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Donald E. Hall and Annamarie Jagose,
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Andrea Bebell and Susan Potter

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Chapter 7

Roderick A. Ferguson

INTRODUCTION: QUEER OF COLOR CRITIQUE, HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, AND CANONICAL SOCIOLOGY

Roderick A. Ferguson is Professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (2004), from which the following excerpt is taken. A sociologist who specializes in American Studies, Ferguson's scholarship examines queer African American culture, contemporary and classical social theory, and ethnic and racial social history.

In this excerpt from his introduction, Ferguson promotes a queer of color analysis that considers how gender and sexual norms are racialized within the context of capitalism. In doing so, Ferguson calls attention to the paradoxical nature of capital—capital's reinforcement of heteropatriarchal universals and its disruption of such universals due to the necessity for surplus labor within a capitalist system. Ferguson discusses the black drag-queen prostitute as a figure that aptly demonstrates not only the racialization of gender and sexual norms, but also the disorganizing effects of capital and the limitations of Marxist analysis in accounting for intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in relation to capital. Despite Ferguson's critique of Marxism, he argues for a revised use of historical materialism—one that acknowledges the formative role that race, gender, and sexuality play in political and economic relations.

IN MARLON RIGGS'S *Tongues Untied*, a black drag-queen prostitute sashays along a waterfront. She has decked herself in a faux leather bomber and a white tiger-striped dress that stops just below her knees. Her face is heavy with foundation as she ponders into the distance. She holds a cigarette between fingers studded with cheap press-on nails, dragging on it with lips painted red. A poem by Essex Hemphill and a ballad by Nina Simone drum in the background. It is difficult to discern whether she is melancholic about her life or simply satisfied. This uncertainty, this hint of pleasure and alrightness, flies in the face of those who

say that her life is nothing more than a tangle of pathologies and misfortunes. In the pleasure of her existence lies a critique of commonplace interpretations of her life. Doubtless, she knows that her living is not easy. But that's a long way from reducing the components of her identity to the conditions of her labor. Conceding to the meanness of life, probably for her, is a far cry from assuming that her gender and sexual difference are the reason for her poverty and that who she is attests to the absence of agency.

This scene captures the defining elements of this book. In the film, the drag-queen prostitute is a fixture of urban capitalism. Figures like her, ones that allegedly represent the socially disorganizing effects of capital, play a powerful part in past and contemporary interpretations of political economy. In those narratives, she stands for a larger black culture as it has engaged various economic and social formations. That engagement has borne a range of alienations, each estrangement securing another: her racial difference is inseparable from her sexual incongruity, her gender eccentricity, and her class marginality. Moreover, the country of her birth will call out to "the American people" and never mean her or others like her. She is multiply determined, regulated, and excluded by differences of race, class, sexuality, and gender. As drag-queen prostitute, she embodies the intersections of formations thought to be discrete and transparent, a confusion of that which distinguishes the heterosexual (i.e., "prostitute") from the homosexual (i.e., "drag queen"). She is disciplined by those within and outside African American communities, reviled by leftist-radicals, conservatives, heterosexuals, and mainstream queers alike, erased by those who wish to present or make African American culture the embodiment of all that she is not—respectability, domesticity, heterosexuality, normativity, nationality, universality, and progress. But her estrangements are not hers to own. They are, in fact, the general estrangements of African American culture. In its distance from the ideals upheld by epistemology, nationalisms, and capital, that culture activates forms of critique.

The scene, thus, represents the social heterogeneity that characterizes African American culture. To make sense of that culture as the site of gender and sexual formations that have historically deviated from national ideals, we must situate that culture within the genealogy of liberal capitalist economic and social formations. That genealogy can, in turn, help us perceive how the racialized gender and sexual diversity pertaining to African American cultural formations is part of the secular trends of capitalist modes of production. These are trends that manifest themselves globally, linking terrains separated by time and space.

Queer of color and the critique of liberal capitalism

The preceding paragraphs suggest that African American culture indexes a social heterogeneity that oversteps the boundaries of gender propriety and sexual normativity. That social heterogeneity also indexes formations that are seemingly outside the spatial and temporal bounds of African American culture. These arguments oblige us to ask what mode of analysis would be appropriate for interpreting the drag-queen prostitute as an image that allegorizes and symbolizes that social heterogeneity, a heterogeneity that associates African American culture with gender and sexual variation and critically locates that culture within the genealogy of the West. To assemble such a mode of interpretation, we may begin with the nascent and emergent formation known as queer of color analysis.[1]

In "Home, Houses, Nonidentity: 'Paris Is Burning,'" Chandan Reddy discusses the expulsion of queers of color from literal homes and from the privileges bestowed by the nation as "home." Reddy's essay begins with the silences that both marxism and liberal pluralism share, silences about the intersections of gender, sexual, and racial exclusions. Reddy states,

> Unaccounted for within both Marxist and liberal pluralist discussions of the home and the nation, queers of color as people of color . . . take up the critical task of both remembering and rejecting the model of the "home" offered in the United States in two ways: first, by attending to the ways in which it was defined over and against people of color, and second, by expanding the locations and moments of that critique of the home to interrogate processes of group formation and self-formation from the experience of being expelled from their own dwellings and families for not conforming to the dictation of and demand for uniform gendered and sexual types.[2]

By identifying the nation as the domain determined by racial difference and gender and sexual conformity, Reddy suggests that the decisive intervention of queer of color analysis is that racist practice articulates itself generally as gender and sexual regulation, and that gender and sexual differences variegate racial formations. This articulation, moreover, accounts for the social formations that compose liberal capitalism.

