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## **TO ANALYSIS THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND LOVE BY BELL HOOKS**

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In research, a conceptual framework is used to identify potential courses of action or to propose a preferred approach to an idea or thinking. The philosopher Isaac Berlin, for example, employed the "hedgehogs" vs "foxes" method; a "hedgehog" might approach the world in terms of a single organizing principle, but a "fox" might pursue numerous conflicting aims at the same time. (Wikipedia) Most critics nowadays are "foxes," in the sense that they incorporate parts of more than one school and/or movement in their critical work. In his book *American Literary Criticism Since the 1930s*, Vincent B. Leitch refers to it as the "crossover phenomenon" (x) and describes it as a "distinctive element of U.S. theory during postmodern times." (367) Gayatri Spivak, who merges "Marxism, feminism, deconstruction, and Third World postcolonial theory" (367), is credited with pioneering this notion in the 1970s. In a separate context, in which he seeks to demonstrate that the literary left is not "homogenous" (346), Leitch cites Lillian Robinson, who belongs to both the Marxist and feminist schools, and Barbara Smith, who he describes as a "black Marxist feminist." (346) Most contemporary critics appear to agree with Leitch's assessment, particularly those writing from a Third World or African American perspective, or from a minority subculture such as queer studies, and the writer under discussion, African American cultural critic bell hooks, is no exception.

**KEY WORDS: Pedagogy, Love, Bell Hooks, Population Oppressed, Postcolonialism.**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

A conceptual framework needed to analyze and evaluate Bell Hooks' works would contain, but not be limited to, elements of postcolonialism, black aesthetics, Black feminism, and Freirean critical pedagogy. At the same time, the history of African American education,



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which includes discussions between famous educators and philosophers such as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, as well as Carter G. Woodson's and Martin Luther King Jr.'s and Malcolm X's differing views on the aims and directions of education for the African American community during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, among others, will also help readers consider these thinkers' views on pedagogy from the socio-historical context in which they are rooted.

Humanism as a literary method was abandoned in the 1930s in the United States, and one of the reasons given was its "transcendental position towards life and its patriarchal, Caucasian, and hetero-normative rule of society." (ix) Leitch Neo-Humanism was also criticized for relying on "ethical standards for aesthetic appraisal" (Leitch ix), conflating religion and art, and ignoring modern and experiential literature. Simultaneously, they did not share their literary forefathers' commitment to classical Greek and Roman literature. Concurrent anti-humanist thinking "defined the founding beliefs of structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, ethnic aesthetics [in this context, Black aesthetics], post-colonial theory, cultural studies, and queer theory." (ix) Leitch Critics also connect the growth of ethnic aesthetics to the decline of New Criticism, which in turn characterized the transition from modernism to postmodernism. Hooks, who is African-American, is particularly interested in investigating oppression that develops from the intersections of class, race, gender, and sexuality. Even though African-Americans shared the same geographical environment, the United States, their predicament equated to what black intellectuals like Hoyt W. Fuller, the editor of Negro Digest, referred to as "internal colonialism" (Leitch 286). According to Fuller, there were "'high solid dividing walls which hate and history had created'" between the races. Leitch (286). Fuller argued for a Black Aesthetic, one of its goals being to build unity and strength among the black community through the reclaiming and indoctrination of black art and philosophy. Indeed, much emphasis was placed on scholarship and teaching centered on the institutionalization of black studies programs, which first appeared in the late 1960s and dominated the attention of university intellectuals throughout the 1980s. Another poet and editor, Larry Neal, spoke about new black artists' struggles to break away from mainstream white artistic paradigms while pioneering African-based approaches of creativity. He saw the African American population as part of a colonial Third World looking for lost native traditions. Politics and art went hand in hand throughout the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Arts Movement

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(BAM) evolved from the Black Power Movement. Bell hooks is a product of this movement's history, and she believes that there can be no such thing as a neutral educational system, that everything is colored by the socioeconomic and political forces of which it is a part. She definitely emphasizes a Marxist perspective here: According to Marxist scholar Gyorgy Lukacs, literature deliberately or subconsciously reflects the social reality that surrounds it.

