



RELATA:  
**TOWARDS A  
SOCIAL  
ONTOLOGY  
OF BLACK LOVE**

CHAPTER SELECTIONS ON  
BLACK LOVE LOVE &  
LIBERATION

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# Marriage & Black Liberation

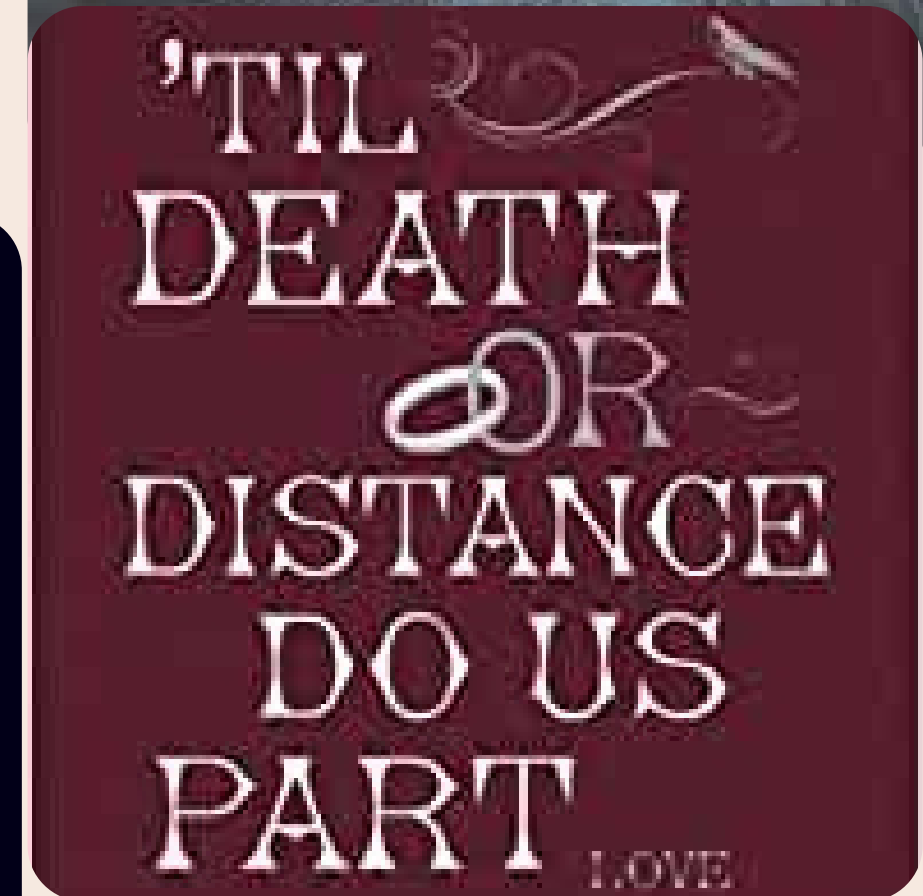
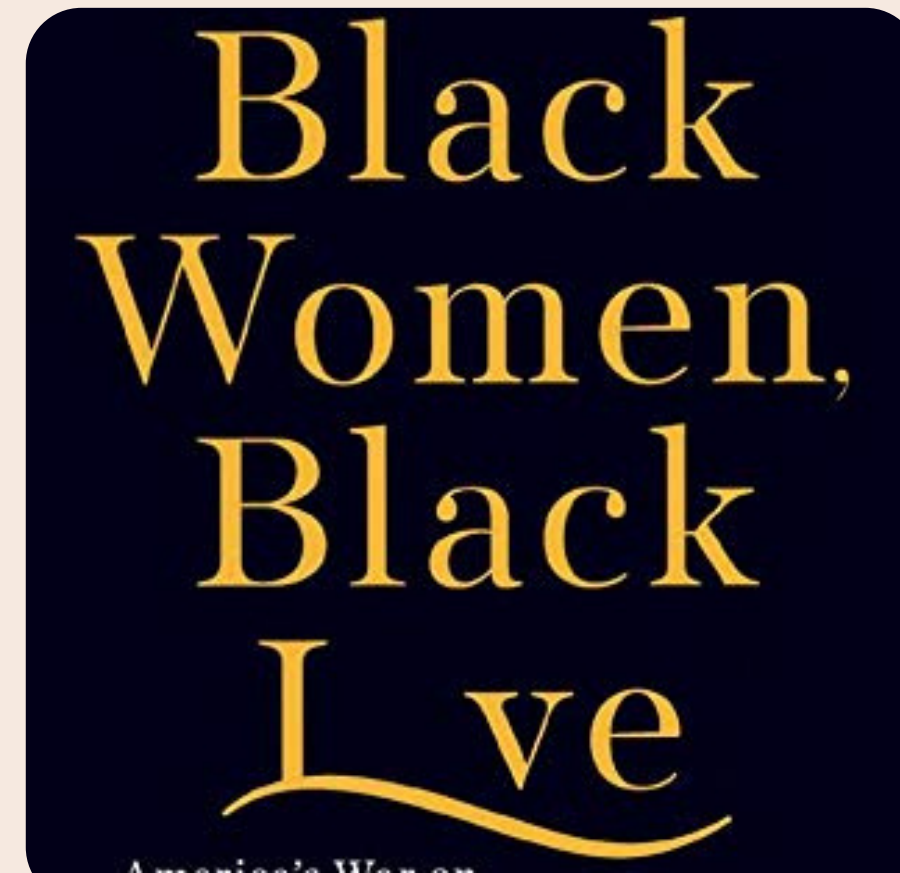
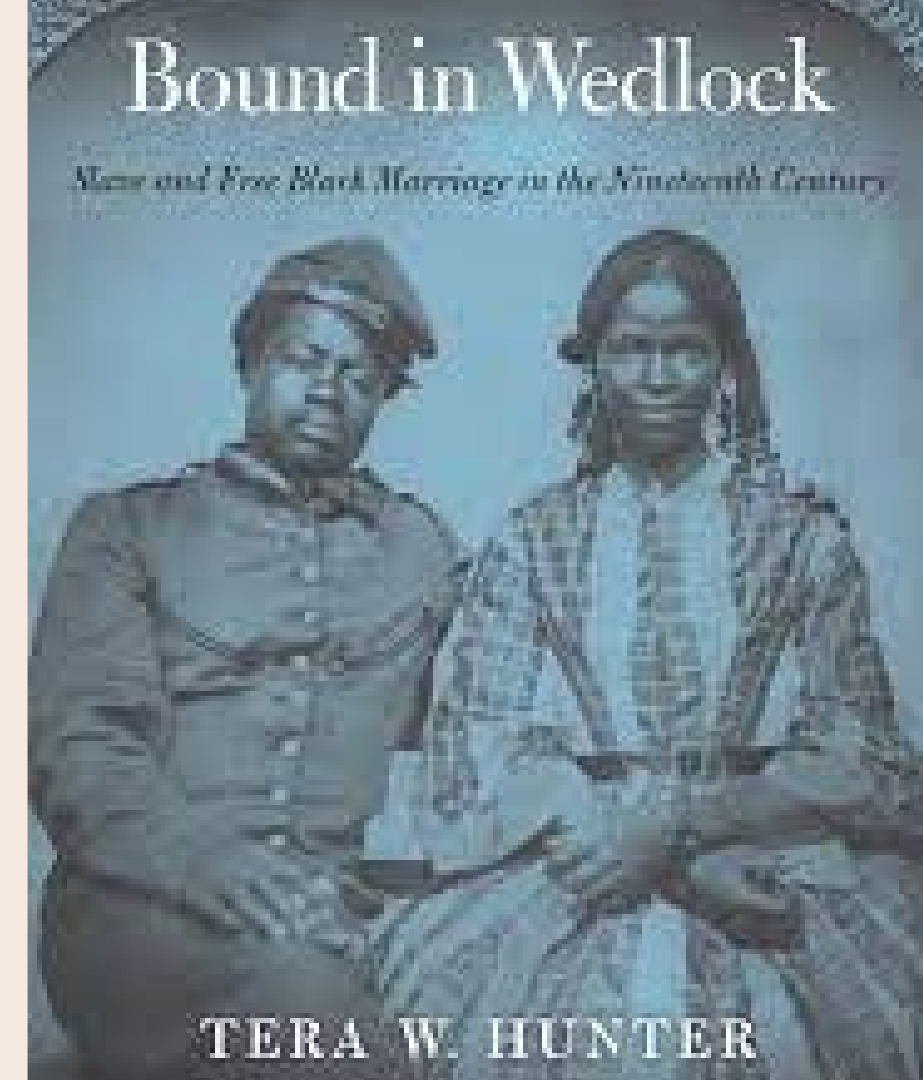
## Motivation/Inspiration:

