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**AN ETHIC OF LOVE:
A FROMMEAN CRITIQUE OF EDUCATION**

BY

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B.A., Latin American Studies & Religion (double major), Samford University, 2001
M.A., Latin American Studies, University of New Mexico, 2004

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Language, Literacy & Sociocultural Studies

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2017

DEDICATION

To my grandparents—Ethel, Roman, Effie, Margaret, and Richard.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is centrally concerned with the ways in which Erich Fromm's critical analysis of society can be applied to education, specifically looking at the ways in which Fromm's conceptualizations of freedom, ethics, and love can be used both to critique education and to provide an alternative vision of education through an ethic of love. With its focus on humanization and freedom, critical pedagogy offers a powerful critique, but its liberatory potential has yet to be fully realized, largely because of the ways in which critical theory has been engaged in the work of critical pedagogy. Fromm's work offers a necessary complication to critical pedagogy through his analysis of the psychological and emotional dimensions of authentic humanization. Combining the liberatory aims of critical pedagogy with Fromm's work enables us to reveal how schooling functions to perpetuate negative freedom, to propose a universal ethic or moral vision for critical educational studies, and to engage in a critical humanizing praxis. Ultimately, the hope of this project is to show how a more complex understanding of freedom that centers a critical theory of love allows us to develop a

pedagogical framework where education as the practice of positive freedom becomes synonymous with teaching as an ethic of love.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Definition of the Problem

As a k-12 teacher, I thought of my job as ensuring that each of my students left my classroom at the end of the year prepared to be successful. This is not a unique answer, and my guess is that many teachers would likely agree with me. While the way I described my job has not changed over the years, my understanding of what it means to prepare a student to be successful has changed a great deal. It is a topic that has driven much of my writing and research, and it is at the heart of my dissertation project.

Too often we use the word success without actually thinking about what we mean by it. Of course, we want our students to be successful, but in what way? Do we mean academically? Socially? Emotionally? All of these? What does success in any of these areas look like? The last year I taught elementary school, it became apparent that my definition of success was quite different from many of my peers. Surely our measurements of success are more than just quiet students who always raise their hands before they speak, perfect penmanship, proficient standardized test scores, the mastery of regurgitation.

I am far more interested in how we prepare our students to take risks, to grow, to think for themselves, to practice creativity, and to engage critically with the world around them. Perhaps what underlies my concern for how we define success, and thus our job as educators, is my belief that there must be something more to this experience of education. I am certainly not the first one to be troubled by the idea that something important is missing. This is a critique educators have been making for decades. As Deborah

Britzman (1998) writes, “But what remains common after all these years is a collective insistence on imagining ‘something more’ than staying put in the logic of official knowledge” (p. 97).

What I have found in thinking both about what this something more could be and how we define success, is that we have first to consider the broader purpose of education. Many scholars have dismantled the idea that education is the great equalizer of society and, in fact, have shown that the opposite is true. Through this work, not only do we see that historically the purpose of education has been anything but to be the great equalizer, but given the similarities to contemporary education discourse, we can also argue that equality is not its purpose today either. Anyon (1980), Bowles and Gintis (1977/2011) and Oakes (2005) are just a few of the scholars whose work has exposed this. If inequality is at the heart of U.S. education, this significantly impacts any discussion of what it means to create successful students in our classrooms. While veiled in discourse about equality, equal access for all, and the American Dream, the impact of the institution of education has been something much different. Despite this, there are those within education who remain hopeful, who think we can make education “something more” than it has been, who believe that education can be the practice of freedom.

When bell hooks (1994) writes of education as the practice of freedom, she describes a school experience that is revolutionary and counterhegemonic, where learning is liberating. “Education as the practice of freedom” is a phrase that is becoming increasingly common, but I doubt if many of us stop to really consider the significance of such a statement. I would argue that to understand and then act upon the notion of education as the practice of freedom, or “the something more” we have been searching

for, we must think deeply about what education as the practice of freedom means, particularly the idea of freedom.

Contemporary notions of freedom are conceptualized in relation to self, encouraging privatization, non-interference, self-reliance and self-dependence. America has come to be the ultimate symbol of individualized freedom; to be an American is to be endowed with a freedom of entitlement. While ideas of individualized and unregulated freedom have allowed for the perversion of what it means to be human, education scholars within critical pedagogy present an alternative way to define freedom, and the means through which it can be realized. Paulo Freire (1968/2000), often referred to as the father of critical pedagogy, wrote the following of freedom in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion.¹ (p. 47)

Re-conceptualized, freedom becomes a means for unveiling oppression and injustice rather than mystifying them.

With its focus on humanization and freedom, critical pedagogy offers a powerful critique, but its liberatory potential has yet to be fully realized, largely because of the ways in which critical theory has been engaged in the work of critical pedagogy. When

¹ The use of “man” in this paper is the consequence of quoting Freire and Fromm, both of whom referred to all humanity as such, along with other scholars who implemented this language when writing about Freire or Fromm. I make no excuses for the failure to recognize the importance of using gender-free writing techniques. I attempt to use both pronouns “she” and “he” and/or “her and “him” whenever I am not citing a statement made by Freire or Fromm.

we look at the critical theorists most often cited or referred to by education scholars, we find Jürgen Habermas, Max Weber, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse. Indeed, all of these scholars have provided insightful analyses and critique, yet I would argue their commitment to more orthodox Marxism and interpretations of critical theory is limiting. Erich Fromm is one critical theorist who is rarely engaged in critical pedagogy, despite the fact that his work most closely aligns with themes central to such projects. He explores notions of freedom, liberation, humanization, and self-actualization, all common to critical pedagogy, but he offers an important analysis not found in critical pedagogy. While a critical theorist, Fromm's approach is quite different from his other colleagues in the Frankfurt School, as he attempts to bring together critical theory, psychoanalysis, and studies of emotionality. All of which provides a compelling and insightful discussion for those of us engaged in education today.

Fromm was a German psychoanalyst and sociologist associated with the Frankfurt School for Social Research during the decade of the 1930s. His work focused on bringing together aspects of Freudian theory with Marxist critique. Much like other critical theorists, Fromm questions the nature and reality of our freedom, problematizing the idea of a given freedom. He challenges notions of what it means to be free and takes to task the assumption that our definitions of these concepts are always good or beneficial. According to McLaughlin (1996), "Fromm was preoccupied with the human roots of destructiveness. . .He stressed the centrality of the human need for community and the emotional dynamics of mass political violence" (p. 242). Fromm's interest lies in the psychological and the emotional states of modern humanity, and how these have manifested in what he refers to as a state of negative freedom. In doing this, he looks at

how people relate to the world, and how we come together as a society. Negative freedom can be understood in terms of the idea of freedom *from*, in contrast to freedom *to*. Here, human beings in an isolated, powerless, and alienated state are free from traditional authorities or powers outside of ourselves, but then blindly submit to other authorities whose power functions through internal restraint, fear, or compulsion, in order to relieve oneself of the overwhelming anxiety of aloneness and burden of freedom (Fromm, 1941/1994). Yet, Fromm is not without hope. He believes that once we understand negative freedom, we can begin to create the space for positive freedom, which he defines as the freedom to fully realize one's self through the spontaneous act of love that allows one to unite with others authentically. The love experienced in positive freedom is nothing like contemporary understandings and requires a complete reconceptualization of the term, which will be addressed through this project (Fromm, 1941/1994).

As Fromm analyzes freedom, he critiques both how we define humanity's states of being, and the terminology we use to describe our existence or the ways in which we are in the world. Fromm unveils the contradictory nature of our existence, showing that the reality in which we live is far from free. His analysis brings to light the oppressive mechanisms of what is commonly considered freedom and looks at what it is that makes modern men and women want to give up their freedom. He uses the contradictions to reveal new spaces for considering what it means to be authentically free. It is this research that sets Fromm apart from other critical theorists of the Frankfurt School. Initially, many within the intellectual circles of psychoanalysis, sociology, and critical theory considered Fromm to be an important and innovative thinker, yet by the 1950s he

lost favor with many of these same circles as his thinking became increasingly unfashionable, and today he has become what some would term a “forgotten intellectual” (McLaughlin, 1998, p. 214). While a forgotten intellectual within his own fields, he is virtually unknown in education, much to our detriment.

Schools are one of the most important sites for the dissemination of a dehumanizing negative freedom. The official discourse in schools rarely challenges students to question the given interpretations of reality. In fact, more often than not, schools ask students to behave as Fromm’s automatons, uncritically accepting a submissive role where they learn not to question the ‘truths’ presented in textbooks or the normative assessments of their intelligence. There are severe inequalities and disparities in academic success based on race, class, and gender. Alienation, anxiety, fear, and isolation flourish in schools. Our students are traumatized by a destruction of self that takes place over and over. Throughout this project, examples such as these will be considered to analyze the ways schools function as structures in which negative freedom is naturalized. This normalization of oppression allows for the separation of knowledge and experience that makes the schooling process so hostile to positive freedom. In divorcing knowledge from lived experience, education loses its ability to counter the fragmentation of the self created by negative freedom. There is no possibility for the integrated personality, and thus no chance for the emergence of positive freedom. This is quite the opposite of what we would find were schooling to take seriously the goal of education as the practice of freedom. It is Fromm’s concern with freedom that makes his work so potentially powerful for the field of education. His analysis of freedom is multi-faceted, as he engages both ethics and love in his conceptualization of freedom,

demonstrating the intersectionality and interdependence of the three.

While freedom, ethics², and love are not new topics in the field of education, I do believe that they have become severely distorted in how they are conceptualized academically and in classroom practice. The nature of these distortions will be discussed in more depth in later sections, but my interest here is to look at those within education who have approached these topics from a critical perspective. Both Maxine Greene (1988) and Paulo Freire (1973, 2000) are well-known for their work on freedom. David E. Purpel (1989, 1991, 1999, 2004, 2005) and H. Svi Shapiro (1985, 2005), who have remained on the fringes of critical theory and education, look at the under-theorized relationship between morality and social justice education. bell hooks (1994, 2001, 2002), Cheryl E. Matias and Ricky Lee Allen (2013) write about the role of love in education in ways that push the boundaries of how we think about this relationship. While all of the aforementioned scholars have alluded to the connections between freedom, ethics/morality, and love to varying degrees, for the most part, these topics have been considered in isolation.

This dissertation is centrally concerned with the ways in which Fromm's critical analysis of society can be applied to education, specifically looking at the ways in which Fromm's conceptualizations of freedom, ethics, and love can be used both to critique education and to provide an alternative vision of education through an ethic of love. Ultimately, the hope of this project is to reconsider how we define and create student success in our classrooms so that the experience of education is one that contributes to

² For the purposes of this project "morality" and "ethics" are used interchangeably. The relevant education scholars tend to use the term "morality" or "moral education," while Fromm's work is discussed in terms of "ethics." For the purposes of clarity, consistency, and flow within specific discussions, I have maintained this distinction when choosing to use each of the terms throughout the project.

the humanization of our students rather than their oppression and degradation, and thus become a practice of freedom. While this is a theoretical dissertation, this is not a discussion of abstract educational notions. It is grounded in the belief that the conceptualization of a critical theory of freedom that engages both morality and love can contribute to a change in the lived experience of all who participate in our educational system.

Fromm's work helps us to examine the reality of education through analyzing its societal role. Education should be about more than obtaining the necessary credentials for employment. Fromm provides the language that allows us to understand that an educational experience focused on obtaining the right credentials, mastering Common Core State Standards, and passing standardized tests is anything but harmless. In fact, it is just such a system that allows what Fromm refers to as negative freedom to become normalized and accepted. For those of us interested in liberatory and transformational education, our work thus far is incomplete without considering what we can glean from Fromm. At the heart of conversations about the liberating and transformational potential of education is a concern for the dehumanizing nature of schooling. We have made significant inroads in critiquing the institution and experience of education, but we are still missing that "something more" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009). I believe the very things that set Fromm apart from the other critical theorists of his time are key to furthering our work in transformational education. If we think of Fromm as a philosopher of the public life, his work, unlike his peers', shows the ways in which our private lives and internal struggles are reflected publically through society and thus impact education.

There is much to be gained in using Fromm's theories as a lens through which to analyze education, but this does not mean that his work is entirely unproblematic. While his writings on freedom, morality, and love are illuminating, they lack any real engagement with race or gender. His engagement with patriarchy and white supremacy in the perpetuation of negative freedom and their effect on our experiences of love and freedom is somewhat limited. Freire is similarly problematic in the way in which he theorizes critical pedagogy around class, minimizing the roles of race or gender. Both Allen (2005) and hooks (1994) critique this aspect of Freire's work, and show ways in which it can be re-theorized around race and gender to be more empowering. This project will do the same with Fromm's work, to propose a Frommean critique of education that engages both patriarchy and white supremacy.

Perhaps Fromm can inspire us to alter our current discourse or create a new one that pushes us to embrace the discomfort of having boundaries questioned and pushed; perhaps we will find exhilaration in new possibilities, or renew our passion when we are encouraged to desire more. Fromm asks us to look deeper and question what has been normalized and accepted. As Pignatelli (1998) contends,

Public discourse must be about solving problems, forging solutions. But it must also probe and touch our civic conscience. Within the folds of such discourse, we might find ourselves both disturbed and exhilarated, anxious and hopeful, restless and energized. (p. 264)

In using Fromm's work as a lens through which to analyze education, we can begin to create a discourse that offers solutions, but also probes us to consider new ideas. This allows us to move closer to the place where education is the practice of freedom, and

toward a deeper understanding of the problems of education and potential solutions.

The basis for much of Fromm's critique is found in his suggestion that as a society we are ignorant of the most fundamental questions of human existence: "what man is, how he ought to live, and how the tremendous energies *within* man can be released and used productively" (1947/1990, p. 4). I am intrigued by these questions, particularly in regards to their relevance for education. Critical educational studies have offered numerous accounts of society's oppression and dehumanization, but none base their critique on the argument that, as a society, we have no idea how to live a life of freedom that allows us to access our potential. What if the purpose of education became the exploration of these very questions? Perhaps then we could get at what education as the practice of freedom means. Placing Fromm's queries at the heart of education drastically alters the purpose of education and challenges its implementation and practice.

If education is the practice of positive freedom, what would it mean to prepare our students to be successful in light of these questions? For Fromm (1956/2006), it would mean unveiling the ways negative freedom dehumanizes and exploring the possibility of transformation in positive freedom. If love is the key to positive freedom, education must teach both students and teachers how to love—but not love as it is experienced in contemporary society. The love of positive freedom is different. This reconceptualized love is defined as,

An action, the practice of a human power, which can be practiced only in freedom and never as a result of compulsion. Love is an activity, not a passive affect; it is a "standing in, not a "falling for." (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 21)

Theoretical Framework

In the broadest terms, this research project is concerned with the potential of liberatory or transformational education. The theoretical framework guiding this project is critical theory through the use of critical hermeneutics. Below is a brief overview of critical theory and hermeneutics, followed by a more in-depth discussion of critical hermeneutics and its applicability here.

Critical theory has been pivotal in demonstrating the ways in which power operates to systemically reproduce oppression and the role of schools in this perpetuation. While a language of critique is essential to the project at hand, equally important is the language of transcendence or the belief that the possibility for change exists. The discussion here is certainly more theoretical in nature, yet it is undertaken with the belief that there must be a strong connection between theory and lived experience. Horkheimer (1982) suggests that critical theory has the very specific and tangible purpose “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” in order to transform the lived reality (p. 244). Barone’s (2000) discussion of Sartre’s work describes what it means to employ critical theory as a framework. He explains,

Sartre wrote to transform the world. He chose a kind of writing that rejected the purity of knowledge allegedly found in abstract, speculative philosophy in favor of a synthesis that included interpretation and critique aimed toward an intervention in history. This was a literature, not of consumption, but of production. (p. 231)

Barone’s (2000) description not only alludes to the focus on transformation through intervention but also explicitly identifies the use of both critique and interpretation as the

means through which this is made possible.

Such a focus on interpretation lends itself to a hermeneutic approach. While everything we do is interpretation, all interpretation is not hermeneutics. The significance and power of hermeneutics is in the act of explicitly engaging in the analysis of interpretation. This act of interpreting is a powerful one, and the history of hermeneutics reveals a field that has been highly contested in its identity, meaning, and purpose for most of its existence. In part, this is due to the complex concepts the field takes on. Interpretation, understanding, and perception are not easily defined. As Thompson (1981) writes, “There is no interpretation without contestation” (p. 46).

To assess how we engage in interpretation, understanding, and perception, and then how to analyze this engagement, is complicated. It is not only the complex nature of what is being studied, but also the power and the politics attached to engaging in and analyzing such activities. Hermeneutics itself is a challenge to the empirically oriented natural sciences that place explanation and verification as the ultimate goals or purposes in a search for absolute truth. Much of contemporary hermeneutic theory argues that absolute truth is impossible. Many scholars of hermeneutics have done important work in laying the foundation upon which to validate non-empirical work. With hermeneutics, the focus shifts from one of explanation and verification to one of understanding and validation, a clear challenge to the primacy of empirical work (Leonardo, 2003). Three of the most significant scholars in the field of hermeneutics who will be referenced in the following conversation are Jürgen Habermas, a German philosopher, political scientist, sociologist, and critical theorist; Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German Continental philosopher; and Paul Ricoeur, a French philosopher.

The contemporary work done on hermeneutics reveals how political lines have been drawn around conceptualizations of meaning and purpose in relation to hermeneutics. These lines are particularly clear when one looks at how various scholars have chosen to portray the field and its history. Even now it continues to be an area full of contestation, as demonstrated by Ricoeur's (1974) statement: "there does not exist a general hermeneutics, that is a general theory of interpretation, a general canon for exegesis; there are only various separate and contrasting hermeneutic theories" (as qtd. in Thomson, 1981, p. 46). A universally accepted definition of hermeneutics is difficult to find. Freeman (2008) suggests the following definition:

The study of the theory and practice of understanding and interpretation. It is built on the assumption that interpretation is not a straightforward activity even though people do it all the time when they interact with others and the world. (p. 385)

In *Hermeneutics and Education*, Gallagher (1992) offers eight different definitions of hermeneutics that reveal the ways in which hermeneutics has been conceived and trace the historical development of the field. Even with eight different definitions, Gallagher admits his list is not exhaustive, but merely an attempt to demonstrate the variety of ways hermeneutics has been understood.

Since this project is grounded in critical theory, my interest here is specifically in critical hermeneutics, as this is where I find the most promise for the transformational theoretical work like that described by Horkheimer and Sartre. Critical hermeneutics is a project that takes on the premises and the purposes of critical theory and applies it to the

study of understanding and interpretation. The field of critical hermeneutics came about largely through Habermas' critique of and response to Gadamer's conceptualization of hermeneutical interpretation. The Habermas-Gadamer Debate has generated a great deal of scholarship in the study of hermeneutics. The significance of Habermas' critique will be discussed in more detail below, but first, follows a more general discussion of critical hermeneutics. Kögler (2008), Gallagher (1992), and Freeman (2008) all discuss critical hermeneutics as a significant approach within hermeneutics. As the content of their discussions varies, each will be briefly discussed below.

According to Kögler (2008), the central theoretical feature of critical hermeneutics is the belief that all explicit acts of interpretation are based upon an implicit background understanding that is mediated linguistically, socially, and culturally, thus one's internal interpretation is shaped by social power practices (p. 153). Kögler (2008) refers to critical hermeneutics as the umbrella term for a number of projects undertaken since the 1960s. He suggests the following definition:

It is hermeneutics because the core of the shared orientation consists in reconstructing the general grounds of understanding and interpretation of symbolic expressions, including texts, actions, images, and practices. It is critical because it takes the grounds of interpretation to be essentially linked to social power and domination, and thus, to require a systematic analysis of the nature, structure, and impact of power on the constitution and understanding of meaning. (p. 151)

Freeman (2008) writes that the critical tradition focuses on both the author's expression and the reader's interpretation as it works to "uncover the shaping presence of history,

power and ideology” (p. 386). He goes on to explain that while this tradition does not believe that one can ever reveal the true meaning of an author, the work of uncovering understanding can provide the means to create a more empowering interpretation.

Gallagher’s conceptualization of critical hermeneutics is slightly different. Gallagher (1992) focuses his discussion on the emancipatory element of critical hermeneutics. He writes, “Critical hermeneutics is conservative to the extent that it promises to destroy false consciousness rather than to live within it, as radical hermeneutics contends we must” (p. 11).

This basic knowledge of how critical hermeneutics is defined provides a context for then discussing the significance of Habermas’ critique of Gadamer’s theory of hermeneutics. Habermas’ critique creates a framework that supplies the two necessary components of critical hermeneutics: a language of critique and a language of transcendence. It is to the language of critique that we look first. The core element of Gadamerian hermeneutics is his idea of the universality of human linguisticity which he believes to be all encompassing. According to Gallagher (1992), “Gadamer maintains that even extralinguistic experience, if it is to have any significance of effect, must always be mediated by language. All interpretation falls under linguistic constraints” (p. 17).

For Habermas, this is a naïve argument and he challenges Gadamer’s belief in the universality of the dialogic encounter. Habermas (1971) insists,

He [the interpreter] cannot simply jump over the open horizon of his own life activity and just suspend the context of tradition in which his own subjectivity has been formed in order to submerge himself in a

subhistorical stream of life that allows the pleasurable identification of everyone with everyone else. Nevertheless, hermeneutic understanding can arrive at objectivity to the extent that the understanding subject learns, through the communicative appropriation of alien objectifications, to comprehend itself in its own self-formative process. (p. 181)

Habermas believes that language is shaped and determined by social factors, operating like a meta-institution upon which social relations are based, and while language is dependent upon social processes, these processes cannot be reduced to language (Gallagher, 1992). Kögler (2008) compares the role of language in Habermas' critique to Marx's use of labor in his own critique. Habermas believes that "language itself is dependent on extra-linguistic social process of domination, organized force, modes of production, scientific-technical progress, and so on" (Gallagher, 1992).

This understanding of language grounds the critical hermeneutic project that Habermas puts forth. According to Habermas (1971),

[Hermeneutics] is designed to guarantee, within cultural traditions, the possible action-orienting self-understanding of individuals and groups as well as reciprocal understanding between different individuals and groups. It makes possible the form of unconstrained consensus and the type of open intersubjectivity on which communicative action depends. (p. 176)

Central to Habermas' hermeneutics is the notion of reflection, which he describes as "the experience of the emancipatory power of reflection, which the subject experiences in itself to the extent that it becomes transparent to itself in the history of its genesis" (1971, p. 197). Habermas argues for a hermeneutics that would have the ability, through self-

reflection, to uncover the distortion and deception, breaking through the false consciousness present in communication and bringing about new self-awareness, in order to offer the hope of pure undistorted communication (Gallagher, 1992). Thompson (1981) describes it “as the demystification of a meaning presented to the interpreter in the form of a disguise” (p. 46). He goes on, characterizing it as “animated by suspicion, by a skepticism towards the given” (1981, p. 46)

In *The Power of Dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics after Gadamer and Foucault*, Kögler (1996) offers an excellent analysis of Gadamer’s conceptualization of pre-understanding and its role in grounding Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory. His analysis demonstrates the inability of Gadamer’s pre-understanding to challenge notions or structures of power. For Gadamer, while it is impossible to transcend the tradition or pre-judgments that bind our understandings, it was also unnecessary to do this. Kögler (1996) writes,

Gadamer conceived language as a productive dialogue in which substantively different views confront one another and ultimately are fused into a new and deeper insight. . . indeed, this confrontation is always accomplished as the unification and formation of a *single* horizon. (p. 70)

For Gadamer, there is no ability or need to transcend these horizons. Instead, the hope is to come to new understanding through fusing horizons, accomplished through our engagement with the historical and traditional texts which push us to think beyond ourselves. Ramberg and Gjesdal (2009) explain,

Having traveled through decades and centuries, the classic works of art, literature, science, and philosophy question us and our way of life. Our

prejudices, whatever aspects of our cultural horizon that we take for granted, are brought into the open in the encounter with the past. . . We recognize the authority of a text (or a work of art) by engaging with it in textual explication and interpretation, by entering into a dialogical relationship with the past. (“Hermeneutic Humanism,” para. 6)

Gadamer sees no deception or guile at work. This means there is no need for Habermas’ transcendent and emancipatory self-reflection because people’s ‘inner worlds’ are not shaped by struggles rooted in false consciousness.

For critical hermeneutics, it is essential to problematize Gadamer’s horizons. These horizons are based upon one’s prejudgment or prejudice and are linked to structures of power that must be recognized and critiqued. Gadamer’s pre-judgments and prejudices are what critical hermeneutics names false consciousness. The authority of tradition in Gadamerian hermeneutics leaves no room for critical reflection, leaving us disempowered with little hope of agency. The way out of this disempowerment, beyond false consciousness, is through Habermas’ theorization of depth hermeneutics, which he bases upon Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. The fundamental purpose of psychoanalysis is to make conscious that which is unconscious by uncovering the hidden or suppressed. Habermas explains the significance in hermeneutical terms. He writes,

Psychoanalytic interpretation is concerned with those connections of symbols in which a subject deceives itself about itself. . . [It] deals with texts indicating self-deceptions of the author. . . such texts document the latent content of a portion of the author’s orientations that has become inaccessible to him and alienated from him and yet belongs to him

nevertheless. Freud coins the phrase “internal foreign territory” to capture the character of the alienation of something that is still the subject’s very own. (1971, p. 218)

Depth hermeneutics “incorporates explanation and understanding into a science oriented towards methodical self-reflection” (Thompson, 1981, p. 83). The role of self-reflection in relation to the unconscious is an important facet of what distinguishes depth hermeneutics. Habermas (1971) contends,

Hermeneutics derives its function in the process of the genesis of self-consciousness. It does not suffice to talk of the translation of a text; the translation itself is reflection: ‘the translation of what is conscious into what is unconscious.’ Repressions can be eliminated only by virtue of reflection. (p. 228)

Critique within self-reflection becomes the means through which one recognizes and transcends false consciousness. Habermas (1971) defines the false consciousness as,

All the places where, owing to internal disturbance, the text of our everyday language games are interrupted by incomprehensible symbols. These symbols cannot be understood because they do not obey the grammatical rules of ordinary language, norms of action, and culturally learned patterns of expression. They are either ignored and glossed over, rationalized through secondary elaboration (if they are not already the product of rationalizations), or reduced to external, somatic disturbances. (p. 226)

Habermas (1973) argues that this sort of “systematically distorted communication” can

only be dismantled through “critique, so that in self-reflection, which the analytic method has made possible and provoked, in the end insight can coincide with emancipation from unrecognized dependencies” (as qtd. in Thompson, 1981, p. 84).

Through self-reflective critique, depth hermeneutics becomes a language of transcendence. Central to critical hermeneutics is the belief that the interpretive process allows interpreters “to transcend their previously taken-for-granted horizons and look critically from the outside at their own assumptions and practices” (Kögler, 2008, p. 153). The potential for the transformation of critical hermeneutics is based upon the belief that the interpreter can practice critical interpretive reflexivity, seeing how their own beliefs and assumptions are implicated in socially oppressive practices, and then challenging them (Kögler, 2008). In critical hermeneutics, the hermeneutical situation can and must be changed. The goal of critical hermeneutics is to push the limits or boundaries of understanding so that they can be challenged and altered. This is an important shift in hermeneutic theory. As Gallagher (1992) elucidates,

If in Gadamer’s view, understanding is always and inexorably situated and so constrained by language and the process of tradition that no privileged disconnection is possible, for Habermas, reflection has the power to create a positive perspective from which to evaluate the constraints of situated interpretation. (p. 244-245)

This ability to reflect is not only a significant break from Gadamerian hermeneutics but also sets critical hermeneutics apart from other critical theory projects. Self-reflection is the language of transcendence, and thus is the crucial piece to the potential of critical hermeneutics. Unlike other critical theory projects, critical hermeneutics provides hope

for a way out. Through critical hermeneutics, Habermas conceptualizes a utopic vision of non-distorted, non-oppressive communication. In breaking with Gadamer and creating the critical hermeneutics project, Habermas opens up a truly promising area of research for critical theorists in education. Critical hermeneutics offers a language with which to approach the many educational studies that engage with ideas of understanding, meaning, and interpretation.

While the use of critical hermeneutics in education is still limited, interest in it is growing. Leonardo (2003b) discusses the potential for critical hermeneutics and educational research through applying Ricoeur's work on philosophical hermeneutics to issues of domination and ideology critique. In doing this, he suggests the creation of a critical hermeneutics educational project that he terms an "interpretation of domination" (p. 329).

Leonardo argues that interpretation is central to the ideology critique of critical studies of education, yet often ignored is the fact that domination is crucial to ideology critique. Thus, he concludes that we must expand our understanding of interpretation in the study of domination. For Leonardo (2003b), Ricoeur is particularly well-suited to this project because his understanding of ideology differs from Marx's belief that ideology functions solely as distortion.

Leonardo (2003b) begins with Ricoeur's definition of hermeneutics as "the site of . . . the conflict of interpretations" (p. 330-331). The focus on conflict as part of interpretation is significant, particularly when one thinks of the role that conflict theory plays in critical theory. What does conflict reveal? In an entry on conflict theory, Hurn (2002) asks, "Does the appearance of conflict usually conceal a deeper agreement on the

basic rules of the game. . .or is it order and harmony that are superficial?” (p. 111). Conflict theorists would argue that the harmony is not only superficial, but fleeting, hiding a system created to ensure the reproduction of inequalities. For the critical hermeneuticist, the “site of conflict” could be the very place where one’s false consciousness is revealed for the distortion that it is. Ricoeur’s concept of understanding appears to be similar to that of Habermas, in that both highlight the role of distortion, although there may be a difference in the ultimate purpose of revealing distortion for the two philosophers. For Ricoeur, “understanding is not the search for consent but the unpacking of layers of distortion in order to arrive at the immanent structure of the text” (Leonardo, 2003b, p. 333).

While Ricoeur recognizes the political nature of distortion and even links it to exploitative social formation, he does not explicitly link it to a social justice project, which means it must be radicalized in order to be of use to an educational project based on an interpretation of domination (Leonardo, 2003b). As Leonardo (2003b) contends,

For to interpret ideology is not only a matter of arriving at the text, how it is symbolized, and what it may mean. Ideology critique is a matter of social justice and this is ultimately the challenge of critical hermeneutics.

(p. 343)

Using Ricoeur, Leonardo (2003b) also makes a strong argument for the necessity of theoretical research to social justice projects. He explains,

The problem of research into domination is not so much an issue of producing “better” knowledge, but of liberating people from accepting their knowledge as natural and neutral. Ricoeur’s hermeneutics can assist

in this project by challenging the claim that research produces objective knowledge about a particular phenomenon. . . Instead, research can justify its knowledge production in ethical terms, that is, by self-reflecting on the political consequences of the research product and project. (2003b, p. 346)

Ricoeur lays the groundwork not only for the validity and value of this kind of work but the inherent hope that comes from this research. He not only attempts to make an argument for freeing theoretical work from the value system of empirical research, but he demonstrates the limitless possibilities that can be created when research is not bound by empirical rules of verification. According to Ricoeur (1981), “What is to be interpreted in the text is a proposed world which I could inhabit and in which I could project my ownmost possibilities” (as qtd. in Leonardo, 2003b, p. 337).

Habermas’ work in critical hermeneutics provides the foundation upon which critical theorists in education can build a strong body of work. Leonardo’s article demonstrates one way in which we can apply critical hermeneutics to a critical social justice project in education. Understood this way, critical pedagogy and critical hermeneutics have complementary objectives. As Leonardo (2003b) writes,

The process of schooling is itself an interpretive endeavor concerning the role of schools in society: it is inherently hermeneutical. At the heart of educational research is a hermeneutical structure where interpretations collide or complement one another. (p. 329)

Critical hermeneutics and critical pedagogy are both two-pronged in their attempt to empower, relying on a language of critique and a language of transcendence. This

language of hope is what has sets both apart from other schools of critical theory that are dominated by a deterministic theory of reproduction that leaves no space for the possibility of change or transformation (see Bourdieu, 1977/2003; Bowles & Gintis, 1977/2011).

Critical hermeneutics is an area wide open for creative interpretive work. It has the potential to provide an innovative lens for liberatory education. We are left with the task to explore how we can apply this kind of work to critical educational studies for transformative purposes. The potential for transformation goes beyond just working to transform a thing or a structure. The transformation cannot be focused just on changing something outside of ourselves. To engage in a hermeneutical inquiry forces self-reflection. To do this is to practice what Mills (2000) refers to as the sociological imagination, risking all that we hold familiar and coming to “feel as if [one] suddenly awakened in a house with which they only supposed themselves to be familiar” (p. 8). We cannot pretend to believe that we can take on a project of reconceptualizing understanding and meaning without bringing about profound personal change. This, when combined with critical hermeneutics’ focus on understanding and critiquing the ways in which power and ideology operate and shape society, make it clear how critical hermeneutics as a framework is suited to a project on a Frommean analysis of education. His implementation of psychoanalytic theory and the unconscious engages self-reflection. Fromm’s attention to freedom and love provide the means to explore critical hermeneutics from a different angle. At the same time, a critical hermeneutical reading of Fromm will reveal his limited engagement with patriarchy and white supremacy. All of which will be considered in terms of its application to the experience of education

today.

A Review of the Literature

The following will briefly review the literature relevant to freedom, morality, and love, as these are the three major themes of this dissertation project. This review will focus specifically on the work that has already been done around these three themes in the field of education. As this project is grounded in critical hermeneutics, the scholarship from the field of critical pedagogy is of the most interest here because it shares a critical theory framework.

Freedom

The overarching project of critical pedagogy is to bring about authentic freedom. In the most general terms, it can be said that critical pedagogy looks at the ways in which schools or educational systems act as a structure which shapes society and social relations, particularly in terms of what counts as knowledge and identity development. Education then is a political activity with the potential to oppress or liberate (Leonardo, 2004). It is here, within this potential to liberate or oppress, that we find the essence of critical pedagogy—a commitment to liberation coupled with a critique of the lived reality of freedom today. As two of the most prolific writers on freedom within critical pedagogy, the following will focus on the work of Freire and Greene, particularly Freire's *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1973) and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968/2000), and Greene's *The Dialectic of Freedom* (1988).

Important to any reconceptualization of freedom is a critique of contemporary interpretations and experiences of freedom. Today, freedom is typically understood in individualized terms, encouraging self-reliance, independence, and non-interference. As

Greene (1988) writes,

Americans assume they were born free. If they can function with any degree of effectiveness, they feel entitled to do as they please, to pursue their fulfillments on their own. To be autonomous and independent: This seems to many to be the American dream. (p. 1)

While we cling to our imagined independence and autonomy, in reality, these are myths that we have chosen to believe. Our freedom is representative of quite the opposite; it is in fact domination. Freire (1973) argues,

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of modern man is his domination by the force of these myths and his manipulation by organized advertising, ideological or otherwise. Gradually, without realizing the loss, he relinquishes his capacity for choice; he is expelled from the orbit of decisions. Ordinary men do not perceive the tasks of the time; the latter are interpreted by an “elite” and presented in the form of recipes, of prescriptions. And when men try to save themselves by following the prescriptions, they drown in leveling anonymity, without hope and without faith, domesticated and adjusted. (p. 6)

Both Freire and Greene question the authenticity or existence of an endowed freedom that has been selectively denied to so many. In broad terms, both their critique and their re-conceptualization come from looking at freedom in terms of its social dimension. Heavily influenced by Marxism, Freire’s critique is class based. In *The Dialectic of Freedom* (1988), Greene takes into account a wider range of points of view and voices, looking at the way in which one’s experience and understanding of freedom

are influenced by gender, race, and class. She argues that “Freedom cannot be conceived apart from a matrix of social, economic, cultural and psychological conditions” (p. 80). While individuals are supposedly born free, societal gaps based upon class, race, and gender can begin to impact a person before they are even born, continuing to grow in significance for the rest of his or her life. It is from within the very contradictory nature of contemporary notions of individualized freedom that both Freire and Greene suggest the possibility for something more. Freire and Greene conceptualize freedom dialectically, using the contradictions to critique the authenticity of what is considered freedom and present an alternative way in which to think of freedom.

For both Freire and Greene, freedom is a notion that must not only be understood but also practiced dialectically. In doing this, the contradictions reveal new spaces that allow for the expansion of one’s thinking. In *The Dialectic of Freedom* (1988), Greene searches out contradictions within the meaning of freedom as it exists in the interactions of individuals and society. For Greene, the contradiction is found in “the sense in which a free society (and its citizens) are morally endangered by unacknowledged mastery, by domination of every kind” (p. 46). While we may be a free society, our social realities bring into question the authenticity of this freedom. Faced with such a contradiction, many are forced to go in search of what Greene (1988) refers to as an “intimate terrain” in which they separate their inner and outer worlds in hopes of discovering “real selves” (p. 20). When their inner selves are safely distanced from their social realities, “They can afford outward compliance, so they tolerate and sometimes become complicitous with what they condemn” (Greene, 1988, p. 20). Those who withdraw into their intimate terrain have acquiesced to the idea that there are no alternative possibilities for the outer

world, that freedom is limited by determinacy (Greene, 1988). This echoes Freire's (1968/2000) argument that we are divided, unauthentic beings living within a duality, whose only hope is to "perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is not exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (p. 48-49). For both, the myth of contemporary freedom is revealed through its dependence on the fragmentation of the self that allows injustice and oppression to continue unchallenged. Within their critiques, they find hope for the possibility of a different freedom, a re-conceptualized freedom that unveils oppression and injustice rather than hides it.

Reimagined, freedom becomes the means through which to create a whole, unfragmented, humanized self. As Freire (1968/2000) writes, "It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion" (p. 47). Freedom and humanization are inextricably linked for both Freire and Greene. It is impossible to understand their conceptualization of freedom without grasping the significance of humanization because freedom is dependent upon humanization. Freire (1968/2000) describes humanization as the true vocation of men and women. For Greene (1988) it is "to be alive" (xxi).

Central to humanization is the concept of critical consciousness or "conscientization/conscientização" (Freire, 2000, p. 109). Conscientization implies the unveiling of contradictions within one's reality. One cannot realize the possibilities or the promises of freedom without a critical consciousness. Without critical thought, we continue to move through this world carelessly and thoughtlessly despite the oppressions or injustices experienced or witnessed (Greene, 1988). Critical thought provides the means to break with the apathy and hopelessness created by dehumanizing freedom

through recognizing it and naming it as such. In doing this, the oppressed are not only naming the obstacles in the way of freedom but recognizing their own lack of fulfillment and incompleteness in an unfinished reality and thus acknowledging their desire for authentic freedom. Recognizing one's concrete situatedness in reality is a necessary starting point in the achievement of freedom (Freire, 1968/2000). While acknowledging the very present reality of freedom, the state of the here and now from which freedom emerges, one must also see freedom in the possibilities of the future. It is a critical consciousness that enables one to be both aware of his or her present situatedness while looking toward the future (Greene, 1988). Thus critical consciousness provides a number of necessary things, such as a way to critique the current reality, the hope needed to imagine a different future, and the sense of responsibility that oppression cannot be allowed to continue unchallenged (Freire, 1968/2000).

Both Freire and Greene advocate for a social freedom, or a freedom that is historically, socially, and politically contextualized. Freedom is something achieved in relationship with one's world and one's social reality. As Freire (1968/2000) writes,

Authentic liberation—the process of humanization—is not another deposit to be made in men. Liberation is praxis: the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it. (p. 79)

A significant part of both of their scholarship on freedom is the necessity of strong, authentic community solidarity. There is not an endowed, given freedom, but one pursued through the practice of agency within community. Authentic freedom does not come at the cost of others' freedom or welfare (Greene, 1988).

It is hope that sustains one's quest for freedom, despite the anguish that comes

with the realization of one's personal responsibility and agency (Greene, 1988). It is through conscientization that the necessary hope emerges to engage in the conquest of freedom and envision other liberating possibilities for reality (Freire, 1968/2000). This hope is not a passive emotion, but an action. It is praxis (Freire, 1968/2000). Hope allows for the ability to envision other possibilities that provide the opening of space for freedom. While hope and praxis require active commitment, they also depend upon the realization of incompleteness. According to Freire (1968/2000), "Hope is rooted in men's incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search—a search which can be carried out only in communion with other men" (p. 91). Hope is found in the incompleteness that drives one to action or praxis, but all of this can only be achieved through communion with others, within a community struggling in unity. While we must all recognize our individual agency and responsibility in the realization of freedom, it is essential to understand that the reality of freedom is not experienced by individuals. Unless our hope is rooted in our commitment to a community working to realize freedom, it is powerless.

For both Freire and Greene, education is an essential piece in how we learn to define freedom and what we expect of it. The conceptualization of freedom in terms of self has had a tremendous impact on the state of education. To be educated is to embody this individualized freedom. "Autonomy," Greene (1988) writes, "is a prime characteristic of the educated person. To be autonomous is to be self-directed and responsible; it is to be capable of acting in accord with internalized norms and principles" (p. 118). These norms and principles naturalize things like oppression, exploitation, and segregation. The official discourse in schools rarely challenges students to question these

given interpretations of reality, in fact, it often encourages students “to accede to the given, to view what exists around us as an objective reality, impervious to individual interpretation” (Greene, 1988, p. 7). This official discourse contributes to the dehumanized state of students who,

Finding it difficult to stand forth from what is officially (or by means of media) defined as real, unable to perceive themselves in interpretive relation to it, the young (like their elders) are all too likely to remain immersed in the taken-for-granted and the everyday (Greene, 1988, p. 7).

Freire (2000) describes this kind of education as the banking model, a form of teaching that encourages and rewards a lack of critical thinking and passivity in students.

Yet education also has the potential to be the practice of freedom as Greene and Freire define it. Through education, students can be empowered to search or reach out for critical consciousness. In fact, it may be one of the only ways to foster conscientization on a larger scale (Freire, 1973). In the extended quote from Greene (1988) below, she describes the circumstances in which she believes the possibility of freedom can exist:

How much does the possibility of freedom depend on critical reflectiveness, on self-understanding, on insight into the world? How much does it depend on being with others in a caring relationship? How much depends on actually coming together with unknown others in a similar predicament, in an “existential project” reaching toward what is not yet? How much does it depend on an integration of the felt and the known, the subjective and the objective, the private and the public

spheres? (p. 79-80)

It is here we see the powerful possibilities of education because each of the situations described above can be met in the space of the classroom.

While Freire's and Greene's work has made significant inroads in the creation of a liberatory pedagogy, there remain important facets of freedom left unexplored. Their work around race and gender needs to be expanded and complicated. Allen (2005) and hooks (1994) both compellingly critique and complicate the field of critical pedagogy for its lack of engagement with race and/or gender in a way that still finds value in the scholarship. The same will need to be done here in this project, as race and gender are significant factors in the theorization of freedom.

Both scholars also largely ignore the psychological nature freedom. They both allude to issues surrounding the psychological dimensions of oppression, but neither fully takes on the issue. Ultimately, this leads to an incomplete understanding of the nature of oppression and the possibilities of freedom. I am not the first to make this critique of critical pedagogy's theorization of freedom. Dagostino-Kalniz (2008) analyzes Freire's theory of liberatory pedagogy in light of the work done by Fromm on freedom. She argues that Freire's theory is incomplete because it does not address the psychological components of oppression or freedom, particularly the psychoanalysis necessary for achieving critical consciousness. In not dealing with the psychological nature of freedom and oppression, Freire's understanding of human nature and the process of achieving freedom comes across as either superficial or utopic.

