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An Examination of the Emergence of the Queer Figure in North American Culture Using a Queer Marxist Theoretical Framework

Jade C.R. Da Costa, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Charles G. Levine, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Sociology

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Abstract

This thesis develops a new sociological perspective entitled “Queer Marxism,” a neo-Marxist perspective on gender identity, gender expression, and gender oppression that incorporates Judith Butler’s queer perspective of gender performativity. Using this Queer Marxist framework, this thesis will identify an existing tension, due to emerging contradictions within the North American capitalist structure, between the current realities of gendered bodies and the dominant gender binary ideology of North American society. In reflecting on this tension, this project will argue that non-normative genders (and sexualities) are gaining more recognition and validation at a cultural level which, in turn, serves to only further contradict the hegemonic presence of the gender binary ideology that is upheld by the dominant socio-political and economic structures of North America society. As a result, the cultural forces of gender-based domination and subordination that support the relations of capital have begun to destabilize, diversifying gender performativity as a consequence.

Keywords

queer theory; Marxism; gender; sexuality; capital; capitalism; gender performativity; historical materialism; LGBT rights; women’s rights; feminism; Marxist feminism

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Dedication

For the 49 victims and 53 survivors of the Orlando Pulse Shootings;

“Thoughts and prayers are nice, gun control and queer rights are better.”

-Unknown

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Introduction

“The oppression of all sexual [and gender] minorities is one of modern capitalism’s myriad contradictions. Capitalism creates the material conditions for men and women to lead autonomous sexual lives, yet it simultaneously seeks to impose heterosexual norms on society to secure the maintenance of the economic, social, and sexual order.”

-Sherry Wolf¹

0.1 Framing the Problem

This thesis addresses Sherry Wolf’s (2009) above observation. It does so by developing a new theoretical perspective on the social, cultural, economic, and historical effects on persons’ gender identity² and gender expression³ in the context of North American capitalism. This perspective is inspired by the works of Karl Marx and Judith Butler and will be referred to as “Queer Marxism,” a neo-Marxist theory of gender identity, gender expression, and gender oppression that incorporates Butler’s (1993) queer perspective of gender performativity. Gender performativity is the idea, for Butler, that people only become feminine or masculine when they are labelled as such by culturally established meanings that are used by a given society to understand what it means to be female or male (Butler, 1993; Nelson, 2010). Echoing the logic of pragmatic philosophy, however, Butler also maintains that these socially and culturally constructed meanings of gender only become “valid” markers of the sexed body when they are used to identify individuals as either “female” or “male” (Butler, 1993).

¹ See Wolf, Sherry. 2009. *Sexuality and Socialism, History, Politics and a Theory of LGBT Liberation*, page: 17.

² Gender identity refers to each person’s internal and individual sense of gender. It is a person’s sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere on the gender spectrum (The University of Michigan, 2016).

³ Gender expression refers to how a person publicly presents or expresses their gender, which includes their behaviour and outward appearance, such as their style of dress, hair, make-up, their body language, voice, chosen name, and pronoun (The University of Michigan, 2016).

From Butler's perspective, ongoing cultural and individual mechanisms within our society, such as the language and symbols that we use to speak of or represent "women" and "men" in public discourses, continuously label bodies as either masculine or feminine. This simultaneously validates the normative status of gender ideologies, while also making the bodies that such norms regulate "real"⁴ in the eyes of the general public. For example, when a parent buys their infant daughter pink coloured clothing, they produce and reproduce the culturally established belief that pink is a "girl's colour," while also gendering the individual body of their child, based on this normative belief system. Beliefs like this may be established through larger institutions, like the media, and how it commonly represents men and women, but their normative status is only established when they are able to successfully regulate and dictate the behaviours and actions of individual people.

Gender, for Butler (1993), is only known by both the individual and by larger society through a process of gendering that exists, and persists, within a matrix of discourse. "Subjected to gender, but subjectivated by gender" Butler writes, "the 'I' neither precedes nor follows the process of this gendering, but emerges only within and as the matrix of gender relations themselves" (Butler, 1993, p. xvi). It is this very emphasis on discourse, however, that has tended to result in Butler ignoring the role that capital⁵ plays in the production and maintenance of gender ideologies (Seidman, 1993).⁶ This is an oversight that I believe has resulted in the tendency of Butler to ignore both the specific ways in which gender has been transformed across

⁴Gendered bodies become "real" in this context in the sense that they are perceived and treated as if they were real by actual people, therefore making them "real in their consequences" (Thomas, 1929, p. 572).

⁵ I use "capital" to refer to the expression of wealth, or value, in either an abstract or concrete form, that represents a "congealed state" of "human labour power" within a capitalist mode of production (Arruzza, 2015, p. 38; Marx, 1867/1978, p. 316).

⁶ The general term "ideology" refers to a shared system of beliefs and myths that are held by an individual, a social group, or a society (Allahar and Cote, 1998). In this same regard, I use the term "gender ideologies" to refer to the beliefs and myths about gender that are held by an individual, a social group, or a society.

changing historical, social, and economic contexts as well as the effect that such changes have had on individual expressions of both gender and sexuality (Arruzza, 2015).

My thesis, in contrast, will look at the complex social and individual elements of North American-based gender identity and gender expression in a manner that identifies and illustrates the influence that past and present economic structures have had on gendered bodies in contemporary society. In order to compensate for Butler's tendency to not properly address the above macro factors that influence gender performativity, my thesis will attempt to integrate Butler's premise that gender expression and gender identity are, in part, "performative," with Marx's foundational logic of historical materialism. In synthesizing Marx's and Butler's work in this fashion, I can incorporate the "concrete" macro perspective of Marx's historical materialism with that of the context-based narrative of gender performativity, and suggest a multi-leveled analysis of gender identity, gender expression, and gender (and sexual)-based oppression within the context of North American capitalism.

I appreciate the fact that Butler's theory recognizes and identifies the ways in which gender norms are produced and reproduced through the day-to-day interactions of individual people. Butler's perspective illustrates that masculinity and femininity are imaginary productions of gender that are (re)produced through the individual's ongoing negotiation with socially and culturally created belief systems (Jagger, 2008). However, Butler has yet to link her descriptions of "femininity" and "masculinity" to any structural factors, social movements, political institutions, and so on, that can explain the social and historical emergence, maintenance, and development of the very gender categories that she analyzes (Arruzza, 2015). Butler also fails to include any analysis of capital in her theory, which leads her to ignore the ways in which the relations of capital can both regulate the production and maintenance of dominant gendered

belief systems as well as govern the individual performativities that reproduce gender norms (Arruzza, 2015). By framing the context specific narrative of gender performativity within a Marxist perspective, I can address how capital does, in fact, reproduce and produce anew, dominant gender ideologies that regulate gender expression and gender identity in ways that benefit capitalism. I can also, in addition, identify how the actions and behaviours of complex social actors and groups can begin to renegotiate normative gender scripts.⁷

A core premise of this project is that there is a tension that exists due to emerging contradictions within North American capitalism between the current economic and material conditions of gender performativity and the gender ideologies that are upheld by our dominant culture. The division of labour in contemporary North American capitalism has begun to destabilize the hegemonic presence of the traditional gender binary,⁸ which emerged during the rise of industrial capitalism. The capitalist forces of production have tried to maintain the ideology of the traditional gender binary by reproducing and producing it anew across changing historical contexts; however, the changing relations of capital, from the industrial revolution to now, have created economic and material conditions which gave rise to “queer,” or “non-traditional,” gender performativities, while simultaneously reproducing “traditional” gender norms that are, at the same time, undercut by the presence of the queer⁹ figure. Due to this tension, I believe that queer genders and sexualities are gaining more recognition and validation

⁷ Normative gender scripts refers to gender performativities, or ways of “doing” gender, that conform to hegemonic or “emphasized versus” of masculinity and femininity that exist within a given society (Carpenter, 2010, p. 160).

⁸The gender binary describes a perceived social norm that discourages people from moving across, or combining, gender norms and roles, and restricts certain types of gender identity and expression to what society deems to be the “appropriate” sexed body (Rosenblum, 2000).

⁹ Queer bodies refer to expressions of gender and/or forms of gender identification that do not fit within the dominant social categories that are used by a given society to represent the sexed body (University of Michigan, 2016)

at a cultural level which, in turn, serves to only further contradict the hegemonic presence of the gender binary ideology that is upheld by the relations of North American capitalist production.

A synthesis of Butler's theory of gender performativity and Marx's theory of historical materialism will help me to better understand this tension by linking the gender norms that regulate the process of gender performativity to the specific socio-historical context of North American capitalism. On the one hand, this will allow me to illuminate how the relations of capitalist production currently regulate, constrain, and influence individual expressions of gender (and by extension sexuality). While, on the other hand, by focusing on the performative aspect of gender, I can illustrate how certain forms of gender expression, namely those articulated by the gender and sexually queer, can begin to reshape and renegotiate the hegemonic cultural presence of capitalist gender ideologies. By connecting the emergence of the queer figure to current tensions that exist between the forces of production and the relations of production within North American capitalism, I can then reveal how the gender categories produced and reproduced by the capitalist relations of production are becoming increasingly unstable in contemporary North American society.

0.2 Queer Theory vs. Marxism

Compared to the past few decades in which queer theory has often rejected and critiqued a Marxian framework, recent trends in queer theory have shown a greater openness towards considering the benefits of Marx's writings when theorizing about the social world (Floyd, 2009). However, while new ways of thinking within queer perspectives have begun to develop that increasingly recognize the relationship between gender and sexual relations and the relations of capital (e.g., D'Emilio, 1983; Floyd, 1998; Floyd, 2009; Hennessey, 2000; Sears, 2005; Wolf,

2009), there is still, what Floyd (2009) identifies as, a “marked schism” (p. 2) between the two fields. This “marked schism” has created a few barriers towards the possible development of a Queer Marxist perspective. Such barriers to the development of a Queer Marxism can be said to ultimately stem from both the apparent failure of queer theorists to appreciate the importance of historical materialism, as well as from the tendency of certain Marxist thinkers to either ignore or minimize questions of gender and sexual-based oppression in their analyses.

Many queer and feminist theorists (e.g., Barrett, 1988; Butler, 1993; Hartmann, 1979; Smith, 1999; Warner, 1993) have argued that Marxists often over emphasize the importance of economic factors in their theorizations of the social, which leads them to pay too much attention to social problems that are only related to class-based oppressions. As a result, these theorists have argued that Marxists end up ignoring the concerns of gender and sexual minorities, among others, in favour of what they deemed to be “real” social issues, particularly issues that pertain to class-based inequality (Floyd, 2009).

While I agree that it is the case that many Marxists do in fact ignore the importance of gender and sexual-based oppression when analysing the relations of capitalist production, I believe that this tendency does not stem from the logic of historical materialism. On the contrary, I maintain that this is actually a result of an inappropriate reading of Marx’s writings which, when read properly, can be easily interpreted in a manner that is sensitive to gender and sexual-based issues. Two notable authors appear to share this perspective with me, while also appearing to be sympathetic with my concerns about achieving some sort of synthesis between Marxism and gender performativity. The first is Kevin Floyd (2009), who wrote *The Reification of Desire; Towards a Queer Marxism*, and the second is Cinzia Arruzza (2015) with her essay “Gender as Social Temporality: Butler (and Marx).” Arruzza is interested in tracing out similar and

contesting logics in Marx's and Butler's work, while Floyd appears to be more concerned with understanding certain expressions of gender performativity within the specific context of North American capitalism. Both of these authors, however, conceptualize the emergence and maintenance of current North American gender ideologies within a Marxist perspective, while still incorporating elements of queer philosophy into their analyses.

In her article, Arruzza (2015) focuses on what she calls the "temporal commonalities" (p. 37) within Butler's and Marx's work. This refers to a perceived common ground for Arruzza that exists between, what she recognizes as, the "social temporality" of gender that is identified by Butler's theory, and the social temporality of capital which is illustrated by the logic of historical materialism. Social temporality, for Arruzza, refers to the temporally "transformative" (p. 36) element of both theories that focuses on the malleable and open-ended state of social constructs and relations. She also outlines what she calls the theoretical "incompatibilities" (p. 41) that exist between Marx's and Butler's theories by noting both Butler's tendency to de-historicize¹⁰ gender as well as her tendency to neglect analysing the relations of capital. Arruzza's central argument is that despite the fact that she neglects to make this connection herself, Butler's theory of gender performativity logically requires an acknowledgment of the impact of capital on the individual and social development of gender.

Floyd (2009) makes a similar argument in his chapter on Butler, which is entitled: "Performative Masculinity: Judith Butler and Hemingway's Labour with Capital." In this chapter, Floyd historicises the emergence of hegemonic masculine gender norms, and investigates their effects on gay men, by connecting the transformation of gender regulation in

¹⁰ To historicise something is to connect it to, as Arruzza (2015) states, "historical circumstances, across different modes of production or historical epochs" (p. 41). Therefore, to de-historicise something, in this case gender categories, is to neglect a consideration of, and linkage to, such "historical circumstances" when considering the social significance of the concept in question.

the early 20th century to the productive systems of Fordism and Taylorism. While these two institutions are not necessarily relevant to the logic of my thesis, the relevance of Floyd's work to mine is his underlying assumption that Butler's work on gender performativity actually describes gender citation¹¹ within North American capitalism. Floyd (2009) argues that the missing historical element of Butler's work is an explicit analysis of the role that the relations of capital play in the production and reproduction of North American gender norms. Arruzza's essay considers how the perspectives of gender performativity and historical materialism converge and diverge with, and from, one another, while Floyd's work uses the perspectives of historical materialism and gender performativity to outline the emergence of the masculine figure within North American culture.

Floyd's and Arruzza's work can be said to be grounded by the same overarching thesis, which is an attempt to synthesize Butler's and Marx's perspectives into a common understanding of the relationship between gender and capital. However, Floyd's and Arruzza's works differ insofar as Floyd: 1) centralises the emergence and regulation of one form of "dominant" gender expression in particular and: 2) investigates the ways in which specific economic institutions and structures played a role in the transformation of hegemonic masculinity. He then looks at the regulation and circulation of the gay male figure (only) in North American culture as a consequence of this transformation. In contrast, Arruzza: 1) analyzes the contesting and similar logics of historical materialism and gender performativity without providing an actual analysis of gender within capitalism, and: 2) as a result, unlike Floyd, she does not make any reference to the emergence and regulation of gay masculinity in particular or to any gender or sexual identity more generally. While Arruzza's and Floyd's work play a central role in how I develop my

¹¹ The term "citation" makes reference to Butler's idea that performativity is "citationality." As Butler (1993) states in *Bodies That Matter*, gender performativity "offers an opportunity to link the question of the materialization of 'sex' with the reworking of performativity as citationality" (p. xxii).

theory of Queer Marxism, my work will extend theirs by addressing, among other themes, the emergence, regulation, and de-regulation of the traditional gender binary in North American capitalist societies. I will investigate how relatively recent structural and cultural changes in North American capitalism have allowed for a greater movement across what we understand as “normative” gender scripts.

0.3 Introducing a Queer Marxism

Marx views society as an ongoing development of the dialectically related social operations that constitute a society’s mode of production, namely the relations of production, the forces of production, and the ideological superstructure. A mode of production, such as capitalism, refers to a formative principle that characterizes the many and concerted ways by which individuals produce their “means of substance” (Marx, 1932a/1978, p. 150). The forces of production refer to the productive forces, the resources, equipment, and techniques, by which individuals transform raw materials into commodities (Applerouth and Edles, 2008). The relations of production are the social relationships that manage and facilitate the collective production of goods by individual people (Marx, 1932a/1978). Lastly, a society’s superstructure consists of all social aspects that do not take on an obvious economic form, like social and/or political institutions as well as cultural systems of knowledge (Applerouth and Edles, 2008).

These macro structures govern the material forces of a given historical epoch, or mode of production, and shape the form and development of human relations at both the micro and macro levels of society (Marx, 1932a/1978). The “apparent” reality of every epoch throughout history actually contains its “conditioning opposite,” and a subsequent synthesis of these “antagonisms” is eventually realized (Marx, 1845/1978, p. 134). The result is a material change in the mode of

production and, subsequently, a change in general consciousness. In other words, new dominant forces of production, and new dominant modes of consciousness, form as a result of the dialectical development of macro productive and social relations throughout history (Marx 1932a/1978, p. 161).

Applying a Marxist-based perspective to any capitalist society means first recognizing that within capitalism labour is based on the production of capital, and that the production of capital depends on the wealth that is derived from the worker's unpaid labour (Marx, 1932b/1978). If one accepts a Marxist perspective, this means that within capitalism, the wage labourer is always in direct conflict with private property, since the more the worker is exploited the more capital that is produced for the owners of production (Marx, 1845/1978, p. 134). Based on this observation, Marx concludes that the inevitable antagonisms which exist between the proletariat and owners of production will eventually result in a revolution, and the subsequent synthesis of a new mode of production, specifically "crude communism" (Marx, 1932b/1978, p. 161).

Critics of Marx often argue that his emphasis on the economic mode of production, and his focus on the antagonisms of proletariat and bourgeois relations, overlooks the social and political concerns of non-class based minorities. In particular, many queer theorists and feminist theorists argue that Marxism, "constituted as it is around relations of appropriation and exploitation," is grounded in a way of thinking that is intended to address only the "significant" questions that regard issues of private property (Barrett, 1988, p. 8; Floyd, 2009, p. 6). As a consequence, many feminists have deemed historical materialism "sex-blind," while many queer

theorists have argued that Marxism's omission of sexuality is heteronormative,¹² as it promotes the "normalization of heterosexuality" (Hartmann, 1979, p. 8; Warner 1993, p. xiii).

A Queer Marxist perspective argues that even though Marx does, in fact, focus primarily on the wage labourer and the mode of production, it is incorrect to argue that this is all that a Marxist perspective does (or can do). I maintain that queer gender performativities can be viewed as emerging from the ongoing differentiation of capital that has given rise to multiple forms and expressions of human consciousness within social life.¹³ With regards to gender, for example, contemporary definitions of masculinity and femininity may be considered hegemonic forms of consciousness, which, throughout history, have been transformed by the material relations that are specific to a capitalist mode of production. I believe that "capital's ongoing internal differentiation," namely the destabilization of the "traditional" gendered division of labour, has begun to broaden the social categories of femininity and masculinity at an individual level, even when these categories are still highly polarized at a macro one (Floyd, 2009, p. 13). A Queer Marxist perspective maintains that while historical materialism may not speak directly to the concerns of gender and sexual-based oppression, it nevertheless provides a theoretical framework that outlines the social, cultural, and historical context in which gender performativity occurs.

¹² Heteronormativity refers to the tendency to normalize and universalize heterosexuality by asserting and/or assuming that heterosexuality (and heterosexual relationships) is the only appropriate form of sexual expression (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).

¹³ Marx (1844/1978) refers to this "ongoing differentiation of capital" in his essay *On The Jewish Question* as the "infinite fragmentation of religion" (p. 35), in which he uses religion as a stand in for all forms of political and social consciousness, which, from his perspective, diversify across changing historical, material, and economic conditions of production.

We can also note that when Floyd (2009, p. 6) identifies what he calls the theme of “totality thinking”¹⁴ in Marx’s work, he’s recognizing that Marx rejects “fetishizations of difference”¹⁵ in favour of emphasising a common social collective. This rejection of what is essentially politics of difference reflects what is from my perspective and that of others (Brenkert, 1983; Habermas, 1976), something that can be understood as a moral claim in Marx’s theory. This universal claim can be identified in Marx’s famous essay *On The Jewish Question*, which argues that social development brings about a state in which the moral importance of human emancipation is actualized (Marx, 1844/1978, p. 35). If Marx is correct in *On The Jewish Question* that *human* emancipation and mutual respect are only possible when society gets rid of “huckstering” (p. 52), then, clearly, sexism, genderism,¹⁶ transphobia, homophobia, and biphobia, which are forms of consciousness that have been produced by and for capitalist relations, would be and ought to be similarly eradicated with capitalism’s demise.

When Butler (1990/1993) ignores the role that capital plays in transforming, regulating, and maintaining socially accepted forms of gender identity and gender (and sexual) expression, she fails to recognize the fact that capitalism plays a fundamental role in maintaining the oppression of gendered and sexual bodies. It appears, then, that she creates a theory of the social world that does not provide the subjects of her theory (those whose oppression she theorizes) with the conceptual tools that may help them better understand this oppression themselves

¹⁴ Floyd (2009) uses the term “totality thinking” to refer to Marx’s “critique of ontological and epistemological particularization. Marxian practices of totality thinking critique capital’s systematic, privatizing fragmentation of social production especially and of social life more generally” (p. 6).

¹⁵ Floyd (2009) uses this turn of phrase when he argues that: “If Marxism has long been criticized for a tendency to emphasize sameness rather than difference, for imposing a form an epistemological “totalitarianism,” it is more accurate to say that it refutes epistemological fetishizations of difference” (p. 6). In other words, Marxism avoids, and critiques, the fragmentation of groups or people, based on socially constructed politics of identity.

¹⁶ Indigo Esmonde (2011) defines genderism “as the valuing of people who are seen as locally gender normative (e.g., people with female bodies who look, act and speak like women are supposed to in that particular context) over people who are seen as non-normative” (p. 29). In other words, genderism, in North American society, is essentially the notion that “proper” expressions of gender are constituted by a binary relationship between two genders, male and female, and that one’s gender is solely depended on their assigned sex at birth.

(Smith, 1999). I believe, just as C. Wright Mills (2000) did, that an essential characteristic of any “good” social theory is the ability to provide the subjects of one’s research with the means to understand and oppose the inequalities that they face. By these standards, Butler’s perspective, in and of itself, falls short of being an example of “good” social theory. However, by not addressing gender and sexual inequalities in a proper manner, many Marxists also ignore the fact that gender ideologies serve to maintain and reproduce the relations of domination and subordination that support capitalism, and therefore like Butler, can also be accused of practicing “poor” social theory. The significance of this oversight is that in order to achieve a state in which human emancipation is realized, the relations of capital, and all that serves it, must be dismantled. This makes a critique of transphobia, sexism, cisnormativity,¹⁷ heteronormativity, and genderism, as well as all forms of oppression, essential to any socio-political agenda that is inspired and informed by a Marxist perspective.

0.4 Conclusion

In sum, my thesis outlines the basic logic of a social theory of gender, and to some extent sexuality, that incorporates the “fluid” aspect of gender that is captured by Butler’s theory of gender performativity as well as the fundamental logic of Marx’s theory of historical materialism. Such a theory will not only historicize the socio-cultural processes of gender performativity within North American culture, but also address questions of gender and sexual-based oppression and expression that largely go unaddressed in Marx’s own work. When synthesized under the perspective of Queer Marxism, gender performativity and historical

¹⁷ Cisnormativity, similar to the concept heteronormativity, refers to the tendency to normalize and universalize the realities of cisgender people by asserting and/or assuming that everyone is, or ought to be, cisgender. “Cisgender” is a term that is used to describe someone whose gender identity, by social standards, matches their sex at birth. This term is often used in contrast to those who identify as “(trans)gender:” individuals whose gender identity does not align with the biological sex that they were assigned at birth (University of Michigan, 2016).

materialism complement and reinforce each other in a way that allows gender to be properly contextualized within the specific historical, cultural, social, and economic context of North American society.

0.5 Chapter Outline

In chapter 1 I will outline my understanding of the foundational logic of Marx's theory of historical materialism. Following this, I will distinguish Marx's work from the works of, what I refer to as, "reductionistic Marxists."¹⁸ Next, I will proffer an outline of the division between Marxist and queer domains of thought, and argue that the apparent incompatibility between Marxism and queer theory is a consequence of two issues. The first concerns the (cis)heteronormative logic practiced by reductionistic Marxists, while the second and related issue, concerns what I will argue are common queer critiques of Marxist writings that are often inappropriately addressed to Marx himself.¹⁹ Lastly, I will suggest that Marx's theoretical practice of "totality thinking" is complementary to the intersectional logic of queer theory, while simultaneously problematizing the persistence of the divide that exists between Marxism and queer perspectives within social theory, based on Marx's ability to conceptualize the realities of diverse and complex gender and sexual subjectivities. This chapter will ultimately set the groundwork to explore the details of the relationship between Butler's and Marx's theories in particular, by first addressing the relationship between queer theory and Marxism in general.