In doing so, queer of color critique approaches culture as one site that compels identifications with and antagonisms to the normative ideals promoted by state and capital. For Reddy, national culture constitutes itself against subjects of color. Alternatively, culture produces houses peopled by queers of color, subjects who have been expelled from home. These subjects in turn "collectively remember home as a site of contradictory demands and conditions."[3] As it fosters both identifications and antagonisms, culture becomes a site of material struggle. As the site of identification, culture becomes the terrain in which formations seemingly antagonistic to liberalism, like marxism and revolutionary nationalism, converge with liberal ideology, precisely through their identification with gender and sexual norms and ideals. Queer of color analysis must examine how culture as a site of identification produces such odd bedfellows and how it—as the location of antagonisms—fosters unimagined alliances.

As an epistemological intervention, queer of color analysis denotes an interest in materiality, but refuses ideologies of transparency and reflection, ideologies that have helped to constitute marxism, revolutionary nationalism, and liberal pluralism. Marxism and revolutionary nationalism, respectively, have often figured nation and property as the transparent outcome of class and racial exclusions. Relatedly, liberal pluralism has traditionally constructed the home as the obvious site of accommodation and confirmation. Queer of color analysis, on the other hand, eschews the transparency of all these formulations and opts instead for an understanding of nation and capital as the outcome of manifold intersections that contradict the idea of the liberal nation-state and capital as sites of resolution, perfection, progress, and confirmation. Indeed, liberal capitalist ideology works to suppress the diverse components of state and capitalist formations. To the extent that marxism and revolutionary nationalism disavow race, gender, and sexuality's mutually formative role in political and economic relations is the extent to which liberal ideology captivates revolutionary nationalism and marxism. To restate, queer of color analysis presumes that liberal ideology occludes the intersecting saliency of race, gender, sexuality, and class in forming social practices. Approaching ideologies of transparency as formations that have worked to conceal those intersections means that queer of color analysis has to debunk the idea that race, class, gender, and sexuality are discrete formations, apparently insulated from one another. As queer of color critique challenges ideologies of discreteness, it attempts to disturb the idea that racial and national formations are obviously disconnected. As an intervention into queer of color analysis, this text attempts to locate African American racial formations alongside other racial formations and within epistemological procedures believed to be unrelated or tangential to African American culture.

To disidentify with historical materialism

By relating queer of color subjects and practices to marxism and liberal pluralism, Reddy suggests that queer of color analysis must critically engage the genealogy of materialist critique. In his book, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, José Esteban Muñoz argues, "Disidentification is the hermeneutical performance of decoding mass, high, or any other cultural field from the perspective of a minority subject who is disempowered in such a representational hierarchy."[4] As Muñoz suggests, queer of color critique decodes cultural fields not from a position outside those fields, but from within them, as those fields account for the queer of color subject's historicity. If the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class constitute social formations within liberal capitalism, then queer of color analysis obtains its genealogy within a variety of locations. We may say that women of color feminism names a crucial component of that genealogy as women of color theorists have historically theorized intersections as the basis of social formations. Queer of color analysis extends women of color feminism by investigating how intersecting racial, gender, and sexual practices antagonize and/or conspire with the normative investments of nation-states and capital.

As queer of color analysis claims an interest in social formations, it locates itself within the mode of critique known as historical materialism.[5] Since historical materialism has traditionally privileged class over other social relations, queer of color critique cannot take it up without revision, must not employ it without disidentification. If to disidentify means to "[recycle] and [rethink] encoded meaning" and "to use the code [of the majority] as raw material for representing a disempowered politics of positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture,"[6] then disidentification resembles Louis Althusser's rereading of historical materialism. Queer of color analysis disidentifies with historical materialism to *rethink* its categories and how they might conceal the materiality of race, gender, and sexuality. In this instance, to disidentify in no way means to discard.

Addressing the silences within Marx's writings that enable rather than disturb bourgeois ideology, silences produced by Marx's failure to theorize received abstractions like "division of labor, money, value, etc.," Althusser writes in *Reading Capital*,

> This silence is only "heard" at one precise point, just where it goes unperceived: when Marx speaks of the initial abstractions on which the work of transformation is performed. What are these initial abstractions? By what right does Marx accept in these initial abstractions the categories from which Smith and Ricardo started, thus suggesting that he thinks in continuity with their object, and that therefore there is no break in object between them and him? These two questions are really only one single question, precisely the question Marx does not answer, simply because he does not pose it. Here is the site of his silence, and this site, being empty, threatens to be occupied by the "natural" discourse of ideology, in particular, of empiricism. . . . An ideology may gather naturally in the hollow left by this silence, the ideology of a relation of real correspondence between the real and its intuition and representation, and the presence of an "abstraction" which operates on this real in order to disengage from it these "abstract general relations," i.e., an empiricist ideology of abstraction.[7]

As empiricism grants authority to representation, empiricism functions hegemonically, making representations seem natural and objective. To assume that categories conform to reality is to think with, instead of against, hegemony. As he uncritically appropriated the conceptions of political economy formulated by bourgeois economists, Marx abetted liberal

ideology. He identified with that ideology instead of disidentifying with it. Disidentifying with historical materialism means determining the silences and ideologies that reside within critical terrains, silences and ideologies that equate representations with reality. Queer of color analysis, therefore, extends Althusser's observations by accounting for the ways in which Marx's critique of capitalist property relations is haunted by silences that make racial, gender, and sexual ideologies and discourses commensurate with reality and suitable for universal ideals.

