
**THREE PHASES OF LOVE AND CONFLICT PORTRAYED IN EASTERINE KIRE'S
*LIFE ON HOLD***

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Abstract

The concept of love plays a crucial role in the life of every individual. It cannot be defined easily but it can be experienced in different stages. Where there is love there will be conflicts. Conflicts are part and parcel of love. In the novel, *Life on Hold* the character of the protagonist was the epitome of Love and conflict. She experienced love and conflicts in all three stages. Their love progressed very well in the tender age but the stage of the conflict in her life does not allow her to cherish the love. The novel was written based on incidents that took place in the 1980s. In Nagaland, insurgency strongly prevailed during this year. The author Easterine Kire, crafted the novel nicely and made the readers understand easily the stages of love during the time of conflicts. With the help of the novel, the paper is an attempt to define love from a different perspective.

Keywords: war, love, insurgency, attraction, memory.

The terms love and conflict often is used interchangeably infamous books and novels. Furthermore, the words love and conflict appear to be synonymous for some but for some, those appear to be antonyms. It is very evident that, at the outset, though these two terms are opposite to each other inwardly both are strongly intertwined and interrelated. Whoever experiences love, will undergo conflict once in their lifetime. But the term love has more power and energy. It will ignite a person. It will make a person to create and to recreate anything in life. It will make a

person be stronger and more productive. Thus many say life is meaningless if there is no love. And in the same chapter verse four expresses the purpose of love "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up" (1125).

Human beings are called social animals. The statement is true because animalistic activities overpower him. It is the concept of love which shapes and helps human beings to come out of animosity. The famous psychologist Erikson identified a major difference between basic trust and basic mistrust at the time of making a research on the growth of the fetus in the womb. In the early months, the babies in the womb experience the love of a mother and will feel a sense of the dependability and trustworthiness of the people and objects in their world. If a baby does not experience the mother's love, will feel a type of mistrust and the unfriendly relationship of the people and objects in their world. Thus love plays a pivotal role in the life of every individual. It will enable a person to be more responsive and more consistent. Love manifests in all stages of human life whether it is children, adult, parents, and friends. It gives a new meaning to the relationship.

Kinds of Love:

Mr. Singer highlighted the four Greek types of love in the book the *Positive Psychology* which had appeared in Greek mythologies. The words are *Eros, Philia, Nomos and Agape* (310).

Eros:

The word Eros appeared numerous times in Greek mythologies. It is the name of Greek God's sensual love and pleasure. He is one of the ancient gods who came down to the cosmos. In the ancient Greek poetries, he had depicted as an adult male who symbolized enormous sexual powers and a profound artist. The ancient Greek writer Homer did not narrate about Eros. But the pre- Socratic philosopher Parmenides mentioned about Eros, the first god of all gods who came to the cosmos to exist. This type of love is giving importance to worldly beauty and sensual pleasures. In the modern world, the majority of the young generation comes under this category. The modern youth do not know the inner meaning of love, for them, love means sensual pleasures.

Philia:

The second type of love is Philia. It is one of the ancient words in Greek to explain love. The word was often used to illustrate brotherly love, affection and friendship, young lovers, lifelong friends, political and business contacts, parents and children, members of the same religious society and members from the same tribe. This type of love is contradicting with the other three types of love because it is promoting well- being of close friends. Philia love is so authentic and motivates the partners to have good cooperation with each other. At the same time,

it also gives a new meaning to friendship. Every individual should have some friends to share their thought and feelings. It makes a person feel that amass of wealth will not lay the platform to build a good friendship. Thus, this kind of love provides the right mind and thought to understand the correct meaning of friendship.

Nomos:

Thirdly, the word Nomos means submission and obedience to the divine and to the government. According to this word, the citizens have to obey the authorities' one who is ruling them. It talks about freedom of thought and the duties of individuals in society. It guides and enables a person to be more responsible in society. Further, it urges members of society to love society as they love one another. It does not promote the love of human beings. It always gives importance to society. When a person starts to love society, it will facilitate peace and harmony among one another in society. But many are not in support of nomos. The individual feels that it spreads a kind of subjugation in the society. It does not respect the feelings of individuals. Though it has demerits, society will have enormous growth and development if it accepts the concepts.

Agape:

Finally, the word Agape means, "selfless love of a person for his neighbor without any sexual implications" (310). Probably, among these four Greek words of love, the word Agape sounds best. It is a spiritual love that reflects selflessness and altruism. This type of love inspires a person to work for the welfare of others without any expectations. (65) Easterine Kire, a writer from Nagaland has touched upon with the concept of Agape love in the novel *life on hold*.