In his introduction to "Race, Writing, and Difference," Henry Louis Gates, Jr. notes that literacy among Blacks did little to eliminate racism (the fallacious assumption was that Blacks could only be considered men if they could write) and that Black writing did not "obliterate the difference of race" (Gates 12). Instead, it "kept those cultural differences [the differences between Blacks and Whites]..... in a separate Western literary legacy, a tradition of black difference," according to Gates. (Gates 12) Gates proposes the formation of indigenous theories of critique, citing Hippolyte-Adolphe Taine as expressly postulating the argument that race is a positivistic standard through which "any work could be read and which, by definition, any work reflected" (Gates 3). To quote him again:

**I once thought it our most important gesture to master the canon of criticism, to imitate and apply it, but I now believe that we must turn to the black tradition itself to develop theories of criticism indigenous to our literatures.**  
**(Gates 13)**

Gates then uses "Alice Walker's modification of Rebecca Cox Jackson's fable of white interpretation" to demonstrate his claim. (p. 13) According to Gates, Jackson, "a Shaker eldress and a black visionary," was taught to read by the Lord, a white man. Gates goes on to explain how, in *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker has one of her characters, Shug, encourage Celie to abolish "'man'" as a mediator between woman and "everything." (p. 14) Walker is writing against the grain here, writing that differs from writing that comes from a white patriarchal mindset. This is made clear by Gates' statement, "The citizens in the republic of literature, in other words, were mainly white, and mostly male." (p. 4) Gates further defines the role of the Third World critic, stating that it should "understand the ideological subtext which any critical theory reflects and embodies, and the relationship which this subtext bears to the construction of meaning." (p. 15)



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Gates is writing in the context of a literary vision and canon dominated by white and male authors. T.S. Eliot characterized the canon as a "closed set of works" (p. 2), and some of the works in the canon were thought to have permanent universal value. Against this backdrop, Gates observes that the role of Other literature in the literary canon has "remained an unasked question" (p. 2) until lately. According to Gates, race was "implicit" (p. 4) in Eliot's canon because all of the writers "pretended to have a single culture, derived from both the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions." (p. 4) Beginning Theory author Peter Barry analyzes Gates' book *Race, Writing, and Difference* correctly in the part on postcolonial criticism, thereby embracing writing about race as an intrinsic component of such a theoretical approach. Again, Gates' acknowledgment that race as a "meaningful criterion within the biological sciences" has been proven to be a "fiction" is significant. (p. 4) However, it is a lie that still exists and plays out on numerous levels: for example, Gates mentions the reality that people of different races have "fundamentally opposing economic interests." (p. 4) Furthermore, despite the misconception perpetuated by European intellectuals such as Hume, Kant, and Hegel, Gates distinguishes between sex, which is a biological construct, and race, which is not. Gates uses the writings of a Dutch explorer, William Bosman, Kant, and Hegel to demonstrate that Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries associated black skin color with avarice, lack of creativity, and low intelligence.

While the Civil Rights Movement's predominantly male leaders worked to achieve racial equality, bell hooks and other black women writers contend that there was sexism within the movement in particular and the community as a whole, and urged black male compatriots to work to end this form of discrimination. Bell hooks discusses the situation in which black women are at the bottom of the heap, with white males at the top of the hierarchy, followed by white women and black men. The marginalization of all women in a patriarchal culture (hooks labels the dominant culture a "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy," which she holds responsible for many of the problems of black American women), the exclusion of women from the literary canon (in her first work *Ain't I a Woman*, there is a chapter on black feminists ranging from Sojourner Truth to Anna Julia Cooper to Mary Church Terrell) and the exclusion of women from the literary canon In her writings on feminism, teaching, and love, bell hooks leans heavily on her personal experiences as a teacher.



