



"Love as the Practice of Freedom" bell hooks

Outlaw Love

Social commentator, essayist, memoirist and poet bell hooks (née Gloria Jean Watkins) is a feminist theorist who speaks on contemporary issues of race, gender, and media representation in America. Her many books include *Ain't I a Woman* (1981), *Talking Back* (1989), *Killing Rage: Facing Racism* (1995), *Outlaw Culture* (1994), and *Remembered Rapture* (1999). In *Black Looks* (1994), she writes, "It struck me that for black people, the pain of learning that we cannot control our images, how we see ourselves (if our vision is not decolonized), or how we are seen is so intense that it rends us. It rips and tears at the seams of our efforts to construct self and identify." In *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (1994), hooks advocates a "progressive cultural revolution" by means of repudiating all forms of domination in a "holistic manner." In order to decolonize our minds suggests hooks, we must begin to "surrender participation in whatever sphere of coercive hierarchical domination we enjoy individual and group privilege." In the essay that follows from that book, hook proposes an "ethic of love" as the means by which we might be guided to turn away from an ethic of domination.

•	THE HEALER
••	THE CAREGIVER
•••	THE DISRUPTOR
••••	THE LOVER
•••••	THE ARCHIVIST
••••••	THE WITNESS



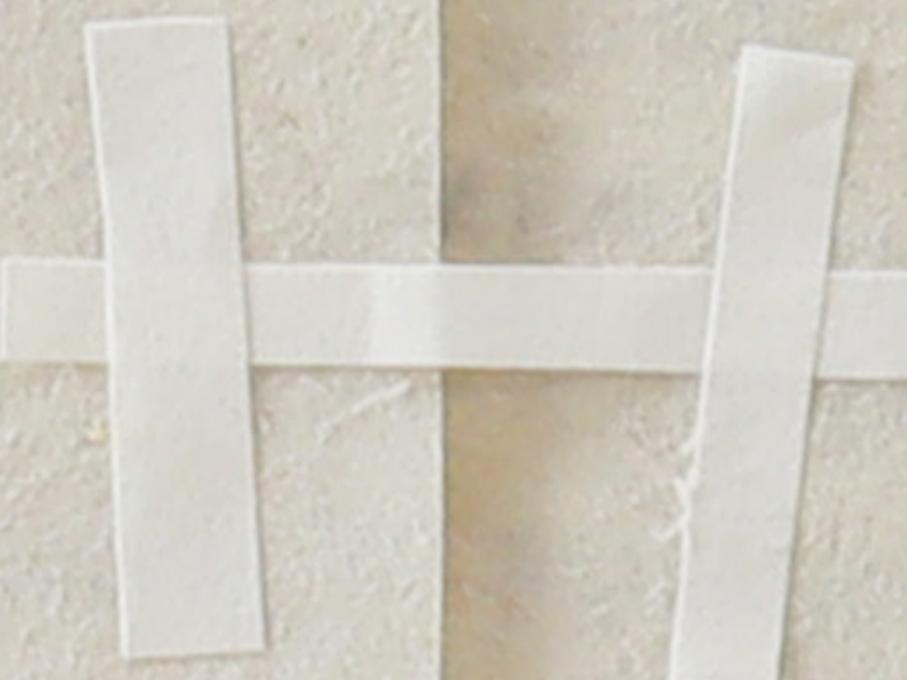
In this society, there is no powerful discourse on love ;

The absence of a sustained focus on love

is why we

are

doomed.



USE A DICE
TO GET YOUR ROLE

•	THE HEALER
••	THE CAREGIVER
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••••••	THE WITNESS

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•	THE HEALER
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In this society, there is no powerful discourse on love ;

The absence of a sustained focus on love
is why we

are
doomed.

YOU ARE INVITED TO A SECRET
SOCIETY TO DRAFT A QUEER
MANIFESTO OF LOVE. THIS IS
A LIVING DOCUMENT – PART
PROPHECY, PART COLLECTIVE VI-
SION – NEVER FINISHED BUT
ALWAYS LEARNING, EXPANDING,
& CHANGING.

i write this knowing that it may never be found. or, if it is, will likely be discarded like a hiccup or a shoulder sore.

Regardless, i must write for my own sanity. why, i was told that i couldn't survive — too soft, too fierce, too unruly. Too impossible, too tender. Too dangerous, i was.

The world tried to teach me that love must be earned, that survival comes first. That i must learn obedience, silence, making myself small enough to avoid discomforting others — always putting them first in order to receive love, because only then am i lovable.

But i call this bullshit.

SIGN YOUR NAME HERE
ALONGSIDE OTHERS WHO
HAVE COME BEFORE YOU



(bell)

Showing the way fearlessly and compassionately, the stream of ancestral teachers, to whom we bow in gratitude.

