

Critical American Studies Series

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Aberrations in Black

Toward a Queer of Color Critique

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Preface

LC-USF33-001172-M4 is a picture, one that is a part of a Library of Congress exhibition, *The African-American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship*. The photo, taken in 1938, depicts a segregated railroad facility in Manchester, Georgia. Four African American men wait outside of what is probably the railroad employment office. Two sit on the steps outside a door that reads "Colored Waiting Room," while the other two—clad in overalls—stand to their right. The men donned in overalls are smoking cigarettes in front of a restroom with the words "Colored Men" written across the door.

I am drawn to this picture for several reasons—some that are purely scholastic, others that are outright personal. In many ways, the picture represents the traditional history of American race relations, cast in black and white, depicting racial exclusion in social accommodations and occupation. Like the picture, the traditional historiography of race in America presents black men as the central characters in a history of exclusion. That historiography casts the exclusion of African Americans from the rights and privileges of citizenship as part of the burgeoning industrialization taking place within the United States. The disciplinary machines of the modern academy historically have recycled that historiography. Indeed, we may presume without error that this picture appeals to a certain sociological rendering of African American racial formations. In this picture are the images that have become the emblem of the sociology of race relations, images suggesting the intersections of poverty, race, and economic discrimination. For canonical sociologists, that exclusion would eventually be resolved by the very political economy that initiated it, and African Americans would gradually be assimilated into the American political and economic spheres.

This sociological imagining of the picture coheres with the official memory of the American nation-state, as the photograph is housed in one of the government's main bureaucratic archives. The introduction to the exhibition reads,

The major presentation in the Jefferson Building, *The African-American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship*, explores black America's quest for equality from the early national period through the twentieth century. The Library's materials . . . tell the story of the African-American experience through nine chronological periods that document the courage and

determination of blacks, faced with adverse circumstances, who overcame immense odds to fully participate in all aspects of American society.¹

The archive solemnizes the image according to the same motivations that lead sociologists to approach racial discrimination—to mark the injustices of racial exclusion *and* to promote the state's ability to assimilate that which it formerly rejected. Like the introduction to the exhibit, canonical sociology has historically organized the meaning of African American history in terms of the nomenclature of liberal capital—"equality, full citizenship, full participation," the rewards subdued after "immense odds" have been "overcome." But what is the normative infrastructure of that language and its practices?

The picture itself suggests answers to this question. Behind the men clad in overalls—in the background—is a white woman. One can imagine that the words "Colored Men" not only identify the gender and racial specificities of the bathroom, but they announce an invisible line that separates her from the four African American men. The picture dramatizes what has become an established insight—that is, the ways in which a discourse of sexuality was inscribed into racial exclusion. As several authors have noted, racial segregation ostensibly worked to ensure the sexual purity of white women and the sexual mobility of white men. Assigning racial segregation the task of protecting gender and sexual norms, of course, made miscegenation one of segregation's signal anxieties. The danger of using this image to think about the intersections of race and sexuality is that miscegenation has often been interpreted separately from other transgressive sexual formations obtained in the context of racial exclusion. How might we see this picture in relation to other racial subjects? In other words, how do we speak of the picture as part of a dialogical and polymorphous network of perversions that contradicted notions of decency and American citizenship?

I am pulled to this picture for reasons that straddle distinctions between the epistemological and the personal. I know this railroad station. It is a ten-minute walk from the house I grew up in. I know as well that there are subjects missing who should be accounted for—the transgendered man who wore Levi's and a baseball cap and chewed tobacco; the men with long permed hair who tickled piano keys; the sissies and bulldaggers who taught the neighborhood children to say their speeches on Easter Sunday morning. Is there a way in which their emergence can be located within the social formations that the picture represents? And might their presence cause us to reconsider political economy and racial formation as they are normally pursued?

I offer this bit of personal detail not for purposes of autobiography, but to demonstrate the ways in which epistemology is encountered personally.

I come to this picture aware of the epistemological and official renderings of racial exclusion and the need to hold those renderings under inspection. I am principally interested in what the sociological and national depictions of that history leave out. My inspection is informed by a single assumption—that epistemology is an economy of information privileged and information excluded, and that subject formations arise out of this economy. I also know that canonical and national formations rarely disclose what they have rejected. Such disclosures require alternatives to those formations, alternatives expressed in those sites excluded from the so-called rigors and official imperatives of canons and archives. As the picture symbolizes the sociological and national depictions of racial exclusion, my personal encounter with it also symbolizes an epistemological engagement with what those depictions leave out.

