

Affirming Black Sociality in a time of anti-CRT Legislation, White Emotionality, & Immunitary Whiteness

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Abstract

This article uses white emotionality to critically conceptualize recent legislative efforts to ban the teaching of Critical Race Theory (CRT). This undertaking is theoretically motivated by immunitary whiteness and is methodologically informed by Black whiteness studies, particularly the importance of W. E. B Du Bois' reflections on education. These reflections form the basis for biopolitical interrogations of how the current moment negates but might otherwise affirm educational life. The former is analyzed both historically by the Kanawha County textbook controversy of 1974 and presently through Florida's 2021 change to the state's Required Instruction Planning and Reporting statute. Toward the latter, this article posits Black sociality as way of affirming educational life against present-historical negations embodied by the current wave of anti-CRT legislation.

Keywords: *Black sociality, white emotionality, immunitary whiteness, educational biopolitics, anti-CRT legislation*

Introduction: Locating White Emotionality

Despite continuing claims that America is a postracial, egalitarian polity, there should be no doubt that the US is a *Herrenvolk* democracy (Mills, 1988) governed by a Racial Contract (Mills, 1997). Recent white supremacists' actions, punctuated by the Unite the Right rally held in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017 and the Capitol insurrection on January 6, 2021, substantiate this sociopolitical reality while also demonstrating that violent displays of white emotionality (Matias, 2016a, 2016b) are permissible forms of political speech. This permissibility is attributable to an immunitary whiteness (Cabrera, 2017; Kearl, 2019) that prevents whites from recognizing the present-historical fact that greater value is given to their feelings of discomfort than to the psychic harm and physical injury people of color experience. Mills (2007) describes this asymmetrical epistemic relation as white ignorance. This social epistemology explains how whites both intentionally cognize society through whiteness and purposefully ignore the material reality such cognitions create. Accordingly, white ignorance is predicated on whites actively misrecognizing what they know about themselves and society.

This article argues that recent legislative bans on teaching Critical Race Theory (CRT) reflect a biopolitical weaponizing of white emotionality designed to curricularly codify white ignorance. This argument is conceptualized by immunitary whiteness and through a methodological note on doing Black whiteness studies (Leonardo, 2013). Turning from theoretical and methodo-

logical considerations, this article historically analogizes current anti-CRT legislation to the Kanawha County textbook controversy of 1974, which similarly sought to negatively protect the curricular souls of white children, before concluding by positing Black sociality as way of affirming educational life. Given the present political success of anti-CRT legislation, it is important to ask how education might respond? Any educational response must ask why negative protections of white emotionality succeed and how Black sociality can help education reimagine itself affirmatively?

Locating anti-CRT legislation both historically and alongside recent violent displays of white supremacy highlight how white emotionality increasingly orders both schooling and society. According to Matias (2016a, 2016b), white emotionality recognizes that emotions are epistemically and ontologically real. Institutions like education structure emotions through processes of socialization within which feelings are governed by a racial hierarchy that privileges the emotional comfort of whites (especially, white men) over the emotional wellbeing of people of color (especially, women of color). “The emotionalities of whiteness are given innate status, whereas the emotionalities of people of Color are rendered both symptom of social construction and innately *unworthy* of humanity” (Matias, 2016a, p. 6). Within this rank ordering of emotionality, whites are allowed to own their emotions whenever there is perceived damage to them and permitted to evade culpability whenever their emotions cause harm and injury to people of color. This affective sleight of hand defines the emotional parameters of white victimhood within education (Zembylas, 2021).

White emotionality exists along an affective terrain within which whites tend to remain unparadoxically emotionally frozen and perpetually angry about being made to feel anything related to racism. The former is steeped in avoidance; whereas the latter is immersed in claims of “reverse racism” aimed at prioritizing whiteness. Examples of this complementarity include white teacher candidates who, following Love (2019), claim to love all children despite being unwilling to utter the phrase “Black Lives Matter.” Undergirding this claim are unreflective appeals to equality and demonstrably false assertions by future white teachers that they will treat all children the same. Disciplinary data and the fact that students of color, particularly Black students, are disproportionately overrepresented within special education disprove the presumed neutrality of such assertions. What these data substantiate is a color-evasiveness (Annamma et al., 2017) that whites utilize to simultaneously affect both avoidance and anger. White emotionality is not only audible in color-evasive claims of race-neutrality but also in angry cries that whites will not be replaced or that the 2020 presidential election was stolen. These vocal affectations of white supremacy call upon whites (especially, white teachers, teacher candidates, and teacher educators) to disinvest from the white imagination because it is “nothing but a false mecca used to shield whiteness and protect against racial realism” (Matias, 2016b, p. 96).