- Love Hates Us: Love, Race, and Non-monogamies in America
- "Black Philosophy and the Erotic" by Anika Simpson



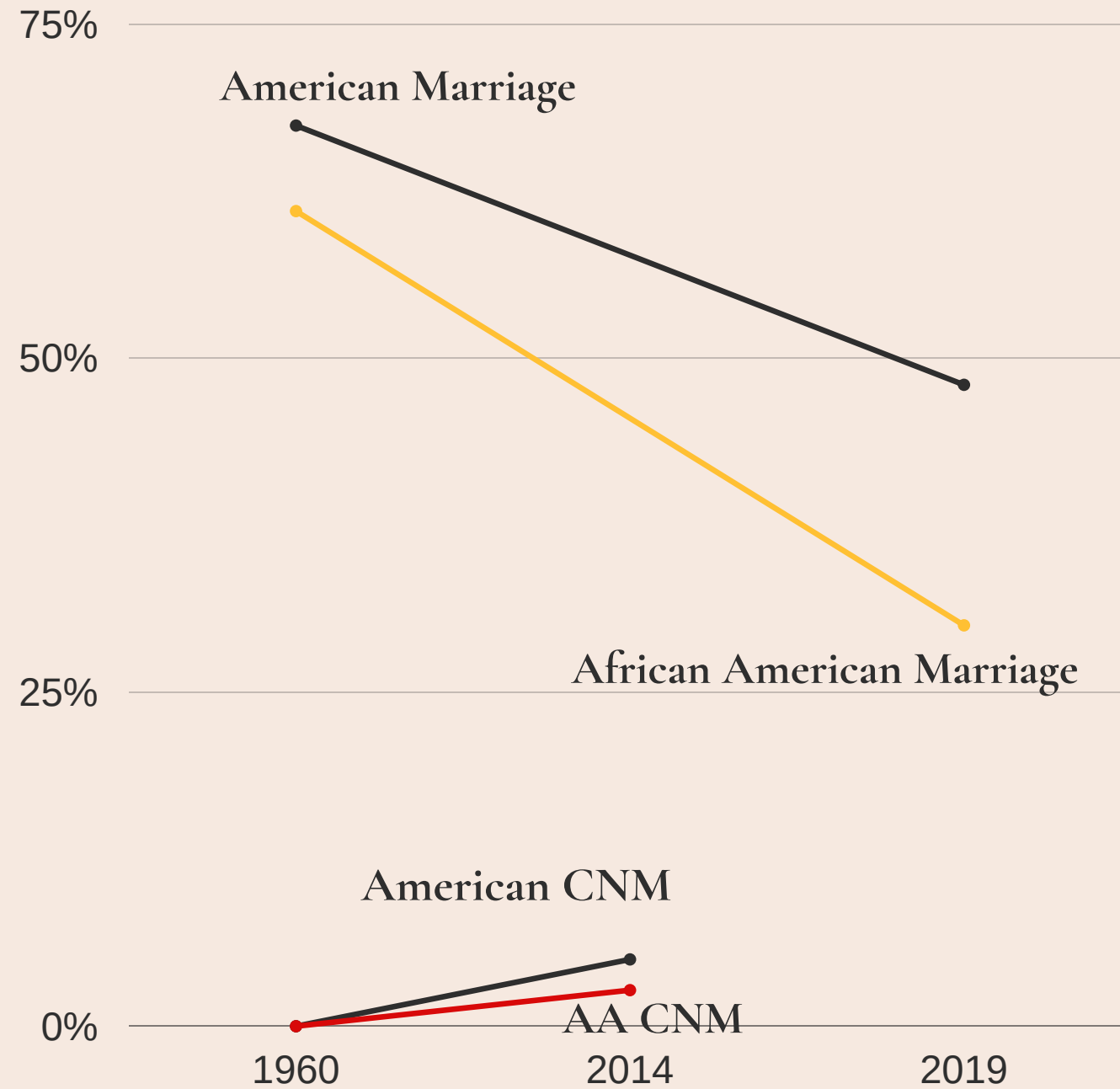
# Black Histories of American Marriage

- Utilize the language of "Black Love".
- Outline the deleterious impacts of American Marriage.
- Situate marriage among civil rights issue.
- Raise **metaphysical** questions about Black Love





# The Marriage "Crisis"



- In 1960, 67.4 percent of all Americans were married compared to 61% of African Americans.
- **In 2019, these numbers dropped to 48% & 30%, respectively.**
- In 2014, numbers of consensual non-monogamists in America turned out to be significant.

# Philosophy & Black Love...

A. Simpson , *"Black Philosophy and the Erotic"*

Discusses the gap in Philosophical literature on Black Love. Does not offer a definition of Black Love.

D. Stewart, *Black Women, Black Love*

Not only should Black love and Black marriage be endogamous , it should not be patriarchal, nor heteronormative.

C. Mills, "Do Black Men Have a Moral Obligation to Marry Black Women?"

Affirmative: there is a presumptive duty. "At the very least I think I have shown that—using conventional moral theories, and without making racist assumptions about whites, or even appealing to any controversial separatist ideology—an interesting case can in fact be built for a position quite widespread in the “commonsense morality” of the black community." (150)

W.E.B. DuBois, E. Franklin Frazier,  
and Daniel Moniyhan

*Various Writings*

Legal, monogamous, Christian marriage was central to racial uplift for Black folks



