



JOURNAL OF CRITICAL THOUGHT AND PRAXIS

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY DIGITAL PRESS & SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Volume 6

Issue 3 *Everyday Practices of Social Justice*

Article 7

(Re)conceptualizing Love: Moving Towards a Critical Theory of Love in Education for Social Justice

Durryle N. Brooks

Follow this and additional works at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/jctp/vol6/iss3/>



This article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC-BY-NC). Users may reproduce, disseminate, display, or adapt this article for non-commercial purposes, provided the author is properly cited. See <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.

The Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis is published by the Iowa State University School of Education and Iowa State University Digital Press. View the journal at <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/jctp/>.

(Re)conceptualizing Love: Moving Towards a Critical Theory of Love in Education for Social Justice

Durryle N. Brooks*
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Through reflection on critical incident involving a social justice educator, this reflexive essay examines the role of love and its implications on social justice education, pedagogy, and praxis. Within the U.S. context, there is a considerable misunderstanding of what love is. Normative discourse on love within in our society is almost exclusively relegated to romance and familial relations. However, through personal reflection and a review of interdisciplinary literature, I argue that normative discourses on love are not innocuous, but instead hegemonic and serve as an ideology to perpetuate individualism and white supremacy. Drawing upon critical theorists, including Black and Chicana feminist, I suggest that love must be: (a) reconceptualized in order to meet the demands of justice; (b) based in Black and Brown lived experiences; (c) embodied for social justice; (d) tend to the whole person; and (e) measured by how effective our pedagogy and practice stymy alienation and heal. Lastly, I offer my personal reflection guide that assisted my move toward a critical theory of love.

Keywords: Racism | Oppression | Critical Self-Reflection | Love | Alienation | Change

I remember entering graduate school with excitement. I remember going to one of my first classes and a professor who has written extensively on social justice education told a relatively racially diverse class at a predominantly-white Research One institution that she was there to *colonize us*. I remember my lungs caving in. My chest gave way under the symbolic weight of that discursive act—a violent act. The cognitive dissonance was palpable. My body still remembers the loss and hopelessness I felt that moment. I entered that program of study to learn how to better analyze oppression so that I might learn concrete ways to dismantle systemic oppression. Instead, I experienced oppressive and violent acts within the classroom. Those acts of pedagogical and epistemological violence demanded nothing less than submission and obedience. Even within the walls of a classroom with a professor who dedicated their life to interrupting oppression, I still was not safe from oppression.

It was that critical moment—studying with a pioneer in the field of social justice that my body knew what my mind and soul did not—that even social justice education practitioners deploy toxic ideologies and violent epistemologies in the name of social justice. That moment simultaneously violently unraveled me while also conjuring from my body a memory of trauma and possibility. That encounter was the impetus for exploring

* Correspondence can be directed to Durryle Brooks at durryle@loveandjusticeconsulting.com

the role of love within social justice practice and its role in social transformation. I wanted to explore how love could inform our pedagogy as practitioners and think deeply on what might be the impact of the absence of love within our praxis and its potential impact on those we serve. Therefore, this paper explores my journey toward a critical conceptualization of love and offers some reflections on redefining love within our praxis.

Acts of Violence: Racism and Colonization in my Higher Education Experience

When my white professor told me that she was there to colonize me, to say that I was shocked would be an understatement. The shock and the internal destabilization that resulted was re-traumatizing. In that moment, I felt unloved and unwanted. I felt a welling up of anger and my body trembled. Mentally, I was transported back to the days when my pastor delivered anti-gay messages from the pulpit and the days when I was being bullied in the hallways of my high school. All of my previous pain, represented itself in an instant, and I could not think, concentrate, or process. She went on teaching, but there was no more learning possible for me there that day or for many weeks to come. That professor went on to explain that it was her duty to teach us how to survive in the academy. I was perplexed by the idea that she was acting in a way to toughen us up and wondered if that was love in her mind. Was it her desire to merely teach me the “*codes of power*” a form of love even if it would destroy my sense of self, dignity, and my overall well-being? I could not understand how someone who had dedicated their life to studying and theorizing strategies for social justice would actively deploy a divisive and destructive discursive practice in the classroom and justify it as if it did not have material implications for me and the other Black and Brown students in that classroom. What would unfold over that first year—the harassment, the bullying, and the denial of feedback on my papers shook me at my core. I had to know how a social justice educator, scholar, and professed practitioner could create such a hostile classroom environment all in the name of “academic preparation”.