The events introduced above are invitations into the same white imagination that purposefully ignores data which repeatedly proves that white teachers do not, in fact, treat all children the same. Disinvesting from this invitation is critical because once accepted it grants whites a presumed right to angrily demand that the present be undone and that history be remade in an image that protects the emotional integrity of whiteness. Legislation designed to eliminate discussing the historical legacy and present effects of racism embody such efforts. While such efforts are not new to education (Brown & Brown, 2015), what is perhaps unique to the recent wave of anti-CRT legislation are explicit appeals to the emotionality of white children for whom such discussions may cause feelings of discomfort. These bans codify active misrecognitions that pedagogies that expose present-historical logics of whiteness are forms of anti-white racism because they make

white children feel bad. Proponents of such bans render these feelings material before comparing this damage to the harm and injury people of color suffer from whiteness. Within this epistemic-ontological sleight of hand, white feelings can only be prioritized through immunitary protections that purposefully ignore the sociopolitical reality of white supremacy. This rank ordering of emotionality is foundational to *Herrenvolk* democracies, which racially assemble who is human (white) and less-than-human (nonwhite) before dividing society against itself according to these racist determinations (Weheliye, 2104).

Theoretical Framework: Conceptualizing Immunitary Whiteness

Conceptualizing anti-CRT legislation is important for two reasons. First, doing so explicates how education's current survival complex (Love, 2019) negates the lives of students of color and educational life more generally. Secondly, interrogating these bans imagines schooling otherwise, as an antiracist homeplace (hooks, 1990) that affirms Black sociality as inextricable to educational life itself. These two inflective points of educational life encapsulate the emerging field of educational biopolitics (Bourassa, 2018), which is interested in exploring the types of life schooling negates and alternative educational arrangements that might affirm the lives of students of color. These valences of educational biopolitics are, in turn, informed by Esposito's (2008) recasting of Foucauldian biopolitics as an immunity/community relation. The former half of this relation reflects processes of subjection and is associated with negative protections of educational life. Love (2019) describes how schooling negates the educational life of students of color: "I call this the educational survival complex, in which students are left learning to merely survive, learning how schools mimic the world they live in, thus making schools a training site for a life of exhaustion" (p. 27).

Anti-CRT legislation likewise subjects students of color to harm and injury despite advancing claims that no student should be made to feel bad. Such efforts are negative because they can only invest in the educational livelihoods of white children by rendering the educational vitality of children of color, particularly Black children, disposable. To paraphrase Foucault's (1990) original formulation: anti-CRT legislation *fosters* a specific form of educational life (whiteness) while *disallowing* educative vitalities constituted by alternative educational arrangements (e.g., Black sociality) to the point of death. Biopolitical critiques elucidate how racism orders education in ways that are increasingly negative and lethal, but which could be otherwise. Toward the former, Lewis (2009) maps how the eugenic underpinnings of the mental hygiene movement created an immunization paradigm that continues to govern educational life through, for instance, racist applications of deficit thinking. Within this paradigm, racial capitalist schooling leverages intelligence to determine which lives are worthy of educational resources and those that are devoid of future economic value (Pierce, 2017). What results is a biopedagogy that must constantly seek out "pathologies." Extending Esposito (2008), this hunt defines the workings of immunization within education. That is, it demonstrates how schooling preserves lives deemed worthy of educational investment while segregating lives determined to be improper (Bourassa & Margonis, 2017).