An ideology has gathered in the silences pertaining to the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class. We may locate that silence within one "tendency" of marxism. Writing about that tendency as part of marxism's critique of Western civilization, Raymond Williams states, "'Civilization' had produced not only wealth, order, and refinement, but as part of the same process poverty, disorder, degradation. It was attacked for its 'artificiality'—its glaring contrasts with a 'natural' or 'human' order."[8] As it kept silent about sexuality and gender, historical materialism, along with liberal ideology, took normative heterosexuality as the emblem of order, nature, and universality, making that which deviated from heteropatriarchal ideals the sign of disorder. In doing so, marxism thought in continuity with bourgeois definitions of "Civilization." Moreover, the distinction between civilization as progress versus civilization as disorder obtained meaning along the axes of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Hence, the distinction between normative heterosexuality (as the evidence of progress and development) and non-normative gender and sexual practices and identities (as the woeful signs of social lag and dysfunction) has emerged historically from the field of racialized discourse. Put plainly, racialization has helped to articulate heteropatriarchy as universal.

Marx universalized heteropatriarchy as he theorized property ownership. In *The German Ideology*, he bases the origins of property ownership within the tribe, stating,

> The first form of ownership is tribal . . . ownership. . . . The division of labor is at this stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the *natural* division of labor existing in the family. The social structure is, therefore, limited to an extension of the family; patriarchal family chieftains, below them the members of the tribe, finally slaves.[9]

For Marx, tribal ownership presumed a *natural* division of labor symbolized by the heterosexual and patriarchal family. This definition of the "tribe" as a signifier of natural divisions cohered with the use of that category in the nineteenth century. "Tribe" described a "loose *family* or collection headed not by a 'king' but by a 'chief' and denoted a *common essence associated with the premodern.*"[10] "Tribe" was a racialized category emerging out of the history of colonial expansion from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Tribes marked racial difference, securing and transmitting that difference from one person to the next through heteropatriarchal exchange and reproduction. As a racial category, "tribe" illustrates the ways in which racial discourses recruited gender and sexual difference to establish racial identity and essence.

In addition, Marx characterized communal essence and identity as a founding prerequisite for property relations. As he states,

> The spontaneously evolved tribal community, or, if you will, the herd—the common ties of blood, language, custom, etc.—is the first precondition of the appropriation of the objective conditions of life, and of the activity which gives material expression to, or objectifies it (activity as herdsmen, hunters, agriculturalists, etc.).[11]

The property relations presumed within tribal communities suggested a racialized essence garnered through heterosexual and patriarchal familial arrangements. Another way of wording this would be to say that Marx imagined social relations and agency—or as he says, "appropriation" and "activity"—through heteropatriarchy and racial difference simultaneously. Explicating this assumption about social relations and agency, Marx argues in *The German Ideology*, man, who "daily [remakes his] life . . . enters into historical development" by "[making] other men" and "[propagating] their kind."[12] Even earlier, in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Marx stated, "This direct, natural, and necessary relation of person to person is *the relation of man to woman*. In this natural species relationship, man's relation to nature is immediately his relation to man, just as his relation to man is his relation to nature—his own *natural* destination."[13] For Marx, heteropatriarchy was the racialized essence of Man and the standard of sociality and agency.

If a racially secured and dependent heteropatriarchy underlies Marx's origin narrative of social relations and historical agency, then capitalist property relations represent the ultimate obstacle to heteropatriarchal practice and being. In disrupting heteropatriarchy, capital disrupted man's fundamental essence. Locating this disruption within the emergence of the commodity form, Marx argues that

> [p]roduction does not simply produce man as a *commodity*, the *human commodity*, man in the role of *commodity*; it produces him in keeping with this role as a *mentally* and physically *dehumanized* being.—Immorality, deformity, and dulling of the workers and the capitalists.—Its product is the *self-conscious* and *self-acting* commodity . . . the human commodity. Great advance of Ricardo, Mill, etc., on Smith and Say, to declare the existence of the human being—the greater or lesser human productivity of the commodity—to be *indifferent* and even *harmful*.[14]

The commodity disrupts the moral parameters of subjectivity and agency. As Marx states, the commodification produces man as a "mentally and physically dehumanized being," deforming agency and distorting subjectivity.[15]

For Marx, the symbol of that dehumanization could be found in none other than the prostitute. He writes,

> Prostitution is only a *specific* expression of the *general* prostitution of the laborer, and since it is a relationship in which falls not the prostitute alone, but also the one who prostitutes—and the latter's abomination is still greater—the capitalist, etc., also comes under this head. . . . In the approach to woman as the spoil and handmaid of communal lust is expressed the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself.[16]

The prostitute proves capital's defilement of man. She symbolizes man's dehumanization or more specifically, man's feminization under capitalist relations of production. While man's essence in heteropatriarchy suggests undeterred connections with other humans, with one's self, and with nature, the prostitute represents the ways that capital disrupts those connections. Capital now violently mediates man's relationship to himself, to others, and to nature. As a figure of self-interest, the prostitute represents man's descent into vulgar egoism. Suggesting this egoism spawned by capitalist alienation, Marx argues, "[Alienated labor] estranges man's own body from him, as it does external nature and his spiritual essence, his human being."[17] We can see that violent mediation very clearly as the worker who—like all prostitutes—must sell his own labor to survive. Castrated from the means of

production, the worker has only that labor that resides in his body to sell. As the prostitute is regarded as the property of "communal lust," the worker is "branded . . . as the property of capital."[18] As Marx imagines capitalist expansion through the disruption of heteropatriarchy, capital implies the mobility of vice, the spread of immorality, and the eruption of social transgressions.

