Beyond Hetero-Modernity: Queering Universal Emancipation for Sexual Liberation

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ABSTRACT This article theorizes hetero-modernity as generating the heterosexualization of modernity, enacting a colonial sexual order that attempts a queer-death project through the dialectics of (re)integration and elimination. It is, in essence, the colonization of sexual existence. The emergence of the hetero-modern world pursues queer death via multiple sites of violence—political, economic, and ontological—culminating in the systemic dehumanizing of queer subjects. This sexual domination produces and sustains manifold forms of anti-queer violence. As such, the article not only proffers the queering of modernity as a critique of sexuality but also provides an intersectional analysis with raced, classed, and gendered implications. By situating Black studies and queer studies in dialogic exchange, it contends that queering modernity necessitates queering universal emancipation for sexual liberation.

Queer death is the cornerstone of modernity. The epidemic of queer suicide and homicide signifies the disposability and dehumanization of the queer Other. The inauguration of modernity[1] temporalized a new civilization in the New World through European colonial conquest from the late 1400s to the early 1500s, marking a pivotal juncture for the intelligibility and later justification of anti-queer violence as being constitutive of everyday, queer existence. In the study of politics, new methods must emerge to make sense of the constellations of queer oppression through epochal and mutually gravitating systems of domination, from colonialism to capitalism. This new method involves intersecting multiple social categories, including race, class, gender, and sexuality. Scholars of queer studies espoused a multimodal, intersectional approach: "I urge queer studies and queer movements to take up questions of colonialism, racial formation, and political economy simultaneously" (Alexander 2005, 12).

Within queer studies, there has been much discussion about the dialectics of normativity and antinormativity in the sense making of historical and contemporary social and political orders (Ahmed 2006; Butler 1993; Jagose 2015). Moreover, scholarship explored queerness as a mode of political development, tracing its various impacts across diverse facets of human life including politics, economics, history, and even the arts (Cohen 1997; Ferguson 2004; Muñoz 2009; Puar 2005). Yet, within political theory, the relationship between queerness and modernity remains largely undertheorized. This article historicizes the ontological and political constructions of the queer subject through the analytical frame of modernity to illuminate the problem of the coloniality of sexual modernity and through the heterosexualization of the modern and its ontological construction of Heterosexual Man—all embedded in ongoing alchemical practices of race, class, and gender. This study intervenes not only by retheorizing forms of queer oppression but also by proffering a decolonial queering of modernity and universal emancipation for sexual liberation. Doing so bridges scholarship in political science, queer studies, Black studies, and decolonial studies, thereby providing a new framework in which queer identity becomes reconfigured through a dialectical relation to modernity.

Against this background, the article contends that the heterosexualization of modernity produces what I term "hetero-

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modernity" in which the queer subject is condemned to an irretrievable, barbaric past and, therefore, devoid of political futures. Hetero-modernity attempts queer expurgation as a disavowal of queer futurity. I argue that hetero-modernity attempts the elimination of queer subjects through (neo)colonial systems and relations. As such, it is necessary to concurrently situate modernity, colonialism, and sexuality in excavating the imbricated layers of contemporary forms of anti-queer violence, thereby contesting the triple hegemony of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism with a view toward new political possibilities. Reorienting toward modernity enables a queer hermeneutics in rereading sexual histories so as to understand queerness as an entry into (de)colonial politics. This article demonstrates how the heterosexualization of modernity inaugurated queer death through orbiting systems of domination. From there, it posits the queering of modernity as a decolonial contestation of the hetero-modern world, the effect of which necessarily is queer universal emancipation for sexual liberation.

HETEROSEXUALIZATION OF MODERNITY: THEORIZING QUEER DEATH

The eliminative logic of a queer-death project is not only grounded in physical purging but also in understanding elimination as the objectification of the queer self. It is also attempted ontological and political elimination. Hetero-modernity, particularly through sexual capitalism, manufactures queerness as a homonational product (D'Emilio 1983; Puar 2005), in which sexuality becomes instrumentalized through the alienation of queer labor. In one sense, it is a corporeal and corporate gatekeeping—that is, the somatic insurance—of the queer body that becomes necessary for its exploitation. Hetero-modernity as a death project also ensures modes of queer survival and visibility. This contradiction—life through death or even death in life—forms the foundational basis of the dialectical essence of hetero-modernity, a system that simultaneously sustains queer life in service of its ultimate goal: queer death. Simply stated, hetero-modernity is also the production and regulation of queer bodies as a necessary condition for its elimination. This dialectic of elimination grounds strategies of commodified sustenance and survival negotiated across diverse historical periods of queer existence, all while embedded in systems of resistance toward sexual liberation as universal emancipation.

The heterosexualization of the modern world is colonial conquest, understood in its genealogical arc as domination in the sexual domain. These logics are not indissociable from those that govern the racialization of social order; coloniality maps the regimentation of social categories along axes of domination. It is notable that in charting the contours of the colonial world and its relations of power, Fanon (2004, 16) wrote, "The colonized subject is…dominated but not domesticated. He is made to feel inferior, but by no means convinced of his inferiority." The racialization of the non-white subject generates a form of domination effectuated through regimes of colonial violence: "The colonial regime owes its legitimacy to force" (Fanon 2004, 42). This colonial force—its inauguration of violence—is enacted through systemized practices of political binarism: "The colonial context…is characterized by the dichotomy it inflicts on the world" (Fanon 2004, 10). The separation between "civilized"/white and "savage"/Black logics constitutes the singularity and universality of a Euromodern grammar of racial dichotomization. It settles as the stabilization of an ethnoracial lexicon, which would come to inform and sustain contemporary racist registers—for example, the sublimation of Blackness as criminality (Chevannes 2023). These anti-Black logics and practices become indispensable to the ongoing elimination of Black peoples within the confines of European modernity. Yet, principally, the social world becomes marked by co-constituted frontiers of colonization, notably within the sexual and racial domains. In this ethnosexual matrix, there is a coproduction of colonial power in which the sexual subject—akin to the racial subject—becomes mapped and totalized within a colonial dichotomy constituting unequal self–Other relations.