As important as these examples of educational biopolitics are, it seems reasonable to ask how present-historical interrogations of educational psychology relate to anti-CRT legislation? Following Bourassa and Margonis (2017), the above examples substantiate how "life is preserved *not* through affirmation, but rather through a subtraction" (p. 618). Interrogations of how educational psychology emerged are helpful because they establish a conceptual link between negative

protections of educational life and the guaranteeing of educational resources. Kearl (2019) explores this propertied logic with specific reference to special education to argue that the capacity to request educational resources (i.e., Individualized Education Programs) qualifies oneself as a sovereign individual in possession of oneself. Lockean articulations of property feature prominently within this conceptualization of immunitary whiteness. Of specific interest is the substantiation of a *Herrenvolk* Lockeanism “where whiteness itself becomes property, nonwhites do not fully, or at all, own themselves, and nonwhite labor does not appropriate nature” (Mills, 1997, p. 96). Immunitary whiteness functions through a subtractive logic that denies nonwhites access to the Lockean ideal that one’s body is the first property. This ideal not only defines the contours of neoliberal articulations of individualism but of life itself. Understood as a self-enclosure against community obligations, individualism negatively defines life as whatever is appropriated as one’s own. Following Harris (1993), American jurisprudence continues to recognize this expectation as settled precedent and continually extends this scientific-legal reasoning into the realm of noncorporeal protections of property (e.g., feelings).

Immunitary whiteness argues that education perpetuates this appropriating logic whenever white demands for more/greater educational resources are recognized despite being predicated on subtractive logics that segregate students of color. Applied to anti-CRT legislation, immunitary whiteness not only reveals how the curriculum is increasingly understood to be the exclusive accumulated property of whiteness but how claims that no student should be made to feel bad articulate perceived intrusions to this same property. The Racial Contract instantiates emotional identification with this property as a prerequisite for participation within *Herrenvolk* democracies. Immunitary whiteness negatively protects both schooling and society by enclosing each as proper to whiteness. Immunitary whiteness helps to conceptualize how such negative protections of educational life are justified through an admixture of scientific and legal reasoning which presuppose that whiteness is solely responsible for the wellness of schooling and society rather than an endemic cause of harm and injury to both.

Interrogations of educational psychology, including uses of special education, demonstrate how education fosters a specific form of educational life through subtractions that are predicated on racial hygiene, whether by eugenic science or through legislation designed to cleanse the curriculum of America’s racist past and present. These negative protections increasingly normalize the immunitary capacity of whiteness to operate as a propertied defense against community expropriations. Immunitary whiteness must both continuously hunt for risks to enclose itself against and continually invent new ideations of property damage (e.g., feelings). If education within the emergence of educational psychology was threatened by Black and indigenous populations labeled as “pathological” by eugenic science, the risk to the proper education of white children being articulated by anti-CRT legislation is that such knowledge will devalue whiteness by causing white children to recognize how their present personhood is historically contingent upon Black and Brown lives being made to regularly feel less-than-human across schooling and society. Finally, as the negative valence of educational biopolitics, immunitary whiteness finds common cause with, while also theoretically extending, previous conceptualizations of white immunity (Cabrera, 2017).

A Methodological Note: Doing Black Whiteness Studies

Immunitary whiteness is situated within Matias and Boucher’s (2021) argument that current discussions of white privilege and white fragility obfuscate critical analyses of how people of

color suffer from whiteness. Uncritical Critical Whiteness Studies, or what Matias and Boucher refer to as white whiteness studies, confuse racial awareness (wokeness) with antiracism and instantiate white ignorance as a curricular norm. White whiteness studies pedagogically terminate at making white students aware of their non-knowing and presents this awareness as a successful curricular outcome; whereas pedagogies designed to challenge white ignorance not only ask how and why non-knowing conditions are reproduced but also how these conditions benefit whites and negatively impact the vitality of students of color across schooling and society. The latter requires what Leonardo (2013) describes as Black whiteness studies, that is, pedagogies that do not allow white students to evasively feign ignorance of the harm and injury whiteness causes. Black whiteness studies are vital to rectifying pedagogies which presume the US is a postracial polity that equally distributes benefits and burdens.

Black whiteness studies also utilize Black intellectual thought. With specific reference to biopolitics, Weheliye (2014) argues that it is important to recognize that Blackness has always been concerned with how the US racial polity ignores the present-historical fact that its policies foster whiteness while letting Black life die. Accordingly, slavery—extended through Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and so-called “Stand Your Ground” laws—functions as a primary biopolitical site for recognizing how humanity is racially assembled into human (white) and less-than-human (nonwhite) categories. The central thesis of Weheliye’s critical re-evaluation of biopolitics is that Black life has always existed precariously between life and death given the capacity of racism to dis/allow its very existence. Extending this insight, Pierce (2017) suggests that the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois provide a methodology for doing Black whiteness studies: “schools play a pivotal role within the racializing assemblages that produce unequal forms of life... As such, Du Bois’s work is a point of entry for future work that bridges biopolitical and educational research in highly relevant ways” (p. 27).