It was precisely this sort of eruption that bourgeois ideologues in nineteenth-century Britain feared the most. During this period, middle-class observers conflated the anarchic possibilities of economic production with a presumably burgeoning sexual deviancy among working-class communities, in general, and working-class women, in particular.[19] The prostitute symbolized poor and working-class communities' potential threat to gender stability and sexual normativity. As mills throughout London employed young British girls, enabling them to buy clothes and other items that were previously inaccessible, middle-class citizens often saw working-class girls' tastes in commodities as signs of awakening sexual appetites. Desires for ribbon, lace, and silks, those citizens reasoned, could entice young girls into a life of prostitution.[20] As Thomas Laqueur notes, "[W]orking-class women were thought to bear the dangers of uncontrolled desire that seemed to flow freely from one domain to another, from legitimate consumption to illegitimate sex."[21] Giving credence to the idea that industrialization was engendering prostitution, the French socialist and feminist Flora Tristan alleged that there were in "'London from 80,000–100,000 women—the flower of the population—living off prostitution'; on the streets and in 'temples raised by English materialism to their gods . . . male guests come to exchange their gold for debauchery.'"[22] Reports of out-of-wedlock births, prenuptial pregnancy, early marriage, masturbation, sexually active youth, and so forth arose during this period and were for the British middle class evidence of a peaking sexual chaos. In doing so, they conflated the reality of changing gender and sexual relations with the representation of the prostitute and the working class as pathologically sexual. As middle-class witnesses to industrialization understood their own families to be sufficiently anchored against the moral disruptions of capital, they regarded the working class as "rootless and uncontrolled—a sort of social correlative to unrestrained id."[23] Corroborating presumptions about industrial capital's encouragement of libertinism, Frederick Engels argued, "[N]ext to the enjoyment of intoxicating liquors, one of the principal faults of the English working-men is sexual license."[24] Marx's use of the prostitute as the apocalyptic symbol of capital's emergence points to his affinity with bourgeois discourses of the day. Both bourgeois ideologues and their radical opponents took the prostitute as the sign for the gendered and sexual chaos that commodification was bound to unleash.

More to the point, pundits understood this gender and sexual chaos to be an explicitly racial phenomenon. Indeed, in nineteenth-century Britain, the prostitute was a racial metaphor for the gender and sexual confusions unleashed by capital, disruptions that destabilized heteropatriarchal conformity and authority.[25] In fact, nineteenth-century iconography used the image of Sarah Bartmann, popularly known as the Hottentot Venus, who was exhibited in freak shows throughout London, to link the figure of the prostitute to the alleged sexual savagery of black women and to install nonwhite sexuality as the axis upon which various notions of womanhood turned.[26] As industrial capital developed and provided working-class white women with limited income and mobility, the prostitute became the racialized figure that could enunciate anxieties about such changes. Conflating the prostitute with the British working class inspired racial mythologies about the supposedly abnormal reproductive capacities and outcomes of that class. One tale suggested that the bodies of British working-class women could produce races heretofore unforeseen. One magistrate warned that if "empty casks were placed along the streets of Whitechapel," it would help spawn species of tub men who would wreak havoc on communities in Britain, creating the conditions by which "savages [would live] in the midst of civilization."[27]

The universalization of heteropatriarchy produces the prostitute as the other of heteropatriarchal ideals, an other that is simultaneously the effect of racial, gender, sexual, and class discourses, an other that names the social upheavals of capital as racialized disruptions. Unmarried and sexually mobile, the prostitute was eccentric to the gendered and sexual ideals of normative (i.e., patriarchal) heterosexuality. That eccentricity denoted the pathologies, disorders, and degradations of an emerging civilization. Rather than embodying heteropatriarchal ideals, the prostitute was a figure of nonheteronormativity, excluded from the presumed security of heteropatriarchal boundaries.

As such, she and others like her were the targets of both liberal *and* revolutionary regulations. Those regulations derived their motives from the fact that both bourgeois and revolutionary practices were conceived through heteropatriarchy. We may imagine Marx asking, "How could she—the prostitute—be entrusted with the revolutionary transformation of society?" Likewise, we could imagine the bourgeoisie declaring, "Never could whores rationally administer a liberal society." Historical materialism and bourgeois ideology shared the tendency to read modern civilization as the racialized scene of heteronormative disruption. Marx fell into that ideology as he conflated the dominant representation of the prostitute with the social upheavals wrought by capital. Put differently, he equated the hegemonic discourse about the prostitute, a discourse that cast her as the symbol of immorality, vice, and corruption, with the reality of a burgeoning capitalist economy. Taking the prostitute to be the obvious and transparent sign of capital, at what point could Marx approach the prostitute and her alleged pathologies as discursive questions, rather than as the real and objective outcomes of capitalist social relations? At what point might he then consider the prostitute and others like her to be potential sites from which to critique capital?