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For these reasons, I define hetero-modernity as the production of reason, power, histories, cosmologies, and political relations that generate a world and its futures exclusive to the heterosexual subject. The hetero-modern world makes the heterosexual a singular condition for modernization. That is, it collapses development into a performance of (hetero)sexual power. Hetero-modernity acts, then, as a hegemonic penetration of phallocentric power within social order so as to reproduce heterosexual subjects for the political purpose of sexual conquest. Hetero-modernity is borne of a praxis of colonial sexual violence with its corresponding genocidal signatures. Yet, in dialectical fashion, the sexual architecture of hetero-modernity—although constructed for heterosexual regeneration—simultaneously is grounded in queer degeneration. These mechanisms of elimination and control evolve over time, shifting the axis along historical periods. In its early forms, those mechanisms varied when sexual behavior differentiated sexual identity. For example, D'Emilio (1983, 102) posited that gays historically are produced due to, in part, "the historical development of capitalism…that has allowed large numbers of men and women in the late twentieth century to call themselves gay…and to organize politically on the basis of that identity." The result means that "homosexual *behavior*, however, is different from homosexual *identity*" (D'Emilio 1983, 104; italics in original). The heterosexualizing of the modern means that the historical production of queer identity becomes rooted in the uncivilized, anti-modern "deviant subject," as a form of sexual signification. Therefore, modernization—or modernity—belongs only to those who perform heterosexual rituals of either erotic desire or strategic survival. It is a concealing of queer futures as political impossibility for the exile of the non-heterosexual, queer Other, thereby irretrievably imprisoned to the primitive past.

Like other forms of imperial and colonial modernities—including European modernity (or Euromodernity)—with its racialization

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of subjects, hetero-modernity charts European conquest of the New World, the genesis of which gave way to the sexualization of *being*. Goldberg (1991, 46) referred to the early (hetero)sexual conquests of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, a Spanish conquistador who colonized parts of the Americas in the early 1500s, wherein he encountered indigenous peoples: "[I]n a Panamanian village, after killing the leader of the Indians of Quarequa and six hundred of his warriors, Balboa fed to his dogs forty more Indians accused of sodomitical practices." These "sodomites" were sentenced to death because they wore what was deemed to be feminine clothing: "[Balboa] founde the house of this kyne infected with the most abhominable and unnatural lechery. For he founde the kynes brother and many other younge men in womens apparell, smoth and effeminately decked, which by the report of such as dwelte abowte hum, he abused with preposterous venus" (cited in Goldberg 1991, 47). In the hetero-modern world of early colonial conquest, the sodomitic subject was not only subhuman on the basis of sexuality but also an existential threat to the human being. Herein, humanity collapsed into heterosexuality, reproducing sexual and gendered norms, as other forms of queer life (e.g., gender fluidity, among others) would come to constitute a violent, savage threat to modern sexual living.

The symbology and the later attempted genocide of the savage sodomite provide a sexual-epistemic justification for the elimination of not only the racial Other (i.e., the "savage") but also the sexual Other (i.e., the "sodomite"). These cohering logics of sexual–racial terror build the colonial infrastructure of hetero-modernity—thus, the coproduction of the sodomitic savage, which represents a threat to the emergent modern political society and its governing cosmological orders. Within the West, "Sodom" finds its genesis in Christological thought—namely, biblical exegesis—as a site of cosmic condemnation later secularized in the political domain as civic elimination, descriptively reinvented as what I term *homocide*. Etymologically reconstructed, homo*cide* designates the killing of queerness (or of queers), derived from the Latin *cidium* meaning "a killing." Homocidal praxis names the plural forms of queer death, whether enacted by the self or imposed by the other, as a condition of possibility for modern life: "he [Balboa] commanded [sodomites] to be given for a pray for his dogges…in pieces as the butchers doo fleshe…from one an arme, from an other a legge, from hym a buttocke, from an other a shulder" (cited in Golberg 1991, 47–48). This queer dismemberment, discursively from the body politic but also physically from the human body, charts the *sine qua non* of hetero-modernity and its sexual death project: homocide.

These descriptions continued to populate narratives about indigenous subjectivity within the colonial world, where the discursive production of the "sodomitic" savage rendered their existence intelligible through elimination, by physical death and other forms of ontological, political, or sexual erasure. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, a Spanish conquistador, argued in his *Natural Historica de las Indias* (1526) that "In many parts of Tierra Firme the Indians are sodomites. Very common among the Indians in many parts is the nefarious sin against nature," the result of which was that "those consenting youths as soon as they fall into this guilt wear naguas [skirts] like women" (cited in Horswell 2005, 74). It is clear that these "sodomitic" depictions of indigenous peoples totalized the death-bound ontology of the indigenous queer subject. That is, the "sodomite" was necessarily one who must be eliminated because such acts were "considered deviant and monstrous, transgress[ing] natural law and justified the severe actions the Spaniards would undertake in the course of the Conquest" (Horswell 2005, 75). Furthermore, there were additional accounts of indigenous peoples who were described as engaging in cannibalism as being isomorphic with the practice of sodomy.

For instance, Francisco de Toledo, a European aristocrat and Viceroy of Peru, argued in his 1570s observations of indigenous sexual relations that "the Carib Indians who live in these parts and on the coast are infidels and idolaters and eat human flesh and commit the nefarious sin against nature" (cited in Horswell 2005, 71). Ultimately, I argue that these sodomitic constructions of the queer subject within early modernity constructed a particular relation to development where there was not only the racialization of sexuality but also the sexualization of civilizational order, whereby homosexuality was that which became both barbarous and non-European and heterosexuality became civilized and, therefore, *modern*. Horswell (2005, 70) argued that the exclusive objective of sexual colonization was social and political elimination: "Proof of these indigenous transgressions, therefore, became important in the early colonial economy" where those "proscribed practices justifying enslavement [of indigenous peoples] expanded to include sodomy." In other words, enslavement and mass murder were built into the intrinsic logic of homocide. Ultimately, then, such a homocidal logic—that is, its systems of (neo)colonial elimination and anti-queer violence—is made intelligible only through the sexual rationalism of the hetero-modern world, in which the inevitability of heterosexual coupling became the only legitimate basis for civilizational order and political development.

Yet, against this queer-death logic stood histories of sexual thriving, negotiated along axes of economic, racial, and hemispheric location. For example, New World histories of sodomitic expurgation coexisted with Old World histories of toleration, both made intelligible through capitalist rationality. Chitty (2020, 43) argued that between the late 1400s and the early 1500s, the Florentine regime understood rituals of sodomitic control as one penetrated, as it were, by sexual capitalism: "Florence mostly pardoned sodomites who turned themselves in and punished those convicted with fines. Florentine magistrates preferred profit to public humiliation." Chitty (2020, 44) continued, "The population of Florence had forced the state to adopt what seems like a surprisingly modern rationality: the city monetized sodomy alongside its societal, notably, religious, campaign of moral turpitude imposed upon it." The economy of sodomy was such that "sex between men functioned, among elites, as a way to curry political and personal favors and to secure business deals and patronage" (Chitty 2020, 45). These Old World histories cohered alongside New World histories, intermediated by hemispheric and ethnoclass location. Hetero-modernity, under its scripts of penality, constructed its eliminative logic not only in corporeal methods, as with the indigenous "sodomite," but also through class-based modes of being—the economization of sexuality. Nevertheless, situating the Americas as inaugurating the hetero-modern world—a modern world order borne from the particularities of its genocidal histories—reveals the nonlinearity of modes of elimination and production. Or, more accurately, it illuminated forms of political elimination enacted via economic regulatory practices—whether monetization in Europe or brutalization in the Americas—in which the

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queer subject is made both indispensable and expendable within hetero-modernity's sexual capitalism.