Du Bois was keenly aware of educational biopolitics despite writing before the advent of this critical framework. Indeed, following Weheliye (2014), biopolitics articulates a criticality already integral to experiencing Blackness. Take, for example, the following passage from a speech Du Bois (1973/2001) delivered at Fisk University in 1933:

[W]e have to remember that here in America, in the year 1933, we have a situation which cannot be *ignored*...Our education is more and more not only being *confined* to our own schools but to a segregated public school system far below the average of the nation with one-third of our children continuously out of school. And above all, and this we like least to mention, we suffer from a social *ostracism* which is so *deadening* and *discouraging* that we are compelled to either lie about it or to turn our faces toward the red flag of revolution. It consists of the kind of studied and repeated emphasized public insult which during all the long history of the world has led men to kill or be killed. And in the full face of any effort which any black man may make to escape this *ostracism* for himself, stands this flaming sword of racial doctrine which will distract his efforts and *energy* if it does not lead him to *spiritual suicide*. (pp. 120-121; emphasis added)

This passage calls attention to how schooling and society negated Black life by making the newly emancipated Black population into a problem; producing knowledge regimes and institutions to measure, invest, and calculate this problem; and creating technologies of control (i.e., white supremacy) to govern this problem (Pierce, 2017). Du Bois (1973/2001) is describing neg-

ative conditions of social death (ostracism) which render Black life bare across schooling and society. What results from this subtractive logic is a segregated public school system that operates through biopower (confinement) and which (re)produces deadening and discouraging conditions that are disproportionality allocated across the population. Importantly, the US racial polity is aware of these conditions but purposefully ignores them thus disallowing the vital energy of Black life up to the point of death (spiritual suicide). This biopolitically-informed reading might also be understood as a form of Critical Race Hermeneutics (Allen, 2021) in its methodological recognition that racial capitalist schooling is not an unconscious aberration of an otherwise ideal public education system, it a system of education designed to support a *Herrenvolk* democracy.

Disentangling this ideal necessitates interrogating the continuing legacy of white supremacy in America. Mills (1988) suggest that there are four hypotheses for this legacy: (1) the US was never a white supremacist polity; (2) the US was a white supremacist polity prior to, for instance, 1954 without lasting effects; (3) the US was a white supremacist polity prior to 1954 with lasting effects; and (4) despite a shift from de jure to de facto racism, the US continues to be a white supremacist polity (p. 143). Anti-CRT legislation utilize hypothesis 1 (or at minimum a hardline version of hypothesis 2) in claiming that racism should not be discussed because it may cause white children emotional discomfort. Revisiting the Kanawha County textbook controversy lends these hypotheses further explanation. The curricular souls of white children are a hermeneutic key to this understanding. Following Harris (1993), as an inward expression of the self that outwardly substantiates one's humanity, soul functions as a noncorporeal property that negates the educational life of students of color while immunizing white students against community expropriations.

Negations: The Curricular Souls of White Children

Mason (2009) documents how white parents living in Kanawha County, West Virginia in 1974 organized political opposition to a proposed multiracial language arts curriculum out of fear for the souls of "our children" and to protect the nation as a whole. Parents in Kanawha County in 1974 and again today ground their political opposition in the emotionality of white victimhood and feelings of future ideological captivity. Both likewise share a desire to rewrite the present moment while it is still happening in an effort to avoid an apocalyptic future. Mason elaborates: "A white, right-wing invocation of spirituality puts an apocalyptic emphasis on the future, projecting white people forward into a postwhite world only to send them back to the future of avoiding that demise" (p. 151). The Kanawha County textbook controversy is a useful historical analogue for understanding contemporary anti-CRT legislation because it exposes how whiteness biopolitically leverages the curricular souls of white children.