Not only does he gloss over the power of the fear of freedom in perpetuating oppression, but he also overly simplifies the process of moving from achieving critical

consciousness to authentic freedom. Freire seems to believe that once the oppressed become critically conscious, they will automatically become advocates of authentic freedom or non-oppressors; yet, he does not address how to ensure that once one achieves freedom they do not become oppressors themselves. As Dagostino-Kalniz (2008) points out, the field of psychology has shown that those who have been abused are more likely to perpetuate the pattern, abusing others themselves. The way in which oppression is internalized must be addressed if there is any chance for the oppressed to liberate themselves. It is important here to distinguish between dehumanization and oppression in terms of the oppressors and the oppressed. As Allen (2005) points out, dehumanization and oppression are not synonyms. While connected, these are distinct concepts, the oppressed experience oppression, and the oppressors experience dehumanization (Allen, 2005). Thus, while utopia can be a powerful ideal as we attempt to imagine the possibilities of the idea of something more, Freire's understanding of human nature limits the transcendent possibilities of liberatory pedagogy.

While Freire does not address the psychological mechanisms at work that encourage either oppression or freedom, he does cite specific sections of Fromm's work that do speak to this. Thus, it is not unreasonable then to use Fromm's work to complicate or deepen the work done within critical pedagogy on freedom.

Morality and Ethics

Morality, a largely unexamined concept within critical theory and critical pedagogy, is closely connected to freedom. As we will see below, the discussions of freedom and morality overlap in a number of ways. Similar themes are broached in both of their conceptualizations. This is not surprising given that Purpel (2004) explicitly cites

Freire and Greene among the scholars he believes we should be looking to for guidance and as examples to follow. As will be addressed in greater depth in the chapter on morality and ethics, morality is a significant piece in both the critique of negative freedom and the transformation toward positive freedom. Here, I will focus specifically on the ways in which morality has been engaged in the field of critical pedagogy. While a great deal of work has been done on moral education, much of it is not grounded in critical theory, and thus its connection to this project is minimal, though some of this work will be discussed through the critique offered by the literature reviewed here.

Few within the field of critical pedagogy have addressed the topic of morality. In fact, little can be found outside the work of Purpel (1989, 1991, 1999, 2004, 2005) or Shapiro (1985, 2005), whose scholarship will be the focus here. Purpel and Shapiro, like Freire and Greene, find great potential in schools as sites where positive social change can be initiated. For Purpel (2004), schools can provide the means for “the creation of a more loving, more just, saner world” (p. 4). Purpel’s work operates within the framework of critical theory and accepts the critique of schooling that social and cultural reproduction theories offer. Yet, he is critical of the lack of any discussion on the moral implications of the work that comes out of such critical theories. Purpel’s critique is important because it reveals a missing piece in critical educational studies. Freire and Giroux (1989) speak to the scope and significance of Purpel’s work in their “Introduction” to his book. They write,

It [postmodern theory] has not sufficiently addressed the central issue of how identities and subjectivities are constructed within different moral experiences and relations, nor has it pursued with enough analytical rigor

how power produces, accommodates, and challenges not simply the discourse but also the material relations of dominant political life. In other words, it has failed to develop a substantive ethical discourse and public morality that is necessary for overcoming existing forms of exploitation and subjugation. (p. xiv)

Critical educational studies have offered insightful analyses and critiques as to how power operates, revealing the means through which oppressive social orders are perpetuated structurally in society and showing quite clearly the connection between politics and education. But, we have avoided any direct conversation around the role of ethics or morality. For Purpel (1991), this has dire consequences. He explains,

Our skepticism, our individuality, and our criticalness have left us alone, fragmented, and lost. In an era when we yearn to believe, our intellect cautions; in a time when we ache for community, our impulse for autonomy intervenes; and in an era when we desperately seek meaning, our rationality scorns. Our tragedy is that this predicament not only produces personal existential anguish but takes on the proportion of catastrophe in the face of our current massive social and cultural crises.

(p. 309)

Purpel (1999) believes education must be viewed as a moral, cultural, and social endeavor. His work is grounded in a “commitment to pursue a vision of a just and loving community within a consciousness of moral outrage and personal responsibility” (1999, p. 94). Purpel’s work is not only meaningful for his critique of the lack of a moral discourse within critical pedagogy but because he provides a necessary critique of the

field of moral education. Before discussing the details of the moral discourse for which Purpel advocates, it is necessary to understand his critique of the field of moral education.

In the article, “Moral Education: An Idea Whose Time Has Gone,” Purpel (1991) offers a critique of some of the more influential movements within moral education, such as the Simon and Rath values clarification approach (1978) and Kohlberg’s cognitive-development theory (1984). In broad terms, Purpel critiques the premise of both programs for their belief that moral issues can be dealt with in a decontextualized political vacuum. Neither program suggests the need for any political, social, or historical analysis. Moral notions are analyzed through hypothetical cases not situated in any specific social or political context. For Purpel (1991), the research done on the hidden curriculum (Giroux & Purpel, 1983) demonstrates quite clearly, that nothing about schooling is politically neutral, and thus the idea that moral education could operate from a place of neutrality is outrageous. According to Purpel, both of these programs rely on an individualized psychology that views morality as something to be explored through personal inner reflection and emotional well-being.

Purpel’s critique of the character education movement further highlights how moral education has been used to frame social problems as matters of individualized attitudes and behaviors, and not as structural issues of classism, racism, or sexism. Moral decline is seen as a psychological issue. Morality in character education is characterized as good behavior and desirable or virtuous traits. Any mention of ideology or politics is avoided. Yet, character education is ideologically driven, and in fact, is guided by a largely conservative political movement. Character education has a definite political agenda. Purpel (1999) argues that it represents “a long standing tradition of using

schools as agents of social stability, political stasis, and cultural preservation” (p. 83).

Ideologically it argues “society is being victimized by unvirtuous (lazy, selfish, indulgent, and indolent) individuals rather than an ideology which posits individuals as being victimized by an unvirtuous (rapacious, callous, competitive, and heartless) society” (Purpel, 1999, p. 93).

These kinds of moral education movements undermine and distract from the critique of those of us advocating for social justice in fields like critical pedagogy. These programs manipulate the conversation in such a way as to neutralize the critique being offered by social and cultural reproduction theories, and effectively alter the discourse of how we address the notion of the moral in education. They have changed the question from,

‘What should be the moral orientation of education?’ to ‘Should education have a moral orientation?’ thereby allowing the notion of moral education to be seen as a possibility rather than an inevitability. (Purpel, 1999, p. 85)

While Purpel is critical of these moral education movements and what they represent, he also believes that those who refuse to engage in conversations about the moral dimension of education within the critical pedagogy community are similarly at fault. Those critical of these moral education programs effectively critiqued them, but in doing so, they silenced any other conversation on the moral analysis of education. We seem to be at an impasse that Purpel (1991) questions,

Are we then left with a situation in which we have twin roads to moral paralysis—one marked by critical, dispassionate, and noncommittal

discourse and the other by passionate and intolerant commitment? Can we not be critical of the efforts to add a moral discourse to education while compassionately supporting and collaborating in the struggle to ground education in a moral vision? (p. 311)

The moral vision that Purpel proposes is not a critical theory of a moral education program. Instead, he argues that we eliminate the concept of moral education entirely. The concept of moral education suggests that there is such a thing as an education that is not moral, that is somehow neutral, or that moral is something we can separate out from other curricular aspects of education. Purpel (1991) insists that what we need is a moral vision that provides both a moral discourse and analyses that apply not only to the actual experience of education in schools, but also to the intersection of our educational policies and larger political, social, and cultural issues. Shapiro (2005) echoes these thoughts, pointing out that it is what we choose to be silent about in our discourse on education that shows what we really value. While we may advocate for things such as critical literacy or critical citizenship, we continue to remain silent on the underlying moral or ethical meanings inherent to teaching such things. Our resistance and critique of corporate driven education is based on moral or ethical concerns, but this is rarely acknowledged.

It is a morality conceptualized in terms of a dialectic between the individual and one's role in the community. Morality is the way in which we construct what it means to be a part of the world. It dictates our way of being in human relationships and grounds our social consciousness. A critical morality should create a means to be in the world that encourages humanizing relationships. Purpel's moral vision is humanizing, much like Freire and Greene's theories of freedom. His concept of morality is based on the

human experience. Purpel (1989) describes moral in the following way,

I take *moral* to be a term that focuses on principles, rules, and ideas that are related to human relationships, to how we deal with each other and with the world. Moral can be used prescriptively (e.g., people *should* love each other) as well as descriptively (e.g., she treats him with little respect).

In both cases, the concern is for the attitudes, values, and behaviors that constitute one's way of being with (other people). (p. 66)

Through ideological analysis, it provides a critique that unveils oppression and injustice.

The possibility for a more just and saner world comes through moral imagination. A moral vision grounded in critical theory is empowering. It counters the alienation that comes from oppression and injustice. It openly confronts the value dyads that create this alienation or fragmentation of the self. It counters feelings of despair with hope. It also requires agency on the part of teachers and students. As teachers, we must not accept this move to turn us into technicians. It is not our job to merely hand out certificates of completion any more than it is the job of our students to fill our standardized tests mindlessly.

The work of Purpel and Shapiro provides the foundation from which to move forward in creating a critical moral vision for social justice education. While they focus on humanization, critical consciousness, and the moral or ethical dimensions of these issues, this is done in terms of broader social relationships within communities. Their work does not provide a strong analysis of the ways in which these things are relevant to the individual, such as the ways in which individualized moralities create the alienation within oneself that is so critical to understanding Fromm's negative freedom. Also,

neither delves into the role of the psychological on which Fromm places a great deal of importance. Looking at the ways in which the work of Fromm, Purpel, and Shapiro can dialogue will provide interesting discussions in the chapter on morality outlined below.

There is one last piece of Purpel's work to discuss that provides a segue into the following literature review. It also demonstrates why Purpel's work is compatible with and complementary to Fromm's conceptualization of ethics. In his chapter "Social Justice, Curriculum, and Spirituality," Purpel (2005) argues that our best hope is to ground our education "in a relentless and whole-hearted quest for the attitude formerly known as agape" (p. 358). Like Fromm, Purpel understands love to be more than an emotion. He describes it as a state of consciousness that may be one of the most powerful tools in our battle for justice and humanization. He recognizes the psychological dimension of liberation and the need to understand human drives. Most importantly, he places it at the center of the transformation of education as Fromm does with love and freedom. Purpel (2005) suggests,

We would need an educational psychology less concerned with instruction, measurement, and evaluation and more with the conditions under which people can learn to love and respect themselves and each other. We would need to have more research that delves into the human impulses for community, compassion, and social justice, and there would need to be more analysis and understanding of the forces that disrupt those impulses. (p. 362)

To my knowledge, Purpel and Shapiro never reference the work of Fromm in their own scholarship, but given the similar themes that surface in their research their work is quite

complementary. While Fromm goes more in-depth in his analysis of the mechanizations of negative freedom and its ethical or moral dimensions, Purpel and Shapiro contextualize this discussion within school and education, providing a foundation from which to move the conversation forward.

Love

Love is a concept left largely unexamined in the field of education as a whole, and specifically in critical educational studies. While it may be superficially engaged, little work has been done around what it means to teach love or to teach from a place of love. Love is paramount to Fromm's conceptualization of freedom, and thus it is a significant part of the conversation here. Despite the seeming disinterest in love as a research topic, there are a few scholars in the field of critical pedagogy addressing it. Their work provides a foundation for the application of Fromm's theory of love to education. hooks (2001, 2002) and Matias and Allen (2013) all write about love and its relevance to education. Since these authors are influenced by Fromm's work on love, the discussion here will echo many of the same themes that will be found in the chapter on positive freedom and love. All three reject the idea that love is a mere sentiment, something that happens to us, or that we "fall into." Instead, they understand love to be something that requires agency, a choice, an action, or praxis.

While all of the scholars considered here come from a critical perspective, Matias and Allen (2013) explicitly state their interest in developing a critical theory of love. In "Loving Whiteness to Death: Sadomasochism, Emotionality, and the Possibility of Humanizing Love," they analyze the norms and values of whiteness and the ways in which these then perpetuate a sadomasochistic form of love. Their work is significant

first because of they look at how to apply Fromm's theory of love to a critical pedagogy of love, and second because they center whiteness and racism in their discussion of love. Fromm does little to critique whiteness, race, gender, or patriarchy, which leaves gaps that need to be addressed.

Arguing that we must reject the normalized oppressive version of love, Matias and Allen (2013) put forth the idea of a humanizing love that is a "formidable, rational, and powerful frame of analysis for interpreting whites' emotional investment in whiteness" (p. 286). Building upon Fromm's critique of normative theories of love, Matias and Allen offer their own analysis of naturalized constructions of love using both emotionality and the unconscious as lenses through which to understand the ways in which white supremacy and patriarchy have created a dehumanizing form of love. In their critique, they distinguish between the ways in which this type of naturalized love functions both individually and in the formation of community. They highlight the ways in which we must engage a critical consciousness around love so that we can both recognize the way it is misused and distorted, and learn to practice a critical and liberatory love.

A crucial aspect of their discussion is the way in which group identity and group affirmation influence our acquiescence to negative and normalized 'loving' relationships. Their article forces the reader to face the question, what part of my identity do I 'love' so much that I am willing to give up my humanity? They propose that, as whites, we are willing to trade our humanity for the belonging and power that whiteness promises. While they understand the fear of alienation, isolation, or rejection that holds many of us back from contesting oppressive societal notions of love, they also insist that resisting it

is the only option for those of us committed to a liberatory pedagogy project. While hooks will more explicitly state the connection between freedom and love, this idea is present in Matias and Allen (2013) as well when they write that “a truly humanizing love exists when both entities contribute to the growth and development of the other” (p. 298).

hooks, like Matias and Allen, comes from a critical perspective. Like Fromm and Matias and Allen, hooks (2002) sees great potential in re-envisioning love so that it can become both redemptive and transformative. The discussion here will focus on her two books *All About Love: New Visions* (2001) and *Communion: The Female Search for Love* (2002). Race and patriarchy are important pieces of hooks’ critique of the way in which we define, understand, and experience love. She echoes Fromm’s description of the reality of the enslavement of negative freedom when she writes that we are “longing for a master who will set us free and claim us because we cannot claim ourselves” (2002, xvii). hooks, like Fromm, understands freedom and love to be inseparable. Describing her experience, she writes,

I looked for love but I found freedom. . .I began to see that the proper place for love in a woman’s life was not relational love as the source but love generated in a quest for self-realization. . .Uniting the search for love with the quest to be free was the crucial step. Searching for love, I found the path to freedom. Learning how to be free was the first step in learning to know love. (2002, p. 32)

Like Matias and Allen, there are clear connections to hooks’ work on love and education. hooks not only connects love and freedom but love and equality. hooks (2002) stresses that love is only possible between equals. There is no hope for love where inequality or

injustice exist.

The interdependence of love, freedom, and justice have important ramifications for those of us interested in liberatory pedagogy. If we take hooks' assertions to be true, then we must be willing to address issues around inequality and freedom in education if we want love to be a part of the learning experience. In *All About Love*, hooks (2001) discusses love in relation to childhood. She emphasizes the harm done when we encourage false understandings of love to children. Often we tell our students they are loved even when they are being abused, as if love and abuse can exist simultaneously in the same relationship. This is something those of us in education must address. We must consider the harm we are doing when we tell our students that we care for them and that education is the path to their success, yet we continue to enact harmful and traumatic educational experiences on them.

hooks also provides an important critique around the ways in which gender and love are often discussed and even conflated. Much like Matias and Allen's discussion of race, patriarchy, and the perpetuation of dehumanizing love, hooks looks at the ways in which gender and patriarchy continue to limit the transformative power of love. hooks (2002) argues that we often operate under the assumption (consciously and subconsciously) that women are born knowing how to love, that love is something that is inherent to being female. The reality is that women are as clueless in how to give or receive love as men, and that love is something we must all learn. When we know that the majority of k-12 educators are women, and we operate from the belief that as women we are inherently loving, we are doing both ourselves and our students a major disservice. We place unfair expectations on these female teachers to be nurturing, loving

caregivers when they have not necessarily been taught how to do this. This then opens us up to the shame of failure when we do not live up to these expectations. Students are then socialized to understand their interactions with teachers as nurturing and caregiving even if they are in fact the exact opposite. hooks' critique of the relationship between gender and love provides a starting point for looking at the ways in which this relationship is manifested in the classroom, and how it must be transformed if critical love is going to have a place in education.

hooks and Matias and Allen provide discussions that demonstrate the power of considering the creation of a critical theory of love in building upon Fromm's work on love. In the chapter on positive freedom and love, I will discuss Fromm's conceptualization of love, and what I hope to look at in that chapter building upon Fromm's work and the research considered here.

An Overview of the Dissertation

The following provides an overview of the entire project and a brief description of each chapter. Chapters two, three, and four each focus on one of the three central themes to Fromm's work: freedom, ethics, and love. The fifth chapter serves as the conclusion, using the previous chapters' discussions to consider what it means to teach from an ethic of love. Below are brief descriptions of each of these chapters.

Chapter 2: Negative Freedom

As discussed in the introduction and review of literature, freedom is a central component to liberatory pedagogy. Given critical pedagogy's focus on freedom and its grounding in critical theory, it is surprising that Fromm's work is engaged so rarely in critical educational studies. This chapter explores Fromm's conceptualization of negative

freedom and how it can deepen and complicate the work already done within education around freedom.

Fromm's theory of human nature provides the basis and context for all of his work. As a Marxist and Freudian, Fromm's work considers both the psychological and material aspects of negative freedom. Fromm's use of social psychology and psychoanalysis to understand freedom is one of the more significant ways in which his work differs from that of other critical theorists. His study of the psychological and emotional components of freedom exposes aspects of freedom that others have ignored. A pivotal piece of his work is his analysis of the fear of freedom. He argues that what we fear more than anything else is isolation. To assuage this fear we give up authentic freedom and settle for negative freedom. Fromm's conceptualization of negative freedom is both compelling and convincing, but there are areas where his theory can be complicated in order to be more impactful. While Fromm explores the ways in which fear, alienation, and isolation function to perpetuate negative freedom, he has little discussion around shame in relation to our fear of isolation and alienation. Given the similarities between Fromm's research and recent scholarship around shame, I consider how to incorporate shame into a conceptualization of negative freedom. This chapter also complicates Fromm's engagement with race and racism through suggesting a racial critique that looks at the ways white supremacy functions to create and maintain negative freedom.

The second half of the chapter looks at the educational applications of negative freedom, using Fromm's theory as a lens through which to analyze and critique the educational experience and drawing attention to the ways in which education dehumanizes through normalizing negative freedom. His analysis provides the means to demonstrate

how the educational experience is psychologically and emotionally destructive for both students and teachers. Through his conceptualization of negative freedom, Fromm offers an insightful explanation for why we have not been able to achieve an empowering transcendent freedom theorized by others within critical pedagogy. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of Fromm's notion of positive freedom.

Chapter 3: Ethics

Freedom is a topic engaged far more often within critical pedagogy than morality. Outside of the literature discussed above, little has been written that attempts to analyze the morality(ies) at work within critical theory or critical pedagogy. Like Purpel and Shapiro, I believe that the inability or unwillingness of scholars within critical pedagogy to address the significance of morality or ethics has contributed to a lack of substantial impact in the transformative goals of the field. The discussion in this chapter focuses largely on Fromm's book, *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics* (1947/1990), where he posits an ethical humanism that is used to both critique our state of negative freedom and reveal the potential of positive freedom. Returning to human nature as the starting point for his analysis, Fromm argues that in order to understand ourselves as humans we must understand our values and moral conflicts. Fromm's humanism suggests a universal ethics that allows us to make normative statements about human nature and the features of society that result in the destruction or liberation of humanity. Fromm explores ideas of norms, values, and moral conflict through the notion of social character and character orientations.

In considering the relevance of Fromm's humanism for education, I argue that we can expand the transformative potential of critical pedagogy through bringing together

Fromm's humanism with the work of Derrick Bell, a critical race theory scholar.

Through the creation of a critical race theory of morality or a race-radical humanism, we can strengthen our languages of critique and transcendence, providing a way for education to challenge dehumanization and oppression and encourage a transformative praxis.

Chapter 4: Love

As the literature review revealed, love is not a topic that has been frequently engaged within critical pedagogy, but many of those who have done work on the topic have based their research on Fromm's theorization of love. For Fromm, once we understand negative freedom we can begin to create the space for positive freedom, which he defines as the freedom to fully realize one's self through the spontaneous act of love that allows one to authentically unite with others. Love is a crucial component of Fromm's theorization of freedom. This chapter looks at Fromm's conceptualization of love and its implications for education. Love for Fromm (1956/2006) is quite different from the love that we are so frequently shown in popular culture or the media. Fromm argues we should think of love as a permanent state that we "stand in" rather than "fall in." This love is not a sentiment, but a skill or an art that we must learn to master. It is best understood as a form of praxis. When conceptualized in this way love becomes a means of social critique and empowerment.

While Fromm's work on love has a great deal to offer, it is not entirely unproblematic. As has been mentioned before, his work benefits from a more complex engagement with race and gender. Here, both the work of bell hooks and Matias and Allen is used to expand upon what Fromm has done. In their work, race/racism and

gender/patriarchy are analyzed as social constructs that a critical theory of love can work to deconstruct or overcome. Throughout this chapter I briefly allude to the implications for education, a conversation that is more fully developed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 5: Teaching From an Ethic of Love

In this concluding chapter, I return to the three questions Fromm (1947/1990) posed that were mentioned in the introduction: “What man is, how he ought to live, and how the tremendous energies within man can be released and used productively” (p. 4). I believe that to consider these questions is to get at is what it means to teach from an ethic of love informed by a critical theory of love. A more complex understanding of freedom that centers love allows us to develop a pedagogical framework where education as the practice of positive freedom becomes synonymous with teaching as an ethic of love. Through the notion of a pedagogy of discomfort, I explore the necessary psychoanalytic self-examination that we as educators must undertake if we hope to teach from an ethic of love.

CHAPTER 2: NEGATIVE FREEDOM³

Introduction

Overview

The introductory chapter demonstrated the importance of the exploration of freedom for social justice education and the limits of the work done thus far on freedom in critical pedagogy. This chapter will look at the ways in which Fromm's research draws on facets of freedom that have remained unexplored in the field of critical education studies. I will begin with a brief overview of the relevant pieces of Fromm's theories of social psychology and human nature as they pertain to freedom. Then, the chapter will move into a discussion of Fromm's conceptualization of negative freedom. Next, I will use negative freedom as a lens through which to analyze and critique educational experience. The chapter concludes with a brief look at positive freedom, laying the foundation for a more in-depth analysis of this idea in later chapters.

Biographical Context

Escape from Freedom, Fromm's seminal text on freedom and authoritarianism, evolved during a pivotal period in Fromm's life in which a great many changes took place. Many of Fromm's experiences during this time were significant in shaping the book's final form (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). The book was certainly influenced by

³ A portion of Chapter 2 is a modified version of the following article: Dillon, K., 2014, Escape from Freedom: Towards the Political Realm." *Philosophical Studies in Education*, 45, 83-92.

Fromm's work with the Frankfurt School in Germany and his preoccupation with German politics and Hitler's rise to power. Initially, he wanted to write a book on authoritarianism that addressed the danger of Nazism. Later, he decided to reframe the book to be a "post-Freudian study of social character [focused] on the social psychology of authoritarianism" (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013, p. 66). The focus of the book would change again when Fromm was reminded of the time he gave his cousin a caged bird for her birthday. Upon receiving the gift, his cousin opened the cage door to give the bird the choice of freedom. This memory triggered another shift in the purpose of *Escape from Freedom*. In a letter to a colleague, Fromm wrote that he now wanted to focus on "the problem of freedom and anxiety or the fear of freedom or the escape from freedom" (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013, p. 66).

Fromm emigrated to the U.S. in 1934. Hitler had come to power, but it was not yet difficult for Jews to procure the necessary paperwork to leave Europe (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). While he did not experience the brutality of World War II or Hitler's genocidal agenda in Europe firsthand, these things impacted him in significant ways. Few realize that he committed a considerable amount of his time and financial resources to helping friends and family escape Europe in the time immediately preceding and throughout World War II (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). He does not write explicitly about how these personal experiences impacted him, but it is certain that they influenced *Escape from Freedom*. Fromm was able to help a number of friends and family escape. However, for some, he could do nothing. Despite his efforts, he was unable to help his Krause family relatives before they were killed in a concentration camp (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). In researching the extensive correspondence amongst extended family

during this time, Friedman and Schreiber (2013) found evidence that suggests there was a very personal dimension to *Escape from Freedom* for Fromm. In fact, Friedman and Schreiber (2013) argue that, “it is inconceivable that Fromm could have written with such a deep, passionate, and compelling voice if the Krause family tragedy had not been a central experience in his life” (p. 73). Friedman and Schreiber (2013) elaborate,

The point is that as Fromm was writing *Escape from Freedom*, he was actively working to help émigrés escape the Hitler regime so that they could enjoy their freedom. The force and clarity of the book was surely influenced by his almost daily interventions for émigré assistance. (p. 76)

Fromm’s experiences leading up to the publication of *Escape from Freedom* were crucial in shaping the ultimate form of the text. What he saw made him feel that it was of the utmost importance to communicate “to the general public about the fate of humankind in an increasingly precarious world” (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013, p. 62). For Fromm, this was the only hope for change. As he writes in the introduction to *Escape from Freedom*,

Although this book is a diagnosis rather than a prognosis—an analysis rather than a solution—its results have a bearing on our course of action. For the understandings of the totalitarian flight from freedom is a premise for any action which aims at the victory over totalitarian forces. (1941/1994, p. x)

This historical background provides the context that inspired Fromm’s work in *Escape from Freedom*. Now, we can move on to look at the relevance for his research on freedom for education.

Overview of Relevant Critical Theory Terminology

In broad terms, negative freedom is a means of analyzing the reproduction of dehumanization as social control. One of the more valuable aspects of critical theory is its analysis and explanation of oppression, domination, and social control. Thus, it is useful here to first consider some of the concepts of critical theory, such as ideology, habitus, and hegemony, that are most relevant here and are referenced in the following discussions.

While there are numerous definitions of ideology, there are three that are significant for critical theory: ideology as (1) negative or pejorative, a false consciousness or distortion of reality; (2) necessary or descriptive, one's worldview; or (3) positive, a means through which we counter or negate structures of oppression through creating something new (Geuss, 1981; Leonardo, 2003a). Ideology permeates all aspects of society—structures, cultural norms, and traditions. It can be used as a hegemonic tool to further the interests of the dominant group, or it can unveil that hegemony. It can bring to light the dissonance between the theory and the reality of human freedom, or it can continue to mystify that reality. Ideology must be conceptualized as something constructed. Enacted through discourse, it is a way to make meaning of lived experiences. Ideology does not function in isolation. It works in conjunction with other ideologies to create habitus, or embodied dispositions, which then mediate the ways in which we interact, respond, and understand the world. One's ideology becomes embedded within the vocabulary of our everyday language, often imperceptibly. It can act in such a way as to encourage human agency or exert social control and hegemony.

Apple (1990), expanding on the work of Raymond Williams (1989), describes how hegemony works through the saturation of our consciousness so that “the

educational, economic and social world we see and interact with, and the commonsense interpretations we put on it, becomes the world *tout court*, the only world” (p. 5).

Hegemony is about the very concrete ways “an organized assemblage of meanings and practices, the central and dominant systems of meanings, values and actions” are lived (Apple, 1990, p. 5). Ideological hegemony is not explicit or outright domination, which would suggest a more static nature. Leonardo (2003a) describes it as “active consent” where there is a process of “incorporation and rejection, compliance and resistance, accommodation and penetration” (p. 46). As the following will show, the concept of ideological hegemony is important in the conceptualization of negative freedom.

Social Psychology and Human Nature

Fromm’s approach to analyzing and conceptualizing freedom is significantly different from most critical theorists, largely due to the way in which he brings together Marx and Freud. In doing this, he creates what McLaughlin (2001a) describes as a “social psychology for critical theory based on psychoanalytic theory” or a “psychology of modernity” (p. 8, 11). At the heart of Fromm’s work is a critique of capitalism. Such a critique is nothing new, even as it applies to education; many have already shown the effect of capitalism on schooling (Bowles & Gintis, 2002, 2011; Giroux, 2001; Lareau, 1989, 2011). Yet Fromm’s critique adds a piece that thus far has been missing. In his analysis of capitalism, Fromm shows the ways in which the material costs of capitalism translate to the value or worth of people and how one determines self-worth. Fromm’s work delves into the psychological costs of the commodification of the self, or what he terms the “marketing character” or “personality market” (McLaughlin, 2001a, p. 10-11). Here Fromm makes explicit the contradictory nature of the modern human life: while we

say we are in pursuit of individual life, happiness, and freedom, we are in fact far more concerned with our market value. The psychological cost of this, Fromm argues, is negative freedom, experienced as insecurity, powerless, doubt, aloneness, and anxiety. It is this analysis that makes Fromm's work so unique. In bridging Marx and Freud, he expands the discourse to include analyses of both the psychology and social construction of oppression.

Fromm's understanding of the social psychology of human nature is central to his analysis of freedom. For Fromm, human nature is neither entirely biologically fixed nor the result of adapted cultural evolution; instead, it is the combination of human evolution and fixed human traits. Fromm writes of human nature in terms of a human essence, which he understands as the contradictions or questions that humans must contend with (Fromm, 1968; Funk, 1982). Fromm (1965) explains,

Man's essence lies in the very contradiction between his being in nature, thrown into the world without his will, and taken away against his will, at an accidental place and time, and at the same time transcending nature by his lack of instinctual equipment and by the fact of his awareness—of himself, of others, of the past and the present. (as quoted in Funk, 1982, p. 57)

Self-aware, we become conscious of our separateness, our smallness, our finitude. We are driven both to transcend these things and understand our own existence (Burston, 1991). In grappling with this self-consciousness, we find ourselves faced with questions, and it is these questions that Fromm believes to be our human essence: "the questions, not the answers are man's 'essence'" (as qtd. in Funk, 1982, p. 58). These questions and

contradictions create disequilibrium that Fromm refers to as existential dichotomies. These dichotomies demonstrate that while we are subject to nature, our self-awareness, reason, and imagination allow us to transcend all other life. The contradictions or dichotomies that represent our essence both enable and oblige us to find resolution. The answers to these questions are various expressions of human nature dependent upon contextual factors (Funk, 1982).

It is important here to distinguish between Fromm's use of existential dichotomy and historical dichotomy. Historical dichotomies are human-made contradictions in individual and social life. They are not part of the essence of humankind; instead, they "emerge wherever a technical, economic, social, cultural, emotional, or physical development begins to contradict the dispositive and creative powers man potentially has to deal with such developments" (Funk, 1982, p. 59). One example of this, according to Funk (1982), is the profusion of technical resources available and our continued inability or refusal to use these primarily for the well-being of society. Historical dichotomies can be resolved because these are contradictions created by men and women. Existential dichotomies cannot be resolved because they are part of the human essence; they can only be reacted to. The difference in these two types of dichotomies is an important tool in creating a language of critique. As Funk (1982) points out,

The observation that only a historical dichotomy is involved in a certain contradiction unmasks the motto of all ideologies and individual rationalizations, that what cannot be must not be, and thus makes man conscious of himself and able to create a productive relatedness to the world. (p. 60)

The naming of historical dichotomies highlights both human agency and our responsibility and ability to address such contradictions.

It is Fromm's understanding of human nature that distinguishes him from traditional Marxist scholars. Fromm certainly shares the Marxist critique of capitalism and alienation it creates, but his work on the psychology of human nature and essence moves beyond Marx's socioeconomic analysis. There are significant differences in the ways in which Fromm understands alienation that should be noted. While lengthy, the following from Burston (1991) is one of the more concise explanations of the distinctions between Marx and Fromm:

Marx saw alienation as arising from the disparity between our essence and the actual conditions of our existence; a disparity engendered by class domination and exploitation. When our essence becomes a means to our existence, rather than being something embodied and expressed therein, we feel dominated by alien forces and are chronically estranged from ourselves, from nature, and from the species. Like Marx, Fromm anticipated a time when we will be able to transform social relations so that we can finally bring our latent sociability and productive powers to full and unimpeded expression. But unlike Marx, Fromm insisted that our essence is given in the conditions of our existence, as a state of thrownness, or homelessness occasioned by the emergence of consciousness from the dualistic, unconscious union of the animal with its natural surroundings. The implication is clear; even in the absence of oppression or privation, we would still struggle for a newfound unity with ourselves, and the

cosmos in a life filled with effort and suffering. (p. 95)

While Fromm believes that suffering will always be a part of the human experience, he also believes that we must continually fight to change society. This is an important piece of his work on the psychology of ethics, which will be explored in greater depth in later chapters, but should be noted here.

Just as Fromm distinguishes between existential and historical dichotomies, he does the same with human needs, differentiating between existential/psychic, physiological, and inhuman needs (Funk, 1982). He believes that human nature dictates two central motives which are “the necessity to satisfy the physiologically conditioned drives and the necessity to avoid isolation and moral aloneness” (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 20). Fromm understands this isolation and aloneness to be the result of the distinctive human self-consciousness or awareness, or “life aware of itself” (Funk, 1982, p. 59). Out of these basic human motives comes what Fromm refers to as existential or psychic needs. In *The Sane Society*, Fromm (1955/1990) identifies and describes these needs as, the need for relatedness, for transcendence, for rootedness, for a sense of identity, and for a frame of orientation and devotion. In one way or another, all five of these serve human nature’s drive to self-preserve and avoid isolation. While almost everyone would cite self-preservation as a basic motive of human nature, Fromm’s focus on the fear of isolation and the need for connection are a unique piece of his work on freedom. Fromm’s belief that human beings have a fundamental need to be related to the world outside of ourselves is a pivotal piece of his work. This relatedness does not refer just to a physical nature, but to a sense of “communion” or “belonging” (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 15-17). Our compulsion to avoid isolation reveals our deep need for connection and

significance. Fromm (1941/1994) explains,

Unless he belonged somewhere, unless his life had some meaning and direction, he would feel like a particle of dust and be overcome by his individual insignificance. He would not be able to relate himself to any system which would give meaning and direction to his life, he would be filled with doubt, and this doubt eventually would paralyze his ability to act—that is to live. (p. 20)

If our ability to live is dependent upon a sense of belonging, it follows then, that our most terrifying fear is a lack of belonging or isolation.

Fromm argues that our historically changing roles and identities have resulted in an increasing individuation or self-awareness. While this self-consciousness is what Fromm believes makes us human, it is also our greatest vulnerability or weakness, creating a state of crisis. For Fromm, we are human because “we are self-aware, conscious of our separateness, and capable of imagining our death or nonbeing, our existence (and potential nonexistence) acquires a problematic cast” (Burston, 1991, p. 86). To be separate is to be cut off, or “to be helpless, unable to grasp the world—things and people—actively; it means that the world can invade me without my ability to react” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 8). Unable to deal with the seeming insignificance of one’s individuality in light of the larger world, individuals respond with a fear that creates feelings of powerlessness and anxiety. The only way out appears to be to sacrifice one’s individuality or self, resulting in a negative state of freedom. The very qualities of our human nature that allow for a self-awareness of life, when paired with the structures of modern society provide the context that enables negative freedom to flourish.

Negative Freedom

Fromm (1941/1994) defines negative freedom as an isolated and powerless state where human beings will submit to authorities that relieve them of the overwhelming anxiety of aloneness and the burden of authentic freedom. In analyzing freedom, Fromm critiques both how we define humanity's states of being and the terminology we use to describe our existence or the ways in which we relate to the world. In doing this, Fromm uses negative freedom to unveil the contradictory nature of our existence, showing that the reality in which we live is far from free. Through his analysis, he demonstrates the oppressive mechanisms of what is commonly considered freedom and explores what it is that makes modern men and women subsist in a state of negative freedom. Negative freedom is a means of social control that maintains the status quo of a systemic unequal distribution of power. While Fromm does not include a significant racial or gender critique in his analysis, I argue that negative freedom is a means to preserve the structure of white supremacist patriarchy. Going beyond a Marxist structural critique, Fromm's theory of negative freedom analyzes the reproduction of this social control through the psychological aspects of the dehumanization of both the oppressed and the oppressor.

For Fromm, modern freedom is concerned with the idea of freedom from external forms of authority and restraint, such as the Church or State. This has resulted in what we interpret to be increased individual freedom. The more these external forms of repression are eliminated, the more free we believe ourselves to be; yet, we remain blind to the internal forces that inhibit and destroy freedom. We become so captivated by fighting for freedom from authorities or powers outside of ourselves that we completely ignore the internal mechanisms that limit or undo the external freedoms gained. Within a

context where our greatest fear is alienation and isolation, things like public opinion and common sense become means of inducing feelings of fear through implicitly threatening isolation. This then drives us to conform to societal expectations rather than be different or othered. These internal mechanisms pressure us to conform to societal expectations of normativity often subconsciously or unconsciously. Fromm (1956/2006) argues,

Most people are not even aware of their need to conform. They live under the illusion that they follow their own ideas and inclinations, that they are individualists, that they have arrived at their opinions as the result of their own thinking—and that it just happens that their ideas are the same as those of the majority. The consensus of all serves as a proof for the correctness of “their” ideas. (p. 13)

While we often espouse notions of individualized and autonomous freedom, the reality is that we are controlled by a paralyzing fear of isolation. Unable to bear the weight of this, we make a choice: we can either attempt to escape from freedom altogether or move beyond negative freedom to positive freedom. Given the pervasiveness of negative freedom, few consider any possibility but escape, but this escape is nothing more than further submersion into negative freedom and an annihilation of the self. What remains is a broken or fragmented self, made up of a ‘real self’ and a ‘social self.’ Modern human beings act on behalf of the ‘social self’ that is based on the societal expectations for the role of men and women. Enacted out of compulsion and fear, these expectations operate as internal restraints which have a profound effect on the psychology of the self, hindering “the full realization of the freedom of personality” thus limiting any possibility of development of an individual self and the creation of positive

freedom (Fromm, 1941/1994, p.105). To quiet our anxiety and panic, we continuously surrender our individuality.

Through eliminating the self, we can rid ourselves of the burden of freedom. Fromm suggests that there are three main mechanisms of escape through which we do this: authoritarianism, destructiveness, and automaton conformity. These function as neuroses that have been normalized in society. Authoritarianism is what Fromm (1941/1994) describes as sadomasochism. Freud's original theory proposed that sadomasochism was an entirely sexual phenomenon, for Fromm it serves a different purpose. He believes it is a way to analyze the means by which people relate to each other across multiple contexts of relationships. The fear, alienation, and isolation we feel push us to enter into such symbiotic relationships. While some people may display traits that are strongly masochistic or sadistic, Fromm argues a combination of both sadistic and masochistic traits are found in most of us because both stem from the same need to connect. The majority of our relationships, therefore, demonstrate a blending of the two. The sadist wants complete domination through the incorporation of another into him or herself. The masochist renounces the self entirely, wholly submitting through giving ownership of oneself to someone outside of him or her. Ultimately both masochism and sadism stem from the need to destroy the self as a means to relieve oneself of the weight of freedom and the anxiety of aloneness (Fromm, 1941/1994).

Destructiveness, Fromm's second mechanism of escape, is fed by the feelings of hostility and rage that are the result of the un-lived life. While sadomasochism aims for symbiosis, destructiveness wants the total elimination of the object. Like authoritarianism, destructiveness is a response to overwhelming powerlessness and

isolation, yet the solution here is to escape by destroying the world that creates these feelings. In many ways, destructiveness is the antithesis to Fromm's (1941/1994) understanding of positive freedom. While positive freedom is the "spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality," destructiveness is the result of the thwarted life, or the "blockage of spontaneity of the growth and expression of man's sensuous, emotional, and intellectual capacities" (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 182, 257). The more these capacities are repressed, the stronger the drive for destruction.

In automaton conformity, Fromm's last mechanism of escape, one copes with fear and isolation through the complete cessation of being oneself. One's personality or identity becomes entirely dependent upon the cultural patterns provided by society. One becomes a pseudo self, sacrificing identity and individuality in the search for security. The sad irony is that while all three of these mechanisms of escape stem from the need to alleviate one's fear, anxiety, and isolation, in reality they only exacerbate these feelings.

Recognizing these mechanisms is essential to understanding humanity's dehumanization and the destruction wrought by negative freedom. Focusing on the psychological aspects of dehumanization, Fromm analyzes the ways in which negative freedom manifests through the unconscious and human emotions. To escape the overwhelming fear of isolation, we must repress the parts of our human nature that urge us to feel dissatisfied and silence the emotions that signal that something is very wrong.

The abdication of our freedom solidifies our feelings of powerlessness. What results is an "inner deadness" or "passiveness" (Fromm, 1968, p. 2). We exist in a state of partial awakeness where we go about daily life, yet we have no sense of agency or identity (Fromm, 1968). We are entirely dependent upon authorities to make our

decisions for us. In *The Revolution of Hope* (1968), Fromm uses a story from Franz Kafka's *The Trial* to illustrate the ways in which our submission to authorities is really a resigned and passive hope that perpetuates negative freedom. In the story, a man finds himself at the doors of heaven, waiting to be granted entrance. Every time he asks the doorkeeper if he can enter, he is told he cannot be admitted at that time. He waits for years, repeatedly asking and repeatedly being denied entrance. Finally, he is told his time has run out, he has missed his opportunity, and he will never be allowed in. The man never realizes that his error was in waiting passively for permission and that he should have boldly claimed his right to enter and walked through the doors. We, like the man at the door, willingly cling to authorities to relieve ourselves of any responsibility of exercising authentic freedom. We find security and comfort, both material and ideological, in our dependence. Yet this is an act of defiance in terms of our human nature, and the consequences are costly. We must repress all the emotions that communicate our dissatisfaction, and in exchange for belonging, we choose a masochistic automaton conformity. Fromm (1968) contends,

Most people do not admit to themselves feelings of fear, boredom, loneliness, hopelessness—that is to say, they are unconscious of these feelings. This is so for a simple reason. Our social pattern is such that the successful man is not supposed to be afraid or bored or lonely. He must find this world the best of all worlds; in order to have the best chance for promotion he must repress fear as well as doubt, depression, boredom, or hopelessness. (p. 10)

As a society resigned to such conformity, we have developed strategies to guard against

the emotions that remain unconsciously. We create lives where we are very busy and active, yet as Fromm (1968) argues, even in this busyness we are passive because we constantly crave outside stimuli. This activeness is nothing more than a means “to escape the anxiety that is aroused when they are confronted with themselves” (Fromm, 1968, p. 12). As a society, we have become like the man in Kafka’s story. Fromm (1973/1992) describes our society as men and women who,

Reduce their demands to what they can get and do not even dream of that which seems to be out of their reach. They are well-adjusted members of the herd and they never feel hopeless because nobody else seems to feel hopeless. They present the picture of a peculiar kind of resigned optimism which we see in so many members of contemporary Western society—the optimism usually being conscious and the resignation unconscious. (p. 21)

Our optimism is passive, tempered by our unconscious knowledge that we are resigned to being automatons who repress our desires or feelings. We are filled with an “unconscious hopelessness” perpetuated by a passive faith that Fromm refers to as “irrational faith” (Fromm, 1968, p. 5). Here, we submit ourselves to objects, leaders, or ideologies that we believe represent truth, regardless of whether or not they do (Fromm, 1968). Fromm (1968) argues that “This ‘passivation’ of man is partly due to the ‘alienated bureaucratic’ method used in all centralized enterprises” (p. 103). Fromm (1947/1990) further critiques modern society, asserting that,

Modern society, in spite of all the emphasis it puts upon happiness, individuality, and self-interest, has taught man to feel that not his

happiness (or if we were to use a theological term, his salvation) is the aim of life, but the fulfillment of his duty to work, or his success. Money, prestige, and power have become his incentives and ends. He acts under the illusion that his actions benefit his self-interest, though he actually serves everything else but the interest of his real self. Everything is important to him except his life and the art of living. He is for everything except for himself. (p. 19)

All of this results in what Fromm (1968) refers to as a “syndrome of alienation” (p. 40). Affecting the majority of the population, this syndrome is not seen as something unnatural or problematic; instead, it has become what Fromm terms a “pathology of normalcy” (1968, p. 41) or “socially patterned defects” (1955/1990, p. 121). In addition to passiveness, Fromm argues that the split of the cerebral-intellectual function from affective-emotional experience is another important trait of this pathology. Thought is separated from feeling, mind from heart, and truth from passion (Fromm, 1968). As a society, we have accepted the idea that emotions can never be rational, or that feelings must have no bearing on what is determined truth. Fromm (1941/1994) argues that “it has become an ideal to think and to live without emotions” (p. 244). Reason and rationality are important to Fromm, but as will be discussed in the chapter on ethics, they must always be guided by the concern for life. For Fromm (1968), rationality comes from the synthesis of thoughts and feelings. When we separate the intellectual from the emotional, both our ability to think and feel are damaged. Society encourages the idea that one who is emotional is “unsound” or “unbalanced” (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 244). Fromm suggests that the lack of regard for emotions and the separation of emotions and

rationality actually leads to “impoverished” and “flattened” thinking (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 244). Our thinking becomes “schizoid intellectual activity” and our feeling becomes “neurotic life-damaging passions” (Fromm, 1968, p. 42). This pathology of normalcy is actually “low grade chronic psychosis” (Fromm, 1968, p. 43).