Naturalizing heteropatriarchy by posing capital as the social threat to heteropatriarchal relations meant that both liberal reform and proletarian revolution sought to recover heteropatriarchal integrity from the ravages of industrialization. Basing the fundamental conditions of history upon heterosexual reproduction and designating capital as the disruption of heterosexual normativity did more than designate the subject of modern society as heteronormative. It made the heteronormative subject the goal of liberal and radical practices. Under such a definition of history, political economy became an arena where heteronormative legitimation was the prize. Universalizing heteropatriarchy and constructing a racialized other that required heteropatriarchal regulation was not the peculiar distinction of, or affinity between, Marx and his bourgeois contemporaries. On the contrary, the racialized investment in heteropatriarchy bequeathed itself to liberal and revolutionary projects, to bourgeois and revolutionary nationalisms alike. Queer of color analysis must disidentify with historical materialism so as not to extend this legacy.

The multiplications of surplus: U.S. racial formations, nonheteronormativity, and the overdetermination of political economy

Queer of color analysis can build on the idea that capital produces emergent social formations that exceed the racialized boundaries of gender and sexual ideals, can help explain the emergence of subjects like the drag-queen prostitute. At the same time, queer of color critique can and must challenge the idea that those social formations represent the pathologies of modern society. In other words, queer of color work can retain historical materialism's interest in social formations without obliging the silences of historical materialism.

Capital is a formation constituted by discourses of race, gender, and sexuality, discourses that implicate nonheteronormative formations like the prostitute. In addition, capitalist

political economies have been scenes for the universalization and, hence, the normalization of sexuality. But those economies have also been the arenas for the disruption of normativity. If we are to be sensitive to the role that those normalizations and disruptions have played within liberal capitalism, we can only take up historical materialism by integrating the critique of normative regimes with the analysis of political economy. In doing so, we must clarify the ways in which our knowledge of liberal capitalism implies this contradiction—that is, the normalization of heteropatriarchy on the one hand, and the emergence of eroticized and gendered racial formations that dispute heteropatriarchy's universality on the other. Understanding the drag-queen prostitute means that we must locate her within a national culture that disavows the configuration of her own racial, gender, class, and sexual particularity and a mode of production that fosters her own formation.

While Marx, like his liberal antagonists, was seduced by the universalization of heteropatriarchy, he can also help us locate procedures of universalization within state formations. As he writes in "On the Jewish Question,"

> [The state] is conscious of being a political state and it manifests its universality only in opposition to these elements [private property, education, occupation, and so forth]. Hegel, therefore, defines the relation of the political state quite correctly when he says: "In order for the state to come in to existence as the self-knowing ethical actuality of spirit, it is essential that it should be distinct from the forms of authority and of faith. But this distinction emerges only in so far as divisions occur within the ecclesiastical sphere itself. It is only in this way that the state, above the particular churches, has attained to the universality of thought—its formal principle—and is bringing this universality into existence."[28]

For Marx, the state establishes its universality in opposition to the particularities of education, property, religion, and occupation. For our own purposes, we may add that this universality exists in opposition to racial, gender, class, and sexual particularities as well. As heteropatriarchy was universalized, it helped to constitute the state and the citizen's universality. Lisa Lowe's arguments about the abstract citizen's relationship to particularity and difference prove instructive here. She writes,

> [The] abstraction of the citizen is always in distinction to the particularity of man's material condition. In this context, for Marx, "political emancipation" of the citizen is the process of relegating to the domain of the private all "nonpolitical" particulars of religion, social rank, education, occupation, and so on in exchange for representation on the political terrain of the state where "man is the imaginary member of an imaginary sovereignty, divested of his real, individual life, and infused with an unreal universality."[29]

The universality of the citizen exists in opposition to the intersecting particularities that account for material existence, particularities of race, gender, class, and sexuality. As a category of universality, normative heteropatriarchy or heteronormativity exists in opposition to the particularities that constitute nonheteronormative racial formations. In this formulation, the citizen is a racialized emblem of heteronormativity whose universality exists at the expense of particularities of race, gender, and sexuality.

Ironically, capital helps produce formations that contradict the universality of citizenship. As the state justifies property through this presumed universality, through claims about access, equivalence, rights, and humanity, capital contradicts that universality by enabling

social formations marked by intersecting particularities of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Those formations are the evidence of multiplications. By this I mean the multiplication of racialized discourses of gender and sexuality and the multiplication of labor under capital. Addressing the multiplication of discourses and their relationship to modernity, Foucault argues, "The nineteenth century and our own have been rather the age of multiplication: a dispersion of sexualities, a strengthening of their disparate forms, a multiple implantation of 'perversions.' Our epoch has initiated sexual heterogeneities."[30] For Marx, the multiplication of class divisions and economic exploitation characterizes modernity. As he states, "Growth of capital implies growth of its constituent, in other words, the part invested in labour-power."[31] Despite conventional wisdom, we may think of these two types of multiplication in tandem. For instance, in "On the Jewish Question," Marx states, "Man, in his most *intimate* reality, in civil society, is a profane being. Here, where he appears both to himself and to others as a real individual he is an *illusory* phenomenon."[32] Man, the subject of civil society, is not an unmediated figure. As an illusory phenomenon, Man is constituted within discourse. Like the British prostitute and the race of tub men, Man testifies to capital as a simultaneously discursive and material site. The growth of capital implies the proliferation of discourses.