While Mason (2009) argues that the Kanawha County textbook controversy involved a complicated history of how white Appalachian identity was reproduced by an emerging New Right politics, there was nonetheless a particular flashpoint that ignited the most violent curriculum dispute in American history: the inclusion of *Soul on Ice* in a new multiracial language arts curriculum recommended to the Kanawha County Board of Education. Protestors routinely referenced this book to argue that the proposed language arts curriculum was morally degraded and to insist that dialectology alternatives to the existing curriculum and situational ethics were lowering standards. School board member Alice Moore, the face of the protest movement, for example, argued that Booker T. Washington and similar "respectable" Black authors should receive greater curricular attention not only because of the content of their writings but because of their unambiguous and standardized form.

Moving from *Soul on Ice* to the curricular souls of white West Virginian children, Mason (2009) observes how the Kanawha County textbook controversy articulated “an intersection of two cultural traditions of ‘soul’—one pristinely and immanently white, fundamentalist, Appalachian, and Christian, and the other nonetheless pure as a manifestation of an African American aesthetic, black power, and urban social critique” (pp. 159-160). Despite presumptions that the former is eternal, Du Bois (1920/2016) argues that “the discovery of personal whiteness among the world’s peoples is a very modern thing...the world in a sudden, emotional conversion has discovered that it is white and by that token, wonderful!” (p. 17). For Du Bois, the souls of white folk are purposefully structured through an ignorance designed to arouse mental peace and moral satisfaction even as it leaves Black America and people and places colonized by European settlement dead and dying. This ignorance does not happen accidentally. Du Bois was keenly aware that the souls of white folk are reproduced through “the deliberately educated ignorance of white schools” (p. 23). The souls of white folk are not eternally occurring, they are racially assembled through a caste education system that privileges the “white world” while dehumanizing the “dark world” (Pierce, 2017, p. 24). Colonialism, imperialism, and education thus mutually instructed each other in how to hierarchically order schooling and racially govern society.

The emotional conversion Du Bois (1920/2016) identifies gained saliency during the Kanawha County textbook controversy and continues to find ascendancy today through narratives of victimhood and captivity that cast the souls of white folk as the unassailable core of American identity. Within such narratives, political work is a personal conviction, an expression of being called upon to save the soul of the nation. This sense of being called upon explains the entry of conservative Christian leaders, who had previously viewed political and pastoral work separately, into the textbook controversy. These leaders were emotionally converted into political work through a spiritual aligning of the personal and national soul, both of which were immutably white and each of which was being besieged by the proposed multiracial language arts curriculum. The same emotional conversion that moved conservative Christians from the political sidelines also spiritually united working- and middle-class white parents with neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan.

The New Right emerging from this controversy focused on how discourses of cultural assault, religious plight, and spiritual degradation could invoke emotions of white victimhood and national captivity while also evading insinuations that textbook protests were racist: “references to spirituality made the protestors of multiracial curriculum not seem overly political or racial, but only natural—as natural as a parent’s love” (Mason, 2009, p. 158). White parents in 1974 and today share an insistence that they are not racist as well as an apocalyptic belief that both their children’s and America’s soul is being held captive by antiracist pedagogies. In addition to being a hermeneutic key, the curricular souls of white children are a biopolitical hinge that naturalizes parental love as white. Captivity narratives resonated in Kanawha County because residents believed that the proposed multiracial language arts curriculum victimized the moral character and racial purity of white children’s souls. The Kanawha County textbook controversy naturalized white parents protesting to protect “our children” while also normalizing an apocalyptic, *Herren-volk* logic that the souls of white children are the future of America.

While the political success of anti-CRT legislation can be traced to this similitude, there are also important differences. First, the face of today’s movement is not “Sweet Alice” but a self-described political brawler who is less inclined to couch racialized opposition in spiritual rhetoric and more likely to biopolitically weaponize white emotionality. Second, the normalizing of white protest as a natural extension of parental love persists despite inflective changes. If the educational menace in 1974 was external, embodied by Eldridge Cleaver, and perceived as integration and