This book tells a story of canonical sociology's regulation of people like the transgendered man, the sissy, and the bulldagger as part of its general regulation of African American culture. This book places that story within other stories—the narrative of capital's emergence and development, the histories of marxism and revolutionary nationalism, and the novels that depict the gendered and sexual idiosyncrasies of African American culture. In turn, this book tries to present another story—one in which the people that presumably evince the dysfunctions of capitalism are revised as sites that possibly critique state, capital, and social science. In this book, I wish to connect American cultural studies to questions from sociology, queer studies, post-colonial studies, African American studies, and ethnic studies. I do so for two reasons. I want to suggest that contrary to canonical claims, intellectual inquiry is always shaped out of heterogeneity, never neatly contained within the presumed homogeneous boundaries of a discipline. I would also like to point to the productive nature of that heterogeneity—that is, its ability to inspire new horizons for thought and action. I do not mean to establish some intellectual or political protocol with this book. I merely wish to offer a work whose insights and failures might incite other ways to be.

This book began in the restlessness of graduate school, and because of the support and intelligence of friends, colleagues, and teachers, I can now put this project to rest. I want to thank Ivan Evans, Harvey Goldman, Gershon Shafir, and Jonathan Holloway for their support as committee members. I thank my friends in sociology—Joann Ball, Doug Hartmann, Jeanne Powers, Jennifer Jordan, Jonathan Markovitz, and Beth Jennings—for knowing what I meant when I uttered our discipline's name. I thank Alex Halkias for being there when I first conceived of this project and for encouraging me with mentorship that was always gentle. I thank Susan Fitzpatrick for her interest

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Introduction

Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology

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 the stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the *natural* division of labour 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 Laquer 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 nonheteronormativity (particularity) to others. The state worked to regulate the gender and sexual nonnormativity 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 nonnormative 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.⁴²

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 contradictions⁴³ 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, overdetermine⁴⁴ national identity, contradicting its manifold promises of citizenship and property. This overdetermination could compel intersecting antiracist, feminist, class, and queer struggles to emerge.

Epistemology, Political Economy, and Regulation

Historical materialism is not the only inquiry into social formations characterized by investments in normative epistemes. Canonical American sociology betrays those investments as well. Canonical sociology denotes a discursive formation that emerges out of Enlightenment claims to rationality and scientific objectivity. These claims entail an investment in heterosexual patriarchy as the appropriate standard for social relations and the signature of hegemonic whiteness. As canonical sociology has racialized heteropatriarchy through whiteness, the discipline has excluded and disciplined those formations that deviate from the racial ideal of heteropatriarchy.

We can see the exclusionary and disciplinary techniques at work in the discipline's engagement with African American culture. American sociology has historically understood civilization as the production of wealth and order and as the spread of disorder and dehumanization. American sociology, like historical materialism, has proffered heteronormativity as the scene of order and rationality and nonheteronormativity as the scene of abandonment and dysfunction. In doing so, the discipline has contributed to the discursivity of capital. I turn now to canonical sociology because it has contributed to that discursivity as it has produced racial knowledge about African American culture. Indeed, sociology has been a hegemonic site of reflection about African American culture and has read that culture consistently through a heteronormative lens. American sociology has deployed liberal ideology as the main paradigm through which to read American racialization. Historical materialism has provided the means by which canonical sociology could translate processes of state and capital into a narrative of African American racial formation and disruptions to gender and sexual ideals.⁴⁵ In fact, universalizing heteropatriarchy and understanding that universalization as whiteness and through American citizenship defined the core of sociological reflection about African American culture. As it has done so, formations like the drag-queen prostitute have been a constant preoccupation that canonical sociology has constructed as pathologies emblematic of African American culture. Looking at canonical sociology's relationship to African American

nonheteronormative formations can help us see how U.S. capital has also been regarded as a site of pathologies and perversions that have designated racialized nonwhite communities as the often ominous outcome of capital's productive needs. As I stated earlier, queer of color analysis attempts to explain how gender and sexuality variegate racial formations and how that variety indexes material processes. We must engage racial knowledge about African American culture as it was produced by sociology if we are to understand the gender and sexual variation within African American culture as the outcome of material and discursive processes.

In *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Anthony Giddens argues that reflection is one of the institutional traits of modernity and that "[sociology], and the social sciences more widely conceived, are inherent elements of the institutional reflexivity of modernity."⁴⁶ In the United States, the social changes that characterized American modernity brought different peoples and cultures within close proximity to one another. Because of these changes, sociology sought to "understand the ways in which societies (or cultures or peoples) differed from one another,"⁴⁷ initiating a foundational concern with difference into sociology's reflexive project. We can see American sociology's interest in difference in the discipline's fascination with the social conditions of African American existence. For early American sociologists of racial relations, the question of African American culture became the location within which sociologists could speculate about the relationships between modernization and cultural difference. Even though these sociologists of race often presumed that they were studying racial phenomena that were external to them, the sociology of race was, in fact, a site for the production of racial knowledge that "consisted *ex hypothesi* in the making of difference."⁴⁸ The sociological writings about race "[were] part of the *reflexivity* of modernity: they [served] routinely to organise and alter the aspects of social life they [reported] on or [analysed]."⁴⁹

