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Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9sd900g8

Journal

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Publication Date

2013

DOI

10.5070/B84110066

Copyright Information

Peer reviewed

Essay

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Loving Whiteness to Death: Sadomasochism, Emotionality, and the Possibility of Humanizing Love

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Abstract

Although scholars have articulated how whites institutionally, economically, and socially invest in their whiteness, they have paid little attention to white emotionality. By explicating a critical, more humanizing theory of love that accounts for the painful process of sharing in the burden of creating humanity, this psychoanalytic theoretical essay illustrates how the norms and values of white emotionality are premised on a sadomasochistic notion of love. Finally, the authors re-imagine a different set of norms and values through a critical humanizing pedagogy of love, one that can only be realized when whites learn to "love whiteness to death." That is, whites need to find not just the political will but also the emotional strength (i.e., vulnerability) necessary to eliminate the white race as a sociopolitical form of human organization and free themselves and others from the shackles of the institution of race.

Key Words: critical whiteness studies, critical race theory, love, humanity, sadomasochism, whiteness, education, sociology, cultural studies, critical theory, women's studies, whiteness studies, social psychology

In the Beginning: What's Love Got to Do With It?

What's love got to do, got to do with it
What's love, but a second-hand emotion
What's love got to do, got to do with it
Who needs a heart, when a heart can be broken
——Britten & Lyle, 1984

According to critics, the emotion of love is dismissed because it is seen as merely an irrational sentiment left unquantifiable, unobjective, and useless in terms of evaluating the social lay of the land. And as society-at-large prematurely lays such a verdict on love, we have yet to understand that these negative depictions are evidence of a patriarchal and

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To motherscholars and critical scholars of race: May your feelings of academic loneliness be recognized, felt, and never be in vain. Remember, you are never alone.

racist lens unable to lift itself from the depths of love's connotations. That is, heterosexual white men, blinded by their privilege in maleness, heterodominance, and whiteness, have analyzed and interpreted love in their favor for so long that the true gravity of love as a social force gets overlooked. We argue that society should reject dominant notions of love, which are overly romanticized, and instead embrace a *humanizing love*, one where those involved in personal or collective relationships give love so as to foster the mutual growth and healing of one another depending on their respective relational needs within traumatizing systems of oppression (Fromm, 1956/2000). While the act of loving is vital, it is so because of the ontological human necessity for feeling loved (Fromm, 1956/2000).

Seen in a new light, love becomes a formidable, rational, and powerful frame of analysis for interpreting whites' emotional investment in whiteness. Often minimized, emotions are as key to political life as ideologies (Boler, 1999). We have feelings about what we think; our thoughts are not detached from our bodies. We have passions that drive us to connect or not connect, to engage or not engage, and to respond or not respond. And these feelings are not simply innate or natural. They are constructed politically through social interactions. We are taught that some emotions are appropriate and some should be repressed. The emotions of some are belittled, and the emotions of others are taken as normal or exemplary. Some passionately feel the pain when they hear about another child of color beat or shot by police, while others seemingly feel nothing. As Raymond Williams (1978) notes, there are structures of feeling that regulate the emotional world in favor of domination. In this article, we look at a particular structure of feeling, that of love and whiteness. We seek to explicate not only how whites feel about being white, but also where the emotions of whites, or *white emotionality*, emanate from and what the consequences are for both whites and people of color. If race is a social construction, as most believe, then there must also be an emotional dimension that binds those who become racialized as white to one another. To better understand whiteness, it is essential to venture into this emotional world of whiteness, for ir/rationality alone cannot explain its persistence. Reason detached from feeling cannot adequately tell us why whites emotionally labor on behalf of the white race to produce not only tangible laws, policies, and systemic advantages but also an en-whitened structure of feeling. The social and political construction of white emotionality is just as real, complex, and problematic as are social constructions of patriarchal masculinity (hooks, 2004). A critical study of white emotionality thus looks at how the patterns, sources, and rules of feelings can be examined to deconstruct the normative expressions, understandings, and definitions of emotions, such as love, among white folks.

Furthermore, to more fully interrupt normative notions of love (see Sumara & Davis, 1999), we must entertain a more womanist definition because the womanist approach is grounded in the politicization of the tenderness, duty, and womanly strength found in Black feminists or feminists of color who resist against racism, sexism, and classism (Collins, 1989; James, 1999; Walker, 1983). Walker (1983) argues that a womanist is "committed to survival and wholeness of entire people[s]" (p. xi). A womanist approach goes beyond an emotional self-indulgence in feeling feelings. Rather, in a womanist understanding, emotions are more politicized because, in feeling these emotions, we can understand the possibilities of bettering humanity. Womanism is a counterspace where

women of color recover from internalized racism and patriarchy by relearning to love themselves so they feel self-love. Love is seemingly an integral emotion of womanist thought. And although scholars in this field have not clearly defined it, love in this discourse underlies emotions, like "caring," that serve as proxies for love. For instance, Beauboeuf-LaFontant (2002) argues that there is a distinct womanist definition of caring in teaching teachers that "embraces the maternal, political clarity, and an ethic of risk" (p. 71) and "seeks the liberation of all" (p. 72) through a transformation of schooling. In our inquiry into love, we seek to disrupt social constructions that limit how we believe we feel and express love, especially with regards to race and patriarchy. In moving beyond the white supremacist patriarchal social imaginary, society should also be committed to experiencing a loving, painful process toward birthing a newly liberated social world.

While we concur that feelings of hatred, apathy, greed, and fear are important emotional dimensions of white racism, we argue that an exclusive emphasis on them constitutes a normative discourse on white emotionality that minimizes love and takes for granted its fundamental role in the formation of social group attachments and senses of self and other. We focus on love because it offers the potential of reimagining how we can more genuinely and wholeheartedly engage in antiracist practices. Since plenty of existing antiracist literature focuses, both explicitly and implicitly, on the roles of fear (Galindo & Vigil, 2006), apathy (Forman, 2004), hatred (Godfrey, 2004), and greed (Lipsitz, 1998), it behooves us to entertain how the analytical power of a critical theory of love can benefit antiracist education. After all, fear, apathy, hatred, and greed are not human needs, but love is. Thus love is more deeply motivational. Essentially, we contend that the emotional aspects of whites' commitment to whiteness, specifically their understanding of loving whiteness and, ultimately, the white race, plays a major motivational role in perpetuating a system of white domination. Much like Tina Turner's query, "What's love got to do with it?", we wonder what does love, or its distortion, have to do with how whites refuse to undo their unhealthy racial coalition and unjust structural power? Are white commitments to the white race born out of love or some other psychic condition? Or said differently, is the white race a loving community, one that grows love for both whites and people of color? For if the ontological opposite of love, hope, and humanity is apathy, despair, and monstrosity, then nowhere is the study of love more crucial than in theoretical postulations about whites' loveless membership in the white race and phobia of the painful possibility of finding love beyond whiteness.