miscegenation; the curricular peril besieging white children today is internal, embodied by themselves, and perceived as the ontological decline of whiteness. This distinction recalls the above discussion of how education must continually seek out “pathologies” to immunize white children against. This hunt is without end and quickly becomes an autoimmunitary response that continually divides schooling against itself to create such protections (Bourassa & Margonis, 2017; Lewis, 2009). Invocations of soul by textbook protestors operationalized a revanchist colonizing of a concept that throughout the twentieth century was aesthetically and politically linked to Blackness. In “claiming protective custody of their children’s souls as the essence of *their* godliness and of their ‘whiteness,’” protestors not only rendered Cleaver as soulless they also stole soul from Blackness (Mason, 2009, p. 159). Following Esposito (2008), such bio-spiritual incorporations are problematic because once the soul is introduced into biopolitical discourses, racism quickly adjudicates who—which bodies—possess a soul, which then determines who is proper to the body politic.

If the Kanawha County textbook controversy enclosed white students against an external multiracial curriculum to protect their curricular souls, anti-CRT legislation is more suggestive of a productive inclusion (Bourassa, 2018) that biopolitically steers sociality toward particular directions (i.e., the ostracism of Black life). A biopolitics of inclusion is more dangerous than repressive exclusions because it is obfuscatory (e.g., the the civil rights movement isn’t excluded, its included to valorize whiteness) and requires constant internal regulations of educational life. Take, for example, Florida’s 2021 change to the Required Instruction Planning and Reporting statute:

Examples of theories that distort historical events and are inconsistent with State Board approved standards include the denial or minimization of the Holocaust, and the teaching of Critical Race Theory, meaning the theory that racism is not merely the product of prejudice, but that racism is embedded in American society and its legal systems in order to uphold the supremacy of white persons. Instruction may not utilize material from the 1619 Project and may not define American history as something other than the creation of a new nation based largely on universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence. Instruction must include the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments.

This statutory change is productive in its insistence that historical events should not be excluded, but rather included in ways that intentionally steer white students toward an ideal and demonstrably false version of American history. This ideal aligns the curricular souls of white children and the Racial Contract through a *Herrenvolk* hierarchicalization of knowledge that, on the one hand, roots Black intellectual thought (e.g., the 1619 Project) “in an ontological condition of less than human” and, on the other, “supports Whiteness as a fully human condition” (Pierce, 2017, p. 42) “based largely on universal principles.” The Kanawha County textbook controversy illustrates how protesting on behalf of the curricular souls of white children inflects this noncorporeal property with material educational life. Parental protests, both then and now, biopolitically link the curricular souls of “our children” to the soul of the nation via whiteness making white children the exclusive property of schooling and society who must be protected against community expropriations like a new multiracial language arts curriculum.

Affirmations: Black Sociality

Internal regulations of educational life are currently moving beyond anti-CRT legislation toward determining proper forms of emotionality and sociality. For example, in addition to the above statutory change, Florida is seeking to eliminate social and emotional learning (SEL). Opponents of SEL advance an ideal vision of education as an academic space where white emotionality and sociality are the norm because they are “based largely on universal principles.” While SEL is not without criticism (Kearl, 2022), its elimination further regulates away hope that schooling could be an antiracist homeplace that affirms Black sociality. Combined with anti-CRT legislation, such efforts perpetuate an immunitary logic of dark suffering. While Love (2019) is critical of how education and, in particular, white teachers imagine themselves as “somehow immune to perpetuating dark suffering” (p. 22), affirmations of Black sociality like Black Joy forever hopefully refuse this suffering. For Love, the pervasiveness of the former necessitates the latter: “Joy provides a type of nourishment that is needed to be dark and fully alive in White spaces, such as schools” (p. 120). Black Joy affirms not just Black life but educational life *in toto* against the deadening and discouraging conditions reproduced by anti-CRT legislation. As an expression of Black sociality, Black Joy insists that Black children are assets not deficits who should be supported in embracing their full humanity. Black Joy refracts Du Bois’ (1973/2001) biopolitical observation that “we have had as our goal—American full citizenship, nationally recognized. This has failed—flatly and decisively failed. Very well. We’re not dead yet. We are not going to die” (p. 132).