The gendered and eroticized history of U.S. racialization compels us to address both these versions of multiplication. Indeed, my use of nonheteronormativity attempts to name the intersection between the racialized multiplication of gender and sexual perversions and the dispersion of capitalist property relations. Anxieties about this multiplication characterized American industrialization. The migrations of Asians, Europeans, Mexicans, and African Americans generated anxieties about how emerging racial formations were violating gender and sexual norms. As racialized ethnic minorities became the producers of capitalist surplus value, the American political economy was transformed into an apparatus that implanted and multiplied intersecting racial, gender, and sexual perversions. Nonwhite populations were racialized such that gender and sexual transgressions were not incidental to the production of nonwhite labor, but constitutive of it. For instance, industrial expansion in the southwest from 1910 to 1930, as George Sanchez notes, "created an escalating demand for low-wage labor" and inspired more than one million Mexicans to immigrate to the United States.[33] The entrance of Mexican immigrant labor into the U.S. workforce occasioned the rise of Americanization programs designed to inculcate American ideals into the Mexican household. Those programs were premised on the racialized construction of the Mexican immigrant as primitive in terms of sexuality, and premodern in terms of conjugal rites and domestic habits.[34] In the nineteenth century as well, San Francisco's Chinatown was the site of polymorphous sexual formations that were marked as deviant because they were nonreproductive and nonconjugal. Formed in relation to exclusion laws that prohibited the immigration of Asian women to the United States and out of U.S. capital's designation of Asian immigrants as surplus and redundant labor, Chinatown became known for its bachelor societies, opium dens, and prostitutes. Each one of these formations rearticulated normative familial arrangements and thereby violated a racialized ideal of heteropatriarchal nuclearity.[35] Likewise, as African American urban communities of the North were created out of the demands of northern capital in the early twentieth century, they gave birth to vice districts that in turn transformed gender and sexual ideals and practices in northern cities. As Kevin Mumford notes, spurred by a wartime economy and "in protest of outrageous repression" in the South, the Great Migration—through the production of speakeasies, black and tans, intermarriage, and fallen women—caused a change in "gender roles, standards of sexuality," and conjugal ideals.[36]

As capital solicited Mexican, Asian, Asian American, and African American labor, it provided the material conditions that would ultimately disrupt the gender and sexual ideals

upon which citizenship depended. The racialization of Mexican, Asian, Asian American, and African American labor as contrary to gender and sexual normativity positioned such labor outside the image of the American citizen. The state's regulation of nonwhite gender and sexual practices through Americanization programs, vice commissions, residential segregation, and immigration exclusion attempted to press nonwhites into gender and sexual conformity despite the gender and sexual diversity of those racialized groups. That diversity was, in large part, the outcome of capital's demand for labor. As a technology of race, U.S. citizenship has historically ascribed heteronormativity (universality) to certain subjects and non-heteronormativity (particularity) to others. The state worked to regulate the gender and sexual non-normativity of these racialized groups in a variety of ways. In doing so, it produced discourses that pathologized nonheteronormative U.S. racial formations. In the case of Mexican immigrants, Americanization programs attempted to reconstitute the presumably preindustrial Mexican home, believed to be indifferent to domestic arrangements and responsibilities. Doing so meant that the Mexican mother had to be transformed into a proper custodian who would be fit for domestic labor in white homes, as well as her own. As George Sanchez notes, "By encouraging Mexican immigrant women to wash, sew, cook, budget, and mother happily and efficiently, Americans would be assured that Mexican women would be ready to enter the labor market, while simultaneously presiding over a home that nurtured American values of economy."[37] In the case of Asian Americans, immigration exclusion laws worked to ensure that the gender and sexual improprieties of Asian Americans would not transgress U.S. boundaries as residential segregation worked to guarantee that such impropriety among Asian and Asian American residents would not contaminate white middle-class neighborhoods. In like fashion, vice commissions in New York and Chicago, along with antimiscegenation laws, attempted to insulate middle-class whites from the real and presumed gender and sexual non-normative practices of African Americans and Asian Americans.

Despite his naturalization of gender, sexuality, and race, Marx is useful for thinking about how capital fundamentally disrupts social hierarchies. Those disruptions account for the polymorphous perversions that arise out of the production of labor. Marx defines surplus labor as that labor that capitalist accumulation "constantly produces, and produces indeed in direct relation with its own energy and extent." Surplus populations are populations that are "relatively redundant working populations . . . that is, superfluous to capital's average requirements for its own valorization."[38] Surplus populations exist as future laborers for capital, "always ready for exploitation by capital in the interests of capital's own changing valorization requirements."[39] Both superfluous and indispensable, surplus populations fulfill *and* exceed the demands of capital.

In the United States, racial groups who have a history of being excluded from the rights and privileges of citizenship (African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos, particularly) have made up the surplus populations upon which U.S. capital has depended. The production of such populations has accounted for much of the racial heterogeneity within the United States. As mentioned before, the heterogeneity represented by U.S. surplus populations was achieved to a large degree because of capital's need to accumulate labor.

As capital produced surplus populations, it provided the contexts out of which nonheteronormative racial formations emerged.[40] As U.S. capital had to constantly look outside local and national boundaries for labor, it often violated ideals of racial homogeneity held by local communities and the United States at large. As it violated those ideals, capital also inspired worries that such violations would lead to the disruption of gender and sexual proprieties. If racialization has been the "site of a contradiction between the promise of political emancipation and the conditions of economic exploitation,"[41] then much of that contradiction has pivoted on the racialization of working populations as deviant in terms of gender and

sexuality. As formations that transgress capitalist political economies, surplus populations become the locations for possible critiques of state and capital.