American sociology began as a way to reflect on "the vast dislocations from extremely rapid urbanization and industrialization. [It] was shaped from the start by a *moral response to immediate national social problems—racial and cultural concerns prominent among them.*"⁵⁰ The social problems that occasioned sociological interest were ones posed by migrations to urban areas. In sociological discourses, African American migration loomed largely in narratives of urban and industrial dislocations and in the moral responses to national and social problems enunciated on the axes of race and culture. Whereas in 1910, 637,000 African Americans lived in cities in the North and the West, by 1930 that number had grown to 2,228,000.⁵¹ Sociologists worried that African American migrants from rural beginnings were culturally unfit and morally unversed for the demands of city life. Canonical

sociology imagined African American culture as the site of polymorphous gender and sexual perversions and associated those perversions with moral failings typically. During this period, sociologists broke with prior formulations of African American racial difference by eschewing explanations of biological inferiority but revised those formulations by offering the cultural inferiority of African Americans as an explanation for urban poverty and social upheaval. Often sociologists explained African American poverty and upheaval through what was considered African American gender, sexual, and familial eccentricity. Sociological arguments about African American cultural inferiority were racialized discourses of gender and sexuality. As Kobena Mercer argues, "[A]ssumptions about black sexuality lie at the heart of the ideological view that black households constitute deviant, disorganized and even pathological familial forms that fail to socialize their members into societal norms."⁵²

At the base of sociological arguments about African American cultural inferiority lay questions about how well African Americans approximated heteronormative ideals and practices embodied in whiteness and ennobled in American citizenship. For instance, African Americans' fitness for citizenship was measured in terms of how much their sexual, familial, and gender relations deviated from a bourgeois nuclear family model historically embodied by whites.⁵³ The sexualized construction of African Americans was both a way of grounding African American racial difference within the so-called vagaries of the sexual and a way of locating African Americans within liberal capitalism. Liberal ideology has typically understood the family as that institution that provides stability and civility against the instability and ruthlessness of civil society.⁵⁴ That ideology has historically constructed the African American family as an insufficient tether against the chaos of civil society. The advancement of capitalism, therefore, has occasioned the state's efforts to displace the social burdens of that advancement onto relations within the private sphere, making the African American family the bearer of those burdens. Liberal ideology has recommended conforming to the heterosexual nuclear family model as the appropriate way to bear such burdens.⁵⁵ Canonical sociology has consistently abutted that ideology by demanding the heteronormalization of African Americans as the primary resolution to economic devastation. By "[naturalizing] heterosexuality as the only possible, sensible, and desirable organizing principle by which society and social relations can function,"⁵⁶ canonical sociology aligned itself with the regulatory imperatives of the state against African Americans.

African American culture has historically been deemed contrary to the norms of heterosexuality and patriarchy. As its embodiment in whiteness attests, heteronormativity is not simply articulated through intergender rela-

tions, but also through the racialized body. Sociology helped to establish African American corporeal difference as the sign of a nonheteronormativity presumed to be fundamental to African American culture.⁵⁷ Marking African Americans as such was a way of disenfranchising them politically and economically. In sum, the material and discursive production of African American nonheteronormativity provided the interface between the gendered and eroticized properties of African American racial formation and the material practices of state and civil society.

I theorize African American nonheteronormative difference as a way of thinking discourse and contradiction in tandem. Foucault argues against the presumption that the modern age was simply about the repression of sexuality, arguing instead that scientific discourses have produced a multiplicity of sexual perversions. Foucault is also arguing against narratives that locate the age of repression within the development of capitalism and bourgeois order.⁵⁸ We may extend and revise Foucault's argument by addressing the ways in which sociological discourse produced multiple sexual and gender perversions coded as nonwhite racial difference and as the study of African American culture. By engaging capital as a site of contradictions that compels racial formations that are eccentric to gender and sexual normativity, I have also attempted to revise the presumption that capital is the site of gender and sexual uniformity.

But canonical sociology has produced that heterogeneity to discipline it. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Mikhail Bakhtin defines canonization as a process that attempts to suppress the heterogeneity of meaning. For Bakhtin, the heterogeneity refers to the multiplicity that characterizes a given social context. Sociology, when incarnated canonically, attempts to discursively suppress an actual material heterogeneity. The material heterogeneity that I've been discussing is one that critically exposes the gender and sexual diversity within racial formations. That multiplicity points to the illusions of universal claims as they are taken up by canonical sociology and the American state. As canonical sociology suppresses heterogeneity in the name of universality, it becomes an epistemological counterpart to the state's enforcement of universality as the state suppresses nonheteronormative racial difference. Pathologizing the material heterogeneity embodied in African American nonheteronormative formations disciplines its critical possibilities. As a site that arches toward universality, canonical sociology can only obscure the ways that nonheteronormative racial formations point to the contradictions between the promise of equality and the practice of exclusions based on a racialized gender and sexual eccentricity, an eccentricity produced through discourse and articulated in practice. As the universal has been the justification for political and economic regulations of those formations deemed antithetical to it, canonical sociology

has intersected with forms of nationalism and capital over the gendered and sexual regulation of nonwhite populations.