Love (2019) helps to map an educational biopolitics that reimages educational life in ways that might affirm the lives of students of color. Rethinking negations of educational life requires turning from immunity to community. If immunization is the negative protection of life, then community is the affirmation of life itself, which Esposito (2008) defines as an obligation of reciprocal donation that jeopardizes any individual ownership of community. It is here that Esposito’s etymological analysis of how immunity and community share the Latin root *munus* is helpful. Defined as a debt, a pledge, or a gift to be given, *munus* coheres immunity and community together. Immunity is an enclosure from the sacrifice of gift giving or an exemption from the reciprocal debt owed to community. For example, Matias (2016a) suggests that whites cling to a sadomasochistic love of whiteness, which immunizes them “from their human responsibility to shoulder their fair share” (p. 61). Immunity is an exemption from community obligations that takes the gift of community as one’s own. By contrast, community is an expropriation of oneself as proper and property which exposes the singular individual to a plurality in which life itself, not idealized universal principles, is the norm. It is a turning of oneself inside out toward obligations that are always owed but which can never be collected because they are collectively shared.

Du Bois (1973/200) helps to link Esposito’s (2008) etymological analysis of *munus* and Black sociality: “We already came bringing gifts. The song we sang was fresh from the lips that threw it round the world. We saw and heard voices that charmed an emperor and a queen. We believed in the supreme power of the ballot in the hands of the masses to transform the world” (p. 118). While Du Bois does not specify these gifts, they might be imagined, through the criticality of Moten (1988), as Blackness itself. For Moten, Blackness is an undercommon and fugitive social life that exists apart from any universal ideal of a polity embodied by scientific-legal reasoning that deems Black life “pathological.” Instead, Black sociality is a lived experience of *dehiscence*, an opening up or spilling out toward a life-in-common. This is perhaps a gift to which Du Bois alludes: the refusal to submit to deadening and discouraging conditions of educational confinement

and segregation. There is joy in this refusal. As a life-in-common, Black sociality refuses any polity structured by productive inclusions that claim community as one's own property. This is perhaps also a gift to which Du Bois alludes: an educational homeplace that affirms the shared humanity of Black life by contesting schooling's hierarchical obsession with white, propertied individualism.

The ontic presence of these gifts—Black Joy and homeplace—creates both autoimmunitary responses within whiteness and a forever hopeful, if not also regularly thwarted, reaching out toward a shared collectivity that recognizes Black sociality as an affirmation of educational life. Anti-CRT legislation embodies the former valence of this immunity/community relation. Still, education could be otherwise. An affirmative biopolitics is animated by the gifts of community already expressed in Blackness and which cannot be repaid except through expropriations of the white propertied self toward a life-in-common. Lloyd (2020) elaborates: “The sociality of the aesthetic refuses the moment of individuation through which the Kantian subject of taste arrives at its universality by way of the enclosure of a common sense that proscribes the feelings in which life-in-common is predicated as ‘pathological’” (p. 84). The Kantian subject invoked here shares an exclusionary identity with the Lockean subject written into the US Constitution and codified in anti-CRT legislation (Mills, 1997). Blackness exists in apposition to this exclusion, that is, it exists alongside codifications of white sovereignty while also refusing to become a property or proper identity. Rather, “blackness is the moving ground of solidarity” (Lloyd, 2020, p. 89). While it would be a mistake to posit Black sociality as a cure for immunitary whiteness, it is nonetheless a way of freedom dreaming (Love, 2019) against education's autoimmunitary enclosure toward an opening up or spilling out of alternative educational arrangements.

Conclusion

This article has argued that anti-CRT legislation biopolitically weaponizes white emotionality and curricularly codifies white ignorance. Immunitary whiteness conceptualizes how anti-CRT legislation negatively protects both schooling and society by enclosing each as proper to whiteness. Following Du Bois' (1973/200) reflections on education, what results from this enclosure is a *Herrenvolk* ordering of schooling and the governing of society via the Racial Contract. The Kanawha County textbook controversy of 1974 demonstrates how the curricular souls of white children biopolitically embody this enclosure. In positing Black sociality as a gift that can affirm educational life, this article has endeavored to do Black whiteness studies, that is, it has utilized Black intellectual thought to counter-narrate anti-CRT legislation and its racializing assemblages of Black thought and life as less-than-human. Black sociality is a critically important response to anti-CRT legislation because it refuses the reproduction of social ostracism and pathological ascriptions of Black life. Within this refusal is a forever hopeful reimagining of education as an antiracist homeplace imbued with Black Joy.

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