(two sounds of the bell)

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SIGN YOUR NAME
ALONGSIDE OTHERS
THAT HAVE COME BEFORE YOU

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JIN, si ti ti, go . now es lew
o to quint o mit dehdeh de hew
. goes redwade

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oot, erigif oot, tfor oot — erivaw
oot, rehast oot, wizzogmi oot . yinw
oot, zaw i, zavengnaw

tzum suol tant gm nist at brist blownd
tant. tarii zemos levivus tant, hennas ot
pwiam, unsliz, unibedo mags tzu i
gutrotmowzid biva ot npana llomz flgylu
ui teqit mett enittng shawlo — zedto
ment fu no serres, perenies love, perenies ot tsba.
. elbau i nu

fazlurd sint ihos i tua

for Love is liberation, it is voice.
It refuses cages, spills over Borders, and
holds space for what is turned away.

i know the recovery of Love will come
from those who have suffered greatly
because they have looked deeply.

Hence, IF this manifesto is ever in
your hands — help it come alive.
Mark it with your BEING.



(bell)

Showing the way fearlessly
ancestral teachers, to

(two sounds of the bell)

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ALONGSIDE OTHERS WHO
HAVE COME BEFORE YOU

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blind spots :

many of us are motivated to

move against domination

solely when we feel our self-interest

directly threatened.

unusually. Too impossible, too tender. Too dangerous, i was.

The world tried to teach me that Love must be earned, that survival comes first. That i must learn obedience, silence, making myself small enough to avoid discomforting others — always putting them first in order to receive love, because only then am i lovable.

but i call this bullshit.

"decided to love"

is

to acknowledge blind spots

as we expand our concern to care about the oppression and

exploitation of others.

(bell)

Showing the way fearlessly and compassionately, the stream of ancestral teachers, to whom we bow in gratitude.

(two sounds of the bell)

see it,
for the sake of all beings.

WHERE DO I CHOOSE TO LOOK
AWAY WHEN I SHOULD BE
WITNESSING?

 WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ↴

THE RECKONiNG

THIS RITUAL CALLS FORWARD THE
WITNESS AND THE DISRUPTOR.

RECOGNIZING THAT LOVE IS NOT
PASSIVE—IT REQUIRES WITNESS-
ING, CONFRONTING, AND COM-
MITTING TO STAY BEYOND WHAT
IS COMFORTABLE.

WITNESSING
WHAT I SHOULD BE
DOING
WHERE DO I CHOOSE TO TALK

WHERE DO I CHOOSE SILENCE
WHEN I SHOULD BE SPEAKING UP?

WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ↗

THE RECKONING

THIS RITUAL CALLS FORWARD THE
WITNESS AND THE DISRUPTOR.

RECOGNIZING THAT LOVE IS NOT
PASSIVE—IT REQUIRES WITNESS-
ING, CONFRONTING, AND COM-
MITTING TO STAY BEYOND WHAT
IS COMFORTABLE.

WHEN I SHOULD BE SLEEPING
WHERE DON'T CHOOSE SILENCE

WHERE DO I PULL AWAY WHEN
SUFFERING NEEDS ME TO LEAN
IN?

WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ↗

THE RECKONiNG

THIS RITUAL CALLS FORWARD THE
WITNESS AND THE DISRUPTOR.

RECOGNIZING THAT LOVE IS NOT
PASSIVE—IT REQUIRES WITNESS
-ING, CONFRONTING, AND COM
-MITTING TO STAY BEYOND WHAT
IS COMFORTABLE.

(All participants stand in a closed circle, forming a boundary of presence & commitment. Take a moment to feel the weight of being seen & seeing others.)

The Witness opens the Ritual, leading participants through the 'seeing'.

(Place hands over eyes.)

(Pause. While hands remain over the eyes, each participant silently names - either in their mind, in writing, or in a whisper — what they have refused to see before.)

(Only after acknowledging it, remove hands from eyes. Let the silence settle.)

The Disruptor continues the ritual, guiding participants into the act of breaking silence.

(Place hands on throat.)

(Pause. While hands remain on the throat, each participant silently names - either in their mind, in writing, or in a whisper — what they have silenced themselves about before.)
(After acknowledging it, remove hands from throat.)

I have looked away from
the mirror, seen myself to see
myself.

(A candle is lit at the center of the circle.)

I mark this moment with my being.
I will not return to unseeing.
I will not return to silence.

(Each participant steps forward, one by one, signing their name with breath alongside those who have come before.)

I have signed my name
with others, in silence.

around the circle, moving clockwise in a clockwise direction, starting at the top of the circle, the facilitator guides participants through the song.

(Place hands over eyes.)
I have looked away from _____. But today, I choose to witness. To see fully, even when it is difficult.

(Pause while hands remain over eyes.)
Each participant silently names "either" or "neither" or "both" what they have

SENSE YM HTIW TINMOM GINT KHAM I

SENSE UN OT NANTAD TON JJIW I
SENCE OT NANTAD TON JJIW I

The DISRUPTOR continues to move clockwise into the circle of silence.
(Place hands on chest.)

I have silenced myself when _____. But today, I choose to speak up, disrupting the status quo.

With their hands down at their sides, each person holds a small piece of paper where often they have written down their own personal or group goals.

MARK THIS MOMENT

(A candle is lit at the center of the circle.)

(Each participant steps forward, one by one, signing their name with BREATH alongside those who have come before.)

to love is
not in fashion
70



Again and again,
participation
shifted away from
the love ethic.

The emphasis
was now more on
power.

The power that
equated love with weakness,
where hope had died —
announcing that the
the willingness to coerce, do violence,
was a
weapon
to freedom

We had a
Redefinition
of



power.