¹⁸ Reductionistic Marxists are Marxists who are economic determinists that focus only on class-based inequality and conflict, which leads them to ignore other forms of inequality and sources of conflict, such as those based on gender, sexuality, race, and so on.

¹⁹ It is important to note here that I am not arguing that Marx himself could not be accused of being a homophobe. Both Wolf in *Sexuality and Socialism* and Peter Drucker in *Gay Normality and Queer Anti-Capitalism* (2015), make a point to note that letters were sent between Marx and Friedrich Engels that promote clear homophobic attitudes. Wolf (2009) notes, for example, that Engels once wrote to Marx that "the Urning [title of Ulrichs's work and his term for "a female psyche in a male body," whose attraction is to other men] you sent me is a very curious thing. These are extremely unnatural revelations" (p. 77). Instead, I am arguing that the logic of Marx's original theory does not promote heteronormative practices, and – despite his personal opinions – Marx did not promote heteronormativity when applying historical materialism to social phenomenon.

Chapter 2 will outline my understanding of Butler's theory of gender performativity in which I will suggest that gender performativity is an example of a type of habitual anticipatory socialization. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate how her theory of gender performativity can begin to be thought of as a way of understanding gender expression as a series of habitual reiterations of dominant gender relations within North American capitalism. Next I will problematize the poststructuralist logic of Butler's perspective based on my Marxian rethinking of her work, while also suggesting that Marx's and Butler's perspectives still share a common emphasis on social fluidity, temporality, and transformation that allows them to be read as complementary.

I will analyze how Butler's alignment with a poststructuralist perspective, specifically a neo-Foucauldian one, results in her theory of gender performativity being "trans-historical" as well as both de-politicized and de-materialized. I will suggest that by incorporating Butler's theory into a Marxist framework, one can not only address the above deficits, but by integrating Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix and Marx's materialist conception of history into one perspective, one can also begin to explain how *and* why gender and sexual-based oppression exists within contemporary North American culture. I will conclude by arguing that gender performativity is relative to a socio-historical, cultural, political, and economic context that largely dictates how people ought to gender themselves, based on dominant gender and sex norms.

Chapter 3 will attempt to unpack a current tension that exists between the relations and forces of production by first mapping the historical emergence of contemporary definitions of "masculinity" and "femininity" in North American society. I will argue, in reference to Max

Weber's concept of "ideal types," that femininity and masculinity are abstract constructs that are used to understand individual and cultural gendering processes within North America. These constructs, in addition, transformed during the industrial revolution when a more clearly stratified dominant gendered division of labour emerged. I will then demonstrate that these socio-cultural understandings of femininity and masculinity are what make up the gender stereotypes²⁰ of the gender binary ideology of today's culture, and explain how they have been produced, reproduced, and produced anew across changing socio-historical contexts.

As a result of their reproduction across changing historical times, these gender stereotypes still largely regulate gender performativity today, restricting "legitimate" gender and sexual identity and expression to the rigid and hierarchical regime of the gender binary. This maintains the persistence of gender and sexual-based discrimination in contemporary North American society; however, at the same time, changes in the relations of production have still allowed social bodies' greater movement across gender roles, both culturally and economically, by destabilizing the actual (white, middle/upper class) gendered division of labour. As a consequence of this, gender performativities are increasingly allowed to exist outside of what we understand as traditional gender norms and roles, allowing LGBT2Q+ rights to increase dramatically in concert with women's rights.

In chapter 4 I will explain the logic of a Queer Marxist perspective by first describing the role that "white" femininity plays in the regulation and oppression of (female) gendered bodies. I will argue that both sexism and the gender ideal types of femininity and masculinity are ideologies that produce and reproduce unequal power relations that exist between not only

²⁰ Gender stereotypes refer to the oversimplification of gender identification and expression in which men and women, by virtue of their biological sex, are thought to think differently. In turn, they are thought to experience the world differently which makes them act differently (Brym, 2014).

women and men, but also among different “types” of women. I will suggest that the popularity of beliefs such as “the cult of true womanhood” demonstrates that the realities and experiences of the white and the wealthy have often set the socio-cultural standards for gender performativity within North American society.

Second I will explain what the signifier “queer” means to a Queer Marxist perspective and outline what the conceptual benefits are to “queering” a Marxist-based perspective on the social world. Specifically, I will suggest that the queer subject problematizes the hegemonic presence of white femininity (and masculinity) in North American society, which supports the reproduction of the relations of capital. And by focusing on the queer subject, Queer Marxism can centralize this “revolutionary” potential. In addition, I will argue that by focusing on the “queer” body, Queer Marxism inevitably rejects identity politics which divide the oppressed for the benefit of capitalists, and instead, promotes an intersectional perspective that rejects tactics of exclusion in social theory.

I will conclude by arguing that while the marginalization and discrimination of the queer subject is beneficial for the owners of production, the increasing rights awarded to LGBTQ2+ people have created new, and highly problematic, issues for the relations of capital that are not being effectively dealt with by capitalists. As a result, capitalism has failed to this point to properly manage the gains made in civil rights in the past few decades with the fact that a capitalist society requires the exploitation and marginalization of the majority of its population to flourish. This, in turn, has helped to create tension between the current relations and forces of capitalist production within North American society.

The final chapter will discuss the increasing prevalence of the queer body in North American society stemming from the increased cultural ambiguity that currently surrounds contemporary gender norms and roles. This gender ambiguity stems from recent economic and political changes, specifically changes in the relations of production, that are beginning to destabilize the socio-cultural relevancy of the gender binary in the everyday lives of men and women. And even though traditional gender stereotypes are still, more or less, used to characterize and divide contemporary gendered bodies within current society, I argue that because these gender divisions are only enforced at a symbolic level, that these divisions between women and men are becoming blurred by the fact that all of us can legally, socially, and politically move across these culturally regulated gendered social scripts.

Changes in the relations of production, even when these changes are mere appropriations of previous relations, have created a cultural space of ambiguity in which gender and sexual identities not only increasingly exist outside of, in between or across the gender binary, but are also increasingly recognized culturally, socially, and politically as existing outside of it. This has resulted in an emerging crisis of anomie with regards to the dominant gender scripts of contemporary North American society, one that is exemplified by the emergence of the queer figure, traceable to changes made in the relations of production, and one which threatens to undermine the stability of the gendered relations of domination and subordination that support capitalism.

Chapter 1

“The unity of the person is formed through internalization of roles that are originally attached to concrete reference persons and latter detached from them – primarily the generation and sex roles that determine the structure of the family.”

- Jurgen Habermas¹

1.1 Historical Materialism

The deconstructive narratives common to queer theory appear to completely reject the socio-historical narrative developed within *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* as well as *The Germany Ideology*, both of which set the groundwork for Marx’s theory of historical materialism. Perspectives within queer theory often reject the general categorizations of social life that are essential to Marx’s perspective, which is not surprising given queer theory’s allegiance to poststructuralist thought. Queer theory’s roots in poststructuralism have arguably played a role in facilitating the current divide that exists between Marxism and queer theory, seeing as poststructuralism emerged as a critique of structuralist philosophies, like historical materialism. In addition, the tendency of some Marxists to produce and/or practice heteronormative and reductionistic² accounts of the social world, has likely added to queer theory’s critical disposition towards Marx’s own treatment of gender and sexuality. I contend, however, that Marxists that produce and/or practice such heteronormative and reductionistic accounts of the social, are both distinguishable from, and ignorant of, the actual logic of Marx’s original theory. In addition, I posit that the desire of some queer theorists to align with poststructuralist perspectives originated from both their objective to recognize and respect diversity as well as from their attempts to implement and practice a novel approach to the social

¹ See Habermas, Jurgen. 1976. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Page: 109.

² Reductionism is the belief that an aspect of a theory “subsumes difference and plurality to a falsely unifying scheme and center” (Best, 1989, p. 336).

world. It is this very premise of queer theory, however, that enables a possible synthesis of Marx's perspective of historical materialism with the general objectives of queer theory and with Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity more specifically.

For Marx "the social, political, and intellectual life processes in general"³ that constitute social reality only exist as such because human beings first exist within a shared material world that is characterized by a common economic base (Marx 1859/1978). As Marx (1932a/1978) puts it, it is only through "the language of real life" (p. 154), through the production of goods by and for humans, that social life can exist at all. I understand this observation as an expansion of the fundamental logic of Marx's theory of historical materialism; a perspective that he thoroughly outlines in his work *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* in which he describes what he later identifies as a "materialist conception of history" (Tucker, 1978, p. 146). Marx then provides an exposition of this materialist conception of history in his later work, *The Germany Ideology*, which is often recognized as Marx's most detailed account of his materialist perspective of human history and society (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008).

³This quote is from a passage that appears in the 1859 Preface to Marx's book *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in which Marx (1859/1979) outlines the logic of his theory in one of his clearest and most detailed explanations of his perspective: "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or — this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms — with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic — in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production" (p. 4).

In reading both *The Manuscripts of 1844* as well as *The German Ideology* we can see that Marx's "materialist conception of history" begins with the very basic observation that human beings need food and water to stay alive and that therefore our survival depends upon our connection to the natural world. "Man lives on nature," Marx (2014) writes, and this "means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die" (p. 4). However, Marx also argues that our connection to the natural world is always mediated through the relations of production, since it is these economic and material forces that determine how individuals produce the goods and resources that keep them alive.

In concert with the above observation, Marx (1932a/1978) concludes that human consciousness becomes objectified⁴ through the act of human labour. For him, humans are the only beings that produce the means by which they sustain their physical existence through the forces of production. Marx argues that what makes human consciousness qualitatively different from animalistic instincts⁵ is that people connect to the natural world through a dynamic of communally organized and socially regulated relations of production.⁶ And when individuals produce food and shelter, for example, through socially organized forms of labour, they enable the realization and continuation of their physical and mental existence.

At the heart of Marx's theory is the claim that social existence is inseparable from material existence. It is only through our immediate relationship with material reality that

⁴ Objectification refers to Marx's premise that individuals are corporeal beings that are created, recreated, and known through collective human labour practices and the "historical and social production of humans by humans" (Floyd, 2009, p. 72).

⁵ Marx (1932a/1978) states in *The German Ideology* that: "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like" (p. 150).

⁶ For example, Marx (1932a/1978) states that: "[people] themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization" (p. 150). Marx is arguing that when individuals produce the means by which they survive, they similarly produce their actual existence, their "actual material life" (Marx, 1932a/1978, p. 150).

humans as social beings come to be. Accordingly, our individual experiences, lives, feelings, and subjectivities are, for Marx, not independent of what Theodor Adorno (2000) refers to as “society in the strong sense” (p. 29). For Adorno, it is “socialization” that creates the “strong sense of society,” the common element that exists among people who belong to a given epoch. This common element links individuals to a theoretical whole, a “whole” that “leaves no-one out,” a whole that is constituted by “a connectedness in which all the members of the society are entwined and which takes on a certain kind of autonomy in relation to them” (p. 30). Understanding the realities of individual people as “entwined” within some sort of a theoretical social “whole” is not only the foundational logic of my Queer Marxist perspective, but it is what I propose to be the foundational logic of Marxism more generally. Gender, racial, religious, and essentially all forms of individual subjectivities, are inseparably linked to the “whole” of society and are equally determined, in part, by the nature of the relations of production. Our subjectivities, thoughts, feelings, and experiences are, of course, individual, but they only exist within a given social, political, historical, cultural, and economic context (Smith, 1999). “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence,” Marx (2014) writes, “but their social existence that determines their consciousness” (p. 4).

Historical materialism posits that human consciousness is objectified through the act of labour and developed in conjunction with the relations of production (Habermas, 1976). It follows then, that from both Marx’s perspective as well as my own, general consciousness⁷ is, in essence, the theoretical shape⁸ of the material relations, or the relations of production, that

⁷ In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx (2014) uses the term “general consciousness” (p. 54) to refer to what individuals can and/or do know within a specific society. This can further be defined as the “concepts, beliefs, ideas, knowledge, and so on” that constitute social reality (Smith, 1999, p. 75).

⁸ The phrase “theoretical shape” is used by Marx (2014) in *The Manuscripts*, when he states: “my general consciousness is only the theoretical shape of that of which the living shape is the real community” (p. 54).

constitute a given society (Marx, 2014). General consciousness, or social knowledge, is produced through socially designed, organized, and known mechanisms, and, as a social product, knowledge – both what is known and what can be known – is subjected to the same relations of ruling and domination that dictate and regulate the material relations of production (Marx 1932a/1978). Therefore, those who control “the ruling material force of a society” also control “its ruling intellectual force,” since the dominant beliefs of any society are the ideological manifestations of its economic and material conditions (Marx, 1932a/1978, p. 173).⁹

If those who control the *dominant material force*, the mode of production, control the ideas produced within a given society, then, from Marx’s perspective, we can conclude that the social, political, and cultural ideas, values, and beliefs that constitute any given superstructure are thought to be sublimations of hegemonic power relations that serve to maintain the ruling material force (Marx 1932a/1978). However, since individuals are beings that can think of and for themselves, this process is not just materialistic, but also “dialectical” (Wolf, 2009, p. 37).¹⁰ While Marx’s account of the social world is predicated on an understanding of history that views individual persons as products of the material and economic world, Marx still believes that as individuals we are capable of independent actions and behaviours that can just as easily shape the relations and forces of production. So even though human beings are products of their social environment, through their individual actions and behaviours they not only change themselves, but the nature of the social world in which they belong (Wolf, 2009).

⁹ As Marx writes in *The Germany Ideology*: “the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force...the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas” (Marx, 1932a/1978, p. 173).

¹⁰ I use the term “dialectical” to refer to Marx’s emphasis on historical development and the transformation of the social, in which the production and reproduction of the relations of production are viewed by, as Ernest Mandel (1976) puts it, “their inner connection as an integrated totality, structured around, and by, a basic predominant mode of production” (p. 18).

Perceptions and understandings of the social world that are possibly critical, rebellious, revolutionary, and/or disruptive can be articulated by individuals when they address the socio-cultural texts, codes, and symbols that are provided to them by the very society that controls them. While the social meanings that constitute the socio-cultural characteristics of a given society only materialize under a dominant intellectual power, which controls the economic and material forces of that society, it is nevertheless the case that human consciousness, for Marx, is not solely determined by the relations of production (Marx, 1932b/1978). Human consciousness is, on the one hand, capable of generating critique as well as carving out novel cultural spaces and non-normative identities. On the other hand, however, human consciousness is, in part, a reflection of the dominant social relations of one's society. It is in this regard that Marx claims that "consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence and the existence of men in their actual life-process" (1932a/1978, p. 156).

1.2 Marx, the Relations of Capital, and Gender

Given Marx's perspective, gender can be understood as an ideological construct that is a part of the superstructure of North American capitalism. As I have previously stated, the ideological superstructure of a given epoch is the dominant material force expressed in an abstract form (Marx, 1932a/1978). From this point of view, forms of consciousness,¹¹ like gender ideologies, are produced, reproduced, and produced anew within the social, cultural, historical, and political dynamics that are specific to a material and economic context of social production. With each new socio-historical context, the relations of production transform the

¹¹ Marx (1932a/1978) uses the phrase "forms of consciousness" in *The Germany Ideology* when he states that: "The phantoms formed in the human brain are...sublimates of their material life-processes which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence" (p. 154).

social meanings that are attributed to, for example, the sexed body, based on the current interests of the dominant material force (Marx, 1932a/1978; Wolf, 2009).

The interests of the dominant material force in a capitalist society in particular are focused on the production and accumulation of capital. This means that the forces and relations of production of a capitalist economy are organized around the profit motive, which in turn means that exploitation is a fundamental aspect of capitalism.¹² Taking this into account, the ideological superstructure of capitalism, from Marx's perspective, would in fact be the abstract form of the economic and material relations of capital (Marx 1932a/1978). The beliefs, values, ideas, and norms of a capitalist society would always attempt to then mediate the everyday experiences of the individual through a system of ideologies that serve to uphold, justify, and naturalize the (re)production of private property (Arruzza, 2015).

If the production of capital depends on human exploitation, it follows that the dominant consciousness of a capitalist society would support the production and reproduction of ideologies such as sexism, racism, and classism, ideologies that ensure the continued devaluation and marginalization of particular groups of people, like that of women, the racialized, and the working class (Allahar and Cote, 1998). These ideologies legitimize and help to maintain the existence of exploitable social groups which then provides the owners of production with a reserve army of labour.¹³ With this in mind, we can begin to think of gender as a form of

¹² Exploitation is an essential part of profit accumulation because profit is based on surplus labour. Surplus labour refers to the amount of labour that the worker performs, but is not paid for. The less the worker is paid in a capitalist society, the more they are exploited, which ultimately increases the profit margins of the owners of production (Marx, 1932b/1978, p. 71).

¹³ This term, which may also be described as the "industrial reserve army" or the "relative surplus population," is first used by Marx (1976) in *Das Kapital*, when he writes: "capitalistic accumulation itself... constantly produces, and produces in the direct ratio of its own energy and extent, a relatively redundant population of workers, i.e., a population of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the valorisation of capital, and therefore a surplus-population... It is the absolute interest of every capitalist to press a given quantity of labour out of a smaller, rather

consciousness that supports the production and reproduction of existing forms of social inequality, in this case gender-based inequality.¹⁴

Contemporary ideologies of gender promote forms of gender-based marginalization, oppression, and discrimination that, for one, help to legitimize the exploitation of women as a social group, allowing women to function as a source of surplus labour that may be utilized by ownership (Allahar and Cote, 1998; Barrett, 1988; Wolf, 2009). “Prior to humans’ ability to store” resources in surplus, people were unable to hoard wealth, which meant that at this time society did not require rigid gender roles to exist between women and men in order to maintain class-based divisions (Wolf, 2009, p. 27). However, with the rise of industrial capitalism, a surplus of wealth became not only possible but necessary, thus transforming the dominant gender roles of women and men within North American society. Gender roles were increasingly defined in relation to the “breadwinner model” of the white, middle class nuclear family unit, in which women stayed at home to take care of the house and children, while men went to work in order to earn an income (Brym, 2014). These roles subjected women, or rather white, cis-straight, middle/upper class, native born women, to a monogamous sexual relationship within the “bourgeois” family structure,¹⁵ which allowed wealthy, white cis-straight men to institute absolute paternity, knowing with complete certainty that it was in fact their children who were going to inherit their wealth (Wolf, 2009). As a result, both class relations as well as class inequality could be reproduced across generations. As I will discuss in greater detail in chapter 3,

than a greater number of labourers, if the cost is about the same... The more extended the scale of production, the stronger this motive. Its force increases with the accumulation of capital” (p. 25).

¹⁴ I use the term gender-based inequality to refer to sexism, transphobia, and any sort of gender, or sexual, based discrimination that stems from the normative status of genderism.

¹⁵ The idea of the “Bourgeois family” refers to a family unit that is characterized both by the breadwinner model of gendered relations/roles as well as private and intimate relationships that exist between parents and children (Berger and Berger, 1983). It is essentially another term for the concept of the “nuclear family,” which also conceptually recognizes the link that exists between the nuclear family unit and capitalism by treating the terms “nuclear” and “bourgeois” as synonymous.

this is why many Marxist feminists attribute the decreased social, political, and cultural status of women in North America to the rise of capitalism, and the accompanying arrival of the patriarchal family unit as the “normative” family structure.

The rise of the patriarchal bourgeois family unit also had a strong effect on the social status of LGBTQ2+ individuals within North American society. Gender expectations in North American culture are often associated with implicit assumptions about sexuality that tend to be heterosexist. Heterosexism is a system of ideologies that reinforces cis-heterosexual superiority and a “heterosexual way of life” that, in turn, promotes the marginalization of both sexual and gender minorities (Nelson, 2010, p. 11; Russel, 2002). The normative gender scripts of North American culture, the scripts outlined by the nuclear family structure, are built on assumptions that exclude same-sex and/or same-gender couples, since the breadwinner model of familial relations defines masculinity in opposition to femininity and vice versa (Butler, 1993). Similarly, the social roles of women and men are characterized, within this model, by their opposition to, and relationship with, one another within the cis-heterosexual relationship (Butler, 1993). As I will explain in detail in the next chapter, non-normative gender and sexual performativities challenge the norm of the cis-heterosexual, monogamous nuclear family unit, resulting in their marginalization within a capitalist society that benefits from their disenfranchisement.

The ideal nuclear family unit plays a fundamental role in producing and reproducing both the capitalist labour force as well as the dominant gender ideologies that support a capitalist mode of production (Arruzza, 2015; Wolf, 2009). It follows, based on my reading of Marx, that he would argue as I intend to, that all gender-based inequality is beneficial to a capitalist mode of production and, likewise, reproduced and produced anew within a capitalist economy. Female-

based exploitation both provides a reserve of surplus labour for the owners of production as well as a free labour force to socialize the next generation of workers (Barrett, 1988). In concert with this, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia also provide a form of socio-cultural backlash that suppresses and marginalizes non-normative genders and sexualities that disrupt the “ideal” bourgeois family unit (Wolf, 2009).

To understand how Marx’s theory of historical materialism provides a multidimensional perspective on “all things gender,” we first need to tease out Marx’s theoretical treatment of identity more generally. Marx’s body of work predominately focuses on concrete macro social structures, such as the mode of production. However, the introduction to his essay *Grundrisse* (1939/1978) thoughtfully illustrates how the logic of historical materialism can conceptualize the complex and diverse nature of both the macro and micro elements of social production within a given society. In this text, Marx (1939/1978) states that the relations of capital are first conceived with regards to the “real and concrete” (p. 237) material relations of a capitalist economy, such as the division of labour and the forces of production. These material relations, however, merely constitute what Marx (1939/1978) refers to as “the imagined concrete”¹⁶ and moving from and beyond the “imagined concrete,” we see diverging standpoints,¹⁷ ones that exist as, what Marx calls; “thinner abstractions” (p. 237) of the dominant intellectual and material force. These moments of epistemological divergence, these “thinner abstractions,” which include, but are not limited to, gender and sexual subjectivities, come together to constitute what we would identify as the “whole” of human society. This unified “whole” is comprised of “a rich totality of the

¹⁶ Marx (1939/1978) uses the notion of the “imagined concrete” to refer to the common context of social production within a given society. He also uses the term “population” (p. 237).

¹⁷ Standpoint, here, refers to Smith’s (1999) use of standpoint in her theory of standpoint, in which she argues that conceptualizations of society are rooted in the everyday realities of the individual and are necessary in the sociologist’s efforts to contextualize the social world.

many determinations and relations” of production and is, therefore, an open-ended unity (Marx 1939/1978, p. 237).

Marx’s ability to link the macro and micro aspects of the social world to a “rich totality” is articulated well by Floyd (2009) when he writes: “In [Marx’s] conceptual movement from an abstract unity to an internally differentiated one, the ‘imagined concrete’ itself, first of all, turns out to be an abstraction: a chaotic abstraction, one that requires specification” (p. 18). As I have begun to suggest, however, this “conceptual movement” is twofold; not only is “society,” that is, society “in the strong sense,” an abstraction of the “rich totality” of individual social experiences, but these individual experiences are, in turn, still “thinner abstractions” of the “imagined concrete;” the “common element” of the relations of production. “These simple abstractions,” Floyd continues, “are themselves concretized by establishing the simultaneous differentiation and connection between the various determinations to which they refer.”