In documenting the bad romance between whites and their whiteness, this theoretical and psychoanalytical essay expands Erich Fromm's (1956/2000) critical theory of love. Although educational scholars have employed love in various ways (see Duncan-Andrade, 2009; hooks, 1995, 2001), we take particular interest in Fromm's psychoanalytic framing of love because he critiques normative theories of it. Additionally, Fromm's portraiture of the sadist and masochist dynamic provides a framework to understand the kinds of distortions of love that womanism deconstructs. In this article, we move readers through three stages. First, we employ a normative inquiry (Berman, 1991) by using Fromm to critique seemingly "commonsense" norms and values of love, arguing instead that educators should take up a critical theory of love that emphasizes the role of humanization in undoing systems of oppression (see Darder, 2002; hooks, 2001). Because Fromm's theory lacks a critique of patriarchy and white supremacy, we also

employ a womanist theory to reinterpret his work. Second, we vulnerably apply his critique of love onto our own love narratives as authors to model and showcase self-reflexive interrogations, ones that take up a method that applies both emotion and reason and that embarrassingly acknowledge normative social constructions of our own meaning making and practices. By doing so, we enable readers to feel, rather than just think about, the importance of love in our everyday lives as we interpret it through a more womanist Frommean approach. Finally, we overlay critical concepts of love onto an analysis of white emotionality, unveiling why whites emotionally invest in whiteness despite the possibility of experiencing a fuller love predicated on refuting whiteness. Borrowing from Fromm, we further postulate that a process of sadomasochism operates when whites refuse to leave whiteness rather than choosing to "love whiteness to death," an act that would liberate them from their necrophilic existence and better fulfill their needs for actual love.

What is Love?

What is love?
Baby, don't hurt me
Don't hurt me, no more
—Halligan & Torello, 1993

Some may be surprised to hear that there are scholars who debate the social meaning of love. After all, isn't love something that just happens and we "fall into" it? Doesn't making it into an academic subject ruin its thrill and mystery? These may seem like commonsense reactions, but the real, everyday experiences many of us have with love tells us that the quest to feel loved is often elusive, infuriating, and even traumatizing. To lessen its opaqueness, we need to examine the existing patterns associated with love and unearth their social meaning. By excavating the ways that normative notions of love construct our un/conscious, we may reveal meaningful implications for how we think about both personal and social relationships. To begin, we need to explore the problematic relationship between two types of love: romantic and humanizing.

Media popularize our understanding of love. Consider, for example, how the love industry thrives because our normative notion of romantic love keeps us willing to pay for answers. Despite gross characterizations of "Disneyfied" (Giroux, 1994) love in romantic comedies, the public's Hollywood obsession over who will be the next "Brangelina," and skyrocketing sales of romance products that enhance, impart, or deflect love, we have yet to truly consider the gravity love has on human relations beyond a flirty wink and a happily-ever-after. Consider the *New York Times* #1 Bestseller, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*, by Dr. Gary Chapman (2010). Chapman describes what he sees as the most pressing issue of love. That is, one just needs to understand the five "love languages" (i.e., receiving gifts, quality time, physical touch, words of affirmation, and acts of service) which are essential in supporting the feeling of being loved in a relationship. Love, according to Chapman, simply is about learning one another's love language for the sole purpose of ensuring that our "emotional tanks" remain full. In this view, love is an object or a commodity that can be poured into our emotional tanks by another. His imaginary would have us believe that our sense of

feeling full of love depends on little more than some internal fluctuating tank in need of continual filling in order for us to feel superficially better. Chapman does not reveal why the tank is in need of continual refilling or entertain the social and political conditions that might cause this mysterious dissipation.

Hooks (2001) notably contributed to the love industry when she wrote a national bestseller on finding various kinds of love while positing that love itself is more an action than an emotion. But, positing love as primarily an action overshadows the importance of feeling loved. After all, one can claim to do loving acts, but how loving are these acts if the objects of these acts do not feel it? Also one may seemingly do loving acts for others, who do not feel loved, or they may believe that they feel love when, in fact, what they feel is something less positive. Therefore, knowing what constitutes love is important before we determine what appropriate actions are necessary to feel it and understand how it can be either distorted or transformed. Additionally, hooks states that "love allows us to enter a paradise" (p. 147), yet it is this type of depiction that we critique. The antinomy of love and pain are never completely resolvable, since there is no outside to such a fundamental psychic conflict (see Britzman, 1998). What we can do is seek out ways of understanding this antinomy that give us a better understanding of our un/conscious. Since the maternal is present in womanism, we find it beneficial for creating a womanist definition that builds on how most mothers experience a humanizing love upon the expected painful labor process, and ultimate birth, of her child (see Darder, 1998). That is, rather than aiming to enter paradise, mothers who willfully experience the burden of mothering and labor illustrate a womanist humanizing love. From a womanist perspective, love is an emotion, tied up with pain and struggle that positively binds the humanity of one person to another. It can be employed in a process for liberating humanity when given proper consideration of its magnitude.

In contrast to Chapman or hooks's conceptualizations of love, those engaged in a humanizing love do not feel either the fear of "needing to be filled" or "entering paradise," because the potentiality of humanizing love is a constant state of fullness. A truly humanizing love exists when both entities contribute to the growth and development of the other. Through this type of fusion, each loves the other as they would love humanity itself. In loving humanity and feeling a part of that humanity, there never exists a state of our separation from that humanity. Humanizing love is not a privatized, masculinized commodity framed by conditional love. Rather, it is similar to how a mother will never run out of love for her child. Therefore, those oriented toward humanizing love should never feel the need to refill their "love tank" because our mere existence as humanized beings provides an unconditional love as our baseline. That is, I love so that you feel loved, and our feeling of love intimately connects us as human beings. Conversely, when you hurt, I hurt, yet our hurt is felt only because we love.

One of our main suggestions in this essay is that we need a more critical analysis of normative constructions of love. We need to excavate the values of our everyday feelings of love and consider whether they bring us closer to humanization or make us more dehumanized. As mentioned above, our critical theorization of love builds largely upon the work of Erich Fromm, a prominent figure of the Frankfurt School. While Fromm's *The Art of Loving* (1956/2000) is his most popular book on love, we also draw heavily from *Escape from Freedom* (1941/1994) because it connects love to a deep

psychoanalysis of society. Fromm (1956/2000) posits that most "loving" relationships are not loving. He asserts that upon birth we long for the connectedness we experienced with our mothers in the womb. We spend our lives looking for that same type of unconditional, nurturing love. It is a primal, motivational force. Without this love, we are prone to feeling alone, a severe consequence of lovelessness. As Fromm (1941/1994) puts it, "To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death" (p. 17). Growing up in large-scale, bureaucratic systems of domination, humans are under great pressure to overcome aloneness by giving up their individuality to submit to the socially constructed world. Our modern societies are fundamentally structured around conflict between groups, with one amalgamation actively seeking to dominate the others (see Bell, 1992; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Collins, 1979). To do otherwise means that "one stands alone and faces the world in all its perilous and overpowering aspects" (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 29). Although modern forms of "democracy" promote the notion of individual freedom, the reality is that people are left to deal with their fundamental issues of love on their own, leaving many feeling isolated and full of anxiety; love is neither seen as a matter of public concern nor as an underlying force of everyday social practice.