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Another key component of Black feminism is their rejection to rely on white male critical ideas and methods: in her essay "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," black feminist critic Barbara Smith calls for the development of unique and personal black feminist modes of analysis. Other feminist critics, like Deborah E. McDowell, Patricia Hill Collins, and bell hooks, agree. All of these also highlight a lack of interest in black women's difficulties and issues, even within the white feminist movement. Collins' work is notable for her refusal to consider black feminism in connection to white mainstream feminism - what all of these critics refuse to do is to elevate white feminism. This is a paradigm shift in which old models cannot accept new developments and new models are necessary—in this case, black models of criticism are required to investigate the concerns of black women.

While critical pedagogy means different things to different people, the editors Michael W. Apple, Wayne Au, and Luis Armando Gandin agree on a "robust definition" (p. 3) of the term that involves a "thorough-going reconstruction of what education is for, how far it should be carried out, what we should teach, and who should be empowered to engage in it." (p. 3) They continue, "deep alterations of the underlying epistemological and ideological assumptions that are formed about what constitutes as "official" or valid information and who holds it" are also included in critical pedagogy. (p.3) Furthermore, critical pedagogy is built on a commitment to social justice and the recognition that numerous factors explain "systems of exploitation and dominance in our societies." (p. 3) The editors propose "repositioning," or viewing the world through the eyes of the oppressed, and "acting against the ideological and institutional processes and forms that sustain oppressive conditions." (p. 3)

Apple, Au, and Gandin identify eight tasks that critical pedagogy must address: to identify the ways in which educational policy and practices are linked to "relations of exploitation and domination" (p. 4), to examine current reality through a framework that emphasizes the spaces in which "counter-hegemonic actions" (p. 4) can be carried out, to support groups of peoples and movements engaged in "challenging existing unequal power relations" (p. 4), and to use practical and intellectual skills to deal with the "histories and debates surrounding (p. 4). Critical pedagogy should also keep radical work traditions alive, as it offers another another means to countering hegemonic narratives. The editors argue for criticizing even radical work when it is insufficient to deal with present reality, emphasizing the significance of learning journalistic and media abilities, academic and popular skills, and the ability to talk



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to very various groups." (p. 5) Apple, Au, and Gandin also encourage critical educators to "act in conjunction with the progressive social organizations whose work they support" (p. 5) and to develop into what Gramsci refers to as "organic intellectuals." They also advocate for using one's status as a scholar or activist to "open the spaces at universities and elsewhere for those who aren't there and don't have a voice in that place." (p. 5)

Despite crediting Paulo Freire as one of those who invented the phrase critical pedagogy, Apple, Au, and Gandin point out that critical pedagogical methods existed before Freire. These "early expressions of critical education frequently questioned existing social relations and power structures, raising substantial critiques of racism, class, and gender relations as well as suggesting radical alternatives to then-existing educational institutions," they write. (p. 5) They mention, for example, a tradition in the African American community that has existed since the 1800s that argues what Black education should consist of given the history of slavery and the persistence of institutionalised racism even now.

Much of hooks' work, particularly on education and pedagogy, is, according to her, owing to the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who established his own pedagogy while instructing peasants in Brazil and Chile, and whose views are included in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. To return to *The Routledge International Handbook of Critical Education* for a moment, "Critical pedagogy broadly seeks to expose how relations of power and inequality, in their myriad form combinations and complexities, are manifest and challenged in the formal and informal education of children and adults..... It involves a break with the comforting illusion that the ways in which our societies and educational apparatuses are currently organized can lead to socioeconomic development." (p. 3) This is a meaningless argument because bell hooks and other critical pedagogues like Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren are ultimately concerned with social justice. In Hooks' case, she attempts to demonstrate how class, racism, and gender play roles in exploitation and oppression in our cultures.