This psychosis created by the overvaluation of the cerebral, coupled with the repression of the emotional, results in “pathological symptoms like anxiety, depression, depersonalization, indifference to life, and violence” (Fromm, 1968, p. 97-98). The passiveness that is clearly at work in masochism or automaton conformity is also a factor in destructiveness and sadism. If we understand destructiveness to be the alternative to hope, then the urge to destroy is further proof of our state of hopelessness (Fromm, 1968). Thus, the normative belief that emotions are irrational and reason is never emotional has become an important means of ensuring the perpetuation of negative freedom. As emotional knowledge continues to be invalidated, our anxiety increases, thus the need for authoritarianism intensifies.

Race

As already noted, one problematic area of Fromm’s work is his lack of engagement with race or white supremacy. This is not an uncommon critique of critical theory studies. Critical race theory (CRT) and critical whiteness studies have contributed essential and missing pieces to critical theory through scholarship that demonstrates how structures and systems continue to empower whites, while disempowering people of color, through white supremacy (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Education scholars applying CRT and critical whiteness studies have shown how schools function as a significant structure that operationalizes the systemic nature of education

wherein white supremacy continues to be perpetuated (Allen, 2005; Leonardo, 2009). In doing this, they provide a necessary critique of the way in which class has been conceptualized as the primary determinant around which society is structured. Much like Allen (2005) argues for critical pedagogy, if Fromm's work is to be genuinely impactful, it must include a racial critique that highlights the dehumanization and oppression of white supremacy and leads whites to a "race-radical white identity" (p. 56). Such a racial critique must center the voices of people of color. As Leonardo (2005) argues,

Communities of color have constructed counter-discourses in the home, church, and informal school cultures in order to maintain their sense of humanity. They know too well that their sanity and development, both as individuals and as collective, depend on alternative (unofficial) knowledge of racial formation. (p. 44)

To privilege the counter-narratives and counter discourses of people of color affirms the identity and experience of people of color and challenges the racial lies of white supremacy.

In an interview, Toni Morrison discussed how African American male authors have written about oppression,

Confronting the oppressor who is a white male or white woman. It's race. And the person who defines you under those circumstances is a white mind—tells you whether you're worthy or what have you. And as long as that's your preoccupation, you're defending yourself against that. Reacting to it. Reacting to the definition – saying it's not true. (Leve, 2012)

This confrontation is necessary. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1998) discuss the importance of naming one's reality in a critical race theory of education. They explain that, the story of one's condition leads to the realization of how one came to be oppressed and subjugated and allows one to stop inflicting mental violence on oneself" (p. 57). The oppressed must expel the internalized voice of the oppressor, or in Morrison's words, the white mind that defines a person of color. Humanization requires a transformation of both the oppressed and oppressor consciousness. A critique of white supremacy that centers the work of people of color, both acknowledges the truth of the oppression and the dehumanization of white dominance, and also provides the means to move beyond the preoccupation and reaction of which Morrison speaks. In the same interview, Morrison talks about how it has been central to her work "to take away the gaze of the white male" because "once you take that out, the whole world opens up" (Leve, 2012). This is what can happen in centering the voice of people of color in a racial critique of white supremacy. The gaze shifts, and both whites and people of color are empowered to imagine a reality outside of white domination. But this is only possible through acknowledging the existence of white supremacy. As Leonardo (2005) writes,

Through discourses of supremacy the racial story unfolds, complete with characters, actions, and conflicts. More important, resolution of the plot transforms into a discreet and pedagogical possibility. (p. 50)

Potential ways this can be accomplished will be expanded upon throughout the rest of this project; however, there are a few points that should be discussed before moving forward. As Allen (2005) points out, we often ignore the way in which Freire distinguishes between the oppressor and the oppressed in his discussion of oppression.

The majority of us are both oppressors and oppressed. Most of us have some privilege that places us in a position of power over another group(s), while at the same time we are in a less privileged position than another group(s). This then leads to the necessary distinction between dehumanization and oppression. These two terms are often used interchangeably, but they are not synonyms. Negative freedom and white supremacy dehumanize everyone, both whites and people of color, regardless of the power society does or does not confer upon a person. In a system of white supremacy, whites are always part of the oppressor group. This is not to say that all whites have an equal amount of social capital or power, as there is an intersecting hierarchy based upon class and gender as well. This is significant here because of how we choose to respond to this situation. Instead of siding with those whom we oppress, we concede power to those who oppress us (Allen, 2005). We do this in multiple ways, one example of which is the tendency of poor whites to choose to identify politically or socially with other predominantly white groups, even if these groups work to actively maintain a classist system. Poor whites could choose to align themselves with political or social groups of people of color who have similar economic interests, but they do not, instead they cling to their whiteness (Allen, 2009). Another powerful example is the persistence of the myth of meritocracy. Whites, as the oppressors, are adept at “normalizing social space in such a way that perpetuates white power and privilege while also making it look like this is not happening” (Allen, 2005, p. 58). This is largely done unquestioningly and unconsciously, making Fromm’s work an ideal lens through which to unveil and critique it. Allen (2009) argues that we must expose “the cracks and crevices” within the political alliances of whiteness in order to destroy white supremacy. Using the psychological and

structural critique that Fromm offers provides a way to do this. Rather than devoting one section to exploring the ways in which negative freedom is used to perpetuate white supremacy, this discussion will be threaded throughout the rest of the project.

The Social Unconscious

As was mentioned earlier, part of what sets Fromm apart from other critical theorists is his background in and practice of psychoanalysis. His theorization of the unconscious is a reflection of this. The unconscious is an essential piece of Fromm's work that bridges the psychological and structural critiques of Freud and Marx. Broadly speaking, Fromm's analyses are about the ways in which our social structures and ideas are connected or related to the concepts of social character and social unconscious. Social character, according to Fromm (1962/2009) is what "makes people act and think as they have to act and think from the standpoint of the proper functioning of their society" (p. 70). Implied here is the notion that there are thoughts or feelings that are deemed unacceptable from the viewpoint of proper society. This is the realm of social unconscious, which refers to,

Those areas of repression which are common to most members of society; these commonly repressed elements are those contents which a given society cannot permit its members to be aware of if the society with its specific contradictions is to operate successfully. (Fromm, 1962/2009, p. 70)

The illusion of freedom that masks the reality of negative freedom is largely created by the unconscious. Here, the lessons we learn through interacting with and being a member of society become so innate that we do not recognize their untruth, or how they influence

us. The result of this is neurosis created by the denial or repression of awareness of our most significant experiences, which produces a conflict between our unconscious and conscious (Fromm, 1962/2009). This neurosis is the socially sanctioned ‘pathology of normalcy,’ or perhaps more simply stated, a socially required mental sickness that helps to create the social self (in contrast to the real self) mentioned above (Fromm, 1941/1994).

Both Freud and Marx wrote about the unconscious, and Fromm’s conceptualization critiques and builds upon aspects of both. While the majority of Freud’s work was focused on the individual unconscious, Fromm found much of it applicable to his own work. Freud argued that most of our consciousness is false, as most of what is real in us is not conscious, but repressed through a mechanism of fear because it is incompatible with the social norms that influence us so strongly. We repress our awareness of emotions, affects, impulses, and facts so that anything that threatens the social norms by which we live becomes part of our unconscious (Fromm, 1962/2009). In order to preserve the semblance of freedom, we repress that which would bring us closer to authentic freedom and accept oppression. In Fromm’s words,

Man, so proud of his freedom to think and to choose is, in fact, a marionette moved by strings behind and above him which in turn are directed by forces unknown to his consciousness. In order to give himself the illusion that he acts according to his own free will, man invents rationalizations which make it appear as if he does what he has to do because he has chosen to do so for rational or moral reasons. (1962/2009, p. 78)

According to Freud, the “strings” or forces at work are physiological or biological needs. For Marx, our consciousness is molded by social function; we are controlled by social and economic forces (Fromm, 1962/2009). Fromm incorporates aspects of both, but expands his notion of the unconscious through a deeper analysis of fear as the mechanism of repression. For Fromm, it is our fear of isolation and ostracism that drives our need to repress. We fear nothing more than complete isolation which, according to Fromm, would drive us to insanity. Out of fear, Fromm writes,

The individual must blind himself from seeing that which his group claims does not exist, or accept as truth that which the majority says is true, even if his own eyes could convince him that it is false. The herd is so vitally important for the individual that their views, beliefs, feelings constitute reality for him, more so than what his sense and his reason tell him. .

.There is almost nothing a man will not believe—or repress—when he is threatened with the explicit or implicit threat of ostracism. (1962/2009, p. 94)

This herd mentality or group think is essential to the preservation of white supremacy. Whites create a world sustained by an egocentric false consciousness that allows them to believe equality does exist, and that their power and privilege were justly earned and not the result of racism. Allen (2005) explains, whites “construct powerful myths that cast people of color as fundamentally inept participants in an allegedly just, fair, and meritocratic society based on individual competition and reward. These myths and the social experience they create are so overwhelming that people of color often come to believe in the myth of their inferiority” (p. 59).

In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed (2015) looks at how narratives in public domain texts help to construct these myths through the creation of a “you” and an “other,” and the manipulation of emotions that are either created through the emotional response to the ‘other’ or attached to the ‘other.’ For example, Ahmed explains the way the British National Front creates a white nationalist identity through narratives that produce a particular emotional response. She writes,

The narrative invites the reader to adopt the ‘you’ through working on emotions: becoming this ‘you’ would mean developing a certain rage against these illegitimate others, who are represented as ‘swarms’ in the nation. Indeed, to feel love for the nation, whereby love is an investment that should be returned (you are the ‘taxpayer’), is also to feel injured by these others, who are ‘taking’ what is yours. (Ahmed, 2015, p. 1).

Whiteness is used to create familial ties through the alignment of family, history, and race that evokes particular emotional responses. The power of these myths is so deeply ingrained that few question them. The contradictions or dissonance that they should create are buried within the unconscious. Those who may begin to question are often silenced by the fear of being cut off or isolated from their communities. Emotions, such as love, shame, and fear, are key to grasping the ways in which negative freedom is enacted, and will be discussed in greater depth in later sections.

It may seem like a hopeless situation given that all societies have the power to inflict ostracism or isolation as a means of social control, but there is hope for change. Fromm finds promise in the fact that we are not just members of society, but members of the human race. Our fear of ostracism is certainly powerful, but so is our desire for the

humanity which resides inside of us as conscience and reason. It is this humanity that allows us to confront the fear (Fromm, 1962/2009). Fromm (1962/2009) writes, “To that degree to which a person—because of his own intellectual and spiritual development—feels his solidarity with humanity, can he tolerate social ostracism, and vice versa” (p. 95).

But how does one do this? Can we defy fear and repression in order to make our unconscious conscious? According to Fromm, we can, but this is not something we can do through mere intellectual knowledge. When we are in a state of self-observation, we are detached and out of touch with our unconscious. Discovery of the unconscious is an act that is both intellectual and affective. Instead of just thinking about it, we must experience it through “being aware” and “seeing” (Fromm, 1962/2009, p. 74). It is an experience that Fromm suggests is “characterized by both its spontaneity and suddenness” (Fromm, 1962/2009, p. 74). He describes it as the “emancipation of man from socially conditioned alienation from himself and human kind” (Fromm, 1962/2009, p. 96). The self-actualization of the unconscious is a vital part of Fromm’s theorization of love as positive freedom and will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

Necrophilia

In addition to his emphasis on the unconscious, Fromm’s use of biophilia and necrophilia as constructs to understand character structure and development demonstrate another way in which his use of psychoanalysis sets his work apart from other critical theorists. Fromm’s characterology will be discussed in greater depth in the chapter on ethics, but I mention it here because his ideas around necrophilia provide a way to both understand how negative freedom operates, and identify some of its important

characteristics. It is important to note at the outset of discussing Fromm's characterology that he does not believe any one person represents just one character structure or typology. Instead, he argues that we are all a combination of types. According to Fromm, there are two basic character formations: productive and non-productive. These are directly related to Fromm's belief that in life we are given the unavoidable task of choosing between *being* (life) or *having* (death) (Landis, 1975). Biophilia and the concept of being will be discussed in more depth in the chapters on love and ethics. Here, I will focus on the relationship between necrophilia and negative freedom through Fromm's conceptualization of necrophilia as destructiveness.

Fromm (1973) defines necrophilia as,

The passionate attraction to all that is dead, decayed, putrid, sickly; it is the passion to transform that which is alive into something unalive; to destroy for the sake of destruction; the exclusive interest in all that is purely mechanical. It is the passion to tear apart living structures. (p. 369)

Landis (1975) further describes it as a "life-thwarting syndrome, the lustful attraction of all that is destructive, mechanical, or dead, manifested in sadistic power operations, greed and total self-absorption" (p. 419). Necrophilia is what Fromm refers to as a "malignant-destructiveness." He differentiates this from "benign-aggression," or what we would think of as a biological or instinctual aggressiveness triggered by a threat to our survival (Landis, 1975, p. 421). Here, the aggressive behavior dissipates once the threat has passed. Malignant-destructiveness is not biological or instinctual. Both sadism and necrophilia are examples of this type of destructiveness. To varying degrees, both

“involve a kind of *exaltation*, an emotional and physiological lust as found in ecstatic rage” (Landis, 1975, p. 423). They are born out of the existential need for “a sense of potency and purpose to exist” (Landis, 1975, p. 423). When these needs are not met through more productive, life-giving, or loving means, a person may escape his or her feelings of meaninglessness or powerlessness through destructiveness (Landis, 1975). Unlike Freud, Fromm does not view the love for life (biophilia) and the love for death (necrophilia) as the two basic biological drives. Instead, he believes love for life is biologically driven, while love for death only arises when the love for life has not flourished (Funk, 1982).

In modern society, necrophilic orientation is one where there is an attraction to all that is “static, mechanical, dead, predictable, and easy to control” (Braune, 2014, p. 143). Necrophilia is also evident in what Fromm (1947/1990) refers to as the marketing character. In this character orientation, everything is commodified. Landis explains this character in terms that are of particular relevance today. He writes,

In this orientation, personalities are merchandised and values are determined by the market price. The technological, or “cybernetic” man according to Fromm, has these qualities in abundance. Life is guided largely by the logic of technique and the vicissitudes of the market place; one experiences one’s body as an instrument for achievement and requires it to appear youthful and successful; actions are routinized and stereotyped, feelings are flattened, and love is replaced by sentimentality. . . . When this technological orientation is carried to an extreme then, Fromm concludes, the result is “a lifeless world of total technicalization (that) is

only another form of the world of death and decay. (Landis, 1975, p. 424)

In his later work, Fromm would create the necrophilic-destructive character type, which he believed evolved largely in response to the threat of nuclear war (Funk, 1982). Before this, necrophilia was used as a means to characterize negative freedom more broadly.

Braune (2014) demonstrates the political nature of Fromm's theorization of necrophilia, writing that the necrophiliac is attracted to "law and order and bureaucracy" and "nationalism, since he loves what is 'home-made' and that to which he is accustomed, while he is afraid of what is new or different" (p. 143). The necrophiliac "misunderstands justice, seeing justice as merely quantitative matter of equal distribution" (p. 143). Braune (2014) also suggests that the necrophiliac finds the present unbearable, instead preferring "a return to the dead, fixed controllable past" (p. 143). Each of us is both biophilic and necrophilic; the question we must ask ourselves is which is the stronger, more influential force.

Emotion

While Fromm's work engages with concepts that are commonly labeled as emotions, such as fear, love, and shame, he offers little explicit discussion for how to define or analyze the concept of emotion. In the following sections, I will look at the significance of shame for negative freedom. Before delving into that research, it is helpful first to consider the idea of emotions more broadly. The study of emotions has generated a substantial amount of research, and the purpose here is not to account for all of it. Instead, I will look briefly at the research that provides a framework relevant to this project for analyzing the ways emotions function. With this purpose in mind, Ahmed's

(2015) work on the politics of emotions is the most useful. Ahmed's interest is not in exploring what emotions are, but rather what emotions do. There is great debate about what emotions are. For example, there is the question as to whether emotions are cognitive, sensory, or physical. Are emotions psychological states or sociocultural practices? Some dispute the idea that certain emotions (such as shame) are actually emotions, and argue that they are affects. While distinctions such as these are important, and are certainly more than just semantics, they are not necessarily of the most relevance here. When they are important, they will be noted, but for this project, the most interesting and useful information comes from analyzing what emotions do, their purposes, and/or their effects.

Ahmed (2015) proposes a "model of sociality of emotion" that suggests we look at how emotions operate in terms of the notion of impression (p. 9). Impression functions in multiple ways. She explains,

So not only do I have an impression of others, but they also leave me with an impression; they impress me and impress upon me. I will use the idea of 'impression' as it allows me to avoid making analytical distinction between bodily sensation, emotion and thought as if they could be 'experienced' as distinct realms of human 'experience.' (p. 6)

As impressions, emotions create surfaces and boundaries. Here, we frame the experience of emotion as "the affect of one surface upon another, an affect that leaves its mark or trace" (Ahmed, 2015, p. 6). There is a sense of movement in Ahmed's understanding of emotion, where emotions move between us and influence how and what we connect or attach to. The significance, she explains, is that "what moves us, what makes us feel, is

also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place” (Ahmed, 2015, p. 11).

This is important when we consider the ways in which emotions, such as shame, are used in the formation of group identities, a discussion that will be addressed below.

Ahmed’s analysis also points to the connection between emotions and the unconscious. Within the unconscious are the things we repress in order to continue living our lives as dictated by the social norms of our society, as part of this, we often suppress or repress certain emotions. In unveiling the ways the unconscious works to sustain negative freedom, we must not only consider the emotions that are repressed, but also the emotions that are allowed to remain at the level of consciousness. Ahmed (2015) suggests that sometimes, even when the emotion remains, the production of the emotion is repressed. In Ahmed’s words, “‘feelings’ become ‘fetishes’, qualities that seem to reside in objects, only through an erasure of the history of their production and circulation” (p. 11). In simpler terms, the how and/or why of the emotion has been erased, which can certainly contribute to a continued state of false consciousness or negative freedom. For example, think of the emotions attached to whiteness or the fear caused by the threat of isolation. In erasing what Ahmed terms the “history of their production and circulation” we eliminate the means to unveil their oppressive nature or transcend them.

One of the more useful outcomes in using Fromm’s work to analyze the educational experience is the way in which it prioritizes the study or analysis of our emotions. While there has been growing interest in the role of emotions in education, much of this research has remained underexamined, perhaps intentionally. As Ahmed (2015) points out, “What is relegated to the margins is often, as we know from

deconstruction, right at the centre of thought itself” (p. 4).

Shame

While Fromm explores the ways in which fear, alienation, and isolation function to perpetuate negative freedom, he does little more than allude to the notion of shame or its role in relation to negative freedom. In *The Art of Loving* (1956/2006), he briefly mentions it, writing “The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love—is the source of shame. It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety” (p. 9). Given the striking similarity between Fromm’s work on negative freedom and current research on shame, it is a connection that needs to be explored. In complicating Fromm’s theory to include a discussion of the role of shame, negative freedom becomes an even more compelling means through which to analyze mechanisms of oppression in society broadly and schools specifically. Negative freedom thrives on isolation, and as will be demonstrated below, shame can only exist when we feel isolated or fear the threat of isolation. Understanding the relationship between shame and negative freedom is important for revealing how these two concepts work in tandem to create and perpetuate oppression.

Much research has been done on shame across numerous disciplines. As shame is just one piece of this project, it is not feasible to account for all of this research here. The following discussion looks at the work of Brené Brown (2008), Thandeka (1999), and Lisbeth Probyn (2005) to conceptualize shame, its relationship to negative freedom, and its implications for understanding how negative freedom operates. Ahmed’s work will continue to be referenced throughout the discussion where applicable. Both Brown (2007) and Thandeka (1999) understand shame to be a psychosocial-cultural construct

that must be deconstructed. Their work analyzes the impact of shame on both an individual and societal level. Probyn (2005) writes from the perspective that shame can be productive. This is an important point of view to engage with because there are critical scholars in education arguing from this perspective. Her understanding of productiveness is nuanced and will be discussed in greater depth below. Zembylas (2008) has also done important work on shame, but as his work is specific to education, his research will be addressed in the section on negative freedom and schooling.

As previously discussed, Fromm's theorization of freedom hinges on his belief that the most important aspect of human nature is our need to belong, to feel connected to and in relation with others in the world around us. Given this, Fromm posits that our greatest fear is isolation or alienation. When we look at the conceptualizations of shame offered by Brown (2008), Thandeka (1999), and Probyn (2005) we see a very similar language of isolation, alienation, and disconnection, and repeated references to the need to connect and belong. Below is a brief overview of Brown's, Thandeka's, and Probyn's ideas on shame, which provides an introduction to their work and to the concept of shame.

As a professor and a licensed master social worker, Brown's research on shame has spanned decades. The accessibility of her work has brought shame into more mainstream conversation. Much of her theorization of shame echoes ideas found within Fromm. She focuses largely on the ways in which individuals, mainly women, experience shame and then, based on that research, generalizes to make broader statements on women and shame. In doing this, she begins to address the relationship between societal constructions of shame and gender norms. While her focus on women

may be a limitation in some ways, it is not entirely problematic, given the educational context of this project and the fact that the majority of k-12 teachers continue to be women. Brown (2008) describes shame as “the fear of disconnection” or something that “unravels our connection to others” (p. xxv). In her definition of shame she explains how she interprets the experience of shame:

Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging. Women often experience shame when they are entangled in a web of layered, conflicting and competing social-community expectations. Shame creates feelings of fear, blame and disconnection. (Brown, 2008, p. 30)

She lays the foundation for a number of important points about shame, demonstrating its connection to negative freedom. Shame is a painful emotion and experience that brings on feelings of fear and isolation. It stems from a conflict between one’s sense of self and social or community norms. These are ideas repeated in both Thandeka and Probyn.

Thandeka’s (1999) work provides an analysis of shame and group identity that Brown’s does not. Her work focuses specifically on whiteness. She looks at how whiteness is learned and the manner in which whiteness and white shame are used to both create group identity and exert control over those within the group. Thandeka’s analysis complicates Fromm’s notion of negative freedom through bringing to light the implications of race for shame. As Fromm does not engage with the idea of race, his conceptualization of freedom must be complicated to include an analysis that accounts for the role of racism in negative freedom. Thandeka’s research provides the means to begin that discussion.

Thandeka (1999) addresses the fear of disconnection through illuminating the internal conflict that takes place within whites when they grapple with the fear of isolation from their white community. Whites are forced to choose between their moral conscience and their white group identity, which Thandeka argues is created through white shame. Thandeka (1999) describes shame as,

An emotional display of a hidden civil war. It is a pitched battle by a self against itself in order to stop feeling what it was not supposed to feel:

forbidden desires and prohibited feelings that render one different. (p. 12)

She goes on to write, “white shame is this deeply private feeling of not being at home with one’s own white community” (1999, p. 13). Thandeka highlights the ways in which the feelings of alienation and disconnection are both internal and external. Whites will struggle to silence emotions that are deemed prohibited by the white community and, at the same time, they struggle with the sense that they really don’t belong to that white community.

As mentioned above, Probyn’s (2005) approach to shame is different from either Thandeka’s or Brown’s. Probyn argues for understanding shame through a sociological lens where shame is examined through what it does within the body and habitus’ in effect, she is choosing not to label shame just an affect or an emotion. According to Probyn, when shame is labeled an emotion, cognition is privileged over the bodily response. Shame as an affect prioritizes what happens in the brain, body, and nervous system. Probyn’s categorization of shame allows for addressing both the affective and emotional aspects of shame, revealing the ways in which shame is one of the primary physical and cognitive reactions to negative freedom.

Her work is used here because she writes from the perspective that shame can be productive. Initially, this may sound counter to both the argument I am making about the connection between shame and negative freedom, and the perspectives offered by Brown and Thandeka. However, while there are differences in their approaches to understanding shame, Probyn's argument of the productiveness of shame is not entirely in conflict with that of Brown or Thandeka. Probyn (2005), like Brown and Thandeka, argues that shame is not something that we can entirely eliminate. None of the research considered here suggests this; that is not the purpose of researching shame. Instead, the idea is to understand what shame is and what triggers it. Probyn's work on shame is based on the research of Silvan S. Tomkins (1962, 1963, 1995), who has become increasingly popular among those looking at shame. He argues that we cannot understand shame without recognizing its connection to interest. Probyn (2005) explains,

Shame highlights different levels of interest. Shame goes to the heart of who we think we are. In this sense, shame puts one's self-esteem on the line and questions our value system. . .What shames me may not shame you. But whatever it is that shames you will be something important to you, an essential part of yourself. (p. x)

Interest reveals the desire for connection, the fear of isolation, and the role of one's sense of self. Probyn (2005) further elaborates on the relationship between interest and shame,

Tomkins describes how shame can only appear once interest and enjoyment have been felt and when they have been ripped from you. At that moment the sheer disappointment of loss translates into shame that attacks your sense of self: the entrails of who you thought you were

suddenly displayed for all to judge. (p. xii)

The productive nature of shame, for Probyn, is found in the self-evaluation that it can provoke. Certainly, we can deny and repress shame, but for those who do acknowledge and examine their feelings of shame, it becomes a tool of both self-evaluation and self-transformation (Probyn, 2005). With this groundwork laid, the rest of this discussion attempts to illuminate the connection between shame and negative freedom.

Shame and guilt.

Before moving into a more in-depth discussion of shame and negative freedom, it is necessary to clarify what sets shame apart from other related emotional responses such as guilt, embarrassment, or humiliation. Guilt and shame are the two most often confused. Brown (2008), Thandeka (1999), and Probyn, (2005) all take the time to distinguish between guilt and shame. Below is a brief summary of their main points.

Guilt and shame are both self-evaluative, but they differ significantly in terms of their origins. Guilt occurs when there is a conflict between our behavior and our personal sense of ethics or values (Brown, 2008). Guilt is the idea that I did something wrong, there is a self-condemnation that can be followed by some reparation or recompense. Shame is the idea that there is something wrong with me, it is about one's self, and not a behavior or action. There is not a mistake that can be apologized for; instead, one views oneself as the mistake (Thandeka, 1999; Brown, 2008). As a result, while guilt can be a motivator of positive change, shame is often a source of more destructive behavior or paralysis because it creates feelings of disconnection and isolation (Brown, 2008). While Probyn (2005) uses a similar framework to distinguish between shame and guilt, she does not find shame to be the more harmful of the two emotional responses. She argues that

shame is the more positive force, suggesting that guilt can be easily assuaged without any real evaluation of the self. For Probyn (2005), guilt is “fleeting” or an “on/off” emotion that allows us to avoid dealing with shame (p. 46). Shame, on the other hand, “has many more shades of difference” and is something that continues to “revisit” you (Probyn, 2005, p. 46). Shame demands “a global [re]evaluation of the self” (p. 45). Probyn’s description and analysis of shame are quite useful, but, for me, her analysis of guilt is lacking. Our evaluation of guilt must be as nuanced as that of shame. Certainly, one can, as she suggests, feel guilty, write a check, enjoy self-righteous praise, and then repeat the cycle. But to suggest that guilt does not result in any positive change is to lump all guilty responses together. Just as one can inauthentically deal with shame, repressing any genuine self-evaluation, one can superficially respond to guilt. While acknowledging and working through shame can be transformative, it is an incredibly toxic emotion, and to label it a more positive emotional response than guilt is not something with which I can agree. Harriet Lerner (2001), psychologist and psychotherapist, explains the danger of shame. She writes,

We cannot survive when our identity is defined by or limited to our worst behavior. Every human must be able to view the self as complex and multidimensional. When this fact is obscured, people will wrap themselves in layers of denial in order to survive. How can we apologize for something we are, rather than something we did? (as quoted in Brown, 2008, p. 66)

This certainly is not to say that we should not evaluate and examine the things that shame us. That is something we must do, both on an individual and group level, if we are to

move beyond negative freedom. I include Lerner's words here because I think they provide a warning on the limits of using shame to change someone or the belief that one can shame another into better behavior, which is particularly important in terms of education.

Those who argue that shame can be used as a successful behavior modification tool often cite John Braithwaite's research (1989, 2000) on the role of shame. Probyn (2005) discusses his research and some of the issues surrounding it. Braithwaite argues that shame can function in a positive manner in reintegrating the shamed back into society, *depending on the context in which the shaming takes place*. Braithwaite cites specific groups or societies within China, Japan, North Africa, Afghanistan, and New Zealand as examples where shaming, through the loss of respect or status, has worked well, and even better than other institutional sanctions (Probyn, 2005). Serious concerns have been raised about the universal applicability of Braithwaite's work due to the very specific cultural contexts in which he finds shame to be reintegrative rather than stigmatizing. As he himself notes, there are certain characteristics of these societies that contribute to these outcomes. When taken out of context, Braithwaite's work becomes the basis for practices like forcing drunk drivers to publicly identify as such by wearing sandwich boards (Probyn, 2005). Shame may be a "silent epidemic" as Brown (2008, p. xviii) refers to it, but this does not make it any less damaging, and in fact, may make it even more dangerous, particularly when it is used as a means to enforce social norms that are dehumanizing or oppressive.

This project will continue to look at the ways in which we must examine shame, reflect on the things that shame us, and use it as a tool of self-evaluation and change. But

because of the dehumanizing and dangerous ways in which shame often operates, it is important to be very clear that before arguing for these transformative possibilities of shame, we must thoroughly educate ourselves in shame as a concept, mechanism of oppression, and tool for transformation.

The discussion thus far has focused largely on how shame affects an individual and the ways in which this shapes an understanding of one's identity. The structural aspects of shame or the significance of shame to a group identity have not been addressed. The formation of an individual identity is complex and multilayered. Race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation are just a few of the factors that shape one's individual identity, and that can also provide a group identity. Our identities are not always fixed. Instead, the ways in which we construct our identities, or how they are constructed for us, are often dependent upon context and, likewise, the ways in which the various aspects of our identity are interpreted are based upon a hierarchy of social constructions of power (Collins, 2000). Our individual identities shape and are shaped by our group identities. Varying amounts of power are attached to many of these identities, and ultimately that power is used to maintain a white supremacist patriarchy. Shame is as relevant to these group identities as it is to our individual identities. Examining how shame operates in these larger identity groups demonstrates that an essential piece to liberation must be in interrogating the way shame is wielded to empower or disempower particular group identities. We all experience shame, but the shame of the oppressors and the shame of the oppressed is not the same.

The shame of the oppressed is created through the dehumanization of being 'Othered,' treated as if one is 'less than,' or even made invisible. Shame is rarely simple.

An ideology based on the creation of an Other is multi-layered in the ways in which it manifests, both consciously and unconsciously, to reinforce oppression. Sandra Lee Bartky (1996) discusses shame as a pedagogical tool used to inculcate the oppressed with a sense of inferiority. Her research looks specifically at women, but I think her insight can be applied more generally to all oppressed groups. She writes,

With few exceptions, women are subjected to a powerful disciplinary pedagogy which teaches us that we are Other and which prepares us for the “lesser life” that many of us are destined to live. . .our subjectivities are formed within an interlocking grid of social ensembles—school, family, church, workplace, media—that teach us our destiny, which is to serve and to please. (1996, p. 225)

Here we see the multiple ways in which various social structures or “ensembles” work as a mechanism of social control, acculturating the Other to a shame that prepares them to accept a life of ‘less than.’ In Freirean terms, it is the purposeful veiling of critical consciousness through a pedagogy of dehumanization. Bartky continues, explaining how one should understand the shame of the oppressed. She suggests,

Shame is not so much a particular feeling or emotion (although it involves specific feelings and emotions) as a pervasive affective attunement to the social environment, that women’s shame is more than merely an effect of subordination but, within the larger universe of patriarchal social relations, a corporeal disclosure of self in situation. (1996, p. 225)

This shame shapes everything about one’s life. It defines the way in which one is in the world.

The shame of the oppressor comes from knowing (consciously and/or unconsciously) that we benefit from the othering and dehumanization of individuals and entire groups of people. We are ashamed because we know that we actively participate in the construction of myths which benefit us and work to the detriment of others. We choose to trade our humanity for power, or its façade, and this creates shame. The knowledge that we fear being cast out of our communities more than we are committed to our own humanization and the humanization of others is shaming. The ideologies of white supremacy and patriarchy that construct shame-inducing myths to oppress people of color and women, create other myths that work to suppress any cognizance of shame on the part of the oppressor. These myths work to sustain ideas of superiority, deservedness, and meritocracy. The shame of the oppressor as it relates to whiteness and national identity will be discussed below.

Whiteness.

Thandeka (1999) looks to the socialization of the white child to examine the fear of isolation on which white shame is based. For Thandeka, white shame is a complex experience. She refers to it as shame because shame signifies an unresolved conflict that makes one feel flawed. It is white because it is within this racial context that whites discover the internal conflict. There is an open wound left when one chooses to exchange his or her own humanity for the distorted benefits of membership in the white group. It is both the alienation within one's self and the threatened ostracization from one's white family and the larger community that creates white shame. Ahmed's (2015) discussion of the effects of shame on the alienation of the self is relevant here. She writes,

In shame, I feel myself to be bad, and hence to expel the badness, I have to

expel myself from myself (prolonged experiences of shame, unsurprisingly, can bring subjects perilously close to suicide). In shame, the subject's movement back into itself is simultaneously a turning away from itself. In shame, the subject may have nowhere else to turn. (p. 104)

She goes on to describe the way in which shame makes the self feel simultaneously concealed and exposed. She explains,

Crucially, the individuation of shame—the way it turns the self against and towards the self—can be linked precisely to the inter-corporeality and sociality of shame experiences. The 'apartness of the subject is intensified in the return of the gaze; apartness I felt in the moment of exposure to others, an exposure that is wounding. (p. 105)

The fear surrounding this internal conflict is learned at a young age for white children. In fact, Thandeka (1999) argues that the white child is the first racial victim of the white community. Through a violent process of racialization, the white child is taught to think and act like "its community's ideal of a white self" (Thandeka, 1999, p. 13). Any action in conflict with this ideal is attacked. Socialized to respond to any difference from the white community's ideals with fear, suspicion, or hatred, the white child learns to deny any feelings of affinity for others outside its white community. Thandeka (1999) argues that this should not be understood as a child's conscious choice to become white. Instead, it is about the choice to survive, which the child understands is dependent upon the continued acceptance by his or her white community. Yet, this choice for survival has detrimental and destructive consequences to one's sense of self. As whites, we learn to separate ourselves from any feelings that are perceived as forbidden by our white

community, and as a result, we become alienated from ourselves (Thandeka, 1999).

Brown (2008) describes these family messages as insidious, highlighting the ways in which they continue to control us as we pass them down through the generations. She also discusses the traumatic nature of lessons like the ones that Thandeka (1999) analyzes. Often we do not recognize the daily traumas we experience. We overlook what we take to be small or insignificant experiences, assuming that for something to be traumatic, it must be big, some sort of disaster. Brown uses the work of psychiatrist Shelley Uram (2006) to discuss the ways in which the traumas that we label small or quiet still trigger the same brain-survival reaction that a larger trauma does. According to Uram, these traumas are registered as threats we cannot control. Brown (2008) suggests that “many of our early shame experiences, especially those with parents and caregivers, were stored in our brains as traumas” (p. 89). These early traumas continue to impact us throughout our lives. Brown (2008) explains,

When we experience something in the present that triggers an old trauma memory, we re-experience the *sense* of the original trauma. So, rather than remembering the wound, we become the wound. This makes sense when we think of how we are often returned to a place of smallness and helplessness when we feel shame. (p. 89)

While we may attempt to repress the trauma of learning to be white through our own self-alienation, we continue to experience and react to these early traumas throughout our lives. The shame of what our whiteness represents becomes part of our identity. There is a complexity that must be addressed in understanding the significance of white shame for individual and group identity. My whiteness is only one part of my

identity as a middle-class white woman, but in a system of white patriarchy, it may be the most powerful and influential part of my identity. Yet, it is also entirely socially constructed. There is nothing innate or biological about my whiteness. One could also argue that when we look at the way whiteness has been constructed, there is nothing redeemable or positive about it. So perhaps the distinction in white shame is that, in fact, whites should feel shame about this part of their identity. This would be in contrast to those groups (for example, ‘race-radical’ feminists or those who identify as LGBTQ) that are shamed for “inhabiting the ‘non’normative” or for not “following the scripts of the normative existence” (Ahmed, 2015, p. 107).

Above, I argue that we cannot shame someone into better behavior, and that is not what I am advocating for here. The distinction is in whether one is invoking shame, as in trying to make another feel ashamed, or if one is unveiling shame that is already there, realized or suppressed. Thandeka’s (1999) research suggests that as whites we are aware of this shame and it is so painful that we choose not to deal with it, suppressing it in our subconscious or unconscious. If whiteness has been constructed in such a way that there is nothing about it to be rehabilitated, the only option for humanization is to abolish it. Now, this is not an argument for colorblind ideology. I am not suggesting that the solution is found in claiming “I’m not white. I don’t see color.” As long as there is power and privilege tied to my whiteness, I have to own and acknowledge it. But at the same time, we must realize that we have to work to give up that identity if we are to transcend the shame. For whites to do this, we must face our shame and identify it. It cannot remain repressed in our unconscious. The only hope for our transformation is to work through it, otherwise, there is no way out of negative freedom. This certainly is not

a simple thing to do. Whiteness is inescapable in the current system, and true abolition of whiteness would require a complete reworking of the social structure. But, we can choose daily how we will combat that part of our identity. Those whites who do ‘give up’ their white identity will certainly encounter a shame more similar to that of the oppressed. Shame will be used against them because they have refused to live up to the social ideal of whiteness, and in doing so have broken the social contract of white supremacy.

The in/visibility of shame.

Shame is an inescapable and universal part of being human. We all experience it, albeit in different ways. Yet, as Brown (2008) argues, it is a “silent epidemic,” something we have been “taught and socialized not to discuss” (p. xviii). We force it underground, “where it now permeates our personal and public lives in destructive and insidious ways” (Brown, p. xix). Our inability or unwillingness to talk about shame provides it an invisibility that makes it even more destructive. Shame’s power is dependent upon never being critically examined in broad daylight. Brown (2008) explains,

Shame unconsciously drives thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Its survival depends on remaining undetected; therefore, it seeks silence and secrecy.
(p. 155)

One way to understand this invisibility is through the relationship of shame to habitus. The notion of ideology was referenced earlier, and the role of habitus and shame is an extension of this conversation.

Probyn (2005) argues that shame is determined by our habitus. Using Bourdieu’s

idea of habitus as “embodied history, internalized as second nature and so forgotten as history,” she describes habitus as “the space of incorporation. . .where the force of history gets played out in our ways of positioning ourselves and being in the world” (p. 55, p. 50). Habitus, then, is the means through which “social rules become inscribed in our dispositions: how we see ourselves and the extent to which we are able to envision alternative outcomes to those histories” (Probyn, 2005, p. 51-52). If habitus is a way in which we position ourselves in the world, shame is “the disjuncture of place, self, and interest” or “the rupture when bodies can’t or won’t fit the place—when, seemingly, there is no place to hide” (p. 39). The irony of the invisibility of shame is that it is quite visible. We have just been socialized to pretend it is not there. The ideology or habitus of shame may remain invisible, but the experience of shame is often a very visible and visceral dislocation. There is a definite embodiment of shame. It makes us aware of our proximity both to our own sense of self and to others. Probyn (2005) explains,

These accounts, in line with Tomkins’ ideas, emphasize that shame is an affect of proximity. It is about bodies being close to one another and an acute sensitivity of one’s sense of self. The importance of emphasizing shame’s innateness to our bodies is that shame is charged with its own physiology, and, as we’ll see in the next chapter, it charges the social: it makes the social natural in the deepest sense of the word. In other words, it is felt—and widely it seems, on the skin, in the blush, in the covering of the face—and it organizes particular social relations. Shame makes us realize in sometimes visceral ways what Epstein calls “the affective dimension of the transmission of cultural values.” (p. 34)

In more concrete terms, shame is the physical sensations felt in the body before one is even cognizant that one is experiencing shame. In assessing the tearful reaction of one of her interviewees, Thandeka (1999) writes,

But Dan did not cry during our lunch together at the restaurant because he was racist. He cried because his impulse to moral action had been slain by his own fear of racial exile. (p. 9)

To use Probyn's terms, his tears were the physical response to the shame he experienced. His shame came as a result of the threat of physical dislocation from his community through racial exile, and the disjuncture of his sense of self as he sacrificed his moral values to remain a part of the white community. Brown (2008) argues that we feel shame before we think it, or that we have a physical response before a conscious one. Recognizing the ways in which our bodies physically react when we experience shame allows us to critically think through what is creating the shame and how we react to it.

The fear of isolation.

As mentioned above, both shame and negative freedom are based upon our fear of isolation. It is important to note that we are not talking about just physical isolation or feelings of loneliness. According to relational cultural theorists Jean Baker Miller and Irene Stiver (1997),

The most terrifying and destructive feeling that a person can experience is psychological isolation. This is not the same as being alone. It is a feeling that one is locked out of the possibility of human connection and of being powerless to change the situation. In the extreme, psychological isolation can lead to a sense of hopelessness and desperation. People will do almost

anything to escape this combination of condemned isolation and powerlessness. (as qtd. in Brown, 2008, p. 29)

This echoes Fromm's (1968) argument that isolation results in a mental disintegration or psychosis. If shame is the threat of such isolation, then there are serious psychological ramifications for not critically unveiling it.