Miranda (2010, 256) suggested the term "gendercide" to name the process of indigenous elimination in which she explored "methods employed by the Spaniards to exterminate the *joya* (the Spanish name for third-gender people)" and the extermination and "the survival of this third gender as first *joyas*, the *jotos* (Spanish for homosexual, or faggot)." Gendercide becomes "an act of violence committed against a victim's primary gender identity," in which "the Spaniards had made it clear that to tolerate, harbor, or associate with the third gender meant death" (Miranda 2010, 259). Whether homocide or gendercide, the colonial logic of hetero-modernity ushers in a death project for queer subjects, particularly those who are non-European. If modernity gravitates around temporal, political, and epistemic axes of power, wherein development means belonging to the future, then the elimination of a particular group of people who are relegated to the past becomes the internal logic of a colonial sexual modernity—or, in this case, the hetero-modern world order. The sexual logic of hetero-modernity is "elimination" or "extermination" of non-heterosexual, queer peoples (Miranda 2010; Morgensen 2011). Here, the ontological construction of the queer Other is tied dialectically to the ontology of heterosexual self in which the former is viewed as sexual savagery and the latter as sexual civility. The heterosexualization of modernity, as political development, is accomplished through the sexual colonization of the human being.

In such hetero-modern logics, the healthy/moral heterosexual stands in anthropological opposition to the diseased/immoral homosexual. It is the universalization of biblical Sodom, mapped on all homosexual bodies as an overrepresentation of queer genealogy. For instance, in postcolonial Jamaica, due to the histories of European sexual colonization, the "sodomite" ironically defines female homosexuality as well, moving beyond its proto-sexual marker of buggery, to universalize divine condemnation to all queer subjects. This discursive mapping "illustrate [s] the totalitarian nature of colonial exploitation, the colonist turns the colonized into a kind of quintessence of evil" (Fanon 2004, 6). As such, sexual colonization, rearticulated as the heterosexualization of development, enacts the reproduction of the homosexual as a lesser being through the obliteration of queer ontology. This ontological elimination becomes a precondition for the hetero-modern turn, with its corresponding historical markers of sexual terror. In other words, development and modernization are linked erotically to the sexualization of the human being. Or, as Foucault (1990, 33) stated, "From the singular imperialism that compels everyone to transform their sexuality into a perpetual discourse…and institutionalize the sexual discourse, an immense verbosity is what our civilization has required and organized." He concluded, "It may well be that we talk about sex more than anything else" (Foucault 1990, 33). Sex, then, in its discursive formations, leads to an ontological construction of sexuality with its regimes of disciplinary power. Hetero-modernity naturalizes both the racialization of sexuality (i.e., Europeans as heterosexuals and non-Europeans as sodomites) and the sexualization of politics (i.e., heterosexuality as the universal condition of *being* human) in the constitution of the civilized, Western world. These power formations become institutionalized through legal regimes of control, enacted—in every conceivable sense—via the nation-state's anti-sodomy laws.

That is, in the early colonial period, sodomitic subjects become reified as savage Indians, understood as those adjudicated to be guilty of the "most abhominable and unnaturall lechery" (cited in Goldburg 1991, 47). Sodomitical savages were to be eliminated because those "contagious beastes" were "infected with that [sodomitic] pestilence," a "pestilence" that would, in the following epochs, naturalize the "gay plague" through the pathologization of queer existence as a site of ongoing psychiatric violence (cited in Goldberg 1991, 47–48). For instance, the long-standing discourse about the AIDS epidemic continues to plague queer existence, in every conceivable sense, as a fatal "gay problem." Here, a biomedical epidemic becomes sociopolitically endemic to the exiled category of the "fag." Other scholars have described this movement as the rectum marking the site of queer death in a hetero-modern world: "If the rectum is the grave in which the masculine ideal…of proud subjectivity is buried, then it should be celebrated for its very potential for death. Tragically, AIDS has literalized that potential as the certainty of biological death and has therefore reinforced the heterosexual association of anal sex with a self-annihilation" (Bersani 2010, 29). The medicalization and consequent criminalization of homosexual erotic practices, via old and new sodomy laws, reproduced sexual terror that sustains hetero-modern political arrangements such as the capitalistic commodification of sex, in which queer bodies become fungible sites for sexual exploitation, racial exoticism, and, ultimately, queer annihilation. This colonial system of racial–sexual exploitation witnessed its continuity from Natives to other non-European Others: those who were to be enslaved Africans. Yet, existence of queerness within the New World, both Native and Black, contested the faux universality of hetero-modernity and its apparatus of heteronormative reason. For example, Ferguson (2004, 85) named this "black nonheteronormative formations [that] present histories in which black and gender practices and identities refute the universalizing claims of Western rationalization," whereby a hetero-modern rationality conscripted forms of acceptable and legitimate sexual practices, embodiments, and identities. At its base, it was the denial of non-white and non-heterosexual reason and desires. This is the argument that Morgensen (2011, 18) made when he argued for an intersectional approach to Natives, Blacks, and other people of color's racial histories of sexual colonization:

> Histories of white settler colonialism and its logic of elimination in the Americas and the Pacific must theorize its coproduction with the transatlantic slave trade and the African diaspora, franchise colonialism in Asia and Africa, and global migrations of indentured labor, all of which inform the globalization of European capital and empire. This context suggests that the relationality of "settler" to "Native" in a white settler society has the effect of excluding non-Native people of color from the civilizational modernity that white settlers seek when they appear to eliminate Native peoples only to elide the subjugation of non-Native people of color on stolen land.

The sexualization of "civilizational modernity" becomes the basis of the hetero-modern world order, one embedded in the political arrangements and institutional power—from the nation-state and their legal regimes of sexual control and militarization—that advance the imperialism of white heteronormative sexual practices, alongside other forms of capitalistic sexual exploitation and commodification of non-white bodies and identities. Ultimately, these profiles of colonized queer subjectivities illuminate hetero-modernity as continuing a death project of

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queer annihilation, including Native queers and all other queer people of color. That is, the hetero-modern logic of colonial elimination finds its continuity and completion in the Africans of the slave trade, contemporarily understood as Black. It is as Morgensen (2011, 40) posited: "Death thus still shaped sexual colonization in the era of containment and assimilation, but in new ways." Those "new ways" include modern forms of queer violence and methods of elimination in all its racialized, classed, and gendered dimensions.