What Marx expresses, and what Floyd embellishes, is nothing more than the idea that there are relations of domination and subordination which, based on the material and economic conditions of a society, regulate human socialization; they regulate the socialization of women, men, racialized groups, sexual minorities, transpeople, and the upper class, for example, based on socially constructed meanings of what it is and what it ought to look like to be a woman or a man, to be Korean or Iranian, to be homosexual or heterosexual, to be rich or poor. At the same time, however, Marx realizes that what it actually looks like to be a woman or a man, for example, is never completely confined to these expectations, these “ideal” guidelines. Instead, it is the collective and diverse realities of all people, across all gender, class, race, age, sexual, political, body type, and cultural categories, that constitute any ensemble of what can be

considered an accurate representation of the social world. Beginning to think of gender in this way, we can argue that individual gendered bodies always mediate and transform the concept of gender, while gender performativity still expresses and helps to legitimize the relations of capital and private property.

The above observations suggest these basic themes about my perspective of Queer Marxism: 1) that gendered bodies are thought to employ specific epistemological standpoints within the social world which determine how they engage with, understand, and enact dominant gender and sexual social texts, namely the gender and sexual norms, values, and beliefs that are held by the dominant culture; 2) that these gendered texts are connected to material forces that serve to promote the production of capital and legitimize the relations of capitalist production; and 3) that as a result, while gendered bodies engage in complex and diverse expressions of gender, based on their unique standpoint, such expressions of gender are still evaluated, understood, and recognized in reference to the hegemonic gender ideologies of one's society.

A Queer Marxism holds that while gender performativities are contextually dependent on one's relatively unique social perspective, the gendered social meanings that we ascribe to our individual gender expressions are still to some extent socially and historically dependent. Gender performativities are, in part, regulated by dominant gender roles and norms, yet, as unique and contextually dependent expressions of dominant gender ideologies, they can still diverge from and contradict hegemonic gender relations. Individual gender performativities and the forces of production both construct and reconstruct the gendered social meanings of North American culture (not necessarily in a complementary movement) within the broader context of the relations of capitalist production. These relations, however, always seek to maintain the

“traditional” gender relations of the nuclear family unit, gender-based inequality, and gender-based exploitation (Wolf, 2009).

From Marx’s perspective, individuals not only play a central role in shaping and developing the social meanings that are attributed to social constructs such as gender, but those individual subjectivities, gender or otherwise, also contribute to shaping and developing the totality of the relations of production¹⁸ in general. Based on this logic, which from my perspective represents a proper reading of Marx’s theory, I maintain that gendered bodies exist within a shared context of social, cultural, historical, and political meaning. This, in turn, informs the complex and often opposing social meanings that we attribute both to our own gender subjectivities as well as to the dominant gender norms, roles, and general beliefs that constitute gender as a given social construct. This social, cultural, political, and historical context of meaning, however, always exists in reference to the “common element” of material production, in which individual consciousness is mediated through a social dialogue that is inseparable from “the whole of society,” from the relations of production.

1.3 Poststructuralism, Queer Theory, and Marxism

Although queer theory is a broad and diverse discipline of thought, from the 1990s and onward queer perspectives have tended to align with poststructuralist philosophies (Floyd, 2009). These perspectives often abstain from employing “grand” theoretical frameworks, such as historical materialism, which they believe promote reductionism (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008; Best, 1989). So, for example, where Marxism focuses on the general material and economic

¹⁸ Marx (1939/1978) articulates this notion well when he states that: “the concrete totality is a totality of thoughts; a product of thinking and comprehending...of the working-up of observation and conception into concepts. The totality as it appears in the head, as a totality of thoughts” (p. 238).

structures of society, poststructuralism emphasizes the fragmentation and discontinuity of social life and the particularization of social politics (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008).¹⁹ As a consequence, poststructuralists often reject Marxian accounts of the social world. Similar to poststructuralism, queer perspectives often emphasize the local and contextual elements of social life and argue that social knowledge and social identities are fluid (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008). This perspective is often articulated from a point of view that rejects the employment of fixed social structures and/or forces, like Marx's idea of the relations of production, when analyzing the social world (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008). For this reason, queer theorists, like poststructuralists, tend to reject the logic of Marx's theory of historical materialism.

The fundamental divergence between poststructuralist thought and Marxism is what Steven Best (1989) attempts to express in his essay "Jameson/Totality/Poststructuralist Critique." As Best observes, while Marx's "materialist conception of history" proceeds on the premise that there is, in some sense or another, a collective whole, that social reality can in fact be grounded to a "common element," poststructuralism begins with the opposite assumption. Best argues that poststructuralist thinkers maintain that social life is diverse and fragmented, and that knowledge of the social world is articulated from multiple social orientations that can never be assimilated into a unified perspective – that is unless one is committing the fallacy of reductionism. Poststructuralism rejects structured theorizing specifically and all structured relationships that assume a "common element" more generally. In other words, it rejects theoretical perspectives that imply a fundamental logic of understanding or a "general" perspective of knowing (Best, 1989).

¹⁹ For example, as Smith (1999) writes: "Postmodernism [and poststructuralism] ...reject... the grand imaginary maps of the Marxisms of the 1960s and 1970s...which were held in suspension outside local practices of finding and recognizing" (p. 129).

Best, among others (e.g., Floyd, 2009; Smith 1999), recognizes that a significant factor that informs the existing theoretical divide between Marxism and poststructuralism is the latter's connection to deconstructionism. Deconstructionist theorists, or those who use deconstructionism as a mechanism of theorizing, challenge cultural binaries of social knowledge and identity, based on the premise that socio-cultural symbols, texts, and codes only derive meaning in contrast to an opposing state (Delaney, 2005). These cultural binaries are said to establish exclusionary politics of identity that promote social domination and hierarchies of power (Seidman, 1995). In accordance with this logic, poststructuralist thinkers argue that identity is "fluid" and that all forms of totalities are mythologies that, in an act of reductionistic violence, aim to regulate and standardize difference (Best, 1989). Queer theorists also conceptualize gendered, racialized, and sexualized subjectivities, for example, as fluid. They argue that the individual subject is never completely one identity over another and to suggest otherwise, is to reify hegemonic power relations that regulate the body (Seidman, 1995).

From a queer-based perspective, one is never solely gay or straight, masculine or feminine, black or white, but instead, one exists within a fluid, contextually dependent state that resides within a gender, racial, and sexual-based spectrum of self-expression and identity (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008). Queer theorists maintain that dominant gender and sexual texts that are used to identify the body are embedded in a hierarchy of socially constructed power relations that are constituted by gender and sexual binaries (Seidman, 1993). These binaries reproduce and legitimize the oppositional relations that exist between a given dominant and subordinate group (e.g., men and women), which, in turn, justifies the subordinate position of the latter (Seidman, 1995). Queer theorists, like poststructuralists, reject general characterizations of

gender, race, sexuality, class, and age, and eschew grand theoretical frameworks that employ general characterizations of the social, like that of historical materialism, as reductionistic.

Poststructuralism, and by extension queer theory, emphasizes difference and unique subjectivities, while Marx (1939/1978) emphasizes the unity of such difference, “the unity of the diverse” (p. 237). There is a “significant elision and shift in perspective” from the characterization and rejection of “difference and discontinuity” in historical materialism, to the “celebration and affirmation” of discontinuity and fragmentation as a “normative principle” in poststructuralism (Best, 1989, p. 337). This same “elision and shift in perspective” with historical materialism is also seen in relation to queer theory, in which similar to poststructuralism, queer theory, in general, assumes discontinuity from the beginning. Moreover, queer perspectives treat any type of classification of the body that refers to an overarching abstraction, which implies any sense of unity, as reductionism (e.g., Butler, 1990/1993 and Warner, 1993). They commonly critique general classifications of the body, arguing that such classifications normalize the “inferior” status of subordinate social groups (Seidman, 1995). Marx, in contrast, begins with a “common element,” with general characterizations, and then moves beyond this general unity, abstract though it may be, towards “the many determinations” of social life, the many realities of actual people, which, when aggregated, constitute a new unity, a “unity of the diverse” (Marx, 1939/1978, p. 237).

1.4 Queer Critiques of Heteronormativity²⁰ in Social Theory

In her queer text *Epistemologies of the Closet* (1990), which deconstructs binary classifications of sexuality, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes that “an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely complete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definitions” (p.1). In this text, Sedgwick is arguing, in accordance with the logic of poststructuralism and queer theory, for the importance of deconstructing social categorizations of identity. More specifically, Sedgwick is addressing how the marginalization of sexual (and gender) minorities is maintained through various discourses, including those of social theory and sociology. The discourses which Sedgwick critiques define homosexuality in opposition to heterosexuality, often giving cis-heterosexuality a status of privilege and normativity, while stigmatizing and marginalizing homosexuality. As a consequence of this, Sedgwick, and queer theorists in general, emphasize the importance of addressing questions of

²⁰ Throughout this project, I will often use the term sexuality or sexual to denote LGBT2Q+ people and/or based discrimination in concert with the term gender, while simultaneously drawing little or no distinction between the two concepts. Specifically within this chapter, I will mostly refer to queer theorists who only explicitly discuss sexuality-based discrimination and/or sexism in their work, and do not, by name, discuss or deconstruct the effects of cisnormativity on the realities of transgender people. However, despite this deficit in queer research, I will speak of gender and sexuality-based discrimination, when reviewing queer literature, as interchangeable. In addition, I will discuss their critiques of heteronormativity while keeping with the implicit assumption that these criticisms include, and are extended to, critiques of cisnormativity. I do this because, I view both cisnormativity and heteronormativity as stemming from the normalization of the cis-heterosexual nuclear family unit (a point I will expand on at length throughout my thesis). Notably, due to this connection, I will commonly refer to both concepts as “cis-heteronormativity.” I find it conceptually difficult, if not politically problematic, to separate gender and sexual performativities from one another in my analysis, since representations of gender and sexual norms are so entangled in public and cultural discourses (Carpenter, 2010). Similarly, although queer theorists have tended to focus on heteronormativity, and not on cisnormativity *per se* in their analyses of the social, a critique of cisnormative structures was often implicit in earlier queer literature, while the initial critiques of formative queer theorists that centered sexuality have since been extended to include the LGBT2Q+ community at large (I would include Butler in this category as well as Wolf, Floyd, and Arruzza, and other notable authors such as Alan Sear (2005), Jay Prosser (1998), Sheila Cavanagh (2010), and Susan Stryker (2004)). Therefore, for the purposes of this project, there is little difference to be *acknowledged* between *theoretical* discussions of sexual and (trans) gender-based minorities.

gender and sexuality critically in social theory and research.²¹ Heteronormativity, and by extension cisnormativity, are not just embedded in the social institutions and structures that constitute society at large, but also in the “critical knowledges” that constitute social theory itself (Floyd, 2009, p. 5). As a consequence of this, many queer theorists argue that these “critical knowledges” not only exclude issues or concerns of the LGBTQ2+ community, but they do so in a way that promotes heteronormativity and/or cisnormativity (E.g., Butler, 1993; Elliot, 2010; Warner 1993). This both reflects as well as reinforces the common tendency of North American culture to universalize cis-heteronormative identities by marginalizing non-normative ones (Floyd, 2009). Therefore, queer theorists place a significant emphasis on not only discussing questions and concerns of gender and sexual inequality and identity in sociology, but also on deconstructing characterizations of gender and sexuality expressed within the dominant social perspectives of the discipline.

While queer theorists are critical of cis-heteronormativity in social theory more generally, they are especially critical of the cis-heteronormative practices of reductionistic Marxists. This is because such Marxists commonly promote cis-heteronormativity by treating sexual and gender subjectivities as “merely cultural” in order to pursue an agenda that is solely focused on the tensions and conflicts that exist between the upper and lower classes. This is exactly Butler’s (1997) argument in her essay “Merely Cultural” in which she investigates the social politics of

²¹Warner (1993) claims in his introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet* that: “Sedgwick’s work has shown that practices of social theory that both implement general characterizations of sexuality as well as neglect to practice “antihomophobic inquiry” (p. xiv) in particular, actually promote cis-heteronormativity in doing so. This assertion that social theory does not provide the proper language and tools to talk about sexual and (trans) gendered-based oppression is a reoccurring critique within the well-known queer collection. In fact, Warner argues that this is not only a major premise of *Fear of a Queer Planet*, but of queer theory in general: “Queer theory is opening up in the way feminism did when feminists began treating gender more and more as a primary category for understanding problems that did not initially look gender-specific. The prospect is that queer theory may require the same kinds of revision on the part of social theoretical discourse that feminism did (Warner, 1993, p. xiv).”

gender and sexuality in “Marxist” theory. For the purpose of this essay, Butler adopts a Marxist perspective to demonstrate the logical ability of historical materialism to conceptualize gender and sexuality-based oppression, despite the failure or refusal of reductionistic Marxists to do so in their own works. In doing this, Butler is able to argue that Marxists, who treat gender and sexuality-based oppression as secondary to class-based oppression, actually practice a “selective amnesia of the history of Marxism itself” (Butler, 1997, p. 273).

Butler posits that certain Marxists argue that the economic and cultural realms of society are distinct and separate from one another in order to distinguish sexual and gender-based inequality from that of class-based inequality. For example, certain Marxists argue that the division of labour and the relations of production are a part of the “economic realm,” while gender and sexual norms and roles are a sole product and function of the “cultural realm” (Butler, 1997). Butler claims that this division not only constitutes a “selective amnesia” of Marxism, but it also re-establishes a division between cultural discourse and material reality that only serves to validate questions of class and discredit questions of sexuality and gender. As a consequence of this, Marxists – who wrongly maintain a division between the cultural world and the material world – end up subordinating the queer body especially to the “cultural sphere” of sociological inquiry which, problematically, is perceived and treated as secondary to the material and economic sphere (Butler, 1997).

Butler argues that when Marxists (who should be distinguished from Marx himself) ignore the questions and concerns of gender and sexual minorities they, as a consequence of such “reductionist violence,” promote heteronormativity and cisnormativity. This criticism of

reductionism has been articulated by other feminists²² who accuse certain Marxists of being “sex blind” (Hartmann, 1979, p. 8). For example, Juliet Mitchell (1971) claims that Marxists often assume that female liberation will follow a socialist revolution, a proposition that ignores the unique oppression and subordination that is felt by women within capitalism. This then leads Mitchell, in line with many Marxist feminists (e.g., Catharine A. MacKinnon (1982), Dorothy Smith (1999, Heidi Hartmann (1979), and Margaret Benston (1969)), to conclude that a specific theory about gender inequality is required for its eradication.

Mitchell’s argument is arguably not completely unfounded since, as Marxist feminist Michele Barrett (1988) observes: “[In the] history of Marxist thought...questions of gender relations and male dominance have long been ignored and marginalized” (p. 23). As a result, the unique oppression and inequality felt by women in capitalism is often ignored. We can, therefore, see that both feminist and queer critiques of Marxism suggest that (some) Marxists impose a type of “epistemological fatalism” onto social inquiry which, in turn, obscures the experiences and accounts of social minorities, namely women and the LGBT2Q+ community (Floyd, 2006: 6). However, it must be emphasized that these critiques are criticisms of reductionistic Marxists, and not critiques of the conceptual logic of Marx’s actual theory, as I understand it.

Butler’s aforementioned essay “Merely Cultural,” for example, uses the works of Marxist feminists and the works of both Marx and Friedrich Engels to deconstruct both hegemonic heteronormativity and masculinity in “Marxist” theory. Butler’s argument actually unfolds in ways similar to Wolf’s aforementioned argument in *Sexuality and Socialism* which is that gender

²² Although I have been referring to Butler as a queer theorist, she identifies first as a feminist. For example, she has stated that: “I would say that I’m a feminist theorist before I’m a queer theorist or a gay and lesbian theorist.” Retrieved on July, 5, 2006 (http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/judith_butler.html).

and sexual regulation are functions of the nuclear family unit in its efforts to reproduce the relations of capital.²³ Butler illustrates in this essay both the relevance of historical materialism when theorizing gender and sexuality-based issues as well as the significant role that cis-heteronormativity plays in regulating the relations of production. The major premise of Butler's essay is therefore not to critique Marx (or historical materialism), but to critique the sex-blind and cis-heteronormative narratives of reductionistic Marxists. Butler (1997) states:

How quickly – and sometimes unwittingly – the distinction between the material and the cultural is remanufactured when it assists in drawing the lines that jettison sexuality from the sphere of fundamental political structure! This suggests that the distinction is not a conceptual foundation, for it rests on a selective amnesia of the history of Marxism itself (p. 227).

Butler claims that the regulation and domination of sexualized and gendered bodies is both an expression of as well as a factor supporting the economic relations of production. In addition, in her essay she also demonstrates that the logic of historical materialism actually lends itself to a gender-orientated analysis of the social world and that understanding gender and sexual inequality is related to, and required for, an understanding of the nature of the relations of production.

Despite Butler's arguments, however, we see that Marxist theorists still practice (cis)heteronormative and reductionistic accounts of the social world (Barret, 1988; Butler, 1997; Floyd, 2009; Warner, 1993), and that materialist perspectives on gender and sexuality are still commonly abandoned by queer theorists (e.g., Butler, 1997; Ki Namaste, 1994; Sedgwick, 1990;

²³ Butler (1993) states that: "both gender and sexuality become part of material life, not only because of the way in which they serve the sexual division of labour, but also because normative gender serves in the reproduction of the normative family... the social field of sexuality [does] not become central to political economy to the extent that they can be directly tied to questions of unpaid and exploited labour, but rather because they cannot be understood without an expansion of the "economic" sphere itself to include both the reproduction of goods as well as the social reproduction of persons" (p. 272).

Warner, 1993; William B. Turner, 2000). Similarly, few theorists have attempted to read Marx's and Butler's works as complementary, in spite of the fact that connections can be made, as I will demonstrate in later chapters, between Butler's and Marx's work. This suggests that poststructuralist influences on queer theory have been sufficient enough to hinder any real development of a Queer Marxist paradigm and perspective. This is because the gender and sexual blindness of reductionistic Marxists is assumed, by poststructuralists, to be the very logic of historical materialism itself and they identify this as a deficit in Marx's own work. As a consequence of this, queer theorists tend to merely deconstruct the cis-heteronormativity and reductionism that is attributable to certain Marxist thinkers, without also addressing the potential benefits of using Marx's actual theory of historical materialism to understand gender and sexuality based-inequality.

In contrast to reductionistic Marxists, who fail to recognize the relevance of gender and sexual difference, I claim that Marx himself merely refused to fetishize the "idea" of difference. While Marx would reject the discontinuity and fragmentation of poststructuralism, it is still the case that he recognized the relevance and significance of the diverse and complex social relations that constitute the social world. In this respect, Marx does not practice an "aspiration towards totality" (Lukacs, 1968, p. 23), but instead, recognizes that the totality of the relations of production is diverse, complex, and open-ended. I will argue that the theoretical foundation of Marx's perspective is actually non-reductionistic and that if it is the case that Marxism is a heteronormative and sex-blind practice, then Marx is anything but a "Marxist."²⁴

²⁴ To this effect, in a letter directed to Engels, Marx (1893) actually stated that: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist."

1.5 Conclusion: Queer Marxism, Totality, and Intersectionality

In contrast to queer theorists, I will argue that Marx's practice of "totality thinking" actually offers a way of understanding a complementarity between queer and Marxist frameworks, and that the so-called divide that exists between the two fields can be removed. Marx's (1939/1978) theory seeks to understand the totality of the relations of production from the "imagined concrete" to its "many determinations" and "thinner abstractions" (p. 237), while rejecting the particularizing fragmentation and differentiation of the social world that poststructuralists and queer theorists assume from the beginning.

We can begin to see where reconciliation between historical materialism and poststructuralist-inspired accounts of the social world, such as queer theory, may be found. While poststructuralist's contextually-dependent narrative for understanding social life emphasizes diversity and difference, such thinkers also recognize the interlocking aspects of social meaning that constitute local experiences and realities (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008). In a similar fashion, queer accounts of the social world place a heavy emphasis on both identifying multiple forms of oppression along with the need to recognize the interconnected elements of social identity, otherwise known as intersectional thinking (Floyd, 2009; Warner, 1993). As recent studies on diasporic queer analysis suggest (Jon Binnie, 2010; Nan Seuffert, 2010; Nicholas Bamforth, 2010; Shohini Ghosh, 2002), queer domains of thought consistently reject any theory of sexuality and gender that ignores the multiplicity of oppression and the influence of race, class, immigrant status, ethnicity, disability, and so on, on gendered and sexual subjectivities. In other words, the experiences of gender and sexual minorities are only understood, by queer theorists, within what Patricia Hill Collins calls the "Matrix of

Domination.”²⁵ Therefore, queer theory invokes a rejection of perceptions that compartmentalize gender and sexuality from other forms of (social) experience, identity, and marginalization.²⁶

To this effect, in her (1993) essay “passing, queering: Neila Larsen’s Psychoanalytic Challenge,” Butler deconstructs the interconnected relationship between racism, cis-heteronormativity, and sexism by addressing the “white male gaze” of Neila’s character “Bellow” in her work *passing*. Here, Butler argues that Bellow demonstrates the interconnections between white and male supremacy in North American society, and that he represents a standpoint that “is [an] historically entrenched social power of the white male gaze...whose masculinity is enacted and guaranteed through heterosexuality as a ritual of racial purification” (p. 137).

The point of Butler’s (1993) analysis is to identify “regulatory norms” (p. xii) which marginalize gendered, racialized, and gendered-racialized bodies as complementary and interdependent. Butler’s interpretation of *passing* at least indicates that deconstructing the multiple effects of discourse on gendered bodies is not only important but necessary in understanding the effects of heteronormative and cisnormative “violence” on the body more generally. “Queer elaborations of heteronormativity’s varied social demands,” Floyd (2009) writes, “have...consistently maintained that any presentation of sexuality in isolation from...other dimensions of the social, any representation of sexuality as always already localized, particularized, or privatized, is a misrepresentation of the social as well as the sexual” (p. 8).

²⁵ The Matrix of Domination is the idea that one’s place in society is constituted by various and complementary standpoints opposed to just one main one (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008, p. 608).

²⁶ Queer literature, as Warner (1993) states “rejects a minoritizing logic of toleration or simple political interest representation in favor of a more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal” (p. xxvi).

Similar to this rejection of the “localized, particularized, or privatized” aspects of the social world, Marx (1939/1978) understands the social world with regards to the totality of the relations of production, which he describes as a “totality of thoughts” (p 238). This “totality of thoughts” refers to the complex nature of individual experiences and realities (the “many determinations”) that exist within a given mode of production or epoch. Marx connects these individual subjectivities to a common element of socialization that exists within a specific socio-historical context. He does this, however, without entirely subsuming individual lives and experiences within this “common element.” This suggests that Marx, like queer theorists, also practices an intersectional logic in his theory; Marx employs general characterizations, or “thinner abstractions,” of social life that are derived from this “common element” of socialization. These general characterizations can be changed, however, when social actors intersect with their initial (or dominant) meanings and definitions in diverse and complex ways. Marx views all aspects of social life, from individual gendered subjectivities to social constructions of gender, as fundamentally connected, dialectical, intersectional, and multifaceted.²⁷ This suggests that Marx and queer theorists both reject the compartmentalization of social life and share a skeptical disposition toward theorists that dissociate class from gender, gender from race, race from sexuality, and so on. Despite variations and divergences in the foundational logics of historical materialism and queer theory, we can see that both perspectives assume a critical mentality towards – what Smith (1999) calls – “monolithic” subjectivities of the social.

²⁷ Marx (1932/1978) articulates this point well in *The German Ideology*, when he states that “the individual must approximate the existing totality of productive forces, not only to achieve self-activity, but also merely to safeguard their very existence. This appropriation is first determined by the object to be appropriated, the productive forces, which have been developed to a totality and which only exist within a universal intercourse. From this aspect alone, therefore, this appropriation must have a universal character corresponding to the productive forces and the intercourse....the appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves. This appropriation is further determined by the persons appropriating” (p. 194).