After spending hours processing that moment with my classmates, I went to the literature. It is that very moment that I finally understand what bell hooks (1994) meant when she wrote,

I came to theory because I was hurting — the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend — to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most important, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing. (p. 59)

I too was desperate. I was desperate for answers. How could it be that someone who dedicated their life to unpacking the ways in which oppression manifests did not create a caring and compassionate learning environment? How was it that she could not or would not conjure love in that moment for us? What I have come to know through my exploration of love, is that educators, especially those deeply invested in social justice, must also be as deeply committed to a love that is political—a critical theory of love.

Searching for Love Within the Field of Social Justice Education

I ventured naturally toward literature in social justice education to explore the social function of love in education for social justice. However, I discovered very little scholarship on love and little to no discourse on love within educational texts such as *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997), the *Handbook of Social Justice* (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009), and the *International Handbook of Social Justice* (Reisch, 2014). While there were many brilliant conversations about social change and transformation along with a myriad of strategies to work towards achieving social justice, the absence of love and its liberatory possibilities was striking. This absence was particularly troubling to me given the levels of trauma many historically marginalized populations bring with them into the classroom, which minimally warrants discussion about the role of love and healing for historically marginalized students. What we know from educational literature is that classrooms and learning communities where teachers and practitioners are engaged in caring and loving practices students learn better and grow (Freire, 1970, 1972; hooks, 2003; Love & Love, 1995; Lampert, 2003).

After examining those texts concerning social justice, I wondered what it means for us a field to have a dearth of literature exploring love and its implications on those whom we teach. What does it suggest about us as teachers, educators, and practitioners for there to be vast bodies of literature on oppression but very little theorizing on and about love? What does it mean for scholars, practitioners, and educators to know oppression so deeply and yet seem incapable of conjuring love within the context of the classroom and our social justice education practice? What is the cost of knowing more about oppression than liberation?

I sat with those questions for months. One thing was for sure; my body knew the impact of what it meant for a social justice educator to privilege knowing oppression instead of embodying and enacting love. One immediate consequence of having educators steeped in oppression but barely touched by love, let alone a critical theory of love, translated into my near constant battle against the pressure of dropping out of my program. I know, in part, that my experience within the academy, in a program designed to address social injustice had failed me because our profession and our field has failed to deeply invest in doing the work of love and studying its implications of it on learning.

Mis-educated In Love: Normative Conceptualizations of Love Within the U.S. Context

When I reflected on the question, what is love, I admit that I too was stumped. I could not quite wrap my brain around what it meant. I wondered why my mind and body remembered shame and pain when I thought about love and what was the impact on my praxis? When I looked specifically to literature on love it became clearer that within contemporary United States context, love is deeply misunderstood. Love is often understood to be affection, familial, or sexual in nature. The Merriam Webster dictionary, a source for a normative definition, reflected larger social (mis)understandings of love as a, “warm attachment, strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties (material love for a child), attraction based on sexual desire, and tenderness between lovers (n.d.)” We can see the pervasiveness of the definition when we read about heroic feats completed by parents to

ensure the safety of their children, the countless “romantic comedies” that are widely circulating, and of course all of the sexual or even hypersexual media portrayals of love within mass media.

However, when I turned my eye toward a critical analysis of the literature on love within the contemporary context, the narratives were overwhelmingly white heterosexual love narratives and emphasized an overtly individualist understanding of love. As a Black queer person reflecting on the narratives of love, I started noticing that I even carried white heteronormative narratives of love within myself. *Pretty Woman*, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Twilight Saga*, were just a few images that soared to the forefront of my mind when I reflected on love. Again, I questioned. I had to ask myself, what are the implications of being overexposed to notions of love that centered the individual and fairytale romance?