So how do individuals respond to this structure psychologically? How does the social psychology of individuals, who are socially and politically organized into groups, influence how they enact their agency on a micro level? Love drives us to care about ourselves and others and to create happiness and wellbeing for all. Or at least it should. However, in our current societal context, where domination is a driving force, the quest for individuality and the fundamental need for love are distorted. Rather than dealing with the daily "burdens" of freedom (i.e., communing authentically with all of humanity, not limiting ourselves by our phobias and false notions of self and Other), people often "escape from freedom" by dealing with their fear of being alone through conformity to societal and group norms. People then minimize their individual selves, choosing instead an inauthentic connection to others, and to humanity as a whole, as a way of resolving their painful feelings of separateness. This means that we are often unable to create healthy, loving relationships, and we opt instead for what Fromm describes as "sadomasochistic" relationships. Although many think of sadomasochism solely as a descriptor for certain sexual behavior, the term is also a way of referring to the normative unequal power dynamics of human relationships, which may or may not involve sexual intercourse. Relationships between co-workers, family members, teachers and students, and lovers, for example, can all be scrutinized for their sadomasochistic tendencies, a dynamic that womanism reveals in its naming of everyday misogyny.

Sadomasochistic relationships arise from a neurotic compulsion that is as much social (i.e., structural) as psychological. Neurosis is social in that it is a psychic pain born of individual and group responses to their socialization in a system of domination. Those who opt out from the burden of freedom and who have been socialized into the ways of dealing inauthentically with others, develop phobias, anxiety disorders, and other mental and social disorders because they have learned to deny who they really are, choosing instead the social role that has been ascribed to them (Fromm, 1941/1994). Macro public discourses and technologies and micro interactions and bodily surveillance are ways neuroses are socially inculcated. According to Fromm (1941/1994), "In neurotic strivings

one acts from a compulsion which has essentially a negative character: to escape an unbearable situation" (p. 153). In a sadomasochistic relationship, two neurotic entities, the sadist and the masochist, compulsively fuse to overcome their aloneness, their "unbearable situation," and they do so in a way that furthers the damaging effects of the social structure since individual thoughts and actions are central to the structuration of society (see Giddens, 1984).

The sadistic individual connects through the domination of another. The sadist seeks to create an attachment with a submissive follower whom they can control. The masochist in the relationship addresses his or her fear of aloneness by attaching via the worship of an idol, allowing him or herself to be controlled by the sadistic partner.

> [T]he masochistic strivings are caused by the desire to get rid of the individual self with all its shortcomings, conflicts, risks, doubts, and unbearable aloneness, but they only succeed in removing the most noticeable pain or they even lead to greater suffering. The irrationality of masochism, as of all other neurotic manifestations, consists in the ultimate futility of the means adopted to solve an untenable emotional situation. (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 153)

Masochists doubt their capabilities. They give up the freedom to decide for themselves, be responsible for their own fate, and contribute creatively to the betterment of humanity, all in the name of their compulsion not to be alone.

Essentially, both the masochist and sadist are dehumanized, such as when women (masochists) and men (sadists) are dehumanized in patriarchy. The masochists believe they need the sadists to survive. The sadists come to believe that they can only be loved by those who are willing to submit to their control, for they need their "object just as much as the masochist needs his [sic]" (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 157). Believing at some level that they, both the sadist and masochist, are unlovable, they do not believe they deserve the love of those who are more prone to humanizing practices of love. Hatred, greed, apathy, and fear arise from the mire of this psychosocial condition. The sadist and the masochist do not learn how to love on equal human terms, which, given our different situations in hierarchical systems of oppression, means we need to learn to love differently from our unequal locations. Fromm (1956/2000) states that the sadomasochistic relation is a "fusion without integrity" (p. 19). Unlike sadomasochistic relations, those in a humanizing relation give love to nurture and strengthen the other depending on their situated and relative needs. This creates a state of self-love in that the self, as a lover of humanity, becomes an active giver of healing rather than a self that passively waits for its love tank to be filled.

Fromm (1941/1994) goes on to argue that these notions of love apply to group relations in systems of oppression. The relationship between oppressor and oppressed is sadomasochistic. As Freire (1970/1993) informs us, "Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human" (p. 26). One needs only to think here of Albert Memmi's (1965) classic depiction of the colonizer and the colonized. The oppressor seeks to connect through the submission of another, whereas the oppressed is often dehumanized to the point where he or she is resigned, fatalistically, to exist within the relationship. Conformity to the oppressor group means

that one must take on a narrowly defined and distorted identity, make a kinship with others who have chosen privilege over justice, and mask over the original self that did not, at the start of life, see itself apart from the rest of humanity. The kinship of the oppressor group is not one based on love. Rather, it is based on the surveillance of one another to uphold group norms and status interests (see Foucault, 1995). Some group members sadistically surveil the group's ideology in its members, whereas those who are surveilled in this way often masochistically submit to this bankrupt relationship for fear of an unbearable condition of aloneness upon being shunned from the group. To illuminate, hooks (2004) relates this type of submission to patriarchy when she describes how her own brother gave up his freedom to express emotions. She claims he did so to "be accepted as 'one of the boys'" and for which he has paid a psychic price (p. 12).

Another aspect of Fromm's analysis is how neurosis is normatively articulated as an aberrant personality disorder. In common discourse, most of society is positioned as "healthy" to the extent that they are able to conform to the functional order of things (Habermas, 1989). Fromm (1941/1994) suggests that this discourse hides the general neurosis of mainstream society: "From a standpoint of human values . . . a society could be called neurotic in the sense that its members are crippled [sic] in the growth of their personality" (p. 138-139). For instance, hooks (2004) points out that "patriarchy promotes insanity," because "it is at the root of the psychological ills troubling men in our nation" (p. 30). According to Fromm (1941/1994), those who are, in the normative lens, seen as "mentally stable" are "well adapted only at the expense of having given up his [sic] self in order to become more or less the person he believes he is expected to be" (p. 138). This process of becoming something one is really not in order to sadomasochistically fuse and overcome the unbearable feeling of aloneness produces pain because "[w]hether or not we are aware of it, there is nothing of which we are more ashamed than of not being ourselves" (p. 261).