Both queer and Marxian frameworks reject the standardization, the universalization, and the reductionism of “multiple local sites of activity” (Smith, 1999, p. 75), to a “one size fits all” model for understanding the social world and social bodies. I would like to proceed, therefore, by grappling with the complex ways in which Butler’s and Marx’s work complement and reject one another in a manner that is indicative of queer theorists’ rejection of Marxism more generally, as well as representative of the intersectional logic I, among others (Cinzia Arruzza and Kevin Floyd), have suggested is shared between the two domains of thought. In later chapters, I will discuss how the complexities of the diverging and converging elements of Butler’s and Marx’s perspectives inform an interdisciplinary perspective of the social world that helps to contextualize an historical analysis of gender relations and queer politics. In the following chapter I will first elaborate Butler’s perspective of gender performativity and demonstrate how it is still largely grounded in the poststructuralist framework. In addition, similar to the objective of my discussion in this chapter, which compared and contrasted poststructuralism/queer theory with Marxism (in a broad sense), I will critically analyze Butler’s perspective from the framework of historical materialism. Instead of condemning Butler’s theory to a “dictatorship of the fragments,”²⁸ however, I will outline how Butler’s and Marx’s perspectives actually enrich one another and how this enrichment then allows for a synthesis of the two theories.

²⁸ This is a phrase used by Best (1989) to describe poststructuralism. He states that: “while poststructuralism rightly deconstructs essentialist and repressive wholes, they fail to see how repressive and crippling the opposite approach of valorizing difference, plurality, fragmentation, and agonistics can be. The flip side of the tyranny of the whole is the dictatorship of the fragments” (p. 361).

Chapter 2

“The category of “sex” is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a “regulatory ideal.” In this sense, then, “sex” not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of production power, the power to produce...the bodies it controls.”

-Judith Butler¹

2.1 The Regulatory Practice of Gendering

The argument that Judith Butler ignores the role that capital plays in controlling, regulating, and organizing gender in her theory of gender performativity has become pervasive in Marxian critiques of Butler’s work (e.g., Nancy Fraser, 1997/1998 and Slavoj Žižek, 2000).² This is not surprising given Butler’s allegiance to poststructuralist thought. In keeping with poststructuralism, Butler emphasizes the role that cultural scripts and preexisting symbolic patterns of social discourse play in organizing social life. Her emphasis on the matrix of discourse, in turn, influences how she both understands gender and the materialization of gender in her work. Butler (1993) perceives gender performativity, or the production and reproduction of gender, as a process of gender materialization which functions as a “kind of citationality,” in which gendered beings are produced through and by “a citing that establishes an originary complicity with power” (p. xxiii) when forming the gendered subject. On the one hand, Butler’s notion of materialization as citationality exudes a poststructuralist emphasis on discourse and textuality that necessarily defies a Marxian emphasis on macro-concrete social structures. On the other hand, however, Butler’s prioritization of hierarchical structures and systems of oppression,

¹ See Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies that Matter*. Pages: xi – xii.

² In his essay, “Performative Masculinity: Judith Butler and Hemmingway’s Labor without Capital” Kevin Floyd (2009) introduces this pervasive tendency (of Marxists) to critique Butler’s blind spot for capital in her analysis as such: “in the nearly twenty years since the publication of Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble*, critical Marxian engagements with Butler’s rethinking of gender and indeed with her work more generally, while divergently focused, have tended to converge on a central point: that capital represents an interpretive horizon consistently elided from her analysis” (p. 79).

domination, and regulation also emanates a neo-Marxist mentality that arguably equally influences how she both understands gender as well as the materialization of gender (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008).

Butler (1990) wants to rupture the very category of “sex” as an essential or complete characterization of the body. She argues that sex-based categories of the body are actually norms which are concertedly created and recreated through “regulatory practices” of cultural and individual gender (re)production (Butler, 1993, p. xii). Butler rejects the notion that labels such as gay or straight can be understood and used as fixed categories of personhood, and instead interprets social identity and social subjectivity as “fluid” (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008).³ Butler believes that conventional categories of the body, such as male vs. female, black vs. white, rich vs. poor,⁴ actually perpetuate systems of oppression like sexism, racism, and classism, and when either social or feminist theorists use such categories as fixed conditions of the body, they engage in “a regulatory practice” of gendering that “produces the bodies it governs” (Butler, 1993, p. xii).⁵

Butler argues that one’s identity is never fixed and that gender subjectivities are always flexible and unstable perceptions and expressions of the sexed body. She believes that people can never be properly characterized by “one” label, such as man or woman, but instead, that people

³ While she focuses specifically on gender and sexuality, as her previously mentioned essay ‘Passing, Queering: Nella Larsen’s Psychoanalytic Challenge’ demonstrates, Butler’s argument extends to her analysis of other forms of subjectivities, such as race and class as well as to a potential analysis of an array of social identities from her perspective.

⁴ While “poor” and “rich” are often used as titles to denote one’s economic standing, as Pierre Bourdieu (2004) illustrates in his paper “The Peasant and His Body,” for example, one’s class status also influences their tenue, i.e., their appearance, clothing, demeanour, and conduct. In other words, one’s class status influences their physical body and corporeal expressions.

⁵ Butler (1990) writes, for example, in her essay *Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire* from *Gender Trouble* that “the presumed universality and unity of the subjects of feminism is effectively undermined by the constraints of the representational discourse in which it functions” (p. 3).

engage in an ongoing, contextually dependent process of gendering themselves, which occurs throughout their entire life.⁶ For Butler (1993), gender identity is a “*continual* performance” (p. xv [emphasis added]), an ongoing act of gender signification in which one genders themselves through a series of behaviours, action, and expressions that invoke the dominant gender norms that constitute the dominant gender scripts of their society.

Butler coins the term “gender performativity” to encapsulate this idea that gender identity and expression are “fluid” processes. Gender performativity refers to the idea that gender is produced and reproduced through the “gendered stylization of the body” by way of “naturalized gestures” that cultivate the very gender labels they cite. From this perspective, gender is neither a “cultural construct which is [solely] imposed upon... ‘the body’” nor is it a biologically determined function of one’s sex (Butler, 1993, p. xii). Instead, Butler (1993) argues that gender only materializes, or becomes “real,” through the “forcible reiteration” (p. xii) of gender norms by means of the individuals who enact them through a series of performative acts that are culturally and temporally dependent. It is in this regard, that one could understand Butler’s concept of gender performativity as a type of anticipatory socialization.⁷ Gender performativity refers to the process by which individuals learn to gender themselves based on the gendered expectations of their given society, often in an effort to occupy a (specific) normative gender script or role. Therefore, in gendering themselves, people tend to “incorporate the perspectives and expectations of the larger society,” and enact stylized behaviours accordingly, so to take up an anticipated gender role and/or form of gender expression (Brym, 2014, p. 60).

⁶ For example, Butler (1993) writes that “‘sex’ is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time. It is not a simple fact or static condition of the body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize ‘sex’ and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms” (p. xii).

⁷ Anticipatory socialization refers to the processes by which people who aspire to have a certain social role, recognize and understand how one ought to behave and act in order to occupy that given role in the future (Stebbins, 1990).

If gender performativity can be considered a directive of anticipatory socialization, it would be because it was functioning to habitualize a person's gender "performance."⁸ During this process of *habitual anticipatory socialization*, individuals would continuously anticipate the gender roles and norms that they seek to perform. They would enact these norms and roles through regular practices and tendencies of gendering, in which every instance of gendering is characterized by the transition from gender anticipation to gender enactment.

Since Butler (1993) sees gender performativity as a fluid process, one would only occupy an anticipated gendered state for a single moment in time and space, and would not experience a "complete" transition from one "stable" status to another, thus making it so that they would be unable to clearly distinguish their ongoing gender "performance" from that of its anticipation.⁹ Instead, one's gender "status" would only be constituted by a never ending series of anticipated moments of gendering, in which one repeatedly transitions from anticipation to performance (Butler, 1993). The realization of gender, or the occupation of a gendered state, is actually at the same time its anticipation; moments of "gendering" are performed over and over again by the individual, often with the objective to fulfill an idealized social status, role, or position. This is a condition of the body that is itself only materialized by such efforts to reproduce said status, role, and/or position at the micro level by and through individual social actors (Butler, 1993).

⁸ I use the term habitual to invoke the notion of "habitualization:" the process by which the flexibility of human action is limited...as repeated actions inevitably become routinized" (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008, p. 277).

⁹ This idea that one can completely transition from one status or role to an anticipated, and separate, status or role, in a chorological movement, is typically the social condition in which the concept of "anticipatory socialization" is used to describe. For example, in explaining the logic of this concept, Brym (2014) uses the example of "students [who intend] to enter the legal profession, try [to imagine] how this experience...will affect their next few years" (p. 60). From this initial understanding and use of the term anticipatory socialization, anticipation does not happen in concert with, or simultaneous too, role enactment. My use of the idea "habitual anticipatory socialization" therefore functions as a rethinking of the original concept.

Gender performativity is habitual because gender is produced by and through *learned* habits of gendering that are performed by the “compliant” individual, as opposed to the “voluntary” subject who consciously enacts gender norms in their own interests (Butler, 1993, p. xxi); people do not purposely rehearse¹⁰ for intended and/or desired expressions of gender, but instead, unintentionally assume a given social role that they act on through the “reiterative practice of regulatory...regimes” (p. xxiii) which, in turn, materializes the role itself.¹¹ Gender performativity may be thought of as an array of temporally and contextually dependent, normalized, and routinized moments of anticipatory socialization, a process that is characterized by the repeated and concerted transition from role anticipation to role enactment.¹² When individuals act according to certain gender assumptions, expectations, and beliefs, often within the regulatory scripts of dominant gender norms and roles, they in consequence produce the material foundations from which the very concept of gender is derived.

As previously mentioned, Butler contends that the concepts of gender and sexuality are produced through a multiplex of performativities and institutional conditions that actually promote hierarchies of power (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008). These hierarchical regimes intersect at the micro, meso, and macro levels of society to inform “normative” beliefs, values, and behaviours about how one ought to identify and express their own gender and sexuality. Therefore, Butler (1993) maintains that the dominant social beliefs, values, and norms that are associated with gender and sexuality shape what individuals believe to be “normal” and

¹⁰ In contrast, initial understandings of anticipatory socialization posit it as the process by which “the individual ‘rehearses’ for future positions, social relationships, and even occupations (Brym, 2014, p. 60).

¹¹ As Butler (1993) states, for example: “A bodily norm is assumed, appropriated, taken on as not, strictly speaking, undergone by a subject, but rather that the subject, the speaking ‘I,’ is formed by virtue of having gone through such a process of assuming [the norm]” (p. xiii).

¹² As Laura M. Carpenter (2015) argues, in her paper “Gendered Sexuality Over the Life Course: A Conceptual Framework” for example, gender performativity – or “doing gender,” as she puts it – maintains that “gender is (re)created through accumulated transitional moments over the life course” (p. 161).

“deviant” forms of gender and sexual expression and identity. This is what Butler refers to when she speaks of the “regulatory practice” of performativity; gender performativity is a practice that is embedded within a matrix of power relations which determine and largely dictate how people ought to gender themselves:

“Performativities tend to include legal sentences, baptisms, inaugurations, declarations of ownership, statements which not only perform an action, but confer a binding power on the action performed. If the power of discourse to produce that which it names is linked with the question of performativity, then the performative is one domain in which power acts as discourses” (Butler, 1993, p. 224).

People gender themselves based on normative gender scripts that are cultivated within the hegemonic discourse of dominant gendered social relations, which actually makes hegemonic gender ideologies “real” through “social action.”¹³ In other words, gendered bodies are both regulated as well as activated by the hegemonic gender norms that are enforced onto them.

Butler (1993) uses the term “heterosexual matrix”¹⁴ to identify how “normative” gender and sexual scripts are regulated by hegemonic cultural systems that reproduce gender-based hierarchies. The heterosexual matrix refers to a system of cis-normative beliefs that determine how women and men ought to behave based on assumptions about, and expectations of, gendering that are fundamentally heterosexist (Allan, 2011). Within the heterosexual matrix “superior authority over sex is heterosexual: two body types, male and female, that are mutually and exclusively attracted to one another. The key word in that definition [being] *exclusively*” (p. 369). Butler argues that the amalgamation of sex status, heterosexuality, gender identity, and

¹³ I use the term “social action” in the Weberian sense of the word; a social action is when a person associates symbolic meaning to their actions, in this case gendered meanings, with consideration to the individual or imaginary social other (Weber, 2004, p. 327).

¹⁴ Allan (2011) also uses the term “hegemonic norm of heterosexuality” (p. 369) to describe the heterosexual matrix.

gender expression is an “hallucinatory effect”¹⁵ of hegemonic cultural discourses which shape and regulate one’s conceptualization of bodily differences (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008).

In accordance with the above logic, one could argue that since the breadwinner model of the North American nuclear family unit is structured around binary characterizations of, and distinctions made between, women and men, that the comprising gender roles are constructed in a manner that normalizes and promotes cis-heterosexuality. In concert, Butler (1993) argues that transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia¹⁶ can be considered (negative) socio-cultural responses of individuals who “fail” to perform gender according to the cis-heteronormative perceptions of gender and sexuality that are outlined by the heterosexual matrix of North American gender relations.¹⁷

2.2 Butler, Queer Theory, and Poststructuralism

While Butler is often recognized as “one of the most important figures in queer theory,” she is also commonly known as “the *doyenne* of post-structuralist feminism” (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008, p. 623; Carver and Chambers, 2008, p. 34). Her work is heavily influenced by the works of poststructuralists such as Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and thus can be situated within “the broad terms” of poststructuralist thought (Lloyd, 2007, p. 3).

¹⁵Butler (1993) uses this phrase in *Bodies that Matter* when she argues that gender is an element of the self “that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts, as an extreme, an hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures” (p. xv).

¹⁶An important thing to note about Butler’s analysis of gender is that she does not distinguish between sex, gender, and sexuality in a manner that allows for distinctions to be clearly made between her deconstruction of sexist and homo/trans/biphobic systems of oppression in her work. In other words, she conceptualizes both gender and sexuality-based forms of oppression as originating from the same cultural systems of sex more generally that regulate both gender and sexual expression in concert with one another. This is largely why, for example, I did not need to distinguish between gender and sexuality in chapter 1. While gender and sexuality-based experiences with oppression, inequality, marginality, and identification consist of practical differences, conceptually, both are forged and regulated within and by the heteronormative matrix of discourse and are, therefore, intimately intertwined.

¹⁷This is a primary premise of her work *Gender Trouble* in which, for example, she centralizes the gender “troublemaker” to argue that non-normative expressions of sexuality and gender *trouble* –they threaten and disrupt – the “reigning discourse” of gender and sexuality (Butler, 1990, p. xxvii).

More specifically, Butler (1993), like the poststructuralists before her, centralizes the role that normative cultural scripts, discourses, and systems play in organizing symbolic patterns of social meaning, while investigating the fluid nature of the “regulatory norms” and beliefs which constitute such patterns (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008; Butler, 1993, p. xii). Moreover, similar to how poststructuralists reject “grand imaginary maps” of the social world that posit an ultimate truth *about* the social world, Butler rejects the notion of the “unitary subject,”¹⁸ and actively tries to dismantle fixed categories of identity. Butler (1990), like poststructuralists, argues instead, that such general characterizations of the social produce culturally sustained scripts of “normative” and “deviant” behaviours, actions, and lifestyles, and foster the reproduction of social hierarchies and unequal power relations.

Butler’s rejection of static labels, such as “female” or “male,” exudes a poststructuralist emphasis on deconstructionism,¹⁹ as previously mentioned in the last chapter, deconstructionism refers to the symbolic destruction of constructs that (falsely) centralize a “unitary subject,” often within binary systems of identification. Butler (1993), like many queer theorists, deconstructs characterizations of normative and deviant gender performativities, which she argues emerge under institutional and structural circumstances that both animate and regulate gendered bodies, based on gender norms (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008). Butler rejects and deconstructs the validity of the universal, the totalizing, gendered body, arguing instead that any idea or belief

¹⁸ Smith (1999) uses this phrase in her essay “Telling the Truth after Postmodernism” when she states that “post-structuralism/postmodernism rejects the unitary subject of the Enlightenments project of rational objectivity” (p. 104).

¹⁹ For example, poststructuralist Derrida commonly deconstructs logocentrism in the human sciences. Logocentrism is a philosophy that maintains that a universal system of knowledge exists, which will ultimately reveal the genuine and true forms of beauty, morality, and authenticity that exist within human knowledge systems (Ritzer, 2008). Derrida argues that this ideology has resulted in the “closure” and “repression” of such discourses, and deconstructs the use of logocentrism in the human sciences in order to free “writing from the things that enslave it” (p. 605). Poststructuralist Foucault similarly deconstructs totalities and regulatory regimes of discourse in an effort to recreate them into a more suitable representation of the social world, one that recognizes and embraces discontinuity as a necessary condition for understanding the social (Best, 1989).

about the body that is held as a “universal” constant functions as a mechanism for the “regulatory practice” of discourse that produces “the bodies it controls” (Butler, 1993, p. xii). Accordingly, Butler adopts, what Steven Best (1989, p. 347) describes as “the poststructuralist challenge to a [social] theory of totality” and similarly aims to develop a social perspective that “explodes the emphasis on difference and discontinuity beyond the boundaries of any theorizable totality, into a Leibnizian space of radical seriality and ‘pure difference’.”

While I agree with poststructuralist efforts to deconstruct hegemonic cultural systems in an attempt to celebrate plurality and difference, I take issue with the fact that when poststructuralists, like Butler, employ the mechanism of deconstructionism in their analysis; they often accompany it with a “depoliticized play of textuality” (Best, 1989, p. 338). Poststructuralists tend to emphasize the role that “signifying activities,” enacted through and by individual performativities, play in the construction and (re)production of both the subject and the social (Lloyd, 2007, p. 12). However, in doing this they often deemphasize, if not altogether ignore, the important role that social, economic, political, and historical systems and structures play in the construction and (re)production of social meaning (Seidman, 1995). Since poststructuralism refuses to recognize, what can be called, “social facts”²⁰ as valid characterizations of the social world, it often emphasizes instead the role that discourse and power play in producing and regulating the subject. As a result, such perspectives are void of any analysis of “real” economic, social, and historical conditions of both the subject and the social, and tend to depoliticize (and de-historicize) the context in which individual performativities occur (Best, 1989; Lloyd, 2007; Seidman, 1995).

²⁰ Social facts refers to social “conditions and circumstances that are external to the individual that, nevertheless, [partially] determine one’s course of [social] action” (Appelrouth and Edles, 2009, p. 88).

This “depoliticized play of textuality” is arguably an inevitable result of poststructuralist thinking. If we accept the poststructuralist premises that 1) social meaning is temporally and contextually dependent, and 2) that the context of such meaning is always fragmented and discontinuous, then within the poststructuralist’s framework, knowledge is a series of never ending moments of signification, or performativity, which can never be captured by any unifying scheme of the social (Best, 1989). This common poststructuralist proposition speaks to the logic of textualism, or “citationality,” which refers to the poststructuralist mentality that social norms, beliefs, values, ideas, texts, and codes only become “real” when they are actually cited and enacted by and through social bodies (Butler, 1993).

We can clearly see the above logic operating in Butler’s work, since gender only materializes for Butler through the “forcible reiteration,” (p. xii) the forcible citation, of gendered texts via the social actions of the individual, who then enacts dominant gender scripts through a “signifying chain”²¹ of performativity. This demonstrates a clear Foucauldian²² understanding of gender relations and regulation, since Butler emphasizes the role that discourse and knowledge play in regulating gender, while downplaying the influence that material and economic institutions and structures play in producing, reproducing, and regulating gendered bodies and norms.

²¹ Best (1989: 338), in his essay “Jameson/Totality/Poststructuralist Critique” uses this phrase when critiquing poststructuralist thought, and states that “if meaning is context-bound, and there is no identifiable whole which can serve as the context, then there can be no “meaning” ...only endless permutations of signifying chains.”

²² Foucault’s influence on Butler’s theory is obvious since, as Lloyd (2007) posits, poststructuralist theorists that look “to the variable and historically specific ways in which subjects – or rather subject positions – are produced by discourse and power,” are arguably practicing the “Foucauldian form” (p. 12) of poststructuralism. This form of poststructuralism is, moreover, fundamentally similar to Butler’s employment of the heterosexual matrix to look at the production and reproduction of gendered and sexuality-based positions within the social.

Butler's work also has clear ties to Derridean²³ forms of poststructuralism, since Derrida refuses general categorizations of the subject like that of the social titles "gay," "women," "black," or "old," and claims instead that any such categorization of the body is always welcome to reinterpretation, or "resignification" (Lloyd, 2007, p. 12). Similarly, Butler (1990/1993) rejects "absolute" categorizations of the gendered body, based on the presumed validity of a biological sexed universal, and argues instead that the arbitrary notion of "woman" is what actually produces the female subject. Like the poststructuralists before her, Butler ends up replacing social, economic, historical, and political contexts of social knowledge and conditions of the body, with a cultural emphasis on discourse and power.

As a result of poststructuralism's influence on her work as well as her shared practice of implementing a "depoliticized play of textuality" (Best, 1989, p. 338) in her analysis, Butler understands and uses the concept of "materialism" differently than what would be commonly seen in the works of traditional materialist thinkers (e.g., Adorno, 2000; Barrett, 1988; Fraser, 1997; Lukacs, 1968; Smith, 1999; Weber, 2004). Butler attempts to show in her work how a norm, particularly gender and sexual norms, can actually materialize a (social) body; how the gendered body not only animates gender norms, but, in some sense, is also activated and shaped by the norms it animates (Butler, 1993). From Butler's perspective, gender expression and the gendering of the body by the individual is always constrained by and within the cultural norms, stigmatizations, expectations, and traditions of a given socio-cultural context, which (largely) determine how people ought to gender themselves (Lloyd, 2007). These same cultural norms, stigmas, expectations, and traditions that regulate, control, and often dominate gendered bodies,

²³ Similar to the latter note, Lloyd (2007) describes the practice of focusing "on the impossibility of defining any identity...because any such definition is inherently open to resignification," in poststructuralist thought, as the "Derridean form" (p. 12) of poststructuralism.

exist as such because they are simultaneously cited through the gendering of the actual body (Butler, 1993).

Butler, therefore, views materialism as a process that centralizes and legitimizes our materiality and/or the materiality of norms; she views it as a process of *thingification*, in which the abstract notion of “gender,” in functioning as a “regulatory norm,” becomes concrete when the real and physical body is gendered through a series of “performative acts.” In contrast, most materialist thinkers understand materialism as the theoretical practice of comprehending the characteristics of the social world as products that are produced and reproduced through material processes, such as acts of labour, which exist within a specified economic context of production (Marx, 1845/1978). Butler, however, understands materialism as the process by which culturally determined gender norms, an apparently abstract element of discourse, become identifiable, become real or treated as real, within the social world and among and by living people (Butler, 1993; Lloyd, 2007).

Individual gender expression and identity, for Butler (1993), “never precedes nor follows the process of gendering,” gender in any sense of the word, only emerges – only materializes – both with and as the “matrix of gender relations themselves” (p. xxii). In acting according to certain gender norms and beliefs, in (the habitual) anticipation of a specified gender role or position, people actually make gender as such real; they materialize it. Yet, the gendered body never exists “within” or as a concrete or permanent material state, but only as a fluid series of gendering acts that occur throughout and within time and space. Here, gender performative acts do not materialize gender insofar as they create a concrete conditional state of and for the

gendered body, but instead, such acts only materialize gender in the sense that they transform an idealized entity into an identifiable and temporal form (Lloyd, 2007).