I went to the literature. This time I read across disciplines. I moved into the field of communications with an eye toward Critical Media Studies and particularly Cultural Studies. There, I found that the proliferation of certain images and various media are not innocuous, but in fact act on our psyche through communicative acts and begin to shape our social perceptions and social realities (Foucault, 1972; Hall & Open University, 1997). This phenomenon is well-documented in critical race, gender, and sexuality scholarship (Earp et al., 2013; Jhally, Hall, & Media Education Foundation, 2002; Jhally, Kilbourne, Rabinovitz, & Media Education Foundation, 2010). The normative notions of love that instantaneously surfaced in my mind were not merely representational, but were actually operating as a hegemonic love narrative—more of an ideology—that centered whiteness and alienated me from myself by conflating love, specifically romantic, outside of my Black queer reach and restricting love to the individual level. At that moment, Stuart Hall came to my mind, and I remember that he offered that ideology was, “The mental frameworks – the language, concepts, categories, imagery of thought and system of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works” (Hall, Morley, & Chen, 1996, p. 26). Additionally, Dr. John Lye (1997) on Marx’s construction of ideology says,

These ideas (often embedded in symbols and cultural practices) orient people's thinking in such a way that they accept the current way of doing things, the current sense of what is 'natural,' and the current understanding of their roles in society. This socialization process, the shaping of our cognitive and affective interpretations of our social world, is called, by Gramsci, “hegemony;” it is carried out ...by the state ideological apparatuses -- by the churches, the schools, the family, and through cultural forms. (para. 3)

If this is true that within our contemporary social context love functions as a hegemonic ideology, then for what purpose? What social function does a hegemonic ideology of love serve?

As I considered the implications of love as a normative ideology that relegated love primarily into the realms of individual versus collective dimensions and along the lines of romance, I could begin to imagine that maybe my professor did not have an opportunity to deeply investigate what Cornell West (2014) meant when he said, “love is what justice looks like in public.” Maybe, within her formal training and years of operating in systems

of oppression, no one provided her the opportunity to think deeply on a kind of love that centered student's whole selves. Maybe, no one afforded her the opportunity to integrate an embodied teaching that centers wholeness and not merely the instilling of knowledge at the cognitive level. And maybe she acted in this way toward our class to resist one system of domination that has traditionally relegated education exclusively to women's work and delegitimized her in the process (Acker, 1990, 2006; Allan, 2011). Whatever the case, exploring love was much broader, complex, and had far reaching implications as I journeyed to unpack what love meant for me and my praxis.

Constructing A Philosophical Foundation: Building A Critical Theory of Love

I needed to start constructing a body of literature on love that allowed me to get clear about the ways in which love was impacting my life and how it was in fact an active apparatus of continual colonization on my Black queer body. This literature is the foundation on which my social justice praxis is now built. This is how I articulate my critical theory of love based in my lived experiences.

Commercialization of Love: Property, Ownership, & Control

A critical theory of love is a commentary about society and social relations. German psychologist and sociologist Erich Fromm, who is associated with the Frankfurt School, has written extensively on love. In his book *The Art of Loving* (1956), he offered a critical analysis of the notions of love within the early twentieth century. He drew attention to the many ways in which normative conceptualizations of love have created the conditions that both position love as abundant, as expressed in the mass consumption of self-help books, and as whimsical, as something someone does not have to learn about (p. 1). This particular positioning of both has created the illusion of abundance within our society when in fact it functions to distract us from the deep lovelessness that our society feels because we are unable to create love ourselves, within ourselves, or our communities.

In addition, Fromm (1956) also notes specifically that one of the staple features of our society is its mass consumerism. He asserted that love has become a commodity. As he put it,

Our whole culture is based on appetite for buying, on the idea of a mutually favorable exchange. Modern man's happiness consists in the thrill of looking at the shop windows, and in buying all that he can afford to buy, either for cash or on installments. (p. 3)

In this particular understanding of American consumerism love is no different from any other product. Love in our society becomes a commodity that is to be bought, sold, and owned. Beyond what Erich Fromm lays out as a consequence of this notion of love as a commodity, what has come to my attention is that objectification also allows for the othering of objects of love—even the human ones. If love is a commodity and can be bought, then when one has obtained it, the love object becomes property of that purchaser. We can see the deleterious consequences of possessive ownership when we examine rates of intimate partner violence within heterosexual and same-sex relationships in which possessiveness and feelings of ownership has deeply impacted the lives of those victimized (Ard & Makadon, 2011; Messinger, 2011; Whitton et al., 2016).

