

The Diversity of Love Journal

Love Power Is in the Power of Both Fire and Water

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The aid of a metaphorical lexicon help us better grasp what love is. Various Western and Eastern languages and cultures have metaphors, metonyms, and related concepts for “fire,” “heat,” and “water” that stand for the core qualities of love (see Karandashev, 2019).

Metaphors of Love as Fire and as Water

In other places, I showed many cultural examples of how the lexicon of many cultures represents the metaphor of “*love as fire*” in [Western cultures](#) as well as in [other societies around the world](#). It is worth noting that these metaphors are frequently associated with metamorphic images of water.

Water is also a *power of love*, yet it can have different connotations. In some ways, love and relationship emotions resemble the power of water. Nevertheless, they are as powerful as water in its numerous variations. They can be like storms, like waves, like rivers, like the great flood. For example, when we are overwhelmed by feelings, we

experience emotional flooding, either in a positive way (feeling elation and euphoria) or a negative way (feeling anxiety and frustration).

- “Looking at her, I was flooded by love”.
- “Waves of passion came over me”.

or

- “He swept me off my feet”.
- “I was carried away by love”.

Jane Eyre: Love Torn Between *Fire* and *Water*

The English Victorian culture of 19th century, however, presents a different example of Western cultural views on the metaphors of *love-as-fire* and *love-as-water*. “Jane Eyre” (Brontë, 1847/2008)- the novel of Charlotte Brontë beautifully exemplifies this cultural idea of that time. The *fire-water image* symbolizes the key points of the novel: love finds a golden middle way between the flames of passion and the waters of reason.

“She re-awakens the glow of their love, and their two natures join in a steady flame that burns neither as wildly as the lightning that destroyed the chestnut, nor as dimly as the setting sun of St. John Rivers’ religious dream”
(Solomon, 1963, p. 217).

The wildly passionate appeal of romantic love goes along with control (Imlay, 1993; Solomon, 1963)

Love as Fire and Water in Eastern Cultures

Water and *fire* metaphors also represent love in Eastern cultures. For instance, the Indian tradition embodies *love* in the *metaphor of heat* that

commonly represents the *power of fire and power of water*:

Swept away by rivers of love

(swelling floods of their desire)

Torrents dammed by their elders

(propriety of all parents require)

Close they stand, anxious but still

(hiding passions, restraining sights)

Lovers drink nectars from the blossoms

(the love that pours from the lotus eyes).

Amaruśataka, a collection of Sanskrit erotic lyrical poems (cited by Siegel, 1983).

Eastern Cultural Representations of Love as Water

In India, love is widely represented in the context of water in Hindi films, television dramas, and songs. They follow the aesthetic traditions evolved in Sanskrit/ Hindi and Urdu poetry and art (Dwyer 2006, p. 294). In the Hindi films, romance and love are portrayed in a paradise setting: parks, gardens, mountains, and valleys: “a whole set of visual codes (landscape, setting, physical appearance, costume, symbols, and so on) as well as those of the language itself, a blend of registers of Hindi, Urdu, and English.” (Dwyer & Patel, 2002, pp. 55–59).

The *romantic eroticism of water* is portrayed by beautiful rivers, waterfalls, mountainous areas, and tropical beaches of paradise. Many episodes of films depict the fantastic places that create private spaces

for romantic couples, where they are away from their family that can control their personal lives, love, romance, and marriage.

Islamic island culture in the Maldives is different from Hindu culture. Nevertheless, Maldivian video clips resemble the way love and eroticism are presented in Indian films and music. These video clips, on the other hand, frequently place love in the beauty of the Maldivian landscape. They portray the turquoise water, the swaying palm trees, and the white sand beaches of the islands (Fulu 2014).

Questions for thought:

Do you know any other metaphors about love as water?

How are the relation of fire and water represented in those metaphor?

Do other languages and cultures have similar or different metaphors about love as water?

You may also be interested in the articles:

[Where do you feel your love?](#)

[Love as a natural force](#)

[Body metaphors of emotions across cultures](#)

[Love-as-fire across European and North American cultures](#)

References

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