2.3 Butler and Marx: Gender as an Imagined Concrete

Marx and Butler challenge an understanding of the social world that presents social life as either static or permanent, arguing instead that what human beings consider to be “real” is contingent on context-based processes of socio-cultural production, such as the matrix of discourse or the relations of production. These socio-cultural processes of production, from both perspectives, are what allow the things that we identify as real to be identified as such. For example, gender for Butler (1993) only materializes through processes of gendering that are enacted by the individual and within the relations of discourse, in which gender is only understood as a real condition of the body because it is identified as such by the very bodies that it (re)produces /reproduce it. Butler always sees gender as an abstract concept, an “imaginary ideal;”²⁴ it is never concrete, always anticipated but never completely realized or finished. It then follows that (biological) sex for Butler is also an abstract concept since gender is the “social construction of sex,” and sex is only represented through the language of gender. Butler writes that:

“If gender is the social significance that sex assumes within a given culture...then what, if anything, is left of “sex” once it has assumed its social character as gender?...If gender consists of the social meanings that sex assumes, then sex does not accrue social meanings as additive properties but, rather, is replaced by the social meanings it takes on” (p. xiv – xv).

²⁴ Butler (1993) states in *Bodies That Matter*, for example, that gender “becomes a normative and normalizing ideal according to which the body is trained, shaped, cultivated, and invested; it is an historically specific *imaginary ideal*...[emphasis added] under which the body is effectively materialized” (p. 9).

Butler argues that neither gender nor sex are “real” conditions of the body in the sense that they are qualities that belong to a biological and/or theological essence of the individual. Instead, she argues that the physical “sexed” body is indistinguishable from the gender norms imposed onto it, which in and of itself is only real in the sense that it is treated as if it were an innate aspect of the bodies it designates, controls, and regulates (Arruzza, 2015; Butler, 1993).

Marx (1939/1978) posits, with a similar logic, that the totality of the relations of production is also not “real” in the sense that it refers to a static material base,²⁵ but is instead, an “imaginary ideal” aggregated from the actual physical conditions of production as well as its “many determinations” (p. 237) and expressions. Just as the gendered/sexed body for Butler is an abstraction constituted by (determinations from and expressions of) imaginary gender ideals, the totality of the relations of production is, for Marx (1993), a “real” abstraction constituted by all the “many determinations” from “the population,” which are themselves “thinner abstractions” that are derived from the “*imagined* concrete” (p. 101). First, “If [we] were to begin with the population,” Marx (1939/1978) writes, “this would then, by means of further determination, move analytically towards even simpler concepts...from the imagined concrete towards ever thinner abstractions until [we] had arrived at the simplest determinations” (p. 237). These “simple determinations,” these real social positions, knowledges, and experiences of real people, are determinations from the “real and concrete” economic factors that organize the dominant

²⁵ Marx (1939/1978) claims in *Grundrisse*, for example, that when observing and conceptualizing the social world “it *seems* [emphasis added] to be correct to begin with the real and the concrete with the real precondition, thus to begin, in economics, with e.g. the population, which is the foundation of the subject of the entire social act of production. However, on closer examination this proves false. The population is an abstraction if I leave out, for example, the classes of which it is composed” (p. 237). Notably, as I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, while Marx meant “classes” to refer to wage and class relations especially, the same logic may (and should) be extended to, to use Floyd’s (2009) term, “congealed” (p. 69) forms of capital as well, such as social identities and positions.

social relations of a given society (the population). Therefore, the “population” is itself a “chaotic conception of the whole” of society (Marx, 1939/1978, p. 237).

Second, it is from this “chaotic conception of the whole” that one moves towards a conception of the social world in its totality: while these “many determinations” do in fact originate from a “common element,” they emerge within a shared “society,” i.e., society in the strong sense, and it is only in the aggregate that these “many determinations” and “thinner abstraction” are the *totality* of the relations of production (Marx, 1939/1978, p. 237). We cannot understand society solely based on the economic relations that constitute it, but must also include an analysis and understanding of its ideological expressions and approximations, such as beliefs about gender, race, sexuality, age, and (dis)ability. We must understand how these “smaller” social constructions exist at both the macro as well as the micro levels of a society to understand how that society as a whole operates. Therefore, the “common element” of a given society, when fully realized, is only ever an “imagined” established state that is derived from its many determinations: “from there the journey would have to be retraced,” Marx (1993) continues, “until [we] had finally arrived at the population again, but this time not as the chaotic conception of a whole, but as a rich totality of many determinations and relations” (p. 100).

As a more accurate and practical depiction of the social world in its complexity and diversity, the “imaginary ideal” of the totality of the relations of production, as a “social fact,” replaces the actual physical relations of production in Marx’s theorization of the social world.²⁶ What actually constitutes the social world in its totality is, for Marx (1939/1978), not a static

²⁶ Marx (1993) states for example, that “the concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse. It appears in the process of thinking, therefore, as a process of concentration, as a result, not as a point of departure, even though it is the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation...and conception” (p. 101).

economic base, but a collection of conditionally dependent social realities, positions, and knowledges, or “thinner abstractions” (p. 237). These standpoints, while all connected, are neither subsumed under a unifying, stable, and/or physical center nor are they considered fixed conditions of dominant social relations. Instead, these relative social states, which are only “real” as real abstractions, and not as static conditions of the body or of the social world, are what actually constitute the “rich totality” of the relations of production.

The above observation is the same as Butler’s (1993) treatment of the gendered body, in the sense that she argues, despite being a corporeal condition of the social body, that the sexed body is still not a physically stable thing in and of itself, since it is indistinguishable from its imagined form of gender. Just as Butler understands the cultural texts, norms, and codes that constitute dominant gender ideologies as the imagined form of the “real” sexed body, we could understand the totality of the relations of production as an imagined form of the material relations of production. These “real” economic factors act as the “point of departure” for the “many determinations” of social existence, which then constitute the actual totality of the relations of production (Marx, 1939/1978, p. 237). Likewise, the physical body, the sexed body, for Butler (1993) is actually quite literally an *imagined concrete*; the gendered body is a “thinner abstraction” of the imaginary gender ideals to which it is jointly “subjectivated by” and “subjected to” (p. xvi). Here we see that Butler’s notion of gender and Marx’s notion of the “real” population are both points of departure as well as points of observation and conception for each theorist.

We can begin to think of gender performativity as a process that occurs within the relations of (capitalist) production, if we think of it in the following way: first, the gendered body

for Butler, is produced, reproduced, and produced anew through the cultural and individual *processes* that attribute and designate gendered symbols and meanings to the physical body. Second, if we incorporate Marx's (1993) logic, we can suggest that one is gendered and genders themselves with and by the "many determinations" from, or expressions of, gender that logically reference the *dominant* gender norms, values, and beliefs of a given society, and such enactments of gender emerge within a specific socio-cultural/historical context of material production. From Marx's point of view, these dominant ideologies and enactments would be considered the point of departure, and individual and cultural processes of gendering would constitute and function as "thinner abstractions" of larger gender ideals. These "grand" gender ideologies may be established *within* a common culture for Butler; however, we can expand on this claim using Marx's perspective, to argue that such ideologies are established *through* shared experiences of gender "socialization." These experiences of gender socialization, as previously noted, are citations of and/or determinations from a set of ideologies that are specific to certain economic and material social conditions.

For Marx (1993), "the abstract determinations" from dominant gender norms "lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought" (p. 101). Since the dominant material base is, in part, expressed in abstract form as gender ideology, it follows that the reproduction of superstructural elements by way of individual gender performativities is the reproduction of elements of the material base. However, the material foundations of gender are not then reproduced in their original "genuine" form because such a form does not actually exist. Instead, the material conditions of gender are reproduced and produced anew through a "process of thinking" that deviates from the imaginary ideal of "gender," since individuals are in fact critical and independent beings that can and do think of and for themselves (Butler, 1993; Marx, 1993).

It would appear to follow that a Marxist perspective would argue that the totality of the relations of gender can only exist as a “unity of the diverse,” as an aggregate of all gender performativities (Marx, 1993, 101).

Dominant gender texts are cited through the many expressions (determinations) of dominant gender scripts by way of individual gender performativities. These “gender performative acts” occur through “the process of thinking” which informs everyday processes of gendering and which reproduces dominant gender norms at the micro levels of society. However, it is from these “many determinations” that this process would have to be “retraced” in order to capture the complexity and diversity of all gendered bodies; the totality of gender relations is always (and can only ever be) the abstract collection of all gender performativities that exist. Since gender performativities exist as “thinner abstractions” and “determinations” from hegemonic gender norms, roles, and ideals that are reproduced through context dependent narratives, which are distinct, then it would appear to follow that for Marx, there can never be a universal or “complete” gendered body (Marx, 1939/1978, p. 237).

2.4 Performativity and Capital

In a footnote, Butler (1993) describes what she identifies as the “transformative” element of the “new kind of materialism” (p. 91) that from her perspective, both her and Marx use in their analyses.²⁷ She argues that Marx “calls” for a type of materialist thinking which recognizes that the socio-cultural determinants of social activity regulate and actualize “the object,” such as the gendered body or the products of capital, both as a mechanism of its materialization and

²⁷ Butler (1993, p. 191) draws on the following quote from the *Theses of Feuerbach* to illustrate her notion of temporal transformation which she believes both her and Marx share in their perspectives on the social: “the chief defect of all previous materialism (including Feuerbach’s) is that the object, actuality, sensuousness is conceived only in the form of the object perception...but not as a sensuous human activity, practice (praxis), not subjectively” (Marx, 1888/1978, p. 143).

objectification as well as an element of its materiality and objectivity (Butler 1993, p. 91). Cinzia Arruzza (2015) in her essay “Gender as Social Temporality: Butler (and Marx),” claims that, in identifying with him, Butler is recognizing that the process of labour (human activity) and the objectification of human consciousness (the object) are, for Marx (2014), inseparable from one another; that “the animal is one with its life activity...it does not distinguish the activity from itself. It is *its activity*” (p. 39). For Marx, it is through the process of production that the individual is objectified, in which the “social character” of our labour is both actualized through the act of producing as well as “congealed” within and into the final product that we create (Arruzza, 2015, p. 38). Similarly, gender for Butler is inseparable from its enactment and reiteration; the performative expression of gender norms is at the same time their materialization. The materialization of gender is therefore indistinguishable from the activity of its production, in which gender “is *its activity*”.²⁸

Butler (1993) sees this process of performativity as occurring within the heterosexual matrix of discourse; performativity is constituted by a series of conventionalized acts of gendering which reproduce “the regulatory norms” (p. xii) of hegemonic gender relations. In addition, for Marx (1932a/1978), within a capitalist mode of production, the relations of capital are the external force that dictates and regulates the nature of production and objectification; capitalism “disciplines the worker’s body” and transforms the social character of labour into a series of standardized and regulated acts that are controlled by the owners of production (Arruzza, 2015, p. 38). Here, the final result of labour is not self-actualization, but is instead, an expression of capital. Butler argues that gender performativities are also not enacted by

²⁸ Notably, gender expression is still the “object” of the conscious and unique being who enacts dominant gender norms in different ways, based on context and experience, the implication of this will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

“voluntary subjects,” but instead, are forcibly reiterated by and through them in order to reproduce and reify the heterosexual matrix of discourse. From this perspective, gender norms must be habitually cited over and over again in order to be realized, just as from Marx’s perspective, capital only remains a constant force, when commodities and profit are produced over and over again through a habitual process of production. This process of production then perpetually enacts capital through the production and use of capitalist commodities (Arruzza, 2015, p. 38).

Butler’s theory, like Marx’s, centralizes the role that temporality plays in the transformation (materialization) of gender per se; special focus is given to the mechanisms of everyday regulatory processes of gendering that materialize gendered bodies through repeated “stylized acts” (p. 33) that occur across the life course. Arruzza (2015) argues that from Butler’s perspective, gender is not only the “reification” of dominant gender and sexual norms, but it is also the actual mechanism that enacts gender and “therefore produce[s] gendered subjects” (p. 34). Butler’s focus on the reification of dominant gender and sex norms through “corporeal styles” of gender performativity, posits that gender is produced and reproduced over time; either across an individual life course or throughout history (Arruzza, 2015).²⁹

Marx (1993) argues in a similar fashion to Butler’s above logic, that capital is only identifiable as a “real” thing due to a series of actions, which are performed by the individual,

²⁹ In claiming that Butler’s theory of gender performativity recognizes that gender is reproduced throughout history, I am not suggesting that Butler’s work provides an historical analysis of gender. I stand by my initial claim that Butler’s work is de-historicized (in the sense that she does not look at the historical processes that help to shape current dominant gender relations). However, it does not follow that the logic of Butler’s theory automatically denies the historical reproduction of gender. In contrast, I believe that the “fluid” nature of Butler’s theory actually complements (in some ways) an historical analysis of gender (something I will touch on in later chapters). This is an observation that Butler actually recognizes in her own work, but for some reason fails to implement this perspective into her actual analysis. As Arruzza (2015) observes, for example, Butler argues that “in order to denaturalise gender and even the sexed body...[she] insists several times on the historicity of norms,” yet, “history is surprisingly absent from her analysis both in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*” (p. 41).

that produces, legitimatizes, and justifies the existence of, and need for, profit. This process, for Marx, necessarily requires the continued existence of surplus-labour and its source (a reserve army of labour) as well as the reproduction of the relations and forces of a capitalist mode of production which justify and legitimize the existence of both (Arruzza, 2015). In other words, the continued production of capital requires that both surplus labour as well as the ideologies which justify and legitimatize the continued exploitation of people, be reproduced over time.

Arruzza (2015) contends that in both Butler's and Marx's theories, we can see the vital role that "the reification of time as a social relation" (p. 39) plays in both the materialization of gender and capital. In the case of Butler's work, gender is simply "constituted social temporality" in the sense that gender only materializes as it is cited by, and inscribed on, the gendered body (Arruzza, 2015, p. 39). In the case of Marx, "the present time of living labour" is controlled and regulated by capital through the "mechanical temporality" of the capitalist work space; however, it is through this very process of regulated temporality, the regulated labour of the worker, that capital is "subjectified" at all.

2.5 The Heterosexual Matrix and Capitalism

Once again, we can begin to see the ways in which Butler's and Marx's theories complement one another. First, Butler discusses the temporal "transformation" of the sexed body within the cultural context of the heterosexual matrix. As detailed in the previous chapter, North American gender roles, which constitute the "nuclear family," are associated with implicit assumptions about sexuality and gender that invoke heterosexist and cis-normative beliefs about how individuals ought to gender themselves (Butler, 1990/1993). Taking into account Butler's perspective, the nuclear family unit can be seen

as a means by which the heterosexual matrix operates; within the breadwinner model of the nuclear family unit, “legitimate” forms of gender performativity include a cis-heterosexual romantic and sexual orientation which imply that people ought to identify and express their individual genders and sexual desires in cis-heteronormative ways (Butler, 1993). The gender performativities of men and women within this model are therefore not only regulated by the gender binary ideology, but are also regulated by cis-heteronormative assumptions that determine “normal” sexuality (Butler, 1993).

The “regulatory device” of dominant gender norms, operating through the mechanism of the nuclear family unit, creates boundaries that impose limits on the sexed body and regulate and control bodies based on cis-heterosexist gender norms. It, therefore, excludes certain sexed and gendered bodies that do not comply with the gender normative scripts of cis-heterosexuality.³⁰ Such exclusion is met with the marginalization, discrimination, and disempowerment of certain bodies, as demonstrated by the cultural presence of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia within North America (Butler, 1993).³¹

Butler also, in addition, treats the heterosexual matrix as the means by which the social exclusion of cis-straight women from power, status, and resources, on account of the

³⁰ Butler (1993) states, for example, that “what will and will not be included within the boundaries of “sex” will be set by a more or less tacit operation of exclusion” (p. xx).

³¹ For example, in an article published in *Time Magazine* entitled “Why Trans People are being Murdered at a Historic Rate,” Kate Steinmetz (2015) reported that: “Transgender people are four times more likely than the general population to report living in extreme poverty, making less than \$10,000 per year, a standing that sometimes pushes them to enter the dangerous trade of sex work. Nearly 80% of transgender people report experiencing harassment at school when they were young.” Similarly, a report released by the Movement Advancement Project (Cruz, 2014) stated that 25% of bisexual men, 30% of bisexual women, 20% of gay men, and 23% of lesbians live in poverty, while 60% of bisexuals reported experiencing what they identified as “biphobic” remarks, comments, and jokes in the workplace. Lastly, in “The first national climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools” (Taylor, et al. 2011), it was reported that one in five (21%) of LGBTQ students reported that they were physically harassed or assaulted as a result of their sexual orientation. Moreover, 20% of LGBTQ students and approximately 10% of non-LGBTQ students reported that they were physically harassed or assaulted because of either their actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

fact that they are women, is also reproduced. Cis-straight women are discriminated against, despite their normative sexuality and gender, because within the gender binary ideology the “feminine” is considered to be the socially inferior counterpart to the superior masculine body (Butler, 1993). As a result, cis-straight women are excluded from many social/cultural, economic, and political forms of privilege, status, and resources that are allotted to their “superior” male peers (Butler, 1993).

Using Butler’s perspective, we can argue that the gender norms associated with the nuclear family unit promote male privilege, heteronormativity, and cisnormativity as well as the potential double or multiple jeopardy³² associated with the intersections of each. This, in turn, reinforces the “regulatory device” of dominant gender norms within and through the heterosexual matrix of discourse, which then brings me to my next point: I contend that while Butler’s perspective of gender performativity can demonstrate *how* LGBT-based discrimination and female sexism are produced and reproduced within the “heterosexual matrix” of dominant family and gender relations, Marx’s theory of historical materialism provides a way of understanding *why* this is the case at all.

In the previous chapter I claimed that the nuclear family unit, and the cis-heterosexist gender roles which constitute it as well as the gender norms that it reifies, operates as one of the many “circuits of capital” which are produced and reproduced by the relations of capital themselves (Arruzza, 2015, p. 39). Within the industrial capitalist economy, the rise of the nuclear family unit instituted absolute paternity which allowed,

³² Multiple jeopardy theory posits that the negative effects of belonging to three or more marginalized and subordinated social groups are cumulative and confounding. In contrast, double jeopardy refers to those who belong to two (no more, no less) lower social status groups; for example, a poor straight cis-black woman vs. a poor straight cis-white woman, respectively (Brym, 2014).

and subsequently still allows, for the continual reproduction of class relations and class hierarchies from one generation to the next. The reproduction of class hierarchies across history ensures the perpetual existence of an exploitable working class and a constant reserve army of labour.

This is what Arruzza (2015) describes as the “self-valorizing” (p. 39) character of capitalism; the systematic reproduction of exploitable social groups, in this case perpetuated by the nuclear family unit, is what naturally reproduces a continued source of surplus-value, ensuring the continuation of “the circuits of capital and their unity” (p. 39). Therefore, one can argue that the heterosexual matrix exists in order to justify and legitimize the existence of hegemonic family relations that allow for the reproduction of capitalist relations across generations, which then ensures the continued existence of surplus value and profit.

The decreased socio-political status of women associated with the rise of the patriarchal family unit provides a subsequent reserve of surplus labour for the owners of capital (Wolf, 2009). By socially, politically, and economically devaluing women, the owners of capital can justify the lower wages awarded to women as well as the lower wages associated with “female” dominated fields (Barrett, 1988; Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007). Lowering the wages of an entire group of people allows the owners of production to increase their profit margins, since the less the worker is paid, the more profit they produce. Additionally, the gender roles associated with the white middle/upper class family unit of industrial capitalism characterized women’s social roles based on their “connection” to the domestic sphere. This then defined women’s social value, based on

their ability to sufficiently perform their roles as wives and mothers (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). In turn, women were, and still are, expected to socialize the next generation of workers (their children) for free, because “motherhood” is viewed as an intrinsic characteristic of the feminized body (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).

The nuclear family, and the gender roles and norms that are associated with this family model, allows capital to reproduce itself in two ways: first “at an economic level the housewife’s labour reproduces on a daily and generational basis the labour power of the worker,” writes Michele Barrett (1988), and secondly “at an ideological level [which] reproduces the relations of domination and subordination required by capitalist production” (p. 2). As a result, the relations of capital are reproduced through the heterosexual matrix and by the family unit which sustains: 1) the process by which the “appropriation” of surplus-labour, and therefore surplus-value, is maintained throughout generations (Arruzza, 2015); and 2) the repetition of the “circuits of capital” as a “regular syllogism” across and throughout socio-historical contexts of social relations and production (Arruzza, 2015, p. 39; Marx, 1932b/1978, p. 89). As Arruzza puts it, “one might say that through these repetitions capital performs itself” (p. 39).

LGBT oppression can be linked to the fact that those who do not “fit” within the gender binary are, in some sense, being punished for disrupting dominant gender norms that ensure the production and reproduction of the relations and forces of capital. Additionally, women’s oppression can be linked to the very nature of the gender binary ideology and the corresponding gender norms that ensure capitalism’s “reiteration” across generations and history.

2.6 Butler vs. Marx: Trans-Historical or Historical Materialism

Despite the above similarities shown by Marx's and Butler's perspectives, Butler's use and treatment of materialism in her analysis is based on a neo-Foucauldian foundational logic that appears to contradict Marx's "materialist conception of history." Similar to Foucault, Butler (1990) provides a "critical genealogy of gender categories in...different discursive domains" (p. xxx)³³ and, in keeping with poststructuralist thought, she argues that social meaning cannot exist in and of itself, but only through its repeated citation (Lloyd, 2007). From this perspective, a text can never be analyzed against a specific historical, political, or economic condition of the social world, but only against either itself or a different and equally depoliticized and de-historicized text (Smith, 1999).

Similarly, the method of inquiry detailed by the logic of poststructuralism is that "problems of knowledge" can only be evaluated against the very "regulatory norms" that both animate, and are animated by, the individual subject (Butler, 1993, p. xii; Smith, 1999, p. 108). Figuring the subject in this way means that questions of identity, such as gender and sexuality-based concerns, can only be addressed by referencing how individuals perceive and understand gender and sexuality, based on their own experiences (Smith, 1999). However, as Smith observes, poststructuralists also shift the "multiple determinations" of general consciousness to the matrix of discourse, which deprives the individual subject of "agentic" knowledge. As a result, they actually block the "route to knowledge" that is required for their own research by omitting in their analyses the relevant role that the acting subject plays in expressing the self (Smith, 1999, p.108).

³³ While this quote is from Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), the sentence itself is paraphrased from Appelrouth and Edles *Classical and Contemporary Sociology Theory* (2008), page: 622.

As a secondary effect of “discourse and knowledge,” individual beings, from the perspective of poststructuralism, cannot provide insight into new understandings and experiences of the social world (Smith, 1999). This is because all that the subject experiences and knows is already a function of preexisting language and discourse, “trapping us in the paradox that nothing can be known which is not already known” (Smith, 1999, p. 109). Poststructuralists therefore replace the “knower,” or the subject, with knowledge itself, since all social knowledge is, from the start, a “regulatory device” previously constituted within the matrix of discourse (Butler, 1993, p. xii).

This same criticism can be extended to Butler’s work on gender, since she maintains that gender performativities are not the products of a specific historical, political, economic, and/or cultural condition of gendering, but instead, are the “effects” of stylized acts of gendered expression (Butler, 1993; Smith, 1999, p. 107). Moreover, the method of inquiry detailed by the logic of gender performativity is that gender identity and gender expression can only be evaluated against the very “regulatory norms” that both animate, and are animated by, the gendered body itself (Butler, 1993, p. xii).³⁴ The heterosexual matrix alone, within Butler’s perspective, is posited as a system of domination that is independent of the relations of capital (or any specified relations of production) and is understood as separate from capitalist domination and exploitation.

Butler’s work tends to de-historicize and de-politicize the social production of gender and ignores the fact that dominant gender norms and scripts are inspired not just by a cultural context of language and discourse, but also by a socio-historical/political context of social relations.

³⁴ As Smith (1999) states, for example, in the case of Butler we see that “individual consciousness is structurally displaced by language to reappear as a subject who is an effect of language or discourse” (p. 107).