As I reflected on the notion of ownership and possession, maybe my professor was enacting a form of love that requires submission and silence. Maybe given her position of power in the classroom, she saw us as objects and not co-creators of knowledge in that space. Maybe exerting “power over” instead of “power with” was easier, in part, because of the pervasiveness of a hegemonic discourse of love that operates on ownership and possession instead of mutual growth, connection, and shared power. While I can never be certain about her intentions, the impact of her enactment of domination was soul shattering.

Inflicting Soul Wounds: Racism and Domination

bell hooks (2000) captured the sentiment in Erich Fromm’s previous work by offering a critical analysis of love and social forces that go into creating possibilities of love. In her assessment of our contemporary context, the type of love that exists is actually toxic and dangerous to our own well-being, sense of self, and our community because of domination (hooks, 2000). Unlike Fromm, hooks drew attention to the ways in which domination materializes around race and gender. She offered that, “cultures of domination rely on the cultivation of fear as a way to ensure obedience” (hooks, 2000, p. 93). Through her examination of historical institutions of domination within the US, hooks spoke to the enduring impact of Chattel Slavery and the enduring violence, which resulted in hundreds of years of dehumanization and trauma.

What I experienced that day when my professor told me she was going to colonize me, was in fact, a demonstration of the ongoing legacy of mass enslavement and contemporary anti-blackness. In the moment when my professor enacted epistemological violence, I felt broken. Maybe it was what bell hooks meant when she wrote that, “to break someone’s spirit is not a gesture of love. It can and often does lead to what contemporary psychoanalysts have called soul murder” (hooks, 2001, p. 23). Indeed, my spirit was being broken and my soul was inflicted with deep despair. That day, the classroom that should have been a space for safety, was instead used as a platform to further destabilize the dignity of Black and Brown students. The intentional eroding of my dignity, for the purposes of “teaching,” was in fact the contemporary manifestations of unchecked racism within our places of learning and demonstrates the sordid legacy of educational institutions within the U.S. serving as a colonizing apparatus.

To have very little public discourse on the subject of love and to not speak specifically to the ways that some Black folks have been interpolated by dominant ideologies of love (that are based in white supremacy and racism) is to allow for the proliferation of that toxic ideology. bell hooks put it like this:

The abandonment of a discourse on love, of strategies to create a foundation of self-esteem and self-worth that would undergird struggles for self-determination, laid the groundwork for the undermining of all our efforts to create a society where Blackness could be loved, by Black folks, by everyone. (p. xxiii)

In this bell hooks’ conceptualization, what my professor told our class was not an act of tough love, but instead an act of domination. In that moment, there was no love there, only violence, which induced a trauma response that impacted my whole body and my ability to learn. Because she did not commit herself to a practice of love, I carry another wound

caused by racism and systematic oppression. Furthermore, her inability to conjure love within the context of that classroom did nothing to stop the historical violence and oppression but instead perpetuated it through white supremacist pedagogy and epistemology. My professor would have to have been equipped with a different knowledge base, with a different set of skills, and a different capacity to educate Black and Brown students in order to not reify oppression in the classroom.

Redefining Love:

Re-conceptualizing Love as a Form of Resistance to Erasure and Dehumanization

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a speech to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1967, where he articulated this notion of a love that does justice. He stated:

Now, we got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.

It is clear from Dr. King's articulation that love was indeed in need of a redefinition. In order to meet the particular demands for social transformation, love, its study, and its uses must be used as a personal and a political project to create the catalyst for change and address the deep apathy and fear that still is pervasive in our society today.

