



Some of Toscani's most provocative campaigns where we find common and divergent elements that highlight the value of diversity and its unquestionability (mother-child, languages, babies, hearts).



Nudicome: Toscani's 2018 campaign, where there are no clothes and only diversity.

Its success led Adidas to replicate the concept a year later with its Pharrell Williams' "An Anthem to Diversity" campaign:



3.2.3. Utopian Narratives

"Utopia is on the horizon. I walk two steps, it moves two steps away and the horizon runs ten steps further. So what is utopia for? For that, it serves to walk," said Eduardo Galeano,

To generate these narratives we have to start from the premise that utopias are, a priori, unattainable, just like dystopias, which is their antonym. It is not a question of constructing a narrative of the possible, but of the impossible. Utopia is shaped, therefore, through a wonderful fiction that inspires us and makes us dream. And it is through that dream that we will realize some indispensable concepts or the necessary phases to get closer to that imagined perfect space. This, in fact, is how the marketing of futures described in previous sections works, devising unattainable concepts that then become concrete products that are absolutely usable and already desired by consumers. Well, here it is a matter of doing the same thing but with ideas and social patterns.

The science fiction stories produced in recent times are mostly dystopian. Of the few utopian narratives that are available to large audiences, the wonderful tale of Sense8 by the Wachowski sisters, authors and directors of titles such as the Matrix, stands out above all others. Sense8 portrays a collective of utterly diverse people, scattered all over the world, who possess a supernatural interconnectedness that makes them a single composite being. It is therefore a story where the community generates a superbeing composed of love and diversity with a physical and spiritual interconnectedness that surpasses the level of intercommunication already magically provided to us in the last ten years by information and communication technologies, reaching what is called a collective intelligence. Also interesting, as Layla Martinez points out, the mythical Star Trek saga would also be utopian science fiction since it describes a society that despite being confined in a very small space lives without inequalities, without using money, without the existence of social classes and with another vital concept far from the current model.

3.2.4. The story of triumph

As we explained earlier, we need to believe again in the capacity of human beings to do good and change the things around them. People need to believe in our individual and collective power to change in order for the calls to action to work.

After 40 years, the aforementioned NGO narratives of the 1980s that hold audiences accountable for the world's ills, placing these ills at universal levels, have left an aftertaste of inevitability. Indeed, on the one hand, in the midst of the covid-19 crisis, audiences with fear and sadness are incapable of assuming the weight of responsibility for a world they do not feel part of. To this we must add that we live in the information age and, unlike previous times, our societies have audiovisual documentation to remind us of everything that society wanted to be and could not be.

In the face of this narrative, we need to recover a closer and more surprising one that repositions human beings as agents of change. Within the framework of the narratives of love, this story will always be that of a collective, that of a group of human beings who, united, achieve the impossible. And it is advisable that such a story be framed within the other points mentioned above.

Among a myriad of inspiring examples, there is one that we particularly like, which is the Amazon jungle. This jungle represents at a narrative level the example of an inalienable natural space, pure, free from the corrupt hand of man, constituting a virgin bastion that must be defended. However, the Amazon rainforest is anthropogenic. It is the presence of man for thousands of years that has led this natural space to be the way it is, improving its plant and animal diversity. To this day, the communities that continue to populate this forest are the custodians that defend it. The problem, therefore, is not the human being but his model of life and development.

Examples like this should be constant in our narrative.

3.2.5. The community narrative

In contrast to the triumph of the individual over evil, which makes up the numerous hero narratives, we need to create a narrative of the community that triumphs collectively, recognizing within it the strength of each of the people who compose it.

How to tell the story of community in order to achieve an inspiring narrative has been one of the great recurring and central debates of the people involved in this work.

In these narratives of love we need to break the narrative of the individual who, moreover, when he or she is a hero is indispensable and invincible and therefore absolutely alien to the common person. On the other hand, it is difficult to generate a story based on a diffuse entity such as a community that revives individual inspiration. People reflect themselves in people, we look for concrete references to copy. Moreover, the dissolution of the value of uniqueness within the collective jeopardizes the narrative of diversity.

What we propose is to narrate communities by personalizing them, qualifying them, generating generalizable and defining attributes that are accessible and tangible. The aforementioned attributes would be narratively organized into a main quality that complements other complementary qualities. Subsequently, within this community framework, narrative characters would be included that represent a set of inspiring individuals who work in a complementary way and respond to different stereotypes.

A clear example of this narrative can be the ME TOO movement, where there is a narrative of the collective, all women have in common that they are women, and within that framework, that they have suffered aggressions because of it but also that they have female leadership, and within those frames there are thousands of women who star in different cases of success, of courage, inspiring other women.