As canonical formations suppress the multiplicity of a social context, they also regulate the diversity that constitutes a discipline. As canonical formations are constituted through claims to universality, they oblige themselves to the regulatory and exclusionary imperatives of those claims. They must present their own histories as ones emptied of formations that contradict universality. In the context of canonical sociology, black sociologists occupy such a position. During periods of segregation and industrialization, African American sociologists were incapable of claiming the illusory universality fostered by canonical sociology. Black sociologists such as St. Claire Drake, Horace Cayton, and E. Franklin Frazier operated within a historical moment that constructed the black body as the antithesis of the rationality and universality of Western epistemology and American citizenship. Whereas the bodies of canonical (i.e., "white") sociologists were unmarked by particularities of gender, sexuality, class, and race, the bodies of black sociologists were the signs of racial differences that placed the rationality of African American sociologists into question. The nonheteronormative racial difference associated with black bodies prevented them from claiming canonical status. For instance, during the 1930s the Carnegie Corporation asked a "neutral" and "objective" Swedish sociologist—Gunnar Myrdal—to head the major study of race relations within the United States rather than E. Franklin Frazier, despite Frazier's status as the authority on race within the states.⁵⁹ Canonical sociology excluded black sociologists as subjects who could not claim the universal properties of the rational subject of epistemology and the citizen-subject of the United States.

Without a doubt, black sociologists from the thirties to the seventies contributed to the body of sociological knowledge. We need only think of how influential Charles Johnson's work was to Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma* or to how E. Franklin Frazier's theories about the black family laid the groundwork for Daniel Patrick Moynihan's *The Negro Family*. As a regulatory and exclusionary formation, canonical sociology has subjugated the history of African American sociology, making authors like Myrdal, Moynihan, Park, and Burgess the spectacular representatives of American sociology's interest in social relations during periods of industrialization. In turn, canonical sociology has made black sociologists such as Du Bois, Horace Cayton, St. Clair Drake, E. Franklin Frazier, Charles Johnson, Kelly Miller, and Monroe Work part of the unread genealogy of American sociology. Canonical sociology expresses an ideological imperative, one that calls for the subjugation of the historical roles of African American sociologists. Hence as I address canonical sociology throughout this text, I am

not referring to black sociologists. While these authors may be canonical to African American studies, they are part of the unseen and subterranean layers of American sociology. While seemingly a progressive and democratic move, including African American sociologists within the definition of canonical sociology actually denies the regulatory and exclusionary practices of canonical formations and suggests the perfection of the discipline. This sort of move is really liberal ideology applied to epistemology. Rather than reifying the suppression of African American sociologists by not addressing them at all, I attempt to demonstrate the ways in which canonical sociology has usurped their intellectual work and banished them from the taken-for-granted and lived history of American sociology.

As it has imputed African American culture with hegemonic meanings, canonical sociology is part of the genealogy of African American nonheteronormativity. It has constructed African American racial difference as the exemplar of social pathologies that suggest gender and sexual disorders. Moreover, it has affixed that meaning to African American culture and to African American bodies. Canonical sociology has consistently said that these hegemonic formulations are appropriate to understanding the upheavals formed by industrialization.

Culture, Heterogeneity, and Rupture

In their introduction to *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd make the following argument:

We suggest "culture" obtains a political force when a cultural formation comes into contradiction with economic or political logics that try to refunction it for exploitation or domination. Rather than adopting the understanding of culture as one sphere in a set of differentiated spheres and practices, we discuss "culture" as a terrain in which politics, culture, and the economic form an inseparable dynamic.⁶⁰

I have been implying throughout this chapter that epistemology, along with politics and economics, composes the cultural terrain as well. Indeed, African American culture obtains a political force as American sociology has attempted to retool African American nonheteronormative difference for state and economic exploitation and domination. As the site of nonheteronormative difference, African American culture materially and discursively registers the gender and sexual heterogeneity of African American racial formations as critiques of the contradictions of state and capital and the regulations of canonical sociology.