Of importance is not just the unconscious way in which shame can operate, but also the way in which the mind and body react to shame as if in crisis mode. Brown (2008) cites brain research that suggests,

Shame can be so threatening that, rather than processing it in the neocortex—the advanced part of the brain that allows us to think, analyze and react—shame can signal our brains to go into our very primal “fight, flight or freeze” mode. (p. 28)

Despite the fact that we have all experienced the trauma of shame to varying degrees, many of us continue to act in ways that shame others. We insulate ourselves and engage in shaming through ‘othering’ out of fear that we will be left alone, isolated or abandoned (Brown, 2008). Some may critique Brown, arguing that her work focuses too much on the individual experience of shame or more superficial aspects, or that she deals with shame in areas that seem less important when we are looking at systemic oppression. To a certain degree, these criticisms are valid. She is not a critical theorist. We cannot look to her for an explicit ideological critique or a critical discourse on structures of oppression. Despite this, I believe her research has value for those of us interested in how shame operates to dehumanize and oppress. Issues of femininity, mothering, body appearance, etc. are significant because they contribute to a broader ideology that

oppresses through race, gender, and class. These seemingly smaller issues become the everyday experiences that are not always seen or consciously processed, but are very powerful in the continuation of isolation, shame, and negative freedom. Many of these things come together to create shame through the notion of an ideal self. Ahmed (2015) explains, “In shame, I expose to myself that I am a failure through the gaze of an ideal other” (p. 106). Such an ideal is constructed through the values that are communicated to us through our encounters with others. Working in conjunction with social norms, the notion of ideal self functions to create the “desire to be ‘like’ an other, as well as to be recognized by an other, an ideal self is produced as an approximation of the other being” (Ahmed, 2015, p. 106). According to Ahmed, we feel shame when we fail to approximate this ideal that provides a sense of belonging to a community.

With Fromm’s focus on Nazism and fascism, it makes sense to explore the relationship between shame and the white supremacist ideal. Is Nazism derived from shame? Does one who identifies as a Nazi or fascist feel shame? This is certainly not an area in which I can claim expertise, so the following thoughts serve as more of an impetus for a separate inquiry rather than a conclusive argument. In Frommean terms, the Nazi or fascist is driven by a false ideal based on a pathological perversion of necrophilic sadomasochism, where they are “drawn to the experience of suffering or submission” which for them is interpreted as both “gratifying and attractive” (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 265). They are compelled by that which is harmful to life. While I would suggest that shame is frequently consciously utilized to create the “Other” who falls outside the “white ideal,” how one who claims a Nazi/fascist identity experiences shame may be more complicated. It is possible, that as a result of their own pathological

perversion, they do not feel shame. As discussed above, shame can be a very toxic emotion, but the conscious experience of feeling shamed can push us towards self-reflective action that will lead us to humanization. Without shame, the Nazi/fascist does not experience this. It is also possible they actually do feel a great deal of shame, the burden of which was too much to bear, so their shame is so deeply repressed they cannot acknowledge it. They escape their shame by choosing to relate to the world through a destructivism based on sadomasochistic necrophilia. While the majority of us will feel the pull to escape, as discussed below, it is not to the degree of total annihilation as with the pathologically driven Nazi/fascist.

The compulsion to escape.

Feelings of shame often result in a compulsion to escape. In Brown and Thandeka's research, we see important corollaries to Fromm's mechanisms of escape. Brown finds that the pain created by experiencing the feelings associated with shame, such as confusion, anger, fear, or judgment, are often overwhelming and result in a desire or need to escape. We may not consciously identify shame as the origin of these feelings; thus the power of shame continues to remain masked. Power, or feelings of powerlessness, are often at the root of shame. When we think back to Fromm's mechanisms of escape—sadomasochism, destructionism, and automaton conformity—these are means of escaping a sense of powerlessness. They are a way to make us feel as if we are in a position of power, authority, or control, or to mask the reality that we are overwhelmed by feeling as if we have no control. Brown (2008) points out that all of this is created by a faulty and oppressive understanding of power. She distinguishes the idea of power-over from real power, defining power-over as,

The idea that power is the ability to control people, take advantage of others or exert force over somebody or something. We think of power as finite—there's only so much, so if I'm going to get some, I'm forced to take it away from you. (2008, p. 24)

She argues that the majority of people think of power in this way. She further explains the way in which power-over works through the work of psychologist Dr. Robin Smith. Smith describes power-over as “I will define who you are and then I'll make you believe that's your own definition” (as qtd. in Brown, 2008, p. 24). Both negative freedom and shame are about social control, but what is so disturbing is that they operate in such a way as to make us feel as if the dehumanizing means of escape are our own empowering choices. Brown elaborates with a gender specific example, but I think her words have a much broader application. She explains,

This chilling explanation of power-over captures what shame does to us. It forces us into gender straitjackets, then convinces us that we put them on ourselves and that we enjoy wearing them. (2008, p. 24)

Her metaphor speaks to why shame is so powerful. Shame is the physical, emotional, and mental experience that allows negative freedom to entrap. It is such an overwhelming experience that we will do almost anything to avoid it or silence it. Shame is the ‘voice’ that speaks from the dominated consciousness. A liberated or critical consciousness would silence a voice that tells us to side with our oppressors. It would reject the need to cling to those who oppress or dehumanize us because we realize we no longer need to fear the isolation or the ostracism with which we are threatened. Until we work to become aware of that which is repressed in the unconscious, we will remain in

the straightjacket of a shaming negative freedom, caught in the vicious cycle of what Ahmed (2015) describes as attempting to expel ourselves from ourselves.

Using Thandeka's (1999) work, whiteness or white identity can be seen as a form of power-over and a reaction to the fear of powerlessness where whiteness becomes a mechanism of escape. Thandeka's (1999) and Allen's (2009) analyses demonstrate the way in which whiteness is based upon both sadomasochistic tendencies and automaton-like conformity, pointing out how working class whites continue to act in ways that are counter to their best interests, choosing a white identity over more economically advantageous alignments with people of color. Matias and Allen (2013) elucidate the ways in which choosing a white identity is a dehumanizing form of self-hatred, and counter to authentic love. In fact, as long as whites choose the power-over of their white identity, they are incapable of loving themselves or anyone else, and thus cannot carry out any project of humanization (Allen, 2005).

Juxtaposed against power-over is real power, which Brown (2008) defines as "the ability to change something if you want to change it. It's the ability to make change happen" (p. 25). Real power is infinite because it is something we create. We do not get it by disempowering someone else; instead, it is created and built with others in a context of "consciousness, choice and change" (Brown, 2008, p. 25). These distinctions of power-over and real power are useful because they reveal the disempowering and implicit ways power is used to perpetuate shame and negative freedom. But, I am not suggesting that there are not real institutionalized systems that oppress based on race, gender, and class. These systems cannot be dismantled just by saying they do not represent real power. They are very real forms of power that oppress and dehumanize.

Negative Freedom and Schooling

While not a scholar of education himself, Fromm's roots in critical theory provide a shared knowledge and intent with those in the field of critical pedagogy. The purpose of critical pedagogy is to expose the contradictions of social life and the reality of oppression through a language of critique, and to offer hope for liberation through a language of transcendence. In these terms, Fromm's theory of negative freedom serves as a language of critique. His analysis of negative freedom unveils the alienation, anxiety, and fear that have come to represent the false and oppressive notions of freedom taught in school. His mechanisms of escape highlight the psychological and emotional aspects of the dehumanization that is central to critical pedagogy's critique.

The mainstream discourse around education often suggests that education is the great equalizer of American society, but if we look at the original purposes or objectives of education in the U.S., we find something very different. In describing the evolution of institutionalized schooling during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Oakes (1986) writes,

Then as now, society looked to the schools for salvation. The expansion of the then quite rare institution—the free public high school—was seen as a solution to a whole array of problems: socializing new immigrants, providing an avenue for upward mobility, training workers for the factories, and providing proper supervision for footloose urban youth. (p. 149)

The original aim of public schooling was never to bring about greater equality. Instead, it

was to maintain the status quo of a stratified democratic society through differentiated and unequal access to education. As this appears to be in contradiction with the ideals of democracy, it is not surprising that early public education proponents developed a set of beliefs to resolve the contradiction. According to Oakes (1986), early public education was based on,

The belief in the immutability of vast differences between population groups, the belief that secondary schooling should serve as a preparation for work, and the belief that democratic principles required the extension of secondary schooling to all. (p. 149)

Equality is not, nor has it ever been, the purpose of education, which then brings into question what exactly schooling is used to accomplish. According to Boler (1999), the common school signaled the shift from the use of explicit authoritarian control to pastoral power. The teachers replaced the police instilling in students a morality that encouraged internalized self-regulation and law-abiding behavior. Centuries later, the beliefs and objectives for early public schooling remain relevant today. Students continue to be told that if they work hard enough in school, they will achieve social and economic success, despite the numerous studies that prove this to be untrue. Race, gender, and class continue to impact one's academic, economic, and social success (Bernal, 2002; Blau, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lewis, 2003; Lopez, 2003; MacLeod, 1995; Oakes, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Valencia, 1997). Schooling continues to work to maintain the status quo, naturalizing negative freedom as our given state of being. As Boler (1999) eloquently argues, schooling has become one of the most effective means of social control. She writes,

Education is by no means merely “instruction” and transmission of information. Education shapes our values, beliefs, and who and what we become. Education is a social institution that serves the interests of the nation-state and functions to maintain the status quo and social order. It is therefore a primary mode of enforcing social control of the nation’s citizens. Total social control is referred to as *hegemony*—control achieved not only through explicit force, violence and coercion but by engineering our “consent” to this control. (p. xvii)

The following section will use negative freedom as a lens through which to analyze the schooling experience, examining the ways in which schooling both functions as a means of social control and dehumanizes through the reproduction of negative freedom. Fromm’s work provides the means to demonstrate how the educational experience is psychologically and emotionally destructive for both students and teachers. This suggests a compelling explanation for why we have yet to achieve the empowering and transcendent freedom that critical pedagogy sought. Thus, Frommian theory serves as a necessary critique of critical pedagogy’s understanding of freedom.

With a shared foundation in Marxist theory, Fromm’s work has much in common with critical pedagogy. Beginning with the premise that all people are unfree, critical pedagogy argues that we inhabit a state of oppression brought about by the unequal distribution of power and privilege. As discussed in the literature review, the field of critical pedagogy questions the idea of an innate freedom and unveils its oppressive consequences (Freire, 1968/2000; Greene, 1988). But, Freire’s limited understanding of oppression and liberation hinders critical pedagogy. Much of Freire’s liberatory

pedagogy is based upon his assertion that our “ontological vocation” as human beings is to be free, and that this drive is sufficient to move a person from oppression to liberation (Freire, 1968/2000, p. 74). For Dagostino-Kalniz (2008) this is problematic. She suggests that even if Freire’s assumption is correct, this “ontological vocation” is not enough in and of itself to bring about authentic freedom. She argues,

Freire’s pedagogy does not adequately help students develop the necessary skills to emancipate themselves (or others) from oppression *because* it is based on the assumption that the ontological calling for humanization is impetus enough to propel one toward liberation. (2008, p. 10)

She continues,

Liberation is more than just freedom from external political oppression. It also requires freedom from the psychological attachment to the oppressor or the oppressive ideology that has been so thoroughly internalized. (2008, p. 10)

Freire’s discussion of the psychoanalytic elements of internalized oppression lacks the depth that is required for it to be genuinely transformative. In developing his theory of critical consciousness, Freire fails to deal adequately with the psychological roots of the fear of freedom. While he suggests that fear of freedom is a significant part of oppression, his discussion and analysis fall short in identifying the ways in which our fear of freedom can encourage us to remain oppressed (Freire, 1968/2000). If we do not determine the ways we psychologically internalize our fear of freedom or the ideology of oppression, we will never be able to transcend the dominated consciousness. It is the explication of this psychological attachment that makes Fromm’s work so valuable for

those committed to a liberatory project, and we must address it within education.

From the very beginning, students are taught that freedom is a burden from which they can and should relieve themselves. Through their schooling experience, students are taught to accept automaton conformity, sadomasochism, and destructiveness as natural and successful behavioral and emotional responses, all of which serves to maintain the status quo of white patriarchy. Schools are seen as spaces where students learn what it means to be a citizen of a democracy, which Fromm would argue, has come to mean to learn how to conform. In one of the few places that Fromm explicitly addresses education, he writes, “Education too often results in the elimination of spontaneity and in the substitution of original psychic acts by superimposed feelings, thoughts and wishes” (1941/1994, p. 241). In other words, education contributes to the creation of the social self, as students are told what to think, feel, and hope.

Boler (2005) brings up a similar line of thought through historian William Graebner’s (1987) discussion of how schools manipulate the democratic process into “engineered consent” (p. 53). Escape from freedom is masked as “group process” or participation through the manipulation of rhetoric that turns “democracy” into “autocratic control” (Boler, 1999, p. 53). According to Boler (1999), Graebner argues that individuals are misled in that they “are made to believe they are actively shaping their moral world, when in fact the illusory sense of “participation” simply leads people willingly to comply with economic, political, and national interests of the ruling class” (p. 53).

As early as preschool, we are taught to all sit the same way, to listen quietly, and to raise our hand if we have something to say. These lessons in conformity are models

for how one participates in community and contributes to a respectful democracy. We are taught to seek out and value authority. We are trained to stand in straight lines, walk quietly, and follow a schedule often dictated by bells. Our intellectual abilities are judged by how quickly we move through pre-determined standards of academic achievement. We find ourselves rewarded for regurgitating the information presented to us by teachers. For Fromm (1941/1994), this is one of the ways we learn that conformity is valued over original or individual thinking. Schooling trains us to accept pre-fabricated thoughts through its emphasis on learning facts of knowledge. Fromm (1941/1994) explains,

The pathetic superstition prevails that by knowing more and more facts one arrives at knowledge of reality. Hundreds of scattered and unrelated facts are dumped into the heads of students; their time and energy are taken up by learning more and more facts so that there is little left for thinking. To be sure, thinking without a knowledge of facts remains empty and fictitious; but 'information' alone can be just as much of an obstacle to thinking as the lack of it. (p. 247).

As students, we are instructed to value the knowledge presented in official textbooks and curricula over our own knowledge, experiences, or truth. We are taught to uncritically accept normative forms of assessment through IQ tests and standardized assessments. We are not encouraged to question disparities based upon a white supremacist patriarchy. The official discourse in schools rarely challenges us to question the given interpretations of reality and may result in punishment if we do.

Over and over, through both explicit and implicit ways, we are taught that we must earn our freedom. Freedom is not something that we automatically receive despite

the nationalist ideology of innate freedom. Ironically, our freedom is dependent upon how well we conform and perform. As elementary school students, we learn in some of the most basic of ways through good behavior (conforming to classroom rules and social norms) and academic achievement. When we perform well, we earn free time in the classroom or recess. As we get older, while we may continue to earn certain privileges, more often than not, our conformity is encouraged through the removal of certain freedoms through punishments like detention or expulsion. While we are rewarded for becoming “well-adjusted members of the herd” (Fromm, 1973/1992, p. 21), non-conformity is policed through a discipline of isolation—the one thing we fear most. Students are separated from the group, seated by themselves, or placed in detention, suspended, or expelled. During the 2002-2003 school year, school officials gave out 3,000,000 suspensions and 1,000 expulsions (NCES, 2003). Our forms of discipline send a clear message that both isolation and freedom should be feared. Boler (1999) characterizes our fear of freedom as resistance to change, which she believes represents “an invisible conformity to the status quo, through it is nonetheless an expression of resisting education” (p. 2).

Fromm (1968) describes this conformity as an “inner deadness” and “passiveness” (p. 2). This process of passivation is dangerous. Fromm (1968) terms it “one of the most pathogenic features in our society” (p. 103). We learn to be passive as a result of being deprived of authentic participation in both societal and personal affairs (Fromm, 1968). As automatons, we learn not only to be passive, but also how to be “unthinking and unfeeling machine[s],” as a consequence of a technologically-driven society that values efficiency and output over all else (Fromm, 1968, p. 29). We sacrifice

individuality for efficiency. Our society has become dependent upon this “inner deadness.” Fromm (1968) explains,

The social machine works more efficiently, or so it is believed, if individuals are cut down to purely quantifiable units. . .men must be de-individualized and taught to find their identity in the corporation rather than in themselves. (p. 34)

In Freire’s (1968/2000) banking concept of education many of these ideas are discussed in a more concrete educational context. The teacher is the sole source and narrator of knowledge. This knowledge is typically decontextualized, rendered unchanging or static. It is something to be deposited or learned, memorized, and compartmentalized. Students function as blank slates or empty containers, waiting to be filled with sterilized knowledge that they learn, memorize, compartmentalize, and regurgitate. Lake and Dagostino (2013) suggest that Freire’s banking model is a form of Fromm’s notion of sadism. In this symbiotic union, the teacher has all the power. They explain that “the teacher expects the student to give back only the knowledge that has been ‘deposited’ into them by the passive receiving of ‘knowledge.’ The teacher maintains one-sided unquestioning authority in this model” (p. 114). As the depositor, the teacher is merely passing along official knowledge deemed worthy of learning by its inclusion in the scripted curriculum, textbook, and/or teaching standard. There is little if any authentic acknowledgment of lived experience or knowledge. Such a learning environment encourages passivation and alienation where teachers and students are nothing more than receptacles to be filled. The more completely teachers and students accept their passive roles acting as automatons, the more manageable and malleable they

are. Lake and Dagostino (2013) argue that this sort of automatony is evidence of the necrophilia-like nature of schooling where necrophilia represents a love of and obsession with law and order. Giroux's (2010) description below demonstrates how this manifests in schools. He writes,

As the space of public schooling. . .increasingly enforces this deadening experience with disciplinary measures reminiscent of prison culture, teachers are increasingly removed from dealing with children as part of a broader historical, social and cultural context. As the school is militarized, student behavior becomes an issue that either the police or security forces handle. . .School has become a dead time, designed to kill the imagination of both teachers and students. (as qtd. in Lake & Dagostino, 2013, p. 115)

It is important to note here, that while both are alienated, the teacher, as an authority figure, is in a position of power. This is why the teacher can take on the role of the sadist in Lake and Dagostino's (2013) account. They have the means to resist their oppression and that of their students in a way that the students cannot, but often teachers do not resist. Despite the dehumanizing effects of banking education, our fear makes us receptive to this type of schooling because the lack of autonomy makes us feel safe.

Fromm (1968) explains,

In their wish for security, men love their own dependence, especially if it is made easy for them by their relative comfort of material life and by ideologies which call brainwashing "education" and submission "freedom." (p. 65-66)

In Freirian terms, we are choosing the safety of the "submersion of [our] consciousness"

(1968/2000, p. 81).

To counter such brainwashing, Freire (1968/2000) advocates for a problem-posing pedagogy that encourages the “emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality” (1968/2000, p. 81). Here, the teacher/student relationship is transformed into one where both are sources of knowledge. Learning shifts to become dialogical, interactive, investigative, and contextualized. This is obviously far more humanizing, but it is still problematic. Freire fails to address why the banking model is so appealing or why students and teachers resist the implementation of problem-posing teaching, which reveals a limited understanding of the social psychology of freedom. In my own teaching, I experienced pushback at the beginning of each new school year as I attempted to move away from a banking-model of teaching and learning. One year, one of my middle school students became so frustrated that he yelled out “Just give us the damn worksheets. We know how to do the worksheets.” I have heard similar stories from other educators, so I know this is not an uncommon scenario. In conversations some colleagues have used this as affirmation that their students really do not want autonomy in their learning. Others have suggested that this shows that our students are lazy, disengaged, and/or unmotivated. Instead, I would argue that this resistance is further proof of how deep our fear of freedom runs, and how important it is that we grasp the psychological nature of our fear of freedom in any liberatory pedagogy. This resistance is not about a lack of engagement; it is a response to fear.

Boler (1999) explains how often an educator’s attempt at transformative or liberating pedagogy is interpreted by students as a threat and responded to accordingly. Slavoj Žižek, a Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic known for his research on

German idealism and the psychoanalytic theory, provides an explanation as to why such pedagogical changes could be perceived as threatening. Žižek is known for his ideological critique, particularly in his works *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989) and *Enjoy your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (1992), but his simplest and most concise analysis occurs in the narration of the documentary *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (Fiennes, S., Holly, K., Rosenbaum, M., & Wilson, J., 2012), which he wrote and stars in. In the film, Žižek uses other popular films to explore the different ways ideology functions. For example, in his discussion of *They Live*, he focuses on a fight scene where one character is attempting to force another character to put on a pair of glasses that will make him see the truth of ideology, bringing all that he has repressed or suppressed to consciousness. During his narration, Žižek states, “the pessimism of the film, of *They Live*, is well justified, this precisely is the ultimate illusion: ideology is not simply imposed on ourselves” (Fiennes, S., et. al., 2012). Often we speak as if we have no agency where ideology is involved, but Žižek challenges this, arguing that ideology is not simply enacted upon us, but rather that we take part in it. We do this because we get enjoyment or pleasure from ideology. Žižek explains, “Ideology is our spontaneous relation to our social world, how we perceive each meaning and so on and so on. We, in a way, enjoy our ideology” (Fiennes, S., et. al., 2012). Ideology serves a purpose for our fantasy and our desires. Nicol (2001) explains,

Ideology does preserve a false version of reality, but behind it is the real, a realm beyond signification, not another symbolic order. . . The function of fantasy is to fill the void created by the real. It creates a space, a kind of blank screen on which the subject's desires can be projected. In this way,

fantasy realizes desire -not in the sense of satisfying it, but by bringing it out in the open, giving it a shape. And this is precisely what ideology does. One of the most striking aspects of Žižek's theory of ideology is his insistence that, though it might seem otherwise, fantasy serves to support ideology rather than challenge it. . . Žižek emphasizes that reality actually depends upon subscribing to the fantasy. (p. 148)

We collude in our subjugation, and on some level we know it. To see it for what it is causes pain, and this is what the fight scene in *They Live* demonstrates. Žižek interprets the scene in the following:

To step out of ideology, it hurts. It's a painful experience. You must force yourself to do it. This is rendered in a wonderful way with a further scene in the film where John Nada tried to force his best friend John Armitage to also put the glasses on. . . It may appear irrational cause why does this guy reject so violently to put the glasses on? It is as if he is well aware that spontaneously he lives in a lie that the glasses will make him see the truth but that this truth can be painful. It can shatter many of your illusions. This is a paradox we have to accept. Put the glasses! Put em on! The extreme violence of liberation. You must be forced to be free. If you trust simply your spontaneous sense of well being for whatever you will never get free. Freedom hurts. (Fiennes, S., et. al., 2012)

When students or teachers resist a liberating pedagogy, they are fighting the glasses. To be faced with the truth is too painful, and it is far more pleasurable to remain within the ideological fantasy of reality that they have created. To give that up is both is

threatening, and we will often go to great lengths to avoid it.

Certainly, teachers have more power and authority than students, yet this provides little immunity to the fear based pressure to conform. Automaton like behavior is often held up as the answer to our “failing schools,” and teachers are taught to judge themselves based on meaningless standardized test scores and de-contextualized evaluations. When they do not ‘measure up,’ it serves to validate the de-intellectualization of teaching that takes place through Common Core Standards, scripted curricula, and more standardized testing. Teachers are as much a part of the machine as their students. In Fromm’s (1968) analysis, he distinguishes workers from the managerial elite, but argues that both are oppressed. If we think of teachers as managerial elite, then his description of their alienation provides a way to understand why teachers conform.

He writes,

They are just as much appendages of the machine as those they command.

They are just as alienated, or perhaps more so, just as anxious, or perhaps more so, as the workers in one of their factories. (Fromm, 1968, p. 33)

In our automatonity, both teachers and students are like the man at the door in Kafka’s story referenced earlier. The learned and rewarded passiveness of negative freedom creates a situation where “they hope, but it is not given to them to act upon their heart’s impulse, and as long as the bureaucrats do not give the green light, they wait and wait” (Fromm, 1968, p. 7). In teaching students and teachers to silence or repress their desires, we are encouraging the fragmentation of the self that feeds both a desire for destructiveness and the total elimination of the self through automaton conformity. A Freirian explanation of this scenario may argue that those who continue to wait at the

door have yet to acquire a critical consciousness, but becoming aware of the structural oppression through critical consciousness, as Freire argues, is not enough to counter the fear of expelling the oppressor. Instead, we must think of “the oppressor’s imposition [as] twofold, i.e., it is both political (social) as well as psychological, the fight for emancipation must take place in both realms” (Dagostino-Kalniz, 2008, p. 8). Without addressing the psychological, there is not hope for challenging automaton conformity.

Schooling models the sadomasochistic relationship as a means of assuaging unbearable feelings of aloneness, alienation, and fear. As educators, we must represent some type of authority in the classroom, but Fromm’s theory of sadomasochism brings to light the way in which unhealthy student-teacher relationships have been normalized. These relationships can often be characterized as symbiotic unions with sadomasochistic tendencies. On a basic level, it is easy to see the ways in which the teacher is cast in the role of the sadist, while the student is taught to take on the role of the masochist. Based upon an unequal dynamic of power, the sadist needs complete control and domination of another, while the masochist submits completely to another in order to avoid the responsibility of his or her freedom. Too often teachers assert their authority through demanding the submission of a student, resulting in the dehumanization of both the teacher and the student. During my time in the classroom, I have never seen anything ignite the anger of a teacher or administrator like a student questioning their authority. The following description from Fromm is disturbingly accurate in its description of the student-teacher relationship. He writes, the sadist wants “. . .to make others dependent on oneself and to have absolute and unrestricted power over them, so as to make them nothing but instruments, ‘clay in the potter’s hand’” (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 143). Are

we not training our students to be masochist through their relationships with school authorities? Consider Fromm's description of the masochists, who "show a marked dependence on powers outside of themselves. . .not to assert themselves, not to do what they want, but to submit to the factual or alleged orders of these outside forces" (1941/1994, p. 143). Schools become a place where we learn very early on that this type of symbiotic union or relationship is socially acceptable and desirable.

Destructiveness, and specifically necrophilia, is another symptom of negative freedom evident in schooling. Here, the ultimate purpose is not to control but to destroy, to make all that is living a static, mechanical object. This is done through crushing any capacities within a person that support life—all that is sensuous, emotional, or intelligent. This is accomplished in schools through the destruction of self that takes place every time we ask our students to accept knowledge that is in conflict with their lived experiences and what they know to be true. This happens when we ask our Native American students to celebrate the first Thanksgiving, when we suggest that the Africans captured and sold to work on U.S. plantations were 'workers' or 'immigrants' and not 'slaves,' or when teach about a democracy that ensures equality for all despite systemic white supremacy. Our students must endure this blatant distortion of truth on a daily basis. When faced with such contradictions, they are forced to go in search of the Greene's (1988) "intimate terrain" discussed earlier. Functioning as a survival mechanism, one separates his or her inner and outer world in order to keep one's inner self safe, while the outer self complies with dehumanizing social norms (Greene, 1988). This happens when one no longer believes that the freedom to move beyond the determinacy of the outer world exists (Greene, 1988). In Frommean terms, there is no possibility for the integrated personality

and the self is destroyed.

A strong attraction to or obsession with law and order is a distinguishing characteristic of necrophilia. Disturbingly, in our schools, we are seeing an increase in law and order like discourse that emphasizes the surveillance and discipline of children and youth. Raible and Irizarry (2010) suggest that the “preoccupation of school officials on behavior management and regulation reflects an age-old tension between *disciplining* and *educating* the young” (p. 1197). Discipline, as behavior management and social control, is now a top priority in schools (Noguera, 2003). Wacquant (2001) uses the term penal state to describe the increasing institutionalization of police surveillance, zero-tolerance policies in school, and imprisonment enacted on our youth in the name of public safety. How else can you describe a system that allows for the handcuffing of elementary school children? (Andrews, 2016; Carrero, 2015; Zimmerman, 2016). While one could argue that discipline and assimilation have always been overriding purposes in education, this fixation has become far more explicit, and the effects far more detrimental to the targeted students. Teachers have become the agents of an educational system focused on surveillance and behavior management that profiles students of certain racial and/or socioeconomic groups. In doing so, teachers play a significant role in institutionalizing the criminalization of vulnerable and marginalized groups, and contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline (Raible & Irizarry, 2010).

Much of the current discourse around discipline in schools is based on the philosophy of zero tolerance where it is suggested that the most effective disciplinary method is one in which there are uniform and often severe consequences for misbehavior in school. Students of color are far more likely to be the targets of discipline plans like

zero tolerance policies (Rausch, & Skiba, 2006; Ayers, Dorhn, & Ayers, 2001). Evidence shows that zero tolerance policies are not only ineffective but have considerable negative outcomes. (Raush & Skiba, 2006). In 2000, African American students represented thirty-four percent of all student suspensions, yet they made up only seventeen percent of the national student population. In comparison with white students, African American students are 2.6 times more likely to be suspended (Wald and Losen, 2003; U.S Department of Education, 2000; Raush & Skiba, 2006). When the Civil Rights Project at Harvard looked into the connection between school discipline policies and the juvenile justice system, they found that the “racial disparity in school discipline and achievement mirrors racially disproportionate minority confinement” (Raible & Irizarry, 2010, p. 1199). Data from the juvenile justice system clearly shows the same racial disparity displayed in schools. For the same committed offense, in comparison to white youth, African American youth are six times more likely to be confined, and Latino youth are three times more likely to be confined (Raible & Irizarry, 2010; Wald & Losen, 2003). This then contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, as involvement with the juvenile justice system is a major factor in the incarceration of young adults (Raible & Irizarry, 2010). As an institutional system obsessed with the surveillance and discipline of youth of color, schools model the earliest instances of what is later perpetuated by the justice system—a society driven by white supremacist necrophilic impulses.

Of course, schools are just one piece of a much larger and much more devastating system. In *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander (2010) likens the mass incarceration of people of color to slavery and Jim Crow laws, arguing that all three are systems of racial control, specifically racial

caste systems, designed to ensure white supremacy. The racial significance of mass incarceration becomes obvious when confronted with facts such as, “one in three young African American men are under the control of the criminal justice system—in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole” (Alexander, 2010, p. 9). Once labeled a felon, one’s access to housing and education are limited, as well as one’s employment rights and voting rights. As a result, the discrimination that many believe ended as a result of the Civil Rights Movement is legally institutionalized (Alexander, 2010). Alexander’s description of mass incarceration as a “stunningly comprehensive and well-disguised system” of racial oppression is tragically accurate (p. 4).

Perhaps a powerful metaphor for understanding the role of schooling in the dissemination of negative freedom is Alice Miller’s (1983) idea of poisonous pedagogy, which Boler (1999) describes as the “systemic ways we teach young people not to notice the cruelties and injustices inflicted upon them.” (p. 193). It is certainly poisonous, but it may even be worse than what Miller suggests. We have naturalized Fromm’s self-destructive mechanisms of escape to the point that they have become socially acceptable norms of a functioning democratic society. We are not asking our students to ignore the dehumanization of the schooling experience; we are teaching them that it is normal. One of the most effective ways we do this is through the social control of emotions, which is addressed in the following section.

The Schooling of Emotions

The notion that emotions are irrational or separate from reason is a belief that dates back to Socrates and Descartes (Zembylas, 2004). In conceptualizing his “syndrome of alienation,” Fromm identifies various traits that have become part of a

“pathology of normalcy.” In addition to passiveness, Fromm (1968) also cites the separation of the cerebral-intellectual from the affective-emotional as an important trait. This separation contributes to “low grade chronic psychosis” (Fromm, 1968, p. 43), which then results in anxiety, depression, apathy, and violence (Fromm, 1968). According to Boler’s (1999) research, schools have been explicitly and implicitly teaching the irrationality of emotions since the inception of the common school, using the social control of emotions as a means of maintaining hegemonic control (p. xvii). In combining the research of Boler and Fromm, one could argue that schools reproduce an ideology of the cerebral-emotional split and function as a significant tool of social control by teaching and maintaining a state of psychosis characterized by anxiety, depression, apathy, and violence. Emotions, and the discourse of emotion, then become a compelling means through which negative freedom is perpetuated by and enacted in schools.

For Boler (1999), emotions are ingrained in our cultures and ideologies. She writes,

Emotions are in part sensational, or physiological: consisting of the actual feeling—increased heartbeat, adrenaline, etc. Emotions are also “cognitive,” or conceptual”: shaped by our beliefs and perceptions. There is, as well, a powerful linguistic dimension to our emotional awareness, attributions of meanings, and interpretations. (p. xix)

In understanding emotions as more than something biological or individually experienced, Boler (1999) argues that they become “a site of power and resistance” (p. 6). She goes on to write that “emotions are a medium, a space in which differences and ethics are communicated, negotiated, and shaped” (1999, p. 21). Emotions are

internalized as a means of self-policing and enforcing what is deemed appropriate social conduct. Boler uses the idea of pastoral power to explain the ways in which emotions are manipulated to provide this social control. In Western capitalist democracies, social governance is enforced through “modes of internalized control” or “social relations of everyday lives” rather than the power of a singular ruler (Boler, 1999, p. 21). Pastoral power is this internalized individual governance through self-control and self-discipline. According to Boler (1999), emotions or “structures of feeling” provide the means through which pastoral power can be enacted as we “internalize ideologies as commonsense truths” (p. 21, p. 32).

Since the inception of the common school, schools have used emotions as a form of social control. Emotions are used to teach students both to self-police and to maintain appropriate social conduct. Boler (1999) identifies three methods implemented to accomplish this: (1) surveillance, which relies on internalized fear; (2) recruiting peers or peer policing, which relies on shame, humiliation, and conformity; and (3) governance of relationships (between peers and teachers and students), which relies on inferiority, superiority, shame, fear, anger, and respect (p. 21). Boler (1999) writes,

For example, children are increasingly taught not to express their anger, not to question authority, and not to resist those who have power. These rules are taught through differing forms of emotional discipline (shame, humiliation, etc., depending on gendered, racialized norms, for instance); depending on their gendered, raced, or social class standing children learn different rules regarding what emotional expressions are acceptable. (p. 32)

Emotions are used to impart ideologies that enforce social norms and uphold pastoral power, but as Boler points out, the rules change based on one's race, gender, or class. The differing rules are taught to prepare one to fulfill a specific role according to the social norms of a white supremacist patriarchy.

Female teachers were to impart lessons of individualized self-regulation through a "pedagogy of maternal love." The idea of a pedagogy of maternal love will be discussed in a later chapter; here, the focus is on how schooling perpetuated social control through gendered norms of emotion. In the politics of emotion conveyed through schooling, both boys and girls are taught to control and subjugate their emotions, particularly emotions like anger, which are perceived as a hindrance to a productive society. Girls are also taught additional emotional rules that are,

Designed to force them to take responsibility for all of society's ills through their "natural" altruism and caring. Preventing boys from expressing anger is discursively framed as being for the boys' own benefit; for girls, emotion control is especially for the benefit of others.

(Boler, 1999, p. 34)

Female teachers, as caregivers, are asked to remove the very irrational emotionality that they are constructed to embody. Both students and teachers are dehumanized through this schooling of emotions.

Moving beyond a gender-specific focus, Zembylas' (2004, 2007) research looks at the ways in which emotions are marginalized holistically in schools, supporting Boler's general findings. Through his work on emotional knowledge and emotional ecology, he demonstrates that the cerebral-emotional rift persists in education. Emotional

knowledge continues to be excluded from any form of official knowledge, either in content presented to students or in the pedagogical practices. Zembylas' ideas on emotional ecology (2007) will be discussed in greater depth in the conclusion.

A Critique of Emotional Intelligence

In the 1990s, there was a shift in the discourse around emotions, largely due to the emerging idea of emotional intelligence (Boler, 1999). Despite the promise such a change would appear to have in altering how we conceptualize emotions and use them to structure social norms, emotional intelligence represents yet another way emotions have been co-opted to maintain white patriarchy. Boler's (1999) research considers the impact of Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (1995), in which Goleman conceptualizes the means to capitalize on emotions using cognitive science and behavioral psychology in order to put forth a modern interpretation of who and what a moral person is. The moral person continues to be characterized "both through his capacity for skills and efficiency as well as his good character and rule-obedience" (Boler, 1999, p. 59). But, now, "moral behavior is increasingly depicted as hard-wired within the brain. The good person is he—and I do mean 'he'—who is taught the right skills to capitalize on the hard-wired virtues" (Boler, 1999, p. 59). The following quote explains how the concept of emotional intelligence shifts the way emotions are used to exert social control:

The moral person is he who accepts his *neurobiologically determined* fate, alongside the disciplined (Aristotelian) *self-control* in order to express the right emotions at the right time, in the right way, through acquired emotional skills. The equation of emotional intelligence with self-control

evidences the fact that the emotionally intelligent person is still the *man* of reason. Although at first glance one might think that that this explicit “valuing” of emotion would place women—with her long-standing stereotypical emotional sensitivity—at the head of the race, in fact, *Emotional Intelligence* reads as a blueprint for male CEO success. (Boler, 1999, p. 61)

These ideas were quickly adapted for application to education. The roots of scientifically based curricula of emotions are found in the mental hygiene movement of the early to mid-1900s. Here, emotions were thought of as “pathological ‘symptoms’” that could be addressed through pedagogies that focused on reducing student stress instead of academics. Emotions and personality are considered pliable and impressionable in both the emotional intelligence and mental hygiene movements. Thus, emotions as a means of social control were understood to be the key to resolving social conflict, which was believed to stem from individual personality (Boler, 1999).

Emotional intelligence is understood through entirely individualistic terms. As a curriculum, it teaches students that to be successful one must “manage conflict and delay gratification” (Boler, 1999, p. 63). Emotional intelligence is a more modernized and socially acceptable “neoliberal variation” of genetically based theories of intelligence to complement IQ assessments (Boler, 1999, p. 65). In Goleman’s research, he compares participants labeled as “successful with mediocre IQs” and those labeled “failures with high IQs.” He attributes the difference in achievement to an emotional intelligence characterized by “self-control, zeal, and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself” (Boler, 1999, p. 65). During the same time that Goleman’s book was attracting wide

attention, a group of Yale trained psychologists developed The Yale-New Haven Social Competence Promotion Program to create an emotional literacy program for social development training for the New Haven public schools. The program identifies impulse control and skill development as the main issues contributing to a lack of achievement. They find that, “most of the kids who were getting into trouble had poor communication skills, poor problem-solving skills, and above all, had poor impulse-control” (Boler, 1995, p. 94). They omit any critique of the social structures such as race, gender, or class and how these impact one’s social development. Instead, failure is individualized, and students are taught to internalize the blame. As Boler (1999) argues,

None of the representations of emotional intelligence analyze how people are taught different rules of conduct for emotional behavior according to their gendered, racialized, and social class status. Instead, we are all supposed to feel the same ‘empathy’ and ‘optimism.’ (p. 61)

Emotional intelligence and emotional literacy curricula are presented as if they are morally and politically neutral, but there is always an agenda that supports the best interests of the dominant group. Oftentimes character education versions of moral education are incorporated into these emotional literacy school programs. This is not surprising given these programs’ explicit focus on self-policing. Their claims of moral neutrality are easily challenged, as demonstrated by the following questions Boler (1999) raises:

What kinds of violence and crises become targets of moral discourse and behavioral modification? War, domestic violence and wife-battering, corporal punishment in schools, sexual abuse and rape are forms of

violence regularly tolerated and even condoned, through silence and omission if not through explicit approval. Who gets punished, who is permitted “reprieve,” and who gets publicly punished and humiliated must always be closely examined. (p. 88)

The message becomes clear that while we are all responsible for controlling our own behavior and complying with the social norms that contribute to the betterment of society, not all violations of these social norms are viewed equally. One’s race, class, and gender often serve as mitigating circumstances that determine whether something is publicly tolerated or punished. The values imparted through such curricula “are taught ‘invisibly,’ the very definition of pastoral power and ‘engineered consent’” (Boler, 1999, p. 95). Instead of empowerment, students are taught to modify their behavior and self-police in order to conform to social norms. When they fail, they are to blame themselves. Emotional intelligence and emotional literacy curricula intentionally ignore any structural critique and have become one more way to perpetuate the idea of meritocracy.

In looking at emotions, we find a significant relationship between the construction of emotions and social control. Through a specific ideology of emotion that frames emotions as irrational and uses fear and shame as a means of social control, negative freedom can be sustained.

Shame and Education

Shame is often invoked as a tool with which to teach and discipline students. The phrases “You should be ashamed” or “Shame on you” are so commonplace that they provoke little notice. But given what the research discussed thus far has shown, shame cannot be engaged in such a heedless or casual way, especially with children.

Unfortunately, the belief that we can belittle or shame a child into changing their behavior has become so ingrained in our approach to schooling that many educators take it to be commonsense knowledge. Consider the standard discipline plans in schools. In early grades, there is often some sort of public discipline or behavior chart. As students get older, schools rely more on removal from classes, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Underlying each of these is humiliation, isolation, and the threat of rejection, all necessary components of shame-inducing negative freedom. For those who have a misguided belief that these strategies have a positive impact on behavioral issues, the research on shame clearly demonstrates that this is unlikely. The intention behind these policies is not, nor has it ever been, to bring about a positive behavior modification that is in the best interest of the student. Instead, discipline policies in individual classrooms and larger school communities are a means to enforce conformity to social norms through the threat of shame. Shame becomes an essential tool through which negative freedom is taught and modeled in schools.

Shame has the potential to have an incredibly negative impact on students. To explain how shame can operate in schools, Brown (2008) poses a scenario where a student receives a failing grade and the teacher announces it in front of the entire classroom. In doing this, the explicit or implicit message is that the student is stupid. I would suggest that public displays of “data” based on various forms of standardized tests could serve the same purpose as the teacher’s announcement. Students can respond to such experiences by feeling humiliation or shame. If the student believes this treatment to be unfair, unfounded, or undeserved, they will likely experience humiliation. In many cases, this sort of student response would require some degree of critical consciousness.

On the other hand, if the student believes the message that they are stupid, they will experience shame. Obviously, neither situation is positive. Humiliation and shame can both have damaging repercussions, but what Brown (2008) has found in her research is interesting. The student who is humiliated is more likely to go home and tell an adult, which provides the space to discuss the experience with the student and address the situation with the school. The student who is shamed is less likely to tell anyone. He or she begins to internalize the shaming message and then shuts down or acts out. While neither is ideal, it would appear that humiliation is the better of the two experiences, except for the caveat that repeated humiliation can lead to shame. Even if humiliation is the preferred emotional response, consider what it requires of our students. How likely is it that the majority of our students are mentally and emotionally prepared to name their teachers words as untrue, abusive, or oppressive? The likelihood is that the majority of students will respond with shame when placed in a situation where for disciplinary purposes (academic or behavioral) they are singled out for not conforming to the societal ideal.

The ramifications of these shaming experiences in the school setting are far reaching. Shame encourages feelings of fear, which then typically result in blame. Blame has two forms—we can either respond with self-loathing by blaming ourselves, or we can respond by blaming others through exploding or lashing out (Brown, 2008). It is easy to see how the use of shame in schools results in a vicious cycle of destructiveness. Self-loathing rarely results in any form of success, and a student known for explosive behavior is quickly labeled as “troubled,” “high/at-risk,” or “not likely to achieve.” This reality is bad enough when we think about it on an individual level, but then consider the

ways in which certain groups of students are targeted based on their race, gender, and/or class. Shame then functions as a means of sustaining a social system that privileges white, wealthy males.

June Price Tangen and Ronda L. Dearing (2002) explore the differences between students who are “shame-prone” or “guilt-prone,” finding that those students who are “shame-prone” in the fifth grade are much more likely to have school suspensions, drug use, and suicide attempts in later years. Those fifth graders who are “guilt-prone” are more likely to apply to college, be involved in community service, and are less likely to attempt suicide, or use drugs and/or alcohol (Brown, 2008). This is not to suggest that we should encourage students to feel guilt, but instead to reinforce how harmful the effects of shame can be, and how important it is that we address the way shame is engaged as a disciplinary tool that encourages conformity.