Philosopher Paul Tillich's (1954) definition of love situated love with power as necessary for achieving justice. Tillich wrote, "Love is the drive towards the unity of the separated" and that "love reunites that which is self-centered and individual. The power of love is not something which is added to an otherwise finished process, but life has love in itself as one of its constitutive elements" (p. 26). In that construction, Tillich spoke to the ways in which the outcome of love, measurable and quantifiable, brings back together that which oppression has sought to tear apart. Therefore, the work of love or rather a critical theory of love, both understands the innate dignity of all human life and also actively creates practices that reunites and rehumanizes. It is the kind of love that allows one's self and another to resist erasure and dehumanization in the context of systemic injustice and oppression. If one deeply explores this construction, one can operationalize it in such ways to ask critical questions about our society, social processes, and institutions. One might ask, to what degree are the systems that we are a part prepare and equip those we serve with the tools necessary to resist dehumanization and erasure caused by systemic injustice and oppression?

The emancipatory possibilities that a critical theory of love can best be echoed by Dr. Cornell West (2014) when he says, "It's a sense of trying to love everybody, and justice is what love looks like in public, just like tenderness is what love feels like in private." The expression of a critical theory of love, when in public, demands and demonstrates justice, and compassion and tenderness in our moments of intimacy. The places where we teach, in spaces like the classroom, are both public and private and requires a pedagogy of love that operates at the intersection of that duality. Those spaces, must center justice, as Dr. West suggested, along with tenderness and compassion if we are to create learning communities based in care and connection and not domination. He goes on to suggest that

to teach love is resistance because it requires us to affirm ourselves in spite of the many ways that society has systematically oppressed us as evidenced by chattel slavery, women's oppression, queer oppression, concentration camps, and indigenous slaughter (West, 2014).

If one agrees with the assessments of Dr. King, Paul Tillich, and Cornel West that suggests love must be redefined and used as a force for our fight for social justice and liberation, then we must begin to fashion a politics of love that is critical, embedded in history, and deeply tied up in the material realities of people's lives. No longer can we teach abstractly about systems of oppression—we must find ways to teach the body, effectively teach love to the body, and teach love through our bodies as an interlocking methodology and pedagogical praxis to meet the demands of justice in the twenty-first century. It becomes imperative for those of us teaching and educating, that we perform love in ways that combats erasure and dehumanization of one's self and historically marginalized populations that we serve.

Educating for Wholeness: An Embodied Practice of Love that Resists Erasure and Dehumanization

As I reflect on the incident with my professor and compared it to critical theories on love, it became clear to me that while she knew intellectually about oppression--knowing alone was insufficient to bring about justice. Instead of designing our learning environment based in loving and rehumanizing practices, she instead enacted and reified violent pedagogical and epistemological violence. I cannot know for certain, but I imagine her lack of critical analysis on love did not permit her to see us as deserving love because hegemonic notions of love had positioned it as individualistic and existing primarily in romantic and familial relationships. In that classroom, her construction of love, if there was any at all, did not permit her to enact a public love, one that was based in justice according to Cornel West. Additionally, her construction of love did not take into account the material impact of her discursive violence on our Black and Brown bodies.

Unfortunately, as educators and practitioners trained in institutions of higher education, we are often taught to privilege knowledge through intellect and not through the body, which in effect erases and/or marginalizes the impact of epistemological violence on people's bodies. This must be what Michel Foucault (1980) meant when he wrote,

I believe that by subjugated knowledges one should understand something else, something which in a sense is altogether different, namely, a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. (p. 82)

Here Foucault rightfully pointed out the privileging of particular ways of knowing within the larger scientific community while also indirectly challenging the Cartesian split, a paradigm created at the advent of the enlightenment period that sought to separate the mind from the body in the name of "objectivity." He proposed a genealogy of knowledge to explore "subjugated knowledges" that are often known locally and often hidden deep within the histories of our bodies (Foucault, 1972; 1980). These subjugated knowledges, which are often historically marginalized populations histories, highlights the continued

oppression of people of color within the academy and society writ-large. However, Black, Chicana feminist, and “third-world” scholars have written extensively about their lived experiences and theorized holistic and embodied ways of knowing as resistance to domination and used their local knowledges to create loving methodologies and pedagogies that are centered on interrupting oppression instead of reifying. Theories such as *La Facultad, Borderland, and Mestiza* by Gloria Anzuldia (1999), the *Uses of the Erotic* by Audre Lorde (1978; 1984), *A Theory in the Flesh* (1983) by Cherrie Moraga. These theories, based in holistic and embodied knowledges are in direct opposition to regimes of domination that are pervasive in our institutions, classrooms, our pedagogies, and our praxis. These pedagogies are public, designed to love and nurture Black and Brown bodies for healing and justice, and designed to restore our dignity and pride in who we are.