CONTRADICTIONS OF HETERO-MODERNITY

Toward an evolutionary temporal turn, the progressive modernization of the Western world marks a shift from early to late hetero-modernity. The colonial sodomitic savage as the inaugural embodiment in the construction of the queer subject lays the foundation for neocolonial forms of domination and violence through political, psychopathological, and economic forms of eliminative practices. Yet, hetero-modernity as a queer-death project reconfigures and resists normative conceptions and practices of expurgation. In other words, it did not merely attempt to purge queerness; rather, it is co-constituted through a dialectical relation between regulatory reintegration and ongoing extermination. To examine this phenomenon, this section presents a brief, panoramic view of hetero-modern contradictions across shifting spatial–temporal boundaries—from Nazi Germany to the contemporary Americas.

Consider, for example, the explicit genocidal treatments of queerness in the hetero-modern world, including the Hitlerism of Nazi Germany in the twentieth century and its pogrom of queer genocide, in which the homosexual was understood as being incompatible with Euromodern whiteness: "Male homosexuals were seen as biologically degenerate within the Aryan race" and thus diagnosed as "sexual deviants," reinforced by ongoing discursive erasure," such that "the discourse of genocide continues to exclude queers" (Waites 2018, 53, 57). This is evidence of anti-queer violence at the thresholds of corporeality (i.e., bodies) and temporality (i.e., histories). Hetero-modernity not only universalizes the human being as heterosexual, reified as Heterosexual Man, but also racializes sexuality, whereby straightness is whiteness.

In the final analysis, the crisis of Heterosexual Man engenders the colonial reality of hetero-modernity and its colonized queer subjects. Moreover, the ethnicization of queerness, constitutive of the ethnoracial logics of hetero-modernity, persists in the elimination of the queer Jewish subject—the gay Jew: "Persecution [of the gay Jew] occurred under paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code (1871), extended in 1935 to cover all 'unnatural vice' and 'indecent activities' between men. The death penalty formally commenced from 1942" (Waites 2018, 54). The use of "pink triangles" localized the site of embodied homosexual deviancy in queer Jewish men. Hetero-modernity cleaves together queerness with sexual "deviancy," which results in the physical and political annihilation of the homosexual Other. The trope of queerness as sexual "deviancy" locates its genealogy in the prior sexual colonization of indigenous subjects, which universalizes heteronormativity as the logic of elimination, now applied to racialized and ethnicized groups from Jews to Blacks, among others.

The question of the Nazi state and its Herrenvolk policies of expurgation were complex, made operable not only by racial logics of Aryan supremacy but also intertwined with classed, gendered, and ableist hierarchies. Nunn (2022, 129) reminded us that the queer existence oscillates between regulation and reintegration while experiencing repression and ruin: "Trans victimization was in no way uniform and was interwoven in a complex persecution system where categories of race and disability trumped so-called sexual and gender abnormality," the result of which evidenced trans liminality within the Nazi state as a site of existential precarity. This liminal zone is not separate from a hetero-modern world order and its classificatory systems of domination, in which its regulatory and even integrative practices of social normalization swing between the pendulum of overt death, in which "The Nazi state reserved its worst violence for trans women" (Marhoefer 2023, 600) and covert unlivability: "The Nazi courts may have granted her [a trans woman] bare life in 1941, but sometime after 1936 her life became unlivable" (Nunn 2022, 154). The domains of uninhabitability and unlivability manifest as queer-death projects through the biopolitics of "normal bodies" and their respective naturalization in ableist, classed, gendered, and sexualized grammars.

Together, hetero-modernity and its interpellation or discursive construction of the "sodomite," with its epochal rearticulations as "fag" among other symbolic markers, politically functions as a homocidal war against the queer subject. It pursues ontological terror against queer existence. Consider, for example, the hetero-modern psycho-juridical practice of what is diagnosed as "homosexual panic" or the "gay-panic defense." At the core of its rational basis, the heterosexual subject proffers a legal justification for the physical elimination of the queer subject. When the sodomitic homosexual contravenes the erotic, cosmic, and civic mandates of heterosexual civilizational living, the result is queer exile by death. Purportedly, queer eroticism induces madness in both the queer subject by provocation and in the heterosexual subject by evocation. That is, the gay subject suffers madness by provoking heterosexual male desire and the heterosexual subject evokes madness caused by the "madness" of gay solicitation.

Paradoxically, homosexual panic settles as a sane, rational justification of irrational madness in which hysteria masquerades as reason.

Paradoxically, homosexual panic settles as a sane, rational justification of irrational madness, in which hysteria masquerades as reason. Similar logic holds true for "trans panic," which has undergone devolution in the contemporary hetero-modern epoch. Consider, for example, the manufactured media hysteria and ideological warfare against the transgender prisoner, an embodied site where trans panic takes on a double function: (1) the monstrous fearmongering of gender-affirming care for the transgender carceral subject; and (2) the double subjection to

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carceral violence by being imprisoned anew by a calcified gender binary, what Currah (2022, 120) asserted as "trans prisoners are punished by the gender policies that govern incarcerated populations." In the 2024 presidential election, millions of dollars poured into television ads to foster and fester anti-trans sentiments by the Trump campaign in order to induce electoral trans panic against an increasingly outlawed sexual minority (Steakin and Kim 2024). This form of transphobic violence constitutes an expansion in the discursive weaponizing of trans panic rooted in the enduring psychopathology of hetero-modern hysteria.

The psychopathology of the hetero-modern world conceives the homosexual victim as perpetrating his own murder. In this nexus of phallocentric, patriarchal, and heterosexist power, studies found that "when the gay panic defense is presented, more homophobic jurors provide more lenient verdicts for the defendant" (Michalski and Nuñez 2022, 800). Ultimately, homicide collapses into homocide: "The 'gay-panic defense' was employed in at least forty-five trials between 2002 and 2013, alone" within the United States (Margolin 2021, 1482). That is, the heterosexual was sane to be driven into madness by homosexual provocation. Hetero-modernity, therefore, antagonizes social intercourse inside its colonial superstructure and, as such, homosocial relations (i.e., same-sex aromantic bonds) are systemically militarized as a war against the (homo)sexual Other. A careful examination of British colonialism in India illuminates an imperial death terror regime against *hijras*, an Indo-centric third-gender category, who faced systematic elimination under the hysteria of trans panic. Gill-Peterson (2024, 36) argued that "The colonial state appointed itself the political right to exterminate hijras to satisfy panicked British moral order." Beyond the bloody specter of physical death, hijras also experienced forms of social death: "The global trans panic…also inaugurated the killability of trans women on an interpersonal scale" (Gill-Peterson 2024, 37–38). Hetero-modernity's psychosocial terror regime, anchored in its systems of colonial domination, pursues this eliminative logic across the entire spectrum of human livability and habitability through the dialectics of regulation and expurgation.