This book critiques canonical sociology by concentrating on a cultural

form that negotiates with the material and discursive components of African American culture. That cultural form is the African American novel. Indeed, the material and discursive multiplicity of African American culture registers upon African American novels. As I have been suggesting, the gender and sexual heterogeneity of that culture interrogates the singularity, normativity, and universality presupposed by national culture. As minority cultural forms, African American novels record that interrogation. Produced within a history of exclusion and nonwhite racialization, these forms are both within and outside canonical genealogies. Hence, we cannot assume that African American cultural forms interrogate national culture in ways that are transparent or intentional. Canonical formations pressure cultural forms, in general, but literature in particular. The contradictory formation of African American literature—as both within and outside of canonical genealogy—means that we can exploit its alienation from canonical presumptions of universality and normativity to provide a critique of the ways in which African Americans have been racialized as pathologically nonheteronormative. We may even use this cultural form to deepen our understanding of the gender and sexual multiplicity that constitutes African American culture. If we were to relate this sort of interrogation to queer of color analysis, we might say that queer of color critique employs cultural forms to bear witness to the critical gender and sexual heterogeneity that comprises minority cultures. Queer of color analysis does this to shed light on the ruptural components of culture, components that expose the restrictions of universality, the exploitations of capital, and the deceptions of national culture.

As an example of the ways in which canonical ideologies pressured African American literature, we need only look at the historical and ideological circumstances out of which black writing arose. In *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self*, for instance, Henry Louis Gates identifies the ways that African American literature arose as a way to claim humanity for African Americans, and in doing so, took up Enlightenment practices of recognition and legitimation. He argues,

[The] black tradition's own concern with winning the war against racism had led it not only to accept this arbitrary relationship but to embrace it, judging its own literature by a curious standard that derived from the social applications of the metaphors of the great chain of being, the idea of progress and the perfectibility of man, as well as the metaphor of capacity derived initially from eighteenth-century comparative studies of the anatomy of simian and human brains and then translated into a metaphor for intelligence and the artistic potential of a "race."⁶¹

Inasmuch as African American writing thematized progress and perfectibility, it located itself within the signature preoccupations of modernity.

Aesthetic culture has pronounced progress and perfectibility within the intertwining languages of nationalism and normativity. The nineteenth-century French intellectual and Enlightenment exponent Germaine de Staël defined the relationship between canonical literature, nationalism, and morality when she wrote, "Literature can derive its enduring beauty only from the most perfect morality. . . . If Literature can serve morality, it must also have a powerful influence upon renown, for there can be no enduring honor in a country where there is no public morality."⁶² As literature upholds public morality, it gives honor to the nation. According to Madame de Staël, literature's aesthetic function is inseparable from its normative and political function. David Theo Goldberg situates the Enlightenment's reformulation of classical aesthetics within eighteenth-century practices of racialization. He states, "[N]atural qualities of beauty and perfection were supposed to be established on a priori grounds of racial membership."⁶³ Progress and perfection became the racialized tropes of the Enlightenment and were immediately associated with aesthetic culture. Celebrating the dictates of morality would assure literature its universality and grant distinction to the nation-state, a distinction and universality that, in the context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were racialized *and* normalized.

In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville echoed Madame de Staël's sentiments. Discussing the relationship between the life of the mind and the rational individual who is the epistemological counterpart of the liberal citizen-subject, Tocqueville states that "[poetry], eloquence, memory, the graces of the mind, the fires of the imagination and profundity of thought, all things scattered broadcast by heaven, were a profit to democracy, and . . . served its cause by throwing into relief the natural greatness of man."⁶⁴ Tocqueville, like Madame de Staël, assumes intellectual and aesthetic work will promote the normalizing knowledges of the liberal state. **Those knowledges distinguish between the rational citizen, who embodies and claims the rights and privileges of citizenship, versus the irrational other, who can never possess those rights and privileges.⁶⁵ If morality is that which legitimates certain social practices, then liberal ideology delegated aesthetic culture to justify normative social relations and the liberal nation-state. Moreover, aesthetic culture could demonstrate moral fitness for citizenship, demonstrating that the citizen-subject is idealized through race and conceived in normativity.**

Accordingly, liberal ideology has often presented literature as a mechanism by which marginalized groups can bid for the normative positions of state and civil society. Abolitionists used the poetry of Phyllis Wheatley and the letters of Ignatius Sancho to show "that the untutored African may possess abilities equal to an European."⁶⁶ Aesthetic practices would grant access to national culture and Western civilization and would bestow the properties

of the rational (i.e., “white”) citizen-subject onto the irrational other. As canonical interpretations format literature to enable morality, they presume literature’s obligation to normalize and universalize heteropatriarchal relations. As we saw with canonical sociology and historical materialism, universalizing and normalizing heteropatriarchal relations would also necessitate disciplining nonheteronormative formations. Indeed, regulating nonheteronormative elements exposes a nationalist imperative at work within aesthetics. As it responds to canonical pressures, literature engages the racialized genealogy of citizen and state formations.

