50 YEARS OF LOVING: ESSAY

ROBERT BRACAMONTES BLACK CROW†

Our input into how society is structured and functions is often discarded, because the colonized are not supposed to analyze the slave master’s authority or blessings.

In 1967, I was thirteen years old and fell in love with a girl named Pat, and today, we have been married for almost forty years. We walked holding hands as we passed my family’s home. After several weeks my mother asked who was the Chinese girl. It was the very first time in my life that I realized that Pat was different.

Many might say we were lucky that Loving v. Virginia¹ helped make this marriage possible. But what did it actually allow? It gave us permission to become part of the societal experience reserved for those in control of a white supremacist society. It was a road to assimilation.

As we grew older I asked, “Pat, did you know I was Mexica Indigenous?” She said yes, and I explained that I never saw her as Chinese when we first met. It was those watching that pointed it out. It is society, not formal law, that still stigmatizes us about being different. But no matter what happened as a result of Loving v. Virginia, society does not change as simply as the stroke of a pen or writing a new law.

Fast forward to the mid-nineteen nineties, when we are reminded about the strong hold of white supremacy and racist thoughts as we walked along the beach. We walked with our five children on the north side of the Santa Monica pier. I was recovering from a back injury. Several young white men and women are staring at us as we walk in proximity. They scream out the clearest words I have ever heard, “Hey, you Niggers don’t belong on this side of the pier.” They made it clear that we had created a mud race, hapa race, which meant our children were incomplete.

Loving v. Virginia made it clear that race could not interfere with the marriages between races, but it did little to curb the reality of racism and white supremacy.

According to Judge Leon Bazile:

Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And, but

† Robert Black Crow Bracamontes was a Community Columnist in a local section of the L.A. Times for two years. He has published articles in the Harvard Independent Magazine, Smithsonian Institution News Letter, and at www.onlinewithbob.com.

¹ 388 U.S. 1 (1967).
for the interference with his arrangement, there would be no cause for such marriage. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.\(^2\)

Marriage is but an illusion of something loving. It is in fact a maze of legal obligations established to gain property and perhaps receive public approval of a union between two people. My love and affection for my wife remains the same from the time I met her, when we were both thirteen years old, to this day. It has nothing to do with marriage, even interracial marriage like ours.

Laws in America are often bent on punishing the slave, those of us that have never been seen as equal to the white master. And equal and freedom are different for us. To be equal is to be the same as one’s slave master. To be free is to have the choice to live with dignity outside the system of white supremacy. And not engage in the perpetuation of a dominance accepted.

So, did *Loving v. Virginia* change the world? No. Did it change a law? Yes. And now interracial couples can encase themselves in a prison of legal obligations that have nothing to do with love.

Yes I live in that scenario of the colonized mind. We are still married, but how are we received away from the letter of the law? The law was changed for my wife and I, so we could live happily ever after.

Do civil rights laws impact the deep seeded white racism that exists in the fabric of society? Is interracial marriage truly accepted?

If we add the symmetry of Emma Goldman’s views on marriage, then add race, we have a harsh reality to consider. In 1914 Emma Goldman said, “Marriage and love have nothing in common; they are as far apart as the poles; are, in fact antagonistic to each other.”\(^3\)

After the passage of *Loving v. Virginia*, all people of color were now given permission to marry white people. How gracious is the law of white supremacy? Those that were previously thought of as too inferior to be married to whites are given permission by the occupation forces, the settlers.

When I first saw her, she was as beautiful as a million sunrises, a million sunsets. I knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her. Oh and race never entered my mind. Love is void of race. It does not need patriarchal institutions to exalt love.

Race judgment is the creation of white supremacy. The Europeans brought it with them during the American Holocaust, the Geno-


\(^3\) Emma Goldman, *Marriage and Love*, in *Anarchism and Other Essays* 233 (1914).
cide of ninety-five percent of my Ancestors. It includes us and excludes us as it sees fit to maintain supremacy. To exclude us from marriage with whites seems unreasonable, but to give permission to marry a white person is equally arrogant and racist. The Supreme Court did not have to rule on how beautiful or how completely in love I was with her. Love has nothing to do with marriage or race. Marriage is an institutional conundrum designed for the dominants in this society.

My Ancestors’ society was filled with women who were doctors, teachers, leader warriors, and worked side by side with men as equals. During the same period women in Europe were being burned at the stake for wanting to learn to read.

It is not a great honor to be part of an institution that engages women and belittles Indigenous people into a patriarchal racist system. We cannot let anyone dictate how to love, when to love, and what love is. Each group of people is different with all of their beautiful cultures and those cultures need to remain intact. Absent of preconceived ideas of what is a happy legal life according to colonial standards.

Robert (Bob) Bracamontes
Yu-va’-tal ’A’lla-mal (Black Crow)
Acjachemen Nation, Juaneno Tribe
Mni Wiconi