Marx addresses many of the ways in which capital fosters social heterogeneity and therefore nonequivalent formations. For instance, he states,

> As soon as capitalist production takes possession of agriculture, and in proportion to the extent to which it does so, the demand for a rural working population falls absolutely, while the accumulation of the capital employed in agriculture advances, without this repulsion being compensated for by a greater attraction of workers, as is the case in non-agricultural industries. Part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat, and on the lookout for opportunities to complete this transformation. . . . There is thus a constant flow from this source of the relative surplus population.[47]

Moreover, as capital produced certain working populations as redundant, it inspired rural populations to migrate in search of employment, a move that ensured greater and greater heterogeneity in urban areas. The constant flow of surplus populations from the rural to the urban captures the diverse histories of nonwhite migrations within and to the United States. For instance, this movement from the rural to the urban denotes the history of African American migration.

As well as exceeding local and regional boundaries, surplus populations disrupt social hierarchies of race, gender, age, and sexuality. As it produces surplus, capital compels the transgression of previously established hierarchies and provides the context for the emergence of new social arrangements, identities, and practices. As Marx states,

> We have further seen that the capitalist buys with the same capital a greater mass of labour-power, as he progressively replaces skilled workers by less skilled, mature labour-power by immature, male by female, that of adults by that of young persons or children.
>
> (788)

To adapt this insight to the circumstances of U.S. working populations we might add "immigrant" and "nonwhite" to that of "less skilled," "female," and "child." Hence, the creation of surplus is the violation of the boundaries of age, home, race, and nation.

Surplus populations point to a fundamental feature of capital: It does not rely on normative prescriptions to assemble labor, even while it may use those prescriptions to establish the value of that labor. Capital is based on a logic of reproduction that fundamentally overrides and often violates heteropatriarchy's logic. Subsequently, capital often goes against the state's universalization and normalization of heteropatriarchy. Discussing the ways in which capital bypasses heterosexual means of reproduction, Marx argues,

> The expansion by fits and starts of the scale of production is the precondition for its equally sudden contraction; the latter again evokes the former, but the former is impossible without disposable human material, without an increase in the number of workers, which must occur *independently of the absolute growth of the population*.
>
> (785–86)

Continuing with this argument, he states

> Capitalist production can by no means content itself with the quantity of disposable labour-power which the natural increase of population yields. It requires for its unrestricted activity an industrial reserve army which is *independent of these natural limits*.
>
> (788, italics mine)

Capital is based on a fundamentally amoral logic. Capital, without pressures from the state or citizenry, will assemble labor without regard for normative prescriptions of race and gender. Capital, on the other hand, will oblige normative prescriptions, especially in those moments in which it wants to placate the interests of the state.

While capital can only reproduce itself by ultimately transgressing the boundaries of neighborhood, home, and region, the state positions itself as the protector of those boundaries. As the modern nation-state has historically been organized around an illusory universality particularized in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and class, state formations have worked to protect and guarantee this universality. But in its production of surplus populations unevenly marked by a racialized nonconformity with gender and sexual norms, capital constantly disrupts that universality. As the state and heteronormativity work to guarantee and protect that universality, they do so against the productive needs and social conditions set by capital, conditions that produce nonheteronormative racial formations. If heteronormativity is racialized, as I have been arguing, then it is not only gender and sexual integrity that are at stake for heteronormative formations, like the state, but racial integrity and purity as well. As capital disrupts social hierarchies in the production of surplus labor, it disrupts gender ideals and sexual norms that are indices of racial difference. Disrupting those ideals often leads to new racialized gender and sexual formations. To restate, capital requires the transgression of space and the creation of possibilities for intersection and convergence. Capital, therefore, calls for subjects who must transgress the material and ideological boundaries of community, family, and nation. Such transgressions are brought into relief through the capitalist production of labor. As surplus labor becomes the impetus for anxieties about the sanctity of "community," "family," and "nation," it reveals the ways in which these categories are normalized in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Indeed, the production of labor, ultimately, throws the normative boundaries of race, gender, class, and sexuality into confusion.

Nonheteronormative racial formations represent the historic accumulation of contradictions[43] around race, gender, sexuality, and class. The variety of such racial formations (Asian, Asian American, Mexican, Chicano, Native American, African American, and so forth) articulates different racialized, gendered, and eroticized contradictions to the citizen-ideal of the state and the liberatory promise of capital. In doing so, they identify the ways in which race, gender, and sexuality intersect within capitalist political economies and shape the conditions of capital's existence. To address these formations as an accumulation means that we must ask the question of what possibilities they offer for agency. We must see the gendered and eroticized elements of racial formations as offering ruptural—i.e., critical—possibilities. Approaching them as sites of critique means that we must challenge the construction of these formations as monstrous and threatening to others who have no possibility of critical agency and instead engage nonheteronormative racial formations as the site of ruptures, critiques, and alternatives. Racial formations, as they are constituted nonnormatively by gender and sexual differences, overdetermine[44] national identity, contradicting its manifold promises of citizenship and property. This overdetermination could compel intersecting antiracist, feminist, class, and queer struggles to emerge. [. . .]

Notes

1 Queer of color analysis, as I define it in this text, interrogates social formations as the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class, with particular interest in how those formations correspond with and diverge from nationalist ideals and practices. Queer of color analysis is a heterogeneous enterprise made up of women of color feminism, materialist analysis, poststructuralist theory, and queer critique.

2 Chandan Reddy, "Home, Houses, Nonidentity: 'Paris Is Burning,'" in *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity*, ed. Rosemary Marangoly George (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 356–57.

3 Ibid., 357.

4 José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 25.

5 Louis Althusser argues, "Historical materialism is the science of social formations." See *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 251.

6 Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 5.

7 Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1979), 88.

8 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 18.