Teachers are not the only source of shame in a school setting. Bullying continues to be an issue that we struggle to address. Despite a supposed increase in “anti-bullying” policies and curriculum, bullying persists. Bullying stems from a need to belong and a fear of ostracism (Brown, 2008). Until we are willing to address the context of negative freedom within which we live, we will make little progress in addressing bullying in schools. Bullying serves multiple purposes in such a context. If we think of bullying as the negation of belonging, it targets those who in some way do not conform to the ideal social norm and pressures others to conform through the threat of being bullied as well. Bullying is also a means of securing social acceptance and connection. Belonging is secured through being part of the “accepted,” or those who meet the standards of the social norm, superficially placating fear of isolation. Until we address

negative freedom as the root of such behavior and provide students the tools to both critique this and establish other means to meet their need for belonging, bullying will persist and probably only worsen.

Shame as a means to discipline and enforce conformity to social norms is perhaps most connected to the previous conversation about the shame of the oppressed, but shame can also be invoked in schools as a means to assuage or hide the shame of the oppressor. Zembylas (2008) and Ahmed (2015) address this through interrogating the shame-pride dichotomy and its role in the creation of historical narratives and national or group identities. In Ahmed's research, she looks at the way in which shame and pride were used to create an Australian national identity as the country struggled to deal with its history of oppressing Aboriginal peoples. While this may appear to be a constructive and humanizing means of dealing with a nation's past wrongdoings, in reality, it did little to address the past shame or marginalization. National shame became the "stand in" for individual shame. In doing this, individuals did not have to account for their own shame or wrongdoing. In fact, as Ahmed (2015) points out, it allowed for the further repression of shame. She writes,

The projection of what is unjust onto the past allows shame to be represented here as a collective shame that does not affect individuals in the present, even as it surrounds and covers them like a cloak or skin. Despite its recognition of past wrongdoings, shame can still conceal how such wrongdoing shape lives in the present. The work of shame troubles and is troubling, exposing some wounds, at the same time as it conceals others. (p. 102)

The discourse used to engage with the idea of shame only served to further hide the shame of the oppressor. In couching shame in historical and nationalistic terms, individuals (from dominant, oppressor groups) were allowed to negate any responsibility for the ways the past injustices continued into the present. As a result, the national shame discourse only served to conceal the very shame it was supposed to expose, and what it concealed allowed for the creation of a false national pride that contributed to the further dehumanization of all Australians.

Discourses of shame, nationalism, and pride are replicated through education in a similar manner. The historical narratives that speak to the oppression and marginalization of certain groups are erased from curricula or rewritten into “sanitized” versions that avoid contradicting any sense of nationalist pride (Zembylas, 2008, p. 264). This reinforces constructions of othering through protecting “us” (the oppressor) at the expense of “them” (the oppressed). Those who question this are criticized for a lack of patriotism and bringing shame upon the nation (Zembylas, 2008). The only way to get beyond this is to create a “radical-reinterpretation of shame” where shame can be productive (Zembylas, 2008, p. 274). Here, shame is reimagined as something that can provoke empathy and positive self-transformation. In doing this, school becomes a space where teachers and students learn to “cultivate individual and collective political consciousness and self-reflection” through pedagogy that supports the exploration of a constructivist politics of shame (p. 274). While I find Zembylas’ argument for reconceptualizing shame promising and necessary, it is not enough on its own. Without contextualizing shame within its relationship to negative freedom, we will fail in any attempt to reframe shame because we have not addressed why shame as a form of

dehumanization and oppression is so ingrained in society or the purposes it serves in sustaining a white supremacist patriarchy. The repression of shame allows the oppressor to avoid confronting his or her own socialization process that creates a false identity around one's whiteness or supposed superiority. In including shame in a critical discourse of negative freedom, the opportunity is created both for the oppressor and the oppressed to challenge the way shame has been used to create and intensify the experience of fear and isolation.

An Introduction to Positive Freedom

Fromm's critique of negative freedom shows the contradictory nature of our lived freedom, yet it is within this contradiction of an oppressive and unjust freedom that hope for the transformative power of freedom can be found. Once we understand and recognize negative freedom, we can begin to create the space for positive freedom, the second part of Fromm's conceptualization of freedom. The following serves as a brief introduction to positive freedom, a topic which will be discussed in greater depth in chapter four.

Fromm closes *Escape for Freedom* by sharing his belief in the possibility of positive freedom. Some were surprised that Fromm ended on such a promising and optimistic note. The majority of the book focuses on authoritarianism, conformism, and destructivism, and at the time of publication, the Nazis controlled all of continental Europe except for Great Britain (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). Nevertheless, Fromm seems to have had great hope in the potential of positive freedom.

Positive freedom unveils our dehumanization through urging us to find a self-actualization that allows for an integrated personality. Fromm (1941/1994) understands

positive freedom to be the reclaiming of oneself that occurs,

Not only by an act of thinking but also by the realization of man's total personality, by the active expression of his emotional and intellectual potentialities. . .In other words, positive freedom consists in the spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality. (p. 257)

Here, spontaneous is not synonymous with compulsive; instead, it is representative of free will. Activity signifies "one's emotional, intellectual, and sensuous experiences" (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 257). Spontaneous activity provides the means to transcend negative freedom because it allows one to retain a true, unfragmented self, while overcoming isolation to unite with the world. In other words, positive freedom is love reconceptualized. Fromm defines love as the "spontaneous affirmation of others, as the union of the individual with others on the basis of the preservation of the individual self" (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 259). Love is the essential component of Fromm's positive freedom because it provides the way in which a person can affirm his or her own self and his or her connection to the world. It becomes a different way of considering what it means to be an individual. No longer defined solely in terms of self, the realization of the self is dependent upon one's ability to connect with others and to be part of a community. Love is the means to meet our most basic need for connection and relatedness.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an in-depth look at Fromm's theory of negative freedom, highlighting Fromm's use of social psychology and psychoanalysis that sets him apart from other critical theorists. As demonstrated, Fromm's understanding of human nature is the foundation upon which he builds his conceptualization of freedom.

He argues that our greatest human fear is isolation, and our need for relatedness is so great that its denial can lead to insanity. As a result, we will do almost anything to avoid such alienation, which means we choose to escape from authentic freedom, and instead, settle for false freedom. In outlining the various mechanisms of escape, this chapter highlighted the psychological and emotional aspects of freedom and how our fear of freedom drives us toward negative freedom and away from positive freedom. The discussion here also demonstrated the need to expand Fromm's theory of freedom to consider the roles of race, racism, and whiteness, and the notion of shame.

In considering the relevance of negative freedom for education, I believe that it is imperative that those of us who practice critical pedagogy learn how to address the psychological nature of oppression within ourselves, and empower our students to do the same. A transformational and liberatory pedagogy must address the psychological components of oppression, fear of freedom, and freedom. Without this, neither teachers nor students will be able to liberate themselves, and the only tools they will be left with are 'mechanisms of escape.'

The next chapter moves on to look at Fromm's theory of a universal ethical humanism as the means to both further critique our state of negative freedom and demonstrate the potential of positive freedom. Here, I will look at Fromm's work on social character and character orientations as a means to explore the relationship between human nature and norms, values, and moral conflicts. In centering ethics, Fromm's research becomes a means to challenge the marginalization of ethics in critical educational studies and propose a critical moral vision for education.

CHAPTER 3: ETHICS⁴

Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: first, to examine Fromm's humanist ethics and its significance to his theorization of freedom; second, to explore the possibilities for a critical theory of morality within the context of education, and in so doing demonstrate why ethics should have a more significant place in our theorization of liberatory pedagogies; and third, to propose a specific framework for a critical theory of morality.

Biographical Context

Fromm describes *Man for Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics* (1947/1990) as the continuation of *Escape from Freedom* (1941/1994). In *Man for Himself*, Fromm remains focused on the possibility of the actualization of authentic freedom, but here it is through an examination of ethics, values, and norms. The optimism with which he ends *Escape from Freedom* carries over into *Man for Himself*. This shift signals the increasingly influential role that Fromm's humanist philosophy would have on his research (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). There are various opinions as

⁴ A portion of Chapter 3 is a modified version of Dillon, K, 2015, Parables for a Critical Race Theory of Morality, *Philosophy of Education* 2014, 323-331.

to the origins of the impetus for this change. Some believe that as Fromm separated from the Frankfurt School, he increasingly privileged creativity and innovation over traditional modes of scholarship. Others see it as a return to the Jewish prophetic tradition that had influenced Fromm for much of the first half of his life. Fromm's grandfather and both of his great-grandfathers were respected rabbis (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). According to Friedman & Schreiber (2013), Fromm's universal humanist ethics was greatly shaped by his years of study with Jewish scholars and rabbis, where he learned the value of messianic ideals such as love, humility, and justice. He was taught that moral autonomy and free choice were inherent to Old Testament prophecy and that Jewish law enjoined its believers to pursue an "inner life of wholeness, joy, and sincerity" (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013, p. 117).

Man for Himself also indicated a shift in Fromm's relationship to Freudianism. To a certain degree, *Man for Himself* was a response to Karl Menninger's *Man Against Himself*, the 1938 classic Freudian text on suicide. *Man for Himself*, as a conceptualization of a humanist ethics, was Fromm's alternative to orthodox Freudianism (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). Friedman & Schreiber (2013) explain the significance,

Essentially, *Man for Himself* elaborated on a saying of Rabbi Hillel that Fromm had often discussed with Rabinkow: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" In trusting one's own creative resources, one could develop happiness, spontaneity, and productivity in one's life. Only when ethical norms were based on external authority and revelation did they stifle the human spirit, turn a person into a joyless automaton estranged from his "true essence," and make suicide a possibility. Unlike

Menninger and Freud, Fromm held himself out as an “ethical thinker” and a voice of the “human conscience” who wrote to underscore “what is good or what is bad for man.” (p. 143)

Fromm’s humanism was based upon his deep and abiding faith that nothing could annihilate humanity’s desire for authentic freedom. As Fromm moved away from orthodox Freudian theory, his humanism became increasingly pronounced, as did his prophetic style. In the following, Eckardt (1996) describes what Fromm believes the role of the prophet to be. She writes,

They present reality free from the blindfolds of public opinion and authority. They feel compelled to express the voice of their conscience to say what possibilities they see, to show the alternatives, of choice, and of freedom; it is never that of determinism. . . They do not think in terms of individual salvation, but believe that individual salvation is bound up with the salvation of society. (p. 152)

In these terms, *Man for Himself* is certainly prophetic, as both a critique of society’s dehumanization and a plea to consider the means to authentic freedom. In the following statement from the beginning of *Man for Himself*, both the critique and the plea are evident, as Fromm describes what he sees in humanity. He declares,

With all his knowledge about matter, he is ignorant with regard to the most important and fundamental questions of human existence: what is man, how he ought to live, and how the tremendous energies within man can be released and used productively. (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 4)

As he continues his examination of freedom in *Man for Himself*, Fromm returns to human nature as the starting point for his investigation. However, here, he uses a humanist ethics to reveal society's state of unfreedom and the possibility for authentic freedom. Fromm's humanist ethics drove much of his research, but its relevance here goes beyond broadening an understanding of his work. His humanism is also a critique of critical theory's treatment of and relationship to ethics. In the chapter, "Normative Humanism as Redemptive Critique," Thompson (2014) suggests that modern critical social theory has lost sight of the dialectical relationship between critique and judgment, making it less meaningful and effective. Thompson (2014) argues,

The very idea of 'critical theory' meant, and still must mean, that the rational, 'critical' explanation of the social world contained within itself the normative guidelines for its own evaluation. In this sense, there are no a priori categories we can use to explain the world nor are there any a priori value claims that can be used to orient judgment or evaluative thought. Rather, the very criterion for understanding the empirical nature of the social world can only be conceived through its effects on human beings and their developmental capacities. (p. 39)

If we think of Horkheimer's (1982) claim that critical theory's purpose is "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" then it seems logical to infer a humanist ethic in critical theory as Thompson does (p. 244). Yet, this crisis in critique and judgment remains.

Within modern critical theory there have been two broad approaches for handling ethics or values, both of which, Thompson contends, have contributed to this "crisis of

critique and judgment” (p. 38). The first, based on the work of Weber and Habermas, states that values and facts must remain separate. Weber (1963) argues, “It can never be the task of an empirical science to provide binding norms and ideals from which directives for immediate practical activity can be derived” (as qtd. in Thompson, 2014, p. 39). Weber’s purpose in doing this, according to Thompson, is to “protect ethical postulates from being limited by factual considerations” (p. 39). The second approach, as seen in the work of Horkheimer, maintains that there can be no separation of value and fact, but the possibility of values is still limited by issues surrounding the objective validity of a value and its ability to be “causal knowledge of social phenomena and social facts that have the same status as objective validity” (Thompson, 2014, p. 43). Here, value knowledge claims are critiqued for abstraction or relativism (Thompson, 2014).

Fromm’s humanism takes an entirely different approach to the notion of ethics. Thompson (2014) explains,

Fromm’s entire concept of critical theory, of ethics, and of social and cultural critique is premised on the thesis that there exist in some sense, normative statements about the nature of human beings that are objectively valid and which must serve as an anchor to any theory of society if it is to be understood as critical in any sense. (p. 44)

In conceptualizing a humanist ethics, Fromm is asserting that it is not only possible but also necessary to make normative statements about the nature of human beings and the features of society that result in the destruction or liberation of humanity. Thompson (2014) also argues that Fromm’s humanism provides a needed reconstruction of critical theory through the creation of a “radical ethics” that is “grounded in the rational,

ontological, and material realities and dynamics of individual and social life” (p. 44). Here, we have universal criteria “from which we can make judgments, construct critique, establish a ground from which to grasp the pathological, destructive features of the modern social order” (Thompson, 2014, p. 44). When we think of the educational context for this project, the critique of critical theory offered by both Fromm and Thompson is particularly pertinent, especially considering the lack of engagement with ethics or morality within critical pedagogy. Fromm’s re-imagining of the role of ethics in critical theory becomes a way to challenge the marginalization and undertheorization of ethics and morality in critical educational studies, and propose a critical moral vision for education.

While the notion of ethics is certainly implicitly addressed throughout the corpus of Fromm’s work, the most explicit explorations of this theme are found in *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics* (1947/1990), *The Sane Society* (1955/1990) and *The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology* (1968). The discussion here will incorporate all three with an emphasis on *Man for Himself*, as its entire premise is the examination of ethics.

The Possibility(ies) of Ethical Knowledge

Fromm’s humanism begins with the assertion that ethical knowledge is possible. The basis for such knowledge is found in the study of human nature. Fromm (1947/1990) suggests that we think of ethics as an applied science, specifically as the applied science of the art of living, which begins with the science of man. The purpose of the science of man is to study and understand “the performance of living, the process

of developing into that which one is potentially” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 17-18). In the following, Fromm (1947/1990) defines the methodological approach to such a science,

The subject of the science of man is human nature. But this science does not start out with a full and adequate picture of what human nature is. . .Its method is to observe the reactions of man to various individual and social conditions and from observation of these reactions to make inferences about man’s nature. (p. 23)

In spite of critiques that such a science is pure speculation, Fromm maintains that it can be used to create a theoretical construction of human nature, which reveals, “what is beneath man’s various expressions and manifestations. . .what governs all expressions and modes of conduct” (Funk, 1982, p. 134). As this construction or model of human nature is based on the empirical study of the behavior of humanity, Fromm (1947/1990) contends that it is no different from other sciences “which operate with concepts of entities based on, or controlled by, inferences from observed data and not directly observable themselves” (p. 24).

According to the theoretical construction of human nature, it is a part of our nature to want to discover human norms by which to live. This is an important critique of Freud and Freudian psychoanalysis. While psychoanalysis has contributed a great deal in terms of knowledge of human beings, Fromm challenges its assertion that psychology can be separated from philosophy and ethics (Funk, 1982). Fromm believes that to understand human nature, one must grasp its drives, needs, and compulsions, which means considering the significance of norms, values, and morals. Fromm (1947/1990) insists that the “human personality cannot be understood unless we look at man in his

totality, which includes his need to find an answer to the question of the meaning of his existence and to discover norms according to which he ought to live” (p. 7). While maintaining that such ethics or norms are based on empirical data, Fromm admits that this does not mean they are infallible. Yet, as all fields of study are constantly evolving, discovering new information, and revising their theoretical knowledge, the lack of absolute truth should not discredit the findings of the applied science of the art of living (Fromm, 1947/1990). Fromm not only suggests that applied science be used to uncover moral norms inherent in human nature by which humanity should live, but he also infers an ethical norm onto scientific study in general. Fromm did not believe in the concept of value-free knowledge. Funk (1982) suggests that Fromm was quite opposed to any “kind of science that proposes merely to analyze, unmask, and relativize what was valid heretofore, without also having the courage to embark on the attempt to place what has been learned against a new horizon of understanding” (p. 129).

Fromm believes that the model of human nature, as the representation of the human situation or human essence, can be the basis from which to devise objectively valid norms and values for how humanity ought to live (Funk, 1982). His definition of ethics makes this clear. According to Fromm (1963) ethics means, “a particular orientation that is rooted in man and therefore is valid not in relation to this or that person, this or that situation, but for all human beings” (as qtd. in Funk, 1982, p. 129-130). Thus, Fromm’s humanist ethics posits a universal ethics that can be applied to all human situations because its norms are based upon human nature or the totality of human beings (Fromm, 1947/1990). For Fromm, to base a system of ethics on anything else is an attempt to use behavioral norms as a means of control (Funk, 1982).

Fromm's humanism begins with the general principle that, "it is desirable that a living system should grow and produce the maximum of vitality and intrinsic harmony, that is, subjectively, of well-being" (Fromm, 1968, p. 91). Fromm (1970) defines well-being as the "optimal functioning of the system of man" where there is "optimal development of all his faculties, minimal friction, and waste of energy within man, between man and man, and between man and his environment" (as qtd. in Funk, 1982, p. 137). From here, Fromm ascertains that there are norms and values that enable humanity to lead a life of well-being. Through his exploration of such norms and values, he comes to a theory of social character, finding that there are two basic character orientations that represent the two modes of response to existential needs that human beings make: nonproductive or productive (Funk, 1982). As both of these will be discussed in greater depth below, the description here is brief. Fromm characterizes nonproductivity as the character orientation of negative freedom. It is regressive and manifests through a syndrome of decay where life is about having. Meanwhile, productivity is progressive and is characterized by a syndrome of growth; it is representative of positive freedom and a life of being. As the only character type capable of achieving a state of well-being, it is considered ethically normative (Fromm, 1947/1990; 1962/2009; Funk, 1982).

Social Character

Fromm's theory of social character is based on his understanding of human nature. One of the defining elements of Fromm's theory of human nature is his notion of the human essence. Inherent to our human essence is a disequilibrium created by various existential dichotomies. These dichotomies compel us to find a sense of resolution that will bring about a new equilibrium, one that enables us to find a sense of unity in our

experience of being. From this stems what Fromm asserts is one of our basic needs—a sense of orientation or devotion. It is here that we are confronted with the unavoidable choices we must make about how we will be in the world, or the nature of our relatedness to the world. Fromm (1947/1990) explains,

Man is not free to choose between having or not having “ideals,” but he is free to choose between different kinds of ideals, between being devoted to the worship of power and destruction and being devoted to reason and love. All men are “idealists” and are striving for something beyond the attainment of physical satisfaction. (p. 49)

According to Fromm, it is our social character that determines what ideals we privilege, both consciously and unconsciously. We must learn to recognize the difference between what Fromm terms genuine or fictitious ideals (1941/1994). A genuine ideal will always be “desirable for the purposes of the growth and happiness of the individual” (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 264). For Fromm, this distinction allows us to move beyond the notion that something is an ideal as long as it is not based on egotistical or material desires. This definition undermines an ethical humanism because, as Fromm (1941/1994) points out,

A Fascist, who is driven by the desire to subordinate himself to a higher power and at the same time to overpower other people, has an ideal just as much as the man who fights for human equality and freedom. (p. 264)

Ideals are not matters of hypothetical consideration. We can empirically state what is good or bad for society based on what is good or bad for life. Clearly, as Fromm (1941/1994) argues, “Poverty, intimidation, isolation, are directed *against* life” based on the effect they have on human beings (p. 265). Ideals must always support the

development of positive freedom where we are not the means to an end, but the end in and of itself. Our growth and self-actualization must always be the primary guiding principle (Fromm, 1941/1994).

Before delving into the specifics of social character, it is important to note how it is different from other often-related concepts. Personality, temperament, and character are often used synonymously, but Fromm is clear that they have decidedly different implications. He defines personality as “the totality of inherited and acquired psychic qualities which are characteristic of one individual and which make the individual unique” (p. 50). Personality is solely significant for an individual and is of no ethical import. Temperament is often conflated with character, but he is careful to differentiate between the two. According to Fromm (1947/1990), “temperament refers to the *mode* of reaction and is constitutional and not changeable” (p. 52). Temperament only reveals how a person may react to a given situation. Like personality, it is largely inherited and has no ethical significance. However, because temperament and character are so frequently conflated, preferences in temperament are often allowed to take on ethical significance even though they are a matter of subjective taste. It is also important to note the way in which Fromm distinguishes between individual character and social character. Individual character is made up of inherited characteristics, like physical constitution and temperament, and acquired psychological or cultural characteristics. Social character looks at patterns of characteristics that create a group identity, such as those based on class or culture (Fromm, 1962/2009). As Fromm (1941/1994) explains, social character “comprises only a selection of traits, the essential nucleus of the character structure of

most members of a group which has developed as the result of the basic experiences and mode of life common to that group” (p. 305).

With the notion of character, Fromm (1947/1990) returns to his belief that humanity’s most fundamental need is to be connected to the world and to feel a sense of belonging. His definition of social character reflects this with his description of it as “the (relatively permanent) form in which human energy is canalized in the process of assimilation and socialization” (1947/1990, p. 59). Here, assimilation means the way in which we acquire things either through receiving them or producing them, and socialization represents the way we relate ourselves to others. They are both means through which we relate to the world. Thompson (2014) explains the significance of canalization. He writes, “Canalization is central because it refers to the ways in which impulses, forms of cognition, the epistemic capacities of the individual, as well as the affective and cathectic dimensions of the personality are formed” (p. 49). Social character is a way to explain how we relate to the world or practice the art of living—how and why we act, feel, and think in the ways we do (Fromm, 1947/1990).

Social character is the basis for Fromm’s character system, which is the “human substitute for the instinctive apparatus of the animal” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 59). As humans, we develop habits that allow us to react in conditioned or semi-automatic ways so that we can function without having to make a deliberate decision for every action. These habits are formed by our character structure, thus character structure provides consistency in our actions and compatibility between our outer life and the needs of our inner situation. It is also the basis for our ideas and values. Fromm (1947/1990) explains,

To most people ideas seem to be independent of their emotions and wishes and the result of logical deduction, they feel that their attitude toward the world is confirmed by their ideas and judgments when actually these are as much a result of their character as their actions are. This confirmation in turn tends to stabilize their character structure since it makes the latter appear right and sensible. (p. 60)

Significant here is the way in which our character operates unconsciously. Fromm (1962/2009) elaborates,

It is the function of the social character to shape the energies of the members of society in such a way that their behavior is not a matter of conscious decision as to whether or not to follow the social pattern, but one of *wanting to act as they have to act* and at the same time finding gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture. In other words, it is the social character's function to mold and channel human energy within a given society for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society. (p. 62)

Social character compels members of society to behave in specific ways based on their group identities so that the social system continues to function (Fromm, 1962/2009). As character structure is largely formed in early years, it is the family structure that has the most influence. Since the social structure determines the family structure, learning how to be a member of the family also prepares one to be a member of society based on one's group identity(ies).

Much of the above discussion highlights the ways in which Freud's theory of characterology influenced Fromm's conceptualization of social character. Both men assert that character is the basis for behavior and must be inferred from it. They also agree that while character is powerful, it is a force of which people may be entirely unconscious. Both understand character to consist of a number of individual character traits and suggest that a particular organization of character traits should be understood as a syndrome, or orientation of character (Fromm, 1947/1990). But, Fromm diverges from Freud in important ways, particularly in regards to the role of social structures in shaping character. Fromm critiques Freud for failing to contextualize his observations culturally or historically. The notion of social structure is a key element of Fromm's theory of character. Fromm (1970) explains that the character structure "is the result of a dynamic interrelation between system-man (with the needs, possibilities and limitations deriving from man's nature) and the system-society in which he lives" (as qtd. in Funk, 1982, p. 29). As such, social character's purpose is to ensure the continued efficient functioning of society, which was explained directly above. Framing social character as the intermediary between the structure of society and the individuals of a society is an important critique of Marxism. For Fromm (1962/2009), Marxism failed to show how the economic structure translated into an "ideological superstructure" (p. 57). This can be remedied through the use of psychoanalysis, which demonstrates how social character operates as "the transmission belt between the economic structure of society and the prevailing ideas" (Fromm, 1962/2009, p. 61-62).

Character Orientations

In “Credo,” Fromm’s closing chapter of *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962/1990), he writes the following:

By the very fact of his being human, he is asked a question by life: how to overcome the split between himself and the world outside of him in order to arrive at the experience of unity and oneness with his fellow man and with nature. Man has to answer this question every moment of his life. Not only—or even primarily—with thoughts and words, but by his mode of being and acting. (p. 133)

As human beings, every moment of our lives we are choosing, often unconsciously, how to be in or relate to this world through modes of being and acting. This is of relevance here because these modes represent Fromm’s construction of character orientations, based upon his understanding of character structure. As mentioned earlier, he begins with two overarching categories of character: the nonproductive and the productive. Within these two broad categories, Fromm further classifies six character types according to their assimilation (the way in which one acquires and assimilates things) and socialization (the way one relates to himself/herself and others) processes. In considering these character types, it is important to remember that these are ideal types. While the majority of people have a dominant character type, one’s individual character is typically some combination of orientations.

The nonproductive orientation.

The nonproductive orientation represents a way of being in the world that is regressive. It is an attempt to deny our capacity for reason and love. Fromm explains its

manifestation through the term “syndrome of decay,” which is characterized by tendencies toward masochism, sadism, destructiveness, indifference, apathy, withdrawal, and/or symbiosis. Fromm identifies six character types within the nonproductive orientation: the authoritarian, the receptive, the exploitative, the hoarding, the marketing, and the necrophilic-destructive, each named for its assimilation process. Fromm elaborates on the authoritarian character in *Escape from Freedom* (1941/1994). The next four are discussed in *Man for Himself* (1947/1990) where Fromm focuses most of his attention on the marketing character. Later, in *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil* (1964/1980), he develops the necrophilic-destructive character type.

Fromm’s understanding of the authoritarian character shaped *Escape from Freedom* (1941/1994). Power, or one’s attitude toward power, is the most important aspect here. For the authoritarian character, the world is divided into two main categories: those who have power and those who do not. An institution or person with power will arouse “love, admiration, and readiness for submission. . .Power fascinates, irrespective of the values or beliefs it represents” (Rasmussen & Salhani, 2008, p. 214). On the other hand, those without power provoke “contempt and evoke a corresponding desire to dominate or humiliate” (Rasmussen & Salhani, 2008, p. 215). The socialization process is one of sadism, masochism, and symbiotic relatedness (Fromm, 1941/1994).

The receptive character believes that everything (material objects, affection, love, knowledge, or pleasure) must be obtained from an outside source. Their socialization process is one of masochism and symbiotic relatedness. This creates a sense of dependence and helplessness. As the ultimate consumer or “eternal suckling” the receptive character plays a significant role in twentieth-century society (Fromm, 1958, p.

9). They are typically viewed as optimistic, friendly, loyal, and affectionate (Fromm, 1947/1990; Funk, 1982).

The exploitative and receptive orientations are alike in their belief that the source of all good comes from outside oneself. However, the exploitative character has no expectation of receiving these things and instead believes that they must be taken by force or cunning. Their socialization process is sadism and symbiotic relatedness. People of this type are often hostile and manipulative. They are described as envious, jealous, and cynical. In the twentieth century, this character type was not as dominant as the receptive (Fromm, 1947/1990; Funk, 1982).

The hoarding orientation is decidedly different from the previous three. Here, there is no expectation of receiving anything from the outside. As the name suggests, hoarding characters focus on hoarding and saving. The outside world is a threat and must be mastered; as a result, they value order and security. They find security in creating a protective wall around themselves. They relate to the world through destruction and tend toward suspicion. Their socialization process is destructiveness and withdrawal. This character type was likely most common during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Fromm, 1947/1990; Funk, 1982).

The marketing orientation emerged during the twentieth century as a result of modern capitalism. After World War II, Fromm became progressively more alarmed with the increase in what he had termed “automaton conformity” in *Escape from Freedom*. Eventually, he decided to replace the notion of automaton conformity with the marketing character, with alienation as its defining aspect. Fromm (1947/1990) describes this type as, “the character orientation which is rooted in the experience of oneself as a

commodity and one's value as exchange value" (p. 68). No permanent kind of relatedness is formed, but instead, there is a drive to conform to whatever makes one most salable. For such individuals, their socialization process is one of indifference and withdrawal. This was the dominant character type of the twentieth century (Fromm, 1947/1990; Funk 1982).

Fromm developed the necrophilous-destructive character much later than the other types, largely in response to changes he observed as a result of the threat of nuclear war (Funk, 1982). This type focuses on violence and force. Such individuals are preoccupied with death, decay, sickness, and the past. They are driven to control through law and order. According to Rasmussen and Salhani (2008), Fromm believed few people were entirely necrophilous-destructive but offered examples such as entrenched racists, terrorists, torturers, war fanatics, and some murderers. It is the one orientation that is entirely in opposition to life (Fromm, 1964; Funk, 1982).

While the descriptions here speak solely to the negative aspect of these types, there can be positive features to most of these types. The majority of us are differing composites of productive and nonproductive character types. The positive manifestations are dependent upon the degree of productivity in one's character (Fromm, 1947/1990).

The productive orientation.

The productive orientation is Fromm's counter to the nonproductive character type. The productive orientation is progressive. Here, one's purpose is to reach the full potential of human powers. Fromm describes this as manifesting through a syndrome of growth (Fromm, 1962/2009; Funk, 1982). While he suggests six different types within the non-productive orientation (authoritarian, receiving, exploitative, hoarding,

marketing, and necrophilous-destructive), there is only one for the productive orientation: working (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 111). Fromm's understanding of productivity differs from the typical definition. While often used synonymously with terms such as active, activity, efficiency, or even artistic creativity, Fromm would categorize many of these as nonproductive. Productivity is about spontaneity or spontaneous activity as defined through positive freedom. The productive orientation,

Refers to a fundamental attitude, a *mode of relatedness* in all realms of human experience. It covers mental, emotional, and sensory responses to others, to oneself, and to things. (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 84)

The focus here is not on productivity as success, but productivity in terms of one's character. In contrast to the alienation of the nonproductive character, the productive character "experiences himself as the embodiment of his powers and as the 'actor'; that he feels himself one with his powers and at the same time that they are not masked and alienated from him" (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 84). One is cognizant of his or her potentialities or powers, and the ability to use these powers productively, or as Fromm (1947/1990) terms it, "power to" (p. 88). This is in contrast to the nonproductive character who is concerned with "power over," or the domination of others and the perversion of "power to" (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 88).

In the productive orientation, one can relate to the world in two different ways, either reproductively or generatively. As with the character types themselves, most people will employ some mixture of the two when interacting with the world. When one reacts reproductively, he or she perceives "actuality in the same fashion as a film makes a literal record of things" (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 88). A generative reaction conceives

reality “by enlivening and re-creating this new material through the spontaneous activity of one’s mental and emotional powers” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 88). If one of the two reactions is atrophied in a person, imbalances occur. Fromm describes a realist as a person who relates entirely, or almost entirely, reproductively. He or she can recognize things as they are but in a superficial way, and cannot recognize the essential or imagine what is not yet evident (Fromm, 1947/1990). On the other hand, if one is largely generative, he or she is unable to perceive reality, and as such is insane—only aware of an inner reality (Fromm, 1947/1990). The opposite of both realism and insanity is productiveness. The productive person must be capable of relating to the world both reproductively and generatively. The atrophy of either results in sickness. These two reactions represent “opposite poles whose interaction is the dynamic source of productiveness,” where productiveness “is something new which springs from this interaction” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 90).

For Fromm, productiveness is the solution for what he terms “the moral problem of man,” and the paradox of human existence: “that man must simultaneously seek for closeness and independence; for oneness with others and at the same time for the preservation of his uniqueness and particularity” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 96-97). It is through one’s use of the powers of emotions and thinking that this paradox or problem can be productively addressed. He examines the power of emotion through looking at productive love, a socialization process of the productive orientation. As Fromm’s theory of love will be analyzed in greater depth in the following chapter, the discussion here is intentionally brief. The ability to love is dependent upon the development of a productive character orientation. Fromm reconceptualizes love as a state in which we

choose to stand, affirming the agentic nature of love. He critiques notions of love that overemphasize receiving love through being *loved* rather than giving love through being *loving*. This is significant here because the ability to give is an essential aspect of the productive character. Fromm (1956/2006) writes,

Giving is the highest expression of potency. In the very act of giving, I experience my strength, my wealth, my power. This experience of heightened vitality and potency fills me with joy. . . Giving is more joyous than receiving, not because it is deprivation, but because in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness. (p. 21-22)

Productive love is empowering because it allows us to give in such a manner that we can intimately connect to others while preserving our own integrity.

Fromm explores the power of thinking through what he refers to as productive reasoning, another identified socialization process of the productive orientation. He begins by differentiating between reasoning and intelligence. Intelligent thinking is typically concerned with discovering knowledge for practical results or goals but tends to remain at a superficial level. Reason is “perspectivistic” in that it represents a “third dimension, that of depth” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 102-103). Reason serves,

To know, to understand, to grasp, to relate oneself to things by comprehending them. It penetrates to the surface of things in order to discover their essence, their hidden relationships and deeper meanings, their ‘reason.’ (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 102-103)

Productive thinking is indicated by an objectivity that is based on respect for what is being observed, which Fromm distinguishes from scientific detachment, and a realization of the totality of the phenomenon or object under study (Fromm, 1947/1990).

The productive orientation is characterized by joy, spontaneity, creativity, and happiness. As Friedman & Schreiber (2013) suggest, “[Fromm] was building a philosophy or credo of the good life by admonishing people to have faith in their capacity to lead themselves to happiness” (p. 148). Love, reconceptualized, is the basis for Fromm’s theory of both productivity and positive freedom. In fact, the notion of the productive life is the basis for *The Art of Loving* (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). Much of this will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter.

Free will or determinism.

Fromm’s notion that character orientations shape the way in which we relate to the world, but are also themselves shaped by the social structures of our society, does raise questions in regard to free will and determinism. Fromm has proposed a humanist ethic where human beings are capable of choosing to regress (nonproductivity) or to progress (productivity) as it corresponds to a given character structure. Progression as representative of the “growth and unfolding of possibilities” is the ethical norm (Fromm, 1982, p. 139). However, as Funk (1982) points out, not everyone chooses to subscribe to this ethical standard, some “have decided or were urged to decide, in favor of a different answer” (p. 139). He continues, further explaining the issue,

Therefore the question remains, whether man truly has the capacity to shape his life in accordance with principles of humanistic ethic, or whether he is determined by facts or factors that exclude this possibility either in

principle or accidentally. This raises the question concerning man's freedom. (Funk, 1982, p. 139)

To address this, we must first consider Fromm's view of the influence of the social and biological. Human agency is an essential piece of Fromm's understanding of humanity. Fromm believes that human beings have the ability to transform both their world and themselves, though he does argue that this transformation is limited by the context. As humans, we can develop and transform ourselves, but only according to or within the context of our human nature. Here, Fromm argues, we must move beyond the standard thinking that dichotomizes the biological and sociological, to understand that we cannot separate the two. He explains,

The main passions and drives in man result from the *total existence* of man, that they are definite and ascertainable, some of them conducive to health and happiness, others to sickness and unhappiness. Any given social order does not *create* these fundamental strivings but it determines which of the limited number of potential passions are to become manifest or dominant. Man as he appears in any given culture is always a manifestation of human nature, a manifestation, however, which in its specific outcome is determined by the social arrangements under which he lives. (Fromm, 1955/1990, p. 14)

Fromm has conceived of a system that recognizes both the interrelationship of the social structures and the biological drives of human nature in shaping our character structure that then influences the decision to progress or regress.

In a related line of thinking, some may question whether human nature is inherently good or evil. Fromm rejects the validity of this question too, believing that we all have the capacity for good and evil. He asserts, “the essence of man is neither good nor evil, neither love nor hate, but a contradiction which demands the search for new solutions—either in a regressive or a progressive way” (1964/1980, p. 121). For Fromm, we should be far more concerned with the influences that mold our social character than questions of inherent good or evil. As Funk (1982) points out, “The real question is what factors, determinants, and conditions can be held responsible for one man’s reacting progressively and another’s negatively to the contradiction of his life” (p. 140).

The question remains though, if character is the determining factor in our choice between ethical productivity or unethical nonproductivity, and if character is shaped by factors outside the realm of control of an individual, to what extent can we claim a freedom to choose? (Funk, 1982). For Fromm, the answer to freedom versus determinism lies in understanding our inclinations (Fromm, 1964/1980; Funk, 1982). While the rare person can exist who is entirely nonproductive or productive, the vast majority of society falls somewhere between these two extremes as varying but not necessarily equal combinations of both. Thus, our choices are the result of the fluctuating strengths of our conflicting inclinations (Funk, 1982). Fromm believes this proves the existence of our freedom to choose. He explains, “it is precisely the average man with contradictory inclinations, for whom the problem of freedom of choice exists” (Fromm, 1964/1980, p. 100). This freedom is a result of our ability to reason. Reason is what allows us to choose progress or productivity, even when the opposite inclination is

stronger. In the following, Fromm (1947/1990) explains the implication of our ability to reason for our freedom:

Man, while like all other creatures subject to forces which determine him, is the only creature endowed with reason, the only being who is capable of understanding the very forces which he is subjected to and who by his understanding can take an active part in his own fate and strengthen those elements which strive for the good. (p. 233)

Authoritarian Ethics

Given our freedom to choose, Fromm then believes we have a central task: “to determine the mechanisms that prevent the critical attitude from arising within members of mass society” (Thompson, 2014, p. 46). One means to do this is to look at the implications of negative freedom for the ethical development of individuals and societies. Fromm posits that negative freedom creates a state of moral confusion. This occurs as a result of “processes of socialization that mutilate the implicit capacities and functions that human beings possess” (Thompson, 2014, p. 49). As we learn to rely on authoritarianism, conformity, and destruction to cope with our fear of freedom, we come to doubt our own autonomy or ability to reason. We no longer believe ourselves to be capable of determining what is moral or immoral, so we relinquish our moral conscience to outside authorities. According to Fromm (1947/1990), “The demands of the state, the enthusiasm for magic qualities of powerful leaders, powerful machines, and material success become the sources for his norms and value judgments” (p. 5). There are no universal ethical norms; instead, everything is a matter of arbitrary preference determined

by forces outside of ourselves. In such a context, our morality is defined by a system of irrational authoritarian ethics. Fromm does believe in the notion of rational authority. This type of authority is based on the competence and knowledge of a person for a specific job. Authority is conferred because of competent help or guidance, not exploitation, and it is often temporary (Fromm, 1947/1990). Fromm offers the doctor-patient relationship as an example (Fromm, 1958). For the purposes of the conversation on authoritarian ethics, the reference is to irrational authority.

Not surprisingly, negative freedom and irrational authoritarian ethics are mutually sustaining. What is most concerning to Fromm about this is the way in which the “universal and ‘fundamental’ drives of the human being become filtered and directed by social relations” (Thompson, 2014, p. 47). Submission to an authoritarian ethics, like the desire for negative freedom, is motivated by a need to belong, as “the fear of disapproval and the need for approval seem to be the most powerful and almost exclusive motivation for ethical judgment” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 11). Authoritarian ethics,

Denies man’s capacity to know what is good or bad; the norm giver is always an authority transcending the individual. Such a system is based not on reason and knowledge but on awe of the authority and on the subject’s feelings of weakness and dependence. (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 10)

This returns to Fromm’s argument that we must look to the socialization processes that alter the basic drives of human nature. Thompson (2014), referencing the mental illness that Fromm associates with the psychological costs of negative freedom, aptly describes how this occurs: “The defective forms of socialization come to infect the character by

implanting, so to speak, the external authority into the subject” (p. 50). According to Fromm, in the context of one’s moral development, these external authorities, such as “the parents, the church, the state, public opinion are either consciously or unconsciously accepted as ethical and moral legislators whose laws and sanctions one adopts, thus internalizing them” (Fromm, 1962/2009, p. 148). Here obedience becomes a virtue, and disobedience a vice.

This type of authoritarian ethics goes against our very nature as humans. In fact, it is a “violation” of human nature that “results in mental and emotional disintegration” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 7). Society has adapted to a culture of irrational authoritarian ethics that promotes a “crippling of man’s powers” and an “irresponsibility towards himself,” this has resulted in “mental and emotional disturbance” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 20, 23). In internalizing such an ethics,

It becomes embedded in the personality because of the alienated form of cultural life that individuals come to be exposed to. It is precisely the pathological forms of culture that motivate the individual to formulate a ‘pseudo-self’; a kind of escape from the instrumentalized, de-humanized world we come to inhabit. (Thompson, 2014, p. 50)

Authoritarian ethics is in many ways embodied or enacted through the authoritarian conscience. Fromm (1947/1990) defines the authoritarian conscience as “the voice of an internalized external authority, the parents, the state, or whoever the authorities in a culture happen to be” (p. 143-144). Here, one is not motivated to act based on fear or hope of reward, which typically come from an external authority. Instead, one acts out of a responsibility to the “ethical or moral legislators” that one has consciously or

unconsciously internalized as one's conscience (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 144). One's value judgments are based not on what is good for humanity, but on norms that are given by the authority. The good authoritarian conscience is found in pleasing the authority, while the guilty conscience is found in displeasing the authority. Control is enacted through the guilty conscience that produces fear of either being punished or abandoned by the authority (Fromm, 1947/1990).

For Fromm, the nonproductive marketing character is the most relevant and destructive in contemporary society. It is the marketing character that is most associated with the chronic, low-grade schizophrenia that Fromm used to describe the notion of the pathology of normalcy. This character orientation is based on a system of supply and demand, but not in terms of goods or resources, but people. Society becomes a market for persons, and people learn to experience themselves as a commodity where they are both "the seller and the commodity to be sold" (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 70). The societal changes that have encouraged the rapid increase in the marketing orientation have triggered the emergence of the personality market. Instead of selling goods or commodities, we now sell our personalities, making the influence of external authorities and their arbitrarily determined ethical norms all the more powerful (Fromm, 1947/1990). Success becomes dependent upon the acceptance of one's personality by others.