As queer of color critique addresses minority cultural forms as both within and outside canonical genealogies, pointing to the ruptural possibilities of those forms means that culture is not simply exhausted by its complicity with regulation. Inasmuch as minority cultural forms are eccentric to the normative and racialized properties of canonical formations, they suggest possibilities outside the normative parameters and racialized boundaries of those canonical structures. For instance, following Homi Bhabha, we may say that African American novels, as minority cultural forms that suggest the racialized gender and sexual nonnormativity of African American culture, only mimic the properties of canonical literature. As discourses of mimicry, they estrange themselves from the normalizing knowledges upon which canonical literature is founded, namely its reliance upon and privileging of the normative heterosexual subject idealized by the West. Apprehending African American literature as a critical cultural site means that we must read it not simply as consistent with the universalist ideals of nationalism. We must read African American literature as a cultural form, that is, to show how it disrupts those ideals by referring to a gender and sexual multiplicity constitutive of African American culture.

As African American cultural forms distance themselves from the normative claims of canonical formations, they simultaneously estrange themselves from liberal articulations of aesthetics and canonical enunciations of sociology. Historically even African American novels, as cultural forms, often converged with American sociology in a contest over African American representation, naming sociology as a contradictory and *ambivalent*⁶⁷ enterprise located between the humanities and the natural sciences and positioned as both the critic and the supplicant of the American state.⁶⁸ As such, sociology’s claims to objectivity were often dogged by suggestions of discursivity, especially where racial matters were concerned. And its declarations of progressive solidarity with racially egalitarian projects were questioned on the basis of sociology’s discursive practices, which often enabled, rather than disabled, racial regulation. Hence, in saying that African American culture is a site of contradiction, I do not mean to suggest that sociology is

not contradictory. I simply mean to suggest that African American culture’s own particular contradiction of being racialized as nonheteronormative produces nonheteronormativity as a site of rupture. Canonical sociology could not produce nonheteronormativity as a site of rupture because whether as supplicant or as critic, sociology universalized and racialized heteropatriarchy and pathologized nonheteronormativity as nonwhite difference. In this book, I have juxtaposed sociological texts alongside African American novels to demonstrate how African American culture as a site of reflection compelled struggles and confrontations over the meaning of the gendered and sexual diversity associated with African American culture. In other words, I situate African American novelists alongside canonical sociologists to illuminate how African American culture as an epistemological object produced dialogical relations that both exceeded the formal parameters of its interlocutors and confused the distinctions between factual and fictive enterprises.

In chapter 1 I address the formation of nonheteronormative subjects and practices in industrial Chicago during the 1930s. I analyze Richard Wright’s *Native Son*; Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Roderick McKenzie’s *The City*; and an unpublished ethnography about a transgender ball on Chicago’s South Side. Each of these texts refers to the discursive explosion around a heterogeneously constituted African American culture. Moreover, they point to the ways in which U.S. industrialization disrupted hegemonic gender and sexual ideals and how that disruption was spoken as racial difference.

Chapter 2 analyzes an unpublished chapter from Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*. In this chapter, a black queer university professor named Woodridge calls for a critique of the ways in which canonical literary and sociological formations serve as discursive locations that produce racial and sexual knowledge about African Americans. Chapter 2 interrogates the ways that nonheteronormative subject formations critique developmental narratives of migration, narratives that figure nonwhite migration as witness to the liberal state’s perfection and to capital’s benevolence. Such narratives presume a subject whose ethical development is organized normatively. As nonheteronormative subjects of color are estranged from the normativity of ethical development, African American nonheteronormative subjects rebut social science, literature, state, and capital’s presumptions about progress, perfectibility, and recognition. Disputing those presumptions offers insights about the migratory narratives of other racial formations. This chapter then evokes canonical sociology’s role in creating a discourse around African American nonheteronormativity to reconsider Foucault’s theory of how sexual knowledge is produced and upon what subjects that knowledge is based.

As chapter 2 critiques developmental narratives from the vantage point of nonheteronormative social and subject formations, chapter 3 analyzes

rationality as a subject and social formation that linked the racialization of African Americans to racialization within colonial regimes. As the book approaches racialization as the production of gender and sexual heterogeneity, chapter 3 interrogates diaspora as a gendered and eroticized process as well. The chapter engages African American nonheteronormative formations to refuse the discrete presumptions of national identity and to link up with the anticolonial struggles of diasporic blacks. To do so, I juxtapose Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma: The Negro and American Democracy* with James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* to highlight the gender and sexual regulations of American citizenship and to locate those regulations within Western nation-state formations, in general. In the chapter, I read *Go Tell It on the Mountain* as an analysis of the ways in which Western rationality is a technique of racialization that requires erotic subjugation. I go on to locate critiques of rationality's disciplinary imperatives within the genealogy of decolonization. I conclude by insisting that diasporic critiques integrate analyses of gender and sexual normativity.