Having ensnared oneself in the illusory trap of claiming to love freedom while, at the same time, pretending to be something one is not (e.g., a "superior" being such as a "white"), the person of the oppressor group will respond neurotically to any attempts to expose this farce. When challenged with the realities of the social order that are plain for others to see, the neurotic oppressor group member will respond with defensiveness, anger, denial, absurdities, false or distorted facts, and other forms of deflection (Allen, 2004; Allen & Rossatto, 2009; Gonsalves, 2008). For example, it is not uncommon for men to exhibit *random tantrums* when their patriarchal views are challenged (hooks, 2004). Individuals of oppressor groups make these moves compulsively to squelch the shameful dissonance between their idealized beliefs and the knowledge of their actual actions. On the surface, many may attribute these behaviors to fear, hatred, greed, and apathy and not pay much attention at all to the underlying motivational role of the repressed desire for love.

We should not be surprised that neurotic behaviors are commonplace in classrooms, where critical theories are used to challenge dominant ideologies and unjust power. These theories seek to reveal what many students' egos cannot tolerate knowing; hence, their egos react defensively (Britzman, 1998). In fact, there is a litany of educational research documenting the neurotic resistance of students to critical curricula in the classroom (see De Jesus, 2004; Gonsalves, 2008; Matias, 2012, Williams & Evans-Winter, 2005). For

example, Gonsalves (2008) interprets dominant-group students' (i.e., white students') resistance to multicultural and antiracist education. He argues, "From a psychoanalytic perspective, resistance can be viewed as a defense of an ego subsumed by dominant social norms" (p. 13). This is similar to how the white ego is subsumed, unconsciously, by its sadomasochistic relationship with whiteness. Therefore, getting in touch with this unconsciousness requires critical reflection that will be both ideological and emotional. As such, a critical praxis of love pedagogically becomes a powerful form of critical reflection in education.

In applying Fromm to a radicalized pedagogy, we understand how a critical praxis of love is born of a painful process. It requires the risk of isolation because succumbing to the "fear of isolation often acts as the mechanism to prevent males [in patriarchy] from becoming emotionally aware" (hooks, 2004, p. 71). It is about the creation of freedom and justice in a social system where either hardly exist. It is about taking a serious, critical look at what one is getting out of his or her social identity groups. For those of oppressor groups, it is about self-enlisting in a painful process of learning how one contributes to the sadistic infliction of trauma on others. It is also about coming to terms with how being a part of an oppressor group and participating in their sadomasochism is traumatic to them such that they "forfeit their chance to be happy" (hooks, p. 73). Learning to replace dehumanization with love, a love that pays forward with further and further humanization of all, is the goal. And, it may require those of oppressor groups to love enough to walk away from their groups altogether in order to build more loving social arrangements and new forms of social being (Allen, 2011). They need to take a chance on real love, that is, fusion *with* integrity, rather than to submit to its opposite: sadomasochism. The more members of the oppressor group take this action, the less powerful is the coalition that gives the oppressor group its power (Allen, 2008). In the end, the essential sadomasochistic basis of the oppressor group can only be rectified through the dissolution of the group itself, for that group was formed on unjust and unloving premises.

To summarize, love is not readily understood. It is often distorted in ways that perpetuate systems of oppression. Before rushing to commit acts of love, we need to interrogate feelings of love critically in order to gauge whether or not they are authentically humanizing. In other words, we need to examine love's unconscious. We need to move beyond notions of love caught up in sadomasochistic interpretations of personal relationships as well as of social relationships between oppressor and oppressed groups. Since most relationships, whether between individuals or groups, are sadomasochistic, we need to pay attention to what drives this and how to interrupt it. The drive to escape from freedom, to give up one's humanity in order to deal negatively with aloneness and the fear of rejection, has a price. One must pretend to be something he or she is not—for example, a "superior" being—to gain a sense of belonging and material benefits. To fuse without integrity creates a deep sense of conflict about one's sense of self; at the least, a shame that manifests in neurotic ways. This psychosocial condition becomes part of the collective unconscious of dominator groups (i.e., whites), which underlies an ego that agrees to misrecognize the world and deny itself humanizing love.

How Deep is Your Love?

How deep is your love
How deep is your love
I really need to learn
'Cause we're living in a world of fools
Breakin' us down
When they all should let us be
We belong to you and me
                —Gibb & Gibb, 1977

Before we begin the specific analysis of love in white emotionality, we will first vulnerably apply Fromm's (1941/1994, 1956) critique of love to our own social constructions of love. We do so to illuminate possibilities of how something as intimate as our emotions of love are nonetheless influenced by structures of race, gender, and class. We illustrate how a critical theory of love can illuminate the meanings of our everyday lives. The fear of aloneness, of taking the risk of loving freedom enough to experience alienation, runs deep in many, and it drives people to do things and commit to things that are not loving, though they may tell themselves otherwise. In other words, romanticized love produces much misery and self-destruction, not to mention that it is an emotional reification for reproducing violent and hurtful social systems. After all, those who truly love would not stand for oppressive relations. They would have to do something about it or else lose integrity. And, they would be willing to risk aloneness. We hope our readers find commonalities, or points of departure, to reflect upon their own love stories. Matias offers her story in the next section. Allen offers his in the following section. We return to a unified voice after these sections.

Love, an American Born Heteronormed Motherscholar of Color.

Growing up in America, I dreamt of love. I dreamt of Prince Charming and running towards each other in slow motion with soft background music. *He* was the "one" who would use his last breath to profess his love for me before sinking into the dark, cold ocean abyss or save me with a kiss that would wake me up from a life-threatening slumber. Expanding Henry Giroux's (1994) critique of Disneyfication, this notion of heteronormed love was not organic; rather, it was co-constructed by images, films, and messages delivered by mass media. From "You had me at hello" to "Aaaaaas youuuuuu wiiiiiiish," my concept of love was not only corporately manipulated, just as whiteness is corporately manipulated (Vera & Gordon, 2003), but it was also unrealistic. In fact, so unrealistic was my concept of love that it left me living in a perpetual state of disappointment where I searched for what I only thought was love. Yet, nothing mirrored that superhuman, glamorized love so subliminally taught to me. Despite disappointment, I refused to let go of the dream of overly romanticized love because it made me feel as if I were a part of something grander than my mere human existence, like a cosmic connection to another human being. Even if my subscription to such a dream meant living in a painful reality that would never produce such kinds of love, I latched onto it masochistically, for letting go meant to relinquish what I thought I knew about myself, my behaviors, and my emotions that responded to what I believed was love.