The marketing character is entirely estranged from him or herself, and the alienation he or she experiences is severe. What Fromm refers to as one's powers or abilities to create are viewed only in terms of how they are judged by others. Knowledge becomes a commodity, a means to an end instead of an end in and of itself. Fromm (1947/1990) writes, "here, too, man is alienated from his own power; thinking and

knowing are experienced as a tool to produce results” (p. 75). Fromm (1941/1994) describes how the possibility of spontaneous activity and thus positive freedom is destroyed:

We produce not for a concrete satisfaction but for the abstract purpose of selling our commodity. . . In the same way we regard our personal qualities and the result of our efforts as commodities that can be sold for money, prestige, and power. The emphasis thus shifts from the present satisfaction of creative activity to the value of the finished product. Thereby man misses the only satisfaction that can give him real happiness—the experience of the activity of the present moment—and chases after a phantom that leaves him disappointed as soon as he believes he has caught it—the illusory happiness called success. (p. 261)

Even the idea of equality, which should be the most basic of ethical norms, is twisted to support a marketing social structure. Fromm (1947/1990) explains,

The word equality has also changed its meaning. The idea that all men are created equal implied that all men have the same fundamental right to be considered as ends in themselves and not as means. Today, equality has become equivalent to *interchangeability* and is the very negation of individuality. Equality, instead of being the condition for the development of each man’s peculiarity, means the extinction of individuality. (p. 74)

The result of such a context is total alienation. When one is primarily concerned with his or her salability, identity becomes entirely malleable. Alienation is all encompassing. One’s relatedness to the world is summed up in “I am as you desire me” (Fromm,

1947/1990, p. 73). Here the authoritarian ethics that thrives on such alienation becomes embedded in our everyday lives, encouraging the disposition of the marketing character. The acceptance of this value-laden disposition not only legitimates those values but also ensures one's place in a social or cultural group. Authoritarian ethics becomes a means of social control with great ease.

For Fromm there is an "art of living," and living must be approached in the same manner as learning any other skill or art would be. Thoughtfulness, reflection, time, and effort are all required. But Fromm argues that we have lost sight of the purpose of life and so we approach living as if it requires no effort. Instead of focusing on happiness or joy, success and duty have become our focus. Fromm (1947/1990) describes the modern person's aim in life:

Money, prestige, and power have become his incentives and ends. He acts under the illusion that his actions benefit his self-interest, though he actually serves everything else but the interests of his real self. Everything is important to him except his life and the art of living. He is for everything except for himself. (p. 19)

Humanist Ethics

When we understand human nature, we will find that, "the sources of norms for ethical conduct are to be found in man's nature itself; that moral norms are based upon man's inherent qualities" (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 7). This is the basis of Fromm's humanist ethics or normative humanism, where there "exists a specific set of characteristics that can qualify as healthy or unhealthy, that can be seen, in some objective sense, to be correct and right" (Thompson, 2014, p. 45). Just as negative

freedom and authoritarian ethics are mutually sustaining, so are positive freedom and humanist ethics. The notion of ethics is embedded within positive freedom, where we have “the ability to act autonomously to fulfill life’s purposes, including the ability to act ethically and creatively” (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013, p. 99). While authoritarian ethics encourages a lack of self-interest or self-care, humanist ethics is an “affirmation of life” that promotes the best interest of the self through encouraging the development of one’s own powers. It is “responsibility toward [one’s] own existence” (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 20). The person of the productive orientation experiences himself or herself as the agent of his or her powers and what he or she creates with them. They have a strong sense of self-realization and identity.

An authoritarian conscience is the internalized voice of an external authority (Fromm, 1947/1990). The humanistic conscience is much different. Fromm (1947/1990) describes it as “the reaction of our total personality to its proper functioning or dysfunctioning” (p. 158). It is knowledge “of our respective success or failure in the art of living” that has both an abstract and affective nature (p. 158). Those thoughts, actions, or feelings that contribute to positive freedom, or “the proper functioning and unfolding of our total personality,” are characteristic of a good conscience. A guilty conscience is the response to anything that does not promote a state of positive freedom. Our humanistic conscience serves as the “guardian of our integrity” (p. 159). Fromm referred to it as “the voice of our loving care for ourselves” (p. 159). As this voice, the humanistic conscience guides one’s choice to live by the norms of a humanist ethics, which for Fromm is synonymous with a biophilic ethics (Funk, 1982).

Humanism and Critical Pedagogy

To return to the earlier discussion that suggested Fromm's humanism can be used as a critique of critical theory, I would like to consider what an ethical humanism can offer to expand or deepen the transformative potential of critical pedagogy. This discussion is largely an extension of Thompson's (2014) use of normative humanism as a critique of critical theory.

First, humanism provides a standard by which to define ethical norms, which in turn allows for an objective ethically based critique of dehumanization and oppression. As Thompson (2014) writes, this provides the means "to shatter reification, to base praxis on ethical grounds that are not constantly shifting and held subject to the manipulation of the errors of public deliberation and discourse" and thus, "a radical form of ethical and political judgments emerges" (p. 56). In providing these ethical and political judgments, one can then determine what the ethical standard or purpose for living is, which provides the means to challenge those situations in which an individual or group is not successful in meeting those standards or purposes. Fromm (1955/1990) explains,

If a person fails to attain freedom, spontaneity, a genuine expression of self, he may be considered to have a severe defect, provided we assume that freedom and spontaneity are the objective goals to be attained by every human being. If such a goal is not attained by the majority of members of any given society, we deal with the phenomenon of *socially patterned* defect. (p. 15)

Now, not only can we argue that freedom and humanization are ethical norms for all members of society, but we also have the means to analyze the situations where dehumanization and oppression have become naturalized, and name them as a normalized

defect or social illness. As Thompson (2014) suggests, “It becomes necessary to be able to secure a normative critique of society, one that is in some way grounded in the life processes of individuals” (p. 56)

Critical pedagogy must be able to identify the means of social control that perpetuate oppression, or what Thompson (2014) describes as the ability “to formulate forms of knowledge that unmask the mechanisms of power and, more importantly, the means by which compliance of the commands of elites and forms of potent dissent [are] weakened among members of capitalist society” (p. 56). Fromm’s humanist ethic provides the language with which to name the authoritarian ethics and conscience that manipulate on both an individual and societal level. His psychological conceptualization of these concepts provides a lens of understanding that critical pedagogy is missing. The normative humanism that both Fromm and Thompson conceptualize supplies a means to better understand and critique oppression, which leads to a more nuanced knowledge of freedom and what is required to achieved it.

The Relevance of Humanism for Education

Almost two decades after first laying out his premise of humanist ethics in *Man for Himself*, Fromm (1968) asks in *A Revolution of Hope*, “How did it happen? How did man, at the very height of his victory over nature, become the prisoner of his own creation and in serious danger of destroying himself?” (p. 2). Fromm (1968) believed that society was at a crossroads, where “one road leads to a completely mechanized society with man as a helpless cog in the machine...the other to a renaissance of humanism and hope—to a society that puts technique in the service of man’s well-being” (p. vii). I would argue that we are still at this crossroads, and while our current political

and social context may seem dire, we should remain hopeful. Certain aspects of our human nature may have become subverted and/or perverted, but our human needs remain constant, pushing us to search for something more than an alienating and dehumanized existence. Consider what Fromm (1962/2009) writes in the following:

While it is true that man can adapt himself to almost any conditions, he is not a blank sheet of paper on which the culture writes its text. Needs like the striving for happiness, belonging, love, and freedom are inherent in his nature. They are also dynamic factors in the historical process. If a social order neglects or frustrates the basic human needs beyond a certain threshold, the members of such a society will try to change the social order so as to make it more suitable to their human needs. (p. 64)

When I read this, I am reminded of the power and potential of education. Schooling can empower students to develop a critical consciousness and to see their dehumanization for what it is. We can provide the space to examine the notion of the unconscious so that both teachers and students learn to know themselves in the Frommean sense. In doing these things, schooling can create a context that fosters a rebellion against the structures that maintain negative freedom and a demand for a humanized society where unconditional love is possible.

While Fromm only makes a few explicit references to education, I believe his work speaks to a need for education deeply rooted in our human nature. In his discussion of human nature, he describes an inherent intellectual curiosity that compels us to search out knowledge. He writes,

He is impelled to go forward and with everlasting effort to make the unknown known by filling with answers the blank spaces of his knowledge. He must give account to himself of himself, and of the meaning of his existence. (Fromm, 1947/1990, p. 41)

The glaring problem is that the schooling experience in the United States was not created to meet the needs of our human nature. As humans, we yearn for happiness, belonging, love, and freedom. We want to know the unknown, and we need to understand the meaning of our existence. Yet, none of these things have ever been the objectives or purpose of education. These are not the types of things we explore in our classrooms. Our educational system operates to maintain a state of negative freedom. This is accomplished through instilling a belief in authoritarian ethics and molding our students into the marketing character who is consumed by the demands of the personality market. Critical educational studies have done valuable work in critiquing schooling as a social structure that perpetuates an oppressive social order. While necessary and powerful, this critique alone is limited. It will never get at the ways in which schooling does not meet our basic human needs because the Marxism, materialism, and structuralism upon which much of it is based has not engaged with what social psychology reveals about the socialization processes of oppression and dehumanization. Without this piece, critical pedagogy will remain limited in its ability to affect change. Purpel (1989) suggests we are stuck in a stalemate game, stressing defense over offense—“The academic community has done far better with its oppositional critical capacities than with its creative responsibilities” (p. 69). Fromm’s conceptualization of freedom has the potential to provide this much-needed offense.

One of the overarching purposes of this project is to advocate for the implementation of Fromm's theory of critical social psychology in critical pedagogy, which I believe is a piece of such "creative responsibilities." In this chapter, my interest is in the relevance of ethics to such a project. Critical pedagogy cannot change the trajectory of the educational system without acknowledging the significance of creating a critical moral vision. Shapiro (1985) pointed this out over thirty years ago. Perhaps it is time to pay attention. He writes,

Education concerned with the need for a more just and humane society will have to propose a *notion of moral "excellence"*—one in which sharing and solidarity rather than separation and superiority become the hallmarks of the educational system. In the quest for a society without exploitative social relations and without the usual form of hierarchy, domination and subordination, incorporating such an ethic into the educational agenda must be regarded as nothing less than our vital and inescapable responsibility. (p. 49)

I would argue that the purpose of critical pedagogy is embedded within a moral understanding of what is just or true. Its social critique appeals to a morality based on ideals of justice and equality. Yet, there is no discussion of the ethical norm that this suggests. It is as if we have abandoned any transformative use for morality or an ethical critique. The crisis of critique and judgment in critical theory (Thompson, 2014) effects critical pedagogy as well. This has allowed more conservative movements within education to monopolize the significance of morality, and abandon any transformative use of it. They have created an understanding of morality based on individualism,

autonomy, social order, and authority. The means through which these more conservative frameworks appeal to morality in order to maintain dominance is striking. Dismissed or reasoned away are any critiques based upon the needs of a pluralist society. The defense is couched in terms of intelligence, vigilance and a right to one's own beliefs and values. While such notions of morality are based upon ideas of meritocracy, achievement ideology, and individual mobility and freedom, they ignore the conditions that deny those things to oppressed groups (Cusick & Wheeler, 1988; McNeill, 1982; Wringe, 1998).

This is why Fromm's work is such a powerful lens. He shares a foundation in critical theory and is well versed in the economic and structural critique of Marx, yet in his critique of oppression and his theorization of freedom he engages with the social and psychoanalytic dimensions of ethics, demonstrating the necessity for a moral discourse in critical theory.

Race and Morality

As previously noted, a critique of white supremacy and racism is a central piece to this project. Fromm's theorization of ethics makes no reference to race, and in fact, Fromm seems to underestimate the importance of race and racism in his theorization of freedom. While he references the entrenched racist as an example of the necrophilous-destructive character type (Rasmussen & Salhani, 2008), there is little discussion of racism in his work. In his "Credo" in *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, Fromm (1962/2009) describes the "New Man" he believes must appear,

A man who has emerged from the archaic ties of blood and soil, and who feels himself to be the son of man, a citizen of the world whose loyalty is

to the human race and to life, rather than to any exclusive part of it; a man who loves his country because he loves mankind, and whose judgment is not warped by tribal loyalties. (p. 136)

While one could argue that Fromm's description communicates a commendable hope for a global society, it falls flat without providing a contextualized critique of white supremacy, sounding like something one would expect from a discourse of colorblindness. It communicates an uncritical understanding of the significance of race or racism, and the need to deconstruct it. Yet while Fromm may not have sufficiently engaged with race, there is promise in combining Fromm's humanist ethics with an antiracist project informed by critical race theory (CRT).

CRT contributes a missing piece to critical theory through scholarship that demonstrates how structures and systems continue to empower whites while disempowering people of color through white supremacy (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). As such, CRT can provide the racial critique that Fromm is missing. Education scholars applying CRT and critical whiteness studies have shown how schools function as a significant structure that operationalizes the systemic nature of education wherein white supremacy continues to be perpetuated (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Allen, 2005, 2006; Leonardo, 2009). While these scholars address the importance of race, they do not look at the value of integrating a critical ethical discourse as a source of normative morality. In the following, I look at what it might mean to bring together Fromm's humanist ethics with the critique of CRT in order to propose a critical race theory of morality.

Derrick Bell, one of the most pivotal figures within CRT, often referred to as its intellectual father figure (Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes, 2013), has placed a great deal of importance on the choice to live an ethical life. In *Ethical Ambitions: Living a Life of Meaning and Worth*, Bell (2002) writes,

Risk taking is a part of life whether one is ethical or not, but this is precisely why I feel it is so important to strive to become ethical. Only when we make a decision to live ethical lives, to aspire ethically, can we transform fear and our reactions to it into the reasoned resistance to the greed and exploitation that serve as a major barrier to a truly democratic society. Each ethical action represents an ongoing commitment as we meet life's day to day challenges and opportunities, a readiness to assume risks in honor of self and all others. (p. 51)

For Bell, the power to change, to transform, to resist, and to risk comes from one's morality or the decision to live an ethical life. To ignore morality is to give up that power. It is here that Bell's work becomes important for this discussion because when we look at Bell's narratives, we find such an ethical discourse or morality. As will be elaborated on below, there is a compatibility between Fromm's humanism and the morality basis of Bell's work. Taken together, I believe we can begin to create an ethical discourse or moral vision for critical pedagogy that can solve the crisis of critique and judgment.

Derrick Bell's Narratives as Parables of Morality

Before beginning to posit a critical race theory of morality based upon Bell's writing, we must first examine how we analyze or understand Bell's narratives. Taylor

(2007) argues that we must look at Bell's narratives as parables with the same literary nature as the parables in the New Testament. Taylor is not attempting to imply religious content within Bell's work but rather suggesting that we may best understand his work by applying the same theory of literary critique used to analyze biblical parables. In doing this, Bell's narratives become substantially more powerful than when read as mere allegories. Taylor (2007) suggests that when analyzed as parables, Bell's narratives become (1) transformative language events, (2) metaphors for discourse, and (3) manifestations of new truth.

As transformative language events, Bell's narratives break through the human consciousness. They become a visceral experience created by the literal conflict presented by the parable that "turns over the listener's world and challenges its presumptions" (Taylor, 2007, p. 235). The narrative or the parable itself becomes the disjuncting experience that re-orientates the reader to other possibilities and challenges one's understanding of morality. Reading Bell's narratives as metaphors reinforces this.

Taylor (2007) quotes the following from Ricoeur (1978) to explain:

Metaphoric predication arises when there is a clash in literal meaning; metaphor creates new meaning in a space where there is literal contradiction. Metaphor destroys the literal order in order to present a new order. (p. 236)

The parable becomes what Ricoeur describes as the "metaphorization of discourse," communicating something that cannot be conveyed any other way. The parable's message is about the manifestation of something new and should be judged accordingly. In using Taylor's work to analyze Bell's narratives, we find that Bell's parables clearly

point to a re-framed conceptualization of morality that deconstructs and challenges the morality that upholds white supremacy.

Bell's understanding of morality is based upon the overarching premise of all of his work: the permanence of racism and the unending need to struggle against it. He writes,

Here, I again enlist the use of literary models as a more helpful vehicle than legal precedent in a continuing quest for new directions in our struggle for racial justice, a struggle we must continue even if—as I contend here—racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society. (Bell, 1992, p. ix)

A morality that takes into account this permanent nature of racism can work to combat it through challenging notions of morality that continue to perpetuate white supremacy. Bell's morality does not depend on superficial platitudes or blind idealism but instead embraces the paradox of the permanence of racism and the necessity and meaningfulness in continuing to fight it (Bell, 1992). In acknowledging this permanence, Bell never negates the need for resistance. Instead, he encourages us to continue to fight for our freedom and our humanity (Taylor, 2007). Bell's racial realism is a formidable tool in the sustained fight against injustice, and it is a key component to his understanding of morality. In analyzing Bell's narratives as parables, we find three main facets to Bell's morality: (1) racial realism, (2) praxis, and (3) a liberation of the mind. The following elaborates on how these three components provide a basis for understanding Bell's theory of morality through the analysis of two of Bell's more well-known narratives from *Faces*

at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism (1992), “The Racial Preference Licensing Act” and “Space Traders.”

In the short story narrative, “The Racial Preference Licensing Act,” Congress has drafted a new federal law in which white business owners can purchase a license that allows them to discriminate against blacks openly. In return, these white business owners are required to pay a 3% tax that is then used to support a variety of education and business opportunities for the black community. In signing the bill into law, the president heralds it as “a daring attempt to create a brighter future for all our citizens. . .It does not assume a nonexistent racial tolerance, but boldly proclaims its commitment to racial justice through the working of a marketplace” (Bell, 1992, p. 47). In “Space Traders,” a science-fiction fantasy, beings from outer space arrive to arrange a trade with the United States. In exchange for all of the African Americans living in the U.S., the visitors will provide enough gold to pay off all U.S. debts, chemicals to reverse the pollution of the increasingly toxic environment, and a safe alternative fuel to replace the rapidly depleting fossil fuel. Americans have 16 days to decide, and despite the heated debates that take place, the U.S. agrees to the exchange.

The racial realism of Bell’s work may be the most important piece of a critical race theory of morality considered here. It is the foundation upon which to piece together a critical race theory of morality. Out of his racial realism, we find both the need and potential for praxis and a liberation of the mind. Bell’s racial realism contains the disorienting and jarring nature of a parable. It is a blatant challenge to the belief that society is constantly evolving for the better, that slowly but surely we will reach that elusive state of racial equality. In the “The Racial Preference Licensing Act,” he presents

a challenge to the readily accepted notion that we are living in a post-racial society that is ever-moving closer to racial equality. To use the words of Taylor (2007), his story “turns over the listener’s world and challenges its presumptions” (p. 235). It is an attempt to break into the “human consciousness and demand the overturn of prior values. . .and established conclusions” (Taylor, 2007, p. 235). Bell’s narrative leaves the reader with a choice or a call to action. He or she can accept the truth of the parable and act on it, thus beginning the process of liberating the mind or ignore it, refusing to see the reality it presents.

His story becomes a metaphor for discourse as it challenges the unspoken ideological notions of post-racialism or racial equality, by presenting a reality where the existence of racism is openly admitted. For the reader indoctrinated in the ideology of white supremacy and colorblindness, the open candor of the discussions around the Racial Preference License is disorienting. Consider the following quote from the President of the United States in the narrative:

We must move on toward what I predict will be a new and more candid and collaborative relationship among all our citizens. May God help us all as we seek with His help to pioneer a new path in our continuing crusade to bring justice and harmony to all races in America. (Bell, 1992, p. 52)

Here, Bell is creating an ideological clash in the reader’s mind, as he places the discussion of harmony and justice within a discussion around a legal act that would allow for open racial discrimination. Ideologically, white supremacy has allowed for the continued existence of racism, while at the same time providing people with a belief in racial equality through color blindness. Cleverly, Bell alludes to God and justice in the

quote above, showing the ways in which morality is used explicitly to support racial inequality.

Yet Bell is not just challenging the existence of racial equality, he is also challenging the ways in which those committed to fighting racial inequality go about it, creating another clash of realities. Consider the following dialogue between the professor and Geneva, his fictional mentor and alter-ego. Geneva says, “Even after all these years, you remain as suspicious of my truths as you are faithful to the civil rights ideals that events long ago rendered obsolete” (Bell, 1992, p. 53). The ensuing discussion creates that clash between realities, both for the reader who has never questioned white supremacy, and the reader working to end white supremacy.

It is in this narrative that we see the ways in which morality operates in a similar ideological manner to white supremacy, supporting the idea that morality is an informal system or structure, perhaps even more powerful than the formal legal structure of law enforcement. Consider the following statement from Geneva:

My friend, know it! Racism is more than a group of bad white folks whose discriminatory predilections can be controlled by well-formed laws, vigorously enforced. Traditional civil rights laws tend to be ineffective because they are built on a law enforcement model. . . .But the law enforcement model for civil rights breaks down when a great number of whites are willing—because of convenience, habit, distaste, fear, or simple preference—to violate the law. (Bell, 1992, p. 55)

Here it becomes clear that our ideology and our morality have a stronger pull than the law, an understanding that has been exploited to the benefit of those who desire to

perpetuate racism and white privilege. The law may be used at times to enforce or ensure the perpetuation of white supremacy; however, it is the ideological nature that guarantees its continuance. A reconceptualized morality would be more powerful because it can counter the ideological nature of this oppressive morality and aid in the liberation of the mind.

Like the first narrative, “The Space Traders” also represents the ability of a parable to reorient through disorienting. Here again, through what appears to be an unimaginable story, Bell portrays his racial realism and provides the opportunity for a transformative language event. Bell openly challenges how morality functions to support white supremacy. In one part of the story, the narrator reflects,

In retrospect, though, those arguments were based on morality and assumed a willingness on the part of the President and the cabinet to be fair, or at least to balance the benefits of the Trade against the sacrifice it would require of a selected portion of the American people. Instead of outsmarting them, Golightly had done what he so frequently criticized civil rights spokespersons for doing: he had tried to get whites to do right by black people because it was right that they do so. (Bell, 1992, p. 171)

While the parable itself forces action on the part of the reader in terms of how they respond—either believing or ignoring, it also encourages praxis through activism. In his reflection on the narrative, Bell (1992) writes,

Activism more than legal precedent is the key to racial reform. You can’t just talk about, meet about, and pray about racial discrimination. You have to confront it, challenge it, do battle. (p. 67)

A Race-Radical Humanism

Superficially, it may seem that Fromm and Bell have little in common—Fromm, a Marxist-Freudian psychoanalyst, and Bell, a legal scholar and visionary in the field of critical race theory. Yet, there is a striking congruity to their work. With the ethical dimensions of the work of both Fromm and Bell laid out separately in the above discussions, the following considers the race-radical humanism that can be created through bringing Bell and Fromm together while continuing to use realism, praxis, and the liberation of the mind as driving factors of such an ethical discourse.

Lynn, Jennings, and Hughes (2013) argue that Bell’s use of counternarratives or counterstories challenge the master narratives that uphold racist ideology. Peters and Lankshear (1996) discuss the role of the postmodern counternarrative as a critique of the “grand,” “master,” or “meta” narratives that characterize the West or America as the “last projection of European ideals, as the apex of an unbroken, evolutionary development of two thousand years of civilization” (p. 2). They go on to describe Lyotard’s model of counternarratives, which suggests that they function through “splintering and disturbing grand stories which gain their legitimacy from foundational myths. . .of progress” (Peters & Lankshear, 1996, p. 2). The work of both Bell and Fromm serve as such counternarratives challenging the liberal ideal that we are always moving forward or progressing toward greater equality and justice. Bell’s racial realism is quite explicit as the foundation upon which all of his work is based. As Taylor (2004) argues,

Bell’s thesis [is] that racism is permanent, an ineradicable structure in American life. Bell’s stance here is unrelenting and a direct and deep challenge to liberal notions of racial progress. (p. 271)

Fromm's realism may not be quite as obvious, but it is there, and it is significant. While not Bell's racial realism, Fromm's realism still challenges the liberal notion of progress in terms of our freedom and oppression. Acknowledging our established freedom from external authorities, Fromm argues that our state of oppression continues as we allow anonymous or irrational authorities to increasingly control us in our attempt to escape from our fear of freedom. Fromm's theory of character structure shows the ways we continue to adapt in nonproductive ways to our state of negative freedom. Fromm's work is not a narrative in the sense of Bell's storytelling, but nonetheless his work is a counternarrative in that it "turns over the listener's world and challenges its presumptions" (Taylor, 2007, p. 235). Many believe we have made previously unimaginable progress in terms of societal and technological advances. Yet, Fromm argues that we are worse off than we have ever been and that the alienation we experience is so severe that we have become the commodity on the personality market. The 'story' he tells of the marketing character disjoints and re-orientates in the same way that Bell's narratives do.

While Bell does not address the unconscious in the psychological terms that Fromm does, the counternarratives of both provoke a conflict that has the potential to make conscious that which has been repressed in the unconscious. In this way, the realism of the counternarratives of both Fromm and Bell serve as more than just a challenge to the grand, meta, or master narratives, "but also (or instead) the "*official*" and "*hegemonic*" narratives of everyday life: those legitimating stories propagated for specific political purposes to manipulate public consciousness by heralding a national set of common cultural ideas" (Peters & Lankshear, 1996, p. 2). Revealing the way one's

consciousness has been manipulated and making the unconscious conscious, liberates the mind. Fromm's use of psychoanalysis and his focus on the psychological nature of our dehumanization serves much the same purpose as the racial realism of Bell's narratives. Taylor's (2004) description in the following characterizes the liberatory potential of both Fromm and Bell:

The acid bath of Bell's thesis of racism's permanence lays reality bare; it strips away our illusions. To lay reality bare is a virtue unto itself. We now know and must acknowledge with what we are faced. (p. 283)

The realism that I am suggesting here is different from the realism that Fromm (1947/1990) critiques when he writes of the generative and reproductive ways the productive character relates to the world. Fromm calls the person who is almost entirely reproductive a realist who is limited by his or her ability to only recognize the superficial. The realism evident in Bell and Fromm is distinct from this realism. In fact, their realism is more characteristic of the productive character who maintains a balance of the generative and reproductive. This character is able to not only perceive reality or actuality, but can also use their powers or abilities to re-create or imagine other possibilities (Fromm, 1947/1990).

Leonardo and Harris (2013) look to the relationship between Bell's ethical idealism and political pragmatism as a means to understand his work. They write, "Bell's ethical idealism and his racial realism comprise two sometimes warring and sometimes complementary moments that permeate his work" (Leonardo & Harris, 2013, p. 471). They suggest that it is the ethical that Bell repeatedly returns to, despite the fact that Bell's racial realism leads him to believe that whites will never let go of white supremacy

simply because it is the morally right thing to do. Bell believes that to convince whites to give up their whiteness (or any of the power and privileges attached to it) requires an interest convergence that will benefit whites as well as people of color. Is it possible for humanization to be this benefit? Leonardo and Harris (2013) explain,

The abstract appeal to increase white humanization through anti-racism is contradicted by the material loss they must be prepared and willing to take on. That is, recovering a lost white humanism symptomatic of a certain interest convergence wherein white anti-racism is guided by a discourse of 'gain' (this time whites' sense of their humanity), which is part of the original problem of racial accumulation. (p. 482)

Fromm's ethical humanism strengthens the argument for finding interest convergence within humanization. For Fromm, humanization is the ethical norm by which all individual actions and societal processes, structures, and systems can be evaluated or judged. If something does not nurture a state of positive freedom, then it is unethical. It has already been argued that racism is a means of perpetuating negative freedom. Through his conceptualization of freedom (negative and positive) and the character orientations (productive and nonproductive), Fromm demonstrates the psychological costs of negative freedom and the benefits of positive freedom. The interest convergence for whites, or what they will gain if they work to dismantle white supremacy, is made clearer with the addition of Fromm's work. Thus, Bell's ethical idealism and racial realism remain complementary.

Praxis, like realism, is an element evident in the work of both Bell and Fromm, but more explicitly engaged by Bell. While praxis applies to a range of human actions,

interactions, and situations, as the context of this project is education, it is praxis in relation to pedagogy or teaching that I will use in the following discussion. Fromm does not speak explicitly of praxis, but his notion of the productive character who is cognizant of his or her "power to" rather than "power over" seems compatible. Here, one can relate to the world productively (and thus ethically) because he or she is cognizant of the potentialities or powers that can be used to relate to or effect change in the world. Within the context of education, one could apply the productive nature of relating to the world to the teacher-student relationship. Both Lynn et al. (2013) and Leonardo and Harris (2013) note Freire's influence on Bell's teaching pedagogy as a law professor. Leonardo and Harris (2013) write that "not unlike Freire (2000), who considers education as an issue of praxis, Bell's teaching experience became an opportunity to combine his ethics with his practice" (p. 471). Bell was vocal and critical of the dehumanization he saw in the education of law school students. While specific to legal education, I believe much of what he argues is applicable to education more broadly. In the article "Humanity in Legal Education," Bell (2005) writes of teaching,

Our highest responsibility is to change lay people into professionals. The process by which we accomplish a change must also strengthen character, increase sensitivity to humanitarian concerns, and deepen moral values.

Too often law schools have done just the opposite. (p. 275)

Evident within his critique are convictions that support a way of teaching that emphasizes many of the same elements of Fromm's productive "power to" in positive freedom. Taylor's phrasing echoes Fromm's use of the terminology creative responsibility to describe positive freedom. Taylor (2004) writes,

The creative possibilities are ours, and we must accept responsibility for their development. So doing, though, will require us to act with realism, in recognition both of the use of power by those in positions of dominance and of the need for exertions of power in response. (p. 298)

This sense of responsibility that comes with praxis in an ethical humanism is particularly important in the context of education. The following quote from Bell (2005) conveys the significance of this responsibility:

Lawyers need conscience as well as craft. To borrow an old but picturesque phrase, skilled lawyers without conscience are like loose guns on a sinking ship, their very presence so disconcerting that they wreak damage whether or not they hit anything. It is said that teaching morality is not possible, or that it is not the function of a law school. That may be true. But even so, law school faculty and administrators must instill ethical values in students through coursework and by example. Lawyers must have the courage to apply conscience, as well as competence, in each situation they face. This courage must be taught, nurtured, and practiced on a daily basis if it is to serve reliably in times of crisis. (p. 276)

There is much here that speaks to our responsibilities as educators. If we do not take on the ethical imperatives of a race-radical humanism suggested by the work of Bell and Fromm, we may very well be allowing our students to go out into the world capable of doing damage equal to that of a loose gun on a sinking ship. Berchini (2017) suggests we re-frame the “at-risk” label. She acknowledges the underlying racist, classist, and sexist issues with the term, but believes that since the label is not likely to disappear anytime

soon, we should redefine it. She argues instead we use it to “identify and address students ‘at risk’ of hurting those around them.” Regardless of whether we actually label any of our students “at risk,” of issue here is how we as educators hold ourselves accountable to instilling in our students ethical values that prepare them to have the courage and the conscience that Bell writes of so that they are less likely to inflict harm on those around them. In his preface to *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* (1992), Bell quotes the following from Frantz Fanon (1967):

I recognize that I have one right alone: that of demanding human behavior from the other. One duty alone: that of not renouncing my freedom through my choices. (p. x)

In a sense, Fanon’s words are the core of a race-radical humanism, and this is what our teaching must convey to our students.

Education and a Reconceptualized Race-Radical Humanism

Allen (2005) poses the question, “How can critical education act as a form of empowerment within and against a white supremacist context?” (p. 54).

Reconceptualizing morality and how we engage with this topic is one way to do this. As critical educators, scholars, and researchers we should be troubled by the present state of education. Our own morality should create a dissonance between what is and what could be. Our morality is the way in which we construct what it means to be a part of the world. It dictates our ways of being in human relationships and grounds our social consciousness. We see this when we look at Bell’s work and recognize the significance of his racial realism, his call to praxis, and his belief in the necessity of liberating the mind. A critical morality should create a means to be in the world that encourages

humanizing relationships. This morality provides the means to understand the alienation within oneself caused by the contradictory nature of our existence that white supremacy creates, and in doing so can counter the alienation between human beings created by the unhealthy relatedness to the world that negative freedom encourages.

A reconceptualization of morality through the lens of CRT supports the work already being done by scholars writing on anti-racist education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Knaus, 2009; Brown & Brown, 2010; Matias & Zembylas, 2014), as we find many of the themes discussed above in their work. While Bell's narratives show us the importance of concepts like praxis and liberation of the mind, other scholars demonstrate what these things mean in the realm of education. Just as Bell's narratives challenge the often uncontested ideologies that support white supremacy, Barbara Applebaum's (2002, 2004) work on situated moral agency looks at the ways in which group location or position and white complicity must be considered when attempting to do anti-racist work in the classroom. Traditional conceptions of moral responsibility can be used to conceal white complicity (Applebaum, 2005). When a dominant group's social location is left unexamined or unacknowledged, moral agency can then be used to perpetuate the social injustice it is supposed to be eradicating (Applebaum, 2002). Fromm's notion of authoritarian ethics and authoritarian conscience is a way to unveil how this occurs through critiquing where these traditional moral norms originate and how they are used as a form of social control.

But, it is not just acknowledging the way in which one's moral agency can be used to perpetuate white dominance in the classroom; it is also about challenging the ways in which white ignorance becomes an evasion of white complicity (Applebaum,

2008). A critical race theory of morality works to challenge the ways in which morality has been used to reaffirm social injustice by calling into question the ways in which white ignorance and white complicity are enacted for the benefit of the dominant group. It brings about a liberation of the mind through an ideological critique of whiteness. This requires examining the parts of whiteness that are repressed in the unconscious. Once we begin this process of liberation, we can begin to engage in praxis. Praxis requires trust on the part of all groups working against racial injustice. Too often, traditional morality is conceptualized in terms of the individual. Both Boyd (1996) and Applebaum (2005) show how this continues to privilege whites through the erasure of any moral responsibility on the part of a group. For praxis to be possible, a critical race theory of morality must move beyond an individualized moral responsibility. The notion of a race-radical humanism provides the means to do this.

Conclusion

Man for Himself did not end on the upbeat note that *Escape from Freedom* did. This reflected Fromm's fear that the unproductive orientation was becoming increasingly dominant and commonplace, while ethical humanism was disappearing. At the end of *Man for Himself*, Fromm writes (1947/1990),

Our moral problem is man's indifference to himself. It lies in the fact that we have lost the sense of significance and uniqueness of the individual, that we have made ourselves into instruments for purposes outside ourselves, that we experience and treat ourselves as commodities, and that our powers have become alienated from ourselves. . . The result is that we feel powerless and despise ourselves for our impotence. Since we do not

trust our own power, we have no faith in man, no faith in ourselves or in what our own powers can create. We have no conscience in the humanistic sense. (p. 248)

In writing about ethics, Alasdair MacIntyre (1999) advises that you must “always ask about your social and cultural order what it needs you and others not to know” (p. 328). I believe Fromm would reply that the answer to this question lies in our indifference to ourselves. But, I think he would also argue that an inquiry into a humanist based ethics could help us arrive at a place where we are not completely alienated from ourselves, and that through embracing our need to understand our moral drives we can realize the potential of our powers or capabilities.

As in the previous chapter, I returned to the need to complicate Fromm’s theory to include a racial analysis. Here, I suggested that we must consider a race-radical humanism as one facet of what is necessary to transcend the dehumanization of negative freedom and expand critical pedagogy’s ability to challenge dehumanization and oppression in schooling.

The following chapter moves on to look at Fromm’s conceptualization of positive freedom as love, considering both the theory and practice of his reconceptualization of love. A critical theory of authentic love has important implications for not only how we frame our understanding of freedom, but also the way we engage race and gender in such discussions of love.

CHAPTER 4: LOVE AS POSITIVE FREEDOM

Introduction

Overview

This chapter analyzes Fromm's theory of positive freedom through a reconceptualized critical theory of love. The following will provide an explanation of Fromm's theory of love and its relationship to positive freedom. The discussion will then move on to the ways in which Fromm's work must be complicated so that it can critically address the political and social implications of a white supremacist patriarchy, and in doing this, consider the significance of a reconceptualized love for education.

Biographical Context

Throughout his career, Fromm expounded on the essential role of love in the attainment of freedom. In *Escape from Freedom* (1941/1994) and *The Art of Loving* (1956/2006), he offers two of his more in-depth explorations of how and why he comes to conceptualize love as positive freedom. This was a part of his scholarship that garnered a fair amount of criticism from other scholars and colleagues. Some believed Fromm's optimism to be unfounded, particularly given the international context. At the time of *Escape from Freedom*'s publication, Germany controlled all of continental Europe except for Great Britain (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013). Others took issue with how Fromm theorized love, particularly in *The Art of Loving*. Friedman and Schreiber

(2013) discuss how Paul Tillich, the prominent philosopher and theologian and friend of Fromm's, urged him to delve deeper in his conceptualization of love, particularly in distinguishing between self-love and love of others. Yet, Fromm continued to insist that love was the same regardless of the object, and that love of oneself and love of others could not be separated.

Some criticized the academic quality of *The Art of Loving*, arguing that it was more of a self-help book than scholarly research, a claim that Fromm vehemently denied. But, as Friedman and Schreiber (2013) point out, the book lacks the often expected academic trappings such as citations, quotations, or footnotes. It is certainly different from other academic publications of the time, and even Fromm's own books, as one of his shortest and most accessible publications. Some attribute this to the circumstances of Fromm's life while he was writing *The Art of Loving*. Fromm's second wife Henny Gurlandin died in 1952, and in late 1953, he married Annis Freeman. Fromm's biographers write that he remained happy and in love with Freeman until his death in 1980. According to friends and colleagues, Fromm's relationship with Freeman changed him and he became a much more joyous person, a change in temperament that *The Art of Loving* reflects (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013).

Even if some of the criticism of Fromm's scholarship on love is reasonable, there is also the possibility that the backlash has more to do with academic politics and rivalry. Despite having been a central figure in the development and early period of the Frankfurt School, Fromm was quickly ostracized from the Frankfurt School and the critical theory community (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013; McLaughlin, 2001b). Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse all criticized Fromm's Freudian revisionism. During the same period of

time that *The Art of Loving* was published, Fromm and Marcuse engaged in a written debate via the journal *Dissent*, which is said to have negatively impacted Fromm's reputation among American academics (Friedman & Schreiber, 2013; Jay, 1996; and Rickert, 1986). Fromm's relationship with the American Freudian psychoanalytic community became equally hostile as a result of his critique of Freud's libido theory. The orthodox Freudian community criticized him for being a "simplistic popularizer," "pop psychologist," and "a dogmatic Marxist" (McLaughlin, 2001b, p. 276). Fromm moved to Mexico in 1950 in the hopes that it would improve Gurland's health, but the hostility from the American psychoanalytic community may have contributed to Fromm's decision to remain in Mexico until 1974 when he returned to Europe (McLaughlin, 2001b). Despite being shunned from both the Freudian and critical theory communities, Fromm continued to find success as a therapist, researcher, writer, and mentor. In fact, his "optimal marginality" from the orthodox Freudian community may have benefitted Fromm (McLaughlin, 2001b, p. 278). The publication of *The Art of Loving* increased Fromm's popularity among the general public. In spite of his rejection by the more orthodox Freudian and Marxian academic communities, he maintained a certain level of popularity and was often invited to take on guest appointments as a lecturer or clinician, and eventually became known for his work as a political activist and commentator (McLaughlin, 2001b; Friedman & Schreiber, 2013).

Perhaps one could argue that Fromm's focus on love garnered him popularity among the general public and more non-traditional groups within academia, and disdain among orthodox Marxists, Freudians, and critical theorists. It would appear that Fromm's work touched on a theme of growing interest within society, even as academia

continued to neglect the taboo subject. Love was certainly not a topic of which orthodox Freudians could approve. In “Love and Psychotherapy,” Fromm (1958a) recounts how furious Freud became at Ferenczi’s suggestion that love was an essential piece of psychotherapy that had to be addressed. Fromm (1958a) writes,

He [Freud] made it very clear that the feeling or the affect of love is always irrational. He made it clear in the two aspects of love. One is erotic love, what we usually call falling in love or being in love. He said this is always formed according to infantile patterns and is in essence no different from what we find in transference. We just can’t help it. (p. 127)

Freud was equally dismissive of brotherly love. In the following, Fromm (1958a) quotes Freud:

What nonsense, what insincerity, to demand any such thing which is perfectly impossible and perfectly nonsensical. Why should I love my neighbor? He doesn’t deserve it. I love my family; that is fine. But to love my neighbor is just plain nonsense. It is against human nature and it is utterly irrational. (p. 127)

Freud clearly disregarded any validity or value in love, but the belief in the illogicality of love precedes Freud by hundreds of years. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the irrationality of emotions dates back to Descartes and continues to persist today.

It is not just Fromm’s own contemporaries who, aside from criticizing and dismissing his work on love, refused to engage with it, this is a pattern that has continued. Small pockets of scholars and researchers across various fields continue to find potential

in his work, but even among this group, few focus on Fromm's work on love. It is fairly easy to find research that considers Fromm's analysis of Nazism, authoritarianism, social character, humanism, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis, yet little exists that looks specifically at his conceptualization of love or biophilia. As Matias and Allen (2013) note, love is a topic rarely addressed in academic research, because it is interpreted as something "unquantifiable, unobjective, and useless in terms of evaluating the social lay of the land" (p. 285). It is interesting though that even those engaging with Fromm's work do not focus more on his theory of love. As the conceptualization of the means to achieving freedom, it is a significant component of his work. Such a radical reinterpretation of a commonplace term should encourage more conversation or discussion, yet it remains largely ignored. Maccoby (1996) writes about how his former Frankfurt School colleagues criticized him for being a conformist who was not willing to commit to the radical action required to bring about societal change. Perhaps though the real issue is that the critical, humanizing, and unconditional love that Fromm advocates for was too radical for Fromm's contemporaries and remains so for many scholars today.

Positive Freedom as Love Reconceptualized

Fromm's investigation of negative freedom might make it seem as if isolation and fear are givens of human independence and freedom, but he sees another possibility. He ends *Escape from Freedom* hopefully, proposing that there is a way out of the dehumanization and oppression of negative freedom through positive freedom, where "the individual exists as an independent self and yet is not isolated but united with the world, and other men, and nature" (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 256). This is a freedom dependent upon a self-actualization through "the realization of man's total personality, by

the active expression of his emotional and intellectual potentialities” (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 257). While everyone has these potentialities, it is only through their expression in spontaneous activity that they result in positive freedom (Fromm 1941/1994). As Fromm explains, “Positive freedom consists in the spontaneous activity of the total integrated personality” (Fromm 1941/1994, p. 257).

Fromm’s understanding of spontaneous differs from other common conceptions. Spontaneous activity is not about compulsivity but free will. Fromm (1941/1994) contrasts it with the “activity of the automaton, which is the uncritical adoption of patterns suggested from the outside” (p. 257). It is dependent upon one’s acceptance of his or her total personality, what Fromm refers to as becoming transparent to oneself. For this to happen, one must become aware of the unconscious and make the unconscious conscious (Fromm, 1941/1994). The following clarifies why Fromm (1941/1994) believes the possibility of positive freedom is found in spontaneous activity:

Why is spontaneous activity the answer to the problem of freedom? We have said that negative freedom by itself makes the individual an isolated being, whose relationship to the world is distant and distrustful and whose self is weak and constantly threatened. Spontaneous activity is the one way in which man can overcome the terror of aloneness without sacrificing the integrity of the self; for in the spontaneous realization of the self man unites himself anew with the world—with man, nature, and himself. Love is the foremost component of such spontaneity; not love as the dissolution of the self in another person, not love as the possession of another person, but love as spontaneous affirmation of others, as the union

of the individual with others on the basis of the preservation of the individual self. (p. 259)

This explanation is important for a number of reasons. First, it illustrates how spontaneous activity negates negative freedom and cultivates positive freedom. Spontaneous activity provides the means to transcend negative freedom because it allows one to retain a true, unfragmented self while overcoming isolation to unite with the world. It also demonstrates the central role of a reconceptualized love for the achievement of positive freedom. There can be no spontaneous activity without love.