9 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, trans. Dirk J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1974), 43–44. Emphasis mine.

10 David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (London: Blackwell, 1993), 63.

11 Karl Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, trans. Jack Cohen (New York: International Publishers, 1964).

12 Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, 49.

13 Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. Dirk J. Struik, trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 134.

14 Ibid., 121.

15 The modern conception of subjectivity and agency (liberal and revolutionary) is thoroughly normalized. David Theo Goldberg, for example, makes the following argument: "Moral notions tend to be basic to each sociodiscursive order, for they are key in defining the interactive ways social subjects see others and conceive (of) themselves. Social relations are constitutive of personal and social identity, and a central part of the order of such relations is the perceived need, the requirement for subjects to give an account of their actions. These accounts may assume the bare form of explanation, but they usually tend more imperatively to legitimate or to justify acts (to ourselves and others). Morality is the scene of this legitimation and justification" (*Racist Culture*, 14).

Indeed the modern conception of agency has historically and consequentially understood formations that fall out of the normative boundaries of morality as incapable of agency and therefore worthy of exclusion and regulation. One of the principal tasks of antiracist queer critique must be to account for those formations expelled from normative calculations of agency and subjectivity. Accounting for those formations means that we must ask what modes of engagement and awareness they enact, modes that normative conceptions of agency and subjectivity can never acknowledge or apprehend.

16 Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 133.

17 Ibid., 114.

18 Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, *A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), 482.

19 Thomas Laqueur, "Sexual Desire and the Market Economy during the Industrial Revolution," in *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS*, ed. Domna Stanton (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 185–215.

20 Ibid., 208.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 189, quoting Flora Tristan, *London Journal*, trans. Denis Palmer and Giselle Pinceti (1840; reprint, London: George Prior, 1980), 79.

23 Ibid., 208.

24 Ibid., 190, quoting Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels on Britain* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), 61.

25 Anne McClintock, "Screwing the System: Sexwork, Race, and the Law," *Boundary 2* 19, no. 2 (1992): 80–82.

26 Evelyn Brooks Hammonds, "Toward a Genealogy of Black Female Sexuality: The Problematic of Silence," in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 172.

27 Laqueur, "Sexual Desire and the Market Economy," 210–11.

28 Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978), 33.

29 Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 25.

30 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 37.

31 Marx, *Capital*, 763.

32 Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 34.

33 George Sanchez, "Go after the Women," in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, eds. Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol Du Bois (New York: Routledge, 1994), 285.

34 Ibid., 291–92. Gloria Anzaldúa writes that the borderland is the place for the "squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal' (*Borderlands: The New Mestiza-La Frontera* [San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999], 25).

35 See Nayan Shah, "Perversity, Contamination, and the Dangers of Queer Domesticity," in *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).

36 Kevin Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), xviii.

37 Sanchez, "Go after the Women," 289.

38 Marx, *Capital*, 782.

39 Ibid., 784.

40 By arguing that capital produces gender and sexual heterogeneities as part of its racialized contradiction, I wish neither to privilege a discourse of repression, nor to assume a corollary formulation—that capital is the site of equivalences or uniformities. Indeed, this material and discursive production of surplus is the racialized production of nonheteronormative—and therefore racially differentiated and nonequivalent—sexualities.

41 Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 23.

42 Marx, *Capital*, 795–96.

43 Althusser defines contradiction as "the articulation of a practice . . . into the complex whole of the social formation" (*For Marx*, 250). Althusser goes on to state that the accumulation of contradictions may produce the "weakest link" in a system: "If this contradiction is to become 'active' in the strongest sense, to become a ruptural principle, there must be an accumulation of 'circumstances' and 'currents' so that whatever their origin and sense . . . they 'fuse into a ruptural unity'" (*For Marx*, 99).

44 For the theory of overdetermination, see ibid.

Chapter 26

Iain Morland

WHAT CAN QUEER THEORY DO FOR INTERSEX?

Iain Morland is Lecturer at the Cardiff University School of English, Communication, and Philosophy. A co-founder of the London Critical Sexology seminar series, Morland has published extensively on the history and ethics of the medical management of intersex.

With its interrogatory title, Morland's essay announces its aim to test queer theory's adequacy to intersex bodies. Morland argues that queer theory's valorization of pleasure risks characterizing postsurgical intersex bodies as irrevocably impoverished. Conversely, its discourse on shame allows an ethical recognition of the persistent effects of genital surgery on intersex bodies. The critical impact of queer theory's reliance on sensorial modes of critique, a critique premised on the interrelatedness of pleasure and shame, emerges in Morland's consideration of the queer discourse on touch. While queer touch offers a way to criticize the surgical emphasis on appearance and function, for Morland queer touching remains bounded by its unexamined reliance on the simultaneity of touch and tactility, obscuring the fact that touch requires a sensate body. Instead, Morland finds that queer theory's critical value lies in its theorization of desire independent of tactility. Morland figures this desire not as touching but as reaching, exceeding surgical attempts to discipline the intersex body.

The time of the touch

TO QUEERS AND nonqueers alike the visceral immediacy of the sexual touch might appear to be self-evident; contact between a lover's body and one's own is typically coincident with the mutual sensation of such contact. Even an unwelcome sexual advance is recognizable by its tactile impression—for instance, the brush of a hand from which one immediately recoils. In short, touching and feeling happen live.

My starting point in this essay is that when the nerves in one's genitalia have been damaged by surgery, the time of the touch changes. For example, one sees a lover's hand touching one's genitalia, but one does not feel it. Hence the apparently real time of sexual