To be sure, the colonial matrix of class, race, and sexuality produces other forms of hetero-modern political arrangements. Queer scholars have long inveighed against what some call "queer liberalism" (Puar 2005) or, as I reformulate it, "queer neoliberalism," along with what others dub "gay capitalism" (Alexander 2005), which, taken together, functions through the hetero-modern enactment of colonial-power regimes. Under this neocolonial situation, queer oppression becomes systemized through Euro-American politics and its pinkwashing doctrine of sexual tolerance. As such, "capitalism is able to position itself as being more progressive than the 'mainstream,' progressive enough to 'sell' to homosexuals" (Alexander 2005, 75). Neoliberal queer tourism is sold to gay consumers, whose geopolitical center is located in the territorialized Global South of black (and brown) economies wherein native, Caribbean queers—under the threat of a neocolonial "black heteropatriarchy"—encounter anti-queer terror fueled by white gay consumption (Alexander 2005, 23).

This political purchase occasions the coupling of "coalitional" bedfellows of heterosexual capital and gay capital for the collective alienation of the native queer underclass, where black and brown bodies become sites of erotic and ecological consumption, as "sexual consumption confuses personhood with bodies only" (Alexander 2005, 88). It is the political economy of sexuality, in which "capitalism is a set of social relations…turning money, things, and people into capital" (Rubin 2011, 35–36). This collapses the universal value of queer politics into political currency: gay marketability as sexual buy-in—it is purchasable tolerance. Hetero-modernity, then, necessarily manufactures queer anti-queerness. This colonial self-negation collapses queerness into a consumptive sexuality that cannibalizes itself. The result is the attempted sociopolitical elimination of queer subjects and their futures.

This notwithstanding, hetero-modernity's eliminative logic is not linear or symmetrical but rather nonlinear and asymmetrical. That is, a capitalist democracy and its notions of bourgeois freedom bound discourses of queer regeneration and rituals of queer sustenance. This complicates but does not undo hetero-modern notions of queer loss, elimination, and afterlives. Wuest (2022, 481), for example, argued that corporate America historically has not been a force of queer domination but, in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, transformed into an economic portal for LGBT rights advocacy: "A capitalistic political order appears neither to require nor generate an unwavering mandate for heterosexuality or gender normativity….The burgeoning embrace of queer life by corporate America would have been unthinkable to those rioters at Stonewall." To evidence this homo-capitalist turn, some scholars not only complicated gay corporatism but also embraced its neoliberal sexual economy: "Corporate political activism on behalf of LGBT equality has also played a crucial role in protecting equality gains from conservative backlash" (Ball 2020, 4). Capitalist sexuality is the production, regulation, and regeneration of queer life through the co-optation of hetero-modern rationality.

At this juncture, the production of homosexual identity becomes inseparable in the modern world from capitalist sexual labor anchored in what I term *homo-bourgeois freedom*. This homo-bourgeois freedom is concerned with liberty interests of a specific ethnoracial class: whites (and even non-whites) ensconced within the power matrix of the Global North. This means that the location of homo-bourgeois freedom becomes delimited geopolitical and hemispheric zones of imperial capitalist production (e.g., the United States) and is concerned less with the corporate protection of precarious queer lives within the developing world—namely, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean and even parts of Asia. Therefore, this uneven distribution underscores that the mechanisms of capitalist sexuality in advancing "gay rights" are partial and contingent, privileging Euromodern imperial sites of domination. This selective sexual economy functions dialectically through rituals of inclusion and exclusion. Therefore, its eliminative logic still holds even as it regenerates and regulates by making unintelligible a transnational queer identity borne from decolonial global struggles and movements. This reconfiguration of hetero-modernity's queer-death project becomes understood dialectically as not a human project of universal freedom but rather an ethnoclass consolidated interest—namely, homo-bourgeois freedom enwrapped within the fabric of a neoliberal property-rights humanism—that is, a faux humanism.

Therefore, hetero-modernity pursues its queer-death project demarcated by ethnoclass recognition and nonrecognition of queer lives, the fatal consequence of which is the regeneration of civilized, queer selves against the degeneration of uncivilized, queer others exiled *elsewhere*. The former retains its profitability

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in burgeoning a capitalist sexual economy and the latter becomes sexual excess, expunged through what Gramsci (1992) called Fordism's labor regimes of efficiency, now modernized and reinscribed through its sexual politics of fungibility. The effects of this can be understood by the strict currency and purchase of homo-bourgeois freedom: "If…people can't be convinced that LGBT people should be fully and fairly included in these areas because it's the morally right thing to do, a basic human rights argument, then we need other arguments to catalyze desperately needed social change. The economic cost of homophobia is one of those arguments….With a cold, calculating lens, we may yet make our societies more civil and humane" (Badgett 2020, 7–8). Yet, this approach merely balances the spreadsheet of the sexual economy on the backs of underclass Black and Brown queers situated in the Global South—whose histories of colonial domination, whether in Haiti, where corporate industrialism remains largely absent, or in Jamaica, where its embryonic presence has not birthed LGBT rights within the belly of its black sexual economy. This "cold, calculating lens" is the weight of homo-capitalism's economic rationality that imposes superstructural violence against Black and Brown queer existence. In the colonial penumbra of North Atlantic modernity, sexuality rescues gay rights for whites. It is the recursive rationalism of European modernity's Rights of Man, wherein Man symbolizes a faux universalism anchored in the particularism of European Man (Wynter 2006). The progressive sexualization of not only Man but also of *his* Rights meant that the Rights of Man would find its full sexual maturation through homo-bourgeois liberty appeals, now (trans)modernized and reinscribed as the new ecumenical "LGBT rights" for First World order, against which the Third World—the Global South—would be violently exiled and expelled from Euromodern futures.

Edelman's (2004, 26–27) timely invocation requires sober mediation: "While the right wing imagines the elimination of queers…the left would eliminate queerness by shining the cool light of reason upon it….Queerness thus comes to mean *nothing* for both: for the right wing the nothingness always at war with the positivity of civil society; for the left, nothing more than a sexual practice in need of demystification." It is demystification by the gentrification of queer juridical precincts. Thus, to embrace "cold, calculating" rationality as the *sine qua non* of economic viability and queer acceptability impoverishes—and outright renounces—a human project built on universal emancipation for all queer people. Within hetero-modernity, corporate America's *incorporation* of LGBT rights as a modality for gay liberation is a homo-bourgeois project, the losses of which may not be counted on spreadsheets but rather bedsheets through countless instances of queer-sexual violence. Therefore, "the reassertion of capital's dominance over labor, and the remaking of the political order to accommodate ostensibly any number of gender or sexual variations of being into a regime of increasing immiseration" is evidence of hetero-modernity's dialectical relation between life and death or, paradoxically, the production of queer death through queer life (Wuest 2022, 501).