"Man's ontological purpose is to be a Subject who acts upon and modifies his reality, and in doing so develops towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life, both individually and collectively," Freire writes. (1996, p. 14) *Conscientizacao*, or learning to detect social, political, and economic inconsistencies and to take action against repressive elements of



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society, is the purpose of education for him. The fact that the oppressive environment must be reformed and that the once oppressed must not behave like the oppressor is a key aspect of Freire's education. Rather, Freire holds the oppressed accountable for restoring their humanity as well as the humanity of their oppressors.

Because it is a distortion of being more completely human, being less human eventually leads the oppressed to strive against those who made them less human. To make this struggle meaningful, the oppressed must not become oppressors of the oppressors in their quest to regain their humanity (which is a method to create it), but rather restorers of the humanity of both. (p. 26)

Freire also criticizes the banking paradigm of education, in which the instructor is the knowledge depositor and the students are the depositories. He claims that the banking model hampers the development of "critical consciousness" (p. 54) and is a technique employed by oppressors to install "a fragmented sense of reality" in them. (p. 54) On the other hand, the right kind of education, according to Freire, "stimulates the critical faculties" (p. 54) and enables the student to see the inter-relatedness of problems and issues - a point of particular interest in the works of African American writers, and particularly in the works of bell hooks, who sees the problems confronting Black women as arising from a complex interplay of factors such as race, class, and sex.

Freire examines the unit of dialogue, the word, in order to investigate the possibilities of communication as a transforming tool available to everyone. Freire distinguishes between true and unauthentic words by positing that true words have two dimensions: action (praxis) and reflection; action without reflection results in activism, while reflection without actions results in verbalism. According to Freire, neither verbalism nor activism can result in true communication. He goes on to say that in true words, there is no duality between the word and practice, and that true words alone may "change the world" (p. 69).

It is worth noting the efforts of other feminists to the cause of critical pedagogy, which helped to institutionalize women's studies. Adrienne Rich "lambasted the oppressiveness of masculinist and heterosexual education, opening for discussion the future possibilities of altered educational institutions," according to Leitch (2010). (p. 279) Florence Howe, a



pioneer in the subject of women's studies, advanced the cause of women's studies by "distributing bibliographies and course plans, as well as nurturing new programs and scholarly networks." (p. 280) Howe advises "feminist scholars and teachers to integrate pertinent resources regarding class and race as well as sex" in their studies and programs, claiming that art "springs from particulars of gender as well as class, color, age, and cultural experience." (p. 281) Confessional critic Jane Tompkins criticized formal professional criticism for being "not only devoid of feeling, but also competitive, aggressive, and macho." (p. 369) Tompkins, in Leitch's opinion, favors "informal personal writing with expressions of sentiment and feeling" as an alternative to "formal argumentation language." (p. 369). Such a viewpoint is also prevalent in Bell Hooks' books, particularly in the Teaching trilogy, in which she actively investigates the function of affect in the classroom. Another influence is Erich Fromm, who discusses the Being mode and the Having mode: two patterns of existence, one emphasizing worldly goods and the other emphasizing an inwardly fuller life. Bell hooks' teaching includes healing and holistic education; a key inspiration is the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. Given the different influences on Bell Hooks and the various threads in her work, I recommend approaching her work through the above-mentioned complex of theories. However, unlike the "fox" in Wikipedia's description of a conceptual framework, I don't find a conflict of interest in selecting theories that, in my opinion, complement and influence one another.