Taking the gender and sexual exclusions of decolonizing and civil rights struggles as its point of departure, chapter 4 explores the emergence of black lesbian feminist critiques in the 1970s, analyzing how woman of color theorizations of intersections index the rise of transnational capital as an economic formation that commodifies nonwhite female labor for surplus extraction. By locating the emergence of black lesbian feminism within the exclusions of anticolonial, revolutionary, and cultural nationalist social movements, I argue that black lesbian feminist formations attempted to disrupt the normative genealogy of oppositional movements. To contextualize this emergence, the chapter creates a dialogue between Toni Morrison's *Sula* and Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1965 text, *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action*, popularly known as *The Moynihan Report*. The chapter analyzes how *The Moynihan Report*, through its theory of black patriarchy, presented the grammar of state and citizen formation as the one most appropriate for decolonizing subjects, a grammar that insisted on the disciplining of gender and sexual nonnormativity. As an example of how revolutionary nationalism intersects with the normative protocols of canonical sociology, the chapter attempts to show how investments in heteronormativity provided occasions for unlikely alliances between radical movements and liberal social science. For instance, the chapter looks at the way in which revolutionary nationalism invested in Moynihan's theory of patriarchy, arguing that the theory displaced anxieties about the destabilization of heteropatriarchy onto black women's hunger for castration and occluded the gendered exploitations of capital. Black lesbian feminists attempted to theorize these displacements and occlusions and address contemporary capital as a set of relations char-

acterized by an unprecedented gender and racial diversity. Hence, theorizing intersections was a way of naming the manifold outcomes of that diversity and determining what new strategies and opportunities for coalition could arise from it. In this context, black lesbian feminists engaged Toni Morrison's *Sula* as a means to fashion a subject who could critique the aforementioned displacements and create alternatives to them.

The conclusion to this book explores the ways that contemporary state formations lubricate the mobility of capital by enlisting middle-class minorities to regulate the gender and sexual eccentricities of nonwhite populations. The present moment requires a critique of canonical social science, and state and revolutionary nationalisms as they all participate in the gendered and sexual regulation of nonwhite peoples. In the conclusion, I acknowledge the complicity between state formations under globalization and minority middle classes as the cooptation of prior social movements. I argue that contemporary globalization is one in which normativity still organizes state and citizen formations, but apprehends subjects previously excluded from the normative privileges of sovereignty and rights. This chapter also theorizes postnationalist American studies as one epistemic formation that might presume the relations specific to woman of color and queer of color subjects as a way of imagining forms of sociality and agency that exceed the normative binds of citizenship.

We need a study of racial formations that will not oblige heteropatriarchy, an analysis of sexuality not severed from race and material relations, an interrogation of African American culture that keeps company with other racial formations, and an American studies not beguiled by the United States. This book represents an attempt to theorize queer of color critique as an answer to these needs. As an inquiry into the nonnormative components of racial formations and as a challenge to the manifold restrictions of normative epistemes, queer of color analysis can be another step in the move beyond identity politics and toward what Angela Davis calls "unlikely and unprecedented coalitions."⁶⁹

liberal subjects, arguing for the universalization of black men through access to black women's bodies. Given a historical context in which middle classes are positioned as the regulators of the intertwining gender, sexual, and racial differences of lower classes, Wilson's argument implies not only a difference between black lower-class women and white middle-class women, but suggests an equivalence between white and black middle-class subjects. It is important to recognize that this equivalence is brokered against the nonheteronormative difference of African American working-class subjects, particularly women. An equivalence between white and black middle classes implies that both can claim, to varying degrees, normative privilege against the denigrated status of black poor women, in particular.

In a context such as this, middle-class status fortifies normative privilege for African Americans who can claim it, ostensibly purifying racial difference of its nonheteronormative hues, casting nonnormative racial difference as a gendered and eroticized phenomenon specific to black poor and working classes. As I argued in chapter 4, national liberation's bid for normativity coupled with the upward and downward expansion of social structures has produced crossracial alliances over middle-class access to normative privileges. As contemporary globalization polarized minority communities economically, it produced the social conditions whereby class differences could help establish the normative status of racial subjects.

Within this historic moment characterized by the normalization of racialized class formations, we need modes of analysis that can address normativity as an object of inquiry and critique. Cultural and revolutionary nationalism are fundamentally incapable of posing such an inquiry as they arise out of a genealogy of normativity. Cultural and revolutionary nationalisms have no mind for gender and sexual normativity. But if it is to study society in its fullest complexity, postnationalist American studies must mind this very phenomenon. We need a postnationalist American studies that can address the complex formations obtained in this moment of globalization, formations whose racial, gender, sexual, and class differences obtain their distinctions through engagements with normativity. In the preface of this book I asked where the familiar faces of black queer subjects were in the picture of my hometown. It is worth asking where the faces of queer of color subjects are within postnationalist American studies. Where, for instance, is the transgendered man who wore Levi's held up by suspenders, or the sissy who played for us on Sunday mornings? It is not enough to merely recognize their existence. In this moment of transgressions and regulations, we must approach these subjects as sites of knowledge.

Notes

Preface

1. The web address for the site is <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aaohhtml/exhibit/aointro.html>.

Introduction

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. *Ibid.*, 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) are 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 Laquer, "Sexual Desire and the Market Economy during the Industrial Revolution," in *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS*, ed. Donna 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 Pincetl (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*, ed. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 172.