Hetero-modernity institutes what some scholars term "necropolitical" outcomes unto the queer subject to impose death making as a new form of life-giving subjectivation. It is a fatal aporia—the attempted calcification of non-being as being. Or, in embodied terms, killability *qua* livability: "[Q]ueer necropolitics, therefore, powerfully evoke the production of disavowed subjectivities…while bringing into sharp relief the consolidating alignment of minoritarian projects of lesbian and gay rights advocacy, for instance, with the production, segregation, and mining of pathological bodies, spaces, and populations within shifting regimes of racism, colonialism and (neo)liberalism" (Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2014, 5). To be sure, death making is a heterogeneous site, operable across ontological, political, social, and somatic planes of being. The colonial–imperial triad of racism, heterosexism, and capitalism becomes the gravitating core of hetero-modern political arrangements as sexual terror against queer past, present, and future and thereby reaches its critical height: temporal death.

QUEERING MODERNITY AND UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION: TOWARD SEXUAL LIBERATION

Given the historical and existing modes of elimination, or *attempted* elimination, queer subjects nonetheless have survived despite colonial regimes of conquest, control, and oppression. For instance, indigenous peoples—queer and non-queer Natives—survived genocidal and homocidal threats, which is evidence of "colonialism's ongoing existence and simultaneous failure" (Simpson 2014, 7). Simpson (2014, 7–8) contended that "Colonialism survives in a settler form. In this form, it fails at what it is supposed to do: eliminate indigenous people." This politics of survival, understood as an emancipatory queer politics, holds true for those who are Black and other queer people of color despite the existence of hetero-modern political arrangements and their systems of colonial elimination. The result is the emancipation of sexual modernity by *queering* it. This mandate moves beyond hetero-modernity toward queering modernity (or modernities) through sexual liberation as a form of universal emancipation.

I denote emancipation as *being* freed from internal and external control and constraint. To emancipate thus grounds the freedom of the human being, whose prior social and political situation defines an already imposed *unfreedom*—an existential restraint or oppression of personhood and, thus, a denial of humanhood. The question of *universal* emancipation becomes anchored, paradoxically, in the *raison d'être* of its particularity. For example, Wynter (2006, 114) argued that it was Black particularism of the radical movements of Black Arts, Black Aesthetic, and Black Studies, "which called into question the mainstream art and aesthetics together with their 'monopoly of humanity.'" The radicality of these transgressive epistemic movements "were not amendable to…pacification and reincorporation" into what Wynter called "the thesis of Liberal universalism" and its Eurocentric construction and conscription of the human being as Euro-American and ethnoracially white. As a result, Black particularism, defined by the specificities of an Afrocentric political context, functioned as a subversive "counter-perspective" (Wynter 2006, 114, 109, 168). It was, in a word, a counter-universalism. The enactment of such a reality occasioned the Haitian Revolution, where Black revolutionaries situated and enacted a world-making program of universal emancipation: "Though individuals had on occasion imagined universal rights as a pure abstraction, no society had ever been constructed in accord with the axiom of universal emancipation. The construction of a society without slavery, one of a *universal* and *unqualified* human right to freedom, properly stands as Haiti's unique contribution to humanity" (Nesbitt 2008, 2; italics in original). Therefore, universalizing emancipation functioned as a disavowal of the colonial dictates of Black domination,

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which concretized the political foundations of Euromodernity. Universal emancipation necessarily illuminates anti-Black oppression, the effect of which generated new forms of decolonial selfhood and Afromodern subjectivities: "The Haitian Revolution created entirely new subjects of modernity" (Nesbitt 2008, 5). Ultimately, this revolutionary praxis struggled against a Euromodern world order toward a decolonial Afromodern project of humanistic regeneration.

If the political conditions of hetero-modernity self-institute a false sexual universalism anchored in the particularity of heterosexual subjectivity, then the queer subject struggles against (neo) colonial relations of sexual domination; that is, "how compulsory heterosexuality—defined as the accumulative effect of the repetition of the narrative of heterosexuality as an ideal couple—shapes what it is possible for bodies to do" (Ahmed 2014, 145). In this scenario, the heterosexualization of being, or Heterosexual Man, provides a false universal orientation *of* the human being. Hetero-modernity offers both sexual logics of race and racial logics of sexuality. For example, the figure of the Black male queer "object" becomes one in which he is said to be "DL," meaning "down low"—a place of barbarous, savage concealment and withdrawal. This is why DL men, in the hetero-modern world, have been labeled "homo thugs."[2] In this view, the "homo" is a sexual savage and the "thug" becomes a racial outlaw. The DL as homo thug brings together both Euromodern and hetero-modern logics, in which Blackness as criminality becomes imbricated with sexual and racial logics of anti-Blackness and anti-queerness, wherein the embodiment of criminality finds its full expression.

Together, what concretizes in the hetero-modern world is a death-bound ontological construction of Black queerness, in which representation of DL men constitutes not only the racialization of sexuality but also the sexualization of race. If DL-ness becomes a form of sexual closet, as Snorton (2014, 18) contended, then "The closet as it appears in (progress) narratives about gay subject-making serves to draw on an implicit colonialist sensibility that figures the 'dark secrecy' of the closet with the premodern and the primitive and the subsequent open consciousness of an 'outside' of the closet with modernity and civilization."

Heterosexuality becomes the necessary condition for modernity. Therefore, *queering* modernity—not merely advancing plural forms of it—engages a form of human liberation that frees the Black queer subject at the intersection of race and sexuality, embedded with political possibilities for the liberation of other forms of colonized identities and subjectivities, including class, gender, and disability, among others. Stated differently, its *long durée* struggles toward the queering of universal emancipation, not only as sexual liberation but also as a humanistic orientation to all freedom projects.