Refusing to let go hindered my opportunities to feel a humanizing love precisely because I thought I would be left alone in finding a new meaning of it. Consistent with Fromm, my identity was inextricably bound by the social construction of romantic love that was nonetheless wrought with masochistic subtleties. Yet, I engaged in this sadomasochistic relationship with a socially constructed notion of romantic love because what else was I to latch onto if the alternative was unknown? I was ashamed to hold onto a definition that I knew was a falsity, but I refused to let go because I feared the unknown.

It was not until I decided to have children that I mustered the courage to begin a process of re-understanding love from a womanist perspective, one wrought with expecting pain, sacrifice, and duty, and locating strength in my tears and commitment to my unborn twins. Like womanists, I learned to embrace my maternal and felt pain as a woman of color. Simply put, I started to learn how to love myself again and take charge in redefining that love. Upon the expected birth of my twins, I could no longer selfishly put this humanizing love aside despite my fear of not fully understanding it. So I had a choice. I could have recycled the over-importance placed on romantic love and minimized humanizing love but doing so would have subjected my twins to my own false sense of love. Instead, I modeled for them the courage it takes to learn anew. For me, a humanizing love became more than a string of happy, self-gratifying moments wrought with physical and emotional superficiality. Love, like when a mother loves her unborn child, cuts deeper than the surface glow of excitement. In this deepness, a humanizing love flourishes because it requires one to take a painful stance to better humanity despite facing embarrassment, guilt, shame, or fear. Womanist theory acknowledges, that love, like caring, is not simply interpersonal but profoundly political in intent and practice.

Personalizing the politics of taking a stance for humanizing love, I refused to prematurely deliver my unborn twins despite months of bed rest. That is, instead of subscribing to patriarchy's egocentrism, I reclaimed my inner womanist identity by embracing a maternal ideology that accounts for the care of others. During this time, my muscles atrophied, and I could no longer walk or use the restroom alone. I was told in advance that this would happen. Yet, despite the pending pain, I willfully underwent this process because I trusted that such a painful and fearful journey would help me learn a more humanizing love that extended beyond my superficial understanding. I knew deep in my gut that this was not about love for myself, but the love my children should have and what I could learn from that process of placing love beyond one's self. Such a sentiment parallels the politicizing of womanist identity because the search for equity and justice goes beyond the self and into a community. Regardless of the fear of an unknown future and identity, I actualized a humanizing love the moment I first held my newborn twins. Hence, my understanding of love goes deeper than the yearn for physical beauty, finding my Prince Charming, or engulfing myself in fantastical, overly-romanticized notions of love that sadistically entrapped me in a reality unable to allow the fruition of such a dream. For me, a humanizing love means to willingly engage in a renewed process of understanding what love is and to learn how that love is rich with pain, loss, fear, selflessness, hope, solace, and humanity.

Being introduced to a more humanizing love, I am now better able to fully love another being. Instead of focusing on the needs and wants that are corporately dictated by what I believe I am physically, materially, and/or emotionally lacking, I have learned that

my pain, tears, sacrifices, and isolation are essential components for another to feel loved (see Beauboeuf-LaFontant, 2002; Knight, 2004; Said, 2002). Love, then, is truly a cosmic connection when it is inextricably tied to how your love is felt by others and how they, in turn, express it further. To illuminate, I feel a humanizing love when I see my twins holding hands or kissing the forehead of their newborn cousin. The love was not about my feeling better. Rather, it was about how I modeled humanizing love and how, in turn, others feel and express love beyond me. The true cosmicality of love is simply knowing that your love is beyond you, breathing life into the womanist commitment to shared responsibility. This is exactly the same philosophy I bring into my teaching. When recognizing resistance, I see students entrapped in a dehumanizing ideology and psychosocial state. In order to liberate their minds, I must first work with them to liberate their hearts. As painful as the process is to not give up on resistant students, I see humanizing love as a process of paying forward to those who have yet to be liberated.

I Found Love in a Hopeless Place.

I, too, was taught a corporate, patriarchal, white supremacist, heteronormative ideology of love. As a white heterosexual male from the Midwest, I was supposed to play the role of "Prince Charming." To fulfill my potential beyond my socially-ascribed identities, I learned that I needed to have "game," a fat wallet, rockin' abs, and a flare for romance. Like George Bailey in the Christmas-time classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*, I learned I had to be the superhero and lasso the moon for my girl. After all, that is what I was told that straight women wanted. They wanted the dream, the fairytale of having all of those material possessions that define success in capitalistic America. I had bought into the dream myself. In this way, the American dream and the dream of love were one in the same. It was what I was supposed to desire. And, I did. Thus, my sense of self was wrapped up in trying to be the one who could make the dream come true. To do otherwise would mean failure. Worse, it would mean that I am unlovable because love is accrued like capital—only under certain relational conditions.

But as a heterosexual male, I was not taught to desire "love" per se, not even the romanticized version. It was not something that I dreamt about as a child, nor was it something I spent much time discussing with anyone. I learned to perceive love as feminine and repress any conscious expressions of a desire for love. Since I had chosen to accept my socialization into a normative masculine role, I rejected deeper notions of love that might cast me as being feminine. My inculcation into patriarchy, into playing the normative role of sadist, was underway. Being a Prince Charming, at least in the male supremacist version of the story, did not mean creating love. It meant getting the "hot" girl to fall for you by any means necessary, including exploiting her insecurities. After all, "all is fair in love and war." And by her falling for you, and your marrying her, you would not be alone. Love was not about mutual growth and healing in the face of the traumas of systemic oppression and sadomasochistic norms. Love was conquest with the vacuous emotional reward of avoiding aloneness. So I learned to desire the absence of aloneness. Becoming a white heterosexual man meant always having someone else there who was loyal and faithful. The goal was not necessarily to feel some overwhelming sense of love for her, although that kind of talk existed in normative discourse, which painted love as a kind of mysterious presence. The greater, most tangible goal was to not

feel alone, that is, to desire a kind of fusion without integrity. Loyalty, faithfulness, and trust were tied to the seemingly essential need to not be without someone. In short, I learned to fear aloneness more than I learned to fearlessly love.

This was the algorithm of a Match.com notion of love that I had internalized. Physical attraction, mundane compatibility, and sharing common interests were all that were required, since the end game was to avoid the fear of being unattached and, moreover, of not being an "alpha male." Love was not the equivalent of success. Rather, in white supremacist capitalist terms, "success," as normatively defined, gave love its (distorted) meaning. For a few decades, I was rather lost when it came to love. When I was a young man, I sought women who, like me, had adhered to the romanticized dream. Consciously or not, I was seeking sadomasochistic relationships. I wanted whatever it was that this mysterious love was supposed to give me, so long as it included the American dream. Later, as I grew critical of the corporatized, en-whitened version of love, I sought those who also seemed critical. Yet, I still did not know what love was, and neither did they. I only knew that the dominant story about love was full of holes. Without a different, more critical theory of love, I oscillated back and forth between hating the normative imaginary of love and hating myself for not being able to fulfill its romanticized promise, which was a promise also connected to realizing the benefits of my maleness, heterosexualness, and whiteness. To be honest, I had given up on the whole notion of love, at least as I understood it at the time. Yet, I continued to pursue it compulsively. Something was wrong, but I did not know exactly what it was or why I could not figure it out.