A Way Forward: Imagining Possibilities

I wonder every now and again if my professor knew in her body and knew through her body, like she knew intellectually, would she still have enacted pedagogical and epistemological violence against my class. She might have known that her enactment of discursive violence would have material consequences on my Black queer body and other historically marginalized students in her class. I wonder if she had spent time deeply exploring love and its role in social justice education if she would have stumbled across bell hooks’s work on love and read that even if the reasons for committing such acts of violence were to teach survival within systems of domination that it is still violence and creates *soul wounds*. Maybe she would have stumbled across Erich Fromm’s work that suggested that love is indeed an art, which would require her to develop new ways of being that do not rely on control and domination. Maybe if she had been taught Black, Chicana, and “third-world” feminist scholarship by her professors, she would have known that she would have to deeply embody a critical theory of love to bring about justice and not merely teach on it. Perhaps, if the institutions of which she was a part valued Black and Brown subjectivities, scholarship, and knowledge than maybe she would not engage in pedagogical and epistemological violence against us. I hope that if these things were true, I would have an educator fully equipped to educate Black and Brown students with the kind of love that bears witness to historical and contemporary wounds caused by structural racism, sexism, and homophobia all the while creating a loving space for them to learn about the very thing they must resist every day—oppression. Or, maybe it would not matter because at the end of the day, to love is a choice and a continued commitment to the nourishment of the other (Peck, 1978).

A Critical Theory of Love: A Love that Resists Erasure and Dehumanization

A critical theory of love is imperative if we are to shift our praxis to ensure that historically marginalized students’ needs are of ultimate concern. A critical theory of love is one that resists erasure and dehumanization. This re-conceptualized love:

1. Affirms student’s social and cultural identities and full personhood
2. Understands the historical and contemporary context in which they exist

3. Understands how power and systematic oppression dehumanizes and traumatizes
4. Centers their experiences and co-creates rehumanizing practices that heal and restore
5. Teach embodied knowledge and educates for wholeness and completeness
6. Measure how effective our pedagogical practices are at stymying oppression and creating wholeness and completeness

In this re-conceptualized notion of love, love must be embodied to ensure that we intentionally perform love instead of reifying oppression through our pedagogical and epistemological violence. This redefined and embodied critical theory of love must engage the breadth of our humanity and the social and cultural identities that each of us bring to the spaces and places where we reside. We must also measure how closely our praxis brings us and others back from the brink of alienation and increase our collective capacity to fight injustice and for justice. To re-conceptualize love with a critical lens opens up possibilities for transformation not only within our own individual lives, but also in our communities and society in which we serve. To not do so is to allow for the perpetuation of modes domination that have been engrained within the larger social context for hundreds of years and allow for the perpetuation White supremacist ideologies to be further ingrained in our own lives, reified in our praxis, and re-inscribed on the bodies of historically marginalized populations. Redefining love becomes not only a personal project but also a political project with implications on our collective salvation. In order to achieve this ambitious aim, I share my reflection guide (Table 1) to help educators ask themselves key questions that will hopefully move them towards a critical theory of love.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all my professors and friends who provided me with great insight as I worked on this article. Thanks to my Dad for being an exemplary educator and teaching me that learning is always best when it is served with love.

Author Notes

Durryle Brooks received his Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in Teacher Education & School Improvement. His dissertation, *Moving from Trauma to Healing: Black Queer Cultural Workers' Experiences and Discourses of Love*, explores the material impact of normative discourses of love on the lives of Black queer folks. He is also the Founder and President of Love & Justice Consulting, an organization dedicated to providing leaders with diversity and social justice learning opportunities to increase their capacity to effectively and authentically engage difference.