That is, the queer subject—historically reduced to the epistemic and cosmic genealogies of hetero-modern sodomitic inventions—means that the sexualizing of emancipation becomes a universal orientation *to* queerness. Indeed, if "queer[ing] sexual orientation itself…demonstrat[es] how other factors—particularly race—problematize its claim to order subjective identity," then the question of sexual liberation as a form of universal emancipation renders the queer subject free from the violent hetero-modern couplet of gay racism and Black homophobia—both of which lie at the intersection of race and sexuality (Harper 1997, 26). Queering sexuality and decolonizing race—or, more radically, decolonizing sexuality and queering race—becomes open to political possibilities of sexual liberation as a form of universal emancipation. The consequence regenerates political futures of the queer subject as moving beyond the sexual–racial binary, to include other intersectional modes and nodes of being human, in the formulation of a revolutionary queer modernity. Consider, for instance, the revolutionary possibilities of nonbinary and transgender discursive politics that prizes open radical, new possibilities for collective freedom: "The potential embedded in *they* and *them* lexically forsakes individualism, which laps up neoliberal logics, and forsakes the singularization of Jimmy, of Tommy, of Lydia and Riley and gifts them all with *them*" (Bey 2022, 58; italics in original). This radical queer grammar produces generative possibilities for new ontologies of the human being. In effect, it is proffering both queer ontologies and epistemologies that ground political life, wherein nonbinary subjectivities allow for a "commitment to collective life and coalitional sociality… [where] it becomes clear that blackness and nonbinariness give way to a radical, and radically opening, subjectivity" (Bey 2022, 58–59). This revolutionary grammar queers normative ways of being, which constitutes a sexual liberation as a form of universal emancipation.

Queering modernity grounds a futurity defined by its commitment to radical openness, whose praxis and politics are antinormative: "Queer is strategically defined in relation to a provisionally specified field of antinormative identities, practices, values, and aspirations that are always circumstantial or relational and therefore cannot be anticipated or foretold" (Jagose 2015, 34). In its sexual turn, queering universal emancipation is universalizing the particularities of being queer—it is opening the space of contingency for futural possibilities beyond itself. Queering universal emancipation allows all particularities to fall within the arc of human histories and futures. It is a futural humanizing of political struggles against colonial modernities, including Euromodern and hetero-modern realities, among others. Therefore, a queer particularity does not refer to a particular queer as such but instead to a universal condition of queering the human by delinking from the coloniality of Heterosexual Man: "The great promise of queerness, after all, lies in its potential to conceive and mobilize modes of social subjectivity not accounted for in advance by the structures entailed in ideological narratives" (Harper 1997, 25).

In its sexual turn, queering universal emancipation is universalizing the particularities of being queer—it is opening the space of contingency for futural possibilities beyond itself.

As such, opening queer subjectivity to the futural possibilities of being "out" necessarily queers universal emancipation in such a way that a new, revolutionary mode of civilizational living emerges and materializes—it is queering modernity, as an effect of sexualizing universal emancipation, moving beyond its existing racialization. If, as I argue, understanding colonial relations refers

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principally to relations of domination, then sexual relations may be oriented, as it were, in a new sexual dialectic. That is, the master–slave dialectic of ongoing racial relations finds continuity along sexual cartographies, where the heterosexual and homosexual subjects map sexual relations of domination constituting a new hetero–homo dialectic. This is what Sedgwick (1990, 1) described as where "major nodes of thought and knowledge in twentieth-century Western culture as a whole are structured—indeed, fractured—by a chronic, now endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition, indicatively male." This is the teleological imperative of Heterosexual Man, instituting an overrepresentation of the human by enacting a false universalism embedded in hetero-modern relations of sexual domination. Thus, the hetero–homo dialectic constitutes the heterosexual thesis against the homosexual antithesis, wherein a new synthesis emerges: queerness as humanness. Therefore, the political possibilities embedded in this dialectical transformation allows for the universalizing of emancipation for all human beings, including the sexual subject. If "Western culture…does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition," then queering modernity is not merely anti-homophobic or anti-heterosexist but also an anti-racist project (Sedgwick 1990, 1).

To be sure, the hetero-modern world intersects with a Euro-modern epistemology and cosmology of the "sodomite" as a genesis of a colonial iteration of sexual modernity. This means universal emancipation as a condition for the racial liberation of the enslaved—phenotypically coded as "black" and borne of the master–slave dialectic—undergoes a sexualized reinvention in order to enact an anti-heterosexist and anti-homophobic liberation movement. The end result constructs a queering of modernity such that queer futures are not defined by anti-queer violence, what some scholars diagnose as a "phase of empire-building in which hegemonic heterosexual masculinity wishes to assert a Pax Americana through imperial violence" (Alexander 2005, 183). This violence is witnessed, for example, through the disproportionate death of Black and Brown poor queer people as a result of the fatal matrix of HIV/AIDS, mass incarceration, and the terror of a profiteering Western pharmaceutical, neoliberal industry: "African Americans in the United States are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, with the rate of AIDS for African Americans nine times that of Whites…contextual factors associated with these disparities are drug policy and the corrections systems" (Blankenship et al. 2005, 140). When further contextualized for sexuality, pathologies are more dire: "Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) are by far the most affected group in the United States. According to the CDC, they accounted for 70% of the 32,100 estimated new infections in 2021, even though they made up only 2% of the population, with the highest burden among Black and Latino gay and bisexual men" (HIV.gov. 2024). Opposed to these bio-juridical machineries of queer death, queering modernity resituates queer life as livable futures by rendering equitable, humanistic outcomes for queer living as a juridical, sociopolitical, and economic mandate. Queering modernity allows for the construction of civilizational development as not merely a sexualizing project but, ultimately, as a humanizing enterprise.

Centering temporalities, geographies, and ontologies illuminates the global hierarchy of colonial conquest: "Considering queerness and diaspora together offers, in the broadest sense, important new ways to approach some of the critical aporias in all these fields….It offers a rethinking of a long history of Euro-American modernity, sexual politics, racial formation…in relation to the advent and rise of colonialism" (Eng 2011, 194). These cohering logics of raciality and sexuality disavow a *straight*-jacketed reading of colonial history as exclusively confined to the racial domain. As such, an emergent queer historiography allows for the decolonial and ontological recovery of the queer subject, as a contestatory relocation from Heterosexual Man to the Queer Human Other.

Butler (1993, 19) defined queerness as "a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes." That is, queerness is, at once, a queering of itself. Thus, those "futural imaginings" function as a contestatory turn away from the heterosexualization of modernity toward a queering of the modern to produce a decolonial relation between state-making and self-making. In this relation, statehood and selfhood disavow a fatal anti-queer terror, such as the ongoing transphobic criminalization of gender-affirming care and the naturalization of a pre-given gender binarism, in governmental policy making and social narratives embedded in everyday political living. This is, ultimately, the queering of universal emancipation.

Queering modernity, therefore, is the pluralization and contingency of the future as being radically open to self-critique as a new, modern method of development. Or, as Muñoz (2009, 18) contended, "Queer futurity…is attentive to the past for the purposes of critiquing a present." Hetero-modernity attempts violence against queerness by exiling it to a "primitive" past, one devoid of the potentiality of political futures. That is, the hetero-modern world does so by delimiting political possibility exclusively to Heterosexual Man. In contrast, queering modernity is not a foreclosure of civilizational development to homosexual imaginings; that is, it is not a homonormative imaginary of modernism. Rather, it is a queering of the possibilities of *being* modern—it is a contestatory opening of futures and, thus, the universalizing of futural development. This is why there is a *queering* of modernities—that is, the movement beyond a singularization of modernism itself toward the sexualizing of modernity in its plural forms.