## **SCHOLARLY WORK ON BELL HOOKS**

Significant and significant work has been done on Bell Hooks' writings. Numerous papers on various parts of her works have appeared in scholarly journals such as sociology, education, Black Studies, feminism, religion, and philosophy, to name a few. Her books have also been widely reviewed in reputable journals all around the world. A Google Scholar alert provides the names of more than a half-dozen journal articles or books whose writers quote bell hooks on a weekly basis. Critical Perspectives on Bell Hooks, edited by Maria del Guadalupe Davidson and George Yancy, was published in 2009, and Bell Hooks' Engaged Pedagogy: A Transgressive Education for Critical Consciousness, by Florence Namulundah, was released in 1998. Critical Perspectives on Bell Hooks is divided into three sections, with approximately fourteen articles on bell hooks' works grouped under the sub-headings Critical Pedagogy and Praxis, The Dynamics of Race and Gender, and Spirituality and Love, each





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section roughly corresponding to one of the three trilogies to which bell hooks has devoted herself in her writing. Contributors come from a number of academic disciplines, including African American Studies, philosophy, English, music therapy, education, and religion, demonstrating the effect, relevance, and applicability of bell hooks in a variety of academic settings.

The authors of the collection's individual essays practice what Michael W. Apple describes in his introduction as a "critical yet supportive examination" of the implications of bell hooks' work in several disciplines. Apple examines hooks' work in the context of her mentor Paulo Freire's work - how she duplicates Freire's work in the setting of the United States - and from the standpoint of a critical analyst, stating that hooks comes "near" to executing all seven critical analyst responsibilities. The volume's editors, Davidson and Yancy, open their preface with a quote from Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, emphasizing the inseparability of hooks' work from Freirean inspiration. According to the editors, hooks takes a Freirean strategy to transforming the world, which incorporates a theory-praxis that is only feasible through the use of "real words" - words that stimulate both reflection and action. They go on to say that hooks is in sync with Freire's methodology, which involves naming the world, discovering that the world appears to be a problem, and renaming the world in light of the new findings, which leads her to challenge oppressive and domineering systems and work toward "spiritual and existential enrichment." Davidson and Yancy credit bell hooks with helping to construct "creative spaces" for members of oppressed peoples, pointing out that she was already involved in critical reflection as a child when she questioned the "historical sedimentation of patriarchy" in her own home.

Nathalia E. Jaramilo and Peter McLaren "praise hooks' critical endeavour to move the focus of critical pedagogy away from a male dominated perspective by stressing on the centrality of women's voices" in the book's opening essay and first section *Critical Pedagogy and Praxis*. Apart from hooks, practically all well-known critical pedagogy theorists were males - Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, Joe Kincheloe, and Henry Giroux are all men. Jaramilo and McLaren compare hooks to Frida Kahlo, and how both might be termed "adelitas" (female warriors) in their own industries, producing artwork or books that are accessible to people from many backgrounds. Furthermore, both artists stress the significance of personal experience in comprehending the social world. George Yancy, Tim Davidson, and Jeanette R. Davidson



address the problem of whiteness as a marker of privilege in American society in distinct sections of the same section: Yancy examines bell hooks' contribution to education, in which the latter envisions a system that caters not just to the head but also to the heart of learners, in contrast to standard epistemologies that prioritize the mind. Hooks, he claims, also called for a holistic educational system that included healing as one of its roles. Healing becomes a crucial marker of hooks' works since all individuals, white or black, male or woman, require healing to overcome the repercussions of wounded psyches, which are the outcome of a white, racist patriarchal system. In a joint paper, Davidson and Davidson investigate the role of whiteness in the American academy and praise hooks' "unflinching" fearlessness in articulating facts that challenge the unfair status quo, much to the chagrin of fellow white academicians. Cindy LaCom and Susan Hadley examine bell hooks' work on critical pedagogy through the lenses of disability studies and music therapy, against the backdrop of an American society in which whiteness is "normative" and so privileged. Gretchen Givens Generett discusses how bell hooks' concept of engaged pedagogy, or "theory meets practice," has inspired her as an educator. She agrees with Hooks that self-transformation was required not only in students but also in educators to achieve actualization.