As an essential component to positive freedom, love is not a romantic notion, but the means to affirm one's own self and connection to the world as one learns what it means to be an individual. No longer defined solely in terms of self, the realization of the self is dependent upon one's ability to connect with others, to be a part of community through the reclaiming of oneself through an integrated personality. Human nature is the basis for Fromm's theorization of negative freedom, and it is what he returns to with positive freedom. He writes, "Any theory of love must begin with a theory of man, of human existence" (1956/2006, p. 7). Alienation is a key piece of Fromm's understanding of human nature. As a significant factor in the compulsion to escape from freedom, alienation is also central to the possibility of positive freedom through love.

Alienation as the Polarity of Love

Our alienation comes from an awareness of our separateness and aloneness. Our cognizance of this isolation often leads to anxiety, fear, despair, and even insanity. These feelings of aloneness have the potential to become so overwhelming that they create mental and emotional instability. As Fromm explains, "He would become insane could

he not liberate himself from this prison and reach out, unite himself in some form or other with men, with the outside world” (p. 8). Faced with the awareness of this alienation, we must all choose how we will cope with it. The inevitability of choosing “how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one’s own individual life and find at-onement” is a universal aspect of the human experience (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 9). Some, too afraid of the threat of aloneness or insanity, will choose to escape freedom altogether, avoiding the work of authentic freedom and settling for a false union through symbiotic or destructive relationships. One of the few times Fromm references shame, it is in relation to the ability to overcome alienation. Shame, according to Fromm (1956/2006), comes from one’s “awareness of human separation, without reunion of love” where one chooses to relate to the world and others through automaton conformity, sadomasochism, authoritarianism, or one of the other mechanisms of escape that sacrifices the integrity of the self (p. 9). Shame exists in the absence of genuine love. While these mechanisms of escape can manifest in any type of relationship--romantic, platonic, work, family, etc., they are often found in our romantic relationships. Fromm (1962/2009) contends that “the most frequent and obvious case of alienation is perhaps the false ‘great love’” (p. 41) where two people believe themselves to be so completely in love that it could never end, until it does, because in reality it was not real love. It was the illusion of love created by the transference of one person’s needs to another. One endows the other with his or her own happiness, joy, and aliveness but in so doing becomes increasingly empty or ‘poor of self.’ The other is turned into an idol, and as such there is no true connection or experience of love. When the relationship ends, one feels as if they have lost the one they love, but really, they are mourning the loss of

themselves as a loving person (Fromm, 1962/2009). This cycle is often repeated throughout one's life. While Fromm's illustration is specific to the destructive nature of being in false love, it is applicable to the majority of dysfunctional human relationships.

In his hopefulness, Fromm maintains that some of us will search for another means to confront alienation through recognizing it and then moving beyond it. This awareness of one's alienation is the prerequisite for genuine freedom in love. Fromm (1962/2009) explains,

As long as the infant has not separated himself from the world outside he is still part of it, and hence cannot love. In order to love, the "other" must become a stranger, and in the act of love, the stranger ceases to be a stranger and becomes me. Love presupposes alienation—and at the same time overcomes it. (p. 44)

A key characteristic of humanizing love is its ability to address this separation without compromising the self. Fromm asserts (1941/1994), "The dynamic quality of love lies in this very polarity: that it springs from the need of overcoming separateness, that it leads to oneness—and yet the individuality is not eliminated" (p. 259). One can transcend the schism created by the awareness and torment of aloneness through spontaneous activity that,

Affirms the individuality of the self and at the same time unites the self with man and nature. The basic dichotomy that is inherent in freedom—the birth of individuality and the pain of aloneness—is dissolved on a higher plain by man's spontaneous action. (Fromm, 1941/1994, p. 260)

In a state of negative freedom we are unable to act spontaneously and cannot express authentic thoughts or feelings, which results in feelings of inferiority. One of basic human needs is to feel connected, our projection of a pseudo self inhibits this, and as a result we are unable to reunite in love which creates shame. Fromm explains (1941/1994),

Whether or not we are aware of it, there is nothing of which we are more ashamed than of not being ourselves, and there is nothing that gives us greater pride and happiness than to think, to feel, and to say what is ours.

(p. 261)

In Probyn's (2005) work on shame she also addresses the connection between shame and love. During her research, she came across Gerhart Piers' (1953) discussion of the following passage from Hegel that analyzes the relationship between shame and love:

Shame does not mean to be ashamed of loving, say on account of exposing or surrendering the body. . .but to be ashamed that love is not complete, that. . .there [is] something inimical in oneself which keeps love from reaching completion. (as qtd. in Probyn, 2005, p. 3)

Piers responds to the passage observing that,

Behind the feeling of shame stands not fear of hatred, but the fear of contempt which, on an even deeper level of the unconscious, spells fear of abandonment, the death by emotional starvation. (as qtd. in Probyn, 2005,

p. 3)

Our pseudo self cannot protect us from this kind of shame because it is the source of our shame. It is what keeps us from the complete love that Hegel references, and it

perpetuates the abandonment and emotional starvation that Piers identifies. All of which converges with Fromm's interpretation of the adulterated and distorted human existence that results from negative freedom and the resultant shame. Positive freedom provides a way to move beyond this shame through spontaneous activity that represents the alternative to the pseudo self that is created by negative freedom.

Positive freedom allows us to experience love in spontaneous action through genuine self-realization where we can maintain individuality and uniqueness while relating to the world and others in an authentic manner. Fromm (1941/1994) argues, "The cultural and political crisis of our day is not due to the fact that there is too much individualism but that what we believe to be individualism has become an empty shell" (p. 269). As a society we may talk a great deal about individualism but, as the discussion of negative freedom demonstrated, our individualism is really veiled conformity.

Love Through Relatedness to the World and Others

In positive freedom, we address the basic need for human attachment by overcoming alienation through reconceptualized love. This drastically alters the way we relate to or know others. We often speak of knowing someone by describing observable facts or personal anecdotes, but for Fromm, to know or relate to another is not about observing. Observation may provide information about something or someone, but it will not allow one to understand a thing or a person in a substantive way. Fromm explains this difference through an illustration that compares the approach of an artist to that of the average person when seeing a mountain. Fromm suggests that the average person takes a photo of the mountain and asks questions about its name and altitude which results in

feeling as if the mountain is 'known.' The artist, however, is not interested in these kinds of facts or observations. Instead, the artist,

Relates himself actively, or if you please, creatively, with all of his senses, with his whole personality, to this mountain and the mountain becomes alive to him. The mountain becomes real to him as this specific mountain.

Abstractions don't count in this process. (Fromm, 1958a, p. 132)

Reconceptualized love allows for this kind of relatedness. When we see another in this way, we are no longer observing and judging them. We have moved beyond observation and judgment as our mechanisms of knowing something or someone. We understand that,

Every person is a bit of living matter endowed with reason, thrown into this world, fighting to develop something, usually defeated, and unless I understand the struggle, the fight, the drama, and most of the time the tragedy of this attempt, I know nothing about the person. (Fromm, 1958a, p. 132-133)

To be seen or known in this way is a relatedness is a powerful act of love, but unfortunately, it is also increasingly uncommon. Fromm's notion of relatedness in love communicates a social critique that is as relevant today as it was when Fromm first made it. In the following, he alludes to the way in which our discourse around relatedness functions to mask the isolation that perpetuates negative freedom and hinder a critique that could lead to authentic love:

We speak about a lot of teamwork and togetherness and all such things, actually people are as lonely as they could be any place in the universe.

Few people are sufficiently concentrated and sufficiently willing to put themselves into the other person, even to really listen. (Fromm, 1958a, p. 133)

Before moving into a more detailed discussion of Fromm's reconceptualized love, it is important to first identify and analyze false versions of love, or those ways of relating to the world and others that are oppressive and dehumanizing, but often referred to as loving.

False Love

As a society we appear to be obsessed with the idea of love. The sheer number of books, movies, and songs about finding, losing, or being in love is evidence of this. Perhaps some of our fascination is due to how elusive this state of "being in love" seems to be. It remains an emotion, an affect, and/or an experience that we struggle to confine to any sort of definition, abstract or concrete. Matias and Allen (2013) suggest love has been constructed in such a way that encourages us to avoid any significant consideration of its meaning. They write, "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?" (p. 288). Approaching love in this way enables us to remove any sort of responsibility or agency in developing our capacity to love. As Fromm points out, we rarely think of love as if it is a skill or something that can be learned. This problematic attitude is upheld by three premises about love that continue relatively unchallenged (Fromm, 1956/2006). First, we believe that the primary concern with love is about *being loved* instead of *loving*. Generally speaking, we give little thought to our ability to love, and instead, focus on how to be loved or be lovable. Second, we approach love as if "the problem of

love is the problem of an object, not the problem of a faculty (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 3). Last, we overvalue the initial experience of “falling” in love. We confuse this experience with what love should be, “the permanent state of being in love, or as we might better say, of ‘standing’ in love” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 4).

These misleading assumptions result in a failure to experience an authentic or liberating love. Unable to achieve ‘real’ love, we are driven to continue to seek out and settle for counterfeit versions of love because of our human need for relation and connection. Fromm suggests there are three broad categories of false love through which we attempt to find connection: orgiastic unions, herd conformity, and creative activity. Orgiastic unions are found in the abuse of sex, drugs, or alcohol. Fromm (1956/2006) describes them as “intense, even violent; they occur in the total personality, mind *and* body; they are transitory and periodical” (p. 12). Union through conformity is the most common representation of false love. Here,

The self disappears to a large extent, and where the aim is to belong to the herd. If I am like everybody else, if I have feelings or thoughts which make me different, if I conform in custom, dress, ideas, to the pattern of the group, I am safe; saved from the frightening experience of aloneness.

(Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 12)

This urge to conform is often unconscious. We believe that in our own individuality we have independently come to form our ideas and beliefs, but as Fromm (1956/2006) points out, we never question “that it just happens that [our] ideas are the same as those of the majority” (p. 13). This is the deceitful love of automaton conformity where equality is equated with sameness rather than oneness or unity. Society perpetuates this type of love

because it needs people to function in a “mass aggregation, smoothly, without fiction; all obeying the same commands, yet everybody being convinced that he is following his own desires” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 15). People conform because they want to far more often than they are forced to. Where orgiastic union is intense and violent, union through conformity is the opposite. Fromm (1956/2006) describes it as “calm, dictated by routine, and for this very reason often is insufficient to pacify the anxiety of separateness” (p. 15). The last type of false love, union through creative activity, is like the work of an artist or artisan where there is a connection with the materials that one uses in their art, but this connection does not translate to others or the world. In this way, the creative act can still sustain isolation. What is lacking in each of these types of unions is “the achievement of interpersonal union, of fusion with another person, in *love*” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 17). With connection as one of the most important of our human needs, one of our strongest drives is to find some sort of fusion outside of ourselves. If we cannot find this, we become insane or destructive, destroying ourselves and/or others. Often we resort to a symbiotic fusion like sadomasochism because even though it compromises the integrity of the self, it alleviates the unbearable aloneness with which we are confronted. But, if we reject these false loves that lack any sense of agency or empowerment, we can reenvision love as a skill that can be learned and mastered, and as such, is capable of humanization through the creation of authentic freedom.

Authentic Love

Fromm argues that we must think of love as an art, and like any other art, in order to excel one must make a commitment to learning both the knowledge and skills of the art. We learn to love through mastering what Fromm refers to as the “theory and

practice” of love (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 5). Fromm begins his theoretical explication of love with Spinoza’s notion of active affect. An active affect allows a person to be the master of the affect, instead of being driven or compelled by the affect, which is what occurs with a passive affect. As an active affect love supports a sustained state of positive freedom because we are no longer driven by mechanisms of escape that lead to false love, but instead can practice agency in how we relate to others and the world.

Fromm (1956/2006) defines love as an active power that,

Breaks through the walls which separate man from his fellow men, which unites him with others; love makes him overcome the sense of isolation and separateness, yet it permits him to be himself, to retain his integrity.

(p. 19)

This is why Fromm argues we must think of love as something that we “stand in.” When we construct love as something that we “fall into” it becomes an entirely passive experience where we remove any sense of choice, agency, or responsibility. As an active affect it is a state that we choose to continually “stand in” through learning how to relate to others and the world at large through the practice of love.

Normative versions of love are largely passive, as they encourage us to be concerned with being loved rather than being loving, which means our focus is on receiving rather than giving. When we conceptualize love as an active power this changes, love becomes an act of giving. But this type of giving must not be confused with the giving characterized by sacrifice that has been used to create an oppressive social norm where deprivation is virtuous. Fromm (1956/2006) explains, “For them, the norm that it is better to give than to receive means that it is better to suffer deprivation

than to experience joy” (p. 21). Dependent upon symbiotic relationships, this type of giving can be both sadistic and masochistic. When exercised through authentic love, giving has nothing to do with deprivation, but instead, is the “highest expression of potency” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 21). Here, it is better to give because “in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 22). Love, when practiced as an active power, will always produce love, which means it will work to sustain a positive state of freedom (Fromm, 1956/2006). This is the litmus test of authentic love.

There are four basic elements evident in all forms of authentic love: care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge (Fromm, 1956/2006). Care signifies concern for life and well-being; if there is no concern for productive growth, then there is no love. When one cares for something there is evidence of effort. There is some truth to the saying “a labor of love.” As Fromm (1956/2006) writes, “One loves that for which one labors, and one labors for that which one loves” (p. 26). Closely related to care is responsibility. Responsibility is often experienced as a duty that is imposed upon oneself, but like giving, it must be redefined. In authentic love, one voluntarily chooses to be responsible for and to respond to the needs of another person. The loving person responds to both his or her own needs and the needs of those he or she interacts with. Responsibility can easily become dominating or possessive, but respect keeps this from happening. Respect is not “fear and awe,” but instead “the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 26). Any form of exploitation eliminates the possibility for respect, thus it can only exist in a context of freedom. Respect is dependent upon knowledge, the last element of love. Without

knowing someone, in the Frommean sense of what it means to know, it is impossible to have genuine respect. The knowledge achieved through love penetrates to the core of a person, which means one must be able to “transcend the concern for [oneself] and see the other person in his own terms,” thus knowledge is dependent upon concern (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 27). This knowledge is also the key to what is often thought of as the elusive “secret of man” that we are driven to understand (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 27). Knowledge, within the context of love, allows for this understanding through making possible a fusion that protects one’s individual integrity. This fusion is a transcendence that can only occur when we overcome the “irrationally distorted picture” we have both of ourselves and the other person which requires us to understand and our own unconscious or what Fromm terms psychological knowledge (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 29). The desire for such knowledge is present in all relationships. In healthy relationships it leads to an empowering union, but in dysfunctional relationships it becomes destructive. Fromm explains using the example of the sadist who is driven in part by the need to understand or to know the essence of a person so that they can experience fusion with another, yet instead of gaining this knowledge of the other, the sadist completely destroys the other through total domination. With the foundation of his theory of love established, we move on to examine how we experience different types of love.

Types of Love

Fromm begins by looking at what he believes to be the most impactful experience of love, the love between a parent and child. For Fromm, this is our first encounter with love, and as such it is the foundation for how we will understand all other experiences of love throughout our lives. As a baby and young child, one knows love through being fed

and cared for by the mother. This love is passive and unconditional. Fromm (1956/2006) explains,

There is nothing I have to do in order to be loved—mother’s love is unconditional. All I have to do is *to be*—to be her child. Mother’s love is bliss, is peace, it need not be acquired, it need not be deserved. But there is a negative side, too, to the unconditional quality of mother’s love. Not only does it not need to be deserved—it also *cannot* be acquired, produced, controlled. If it is there, it is like a blessing; if it is not there, it is as if all beauty had gone out of life—and there is nothing I can do to create it. (p. 37)

As a child matures, love is no longer just about being loved, but also about the possibility of creating love. Child-like love is based on the premises “I love because I am loved” and “I love you because I need you” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 38). As we grow older, we start to think about the possibility of producing love through giving. We move beyond child-like love and begin to think of love in terms of “I am loved because I love” and “I need you because I love you” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 38). This represents the ideal progression of how one learns to love. If one does not experience what it is to be loved as the infant or young child, one is at an obvious disadvantage in being able to develop the capacity to create mature love.

As we mature, we continue to seek out unconditional love as we increasingly experience conditional love. Unconditional love remains significant as “one of the deepest longings, not only of the child, but of every human being” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 39). We cling to the certainty of unconditional motherly love in response to the doubt

created by a conditional love where love is earned or deserved, but can disappear.

Fromm believes there are two poles of human existence: the natural world and the world of thought. He connects these two poles to the roles of conditional and unconditional love and the development of our capacity to love. The natural world is represented by the mother (unconditional love) who is characterized as “the home we come from, she is nature, soil, the ocean” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 39). Motherly love is of the most importance in the early years of child. The world of thought, represented by the father (conditional love), becomes increasingly important as we grow older. Father is described as,

The world of thought, of man-made things, of law and order, of discipline, of travel and adventure. Father is the one who teaches the child, who shows him the road into the world. (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 39)

Fatherly love must be deserved and can be taken away. One learns that love is earned through obedience and lost through disobedience. While there is a lack of certainty, conditional love does impart a sense of control because one can work to acquire it. The mother’s love functions to provide security and prepare a child to eventually separate from her, while the father’s love, based upon principles and expectations, helps the child matures into a competent person. It is the experience of both motherly and fatherly love that prepares the child to eventually assert themselves as their own authority, independent of both parental figures. The independent person is capable of love because he or she builds two internal consciences: “a motherly conscience on his own capacity for love, and a fatherly conscience on his reason and judgment” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 41). These consciences are not internalizations of the mother and father, nor are they a version of

Freud's superego. The existence of both of the consciences, working in tandem, allows one to be able to love, which in turn, provides maturity and mental health. (Fromm, 1956/2006).

Love, for Fromm, cannot be conceptualized as a relationship to a specific person. He writes, "[Love] is an *attitude*, an *orientation of character* which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward on 'object of love'" (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 43). It is impossible to love friends or family, but not love humanity. In fact, Fromm believes that love for humanity, for the "stranger," is the premise upon which our love for family or friends is based. If one attempts to say that he or she loves one person, but does not show love to the world as a whole, Fromm (1956/2006) suggests their love is false; it is a "symbiotic attachment" or "enlarged egotism" where love is about an object instead of a faculty (p. 43). Fromm's discussion of types of love must be understood within the context of love as a faculty. The three most relevant to our discussion here are brotherly love, motherly love, and self-love.

Fromm defines brotherly love through its lack of exclusivity. It is a love that comes from the understanding that we are all human. Characterized as a love of union and solidarity, it is the basis for all love. It moves beyond peripheral differences that divide people to the core of a person where one can realize a "central relatedness" or "brotherhood" (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 44). It is the love of compassion that moves us to love those beyond our own family, and can only be achieved through recognizing the basic equality of all human beings (Fromm, 1956/2006).

Motherly love, as the unconditional love of a child, not only ensures life and growth, but also instills a love of life. Fromm uses the biblical notion of "milk and

honey” to illustrate the two facets of motherly love. Milk, literally and figuratively, provides the required physical, mental, and emotional sustenance to grow, while honey represents the way in which a mother communicates the “sweetness of life, the love for it and the happiness in being alive” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 46). Unlike brotherly love, motherly love is based upon an unequal relationship between a mother and child where the child needs and the mother provides. For Fromm, the real test of motherly love comes as the child grows older and must separate from her. According to Fromm,

The mother must not only tolerate, she must wish and support the child’s separation. It is also at this stage that many mothers fail in their task of motherly love. The narcissistic, the domineering, the possessive woman can succeed in being a “loving” mother as long as the child is small. Only the really loving woman, the woman who is happier in giving than in taking, who is firmly rooted in her own existence, can be a loving mother when the child is in the process of separation. (p. 48)

Motherly love is thus dependent upon a firmly established self-love.

Fromm’s notion of self-love is one of the most important facets of his theory of love. It deconstructs the belief that self-love is the vice to love’s virtue. Often self-love, misconstrued as selfishness or narcissism, is believed to be mutually exclusive of love for others. Fromm (1956/2006) argues that we must view self-love and selfishness as two different phenomena and suggests that selfishness is actually the result of a lack of self-love. Fromm uses the oft-cited biblical doctrine of “love thy neighbor as oneself” to make his point. He explains, “If it is a virtue to love my neighbor as a human being, it

must be a virtue—and not a vice—to love myself, since I am a human being too” (1956/2006, p. 54). He goes on to argue that,

Respect for one’s own integrity and uniqueness, love for and understanding of one’s own self, cannot be separated from respect and love and understanding for another individual. The love for my own self is inseparably connected with the love for any other being. (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 54-55)

We must understand that we are the objects of our feelings or attitudes, just as others are. Love of oneself and love of others are mutually inclusive, so that if we are to be capable of loving others, we must love ourselves. It is impossible to love others, but not love oneself. For Fromm (1956/2006), “*Love, in principle, is indivisible as far as the connection between ‘objects’ and one’s own self is concerned*” (p. 55).

If I cannot love myself, then there is no possibility for me to genuinely love another. Selfishness is a key characteristic of the nonproductive character type who is unable to love. Selfishness is the complete obsession with oneself that is founded on a lack of love, or even a hatred, for oneself. The selfish person is not only incapable of loving others, but cannot love him or herself either. While one appears to be self-centered, this is really an attempt to “cover up and compensate” for the failure to love oneself (p. 56). Fromm uses an analysis of unselfishness to support his theory of selfishness. Unselfishness functions in a way similar to that of virtuous sacrificial giving. The unselfish person is characterized by his or her lack of self-importance and concern for the needs of others. Yet, psychoanalysis reveals that unselfishness is almost always accompanied by an inability to love others or enjoy life. It masks a hostility towards

others and a sense of self-centeredness. Fromm uses the example of the dysfunctional “unselfish mother” as an example. The “unselfish mother” believes that through her unselfishness and her virtuous sacrifice her children will learn to love. But instead, these children often become fearful of disappointing their mother, demonstrating anxious and fearful dispositions, and ultimately, they learn to mimic their mother’s hostility to life. Love, when constructed as unselfish sacrifice, perpetuates negative freedom through hindering one’s ability to learn and practice the self-love that allows one to spontaneously relate to others and the world.

While there is much of value in Fromm’s theory on authentic love, his use of gender in conceptualizing love requires further discussion. To a certain degree, Fromm can be described as both ahead of his time and a product of his time. In *Love, Sexuality, and Matriarchy: About Gender* (1997), a collection of Fromm’s essays written between 1933 and 1967, he critiques patriarchy while elaborating on a theory of matriarchy and gender. His critique of patriarchy represented a major break from Freud, and although this alienated him from the orthodox Freudian community, it also created the space for collaboration with colleagues in feminist psychoanalysis.

Between World War I and World War II, Fromm was a part of a movement within the German and Austrian moderate left to recognize a primordial matriarchate. Fromm was influenced by Johann Jakob Bacofen whose work served as the impetus for Fromm’s analysis of patriarchal and matriarchal societies (Burston, 1991; Greisman, 1981). Bacofen argues for the universality of the matriarchate and suggests that patriarchal society was preceded by a matriarchy driven by “a race of strong, creative,

and self-assured women [who] dominated their weak, unimaginative, and submissive male counterparts” (Greisman, 1981, p. 323).

Fromm argues that patriarchy results in a “collective psychic disorder” (Greisman, 1981, p. 325). Individuals are driven by submission to authority, reification of duty, and a need to control and dominate. They often suffer from guilt and anxiety, while love and compassion are nonexistent (Greisman, 1981; Burston, 1991). This translates into a society that values restrictions, private property, renunciation of instinct, control over nature, hierarchy, struggle, and violence (Greisman, 1981, p. 326). In contrast, matriarchy is characterized by its concern for universality, communal life, sexual freedom, acceptance of nature, equality, cooperation, and peace (Greisman, 1981, p. 326). The unconditional nature of motherly love is evident in matriarchy’s valuing of democracy, compassion, intimacy and sensuality (Burston, 1991).

Fromm believed that in order to understand the psychological implications of the relationship between the sexes, we have to understand the matriarchal and patriarchal social structures that shape it (Funk, 1997). In an interview in 1975, Fromm shared the following thoughts:

We will never understand the psychology of either women or men as long as we fail to acknowledge that a state of war has existed between the sexes for approximately six thousand years. This is a guerrilla war. Six thousand years ago the patriarchy triumphed over women, and society became organized on the basis of male domination. Women became the property of men and were obliged to be grateful to them for every concession. But there cannot be domination of one social class, nation, or

sex over the other that does not lead to subliminal rebelliousness, rage, hatred, and desire for revenge in those who are oppressed and exploited, and to fear and insecurity in those who do the oppressing and exploiting.
(as qtd. in Funk, 1997, p. v)

For Fromm, the solution to this conflict cannot be found in merely replacing patriarchy with matriarchy. Instead, we must analyze the ways in which the differences between the sexes are used to encourage domination, submission, or hatred. Then, with this understanding, we can work to create a society based on humanizing love that is not limited by a matriarchal-patriarchal dichotomy.

While Fromm's work offered important challenges to the way many of his contemporaries addressed gender and patriarchy, he lacks any analysis of how his conceptualization of love perpetuates stereotypical gender norms that reinforce societal structures that maintain negative freedom. Fromm challenges patriarchy, but remains somewhat essentialist in how he addresses gender. Critiquing Fromm's essentialism necessitates embracing a more dialectical approach and accepting that this may be a bit "messy." It is easy to fall into the trap of relying on an overly simplistic anti-essentialism to provide a counterargument, but this does little to move the conversation forward in a meaningful way. In moving beyond an essentialist/anti-essentialist framework we can critique the ways gender roles dehumanize, oppress, and teach us false love, while also creating space for recognizing the reality that various factors create unique aspects to how gender mediates and shapes our capacity to love.

I am critical of the gendered characterizations Fromm uses because I fear they reify negative social norms, but I also believe that some are likely more representative of

our lived experiences with love. They are both problematic and realistic, thus they challenge us to think in a more complex way about our constructions of gender and love. In approaching a critique of Fromm's gendered characterizations of love, I want to both recognize the reality they represent and the need to challenge how they limit our capacity to fully love. This allows us to address the complexity of love without reaffirming gender stereotypes that support patriarchal norms.

Fromm relies a great deal on the notions of unconditional motherly love and conditional fatherly love, and in doing so, ascribes certain attributes to motherhood and the mother-child relationship. In characterizing unconditional love as motherly love, Fromm leaves the notion of traditional gender roles unchallenged. Here, the mother remains in the home as the primary caregiver, while the father plays a secondary and seemingly less important role in the early life of the child. To construct unconditional love as motherly or female perpetuates stereotypical assumptions of femininity and masculinity, such as women are innately nurturing and loving, and men are unable to and/or should not be expected to offer unconditional love. Women are encouraged to take on the role of the unselfish and sacrificing mother and repress any desire they may have to not be a primary caregiver, while men are encouraged to accept a secondary role, offering conditional love later in the child's life. While I am critical of such a gendered construction of unconditional and conditional love, at the same time, I recognize that to a certain degree it is representative of reality. Patriarchy's constructions of masculinity and femininity inhibit unconditional love in men and encourage it in women, which means even if women do not consistently "stand in" a state of humanizing love, they are still more likely engage in it than men. If each of us thinks of a time we felt unconditional

love, my guess is, many of us would associate this with a mother-type figure. Thus, Fromm's characterization of unconditional motherly love is somewhat accurate, it just lacks a critique of the societal structures that perpetuate gendered discrepancies in our capacity to love unconditionally.

If the experience of unconditional love is as pivotal as Fromm suggests, we should all be expected to develop the capacity to practice it. In a theory of love that places such importance on the ability to give rather than receive, it would seem learning to practice unconditional love would be of the utmost importance, and in fact, not learning how to love in this way would inhibit one's capacity to love. While I agree with Fromm that the person capable of love must develop the capacity to love represented by both the 'motherly' and 'fatherly' conscience, I am critical of his notion that a child would or should learn only 'motherly' love from the mother and 'fatherly' love from the father. If we are capable of mature and healthy love, then we have developed consciences based on these two foundational types of love, which means a child would experience love as the synthesis of these two consciences. Certainly, both men and women are capable of providing unconditional love to a child or demonstrating the rational basis of conditional love. The use of such gender specific characterizations contributes to the perpetuation of patriarchal norms that are damaging to all genders.

With that said, we must also recognize the universality of the birth experience that uniquely shapes the mother-child relationship. I believe we can identify the power and significance of this experience without assuming it creates an innate ability to practice unconditional motherly love. Fromm places a great deal of importance on our experience (or lack thereof) with unconditional motherly love, suggesting that it not only impacts our

early infant years, but continues to shape how our capacity for love develops throughout the rest of our lives. Fromm describes motherly love as “milk and honey,” suggesting that it is the mother who provides the sustenance to grow physically, mentally, and emotionally, while also instilling in the child a necessary love of life. Obviously, it is of great benefit for a child to experience a love that allows one to grow into an independent entity and to learn a love for life, yet characterizing this as “motherly” reiterates problematic and harmful gender expectations in regards to love and parenting. Any caregiver could and should communicate a love for life, suggesting that only a female is capable of doing this is detrimental not only to women, but to men as well, limiting the ways men can encourage others to develop their capacity to love. As will be discussed in greater detail below, if we believe that love is a skill that must be learned, then unconditional and conditional love cannot be attached to specific gender constructs.

Within his discussions of love, Fromm provides gendered illustrations of how false love can manifest. First, he describes the mother who struggles to allow her child to separate from her. The difficulties in allowing the once dependent child to grow into a mature and independent adolescent and adult are valid and need to be addressed, but the scenario as Fromm has constructed it is overly simplistic and detrimental. I would argue that in order to get at the real issue in this illustration, one has to analyze why such a conflict may exist, such as, how the societal pressure to define oneself in terms of one’s motherhood serves the interests of maintaining patriarchy. Second, Fromm uses the scenario of the dysfunctional “unselfish mother” to address the false virtue of unselfishness. This is an important topic to deconstruct, but Fromm’s analysis ignores how gendered constructs of unselfishness are used to uphold normative assessments of

one's commitment to parenting and how these are learned or modeled by multiple members of the family. Suggesting that unselfishness is communicated solely through the mother minimizes the role of the father in perpetuating such a message by leaving it unchallenged and not insisting on a more equitable norm for family relationships or roles. It ignores how the distant father who works incessantly in order to provide for the family models a similar virtuous dysfunctional unselfishness. This also reaffirms a secondary and distant role for the father and his love. The discussion never addresses how a patriarchal system benefits from these scenarios, or how both men and women are dehumanized when they are encouraged to take on roles that perpetuate negative freedom through promoting a lack of self-love as a virtuous quality.

Fromm's overall argument would be more powerful and accurate if his examples demonstrated a more critical analysis of the gender stereotypes that create the scenarios he describes. But, if we acknowledge the issues with the stereotypical gender assignments of the types of love, and focus more on what they represent, we can get to what is of value here, which are the multiple dimensions of love that one must know and understand in order to develop the capacity for authentic love.

Love in a Capitalist Society

In offering a revisionist fusion of Marx and Freud, Fromm analyzes the psychological ramifications of living in a capitalist society. Fromm argues that capitalism requires the repression of authentic love in order to maintain forms of pseudo love that support the capitalist structure. Fromm's analysis of the psychology of capitalism was addressed earlier in relation to his humanist ethics. Here, I will look specifically at the role of love in his critique. In the following Fromm (1956/2006)

explains the psychological manipulation that occurs in capitalism to create a society that serves the best interest of the system:

Modern capitalism needs men who cooperate smoothly and in large numbers; who want to consume more and more; and whose tastes are standardized and can be easily influenced and anticipated. It needs men who feel free and independent, not subject to any authority or principle or conscience—yet willing to be commanded, to do what is expected of them, to fit into the social machine without friction; who can be guided without force, led without leaders, prompted without aim—except the one to make good, to be on the move, to function, to go ahead. (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 79)

The result of this is a society made up of alienated and commodified men and women who cannot love in any type of relationship. The previous chapter discussed Fromm's theory of the market personality and the resultant widespread automaton conformity. Automatons are unable to love authentically, instead, engaging in false love, they "exchange their 'personality package' and hope for a fair bargain" (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 81). Capitalism's model of the smoothly functioning team values the employee who is "reasonably independent, cooperative, tolerant, and at the same time ambitious and aggressive" (Fromm, p. 81). This 'team ideology' influences marriage as well. Couples never develop a "central relationship" built on authentic love because they are taught to emulate capitalism's version of teamwork where they represent a "well-oiled relationship between two persons who remain strangers all their lives. . .who treat each other with courtesy and who attempt to make each other feel better" (Fromm, p. 81). Marriage and

love become a means to relieve oneself of loneliness and isolation through a team mentality where “one forms an alliance of two against the world,” but the reality is that this is a façade for pseudo love where “egoism *à deux* is mistaken for love and intimacy” (p. 81).

As a result of this team mentality, we often believe that conflict and love are mutually exclusive. To a degree this is understandable, as often the conflicts we engage in are really used to mask and avoid the real issue. These superficial conflicts rarely result in anything but further destruction, but if we delve below the surface and communicate about the root of the conflict this leads to clarification (Fromm, 1956/2006). This type of communication is essential for authentic love and reveals an important aspect of love. Fromm (1956/2006) explains,

Love, experienced thus, is a constant challenge; it is not a resting place, but a moving, growing, working together; even whether there is harmony or conflict, joy or sadness, is secondary to the fundamental fact that two people experience themselves from the essence of their existence, that they are one with each other by being one with themselves, rather than by fleeing from themselves. There is only one proof for the presence of love: the depth of the relationship, and the aliveness and strength in each person concerned. (p. 96)

In Fromm’s theoretical exploration of love he conceptualizes an authentic, humanizing love based on a mutually inclusive love of oneself and love of humanity that protects the integrity of all involved, but as noted earlier, the theory is only one piece of the art of love. We must also learn to master the practice of love.

The Practice of Love

While some may expect *The Art of Loving* to lead them through a prescriptive explanation of how to learn to love, Fromm is critical of the idea of “do it yourself” or “self-help” manuals. The market for these types of resources has exploded in the last few decades, but one of the first to gain great notoriety was Dale Carnegie’s 1938 bestseller *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Fromm critiques this book and others like it because they rely on a problematic application of “auto-suggestion and psychotherapy” as the means to find success or happiness (p. 98). Matias and Allen (2013) critique Gary Chapman’s modern day love manual *The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* (2010) for similar reasons. Books such as these are often grounded in a capitalist market where people, personalities, and even love become commodities. Such an approach is inherently contrary to authentic love. For Fromm, there is no step-by-step explanation for the art of loving. We cannot teach another how to love because of the nature of the experience of love. Fromm writes, “To love is a personal experience which everyone can only have by and for himself” (p. 99). What we can do is discuss the premises and approaches to the art of loving. Fromm begins by identifying six general requirements applicable to mastering any art: discipline, patience, supreme concern, concentration, and sensitivity to oneself. I briefly discuss the most relevant parts of these below.

Discipline is a continual practice. We must have discipline both in our practice of the art and more generally speaking in the entirety of our daily lives. Fromm argues that while the modern society demonstrates a certain discipline in its compliance and commitment to the standard 8-hour workday, outside of this, society has become

increasingly undisciplined, largely as a result of the need to rebel against the authoritarianism that thrives on the smoothly functioning and routinized daily existence of the members of society. Unfortunately, the majority of the time this resistance is futile as it is often an immature or self-indulgent rejection of all discipline and not just that enforced by the irrational authority figure. For Fromm (1956/2006), “Discipline should not be practiced like a rule imposed on oneself from the outside, but that it becomes the expression of one’s own will; that it is felt as pleasant, and that one slowly accustoms oneself to a kind of behavior which one would eventually miss, if one stopped practicing” (p. 103). Discipline as a premise of love cannot come from outside of oneself, but must be a self-directed or self-motivated drive. As such, it is the means to resist the pressure of the irrational authority figure of negative freedom.

Concentration is about the ability to be alone with oneself. Much like discipline, Fromm argues that it is an increasingly rare practice in a society that values constant activity. The notion of multitasking is the antithesis to concentration. The commodity market has turned each of us into the ultimate consumer with “the open mouth, eager and ready to swallow everything—pictures, liquor, knowledge” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 101). In practicing concentration we learn how to not be the consumer, but instead, to be alone with ourselves, an ability that Fromm suggests is a condition for being able to love. This also allows us to grow our capacity to deeply focus on one thing or one person, moving beyond the superficial knowledge and relationships that perpetuate negative freedom. When we learn to concentrate our focus changes, so that we no longer live in the past or the future, but the present. In doing this, we learn how to be close to others and

ourselves, so that we are not compelled to run away from the intimacy and vulnerability required to authentically love ourselves and others.

Our ability to concentrate is dependent upon being aware of how we are feeling both physically and psychologically, which Fromm refers to as being sensitive to ourselves. Most of us have a sense of what it means for the body to feel well and can use that as the basis from which to assess our physical state. Fromm argues that psychological health is a much rarer occurrence in society, which means we lack a standard by which to measure. Being receptive to our mental or emotional state is more difficult because we struggle to gauge what it means to be psychologically healthy. Such a sensitivity allows us to recognize feelings like tiredness or depression, and not feel compelled to rationalize them away, but instead, to explore why we feel a certain way and where those feelings are coming from. This kind of sensitivity creates the means through which one can begin to explore all that has been suppressed or repressed in order to maintain the conformity encouraged by societal structures.

Developing this kind of sensitivity is obviously valuable, but as Fromm points out, it is hard to learn when examples or models of healthy functioning people are so far and few between. Fromm places some of the responsibility for this on the educational system. While our students learn subject based content knowledge, they are not taught the knowledge or skills that can equip them to love, often because our classrooms lack the “the simple presence of a mature, loving person” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 108). For Fromm, our younger generations must be provided an understanding of what the mature life is and the traits that characterize the mature person. We must have a “vision of good human functioning, and hence of sensitivity to malfunctioning” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p.

109). Without this, there is little possibility that our students will be capable of practicing a humanizing love.

In addition to these general requirements that apply to the practice of any art, Fromm (1956/2006) identifies six factors that are essential to the practice of love. In order to love authentically, we must overcome our narcissism, develop objectivity, have faith and courage, nurture a state of activity, and embrace an ethic of love over the principle of fairness. For Fromm, narcissism is the largest impediment to achieving authentic love. We all struggle with narcissism, but what must be questioned is the degree to which narcissism dominates one's character. More than likely, most of us are familiar with extreme forms of narcissism, which Fromm labels as a form of insanity, but of greater concern, is the less obvious narcissism that the majority of us struggle with. As an example, Fromm describes the parent who interprets their child's obedience as pleasurable because it is a credit to his or her child-rearing skills. Fromm suggests such a reaction as self-centered because the focus is not on considering the child's own feelings, why the child chooses obedience, or how the child feels about the obedient actions. This illustration is applicable to teachers as well as parents. How often as do we as teachers respond to our students' behavior with the same type of narcissism, centering our own needs and responses to student behavior, achievement, etc. rather than focusing on our students' feelings? We can counter and overcome narcissistic tendencies through the development of objectivity.

Objectivity, defined as the ability "to see people and things *as they are*," is the antithesis to narcissism. Narcissism inhibits our ability to understand our relationships,

as individuals or members of a group, separate from our own fears and desires. In the following, Fromm (1956/2006) explains how objectivity functions:

The faculty to think objectively is *reason*; the emotional attitude behind reason is that of *humility*. To be objective, to use one's reason, is possible only if one has achieved an attitude of humility, if one has emerged from the dreams of omniscience and omnipotence which one has as a child. (p. 111)

To love, one must consistently practice humility, objectivity, and reason in his or her relationships to others and to the world. Just as love for oneself and love for others is indivisible, so is one's objectivity. If we can only be objective with our own loved ones, our objectivity is inauthentic.

Faith is another requirement of the ability to love. Fromm identifies two types of faith: irrational and rational. The previous chapter distinguished between rational and irrational authority, which is relevant again here. Irrational faith is based on the belief in or submission to an irrational authority (Fromm, 1956/2006). Rational faith is not necessarily about belief in something, but instead, "a conviction which is rooted in one's own experience" and as such, is a trait based upon the reason and rational thinking of the productive character type (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 112). While irrational faith depends upon the compulsion to conform by accepting something as true just because the majority believes it to be so, rational faith is based on an autonomy that allows one to come to certain convictions based upon his or her own thinking and observation regardless of what the majority believes. Rational faith strengthens our sense of self and allows us to maintain a sense of identity that is not dependent upon the approval or opinion of others.

Fromm argues that if we do not have faith in ourselves, it is impossible for us to be faithful to others because faith is what allows us to make and keep a promise. Working from Nietzsche's belief that the ability to promise is what defines man, Fromm concludes that "faith is one of the conditions of human existence" (p. 114). Faith provides a certainty in "one's own love; in its ability to produce love in others, and in its reliability" (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 114). Not only does faith encourage a strong sense of self necessary to achieve a state of positive freedom, it is what allows us to authentically connect with others through demonstrating a genuine faith in their potentialities. Faith, according to Fromm, is what determines the difference between manipulation and education. He writes,

Education is identical with helping the child realize his potentialities. The opposite of education is manipulation, which is based on the absence of faith in the growth of potentialities, and on the conviction that a child will be right only if the adults put into him what is desirable. There is no need of faith in the robot, since there is no life in it either. (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 115)

On a larger scale, the faith that allows us to believe in the potential of a child is the same as the faith that allows us to believe humankind is capable of creating a humanizing society. Fromm (1956/2006) explains,

Like the faith in the child, it is based on the idea that the potentialities of man are such that given the proper conditions he will be capable of building a social order governed by the principles of equality, justice, and

love. Man has not yet achieved the building of such an order, and therefore the conviction that he can do so requires faith. (p. 115)

This kind of faith takes courage, much like the risk inherent to living an ethical life suggested by Derrick Bell (2002). Courage is what allows us to move forward in our belief that we can create a more loving society. Love requires “the courage to judge certain values as of ultimate concern—and to take the jump and stake everything on these values” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 117). Here, courage is the willingness to take a risk through embracing the vulnerability of a humanist ethic that goes against so much of what we are taught by society.

To nurture a state of activity can best be understood through the notion of praxis. While Fromm does not use this term, its sentiment is evident in his insistence that the art of loving is based on the mastery of theory and practice. Love, as conceptualized by Fromm, is a form of praxis or transformative reflective action. When we “stand in” love we are we are “fully awake” in a state of “active concern,” “awareness,” and “alertness.” (p. 118). People of the productive character type are the only ones capable of such activity.

To love is to embrace a humanist ethics that moves beyond a principle of fairness, or what Fromm refers to as the ethics of capitalism. Such a principle encourages us to focus on the fair exchange where “I give you as much as you give me” and everything is a commodity—material resources, people, even love (Fromm, p. 119). We have fused the two oft-cited norms of “Love thy neighbor as they self” and “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” to the benefit of capitalism and the detriment of humanization (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 120). Love, twisted into fairness, has been robbed

of its transformative power. Fromm explains the difference between the two, where love is “to feel responsible for and one with him [our neighbor], while fairness means *not* to feel responsible, and one, but distant and separate” (p. 120). Modern society makes it very difficult to practice such a humanizing love because love has become,

By necessity a marginal phenomenon in present-day Western society. Not so much because many occupations would not permit of a loving attitude, but because the spirit of a production centered, commodity-greedy society is such that only the nonconformist can defend himself successfully against it. (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 122)

Collective group identities are an important way in enforcing the conformity necessary in a capitalist society. False versions of conditional and oppressive love are used to create and sustain racist and dehumanizing group identities that perpetuate a white supremacist patriarchy. The following section looks at the way collective identities, particularly around race and gender, are used to uphold false love and how a critical theory of love can counter and transform oppressive versions of misconstrued love.