The Types of Love Portrayed In the Novel:

The novel begins with the wrestling fight among Roko, and Nime. Kire narrates it in the very beginning of the novel. "They tumbled over and over in the short grassy slope sky and earth revolving around them until it was all just a whirr. Among the three Roko would come first, and then Setup and finally Nime. She usually wound up last" (1). Whenever they played, the two boys behaved very roughly. Nime was a seven years old girl. The other two boys were six months older than her. Her original name was Nimenuo but she was called Nime. These three kids always enjoyed playing wrestling. Cynically, she introduced wrestling game in order to spread the bravery of Naga women to the entire world. The historical incidents witnessed that the Naga society was not willing to recognize the bravery of women.

During the time of wrestling game, being an active boy, Roko easily pulled her down. However, sometimes Nime would dominate him in the game. Whenever she became triumphant in the wrestling game, he became restless, ferocious and annoyed. According to Naga's teaching,

the men have to control over women in all the stages of life. If women dominate men in a family it was considered to be losing one's own dignity and valor. The author brilliantly brought out the awkward attitudes of men through the protagonist Roko. "The day after Nime pushed him down, he refused to speak to her at school" (2). He began to talk to her only after winning the wrestling game in the next match.

Roko won the first round Nime's hair had caught in one of his shirt buttons and she cried out in pain. That stopped him. But when they had managed to disentangle themselves the match started again in earnest. Nime was surprised that Roko was so strong that afternoon. His stomach was hard and pushed against her. In the second round, she panted as she tried to twist her leg around his and bring him down. He was ready for all her tricks and soon she was on the ground (3).

The failure had not disturbed Nime in any way because she liked him very much. When she was growing little older she was warned by her mother not to play with Roko. She was often scolded by her mother for being with the boy. In Naga culture, as the girls are growing older they must keep them aloof from society. They are allowed freely to talk with the boys. But Nime was not ready to obey. She had a good opinion on him. Once they had a camp organized by the school authorities. In the camp, he was ready to offer her a precious and expensive knife to save her on an important occasion. Everyone was surprised to see the generous attitude of Roko. She thanked him profusely. From that day onwards the good opinion developed into a kind of love and affection towards Roko, in a very tender age. She felt the changes of attitude within herself. She was not ready to look at him directly "she blushed now if he looked in her direction" (21).

However, the situation in Nagaland also changed. The innocent people were brutally killed by the Indian army and underground groups. Sometimes, the students were horrified to see the dead bodies which were lying in the woods near their school. These incidents always disturbed Roko. He felt so sad to think of the worst situation of Nagaland. Meantime he too heard the role of some leaders who were fighting for the Naga Independence. The cycle of killing really brought the reign of fear among innocent people. Both the Indian army and the members from the underground groups targeted the innocent people in society.

Seeing the pathetic situation, he made a decision to join his uncle who was the leader of one underground group. She entreated him earnestly to change his decision. But he was so strong in his decision. Though he loved her sincerely, he was not able to change his decision. He loved Nagaland more than Nime. The concept of nomos was so strong in Roko. But their love progressed even after joining an underground group. He was trying to forget her but each and every minute he was thinking of her. He was ruminating over the school day wrestling matches.

One fine morning, he was shocked to hear the marriage news of Nime. Nime was so adamant on not to marry others. She was ready to wait for him. But her parents and the family situation forced her to marry someone else. She married Abeiu unwillingly. The concept of love

and conflict was so visibly seen in the novel. Though Roko joined the underground group, he was in distress for not able to forget her. Her memories did not allow him to fully concentrate on his work. In the same way, though she married another man, she was not able to forget Roko, each and every minute she was thinking of him. "John Lee, a psychologist, had pronounced theory of love. According to him, styles of love can be compared to the color wheel" (*Sebastine*153).

Conclusion:

She had love and conflict in all stages of her life. In her child experience through her mother scolded her so many times she never gave up her relationship. She was in conflict whether to talk to him or not. In her teenage, though he had the idea of joining in the underground group, again she had fallen in the pool of conflict but she was not ready to forget him. She was expecting his arrival. She pleaded him stealthily to come out of the group. Though he neglected it she was not in a mood of forgetting him. Again, when she was an adult she was so disturbed and had a conflict with the plan of marriage. When she was compelled to marry an unknown person she burst out that "But I will never love him, don't you understand?"(60).She was capable of overcoming the conflict in all the stages because she showed him a true love which is Agape love.

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