Butler neither frames her discussion of the heterosexual matrix, nor does she situate the regulatory gender norms that she analyzes, within a specific socio-historical context which explains cis-heterosexuality as the norm. As a consequence of this, Arruzza (2015) argues that she treats gender as a “trans-historical phenomenon” (p. 41) and does not make it clear if her analysis of gender and gender relations can be applied indiscriminately across historical contexts. Moreover, Butler fails to recognize that, although gender is socially constructed, the means by which gender has been constructed, reconstructed, and constructed anew, even just within the context of North America, has changed throughout history and across different socio-political circumstances (Arruzza, 2015).

For example, Wolf’s (2009) aforementioned book *Sexuality and Socialism* provides an extensive historical analysis of how gender expressions have changed within various contexts of North American society, changes that similarly go unidentified by Butler in her work. For instance, in the mid-nineteenth century, some working-class women dressed and acted like men in order to get hired to do “men’s” work. This allowed them to gain economic and political resources and/or to pursue same-sex relationships without legal and/or cultural backlash (Wolf, 2009). In this example, such women did not engage in masculine gender expression as a means by which to express their personal identity, but instead, did so in an effort to gain economic and political rights which, within their given society, were otherwise denied to them.

Another example of the socio-historical and political nature of gender performativity detailed by Wolf is the emergence of the “campy,” feminine gay man of 20th century New York. Drawing on George Chauncey’s (1994) work “the myth of invisibility,” Wolf (2009) explains that gay men within this specific socio-historical context dressed and expressed themselves in

“feminine” ways in order to “attract suitors” (p. 48). In other words, they gendered themselves in a manner that made their sexuality visible, to then “attack others like themselves” (Wolf, 2009, p. 49). In this example, one’s gender expression was dictated by sexual orientation, in which gay men dressed and acted in socially feminine ways in order to overcome the social barriers that they faced in finding sexual and romantic partners.

A third, and well known example, of the socio-historical/political conditions of gender performativity is women’s involvement in paid labour during World War II. Approximately 250,000 women in the U.S. were recruited by the armed forces at this time, and were employed in jobs previously designated as “masculine,” which included mechanical work, motor vehicle operation, and drill instructing (Wolf, 2009, p. 57). Here, there was a major shift in what society considered “proper” gender roles for men and women, due to a pressing political climate in which “the realities of the war and the dire need for service men and women trumped all other concerns of the War Department,” including the hegemonic gender scripts of that time (Wolf, 2009, p. 49). This example demonstrates that the “knowledge and discourse” about gendered bodies can shift due to historical, social, and/or political changes within a given society. Moreover, it showcases that, like the other examples, the ways by which individuals “gender” themselves can be situated by a socio-historical and political context.

Butler (1993) also ignores the fact that gender performativity occurs within a specific economic context of production,³⁵ and when analyzing “regulatory” gender norms, she often fails to account for the emergence and maintenance of the hegemonic relations that she seeks to deconstruct (Arruzza, 2015). As a consequence of this, Arruzza (2015) argues that: “she erases

³⁵ Floyd (2009) for example, states that “concretizing a hegemonic norm of gender also means situating it socially and historically, considering the socially and historically specific *context* of that norm, a consideration that the relatively formal, philosophical register of Butler’s analysis tends to pre-empt” (p. 81).

capital from her analysis altogether” (p. 42), making it unclear if the social exclusion of gender and sexual minorities, which she problematizes, happens in concert with and/or despite of the constraints imposed on the gendered body by the relations of capital. Something that goes unaddressed in Butler’s work, for example, is that the rise of the nuclear family unit reflected not only a shift in the forces of production, as previously discussed, but also a material shift in the relations of production.

Prior to the industrial revolution, production and consumption occurred mostly within the context of the home (McMullin, 2010). With the rise of industrial capitalism however, production shifted to outside of the home, resulting in a social/economic division that emerged between productive and consumer practices (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). This divide between consumption and production-based practices then resulted in an emerging division between (white, middle class) gendered bodies; “women,” who stayed at home, started to occupy the social role of “consumer,” while men, who performed paid labour, began to occupy the role of “producer” (Allahar and Cote, 1999). As a result, the masculine body was increasingly viewed as “productive” and “naturally” linked to the public sphere, while the feminine body was viewed as unproductive and “naturally” linked to the domestic sphere (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).

As discussed in detail in the following chapter, the above example illustrates that the dominant gender relations which existed before the industrial revolution underwent a significant social transformation due to changes in both the relations and forces of production. In other words, the “regulatory device” of gender was subjected to the relations and regulations of, and/or changes made within and to, the economic conditions of the given society. In her analysis of gender, however, Butler (1993) ignores the role that material production plays in the regulation

of dominant gender norms, values, and scripts and fails to identify how gender ideologies are reproduced and/or produced anew through mechanisms such as the family or a gendered division of labour. Butler similarly ignores the constraints placed on certain bodies that exist within specific socio-historical/political conditions and fails to address how dominant forms of gender performativity may change as a consequence of changes made to either the forces of production or the dominant division of labour within a given socio-historical context.

2.7 Conclusion

Now that it has been established that gender performativity can be associated with a social, historical, cultural, economic, and political context, I would like to proceed by mapping out the historical emergence of contemporary definitions of “masculinity” and “femininity” in North American capitalism, beginning with their transformation during the industrial revolution. The following chapter will posit that the dominant gender norms of today’s society were (re)created when the industrial revolution transformed the relations of production, thus creating a more clearly stratified gendered division of labour within the upper and middle classes. In addition, I will argue that the dominant gendered division of labour of this time produced the gender stereotypes that largely constitute the gender binary ideology of current North American society.

Next, by drawing on 1) the complexities of the diverging and converging elements of Butler’s and Marx’s perspectives outlined in this chapter, and 2) Max Weber’s notion of “ideal types,” I will argue that gender performativities exist, at the micro level, within an increasingly wide and fluid spectrum of masculine/feminine gender expression, due to changes made in the relations of capitalist production, specifically the division of labour and the family unit. I will,

however, also note that despite the increasing presence of “fluid” gender identities and expressions, gender has yet to be completely recognized, at the macro level, as existing within such a spectrum. I will then argue that this is the case because even though the gender binary ideology does not speak to the multiple and diverse expressions of gender performativity that exist at the individual level, an investment in this ideology still remains in contemporary North American capitalist society. As a result, the following chapter will illustrate that the dominant gender binary ideology is, on the one hand, maintained by the forces of capitalist production, while, on the other hand, is undercut by the increasing presence of non-normative gender performativities. Such gendered bodies are, moreover, only made possible due to changes made in the relations of production stimulated by change in the forces of production. As a consequence of these changes in the relations of productions and the forces of production, and the respective tensions in the so-called superstructure that they produce, the following chapter will argue that queer genders are gaining more recognition and validation at a cultural level. This, in turn, serves to only further contradict the hegemonic presence of the gender binary ideology in contemporary North American society.

Chapter 3

*“A world so hateful some would rather die than be who they are.
And a certificate on paper isn't gonna solve it all.
But it's a damn good place to start.
No law is gonna change us.
We have to change us.”*

-Macklemore¹

3.1 Marx, Gender Norms, and Capitalism

Most people who have openly advocated for the rights of marginalized groups have been asked, usually by non-activists, how we can argue that things like sexism, LGBT2Q+ discrimination, and racism exist when, in North America, everyone shares the *exact same* legal and political rights and freedoms. Besides the fact that these “devil advocates” never acknowledge that this is largely not that case for Aboriginals and Native Americans, what their point of view fails to consider is the fact that legal and political rights do not automatically translate into social and cultural freedoms, respect, and security. They do not recognize, for example, that even though in my hometown I can legally go into a men’s bathroom,² it does not mean that I will not be stared at, yelled at, and/or verbally or physically harassed for doing so. The fact that what we legally can do does not always line up with what society claims we ought to do, speaks to the current tension that exists in North American capitalism: on the one hand, sexism, genderism, and transphobia are all ideologies that are beneficial to the production and accumulation of capital and are, therefore, reproduced and produced anew within dominant North American culture. However, on the other hand, changes in the relations of production have

¹ See Macklemore and Ryan Lewis. 2012. Same Love. On *The Heist* [CD].

² As stipulated by "The Ontario Human Rights Code," gender identity and gender expression are protected under the human rights act which protects an individual’s right to choose what public bathroom they feel comfortable using (OHRC, 2012).

created a cultural space of ambiguity in which gender identities not only increasingly exist outside of, in between or across the gender binary, but are also increasingly recognized culturally, socially, and politically as existing outside of it.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the ideological superstructure is one of the three major social structures that Marx investigates using his “materialist conception of history.” The superstructure within any given society is constituted by political, social, cultural, and historical systems of knowledge which are all determined by the mode of production. Within this base-superstructure model³ of the social world, both “general consciousness” as well as individual consciousness, what we can know, what we do know, and how we come to know it, are neither determined nor produced by the individual minds of “voluntary” subjects. Ideas, from Marx’s (1932b/1978) perspective, do not, and cannot, exist independently from the physical world, and the objectification of human consciousness is governed by the material and economic conditions that constitute a given society (Marx, 1932b/1978). Our relation to the dominant economic and material conditions of production largely determines the development of our individual consciousness, and this relationship is determined by our objective social positions, such as our class, gender, race, and sexuality (Appelrouth and Edle, 2008). What class we are, what race we are, what gender we are, and what our sexuality is, in part, determines how we perceive and understand the social world.⁴

³ Although Marx never described or referred to this model himself within his own work (Arruzza, 2015), I (loosely) draw on it here to invoke the idea that Marx viewed the superstructure as a derivative from a material foundation.

⁴ Marx (1932a/1978) writes, for example, that “[people] are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. ...as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forms and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of [people] is their actual life-process” (p. 154).

A given ideological superstructure is composed of many different “forms of consciousness,”⁵ such as ideologies pertaining to race, religion, philosophy, politics, or education, and beliefs associated with the gendered body would presumably be one of such forms. Accordingly, how the westernized world comes to identify, understand, and express the gendered body is informed too by ideologies that constitute a part of the North American capitalist superstructure. Gender ideologies are therefore forged within the given political, social, cultural, and historical dynamics of a given mode of production and are part of the ideological superstructure. If beliefs about the biological body and human sexuality, among other things, are nothing more than elements of relations and forces of production “grasped as ideas,” and those who control the means of production control the ideas produced, it would follow that the dominant consciousness, and its respective forms, would be regulated by efforts to justify, legitimize, and maintain a social hierarchy that benefits the ruling class (Marx, 1932a/1978, p. 173).⁶ In other words, the ruling group of a given society would manage and organize both the heterosexual matrix as well as the matrix of discourse more generally in an effort to maintain their privileged social position(s)⁷ and elevated social status.

⁵ Marx (1932a/178) uses this phrase in *The Germany Ideology* when arguing the same point, he states that: “The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-processes, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding *forms of consciousness*, [emphasis added] thus no longer retain the semblance of independence” (p. 152).

⁶ Marx (1932a/1978) states to this effect that “the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationship...hence, of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance” (p. 172 – 173).

⁷ I pluralized the word “position” here because, although the dominant objectified class position is itself characterized by a single relationship to the forces of production, i.e., “the owners of production,” the various attributes of the dominant class, while concertedly award them the “ultimate” privilege, arguably inform multiple systems of domination and subordination based on these characteristics both concertedly *and* respectively. In lamest terms, while the upper class are often white, cis-straight, native-born, Christian and able bodied men, attributes that, in the aggregate, typically constitute *the* dominant group, social hierarchy’s based on class, race, sexuality, immigrant status, religion, body type, and gender (which themselves can function together either in part(s) or as a whole) still exist respectively as single, double and/or multiple deviations from the ruling class. These deviations result in different degrees of marginalization, or in single, double, or multiple jeopardy.

Within capitalism in particular, Marx (1932a/1978) argues that the private ownership of production that is used to produce wealth necessarily results in a class hierarchy that dominates and subordinates some classes, or groups, for the benefit of others. Marx makes this claim based on the observation that capitalism depends on the existence of profit, while the existence of profit depends on the existence of exploitation, which requires the existence of class hierarchies so one group can in fact exploit another (Marx, 1932a/1978). The existence of capital therefore necessarily requires both the existence of exploitable social groups as well as the relations of subordination and domination needed for a capitalist mode of production. It then follows that, as the ideal expression of the dominant material force, the capitalist superstructure would serve to justify, legitimize, and help to maintain the existence of exploitable social groups and their subordinated and dominated positions. We can conclude then that forms of consciousness, such as the dominant gender ideologies of masculinity and femininity, function to justify the relations of capital in an effort to produce, reproduce, and produce anew the existence of exploitable social groups. Such exploitable social groups would include gender and sexual minorities, especially those who have double or multiple jeopardy, such as racialized lesbian women and/or LGBT youth (Wolf, 2009).⁸

The gender hierarchy of North American capitalism privileges some genders over others which allow capitalists to justify the gender-based exploitation of certain bodies, while, at the same time, ideologies such as transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia allow capitalists to reinforce the gender normative structures that maintain and reproduce these gender-based

⁸ Depending on attributes such as their race, class, body type, or collective gender and sexual status, LGBT youth can be considered either a multiply or doubly marginalized group. Primarily on account of either their non-normative gender or sexuality (or both) and their age, they experience disproportionately higher rates of homelessness, mental health issues, and sexual and physical assault when compared to the rest of the LGBTQ2+ population as well as their straight cisgender peers (Grossman and D'Augelli, 2007; Muñoz-Plaza, Quinn and Rounds 2002; Scherzer 2000). Therefore, a white, middle class, native born, cisgender, able bodied, preteen male bisexual would still be considered to have double jeopardy status on account of their sexuality and age.

systems of oppression. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the gender hierarchy of North American capitalism may be viewed within the context of the heterosexual matrix of discourse. The heterosexual matrix imposes social boundaries onto the gendered body that necessarily excludes members of the LGBTQ2+ community, while also dominating and subordinating the female, or “feminine,” body.⁹ The purpose of such boundaries is to reproduce the nuclear family unit, and the gender roles that constitute it. This contributes to the ability of capital to reproduce itself across socio-historical contexts by maintaining class and gender hierarchies. The political and social validation of individuals as gendered subjects, either as “male” or “female,” serves to establish a social hierarchy of power by producing and reproducing dominant and subordinate relations among people, which legitimizes the relations of capital (Barrett, 1988; Butler, 1993; Wolf, 2009).¹⁰ Understanding gender in this way recognizes that the gender binary and (contemporary) patriarchy¹¹ are systems of cis/heterosexual male domination that were forged in relation to the organization of capitalist production.

⁹ Notably, transwomen experience alarmingly high rates of discrimination when compared to both their cisgender peers and the rest of the LGBTQ2+ community. For example, transwomen are disproportionately impacted by murder. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects reported that in 2010, transwomen constituted 44 percent of murder victims within the LGBTQ2+ community within the United States (Thompson, 2011). The disproportionately high rates of violence and discrimination felt by transwomen in particular is a product of both transphobia and sexism, in which MTF transpeople are considered to be moving from the “superior” masculine gender identity to the “inferior” feminine one. As a consequence of this, they experience what is commonly referred to as transmisogyny: the negative attitudes, expressed through cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination that are directed towards transwomen and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum (Scersno, 2007).

¹⁰ Positioning social constructs of the body, like that of gender, race, class, sexuality, and so on, as conditions of the human body that maintain and reproduce hierarchies of power is more or less the argument Marx (1844/1978) presents in his essay *On The Jewish Question*. In this text, Marx (1844/1978) argues that political emancipation, for example, of a religious position, per se, logically recognizes and legitimatizes this “*unreal [and] imaginary form*” (p. 36) of the self which, in turn, recognizes and legitimatizes the relations of capital in which such forms are forged.

¹¹ Patriarchy is a macro social structure that refers to a political and economic system that disadvantages women and advantages men (Brym, 2014).

3.2 Gender Ideal Types and Gender Performativity

Max (2004) Weber's work largely reflects a critical rethinking of "Marx's" theory of historical materialism¹² that I believe allows me to more clearly address the growing tension that exists between gender expression and gender norms in contemporary North American society. Similar to Marx, Weber recognizes the significant role that historical context plays in helping to shape human consciousness and action (Weber, 2004). Weber, however, zealously investigates the symbolic patterns of a given society¹³ as they occur within a unique moment of history, and illustrates how these historically meaningful moments influence and inform social action. Social action occurs when a person attaches subjective, symbolic meanings to their actions with consideration of a real and/or "imaginary" social other (Weber, 2004, p. 327).¹⁴ Social action for Weber, in part, depends on one's interpretative understanding of ideal forms, or stereotypes¹⁵ of others and their behaviour, which he refers to as ideal types. Ideal types are pure constructs of

¹² In their section on Max Weber, Appelrouth and Edles (2008) in *Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory* provide a footnote that I find significant to note in my reading of Weber, in which they state "it is important to point out that Weber's critique of Marx was based more on secondary interpretations of Marx's work than on a thorough, first-hand encounter with his writings, as much of it was unavailable. In Weber's time and continuing today, Marx was (is) often miscast as an economic determinist by his followers and critics alike. Perhaps more accurately, then, Weber was responding to a "crude," reductionistic version of Marxism" (p. 147). Accordingly, as this is an observation I full heartedly agree with, I will not detail the ways in which Weber critiqued and differentiated from Marx, but instead, focus on the aspects of Weber's reading of historical materialism that were unique to his own work and draw on such elements to complement my own interpretation of Marx.

¹³ In concert with Appelrouth and Edles (2008) aforementioned footnote, I do not agree with Weber that Marx underestimates the role that ideologies, beliefs, and ideas play in influencing the development and transformation of the social world. However, I do believe it is fair to say that Weber's work, unlike Marx's, provides more of a detailed analysis of how ideas influence society and it is in this regard that I believe that his work provides a useful interpretation of the social that is not (completely) offered by Marx himself.

¹⁴ For example, a man in North America may consider wearing eye makeup, but then decide not to because he fears his friends, family, and coworkers, who would be considered examples of "real" social others, will tease him. He may also decide not to wear makeup because he has internalized the belief that make up should only be worn by girls and women, in which case he would be acting according to an imaginary social other. Notably, I understand the "imaginary social other" in this instance to be the ideal masculine figure – that imagine of what a "real" man ought to look like – that does not, and should not, wear makeup.

¹⁵ I am using stereotypes and ideal types as synonyms because ideal types are more or less stereotypes, without positive or negative connotations, in the sense that both concepts refer to ideas that are held as the standard, or the norm. In other words, ideal types and stereotypes are cognitive structures that we use to make sense of complex and diverse behaviours by making reference to generalizable standards and/or expectations of human action.

human behaviour that are constituted by a set of assumed hypotheses which indicate how individuals will likely act and/or ought to act in a given situation (Weber, 2004). These analytical categories of human behaviour provide a hypothetical guideline for real human action and everyday life to be examined against and understood (Weber, 2004). Moreover, Weber posits that what constitutes an ideal type depends on the socio-historical context in which such ideal forms of human action emerge.

Drawing on Weber's (2004) notion of ideal types, I maintain that masculinity and femininity are "pure" forms of gender consciousness. These "pure" categories of gender can be understood as the social constructs that detail the broad parameters within which the gender stereotypes of the gender binary ideology exist. We can think of ideal types as constructs that consist of a list of all the qualities associated with a given concept or idea and, when aggregated, these qualities constitute said concept in its "absolute" form (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008). Thinking of femininity and masculinity in this way, all qualities associated with the "feminine" body in North America, and all qualities associated with the "masculine" body, would constitute feminine and masculine ideal types, respectively. For example, some of the synonyms listed for "femininity" by thesaurus.com include: gentleness, womanhood, delicacy, docility, effeminateness, kindness, and softness.¹⁶ One could imagine such qualities appearing on the list of all feminine attributes in the cultural context of North America. If we refer to the "historical image" (Brym, 2014, p. 109) of the nuclear family unit and related gender roles, we could also add: domestic, consumer, weak, fragile, caregiver, wife, and mother. We could continue this procedure until all qualities, characteristics, ideas, beliefs, codes, mentalities, texts, behaviours, and actions that are associated with the North American construct of femininity are included.

¹⁶ Retrieved April 30th from <http://www.thesaurus.com/browse/femininity?s=t>.

A completed list of attributes could be used to construct an “ideal type” of femininity in North America. Additionally, we could perform the same procedure for the North American construct of masculinity¹⁷ until we ended up with two lists that would likely make up both gender ideal types in their entirety. Together, these lists would include all the gender norms, behaviours, expressions, roles, and beliefs that are known to the western world. In this example, femininity and masculinity would be considered analytical constructs of gender that would never be completely realized in the actions of actual people, but instead, would act as “conceptual yardsticks” against which the diverging and converging ways in which real people “perform” gender could be addressed (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008, p. 144). There would be no individual that had all feminine or masculine qualities, and it is probable that most, if not all, people would have qualities that fall under the categories of “femininity” *and* “masculinity.” However, when people identify individual actions, behaviours, and expressions as one, the other, neither, or both, they are referring to these absolute categories of gender in order to say, for example, wearing makeup is “feminine,” men are strong, boys like blue, and women wear pink.

Taking into account Weber’s concept of ideal types,¹⁸ we can argue that gender ideologies are forms of consciousness which allow us to make sense of, although not always effectively or morally, our own physical bodies using socially established meanings that are shared among members of a given society. It is from these pure types of gender that we can then understand the subjective meanings that complex and diverse people attribute to, and associate with, their own gender performativity (Weber, 2004).

¹⁷ Synonyms for “masculine” listed on thesaurus.com include: muscular, adult, ape, beefcake, bold, brave, caveman, gallant, hardy, hunk, jock, stallion, stud, courageous, hairy, honorable, potent, powerful, red-blooded, resolute, robust, strong, two-fisted, vigorous, and well-built. Retrieved on April 30th from <http://www.thesaurus.com/browse/masculine?s=t>.

¹⁸ It is important to note that Weber uses the concept of “ideal types” to refer to a pure form of social action, and not to refer to the best or perfect form of social action. In other words, ideal does not refer to a “perfect” state, but to a conceptual and impractical state that acts as a model to which real life experiences can be analysed against.

Gender performativity emphasizes the relationship between the individual meanings we attribute to our own gender expression or identity and the cultural context of said meaning within the heterosexual matrix of discourse. Similar to Weber, Butler investigates how human action converges and diverges with dominant ideologies and seeks to understand the relationship that exists between discourse or “ideas” and dominant patterns of individual action within social structures and/or institutions. However, only Weber identifies a historical context for social action, or for what Butler calls performativity. In contrast, Butler, at best, fails to acknowledge historical context, and at worse, treats gender especially and social knowledge more generally as “trans-historical.” I claim, however, that gender performativity can be understood as a historically contextualized type of social action, with Weber’s “ideal types” used to define the dominant gender scripts of femininity and masculinity within North America. These ideal types, moreover, function as, what Butler (1993) calls, the “regulatory norm” (p. xii) of gender. From this perspective, dominant gender ideologies would function to direct the gender socialization of individuals through habitual anticipatory socialization, which would ultimately determine and regulate how they “do gender.” These effects may be identified by the sociologist as being rooted in specific economic, cultural, historical, and/or social contexts that establish a shared sense of gendered meaning within a given society. At the micro level, individuals would refer to these established meaning contexts in order to identify and interpret their own gender and the gender of their peers (Weber, 2004).

Historical materialism provides a theoretical framework for understanding the emergence and maintenance of contemporary notions of femininity and masculinity by linking them to specific economic and material conditions of production. This perspective can shed light on why current understandings of femininity and masculinity exist as such and can help us detail how

and why we know ourselves as gendered subjects, as either “masculine” and/or “feminine,” and what that means. However, Marx’s historically materialist perspective does not express the micro dynamics of the social world which allows us to identify the meanings we attribute to our own gender expressions and/or gendered experiences. However, by linking social action to meaningful context, Weber (2004) allows for, in a manner Marx does not directly or clearly provide in his analysis, a way for one to discuss gender both as a social construct as well as an expression of individual subjective meaning.