# Toward a **Social Ontology** of Black Love

I

Romantic Love

2

Black Love

Romantic Love **vs** Black Love



# Romantic Love



# Toward a **Social Ontology** of Black Love

I

## Romantic Love

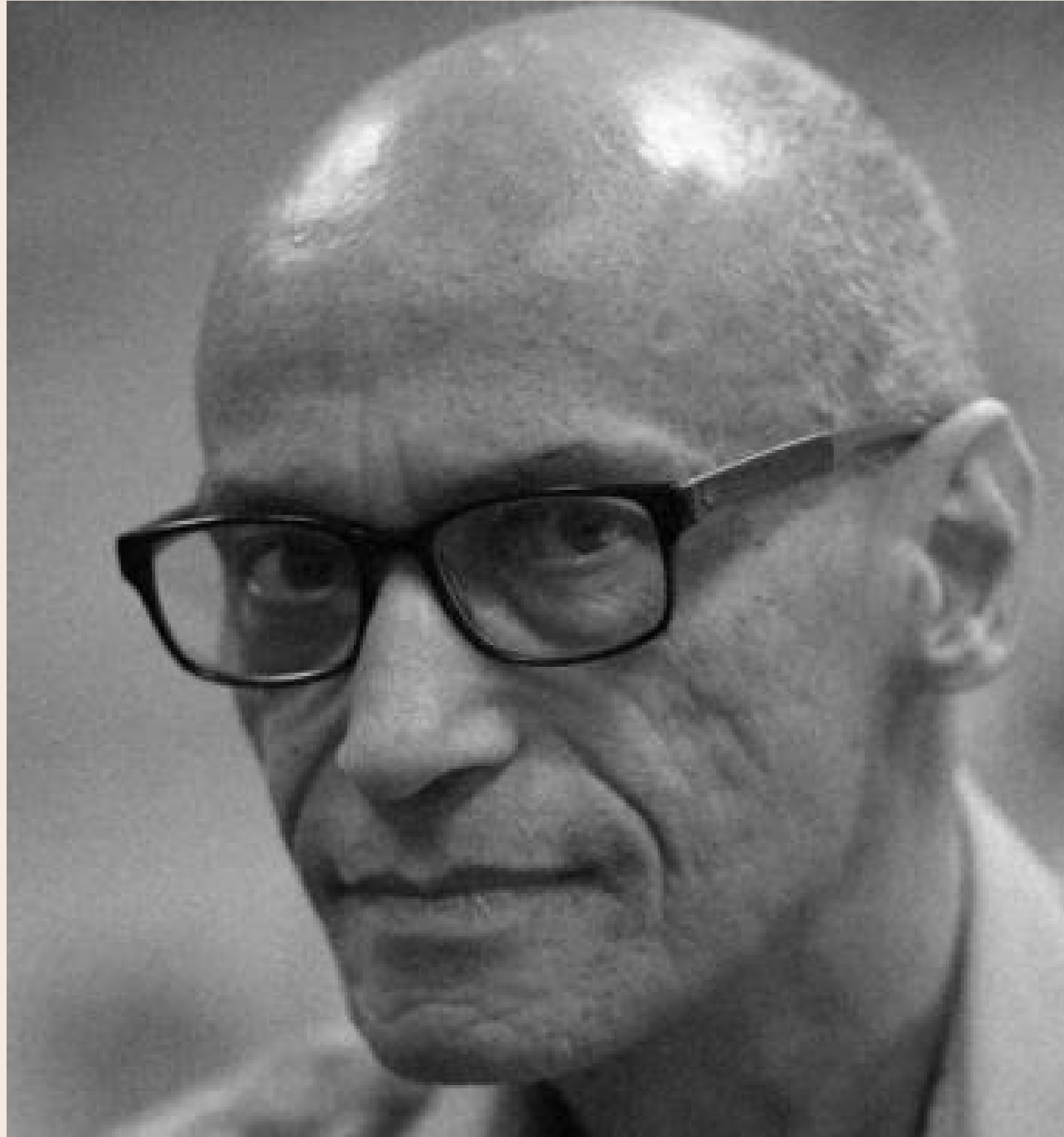
Presupposes a subject that is

- Strong,
- Discreet,
- Autonomous
- & Sovereign

2

## Black Love





# *Black* Love

## Mills on race...

“

Race structures our particular social universe, having a social objectivity and causal significance that arise out of our particular history.

Charles Mills, "But What are you Really?": The Metaphysics of Race, p.48

# Black *Love*

“

Social constructionism  
[about love] is not a  
kind of eliminativism:  
to say that *love is socially*  
constructed is not to  
deny that *love is real*.

C.S.I. Jenkins, "What is Love? and  
Incomplete Map of the Metaphysics", p. 358





# Black Love



# Toward a **Social Ontology** of Black Love

I

## Romantic Love

Presupposes a subject that is

- Strong,
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2

## Black Love

Is...

- Intimate caring relationships among Black *relata* not excluding relationships of erotic love and sex.
- Non-mongamous

# Relata

## Black Liberation Tradition:

"We shall have to struggle for the right to create our own terms through which to define ourselves and our relationship to society, and to have these terms recognized."

Kwame Ture (formerly Stokely Carmichael), *Black Power*, p. 35

## Polyamorous Tradition:

"the identities, relationship practices, and emotions of polyamorous people are not easily described through the language of monogamy...the act of rewriting the language of identity, relationships, and emotion can enable alternative ways of being."

Ritchie & Barker, "...Constructing Polyamorous Language in a Culture of Compulsory Monogamy", p. 598



# Relata & Black Love

## Gender/Number

Relata makes no explicit reference to gender or number. As such, it meets Stewarts criteria of rejecting patriarchy and heteronormativity.

## Amato- & Mononormativities

Black love(s) and the relata that make them up are organized around intimate caring relationships (not excluding relationships of erotic love and sex). It eschews the language of partner/spouse/husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend/ect.

## Subject/Object and the Question of Sovereignty

*Black Skin, White Masks* raises questions of recognition and non-belonging; of being and non-being. On the train, Fanon is frustrated by the discovery that he, “A negro” is but a mere “object among other objects”; a genuinely suffocating “dialectic between [his]body and the world.” He probes a social ontological landscape that denies “being” for the negro because it fails to accommodate their lived experiences.



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