Carme Manuel's piece focuses on Bell Hooks' children's writings, which seek to instill positive self-esteem in black children in a world where they internalize feelings of racial hatred and inferiority. Donna Dale Marcano argues in the section The Dynamics of Race and Gender that bell hooks' work should be considered "a phenomenology of black women's consciousness," Maria del Guadalupe Davidson argues for an understanding of radical black subjectivity through the author's notion of the commodification of blackness, and Cleavis Headley engages bell hooks' work in relation to postmodernism, poststructuralism, and deconstruction. Kathy Glass's essays in the third portion ground Bell Hooks' theories on love by analyzing three novels, two by male writers and one by a female writer. Marilyn Edelstein compares and contrasts Bell Hooks' and Julia Kristeva's concepts of love.

## **LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT**

The first book in bell hooks' love trilogy, *All About Love: New Visions*, was published in 2001. Hooks proposes a love blueprint for America, which is experiencing a paradox: on the one hand, there is a yearning for love, but there is also a turning away from love,



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accompanied by a cynical attitude about it, particularly among the youth. As hooks explains in her introduction, there is also a reluctance to discuss the subject of love. Hooks utilizes an anecdote from her youth to raise the loss of love to a more communal and national level, substituting the "I" for the "we" in the Preface itself, talking in Biblical terms about the loss of love in her childhood — she describes it a "fall from love's paradise (X)". Hooks asserts unequivocally, in language evocative of great spiritual leaders, that the way to love again is to let go of the past sorrow associated with the knowledge of the loss of love in the first place. She believes that returning to love is essential to living a more meaningful life. Her personal loss of being unloved as a child provides fodder for debate about the meaning and form of love in American life. The anecdote also has another purpose: it foreshadows the author's interest in understanding love as it affects our daily lives, as opposed to writing about it as "fantasy." "I want to know love's truths as we live them," she declares confidently in the Introduction. Hooks advocates a love ethic that confronts "sexist-defined gender boundaries," pointing out that few writers have acknowledged the influence of patriarchy as an impediment to loving. Thus, one finds in her "meditation" on love the same approach that hooks has used in her previous books: first, she dispels the myths about love that are prevalent in the nation's culture, then she surveys and critically analyzes the work done in the field of love, then she points out the obstacles to loving, and finally, she explains how love as a skill must be taught.

Bell hooks defines love as "a combination of caring, commitment, trust, knowledge, responsibility, and respect" (7-8). She takes this idea from M. Scott Peck's self-help book *The Road Less Traveled*. Peck, in turn, takes the term from Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving*, which describes love as "care, duty, respect, and wisdom." (24 *The Lover's Art*) Hooks rejects alternative meanings of love that circulate in the culture while choosing Peck's. The dictionary definition is rejected as overly restricted, and authors of works on love rarely define love in precise words. Hooks would rather that the reader unlearn outdated definitions or imprecise concepts about love in order to learn new ones that are more responsive to American cultural challenges. She also agrees with Peck's observation that cathecting is frequently misunderstood with love in current society. Hooks, using instances from her own early family life, establishes a contrast between care and love, claiming that in American households, care is frequently mistaken for love. Taking her fight against patriarchy a step



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further, she dismisses the idea of gendered differences in love. Another controversial stance she takes is to separate the concept of a soul or life force from religion, claiming that even as a non-believer, one can "embrace the idea of a soul" because nurturing the soul increases our capacity to love. Thus, in her presentation of love, Bell Hooks takes an intriguing method that incorporates spirituality while emphasizing action. She pulls concepts from various sources in popular culture but synthesizes them to provide ideas that may be applied in daily life. One noteworthy characteristic of her works is that she isn't afraid to use the excellent in men's ideas - her use of Peck's notion of love is only one example. This is a welcome change from the approach taken by many in the feminist movement, who have vilified everything male. This reflects Hooks' attempts to objectively reflect on major issues and analyze ideas put forth by either male or female writers through a critical lens.