Weber’s work then provides a two-way conceptual bridge linking the perspectives of Marx and Butler, while Butler, in addition, emphasizes the perpetual enactment of gender norms, based on cultural context in which she details how the reproduction of gender specifically occurs through and by the individual. Such a perspective complements Weber’s concepts of ideal types and social action, but expands on them by providing a specific analysis of gender that Weber does not provide. By bringing Weber, Marx, and Butler together, one can argue that: 1) cultural definitions of gender are reproduced when they are used to identify gendered bodies as such, but: 2) are also produced anew when individuals, who are diverse, complex, and self-conscious social actors, manage to recreate these gendered symbols through the unique articulations of their personal gender identity and expression; a process that: 3) is based on social and individual contexts of gender performativity which largely dictates and informs how individuals “do gender,” which is ultimately regulated and determined by the material conditions of a capitalist mode of production.

3.3 The Historical Emergence of the Gender Binary Ideology

Before I continue with my historical analysis of gender relations in North American capitalism, I think it is important to note that I will be focusing primarily on the reproductive and labouring practices of white, cis-straight, middle/upper class, native born women (and men). While I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter why I am doing this, for now it should be noted that in centralizing the white, middle/upper class female body, I am not promoting a practice of what cyberfeminists¹⁹ commonly identify as White Feminism.²⁰ I will in fact be focusing on the white bourgeois nuclear family unit and the gendered division of labour of industrial capitalism, but still, I think it would be inaccurate to say that in doing this I am promoting the same Eurocentric, race-blind, and class-biased mentalities that some of my Marxist feminist predecessors have been accused of.²¹ Instead, it would be more accurate to say that by focusing on the past experiences of white, middle/upper class women, I am recognizing that the dominant intellectual and material forces of North American capitalism have tended to recognize the white feminist figure as the only “legitimate” feminine gender body.²² In other

¹⁹ Cyberfeminism refers to modern feminist communities that use and/or are interested in cyberspace, the internet, and technology as a domain for socio-political action (Wajcmana, 2006).

²⁰ In her article "The Real Definition of a "White Feminist" published on the website *Feminist Culture*, Oyinkansola Sofela (2015) provides the following definition of White Feminism that I find very accurate and well put: “white feminism is not a branch of feminism based on your race, but rather how intersectional your outlook on gender equality is. The harsh truth is when some women think about equality, they think about equality for their race only. White feminists are an exclusive group of feminists in that they do not include women of color, queer women, or any other minority group of women in their talks of gender equality. They are only concerned about equality for white heterosexual women, hence the name white feminism.”

²¹ The most common criticism of Marxist Feminism, like that of Marxism as a whole, is that they focus too much on class. Other feminists, especially non-western feminists, have argued that the macro perspectives of second wave feminisms, like Marxist feminism or Radical feminism, often treat the public/private divide as absolute boundaries for understanding gender relationships, power dynamics, and gender-based experiences (Blunt and Rose, 1994). In turn, they argue that this ignores and obscures the experiences of women who do not fit within this model of gender relations (Blunt and Rose, 1994)

²² I think this is the point that Sojourner Truth (1851) illuminates in her well-known speech “But Ain’t I a Women?” The speech was delivered on 1851 at the Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio, and goes as follows: “Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what’s all this here talking about? That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to

words, black women, immigrant women, lower class women, Native American women, Aboriginal women, lesbian women, transwomen, bisexual women, and so on, have commonly been recognized, if recognized at all, as either “naturally” unfeminine or as less than human. I am not attempting to universalize the experiences of the white middle/upper class woman of the 19th century to obscure the experiences of other women, but instead, I am focusing on these experiences to recognize that the dominant gender relations of North American capitalism are themselves Eurocentric, class-biased, race-blind, heterosexist, and cis-normative.

Prior to the 19th century both production and consumption occurred predominately within the home. During this time, food and resources were grown within the homestead and the division of labour was constituted by the relationships between wives and husbands as well as parents and children (Allahar and Cote, 1998; Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Nelson, 2010). After the industrial revolution, however, the forces of production shifted from a primarily agricultural state to an industrialized one, which ended up pushing production outside of the home and into the form of industrial, and increasingly urbanized, private property (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Nelson, 2010). The separation of production and consumption into the public and private spheres, respectively, largely resulted in the public sphere being associated with production and

have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full? Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him. If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them. Obligated to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.”

the private sphere with consumption, which then prompted an emerging division between the two spheres (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Nelson, 2010).

Within capitalism, paid labour and its materialized, or transformed, form of “capital commodity” or “money commodity” is what is considered to be valuable, and formal practices of production are viewed as being more directly associated with the “legitimate” production of capital (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Arruzza, 2015, p. 39; Barret, 1988; Nelson, 2010). Segregating processes of production to the public sphere then had the effect of associating it with a sense of “value” and worth. In addition, the social domain constituted by consumption processes (the private sphere) became associated with an ethos of “valueless-ness” (Wilson, 1996; Zaretsky, 1976). The public sphere was more or less viewed as the place in which people performed labour and *actually* produced things that were considered valuable, while the domestic realm was viewed as the place in which people just “took” and were not seen as giving anything back to their society. In this instance, the unpaid labour that occurred within the private sphere was not considered to be “real” work, while paid labour was considered to be the only legitimate form of work (Wilson, 1996).

Women,²³ who occupied the private sphere, then became associated with consumer practices, while men, who occupied the public sphere, became associated with productive practices (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Nelson, 2010). The effects of this gendered division of labour were twofold: first, the characteristics of these social spaces, namely productive and consumer labour practices, which were associated with the public and private spheres,

²³ Here, I am not referring to all women, but to white, middle/upper class cis-straight, able-bodied, native born women whose experiences were wrongly universalized to encapsulate the experiences of “all” women in the form of gender stereotypes. Such stereotypes are invalid assumptions about the sexed body that were used and generalized by capitalists to support hegemonic gender relations and to maintain the existence of unequal class relations and gender hierarchies which, in part, allow for the production and reproduction of capital.

respectively, began to inform the socio-cultural understandings of the sexed bodies that predominately occupied them (Anderson and Hysock, 2011). Masculinity, for example, adopted characteristics that were associated with the valuable and “active” aspects of production and paid labour: men are producers, driven, dominant, strong, smart, assertive, and active (Nelson, 2010; Spade and Valentine, 2004). In contrast, femininity adopted characteristics that were associated with the “wasteful” and “passive” aspects of consumption and unpaid labour: women are docile, lesser, stupid, passive, submissive, weak, nurturing, and domestic (Fox, 1993). Second, and as a consequence of this, “femininity,” as the ideological expression of consumption, also became devalued.²⁴ In contrast, masculinity took on the social and cultural value that was assigned to productive processes (Allahar and Cote, 1998).

The industrial revolution, and the changing forces of production, produced a change in the division of labour in which the private and public spheres were increasingly separated from one another (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Nelson, 2010). As a consequence of this, a false²⁵ dichotomy was adopted by North American culture that characterized each domain as either production or consumption-based which in turn positioned productive and consumer practices as independent and opposing forces. Due to the gendered nature of each sphere, in which women, or white, straight cis-middle/upper class women, predominately worked within the home, and their male peers within the public sphere, women and men stereotypically became characterized by this same dichotomy. Masculinity became associated with processes of production, and as

²⁴ Notably, I am not arguing that gender inequality and the exploitation of women did not exist prior to the industrial revolution and that all gender inequality emerged after the 19th century. I am arguing, however, that the nature of oppression, marginalization, and/or discrimination that women face today did in fact emerge within this specific socio-historical context which transformed the previous dominant perceptions of masculinity and femininity, based on changes made to and within the forces and relations of production.

²⁵ Nelson (2006: 72), in paraphrasing Nett (1993), describes this “false” illusion that production and consumption are separate, by arguing that, instead, they could be viewed as “two overlapping circles: events in the workplace impact upon the life of the home place, while unpaid labour in the home provides crucial support for paid labourers in the work place and ‘makes industrial society possible’” (p. 51).

such was “valorized and glorified,” while femininity became associated with domesticity and, as a result, was “trivialized” (Nelson, 2010, p. 72).

The gender stereotypes I have outlined are what largely constitute the gender binary ideology of today’s culture and have been produced, reproduced, and produced anew across changing historical, social, cultural, and political contexts within North America since the industrial revolution. However, “chinks in the armour” of these stereotypes have begun to appear during 20th century capitalism. Socio-political conditions brought about by World War I, World War II, and the Great Depression created an economic state that demanded and desired women’s entry into the paid labour force (Nelson, 2010; Wolf, 2009). The conscription of the wars, for example, resulted in a shortage of male labour which increased the demand for female labourers within the public sphere (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Nelson, 2010). In addition, the ideology that motherhood was a characteristic of the private sphere generated the belief that one could not be both a mother as well as a wage labourer (Nelson, 2010). This belief was then used by employers during the Great Depression to justify and legitimize the lower wages that were awarded to married women and/or mothers (Nelson, 2010). Moreover, economic shifts, such as the de-stabilization of the Tripartite Model²⁶ of (white, male) employment, created “inflationary pressures” that now require families to acquire higher annual incomes (Marshall et al., 2009; Nelson, 2010, p. 214). This, in turn, placed more pressure on all men *and* women to go to work. As a result of such changes, the socio-cultural constraints that are placed on married women, especially those with children, are no longer all that effective when it comes to “keeping” women

²⁶ The Tripartite Model is a highly differentiated life course model that is constituted by the three trajectories of education, work, and retirement, which are differentiated by three major turning points: 1) transiting from the role of child to student, 2) from student to worker, and 3) from worker to retiree (Marshall et al., 2009).

in the home, since these women are both needed in as well as welcomed into the work sphere (Nelson, 2010).

While introducing white, middle/upper class cis-straight women into the paid labour market did help to dismantle the *traditional* gender division of labour,²⁷ the “available professions for women” at this time were still ideological extensions of the domestic sphere and expressions of “motherhood,” such as “teaching, social work, and nursing” (Nelson, 2010, p. 76). Similarly, women in today’s society are still over-represented in jobs associated with traditional feminine gender roles, such as the beauty industry, the service industry, and caregiving related jobs (Allahar and Cote, 1998). Some of the top ten most common jobs for Canadian women are registered nurse, secretary, elementary school teacher, receptionist, and retail trade manager (Brym 2014). Similarly, American women are most commonly employed in “health assessment and treating occupations,” and tend to be nurses, “teachers; and health services workers” (Andersen and Hysock, 2011, p. 338). All of these occupations are associated with the gender normative tasks that women ought to take care of and/or serve others.

Men are similarly more likely to be employed in jobs that are associated with traditional masculine gender roles; some of the top ten most common jobs for Canadian men are carpenter, truck driver, and retail trade manager (Brym, 2014). American men are also most likely to be employed as “engineers, judges and lawyers” and in “construction trades” (Andersen and Hysock, 2011, p. 338). All of these jobs invoke the gender stereotype that men are driven, independent and/or smart, and dominant/strong. So even though changes in the relations of production have dissolved the socio-cultural barriers that kept white, middle/upper class women

²⁷ Armstrong and Armstrong (1994), observe for example, that since 1942, women’s enrollment in paid labour has approximately tripled.

out of the paid labour force, which undermines the gender normative assumption that a women's place is only in the home, the traditional gender binary has not been entirely dismantled. It would be more accurate to say that the gender roles of the nuclear family unit have been reorganized in an effort to divide the *paid* labour of women and men along traditional gender lines. As a result, the gender stereotypes of the gender binary ideology appear to remain the dominant intellectual force of gender socialization in our society and, as such, function as the “regulatory norm” of gender (Butler, 1993, p. xii).

This phenomenon of segregating occupations based on sex-status²⁸ is one of the factors that contribute to the gender wage gap within current North America society. The gender wage gap refers to the fact that Canadian and American women, on average, make 65% and 79% of every male earned dollar, respectively (Brym, 2014, p. 168; IWPR, 2015). This is, in part, due to the fact that women are more likely to get degrees and jobs in “feminized” fields that are often paid less money (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007). These jobs are paid less because of the “societal devaluation of women's work” in North America, in which *women's* work, namely domestic labour, both paid and unpaid, is viewed as less valuable than “real” work, or “men's” work (Brym, 2014, p. 168).²⁹ In addition, women are still expected to be the primary caregivers of the household, and in order to negotiate the competing demands of family and work, women in the labour force today tend to work less hours than men. Moreover, although women's involvement in paid labour has nearly tripled since the 1950s, women more or less still spend the same

²⁸ This is referred to as “sex segregation,” or occupation segregation, which is the tendency to employ women in certain types of labour and men in others (Brym, 2014; McMullin, 2010).

²⁹ Women's higher tendency to go into “feminine” degrees and careers is largely attributable to effects of gender socialization which teaches men and women, often from a young age, that they ought to be interested in some things, and not interested in others, based on their gender (Brym, 2014, p. 57; Mackie, 1991).

amount of time performing unpaid labour, while the amount of hours men spend doing unpaid labour has only increased slightly (Allahar and Cote, 1998; Andersen and Hysock, 2011),

These changes have led to the coining, or popularization,³⁰ of the term “Double Shift,” which refers to the fact that women spend a lot more time doing unpaid labour in the household when compared to men, but still engage in a significant amount of paid labour (Brym, 2014). As a result, women essentially work two shifts a day, one shift in the public realm and one shift in the private. Women are therefore more likely to be employed in part-time work and/or in “non-standardized work” (p. 168) when compared to their male peers. Relative to “full-year, full-time jobs,” such precarious work is associated with lower pay, less job security, and less rewards and benefits (Brym, 2014, p. 168; McMullin, 2010). The segregation of women into undervalued and underpaid work has even prompted the use of the term “pink collar ghettos,” which describes the tendency of women to be employed in low or underpaid jobs that are high demand and low reward (England, 1993). We see that North American culture still draws on the gender stereotypes of the 19th century nuclear family unit to first pressure women into engaging in more family responsibilities, which impedes their ability to perform paid labour, and second, to segregate them into lower paying jobs associated with “domesticity.” These jobs are only devalued in the first place, however, because of the gender binary ideology of North American culture which promotes the devaluation of women and “women’s work.”

The gendered division of labour of the early 19th century transformed from an economic division between paid and unpaid labour which physically segregated gendered bodies into different and separate spheres, work vs. home, into a “regulatory norm” of gendered discourse

³⁰ Notably, working class and racialized women have always worked what we identify today as the “double shift,” and although the term became more popular when it pertained to the experiences of white, middle/upper class women, it was nonetheless the reality for many women prior to the 1950s (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).

(Butler, 1993, p. xii).³¹ Despite the fact that the breadwinner model of the white middle class family unit no longer exists in its original form, men and women are still taught beliefs about their bodies and behaviours that correspond with the traditional gender stereotypes of the 19th century nuclear family unit. Additionally, paid labour is now valued and perceived according to the gendered bodies that occupy a given field as well as the gender norms that are associated with the work that they perform. Because of the reproduction of the “historical image” of 19th century white middle/upper class gender and family relations, “feminized” labour in today’s society is still devalued and women and men are still taught to behave in gender normative ways (McMullin, 2010). As a consequence of this, the gender stereotypes associated with the nuclear family unit of industrial capitalism are reproduced and produced anew within contemporary North American society.

3.4 The Gender Binary Ideology in Today’s Culture

Despite the increase in women’s social, political, and economic rights and freedoms in North America, the reproduction of the traditional gender binary allows for the continued devaluation of women socially and culturally. This, in turn, produces and reproduces a “reserve army of labour” for the owners of production because the social and cultural devaluation of women provides an ideological justification for their increased exploitation when compared to

³¹ For example, the media is a well-known source for reproducing dominant gender stereotypes, gender roles, and gender norms. For instance, Gooden and Gooden (2001) analysed 83 well known children’s books over the last 30 years and found that girls and boys are still largely depicted based on traditional gender stereotypes. Moreover, research suggests that media advertisements that target men use the “ideal women,” submissive, sexually objectifiable women who fit within social standards of beauty, as a “status symbol” that may be obtained if the given product is purchased (Baker, 2005; Hazell and Clarke, 2008, p. 3). Advertisements that target women, however, use the “ideal man,” strong, dominant, handsome, and successful, as a “role model” who inspires women to buy a given product in order to become “closer to the ideal woman,” which will then make them more attractive to the ideal man. In this instance, women and men are not only represented in a gender stereotypical fashion, but these stereotypes: 1) are marketed in a way that promotes heteronormativity (products are appealing because they attract the opposite sex) and: 2) infer that women function as objects that men can use as currency in gaining social status, while also teaching women to regulate their own behaviours and appearance for the sole purpose of attracting the “perfect” man.

their male peers. For example, in 2003 in Canada, women employed in full-time year-long work still made 71 percent to every male earn dollar across all levels of education (Statistics Canada 2003). Relative to their male peers, women dentists reported earning, on average, 37% less, while senior female managers reported earning 40% less (Brym, 2014, p. 165). Similarly, across 12 different occupations in the United States, the weekly income of white, African American, and Hispanic women was notably lower than their male peers in all categories, with some exceptions (Andersen and Hysock, 2011, p. 339).³² For example, the median weekly income for white women employed in executive, administrative, and managerial positions was \$345 less than their male counterparts, while black women in the same jobs made \$1,185 less than their male peers. Black women employed in sales, retail, and personal occupations also made 34% less than black men, while Hispanic women in the same occupations made 20% less than their male peers. Hispanic women employed in both health diagnosing occupations as well as in sales representation (besides retail) also made \$255 and \$193 less than their male counterparts, respectively (Andersen and Hysock, 2011, p. 339).

In addition, there are clearly unequal power dynamics that exist between women and men who are employed in similar jobs as well. For example, 25 percent of Canadian women identified themselves as supervisors versus 40 percent of men (Brym, 2014, p. 165). Canadian and American male supervisors are also more likely than their female peers to be employed at the highest levels of an organization and to report having an active role in the decision making processes of the company (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). These statistics are associated with the concept of the “glass ceiling” which speaks to the invisible walls that women face in their

³² Black female engineers, lawyers, and judges actually make more money than their male counterparts, with the difference being more pronounced for engineers. Moreover, Hispanic men and women employed in construction trade jobs make the same weekly annual income as one another, while Hispanic men employed in health service jobs only make slightly more than their female peers (Andersen and Hysock, 2011, p. 339).

attempts to enter the top positions of a given company (Brym, 2014). Organizing paid labour in such a manner invokes traditional gender roles because it alludes to the commonplace idea in North American society that women ought to be submissive to men, who are dominant and superior.

Not surprisingly, research suggests that women in Canada and America have higher rates of poverty when compared to men, especially African American or black women and Aboriginal or Native American women (Ezeala-Harrison, 2010; McMullin, 2010). In Canada, for example, women tend to be the ones who live in poverty or who constitute the lower working class (McMullin, 2010). The phenomenon in which women have disproportionately high rates of poverty is often referred to as the feminization of poverty.³³ This phenomenon is a consequence of both systemic sexism and discrimination as well as an effect of pink ghettos. Due to the precarious nature of their labour, women are more likely than their male peers to be dependent on both underpaid labour as well as on the state (McMullin, 2010). Because women live in a normalized state of relative poverty and/or underemployment, they are more likely to accept lower wages because they lack fair and equal opportunities in the labour market. Moreover, women tend to be paid less because of their actual or perceived ties to the private sphere (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).³⁴ Both factors increase the surplus value of women's labour overall.

³³Ezeala-Harrison (2010) defines the feminization of poverty as “the condition in which the percentage of females living in poverty relative to the composition of females in the population, is disproportionately higher than that of males, and consistently so over time” (p. 15). The term “pink ghettos” is also sometimes used to refer to the relatively high rates of poverty that are documented within the female population.

³⁴ Women are often discriminated against by employers because they fear that women will either become pregnant (and go on maternity leave which is costly and timely), or that they have existing children who will impede on their ability to do their job (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). For example, some lesbian women have higher levels of income compared to straight women, because pregnancy and childcare are not viewed as being as much of a concern with women who are attracted to the same sex and/or gender (Waite and Denier, 2015).

The benefits reaped from gender-based exploitation not only ensure the need to reproduce sexism or female-based gender inequality, but the cultural need for homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia in an effort to discourage individuals from identifying with gender, and/or expressing gender, in a manner that disrupts the gender binary ideology. Since dominant gender roles and norms tend to operate under the assumption that people ought to only be attracted to the “opposite” sex and gender, members of the LGBT2Q+ population are commonly perceived, labelled, and treated as “deviants.”³⁵ Accordingly, multiple institutions, legal, educational, medical, and so on, often treat LGBTQ2+ people as if they were different, abnormal, and/or not “complete,” or respectable, citizens. Examples of this include the World Health Organization’s “logic” to currently classify transsexualism as a type of mental illness and to classify homosexuality as a mental illness until 1990 (Brym, 2014; WHO, 2011). Another example of the dehumanization and marginalization of the LGBTQ2+ community in institutions is the covert and overt forms of discrimination LGBTQ2+ people face in academic settings and the failure of existing institutional action, or lack thereof, to address such concerns (Bilimoria and Stewart, 2009). A third example of LGBT-based discrimination in institutions is that hate crimes which target members of the LGBTQ2+ community are thought to be one of the most underreported and under-documented types of crimes, and it is not uncommon for the perpetrators of these crimes to face no legal repercussions (ODIHR, 2006). Additionally, homophobic and transphobic related crimes tend to involve an unprecedented degree of aggression and maliciousness, in which victims commonly endure “severe beatings, torture, mutilation, castration, [and] even sexual assault. They are also very likely to result in death” (ODIHR, 2006, p. 24).

³⁵ Deviance refers to any action that breaks or violates a social norm. Therefore, if heteronormativity and cisnormativity are the norms, then all non-heterosexuals and non-cis people would be considered deviants by North American socio-cultural standards (Brym, 2014, p. 79).

While the aforementioned examples are only some of many that demonstrate the discrimination and marginalization that LGBTQ2+ people face in North America, they are all examples of how the ideology of cis-heterosexuality is institutionalized. Labelling homosexuality in the past, and transsexualism in the present, as a type of mental disorder, promotes the stigmatization of LGBTQ2+ people as “sick.” This is a perspective that fails to recognize that if North American culture did not define femininity and masculinity in such a static and finite way, then those who exist outside of the gender binary would not be considered different in the first place (Eichler, 1980). Similarly, the lack of institutional action that exists to address either overt or covert forms of discrimination faced by LGBTQ2+ people within the educational system, or otherwise, only serves to normalize such discrimination which inevitably advances both compulsory heterosexuality³⁶ as well as cis-normativity. Lastly, the lack of institutional action aimed at minimizing the disproportional amount to which LGBTQ2+ people experience hate crimes; the lack of prosecution often faced by the perpetrators of such crimes; and the lack of efforts to fix these problems, only serves to normalize transphobia, trans-misogyny, homophobia, and biphobia. Moreover, it normalizes the most violent and hateful forms of such bigotry. This provides a constant source of threat to LGBTQ2+ people which essentially establishes that stepping outside of the cis-heterosexual categories of the gender binary can result in serious, life threatening consequences.

The continued marginalization, stigmatization, and discrimination of gender and sexual minorities in any institution merely “gives a green light” to the social, political, and legal restrictions and regulations placed on the LGBTQ2+ community at large (Wolf, 2009, p. 71). Moreover, it also protects and normalizes LGBT hate and anti-LGBT bigotry which minimalizes

³⁶ Compulsory heterosexuality refers to the tendency of people to automatically assume that individuals ought to only be attracted to the opposite sex (Brym, 2014).

the likelihood that people will deviate from the gender binary ideology, which would threaten to undermine the cis-heterosexual scripts that constitute it. In addition, the failure of legal institutions to properly address how cis-heteronormativity hinders the lives of LGBTQ2+ people not only has the same negative effects of blatant trans/homo/biphobic policies and laws, but it also serves to normalize and promote ignorance of such discrimination. This makes it more difficult to identify and address the many forms of oppression that LGBTQ2+ people face. This, in turn, promotes gender/sexual non-conforming discrimination and de-legitimizes challenges to hegemonic gender norms, since the quality and quantity of LGBT oppression is either ignored or largely downplayed in public discourses. In both cases, the normalization of LGBTQ2+ discrimination (or the lack of recognition given to it) supports the maintenance of hegemonic cis-heterosexual gender ideal types. It is, therefore, my contention that gender ideologies, including those which marginalize LGBTQ2+ people; ensure the reproduction of “the circuits of capital and their unity” across changing historical and social contexts of capitalist production (Arruzza, 2015, p. 39).