For example, we may speak of trans-modernity as it centers the epistemic constructions and political futures of the transgender subject; conversely, a queering of modernity also may speak to the homo-modern as it situates the futures of the homosexual subject. Yet, the collective contestation of all forms of queerness constitutes a queering of the modern not merely beyond its hegemonic, normative heterosexualization but rather going beyond its homosexualization to include limitless possibilities of subaltern, anti-normative sexual orders for the not-yet-here. It is as Muñoz (2009, 1) argued, "The future is queerness's domain.…Queerness is a longing that propels us onward, beyond romances of the negative and toiling in the present.…Queerness is also a performative because it is not simply a being but a doing and toward the future. Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world." Queering modernity is, at once, a reclamation of a once-denied sexual selfhood that has been the mainstay of the hetero-modern world through its anti-queer apparatuses and death instruments, such as the proverbial gay closet, alongside the bio-

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politics of the AIDS crisis. The potentiality "for another world" requires sexual liberation as a form of universal emancipation. That sexual-liberation project is plural in its revolutionary imaginings. It is not final, because queering modernity is always in motion—always making ground for queer futures to come. Queering modernity disavows homocidal projects for life-giving ones, for all queer subjects here-and-to-come. Its teleological imperative of universal emancipation grounds its sexual liberation in the particularities of Black, Native, and other queers of color, with the result producing a human universalism for all people, queer and non-queer alike.

If queering universal emancipation necessarily requires an intersubjective, dialogic exchange between racial and sexual freedom struggles, then it follows that Black liberation should inform gay liberation and vice versa. This is precisely the dialectic that gay Civil Rights leader, Bayard Rustin, articulated when he evocatively argued in his 1986 speech: "The New Niggers Are Gay." Rustin declared, "The new 'niggers' are gays....It is in this sense that gay people are the new barometer for social change.... The question of social change should be framed with the most vulnerable group in mind: gay people" (Hinzmann 2018). Rustin was not signaling a flattening of racial or sexual intersection or differentiation; rather, the argument understands the internal logics of racial oppression such that overcoming anti-Black racism is intelligible and attainable only to the extent that it does not fall prey to its own fetishization by ceding space and actionable ground to other (or even more) vulnerable groups. In other words, neither the struggle against anti-Blackness nor the struggle against anti-gayness can understand itself by itself without collapsing into fatal solipsism. It is precisely this artificial parsing and the intra-fragmentation of liberation movements that become the normative practice of hetero-modernity. Conversely, queering modernity allows each to be (re)framed in the other's register for its own intelligibility for the possibility of dialectical transformation. Black Panther Party leader, Huey Newton (1997, 405), argued, "And I know through reading and through my life experience, my observations, that the homosexuals are not given freedom and liberty by anyone in the society. Maybe they might be the most oppressed people in society." It is on this condition of being "the most oppressed" that Newton (1997, 405) concluded, "But there's nothing to say that a homosexual cannot also be a revolutionary....Quite the contrary, maybe a homosexual could be the most revolutionary." For Newton, the height of revolutionary possibility is located from below. It is the queering of race as much as it is the queering of itself. Queering modernity enacts universal emancipation as a revolutionary project by being or living against the sacred orders of sexual and racial normativity, overturning the conditions that renders coexistence impossible.

Queer transformations at the core and the margins make plain the indispensability of an intersectional (Collins 2020) if not creolizing (Gordon 2014) approach in queering modernity as a decolonial project toward universal emancipation. Consider, for instance, Stryker's (2008, 150) argument that contemporary transgender liberation politics, grounded in queer feminism and beyond, must account for politics outside of its conventional view of "sexuality and gender identity politics." Stryker (2008) contended that transgender liberation must align with seemingly nonsexual groups or categories such as "immigrants, refugees, and undocumented workers" because of shared positionality in the unique yet collective struggle against the surveillance state and its panopticon regime post–9/11 within the United States. Given these shared terms, the conditions of Blacks in America and its historical policing of Black bodies—from slave law to Black codes; lynch law to law-and-order regimes; and, most notably, America's "war against drugs" and its attendant carceral politics institutionalized via stop-and-risk policies—provides fertile ground to reconfigure racial liberation as sexual liberation and, conversely, sexual liberation as racial liberation. Collins (2020, 222; italics in original) referred to this as the intersectionality of racial–sexual paradigms: "Racism and heterosexism, the prison and the closet, appear to be separate systems, but LGBT African Americans point out *both* systems affect their everyday lives. If racism and heterosexism affect Black LGBT people, then these systems affect *all* people, including heterosexual African Americans." This evidences the radical potential of queer politics when it queers its interlockers beyond the remit of sexual and gender politics (Cohen 1997).

If the Black subject is disproportionately incarcerated at a higher rate than the white subject (Alexander 2012), and if the transgender subject also is incarcerated disproportionately at higher rates than the cisgendered subject (Currah 2022), then the question of the Black trans-carceral subject undergoes a double captivity, fatally condemned twice over. Ultimately, hetero-modernity's carceral logics and penal politics render Black trans (carceral) existence unlivable. It is at this intersection that the Black transgender subject—who experiences surveillance at the intersection of Blackness and transness—where *queering* the modern necessitates not merely trans-modernity as overturning a transphobic sexual order but also in constituting Afromodernity as displacing anti-Black racism. Both generate the conditions of possibility for queering universal emancipation as a radical project of humanism—one that does not seek incorporation within the existing capitalist surveillance state on the narrow basis of their respective terms of sexual or racial particularism but rather enacts a decolonial struggle to constitute anew the human in a critically open universal category.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research. ■

NOTES

1. By "modernity," I mean Western or European modernity, what Gilroy (1993, 43) called "the bold, universalist claims of occidental modernity and its hubristic confidence in its own infallibility"—an infallibility predicated on the exclusive "modern rationalism" against which the non-European "savage" is contrasted and constructed. Therefore, non-Europeans become excluded from the project of European modernity on the basis of their subrationality and consequent subhumanity. In this sense, modernity becomes racialized by the Occident to the exclusion of Others. Aligned with this, I posit hetero-modernity to offer not principally its racialization—although racialist logics become a consequence of

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it—but rather the sexualization of the "modern" as the basis of political society and its futures. Necessarily, therefore, hetero-modernity excludes on the basis of the subject's queerness—it is the hetero-sexualization of political existence.

2. See Snorton's (2014, 7, 127) queer analysis of this anti-queer and anti-Black trope.

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