Hooks also goes beyond narrow feminist concerns when she speaks out against the "intimate terrorism" of one of society's most vulnerable groups, children. Physical abuse of children is a problem that is rarely discussed in American society. However, as Hooks points out, children, too, fall victim to the mistaken belief that care equals love and choose to live with abusive parents. Hooks proposes a snappy phrase "discipline without punishment" as a technique of coping with aberrant conduct in youngsters, disrupting previously held beliefs. Hooks proposes the idea of a "second parenting figure," especially in single-parent homes, as a mediating role in settling stand-offs between parent and kid, drawing on her own experience as a godmother. Hooks is continually utilizing her personal experience as a springboard to discuss topics concerning love or the lack thereof in American culture. The personal element allows the author to talk more boldly about concerns, bridges the gap between the author and the reader, and provides concrete solutions to problems of love and lovelessness.

Hooks also criticizes patriarchal and masculine ideas, which operate as barriers to love. She exhorts readers to be truthful in love, pointing out that youngsters in America are raised in a lying culture. While "sexist socialization" promotes women to lie, men also lie, with men's lying taking the form of "withholding." Embracing patriarchal rules is equivalent to adopting a fake self, according to Hooks, who adds that males become victims of lovelessness by adopting this false self. She pushes for the rejection of patriarchal conventions that obstruct one's ability to love. She quotes Jung and claims that where "the urge to dominate is



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paramount, love will be weak." Using examples from personal experience and popular culture, Hooks demonstrates that lying is harmful to love, despite the fact that the former receives tacit support in patriarchal American culture. Men and women alike are victims of sexist thinking that drives them to hide their true selves. She argues for the necessity of honesty in public, demonstrating the need for openness as a prerequisite for the development of a rational society. Nonetheless, she advocates for both men and women to be prepared or open to dealing with the truths revealed to them by their relationships of the opposing sex. She also distinguishes between secrecy and privacy; while privacy is desired, secrecy is not. Hooks is thus re-imagining a new America in which a culture of lying that covers patriarchy's invidious nature is replaced by honesty in relationships and in public life. Hooks uses the example of advertising to demonstrate how it always maintains "people in a continual condition of need" by peddling false pictures. We find her speaking in the same tone as Eric Schumacher in *Small is Beautiful* or Gandhi, who teach us that human aspirations are limitless and that it is best to limit one's desires. This is also consistent with the concepts of great thinkers who encourage nurturing inner traits in order to improve the human state.

## CONCLUSION

Hooks examines the mental tension that black males experience as a result of having to portray a false personality in order to live in a racist culture in his essay "We Wear the Mask." Rebellious black youngsters were also brutalized into submission by black parents concerned about their children's safety in such a culture. Material needs trumped emotional concerns for generations of blacks escaping slavery, poverty, and Jim Crow segregation. Hooks argues, using examples from black writers, that spiritual healing is just as vital as material fulfillment. She continues by stating that black children experience abandonment and emotional maltreatment as a result of being born into or raised in dysfunctional black families or foster homes. Hooks' writings reflect the hardships that African-Americans have faced at various levels and stages of their subjugation in America. From the struggle to be recognized as fully human, to the struggle for education, to the struggle for political freedom, to the effort to overcome emotional trauma, the black community's life has not been simple. It is a never-ending battle not just against the enemy outside, but also against the enemy within. While hooks is outspoken in her appeal to eradicate racism and sexism, she is equally concerned about the mental health of all people, particularly black people. Her book on love



aimed towards the black community is an attempt to heal the scars left by their material existence in America, and it is intended to act as an antidote to the pessimistic spirit that grips black people. She wishes to replace a sense of pessimism with one of hope and spiritual rebirth. Part of that, she argues, entails blacks off their composure masks and "laying the groundwork for emotional well-being that makes love possible." (31). She requests that blacks reconnect with their genuine damaged selves and work for their salvation. Given the numerous issues that black people experience, the term "salvation" is an excellent choice, as its dictionary definition is "protection or deliverance from injury, ruin, or loss." While Hooks' first book provides a basic foundation for building love, her second book, *Salvation: Black People and Love*, focuses on difficulties and concerns unique to the black community and suggests viable solutions to provide a sense of well-being and positive self-direction.

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