My understanding of love began to change significantly when I took up antiracism as a personal and professional calling and became a professor. The academy can be an isolating environment. For those of us who identify as critical theorists, especially those of us who challenge whiteness while inside the "ivory tower," the aloneness of the academy can be bone-crunching. The political battles over the curriculum, research agendas, and institutional policy leave many wounds. And an academic's desire to read and write mean even more time spent alone, at least when one finds the time for it. In the comfort of writing about one's ideas, the critical academic can imagine a new world with fair and just forms of connectivity. But realizing these possibilities in the institutions in which we work is another matter. The sad fact is that schools of education are as mired in dominant ideologies and petty turf wars as any other type of educational institution.

I never expected to find a new understanding of love in the academy, in what seemed to be a hopeless place. But to my surprise, my academic work as a white antiracist led me to a new meaning of love. When I was a new professor, I was bold and brash, willing to challenge anyone and say whatever I thought needed to be said to disrupt whiteness. However, many whites (and even some people of color) pushed back. Initially, they discursively policed my ideas. Their surveillance eventually evolved into social shunning and distancing. There were even calculated acts of revenge aimed at getting me to stop what I was doing or leave the institution. I grew more isolated. Some colleagues said sadistically, out of their own projected fears of isolation, "I think you just like being alone." Yet, I did not relent. Although the subsequent isolation and shaming was painful, I persisted because I realized that my love for humanity was greater than my fear of being alone. Eventually, I began to realize that I was not alone after all. There were supportive

students and community members, as well as colleagues around the country, who shared a similar vision and appreciated what I was doing. I had come to see that a truly humanizing project of love requires giving of oneself and not expecting in return. And even if they doubt at times whether this love is true or authentic, as when many people of color may rightfully doubt that my efforts to undo whiteness and racism are legitimate, that is no reason for me to stop loving. Overturning white domination in the world is an enormous, seemingly insurmountable task, yet I pursued it, and I risked the consequences because I chose to love humanity.

Here is what I have learned. A truly humanizing love can be realized once one is ready to accept the pain of isolation. I have learned the radical importance of vulnerability, that is, to be willing to risk feeling pain, to even find beauty in the pain, in order to love humanity, and thus myself, more. In fact, I now understand that pain is a necessary aspect of love. One can love so much it aches, yet not expecting anything in return. I love humanity because it makes me love myself. It helps me combat the sadistic forces of whiteness, capitalism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity that surveil my allegiances, coercing me to masochistically trade my humanity for a false sense of being. To be sure, there is joy to be found in creating a humanizing environment for another, one where they feel complete and unconditional love. I continue to love because that is what I want for humanity. Like my co-author, I am committed to building a type of love that pays forward. In this sense, I strive to be a critical agent of love.

White Love or Bad Romance?

I want your ugly
I want your disease
I want your everything
As long as it's free
I want your love
(Love-love-love I want your love)
   —Germanotta & Khayat, 2009

We now turn to a discussion of the title of this article, "loving whiteness to death." This title suggests that whites seemingly love their whiteness so much that they are willing to undergo a kind of spiritual death to sustain it and reap what they believe are its material and psychic rewards (see Du Bois, 1935). The need for love and the fear of its ontological opposite, aloneness, cultivate a bad romance with whiteness, a sadomasochistic relationship with it. In many ways, Whites willingly and knowingly engage in the surveillance of a racialized social structure that sadistically inflicts harm onto people of color. However, they are largely unconscious to what motivates them to do so. They are disconnected from what Lacan calls "the subject of their unconscious" (as cited in Roseboro, 2008), namely, how they masochistically deny themselves the opportunity to experience humanizing love in the name of white superiority. Rather than dealing with this condition positively by undoing the racist social structure, whites instead repress their racial knowledge, creating psychological defense mechanisms that allow them to continue reaping benefits (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2012; Du Bois, 1903/2005; Fanon, 1967; Leonardo, 2009). As white group members ensure this repression continues

via social operations of surveillance (see Foucault, 1995), whites are instilled with the sense that if they become traitors to whiteness, they will be alone, isolated, and, thus, without love (Thandeka, 1999). Fearing loneliness, whites masochistically cling to the white polity, expecting to find some wholeness and love there.

Facing what they believe to be an unbearable condition, that is, to be without the white "race" and thus alone and racially vulnerable, whites exhibit neurotic behavior when their contradictions are exposed. Living the lie of whiteness, they become angry, defensive, and agitated when the reality of their racial practice is shown to be incongruent with their racial idealism. Nowhere is this more obvious than in their embrace of colorblind ideology. As Bonilla-Silva (2009) has shown, whites articulate the ideals of abstract liberalism; that is, we all ought to live together, go to school together, and intermarry. But they know that, for the most part, they do not actually do these things. Rather than being honest about it, many conjure up stories to distance themselves from taking responsibility. Some common ones that whites say are: "I would send my kids to a school with mostly Black kids, but the curriculum wouldn't be challenging enough, and the schools are just a bit rough around the edges." "I would live next door to a Native American family, but sometimes they don't take care of their property very well." "I love Latinas because they are feisty and full of life, but our cultures are too different for marriage. Plus, it would be too difficult for our mix-raced children." "I believe in diversity in the workplace, but my Filipina boss is just not collaborative with us." These offensive deflections are more than just passive stereotypes or active rhetorical moves. Instead, they are lies produced by a psyche that does not wish to be revealed for all to see. They are behavioral symptoms of the deep shame that whites feel for pretending to be something they are not (i.e., "white") and inflicting pain and trauma onto people of color (see Baldwin, 1999; Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996a). Underneath all protestations about the reality of white privilege, there are the original selves that gave up their independence in order to get the conditional love of the white community, a "love" that remains only if they fall in line with white racial talk and maintain the facade of racial superiority and separateness (Thandeka, 1999).

Applying a theory of humanizing love to whiteness, it becomes clear why whites emotionally invest in whiteness. Just as romanticized love is socially produced with capitalistic or corporate intentions, so, too, are race and racism intertwined with our notions of love. The American dynamics of race produces a state of meaning for people dependent on their racial categorization (Bonilla-Silva, 1996; Collins, 2000; Haney López, 2006). That is, everyone experiences race and makes meaning of it under a system of race, albeit differently. For people of color, an oppressive system of race disenfranchises their stories, experiences, histories, identities, languages, and cultures inasmuch as it propels, highlights, and substantiates those factors for whites (Gilroy, 2000; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Leonardo, 2009).