3.2.6. The narrative of the Common Good

In the face of the narrative of otherness, the narrative of the commons emerges as a solid alternative, still devoid of partisanship. The commons is the translation of the Anglo-Saxon concept Commons, which is related to community goods or resources. In this paper we understand the commons as that narrative of the community in which the community is presented as the greatest good through which the individual flourishes. As opposed to

classical values such as solidarity, which is presented as the most philanthropic of collaborative options but is still "circumstantial adherence to the cause or enterprise of others," the commons takes the reverse path from the common good to the individual good.

Narrating through this prism implies that the center of the story is the common space and the community and the effect it has on each individual. Even in cases where the center of the story is the individual, the individual does not appear as the savior of the community but as saved by it. This narrative encourages community participation and the promotion of love.

This narrative was at the core of such powerful narratives as those of the beginning of Christianity or more recently the 15M, Occupy Wall Street or the Arab Spring.

3.3. Tools of love

Having defined the most appropriate narrative solutions, we now face the challenge of reaching larger audiences. Of all the supports we can count on, there are two particularly powerful tools when it comes to generating spontaneous fraternal love between people: music and laughter. Both tools are insufficiently exploited and can complement any expressive proposal that is chosen.

3.3.1. Music and dance

Music is a tool of union between individuals. Professor David Huron states that music "can contribute to group solidarity, encourage altruism, improve the effectiveness of collective actions [and] coordinate group work".

Since ancient times, music has been recognized as a tool to improve the emotional states of individuals and therefore of communities. At present, thanks to physiological and neurological studies, it can be affirmed that music has a physical effect on human beings and is related to the emission of endorphins, dopamines and serotonin, among other effects.

Music is the main tool of transcendence through the collectivization of emotion. As Barbara Ehrenrich explains, the desire for collective joy, historically expressed in ecstatic festivities, costumes and dances are part of the very essence of humanity. The celebration of music is very often communal and massive music and dance parties are indigenous to the West, and existed without limit from the ancient Greeks to medieval Christianity.

Nowadays, tens of thousands of people meet recurrently in spaces of musical consumption that we call festivals, sharing moments of collective ecstasy and love. Spaces that should be defended and preserved as a source of collective inspiration and generation of community. And this is the way it is understood in many countries, where it is worth mentioning the French-speaking countries that have a huge network of festivals with public funding that support the sexagenarian cultural and musical tradition.

In addition, music is one of the cultural products that has and accepts more crossbreeding, presenting the most popular face of diversity. The French Festival Les Transmusicales de Rennes has counted in its 2021 edition, with bands from at least 33 countries including France, Turkey, Cameroon, United Kingdom, Australia, Netherlands, Mauritius, Armenia,

Madagascar, Spain, Sri Lanka, Algeria, Gabon, Comoros, Finland, Angola, Switzerland, Armenia, Tunisia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin, Canada, Italy, Belgium, Iceland, United States, Australia, Cyprus, Israel, Indonesia, Japan, Ireland or South Africa. The mostly French and European public reached 55,000 people who vibrated for three days with this music. There is no comparable tool to vindicate the value of diversity.











3.3.2. Laughter

Laughter is a biological response of the human being whose function would be to consolidate the bonds within the group. Laughter has been scientifically studied more intensively since the beginning of the 20th century by psychologists and neuroscientists. The psychologist Leonhard Schilbach, from the University of Cologne, demonstrated that laughter spreads between individuals through the activation of the neuronal system of those who perceive laughter in a third party. The neurons that are activated are those linked to the contraction of the zygomatic muscles that are involved in laughter. It is not therefore a simple voluntary act but a subconscious act determined to release stress and in general to produce well-being, joy and collective feeling as the cognition researcher Sophie Scott emphasizes in her latest work.

4. Bibliography and Recommendations

This idea of love is not innovative, it is the long tradition that understands love as a political action and a vector of change.

This is what black feminist activists and theorists such as bell hooks, Audre Lorde and Toni Morrison have in common.

The analysis of brotherly love and its imprint on Latin American social movements in the study "Filial love as collective action and trust" by Adrián Scribano (2019).

The two encyclicals of Pope Francis, but especially the indispensable Fratelli tutti (2020).

Sara Ahmed: The cultural politics of emotions :

Barbara Ehrenreich in her essay: A history of joy: collective ecstasy from antiquity to the present day (2008)

numerous social movements such as Act Up, Idle No More or Occupy, 15M, V for Housing, 0.7.