

# ROMANTICISM AND ITS VICTIMS

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If you've been in a relationship, you're most likely no stranger to arguments on how one doesn't spend enough time with the other, or complaints from your friends. Regardless of how trivial and miniscule these issues may seem from a myopic viewpoint, there's a larger underlying problem we need to address – romanticism.

An ideology once belonging only to the hearts of poets and artists, it's now conquered the world, fueled by Ted Mosby's never-ending search for love, problematic rom-coms, and pop culture's inability to portray love as it is. Transforming world views on marriage and children, it now ironically poses a threat to relationships. There's this burdening expectation to be in constant contact with our significant others, from morning texts so we can start the day with their presence, to ditching hangouts with friends to go on dates. Long phone calls in the nights so we can watch the sun rise together; love dependent on the shaky hands of Wi-Fi and service providers. Anything otherwise would lead to one party believing the other doesn't



love them enough, and then you can grab some popcorn and watch the fight unfold. This expectation only works to amplify existing insecurities and make relationships uncomfortable – time spent together should be on the basis of enjoyment and comfort, not to meet a demand that detrimental to the mental health of the two. By encouraging codependency, you encounter the pitfalls of romanticism.

But it's more than just that – we are now expected to completely accept the other person, to worship the flaws, to see heaven in their eyes when they're at their worst. We are to don our rose-tinted glasses and overlook the red flags. The idea that two people aren't going to meet all of the other's demands, or that change and adjustment will be required is shunned by romanticists. "You need to change"

is now a last ditch effort, not something that should be addressed in the relationship early on. So we have a generation of people trying to find love in each other, believing that in each other they'll find their world, the same shared core beliefs on intimacy and love. It's impractical to pretend that one person will understand you fully, without words even being said, but with romanticism in the picture, that is exactly what masses of people now believe; that through intuition and love, we've now harnessed the ability to look into the eyes of our dear ones and understand their woes completely. With romanticism, we are expected to not know loneliness, our lover now the solution to problems we are supposed to deal with ourselves. As a result, we have a deeply troubled generation struggling with relationships, unable to understand where they went wrong.

When questioning romanticism, it is not to destroy or mock love; it is to save it from itself. Maybe one day in the cinema halls or under your sheets, watching Netflix, you'll run into a rom-com where a romanticist new to the idea of love falls for a skeptic, one who understands all that's written above.

## THE (DIS)UNITED IDENTITY

### A torn fan-base desperately wanting the club to listen

RUMMAN R KALAM

Pages after pages have been written about Manchester United's failure to do even the most basic of footballing things -- like buying defenders to replace Rio Ferdinand and Nemanja Vidic instead of getting another left winger. If Ed Woodward is indeed solely responsible for our transfer shortcomings, then he has been nothing more than a child playing FIFA Ultimate Team with his father's credit card.

However, all clubs go through periods of great upheaval. But the sheer toxicity of the fanbase is no better than Woodward's transfer policy. Our transfer budgets have not been an issue in recent years and it's also a strange thing that no matter the player we buy, they underperform. Managers also underperform after their honeymoon phase is over. Maybe Manchester United as an organisation is underperforming and it's all trickling down onto the pitch. Even the best professionals can't perform to their fullest in a dysfunctional environment.

While the fans are wasting their precious data discussing Alderweireld vs Koulibaly, we as a club have lost our sense of identity from both sides of the pitch. United was never about throwing money at the cup until we win. We always had one or two marquee signings every year (Carrick, Berbatov, van Persie) and that too would be one of the best players in the Premier League. Our focus would always be on the wonderkids we signed. Things are different now. The fans think they are makeshift scouts with their ScoutNation videos, FIFA stats and Football Manager databases. There's a wealth of information available that can make any player look good if you know the right stats to pick. A lot goes behind a transfer that makes our internet "research" look like a child's analysis.

The infighting is even worse. There was the entire



#MourinhoOut debacle that alienated a large chunk of the fanbase who were Mou fans. After the string of bad results following the win against PSG, newly appointed manager Ole Gunnar Solskjær is now under fire from a set of fans who think that Mourinho should have never been fired. This is all understandable. The club navigating the league in such rudderless fashion makes us fans feel helpless and from this frustration, we've been acting out against each other – trying to be the one who's in the right. And that's the saddest part, we're desperately looking for something... anything that is going right with this club.

One good thing is that there is a way for us fans to voice our concerns. Rather than fighting with each other

or trying to force the club into doing specific actions like buying certain players, we could simply unite in our agreement that whoever is running the club, has no idea how football works. The #UnfollowManUnited movement is about unfollowing all of United's social media platforms to show dissatisfaction towards the club that fans feel. Since United is a global brand now and recent years have shown that they are more interested in lifting revenue figures than cups, if enough people join, this will have a noticeable effect. In essence, the movement asks you to stop giving any attention to United as a brand.

At the end of the day, fans arguing with each other about United won't make any difference. If anything, it'll work as a distraction against a backdrop of bigger issues.