27. Laquer, "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*, ed. 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.*

45. I thank Grace Hong for making this implication clear to me. Robert Park cites Marx as the theorist who inspired an engagement with social transformation. As Park states in "Race Ideologies," "What students of society and politics know about ideologies and about revolutions seems to have its source, for the most part, in the literature inspired by Karl Marx and by the writers who inherited the Marxian tradition." Robert Ezra Park, *Race and Culture: Essays in the Sociology of Contemporary Man* (New York: Free Press, 1950), 303.

46. Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 2.

47. Craig Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 43.

48. Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 150.

49. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 14.
50. Thomas Pettigrew, *The Sociology of Race Relations: Reflection and Reform* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), xxi.
51. James McKee, *Sociology and the Race Problem: The Failure of a Perspective* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 128.
52. Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 150–51.
53. As Rose M. Brewer argues in “Black Women in Poverty: Some Comments on Female-Headed Families,” “Most analyses of the underlying causes have been filled with normative assumptions about what is proper and improper familial behavior, and, consequently, social scientists often have labeled the family formation practices of the black population ‘inappropriate’” (*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 13 [1988]: 331). See also Angela Davis and Fania Davis, “The Black Family and the Crisis of Capitalism,” *Black Scholar* 17, no. 5 (September/October 1986): 33–40. The work of black queer intellectuals extends this discussion to show how the labeling of black familial forms as inappropriate denies families formed out of same-sex unions any positive regard, labeling them “immoral” and “threatening.” See especially Cheryl Clarke’s “The Failure to Transform: Homophobia in the Black Community,” in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith (New York: Kitchen Table-Women of Color Press, 1983). See also Isaac Julian and Kobena Mercer’s “True Confessions: A Discourse on Images of Black Male Sexuality,” in *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men*, ed. Essex Hemphill (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1991).
54. For a discussion of the family’s place within liberal ideology, see Wendy Brown, “Liberalism’s Family Values,” in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 135–65.
55. As Sheila Rowbotham noted, “The family under capitalism carries an intolerable weight: all the rags and bones and bits of old iron the capitalist commodity system can’t use. Within the family women are carrying the preposterous contradiction of love in a loveless world. They are providing capitalism with the human relations it cannot maintain” (*Woman’s Consciousness, Man’s World* [Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973], 77), quoted in Brown, “Liberalism’s Family Values,” 151.
56. David L Eng and Alice Y. Hom, eds., *Q & A: Queer in Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 5.
57. I thank Judith Halberstam for helping me arrive at this argument.
58. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 5.
59. Steinberg, *Turning Back*, 26–29.
60. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, eds., *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 1.
61. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the “Racial” Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), xxiv.
62. Morroe Berger, ed. and trans., *Madame De Staël: On Politics, Literature, and National Character* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), 142–45.

63. Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 30.
64. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 11.
65. My distinction between the “rational citizen” and the “irrational other” is analogous to Immanuel Wallerstein’s use of the “citizen” and the “barbarian” in “The Insurmountable Contradictions of Liberalism: Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples in the Geocultures of the Modern World-System” (*The South Atlantic Quarterly* 94, no. 4 [fall 1995]: 1161–78).
66. Gates, *Figures in Black*, 8.
67. My use of “ambivalence” is borrowed from Zygmunt Bauman, who in his chapter “Philosophy and Sociology” argues that establishing discursive authority means making the boundary of the “organic structure” sharp and clearly marked, which means “excluding the middle,” suppressing or exterminating everything ambiguous, everything that sits astride the barricade and thus compromises the vital distinction between *inside* and *outside*. Building and keeping order means making friends and fighting enemies. First and foremost, however, it means purging ambivalence (Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* [London: Routledge, 1992], 120).
68. See Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), and Pettigrew, *The Sociology of Race Relations*.
69. See “Angela Davis: Reflections on Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S.A.,” in Lowe and Lloyd, *The Politics of Culture*.

1. The Knee-pants of Servility

1. Robert E. Park, *Race and Culture: Essays in the Sociology of Contemporary Man* (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1950), 138–51.
2. *Ibid.*, 36–51.
3. Stow Persons, *Ethnic Studies at Chicago: 1905–1945* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 68.
4. *Ibid.*, 63.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Robert E. Park, “Human Migration and the Marginal Man,” in *Race and Culture*, 354.
7. James Barrett and David Roediger, “Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the ‘New Immigrant’ Working Class,” in *Journal of American Ethnic History* (spring 1997): 11.
8. *Ibid.*, 8.
9. *Ibid.*, 12.
10. *Ibid.*, 14.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 13–14.
13. During the eras of Prohibition and vice reform, prostitution and alcohol consumption were thought to be in tandem with each other. The association was made, in large part, because the saloon was the location for the purchase of both alcohol