Table 1: A Practitioners Reflection Guide to Moving Toward a Critical Theory of Love

Love Redefined	1. What is love?
	2. What is your personal definition of love?
	3. Based on your personal definition of love, what role does love play in social change and transformation?

Love Embodied	4. What have you learned socially and culturally about love?
	5. What has been the impacted of what you learned about love on your body, relationships, and your ability to feel justice?

Love Performed	6. In what ways does love show-up in your social justice pedagogy and/or practice?
	7. What specific loving actions, behaviors, and beliefs are active in your social justice pedagogy or practice?

Love Holistic	8. How and in what ways does your practice or pedagogy acknowledge, engage, and affirm the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual dimensions –full personhood of those you serve?
	9. How does your practice or pedagogy acknowledge, engage, and affirm the various social identities (race, gender, sexuality, ability status, etc.) that matter to those you serve?

Love Measured	10. What are the holistic theories grounding your social justice pedagogy or practice and what is the result of the rehumanizing strategies you deploy to address the whole person?
	11. In what ways have those you have trained or educated expressed that they have felt more connected to their own bodies, others, and moved to everyday actions for social justice?

References

- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: a theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & Society*, 4(2), 139–158.
- Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender & Society (Online)*, 441–464.
- Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (1997). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: a sourcebook*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Allan, E. J. (2011). *Women's status in higher education: equity matters*. San Francisco, CA.: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands: the new mestiza = La frontera*. San Francisco, CA: Spinsters/Aunt Lute.
- Ard, K. L., & Makadon, H. J. (January 01, 2011). Addressing intimate partner violence in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 26(8), 930-933.
- Ayers, W., Quinn, T., & Stovall, D. (2009). *Handbook of social justice in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cornel West talks to David Shuster | Al Jazeera America. (n.d.). Retrieved December 8, 2014, from <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/talk-to-al-jazeera/interviews-and-more/2014/2/24/cornel-west-talkstodavidshuster.html>.
- Earp, J., Katz, J., Young, J. T., Jhally, S., Rabinovitz, D., & Media Education Foundation. (2013). *Tough Guise 2: Violence, Manhood & American Culture*. [Film]. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge; and, the discourse on language*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1972). Education: domestication or liberation? *Prospects*, 2(2), 173-181
- Fromm, E. (1976). *To have or to be?* New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Fromm, E., & Anshen, R. N. (1956). *The art of loving*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage in association with the Open University.
- Hall, S., Morley, D., & Chen, K.-H. (1996). *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies*. London: Routledge.
- hooks, b (2000). *All about love: New visions*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (2001). *Salvation: Black people and love*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jhally, S., Kilbourne, J., Rabinovitz, D., & Media Education Foundation. (2010). *Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising's image of women*. [Film]. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation.
- John Lye's Courses and Sources Pages. (n.d.). Retrieved October 15, 2016, from <https://brocku.ca/english/jlye/ideology.php>.
- King, M. (1967). "Where do we go from here?" Delivered at the 11th Annual SCLC Convention. Retrieved October 15, 2016, from http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/where_do_we_go_from_here_delivered_at_the_11th_annual_sclc_convention/.
- Lampert, K. (2003). *Compassionate education: A prolegomena for radical schooling*. Lanham, Md: University Press of America.
- Lorde, A. (1978). *Uses of the erotic: the erotic as power*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Out & Out Books.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: essays and speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press.

Brooks – (Re)conceptualizing Love

- Love, P.G., & Love, A. G. (1995). Enhancing Student Learning: Intellectual, Social, and Emotional Integration. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4. ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED400742>.
- Messinger, A. M. (2011). Invisible victims: Same-sex IPV in the national violence against women survey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(11), 2228-2243.
- Moraga, C., & Anzaldúa, G. (1983). *This bridge called my back: writings by radical women of color*. New York, NY: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press.
- Peck, M. S. (1978). *The road less traveled: A new psychology of love, traditional values, and spiritual growth*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Reisch, M. (2014). *Routledge international handbook of social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tillich, P. (1954). *Love, power, and justice: Ontological analyses and ethical applications, given as Firth lectures in Nottingham, England, and as Sprunt lectures in Richmond, Virginia*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.