Just as the authors emotionally adhered to distorted definitions of love for fear of aloneness, whites emotionally invest in the need for whiteness for fear of ostracism. Inherent in this emotional investment is a false sense of belonging, a defensive sense of self-understanding, and a distorted sense of love tied to a group identification. One thinks, I am not alone because my emotional investment in whiteness demonstrates my acceptance into a larger group. However, unrecognized or suppressed is an understanding

of their sadomasochistic relationship with whiteness, which is iterative with a fear of isolation and loneliness that so compels whites to never leave whiteness. In other words, they do not cling to whiteness out of love; rather, they take up whiteness for fear of being expelled and powerless in the face of white racial domination.

If not just for the fear of being lonely, what else compels whites to emotionally latch onto whiteness? Since whiteness is historically, politically, and socially instituted, the social system gives whites little encouragement to leave. For example, if U.S. history (Acuña, 2000; Roediger, 1999; Takaki, 1993), court cases (Haney López, 2006), immigration laws (Haney López, 2006; Pierre, 2004), schooling (Bell, 1980; Lewis, 2003; Love, 2004), and economy (Lipsitz, 1998; Oliver & Shapiro, 1997) all reinforce the superiority of whites and centrality of whiteness, then letting go of whiteness would mean a loss of identity, one built upon such falsities (Matias, 2012). The elusive question of "Who am I?" becomes too much to bear when acknowledging that, in answering such a question, whites must unlearn their emotional investment in whiteness. Such an active agency places a proprietary burden on whites, a historical burden that has been shouldered on the backs of people of color for far too long. More recently, whites' admonition of racial ignorance, or colorblindness, to one another has left people of color with the burden of revealing the inherent contradiction of a society that practices systemic racism while claiming to be racially open (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Morrison, 1992). Whites turn a blind eye to it and claim it is not their problem (Tatum, 2003). Instead, they subscribe to the sadomasochistic "love" of whiteness that numbs them from their human responsibility to shoulder their fair share, which is primarily theirs anyway, since race and racism are mainly white problems.

For example, consider how racially discriminatory housing covenants were implemented to protect whiteness (Brodkin, 2006; Haymes, 1995; Lipsitz, 1998). Although public policy and practice openly barred people of color from residing in places like the suburbs, whites willingly entered these communities hoping whiteness would flourish without the alleged contamination of, as well as the risk associated with, people of color (Conley, 1999; Massey & Denton, 1993; Oliver & Shapiro, 1997). In doing so, whites acknowledge they have an emotional investment in their whiteness, in that their yearning for acceptance from such a community is seemingly more important than the harm they do to people of color (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996a).

Yet, loving whiteness also hurts whites themselves, just as clinging onto over-romanticized notions of love hurts people who want to feel love (Thandeka, 1999). Take, for example, the effect that the racialization of housing has had on the white psyche. By opting to emotionally invest in whiteness, white people spiritually and materially isolate themselves and their children (e.g., sending them to mostly white schools) from the rest of humanity. In doing so, they limit their own experiences much like women who choose not to have children solely out of fear of labor pains. At the same time, whites justify their emotional investment in whiteness by stereotyping and denigrating urban communities, which, due to pro-white housing policy, are populated mostly by people of color. Therefore, adhering to whiteness stifles whites' ability to have pride and strength in a group identification or community because they commit to a group that seeks only their conformity in a quest for domination (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996b), or, in other words, fusion without integrity. While whites reap the benefits of white privilege as the

wages for their willingness to relinquish their individuality and sense of pride, they pay for it in terms of shame for pretending to be a white person, which they know occupies an unjust "superior" status (Baldwin, 1999). Love is non-existent in such a scenario. Besides, how is love "love" if it hurts others? After all, there is pain associated with humanization, and pain associated with dehumanization. In conditions barren of love, it is not too hard to see how hatred, apathy, greed, and fear can thrive. As Ignatiev and Garvey (1996a) famously said, "Treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity" (p. 10). For whites, committing treason and rejoining humanity is work that is not only material and ideological but also emotional and spiritual. A critical focus on love reminds us of that.

As we described above, loving whiteness to death also produces a fearful state of loneliness for whites. Why leave when rejecting whiteness clearly marks a state of impending loneliness? Can loving whiteness make whites fear loneliness so much that they are willing to accept any type of love (regardless of its sadomasochistic quality)? Loving whiteness, then, becomes nothing but a death sentence that limits whites' potential understanding of a love that does not use the fear of loneliness as a way to entrap whites in whiteness and leave them emotionally frozen when it comes to the racial pain of others (and themselves).

In this state, they communicate without integrity, whether through icy-cold indifference or white-hot rage, as we often see in the antiracist classroom. Whites are fearful of the impending pain of rejecting whiteness, as if, somehow, the feeling of discomfort is incompatible with love. A more humanizing love embraces painful feelings because to feel them is to inherently recognize that we still care about being connected with one another. Consider how many critical whiteness scholars explicate the role white guilt plays in taking on an antiracist white racial identity (Allen, 2011; Brodkin, 2006; Howard, 1999). Anticipating the impending discomfort of white guilt in an antiracist process, and choosing not to embrace it, stagnates whites' ability to feel and utilize it as an emotional tool for continuing towards a racially equitable human condition. Cross-racial dialogue can only occur once whites feel a humanizing violence, which is necessary for countering white tendencies to control classroom dialogue, and they come to understand the impact of their whiteness on students of color (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). We also argue that only once the pain of what one gives up to become white is revealed and accepted can a dialogical interaction take place. At that point, whites will truly have a stake in antiracism and in giving up whiteness.

However, whites must keep in mind that people of color have been living in discomfort all their lives due to the oppressiveness of white supremacy (Fanon, 1967; hooks, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Leaving this fact out again supports the idea that the pain of whites is greater than the pain of people of color. Whites need to figure out how to analyze their pain without centering it.

Conclusion: True Love Will Find You in the End

True love will find you in the end
You'll find out just who was your friend
Don't be sad, I know you will

But don't give up until
True love will find you in the end
                    —Johnston, 1984

The antiracist implications of realizing a humanizing love are manifold. In a humanistic sense, whites would not see race as a problem of the Other (i.e., people of color), but, rather, as a white problem. Sharing in the burden of race would demonstrate a collective sign of strength, where whites finally learn how to be responsible for their share of the emotional burden of white supremacy. Through feeling this painful, discomforting burden, whites finally can experience a more humanizing love that releases them from their neurotic compulsions and sadomasochistic tendencies. Although leaving whiteness may be perceived as an unbearable condition, a form of emotional chaos, remaining in whiteness is even more unbearable because it is a living death. It will be a painful process for whites, just as labor is a painful process of motherhood or social justice is a painful process of academia, but the reward of humanizing love is ultimately much greater than the reward for kowtowing to whiteness out of fear. How can whites be lonely when they finally realize that humanizing love, wrought with juxtapositions of pain, joy, sadness, and happiness, is intimately married to our humanity as a whole? After all, whites who authentically undertake this painful burden and struggle with people of color against white domination will be more likely to have people of color as close friends and allies. Clearly, they will not be alone. This has particular implications for classrooms. Instead of sadomasochistic classroom dynamics, whereby white teachers exert their whiteness in ways that hurt their urban students of color and ultimately themselves, this release of whiteness can make classrooms more therapeutic spaces, where humanizing love can flourish.