Implications of Authentic Love for Racism and Patriarchy

Ahmed (2015) considers the way in which love is based on the creation of an ideal that in turn creates a collective or group identity through the acceptance of the ideal. The obvious and necessary consequence of the creation of an ideal like this is the production of an other who fails the ideal. Through the use of the ideal and the other, Ahmed (2015) reveals how the discourse of love is used to further the sociopolitical aims of dominant groups. She begins by looking at how white supremacist groups manipulate the concept of hate and turn it into nationalist love, where “Love is narrated as the

emotion that energises the work of such groups; it is out of love that the group seeks to defend the nation against others” (Ahmed, 2015, p. 123). Here, racism becomes love and anti-racism becomes hate. She explains,

By being against those who are for the nation (anti-racists, anti-fascists, and so on), such critics can only be against the nation; they can only be against love. The critics of hate groups become defined as those who hate, those who act out of a sense of ‘anti-ness’ or ‘against-ness’, and thus those who not only cannot protect the bodies of white Americans from crimes, but re-enact such crimes in the use of the language of hate. (2015, p. 123)

In this politics of love, hate is reconceptualized so that it can be portrayed as the loving actions of committed citizens. Criticisms of such ‘loving’ actions are twisted into hate for one’s nation.

Ahmed uses the distinction between love-as-having and love-as-being to elucidate on the role of the ideal in love. She writes, “The idealization of the loved object can allow the subject *to be itself in or through what it has*. The subject approximates an ideal through what it takes as its loved object (p. 128). In the example of the white nationalist, the white nation as the idealized loved object, allows the white nationalist to see him or herself as the ideal through love-as-having. This process continues through the creation of a “restricted domain of loveable subjects” where certain objects are idealized while others are not (Ahmed, 2015, p. 128). One’s individual and group identity is created through this process of idealization.

Narcissism was discussed in terms of the individual earlier, but it is also relevant to collective or national identities. Fromm discusses how nationalistic narcissism allows

us to employ double standards when excusing our own actions while judging the actions of other nations versus our own. Fromm (1956/2006) writes, “Even good deeds by the enemy are considered a sign of particular devilishness, meant to deceive us and the world, while our bad deeds are necessary and justified by our noble goals which they serve” (p. 111). The same analysis applies to certain group identities such as whites or males. Their narcissism allows them to discount any counternarrative offered by people of color or women leaving their own narrative unquestioned. In the following, Fromm (1955/1990) describes the false love that is often invoked by dominant collective identities in the name of love of country:

Nationalism is our form of incest, is our idolatry, is our insanity.

'Patriotism' is its cult...Just as love for one individual which excludes the love for others is not love, love for one's country which is not part of one's love for humanity is not love, but idolatrous worship. (p. 58)

Nationalism becomes representative of a conformity that inhibits love. In a quote referenced earlier, Fromm (1956/2006) refers to love as “a marginal phenomenon” that can only be practiced by the “nonconformist” (p. 122). Such a description lends itself to considering humanizing love in terms of Jaggar’s (1989) notion of the outlaw emotion.

Jaggar (1989) argues that our emotions are socially constructed, and just as race, class, and gender are manipulated to serve the interests of wealthy white men, so are our emotions and emotional constitutions. Outlaw emotions are “conventionally unacceptable” and “distinguished by their incompatibility with the dominant perceptions and values” (Jaggar, 1989, p. 166). As such, Jaggar

argues that outlaw emotions can be used to construct a feminist theory capable of contributing to a critical reforming of our emotional constitutions. While Fromm largely ignores the roles of gender and race in his work, Jaggar's theory centers them, so when combined, constructing authentic love as an outlaw emotion provides a means to contest a white supremacist patriarchy and transcend it through proposing the possibility of a more humanizing emotional constitution.

Fromm's work is grounded in an understanding of human nature that places the greatest importance on our need to authentically connect to others and the world. Jaggar shares a similar perspective, arguing that we need critical theoretical models that reflect the way emotions impact how we relate to others, the world, and ourselves. She writes,

The alternative epistemological models that I suggest would display the continuous interaction between how we understand the world and who we are as people. They would show how our emotional responses to the world change as we conceptualize it differently and how our changing emotional responses then stimulate us to new insights. They would demonstrate the need for theory to be self-reflexive, to focus not only on the outer world but also on ourselves and our relation to that world, to examine critically our social location, our actions, our values, our perceptions, and our emotions. (1989, p. 170)

Outlaw emotions function in a way similar to that of Fromm's reconceptualization of love, as they "enable us to perceive the world differently from its portrayal in conventional descriptions" (Jaggar, 1989, p. 167). Often these emotions are suppressed in our unconscious, and must be brought to consciousness. Jaggar (1989) writes,

Conventionally unexpected or inappropriate emotions may precede our conscious recognition that accepted descriptions and justifications often conceal as much as reveal the prevailing state of affairs. Only when we reflect on our initially puzzling irritability, revulsion, anger or fear may we bring to consciousness our 'gut-level' awareness that we are in a situation of coercion, cruelty, injustice, or danger. Thus, conventionally inexplicable emotions, particularly though not exclusively those experienced by women, may lead us to make subversive observations that challenge dominant conceptions of the status quo. They may help us to realize that what are taken generally to be facts have been constructed in such a way that obscures the reality of subordinated people, especially women's reality. (p. 167-168)

In becoming aware of our unconscious, we achieve a state of critical consciousness that allows us to reconstruct our emotional constitution, or in Frommean terms, the ways we relate to others, the world, and ourselves. Obviously, this requires a change on an individual level. We each must become aware of our own socially constructed identity. We must think of ourselves as,

Beings who have been created in a cruelly racist, capitalist, and male-dominated society that has shaped our bodies and our minds, our perceptions, our values and our emotions, our language and our systems of knowledge. (Jaggar, 1989, p. 170)

But to be effective, these individual changes must translate into changes in the larger of social structure. Without such change, love is limited to a "highly individualistic

marginal phenomenon” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 122). When we integrate a model of humanizing love into critical social theory, our theory becomes an “indispensable psychotherapeutic tool” because it now has the potential to lead us to a more complete understanding of our emotional constitutions which demonstrates that “the reconstruction of knowledge is inseparable from the reconstruction of ourselves” (Jaggar, 1989, p. 170).

While they do not name it as such, I would argue that Matias and Allen (2013) and hooks (2001, 2002) construct love as an outlaw emotion, looking at the ways love has been used to sustain a white supremacist patriarchy, but also how it can be critically re-envisioned to be a humanizing tool capable of challenging the status quo through both the self-reflective transformation of the individual and a larger social transformation. The following will look to their work to consider the implications of race and gender for a humanizing critical theory of love within the context of education.

Matias and Allen’s (2013) piece is insightful and relevant to the discussion here for a number of reasons, but most importantly because of the way their analysis asserts the need for a critical theory of love that addresses oppressive normative versions of love based upon white, male heterodominance. In centering whiteness in their psychoanalytic exploration of love, Matias and Allen pose the following questions:

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. (p. 287)

As they investigate these queries through a Frommean lens, they demonstrate the sadomasochistic and necrophilic nature of love that whites experience when they remain complicit to racism and white supremacy.

Within a context of unchallenged white supremacy, whiteness represents a “distorted sense of love tied to group identification” (Matias & Allen, 2013, p. 299). When we return to the basic drives of human nature, we find that “the need for love and the fear of its ontological opposite, aloneness, cultivates a bad romance with whiteness, a sadomasochistic relationship with it” (Matias & Allen, 2013, p. 298). Whites masochistically refuse to give up their white identity out of fear of isolation, while sadistically oppressing people of color, but as Matias and Allen point out, whites remain largely unaware or unconscious to why they are compelled to maintain such a dehumanizing existence. The critical theory of love that Matias and Allen propose requires whites to “excavate the values of our everyday feelings of love and consider whether they bring us closer to humanization or make us more dehumanized” (p. 289).

To do this means we must bring to consciousness all that we have repressed in order to remain part of the white group. Matias and Allen echo assertions made by both Žižek (1989, 1992) and Thandeka (2000) about how painful such a process can be. A critical praxis of love requires that we are willing to risk examining the ways we benefit from our white identity and the group membership that it allows us, which means

confronting the ways in which we sadomasochistically inflict trauma on ourselves and people of color, and in so doing, sacrifice everyone's humanity in exchange for power, privilege, and a false sense of connectedness. We will likely face isolation and ostracization from others in our white identity groups, but humanizing love means having the courage to leave these groups so that we can create humanizing relationships on individual and societal levels (Matias and Allen, 2013).

Such a critical consciousness born of humanizing love should have significant implications for education broadly and the classroom experience specifically. With over 90% of the teaching force made up of whites (Matias and Allen, 2013; Sleeter, 2001), the influence of a sadomasochistic investment in whiteness is far-reaching, impacting our educational policy, pedagogy, and curricula. It creates a toxic environment for both those of the oppressor and oppressed groups. Based on this, a critical praxis of love requires white educators to reflectively act. As Matias and Allen (2013) write,

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.
(p. 303)

In order to do this, white teachers and students must be willing to teach and learn about their whiteness, something we have avoided for far too long. We have pretended to do such work through engaging in discourses such as critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and multiculturalism, to name a few, but this has really been a cop out. It has

been a way to pretend to address racism in education without actually dealing with our whiteness. Matias and Allen (2013) point out the hypocrisy in such actions,

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? (p. 303)

But, when we as white educators do the work to develop a critical consciousness that recognizes both the distorted sense of love offered by whiteness and the transcendent possibilities of a critical humanizing love, we transform our classrooms and ourselves.

We create the space where

“education can be a medium to love whiteness to death with a critical humanizing praxis of love” and thus provide the opportunity for true freedom (Matias and Allen, 2013, p. 304).

In addition to analyzing the ways that racism and white supremacy are used to perpetuate false love, we must also look at the ways sexism and patriarchy serve the same purpose. While Matias and Allen’s focus is primarily on race, they also address patriarchy through using a womanist approach “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” (p. 286). hooks (2001, 2002) does not name herself as a womanist in either of her books on love being used here, but her own exploration of love, patriarchy, and sexism seems to share much with a womanist analysis and interpretation. Like Matias and Allen, hooks employs Fromm’s work to ground her critical theory of love. In *All About Love* (2001) and *Communion* (2002)

hooks looks primarily at the implications of gender and patriarchy for love, addressing race and class to lesser degrees, making her work a useful addition to the work of Matias and Allen. Admittedly, Matias and Allen (2013) are critical of hooks (2001) because of her statement that “love allows us to enter paradise” (p. 147). They argue that such a perspective is what they are admonishing against because it problematically perpetuates an understanding of love that erases pain as an element of humanizing love (p. 147). While hooks (2001) certainly makes this statement, when we look at the larger context of her work, she notes the role of pain in authentic love, writing,

False notions of love teach us that it is the place where we will feel no pain, where we will be in a state of constant bliss. We have to expose the falseness of these beliefs to see and accept the reality that suffering and pain do not end when we begin to love. (p. 159)

Given this, I think it is more fruitful to view the work of Matias and Allen (2013) and hooks (2001, 2002) not as contradictory but as complementary analyses that challenge and push each other and understandings of love within critical educational studies and broader society.

In defining love, hooks (2001) refers to M. Scott Peck (1978) who, using Fromm’s work, defines love as a reflective action based upon the choice to nurture the growth of self and others. For hooks (2001), such a definition differentiates humanizing love from false love because it replaces the lack of agency inherent in the latter with the accountability and responsibility present in former. Love must be understood as “an act of choice and will” (hooks, 2002, p. 10). Like Fromm, hooks (2002) connects the possibility of freedom with authentic love. She writes,

I loved for love but I found freedom. . .Uniting the search for love with the quest to be free was the crucial step. Searching for love, I found the path to freedom. Learning how to be free was the first step in learning to know love. (p. 32)

hooks (2001), like Matias and Allen, critiques the majority of non-fiction and self-help books written about love, noting that the majority of them are written by men and that they rarely “demand a change in fixed ways of thinking about gender roles, culture or love” (p. 11). Often, these books perpetuate an “anti-gender equality” through presenting “women’s overinvestment in nurturance as a ‘natural,’ inherent quality rather than a learned approach to caregiving” (hooks, 2001, p. 155). The dehumanizing counterfeit versions of love promulgated in such books serve to uphold patriarchy to the detriment of everyone’s humanization.

In explaining the consequences of patriarchal culture, hooks (2001) cites Stoltenberg’s (1994) work that argues that patriarchy requires a masculine identity where men must “invent and invest in a false self” (p. 38). Such an identity is based on maintaining superiority and power over women no matter what the cost. For their part, women must learn to conform to societal notions of femininity, focusing on how to be lovable, in doing this, they become disempowered and fearful that if they do not conform they will be abandoned and unlovable (hooks, 2002). These lessons and the accompanying trauma are learned early on. hooks (2001) explains,

The wounded child inside many males is a boy who, when he first spoke his truths, was silenced by paternal sadism, by a patriarchal world that did not want him to claim his true feelings. The wounded child inside may

females is a girl who was taught from early childhood on that she must become something other than herself, deny her true feelings, in order to attract and please others. (p. 49)

One of the more dangerous lessons both males and females learn is the myth that women are inherently nurturing (hooks, 2002).

There is much research and scholarship that supports this myth of innate feminine nurturance. hooks (2002) cites Carol Gilligan (1982, 2002) and Jean Baker Miller (1973, 1986) as two such examples whose work suggests that there are innately different and defining drives in men and women. Gilligan is well known and often cited within the field of education, making her particularly relevant to this discussion. In their work, they make similar arguments around the notion that women, as the more caring of the two sexes, are motivated by a need to connect while men are motivated by a need for autonomy. Their argument contradicts Fromm's assertion that a basic part of everyone's human nature is the need to search out connection. Theories like that of Gilligan and Miller serve to reify patriarchy and are dehumanizing to men and women because they suggest that we do not all need to experience humanizing love that can connect us to each other while maintaining our individual integrity. Unfortunately, the myth of nurturance is widespread, even circles within the feminist movement have debated whether or not women naturally have a greater capacity to love and nurture (hooks, 2002). As long as this belief persists, the possibility of humanizing love will be limited.

We often conflate care or nurturing with love, when this is only one part of love. To suggest that all women are innately nurturing is to also suggest that women have the greater capacity for love. Nurturance and love become female traits instead of skills that

must be learned. Of issue is the fact that reality does not support this gendered stereotype. As hooks (2002) points out, “we need only examine the incredible statistics of child abuse inflicted by females to see hard evidence that women are not naturally more prone to give nurturance and care” (p. 79). Humanizing, authentic love is not innate to anyone; it is an art that everyone must learn and practice. Patriarchy dehumanizes both men and women in conditioning us to believe that women naturally know how to nurture and love. Women and men are equally clueless in how to practice love, and until we accept this, we will remain unable to break patriarchy’s hold on ourselves or our students. hooks (2002) elaborates,

Until we are able to acknowledge that women fail at loving because we are no more schooled in the art of loving than are our male counterparts, we will not find love. If the female obsession with love in patriarchal culture were linked from birth on to the practice of love, then women would be experts in the art of loving. And as a consequence, since women do most of the parenting in our nation, children would be more loving. If women excelled in the art of loving, these skills would be imparted to male and female children alike. (p. 88)

This gendered notion of love and care has significant ramifications for a schooling experience where the majority of teachers are female. First, assuming that women innately know how to care and love, means that there is never any direct instruction on how to practice either of these skills. It is assumed that, as women, our teachers will know not only how to nurture and love themselves and their students, but also how to teach their students to practice self-love and love of others, yet we know this is not the

case. Despite being ill-equipped to practice humanizing self-love or love for their students, female teachers are characterized as loving and caring, which then means that students are taught to label what are very often uncaring and unloving schooling experiences as nurture and care. Thus, from very early on we are taught a skewed understanding of love, which can have lasting ramifications for how we relate to others, the world, and ourselves throughout our lives.

The myth of nurturance is obviously significant to the social construction of motherhood that assumes there is an innate connection between a woman and her child that begins during pregnancy and continues after birth. But, as hooks (2002) points out, “There is much hard evidence that documents the reality that women who passively nurtured a child in the womb may be completely indifferent to the needs of newborn infant” (p. 83). An in-depth discussion of the ways social norms around motherhood are used to create female shame are beyond the scope of this project, but I mention it here because I believe there are correlations to the way teachers are shamed for not naturally wanting or knowing how to fulfill the ‘mothered’ social construction of teaching. We cannot expect teachers to instruct their students on something they were never taught themselves. This also raises the issue of whether or not we should expect teachers to provide the unconditional motherly love that Fromm describes. If the majority of the teaching population were male, would we have the same expectations? What is most beneficial to teachers and students? These are not questions that I have definitive answers for, but I will attempt to begin to answer them in the concluding chapter on what it means to teach from an ethic of love.

Answering these questions requires us to look critically at the feminist movement, considering both how it has brought to light the ways patriarchy operates, but also how its discourse on love has served to continue to oppress. As hooks (2002) argues, the feminist movement struggles to adequately address the issue of love. She writes,

Because we did not create a grand body of work that would have taught girls and women new and visionary ways to think about love, we witness the rise of a generation of females in our late twenties and early thirties who see any longing for love as weakness, who focus our sights solely on gaining power. (p. xviii)

Through its critique, feminism silences conversations around love and turns away from the possibility of creating a humanizing love to counter patriarchy. As a movement, it made great strides in revealing the psychological dimensions of patriarchy and how much of psychoanalysis privileged men. Yet, the way that feminism challenges male privilege and patriarchy leaves little room for love (hooks, 2002). Love is seen as something that “would somehow undermine an image of powerful, self-actualized feminist womanhood” (hooks, 2002, p. 58). If it is to be of use in countering oppression, the feminist movement must find a way to address its problematic narrative around love.

Matias and Allen’s (2013) use of womanism may be one way to begin to provide alternative narratives. The larger feminist movement has been repeatedly critiqued for the ways in which it fails to address race (Collins, 1990; hooks, 1981, 1984). Womanism provides a “counterspace where women of color recover from internalized racism and patriarchy by relearning to love themselves so they feel self-love” where “love is seemingly an integral emotion of womanist thought” (Matias & Allen, 2013, p. 286-287).

Here, instead of silencing emotions like love, as feminism has done, emotions are embraced and politicized as a means to empowerment.

As a white woman, I feel the need to step cautiously around any critique of womanism, as it is a space created for and by women of color. In a short personal narrative within the coauthored article (Matias & Allen, 2103), Matias explores of her own learned social construction of love, Matias vulnerably shares how she came to know humanizing love through a womanist understanding of the birth of her own children. Through narratives such as Matias', womanism provides a way to challenge feminist theory that does not allow for love or motherhood to be humanizing and empowering. This is powerful. Yet, I also believe we must be careful to not limit our counternarratives, those stories that can resist both patriarchy and a disempowering feminism, to birth or motherhood. I think it is important to "take back" or redefine what motherhood represents. Matias demonstrates how a birth narrative can be a powerful means of illustrating humanizing love, but if this is our only narrative, it alienates those women who do not share such an experience. We must be careful to provide the space for multiple narratives that allow women to define or illustrate humanizing love in ways that represent a broad understanding of womanhood so that we do not limit other ways of interpreting or recognizing humanizing love. In doing this, we accept a both and/more rather than either/or approach to the ways we theorize and understand love.

While unconditional love is not innate or inherent to women, given the birth experience and the dependency on our mother (or mother-like figure) we all experience as newborns and young children, our mothers often shape our how we come to understand unconditional love. The basis for much of Fromm's discussion of

unconditional love is based upon the mother-child relationship during the early formative years. My critique is not meant to reject this connection. Instead, I think we must go a bit deeper in how we think about it, both accepting the truth it represents and recognizing the limitations it can create.

We cannot fall into the trap of over-romanticizing birth and motherhood narratives the way we have done with love. In describing humanizing love, Matias and Allen (2013) write, “It is similar to how a mother will never run out of love for her child” (p. 289). This statement problematically echoes Fromm’s synthesis of mothering and unconditional love, which was discussed above. It also ignores the fact that there are women who act in very unloving and abusive ways toward their children and it potentially perpetuates the myth of maternal instinct (Blackstone, 2017). Matias writes, “I actualized a humanizing love the moment I first held my newborn twins” (2013, p. 295). This is Matias’ experience to define, and I do not critique or doubt such a statement. My concern is if this becomes the dominant means of defining humanizing love, particularly given the dangerous and dehumanizing ways society has historically shamed women who do not want to have children, who do not feel such an immediate connection to their newborns, who struggle with postpartum depression, or those who cannot have such an experience due to infertility or miscarriage. Romanticizing the birth narrative can also result in silencing conversations around the danger of giving birth, an important topic given the increasing maternal mortality rate in the U.S. (Erickson, Kravitz, & Gallardo, 2017). If we are to move closer to actualizing a humanizing love for ourselves and others, we must move beyond an either/or framework. For many of us, the mother-child relationship represents authentic love, but for others, such a narrative is

alienating and oppressive. We must be able to recognize both of these points of view (and potentially others) to create a theory of love capable of overcoming negative freedom.

Conclusion

As discussed earlier, the irony of humanizing love is that we must first embrace our fear of alienation and isolation. We must accept that we are separate and alone, and once we do this, the fear that drives us to escape no longer has the same power. Fromm (1956/2006) writes,

To analyze the nature of love is to discover its general absence today and to criticize the social conditions which are responsible for this absence.

To have faith in the possibility of love as a social and not only exceptional-individual phenomenon, is a rational faith based on the insight into the very nature of man. (p. 123)

To have such a rational faith is to believe in the possibility of “a critical humanizing praxis of love” (Matias & Allen, 2013, p. 304). It is this belief that allows us to confront our fear of freedom, within which lays our fear of love. This is no small or insignificant task, in many ways, to do so is to engage in a form of civil disobedience. hooks (2001) writes,

Cultures of domination rely on the cultivation of fear as a way to ensure obedience. In our society we make much of love and say little about fear. Yet we are all terribly afraid most of the time. . . When we choose to love we choose to move against fear—against alienation and separation. (p. 93)

When we choose to challenge our fear of freedom, opting for a different set of values by which to live our lives, we find an authentic way to connect with the world around us through standing in love. A critical, authentic love is much different from the oft-accepted romanticized pop-cultures versions of love. In Fromm's reconceptualization of love as an art that must be learned and mastered, it becomes a powerful force of self-actualization and empowerment. As the discussion demonstrated, Fromm's theory is somewhat limited by the way he employs gender and his lack of engagement with race, but if expanded and complicated to address these issues, his theory of love becomes a tool capable of transforming dehumanization into genuine freedom.

Within critical pedagogy we do not often explicitly address the significance of love, despite Freire's frequent allusions to it. Where Freire does offers more extended discussions of love, it is clear that he and Fromm share a similar understanding of love, as evidenced in the following from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968/2000):

Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and men. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. It is thus necessarily the task of responsible subjects and cannot exist in a relation of domination. Domination reveals the pathology of love: sadism in the dominator and masochism in the dominated. Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to other men. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their

cause—the cause of liberation. And, this commitment, because it is love, is dialogical. As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom, it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. It must generate other acts of freedom; otherwise it is not love. Only by abolishing the situations of oppression is it possible to restore the love which that situation made impossible. If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love men—I cannot enter into dialogue. (Freire, p. 89-90)

While Freire may not provide a clear or explicit definition of love, his words clearly demonstrate his belief in the centrality of love for overcoming oppression and dehumanization. This is where Fromm's in-depth analysis of love becomes increasingly relevant for those of us within critical pedagogy. Taken together, Fromm and Freire demonstrate the need for a critical theory of love that is capable of transforming education into a practice of freedom. In the following conclusion, I consider the implications of Fromm's work for education, exploring what it means to teach from an ethic of love.

CHAPTER 5: TEACHING FROM AN ETHIC OF LOVE

In the introductory chapter, I suggested that Fromm's conceptualization of freedom could be used to reframe the notion of education as the practice of freedom. Having now considered Fromm's work in greater depth, we can return to this discussion. Fromm's focus on the psychology and emotionality of freedom allows us to complicate critical pedagogy's freedom project in necessary ways. Critical pedagogy has been hindered by its inability to develop a theory of freedom that accounts for the social psychology of human beings. Combining the liberatory aims of critical pedagogy with Fromm's work enables us to reveal how schooling functions to perpetuate negative freedom, to propose a universal ethic or moral vision for critical educational studies, and to engage in a critical humanizing praxis of love. A more complex understanding of freedom that centers a critical theory of love allows us to develop a pedagogical framework where education as the practice of (positive) freedom becomes synonymous with teaching as an ethic of love.

I continue to be intrigued by the implications of Fromm's (1947/1990) three questions first referenced in the introduction: "What man is, how he ought to live, and how the tremendous energies within man can be released and used productively" (p. 4). Fromm poses these questions to make the point that as a society we remain clueless in regards to the true meaning of living a life of freedom. Within the context of education, I

believe that to consider these questions is to get at is what it means to teach from an ethic of love informed by a critical theory of love that places at its center the goal of “humanization in undoing systems of oppression” (Matias & Allen, 2013, p. 287).

Throughout his work, Freire emphasizes the role of love in a liberatory pedagogy aimed at humanization and freedom. When we look at what Freire writes about love, it is clear that love is a central component to his theory of humanization. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968/2000) he writes,

As individuals or as peoples, by fighting for the restoration of their humanity, they will be attempting the restoration of true generosity. And this fight, because of the purpose given it, will actually constitute an act of love. (p. 45)

Freire (2005) characterizes this type of love as “armed love” which he defines as “the fighting love of those convinced of the right and the duty to fight, to denounce, and to announce” (p. 74). Such a love creates a solidarity capable of transforming the world. He explains,

The oppressor is in solidarity with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor—when he stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love. True solidarity is found only in the plentitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis. (1968/2000, p. 50)

Despite its obvious importance, Freire never provides an explicit definition of love or a clear explanation of love's relationship to education. This has resulted in a limited engagement with the role of love in critical pedagogy, even though Freire clearly establishes the significance of love for education when he characterizes education as a courageous "act of love" (1973, p. 38). In fact, he argues that love is essential to teaching, asserting that,

It is impossible to teach without the courage to try a thousand times before giving up. In short, it is impossible to teach without a forged, invented and well-thought-out capacity to love. (1998, p. 3)

While freedom and love are central to Freire's theory of humanization, his analysis lacks an understanding of the role of individual or social psychology in our practice of either.

As Dagostino-Kalniz (2008) points out,

Freire's educational paradigm, which strives to raise people's awareness about oppression and its causes (from a very political and hence social perspective), would be more complete and would better help move learners toward liberation if it also strove to raise people's awareness of self and the internal/psychological dynamics which often compel them to behave in oppressive rather than liberating ways. (p. 13)

She goes on to argue that,

Freire's theory of liberation places a heavy burden on the oppressed to free both themselves and the oppressor while not sufficiently helping them to understand how *not* to be like the oppressor. (p. 14)

Freire (1968/2000) argues that only radicals are capable of carrying out a pedagogy of the oppressed, echoing Fromm's (1956/2006) belief that only nonconformists have the capacity to practice humanizing love. The issue, as Dagostino-Kalniz (2008) demonstrates, is that Freire never addresses the psychological or emotional transformation necessary to become the radical non-conformist. Fromm's work offers a necessary complication to the critical pedagogy project through his analysis of the psychological and emotional dimensions of authentic humanization, which allows us to create a liberatory educational paradigm capable of meeting our basic human need of connection and relatedness that is only possible through authentic freedom and love.

I began this project with assumption that when I reached the end, I would be able to provide some idea of what that educational paradigm could be. It seemed logical to address the more explicit pedagogical applications of Frommean theory, but when it came time to write this conclusion, that was not where I found myself. I have come to realize that I cannot distill this project down to a series of bullet points of pedagogical or methodological implications. Such prescriptive elements are meaningless if we as educators have not done the work to first transform ourselves. We must first liberate ourselves from the internalized oppression of false freedom and love before we can transform our teaching practice. How can we teach from an ethic of love if we do not know how to love? We have to start with our own critical consciousness raising informed by Frommean theory. This is where we begin to learn the significance of an ethic of love for our teaching practice.

In looking at the notion of critical consciousness, Dagostino-Kalniz (2008) makes an important distinction between the social consciousness and the inner consciousness.

She explains,

A critical social consciousness without a critical inner consciousness will not lead to social transformation. One must gain a critical understanding of one's inner workings in order for the critical understanding of the outer (social) workings to progress to a new level. Liberatory educational paradigms, like Freire's, must have a paradigmatic shift in focus in which the inner life of the individual is explored alongside the social context. As such, Freire's theory would be more complete if it included an exploration of an educational plan for self-reflection and self-transformation. (p. 132-133)

Distinguishing an inner consciousness from a social consciousness provides a language that allows us to get at the psychological and emotional dimensions that shape one's consciousness. Critical awareness must extend not only to the material aspects of oppression but to the psychological manifestations of dehumanization. It is the critical transformation of inner consciousness that lays the foundation for achieving a state of positive freedom. Such work requires us to embrace the discomfort that comes from questioning and pushing boundaries that have been allowed to remain unchallenged. In doing this we begin the difficult but necessary work of a reflective, psychoanalytic, self-examination that allows us to transcend the dehumanization of negative freedom so that we can teach from a place of authentic love. One of the few times Fromm directly addresses education, it is to point out that students are not provided the necessary

guidance to learn how to authentically love because schools lack “the simple presence of a mature, loving person” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 108). There is no hope for creating a humanizing educational experience if we as educators do not provide a “vision of good human functioning, and hence of sensitivity to malfunctioning” (Fromm, 1956/2006, p. 109). This will only happen through making the commitment to embark on our own journey of self-reflective humanization.

Dehumanization is a state that affects all of us. As educators, we, like our students, have internalized oppressive ideologies. As hooks (1994) writes,

When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. (p. 21)

This means that we must learn how to practice a self-reflective praxis before we can even begin to consider modeling it for our students. We begin by recognizing our need for connection and belonging as the primary guiding principle of our human nature. This need creates a fear of alienation so powerful that we will settle for false, inauthentic, and dehumanizing means of belonging in order to avoid isolation. We must be brave and vulnerable enough to undertake our own psychoanalytic self-examination through exploring the ways that we ourselves have acquiesced to the pressures of negative freedom, searching out the parts of ourselves that we have repressed out of fear of isolation, and asking how our own psychology and emotionality have been shaped and influenced by dehumanizing ideologies.

In the foreword to Boler’s *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, Maxine Greene (1999) invokes the metaphor of the stranger or the un/familiar as a way of

illustrating the significance of Boler's work. Her discussion provides an insightful means to describe the process of self-examination and reflection that we must engage in if we are to challenge our own internalization of negative freedom. She begins with the following quote from Toni Morrison (1998):

For the stranger is not foreign, she is random, not alien but remembered;
and it is the randomness of the encounter with our already known—though
unacknowledged—selves that summons a ripple of alarm. That makes us
reject the figure and the emotions it provokes—especially when these
emotions are profound. It also makes us want to own, govern,
administrate the Other. To romance her, if we can, back into our mirrors.
In either instance (of alarm or false reverence), we deny her personhood.

(as qtd. in Greene, 1999, p. ix)

Greene goes on to explain that Boler's work is moving us to "confront the mystery of the stranger" as imagined by Morrison (p. ix). As I read this, I was reminded of Mills (2000) belief in the necessity of the sociological imagination, where in our search for humanizing truth we must be willing to risk all that we hold familiar. When we risk such a confrontation within ourselves, we find, as Morrison suggests, that the stranger is not really a stranger, and in recognizing this, the familiar becomes unfamiliar. The stranger we have become accustomed to keeping at bay and repressing in our unconscious becomes known, and the familiar Other becomes unfamiliar when we find it represents parts of our self that we refuse to acknowledge. Confronting such truth is frightening because it calls into question everything that we think we know. It reveals the pain of our own internal alienation and our lack of authentic relatedness to those around us. We are

forced to recognize the various forms of our own pseudo-selves that we have created in order to survive. Yet, while painful, this recognition is the necessary precursor to freedom in love. As Fromm (1962/2009) writes,

In order to love, the “other” must become a stranger, and in the act of love, the stranger ceases to be a stranger and becomes me. Love presupposes alienation—and at the same time overcomes it. (p. 44)

The discomfort in recognizing the stranger as known, or in making the familiar unfamiliar, is the beginning of transcending our alienation, creating the opportunity for the development of both an inner and social critical consciousness that makes a humanizing praxis of love possible. Key to such a critical awareness is an understanding of the politics of emotion and how our emotions can serve to perpetuate or disrupt hegemonic societal structures. Zembylas and McGlynn (2012) explain,

Deeply entrenched social norms create and sustain the structures that privilege or oppress—norms which are attended by significant emotional response. Challenging those social norms means changing our emotional relation to them; that is, seeing the consequences of these norms as either gain or loss. (p. 43)

It is here that I believe Boler’s (1999) pedagogy of discomfort becomes particularly relevant because it provides a language that allows us to explore what such a transformation entails.

Boler (1999) defines a pedagogy of discomfort as:

Both an invitation to inquiry as well as a call to action. As inquiry a pedagogy of discomfort emphasizes “collective witnessing” as opposed to

individualized self-reflection. I distinguish *witnessing* from *spectating* as one entrée into a collectivized engagement in learning to see differently.

A central focus of my discussion is the emotions that often arise in the process of examining cherished beliefs and assumptions. (p. 176)

A pedagogy of discomfort hinges on our willingness to explore, questions, and challenge our “cherished beliefs and assumptions,” explicitly engaging aspects of both a social and an inner consciousness. In doing this, a pedagogy of discomfort uncovers the ways our emotions “shape daily habits, routines and unconscious complicity with hegemony” (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012, p. 44), thus challenging us to recognize the ways we are complicit in the dehumanization created by a white supremacist patriarchal ideology.

In order to teach from an ethic of love, we must demystify the ways emotions, like fear and shame, are used to create and sustain individual and group identities, both our own and those who have been ‘Othered’ by social constructions of race, gender, and class. Thandeka’s (2000) analysis of white shame as discussed in the chapter on negative freedom is one example of this. In other instances, seemingly positive emotional responses actually mask something quite different. Matias and Zembylas’ (2014) study of white preservice teachers uncovers the ways emotions, like caring, sympathy, and even love, are used to mask the disgust for students of color. Here, preservice teachers embed their desire to work with urban students of color in a social justice narrative of care and empathy, but when further analyzed these narratives reveal disgust, racism, and hypocrisy. Matias and Zembylas (2014) find that,

These teacher candidates use terminology of equity and social justice to present themselves as socially just urban teachers, yet have repressed their

deepest feelings about people of color until they are challenged, a process that surfaces their emotional discomfort and eventually their distaste, moreover, disgust for people of color. (p. 330)

While one could argue that these preservice teachers have done some work around creating a more critical social consciousness based on their use of social justice discourse, the importance of a critical inner consciousness becomes apparent through the ways their emotionality allows them to maintain a racist discourse.

A pedagogy of discomfort provides the means to interrogate the emotional-cognitive dissonance that exists within the narratives that we use to define our identity, such as those demonstrated by Thandeka (2000) and Matias and Zembylas (2014). For Boler (1999), this pedagogical approach allows us to examine our “constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others” and “how modes of seeing have been shaped specifically by the dominant culture” (p. 177, 179). In doing this, Boler (1999) is positing a shift in how we frame our sense of self, suggesting a more “ambiguous and flexible” approach that allows us to move beyond “a reductive model of guilt vs. innocence” (p. 176). This is significant in terms of the critical self-reflective transformation necessary for educators who hope to teach from an ethic of love, because it allows us to see ourselves as both the oppressor and the oppressed without being devastated by the shame that can accompany such an admission. Certainly, there are aspects to our educational system where educators are dehumanized, and this project has looked at some of these. But, at the same time, we must also recognize the ways that a politics of emotion allows educators to perpetuate the systemic dehumanization of others based on race, gender, and/or class, particularly when we consider the largely white

middle class teaching population. The shame in admitting our role as an oppressor provokes a fear that many of us do not want to confront, so we choose to repress it. Boler writes that “what we learn not to see is shaped by fear,” and that “learning to see differently requires a willingness to live with new fears—what I call learning to inhabit a morally ambiguous self” (p. 182). When we do this, the fear of isolation or separateness is no longer as powerful, making it possible to move beyond it to create both a social and an inner critical consciousness.

When we only transform our social consciousness we remain privileged spectators, which Boler (1999) describes as “allowing oneself to inhabit a position of distance and separation, to remain in the ‘anonymous’ spectating crown and abdicate any possible responsibility” (p. 184). When we transform our inner consciousness, we are able to engage in collective witnessing where “one is challenged to disrupt the oversimplifications of ‘popular history’” which “enables a recognition of how truths have been constructed in relation to particular silences (Boler, 1999, p. 185). Collective witnessing is a way to move beyond self-reflection that does not push one to understand social constructions of power and privilege because it provides a critical understanding of self-reflection that acknowledges one’s position of power or privilege in relation to others (Boler, 1999, p. 177). Collective witnessing encourages truth-telling, without which an ethic of love is impossible. We, particularly those of us who are members of dominant groups, must be willing to hear and believe the truths that others speak. As hooks (2001) writes, “To be loving we willingly hear each other’s truth and, most important, we affirm the value of truth telling” (p. 49).

One of the most powerful aspects of Fromm's conceptualization of love is his insistence on the importance of self-love. Any conceptualization of what it means to teach from an ethic of love must have self-love at its core. Consider hooks' (2001) words on self-love in the following:

Self-love is the foundation of our loving practice. Without it our other efforts to love fail. Giving ourselves love we provide our inner being with the opportunity to have the unconditional love we may have always longed to receive from someone else. Whenever we interact with others, the love we give and receive is always necessarily conditional. . . We can give ourselves the unconditional love that is the grounding for sustained acceptance and affirmation. When we give this precious gift to ourselves, we are able to reach out to others from a place of fulfillment and not from a place of lack. (p. 67)

Before we can learn how to practice self-love, we must relearn what it means to love and unlearn all of the false ways we have been taught to know, experience, and demonstrate love. More than likely, our own education took place in a system based on the perpetuation of negative freedom, which means we must first interrogate the ways that we have been taught to conform out of fear of authentic freedom. Dagostino-Kalniz (2008) writes,

That is, their fear of isolation causes them to look for security outside of themselves rather than inside of themselves, and as such, causes them to end up re-conforming or re-submitting to external authority in an effort to relinquish the fear. (p. 71)

Deconstructing such a dehumanizing model of love is a complex task that begins with educators learning to value our own internal authority over an external authority.

Our ability to love others is based upon a genuine love for ourselves, but if we think about the commonly accepted model for the ideal teacher, self-love is nowhere to be found. Instead, the idealized teacher is often painted as a martyr who sacrificially gives to her or his students and school until there is nothing left to give. While this “selfless” love is held up as virtuous, it is actually evidence of an unproductive character type like the “unselfish mother” that Fromm describes. Psychoanalysis suggests that this “unselfishness” often belies an inability to love others or enjoy life (Fromm, 1956/2006). When we choose to idealize the sacrificial teacher, schooling becomes a means to reify negative freedom through the devaluation of self-love. When we consider the gendered nature of teaching, we see how the virtue of unselfishness sustains patriarchy through perpetuating sacrificial selfless love among a largely female teaching population. Instead of teaching humanizing self-love, we model for both our teachers and students a total disregard for self-love, thus hindering their ability to learn how to practice a love that allows one to spontaneously relate to the world. We must find a way to conceptualize authentic, humanizing, unconditional love that moves beyond gendered notions of sacrificial care so that we learn how to practice and recognize a love that is capable of empowering everyone.

I am wary of giving any sort of prescriptive advice on “how to” teach from an ethic of love. Fromm (1962/2009) is insistent that to learn to love, we must each do the work for ourselves. To learn to practice the art of loving is an intensely personal and internal process. I fear that offering prescriptive suggestions risks perpetuating the belief

that altering one's pedagogy or teaching methods alone is enough to transform education into a practice of freedom. With that said, I do believe that there are potential pedagogical implications to consider. Just as with critical pedagogy, there is no cookie cutter, one-size-fits all approach to teaching from an ethic of love. A teaching philosophy that centers humanizing love does not necessarily lend itself to a specific methodology, but I do believe we can identify certain foundational beliefs that would be inherent to a pedagogy informed by an ethic of love. We must start with the principle that love can only exist between equals. Such a belief transforms the teacher-student relationship characterized by irrational authority or sadomasochistic tendencies. This is part of why a firmly established self-love on the part of the teacher is so important. Self-love counters our fear of isolation or our need to escape from freedom, enabling us to model for our students how to connect to others and relate to the world in authentic ways. When educators embody such a humanizing love, students are empowered to approach life in a similar manner.

In doing this, an ethic of love teaches critical awareness. It explicitly teaches that constructs such as race, class, and gender exist, why they exist, how they impact society, and who benefits from them. An ethic of love demystifies fear and shame as social constructs. Through an ethic of love, we can teach both our students and ourselves as educators how to recognize and name negative freedom and strive for positive freedom. In doing this, we provide our students and ourselves as educators the space to learn how to recognize shame or negative freedom when it is experienced, move through it in a constructive way that allows for authenticity, and growth through experience. Fromm (1956/2006) writes, "The desire for interpersonal fusion is the most powerful striving in

man. It is the most fundamental passion” (p. 17). To teach from an ethic of love is to understand and embrace this desire for connection and to place this at the center of our teaching. We must recognize the importance of emotional knowledge and mental well-being as things we should be addressing in the classroom. Teaching from an ethic of love provides students the vocabulary and skills to navigate the emotional world successfully.

While I do not suggest a specific methodology for teaching from an ethic of love, I do think Boler’s (1999) theory of emotional literacy provides one way to think about the pedagogical implications of teaching from an ethic of love. Critical pedagogy has been limited by its inability to address the emotional dimension to freedom and love, and a theory of emotional literacy is one way to address this. In contrast to the emotional intelligence literature that Boler critiques, emotional literacy curricula explicitly address the politics of emotion. It recognizes the importance of emotional knowledge and mental well-being and embraces the cerebral-emotional basis of knowledge, countering the long held belief in the superiority of reason and rationality as the only true and reliable forms of knowledge, thus providing the space to center humanizing love as a source of knowledge.

When we teach from an ethic of love, education becomes synonymous with education as the practice of freedom. If our work is to ensure that each student leaves the classroom prepared to succeed, we can do nothing less than teach them to master both the theory and practice of critical love. When we consider how to do this, there are no easy or fixed answers. A life of authentic love and humanization can never be static, but requires constant and uncomfortable self-reflection. It is the same for teaching from an ethic of love.

I was recently at an event with young adult author and poet Jacqueline Woodson. When asked about why she writes, she responded that as adults, we are the gatekeepers for our children, and as such, we choose the narratives that our children learn to define themselves by. I found this an apt metaphor for the significance of learning how to authentically love. As educators, we must change our own narrative on love before we can hope to empower our students to change their narratives. Then, it is possible, that we, together with our students, can hope to live a life like the one that Fromm (1964/1980) describes below,

The person who fully loves life is attracted by the process of life and growth in all spheres. He prefers to construct rather than to retain. He is capable of wondering, and prefers to see something new rather than looking for the security of finding confirmation of the old. He loves the adventure of living. He sees the whole rather than the part. He wants to mold by love, reason, and persuasion, not by force. He enjoys life rather than just craving excitement. (p. 45)

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