When whites become courageous enough to feel and accept humanizing love, in turn, they learn that they can never be without love or be alone. Understanding humanizing love means to acknowledge that we have existed together as a human family before the social construction of race fractured our understanding of our essential ties. Metaphorically speaking, the humanizing love we are talking about, that predates the birth of manufactured racial categories and hierarchies, has been a long-standing river. In creating the social institution of race, whites devised paths away from that river, so much so that the original path to the river has been overgrown and seemingly lost. Yet, the river was never lost. It has always been there, obscured. Through their own actions, whites have lost the path to the river. And finding a way back to that river should entice whites to take up a humanizing love to heal the human family so broken by race. As we suggested in our personal stories, love is more than a superficial need to self-gratify; rather, it is a state of existence, a way of being in the world, that leads us back together. It is a feeling that is paid forward in the interconnectedness of our humanity and its capacity to produce conditions that are more just. Plainly stated, if whites actively leave their emotional investment in whiteness, then they not only leave behind a sadomasochistic notion of love, they also open the doors to experiencing humanity. Imagine the possibilities of antiracist education if such a release was met. Instead of fearing racism and white supremacy, the releasing of emotional investment in whiteness leaves whites

open to understanding their role in these structures, a necessary first step towards racial justice.

Therefore, in order for whites to experience this humanizing love, they must abandon the whiteness that has all along abandoned them and has left them longing for love and a release from their shame (see Thandeka, 1999; Zembylas, 2008). This brings us to the other meaning of loving whiteness to death. If treason to whiteness really is loyalty to humanity (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996b), then the greatest act of love whites can show humanity is to end whiteness itself, to love so much as to send whiteness to its grave. This is no utopia, since whiteness is a modern human creation (Allen, 1994; Roediger, 1999); that is, there was a time before whiteness. As such, there can be a time after whiteness for we can choose to demolish whatever we have built. Applied to education, this means accepting the fact that white teachers and students must be taught about their whiteness, for it is that existing condition that so hurts people of color. Ending whiteness can only begin when whites take responsibility in its identification and understand its ubiquity. Given that whiteness is mainly a sadomasochistic construction (Allen, 2011), whites need to not only undo racist ideologies and organize acts of racial disobedience but also bear the emotional pain necessary to lovingly end the white race as a sociopolitical form of human organization. And, education can be the medium with which whites undo racist ideologies. Let us be clear: We believe that whites have the capacity to actually muster the tremendous emotional strength and courage to love humanity as it should be loved. Again, this is not about ending those people called white; rather, it is about ending the white race. And when whites do undergo this rebirth, waiting for them is a more loving humanistic community ready to embrace them.

Educationally speaking, almost 90% of the teaching force is racially white (Sleeter, 2001). This severe overrepresentation has profound implications for how whiteness impacts curriculum, pedagogies, standards, and policies (Gillborn, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lewis & Manno, 2011). In order to disrupt the normality of whiteness so that the ideals of antiracist education can be realized, we must consider how teachers, educational policy makers, districts, and academia can disinvest in whiteness such that the discomfort in talking about race becomes less violent (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). By understanding that emotionally investing in whiteness is sadomasochistic, critical educators can explore the possibilities of confronting the emotional discomfort in antiracism. For example, the overwhelming presence of white teachers and teacher educators in the teacher preparation pipeline (Sleeter, 2001) has produced a condition where discussions of race, diversity, and white supremacy are resisted (Allen, 2004; Allen & Rossatto, 2009; Matias, 2013; Rodriguez, 2009; Yoon, 2012). In emotionally refusing to *feel* discomforted by understanding race, teachers and teacher educators disingenuously engage in antiracism. For how can one wholeheartedly engage in a cure if they cannot emotionally bear talking about the problem? As such, critical ruminations of how to re-understand our commitment to love and humanity can provide a new way of thinking about how white teachers and teacher educators can emotionally reinvest in the possibilities of antiracist projects.

The final implication is that more critical conceptualizations of emotionality and whiteness are needed. For example, there must be more pedagogical practices that engage emotional theories of whiteness, lest the genuineness of antiracist education be

questioned. After all, white teachers may learn the scripts we provide them, to say all the right things, only to later demonstrate that their heart wasn't really in it. Specifically, antiracist educators and antiracist educational programs must ask their white students some of the following questions: What does love mean? Do you feel anxious, guilty, apathetic, or angry when talking about race? Why or why not? Do you love being white? Why or why not? Do you love people of color? Why or why not? Too often, educational rhetoric relies on the need to "save" urban students of color, advocate for social justice in urban education, and serve and protect underrepresented populations. Yet, rarely are white educators asked why they feel they need to save, advocate, serve, or protect, or why they believe they are the rightful ones to do such things. Further interrogating the social constructions of emotions provides a greater context for understanding to whom we intimately tie our racial hearts. By doing so, we reveal how we limit our humanity when we blindly accept normative social constructions of emotionality that wrongly directs our hearts.

In summary, we presented a theoretical critique of love and how it applies to the psychosocial condition of whites' emotional investment in whiteness. First, we entertained a womanist definition of love that helps us understand how the individual is connected to a project for humanity in the face of structural oppression. Second, we applied a Frommean approach to critique the meaning of love in individual and collective relationships, particularly in normative sadomasochist relationships. Finally, we used the Frommean critique of love to construct an emotional understanding of how whites invest in a reification of whiteness and offer a path away from whiteness by working through whiteness critically. Specifically, we identify how education can be a medium to love whiteness to death with a critical humanizing praxis of love.

Love, like other emotions, is felt. Beyond a simple unquestioned feeling, love is a human need that leads us to feel other emotions, like anger, guilt, fear, and loneliness. Whose pain are we angry about? Whose misdeeds do we feel guilt for? Whose loneliness do we seek to comfort? These emotions are expressions based upon whether or not one feels a humanizing love. From realizing the sadomasochism of whiteness to actualizing a critical praxis of love in education, we, as human beings, have the human capacity to entertain new ideas about the place of love in antiracist education. And, amidst the historical relics of the Taj Mahal, wars of Helenian proportions, and doctrines of nationhood, it becomes apathetic of humanity to disregard love's full power. For when we wholeheartedly love humanity, the possibilities become endless.

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