3.5 Gender Ideologies and Gender Performativity

Changes in the relations of production have resulted in gender identities and expressions increasingly moving across, in between, and/or outside of the gender ideal types of North American society. Gender performativities within today’s society commonly contradict, either completely or partially, the hegemonic ideologies that they cite. This is due to incompatible ideologies that coexist within the superstructure of North American culture, contributing to an emerging tension between the forces and relations of production. On the one hand, economic shifts have made women’s participation in the paid labour force a necessary aspect of the

economy, while the feminist movement has largely democratized women's rights in the first world.³⁷ On the other hand, dominant gender ideologies are still based on the cis-heterosexual, as well as Eurocentric, race-blind, and class-biased, historical image of the nuclear family unit and its corresponding traditional gender roles, both of which function to reproduce "the circuits of capital in their unity" by representing women as domestic servants and secondary citizens (Arruzza, 2015, p. 39). The tension is, therefore, that we are taught that "women are people too," who have the same legal and political rights as men (besides Aboriginal and Native American women), while also being taught through social and cultural platforms that "woman" is synonymous with "the lesser;" that we are inferior, valueless, and that we only exist as secondary to, and as a function for, men. We *legally* let women be CEO's, get abortions, have casual sex, be childless, and sleep with other women, while simultaneously telling them that they should not do these things, and when they do, we call them bitches, deviants, sluts, spinsters, and dykes.

Likely in concert with women's increased economic freedom, groups of radical feminists began to form during the mid-1960s/late 1970s and this development had a profound effect on the body rights of women (Nelson, 2010; Andersen and Hysock, 2011). This, in turn, had an

³⁷ I think it is first important to note here that even though I am claiming that women's rights have been largely recognized and established through legal institutions and sanctions, it is still the case that the degree to which these rights are actually respected and these laws implemented is often uninspired. For example, while sexual assault and rape are illegal, crimes that predominately affect women and girls, only 6% of rapists go to prison in the United States (RAINN, 2009). Similarly, only 6% of every 100 incidents of sexual assault in Canada are reported to the police (SexAssault.ca). Second, the rights of aboriginal women and Native American women have largely not been "democratized" in any sense of the word, as there are still multiple legal, political, cultural, and social structures in place that deny the rights of such women (Kubik, et al., 2006). This is reflected by the fact that aboriginal and Native American women and girls are disadvantaged in almost all social arenas when compared to their non-Native American and non-Aboriginal peers. For example, 57% of aboriginal women have been sexually abused in their life time in Canada (SexAssault.ca). In 2006, 28% and 32% of Inuit and Nunangat women and girls lived in a house that required major repairs, respectively, relative to only 7% of non-Aboriginal women and girls in Canada (O'Donnell and Wallace, 2009). As of 2010, 582 known cases were documented in which Aboriginal women went missing or murdered in Canada (Canada Women's Foundation). In the United States, 27% of Native American women and 53% of Native American female-headed households lived in poverty (Robbins and Morrison, 2014). In addition, "34% or more than one in three Native women will be raped during their lifetime, whereas for women as a whole the risk is less than one in five" (Tjaden and Thonennes, 2000).

effect on the reproductive practices of the family unit, or at least on the gender norms that are associated with reproduction practices. Radical feminists see patriarchy as the root cause for all gender inequality, independent of capitalism (McMullin, 2010). They maintain that as long as we live in a society that links the value, or lack thereof, of women to the “reproductive differences” between men and women, that gender equality will never actually exist (Nelson, 2010, p. 89). Likewise, radical feminists were among the first feminist groups to identify women’s reproductive and contraceptive rights as feminist issues. Radical feminists fought for a women’s right to an abortion, to express and experience sexuality in whatever manner they saw fit, to access reproductive technologies, and to be protected against sexual and/or physical assault and violence (Nelson, 2010). This led to an increase in the reproductive rights awarded to women in North America. For example, abortion was legalized in the late 1960s in Canada and in the early 1970s in America as was the legalization of birth control in the early 1960s for Canadian women and in the 1960s/70s for American women (Engelman, 2001; Nelson, 2010).

Granting women reproductive and contraceptive rights recognizes that a woman has a right to her own body and that she is not the property of her husband (McMullin, 2010). Providing women with sexual and reproductive freedom challenges the notion that a women’s sole purpose is to reproduce children. These developments threaten to undermine the existence of absolute paternity which ensures the reproduction of class relations. It is therefore not surprising that women’s sexuality has largely been regulated and undermined by the state throughout North American history even after the above changes made by radical feminists. For example, while birth control pills were available in the 1960s in Canada, access to them, granted by mostly male doctors, was initially restricted to those who used them for “therapeutic use,” namely regulating

one's menstruation cycle (Nelson, 2010, p. 79). Similarly, in America, twenty six states prohibited the use of birth control for unmarried women until 1965 (Thompson, 2013).

There have also been attempts to limit access to medically safe abortions, such as the Canadian Bill C-484: The Unborn Victims of Crime Act, and the American Public Law 108 – 212: The Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004. The main intention of both bills is to recognize the fetus as a legal victim and to “criminalize any act intended to ‘injure, cause the death of or attempt to cause the death of a child before or during its birth while committing or attempting to commit an offense against the mother’” (McMullin, 2010, p. 317). While these bills exempt “voluntary abortion,” they function to provide a separate legal status for the unborn fetus, which challenges a woman's right to an abortion by questioning her right to choose (McMullin, 2010, p. 317). Moreover, many feminist activists have argued that these bills serve to police and regulate the bodies of pregnant women. The notion of “fetal rights” as well as the idea that a state can and should put regulations and guidelines on the bodies of women merely reflects joint efforts to maintain and reproduce traditional gender roles (McMullin, 2010). Such regulations appear to stem from the belief that women should only engage in sexual activity for reproductive purposes and that, as secondary citizens, their bodies are essentially publically regulated property.

In contrast to the above, it is also the case that both women's involvement in paid labour as well as the increased recognition of body rights awarded to women over time, have allowed women to claim increasing political and legal rights as independent, free persons of the state. For example, women's involvement in paid labour made it so that women were no longer solely dependent on a male provider to generate an income. Accordingly, in the last few decades we

have seen a significant increase in divorce rates and the appearance of other family structures besides marriage, such as common law, lone-parent homes, and one person households (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2006). In concert with this, we have also seen a decrease in the number of married couples in North America (Statistics Canada, 2006). This rise of “non-normative” family structures, coupled with the fall of the “traditional” family unit, threatens to undermine the dominant status of the nuclear family by diversifying the nature of family relations in North American society. In addition, providing women with contraceptive and reproductive rights recognizes that a woman has a right to her own body; that a woman’s sexuality is not solely tied to the reproduction of the nuclear family unit; and that women’s rights are human rights. This also undermines the normative status of the nuclear family unit by undermining the gender roles that constitute it.

All of these changes are tied to white women’s changing roles in the relations of production and their inclusion in the public sphere of paid labour. This increasing economic freedom of women, in part, has to some extent dismantled the traditional gendered division of labour that deemed them inferior to men. This has awarded women more agency in demanding social and cultural freedoms and rights by altering the material and economic conditions that sexist gender stereotypes were derived from. In turn, the increasing socio-cultural rights awarded to women serves to further undermine the gender binary ideology because it sets a precedent for women and men alike to challenge and problematize prevailing gender norms and roles. These changes have now resulted in a decline in the nuclear family unit, while effectively undermining the potency of the gender roles that constitute it, which has subsequently blurred the socio-cultural boundaries placed on women and men. By destabilizing the gendered division of labour, and to some extent its political and legal expressions, social bodies’ have increasingly been

allowed greater movement across gender ideal types which allows for greater flexibility in gender performativity, or in expressions of gendered social action.

Accordingly, those who exist outside of the gender binary are gaining more rights in North American society. Not surprisingly, the increased rights of LGBTQ2+ people largely corresponded with the increase of women's rights during the 1960s, and were notably inspired and influenced by the black rights movements of the time as well (Wolf, 2009). Groups such as the Mattachine Society, the Student Homophile League, the East Coast Homophile Organization (ECHO), and Vangaurd emerged in the early to late 1960s and were all aimed at increasing LGBT equality (Wolf, 2009, p. 118 – 119). However, these groups were small, and it was not until the Stonewall Riots of 1969³⁸ that the gay rights movement really began to gain traction. “Stonewall was the eruption after twenty years of trickling progress by small handfuls of men and women,” Wolf writes, for example, “whose conscious organizing gave way to the spontaneous wave of fury” (p. 126). These riots were followed by the emergence and/or revamping of LGBTQ2+ rights organizations that transformed the blatant outrage of Stonewall into a “social force” with an established political and social agenda. Organizations such as the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and Gay Alliance Toward Equality (GATE) emerged which, unlike many pre-Stonewall Riot groups, were aimed at dismantling systems of oppression, even including non-LGBT-based oppressions (Jackson and Persky, 1982; Wolf, 2009, p. 126 – 129).

The emergence of such groups resulted in many legal, political, and social rights being awarded to LGBTQ2+ people, such as the removal of homosexuality from the conditions of mental illness provided by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973 (Wolf, 2009). Also in

³⁸ The Stonewall riots were a collection of passionate and aggressive demonstrations that were performed by the LGBTQ2+ community which were enacted after a police raid that took place on June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn, located in the Greenwich Village (Wolf, 2009).

1973, a campaign led by GATE lobbied the City Council of Toronto to implement a public policy that disallowed employers to discriminate against workers on the basis of their sexual orientation in municipal hiring practices, while the Ottawa City Council passed this same motion in 1976 (Jackson and Persky, 1982; Manon, 2015). In addition, in 1977, the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms was amended to prohibit sexuality-based discrimination (Publications Quebec, 2016). Similarly, in 1975 the first federal gay rights bill was introduced in the United States that addressed discrimination, based on sexual orientation (CNN, 2016). In 1974, Kathy Kozachenko became the first openly gay or lesbian person in America to be elected to any public office, while Elaine Noble was the first openly gay or lesbian candidate elected to a state office (CNN, 2016). In Canada in 1975, Maurice Richard, who was one of Canada's first openly gay politicians, was elected mayor of Bécancour, Quebec, while in the United States Harvey Milk become the first openly gay man to be elected to a political office in California in 1978 (CNN, 2016).

Such historical changes arguably set the groundwork for the increase of LGBT-based activism that we see in today's society. For example, in Canada there are various and diverse LGBT political advocacy groups, such as Canadians for Equal Marriage, Foundation for Equal Families, the Iranian Queer Organization, Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees, the Lambda Foundation, and many more. There is also an extensive and long list of similar organizations in the United States, some of which include: Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE), Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), and the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays. Additionally, Canadian and American LGBTQ2+ people in contemporary North America enjoy far more rights and freedoms than their counterparts of the past. For example, same-sex marriage and the

adoption of children by same-sex married couples were both legalized in 2015 in the United States. Same sex marriage has been legal in Canada since 2005, while protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is explicitly covered by Human Rights Acts across Canada (Human Rights Act, 2002). Human right laws also protect against discrimination on the basis of disability, including those who have AIDs and/or are HIV positive, while many Canadian human rights laws protect against discrimination on the basis of one's gender identity (Giovanneti 2015; Human Rights Acts, 1989; Manitoba Legislative Assembly, 2012; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2012; Salerno, 2013).³⁹ In 2011 the "don't ask, don't tell policy" of the American Military was revoked, and homosexuals, lesbians, and bisexuals are now allowed to serve openly,⁴⁰ while in 2015, the Military Equal Opportunity policy was changed to include gay and lesbian military members (CNN, 2016). Lastly, the Boy Scouts of America's national executive board ratified a resolution to remove the restriction on openly employing gay leaders and workers in 2015 (CNN, 2016)

In addition to major historical and political shifts pertaining to gender and sexual minorities, we see the increased cultural representation of LGBTQ2+ people in popular North American television shows, such as in the Ellen Degeneres show, Modern Family, Sense8, Pretty Little Littles, Orphan Black, American Horror Story, Rupaul's Drag Race, and Transparent.⁴¹ All

³⁹ Protection for individuals on the basis of their gender identity is only clearly stated in the Northwest Territories, Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island and Alberta.

⁴⁰ Transgender people are still banned from serving openly, since gender identity disorder is considered to be a medical condition that allows for one to be disqualified from the military (Brydum, 2012).

⁴¹ Other well-known Canadian, American, and British Television shows (most of which have been introduced to a significant North American-based audience) that have either a main or a returning lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and/or gay character or actor on it are: Sherlock (British), How I met your Mother (American), Olympus (Canadian and British), Lip Service (British), Skins (British), House of Cards (American), Degrassi Next Class and The Next Generation (Canadian), Prison Break (American), Shadowhunters (America), Roseanne (American), Heroes (American), Glee (American), Superjail (American), Nip/Tuck (American), House, M.D. (American), True Blood (American), Doctor Who (British), My Fabulous Gay Wedding (Canadian), Shameless (American remake), Bomb Girls (Canadian), Sons of Anarchy (American), America's Next Top Model (American), Big Brother (Canada and America), Bones (American), The L word (American/Canadian), The Walking Dead (American), 1 Girl 5 Gays

of these programs have main characters that are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and/or Transgender and/or employ or centralize actors or people that are a part of the LGBTQ2+ community. Moreover, popular LGBT icons and shows, such as African-Canadian Gary Levy, the 2014 runner up for Big Brother Canada, and the diverse cast of the popular NETFLIX series *Orange is the New Black*, indicate that LGBT representation in the last few years has become increasing intersectional. We also see a major social shift in LGBTQ2+ rights, as Pride Parades⁴² are now a global phenomenon. Pride Parades take place in over 30 countries across the world, including the United States and Canada, as well as in other countries such as Hong Kong, Israel, Serbia, Uganda, Austria, and many more (Belgrade Pride, 2016; Hong Kong Pride Parade, 2015; Okeowo, 2006; Urban Travel Blog, 2012). These social, cultural, and political changes represent the increased emergence of LGBT right advocates that identify, respect, and fight for forms of gender and sexual expression that diverge from dominant gender and sexual norms.

These shifts reflect historical changes that largely resulted from women and LGBT rights groups that challenged cis-heteronormative and sexist assumptions about the gendered body. In addition, these changes allowed for the increased socio-cultural recognition of LGBTQ2+ people which, in turn, threatens to undermine the importance, significance, and validity of traditional gender norms and roles upheld by current North American society. Like the increase of women's rights, these changes are tied to the economic and material dismantlement of the traditional gendered division of labour. As previously stated, awarding women increasing social, cultural, economic, and political rights undermines the traditional gender norms and roles that constitute the nuclear family unit, the mechanism by which the heterosexual matrix operates.

(Canadian), *The Fosters* (American), *Xena: Warrior Princess* (American), *Under The Dome* (American), *ER* (American), and *Lost Girl* (Canadian).

⁴² Pride Parades are events that celebrate LGBT culture and LGBTQ2+ individuals and often take place in June in order to commemorate the Stonewall Riots (Bianca, 2014).

The above gains achieved by gender and sexual minorities have resulted in a decline of the nuclear family structure and corresponding gender roles, while also undermining the relevance and potency of the ideologies that serve to uphold the nuclear family unit, such as transphobia or homophobia. In de-stabilizing the traditional gender roles of men and women, the cultural boundaries placed on gendered bodies have become blurred. This not only problematizes the normative status of the nuclear family unit, by resulting in its literal and ideological decline, but in doing so, it also provides people with “legitimate” economic and material conditions to express their genders and sexualities in non-normative ways. Allowing people greater flexibility in gender performativity, to some extent, de-normalizes cis-heterosexuality, which contributes, to a limited extent, to the de-stigmatization of LGBTQ2+ people. This, in turn, has made possible the increasing rights awarded to LGBTQ2+ people, which will only further undermine the gender binary ideology.

3.6 Conclusion: LGBT Rights vs. Capitalism

While the gendered division of labour has more or less dissolved, the relations of capitalist production have still nevertheless tried to maintain the aforementioned ideal gender categories which constitute the traditional gender binary. An investment in this ideology persists because, as previously outlined, it ensures the reproduction of surplus value and its source, namely class and gender hierarchies that reproduce class and gender-based exploitation. In addition, men and women are still defined on a macro level, based on their supposedly “innate” connection to production and domestic processes, respectively. In other words, the gender binary ideology invokes an essentialist viewpoint of gender which maintains that differences in the gender and sexual scripts placed on men and women are “natural and universal” (Brym, 2014, p.

87). The reproduction of the gender binary ideology therefore contributes to the maintenance and reproduction of domestic and productive labour practices that benefit capital by suggesting that these practices are biologically determined by one's sex and are, therefore, unchangeable and unavoidable.

As a result, unpaid labour is not only viewed as an “innate” aspect of womanliness and motherhood, which ensures that women will socialize the next generation of workers for free, but paid labour is also viewed as an “innate” aspect of manliness and fatherhood. This reproduces the relations of capital at the micro level because men feel pressured to engage in paid labour as a function of their “manhood.” For example, Good et. al. (2000) found that cultural messages in North America that are directed at men largely include the ideas that men should “be competitive and successful...aggressive, fearless, and invulnerable...independent” (Nelson, 2010, p. 378). Culturally assigning these attributes to men supports the idea of the male “provider” that is associated with the nuclear family unit. Similar to the socio-cultural pressures placed on women to become mothers and wives, this mentality ensures that men and women not only need to work within capitalism in order to stay alive, but it also ensures that men will want to work, and will work hard, in order to “prove” themselves as fathers, as husbands, and, ultimately, as men.

Changes in the gendered division of labour, however, have allowed for the increase of women's and LGBT rights and recognition. This threatens the capitalist forces of production which still promote the gender binary ideology, which devalues women and excludes LGBTQ2+ people. In other words, the socio-cultural presence of the traditional gender binary, in contemporary society, is being threatened by changes occurring within capitalism's relations of production and in the political, cultural, and social structures they encourage.

Using this chapter as a template, the following chapter will outline the emergence of the queer figure. First I will define what is meant by a socially queer body and outline the types of gender and sexual identities that are considered to be queer. Additionally, I will argue that those who are considered to be sexually and gender “queer” are problematic for the maintenance and reproduction of the relations of capital and detail why. Second, I will outline some of the ways in which capitalism has attempted to transform the LGBT rights movement and explain how capitalist’s efforts to revamp the Gay Liberation Movement reflect the current tension between the relations and forces of production. I will conclude by arguing that there is an emerging crisis of anomie with regards to the dominant gender scripts of contemporary North American society which, in turn, can be traced to changes in the relations of production. As a result, North American capitalism provides the material and economic conditions for men and women to express their genders and sexualities in non-normative ways, while still enforcing cis-heterosexual gender norms that support LGBT marginalization.

Chapter 4

“The patriarchal/kyriarchal/hegemonic culture seeks to regulate and control the body – especially women’s bodies, and especially black women’s bodies – because women, especially black women, are constructed as the Other, the site of resistance to the kyriarchy. Because our existence provokes fear of the Other, fear of wildness, fear of sexuality, fear of letting go – our bodies and our hair (traditionally hair is a source of magical power) must be controlled, groomed, reduced, covered, suppressed.”

-Yvonne Aburrow¹

4.1 Queer Marxism is not White Feminism

If religion is the opium of the masses,² then identity politics³ are our steroids. Identity politics create an energetic hostility and aggression between groups of people who would otherwise find a common ground for solidarity. Queer Marxism works towards reclaiming this potential for solidarity among the exploited and marginalized people of North American capitalism by drawing on the revolutionary and inevitably intersectional power of the queer subject. The main objective of Queer Marxism is to investigate the emergence and effect of the queer subject within North American society, an effect that, I believe, will threaten the stability of its capitalist infrastructure. While I am specifically interested in how LGBT2Q+ people *queer* the gender normative assumptions that support the reproduction of capital, the queer figure can refer to any *body* that exists in between or outside of the relations of domination and subordination that support capitalism. In this regard then, the “queer” subject, the in-between or ambiguous subject, is what is most relevant to a Queer Marxist perspective.

¹ Retrieved from <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/intersectionality> on June 26, 2016.

² This is a famous paraphrase from Marx’s essay “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right” in which he states (1843- 44): “Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.”

³ The term “identity politics” speaks to the tendency of some activist groups to organize their political and social agenda around the concerns of only one historically disadvantaged “class” (Balfour, 2005).

In the last chapter, I focused my attention on the role that the gendered division of labour within the “traditional” nuclear family unit played in the historical emergence of contemporary gender ideologies. While this division of labour only really existed for white, middle/upper class married men and women, ideologies themselves are socially orientated belief systems that often *distort* reality in order to justify the status quo and to legitimize the power and wealth of “elite” groups (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). In concert with this, I maintain that the transformation of gender ideologies during the industrial revolution manufactured new gender norms and ideas that benefited the dominant material force and the ruling class. The gender ideologies I outlined in the last chapter would therefore not necessarily reflect the actual realities of gendered subjects, but instead, simply demonstrate how the transition from a home-based economy to an industrialized one prompted the socio-cultural transformation of the *ideological* definitions of manhood and womanhood in North America (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).

I have assumed that these ideological definitions, these ideal types, are constituted by beliefs that are associated with the gender normative roles of white, middle/upper class women and men during the 19th century. However, these gender ideologies inappropriately universalize a white “standard,” and in doing so, they provide *false* representations of gendered bodies and regulate gender performativity based on gender belief systems that have strong Eurocentric, racist, cis-heterosexual, and classist undertones. Instead of simply universalizing the validity of these false representations like white feminists often do, I want to understand how it is that people perform and/or evaluate gender, based on these false representations, why it is the case that gender performativity is regulated by an outdated, Eurocentric, classist, and race-biased historical image of gender and family structures, and what affect this has on the gendered social actions of individuals.

Many white feminists⁴ have argued that sexism is an ideology that supports the interests of men and/or capitalists by falsely representing men as superior to women (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).⁵ This in turn justifies the “traditional statuses” of women and men that support male and/or class-based hegemony (Andersen and Hysock, 2011, p. 75; McMullin, 2010; Mitchell, 1971; Nelson, 2010, p. 86 – 90; Wilson, 1996). While I, in part, agree with this claim, I also believe that by treating white genderism⁶ as the norm, femininity and masculinity have come to falsely represent the gendered body altogether. By falsely representing gender, based on the experiences of the white and the wealthy, capitalists are able to justify as well as enforce the gender “traditional statuses” of the elite as *the* norm – that is, as the “regulatory norm” (Butler, 1993, p. xii). This obscures the experiences of persons that exist outside of, in contradiction to, or as different from, the breadwinner model of the nuclear family unit, whether these differences are based on one’s sexual orientation or racial identity.⁷ In turn, these individuals are marginalized, in part, for deviating from the gender normative roles and behaviours that are deemed appropriate for North American society.

Just as hegemonic gender norms invoke dominant and subordinate relations that exist between women and men, hegemonic white femininity invokes dominant and subordinate

⁴Aezu Merali (2006) also refers to these types of feminist practices as “universal feminisms” (p. 185).

⁵ Notably, this proposition is not inaccurate in and of itself, but is inadequate in so far as it does not expand on an analysis of sexism to include complementary forms of discrimination like homophobia or racism, therefore obscuring the experiences of many women in North America.

⁶ Because the gender binary ideology is based on the nuclear family unit, and is therefore inherently Eurocentric, race-blind, and class-biased, just like white feminism, I will refer to gender non-conforming discrimination based on this belief system as white genderism to ensure that the intersections between white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy are made clear in my analysis of dominant gender relations.

⁷ In other words, the major difference between white feminism and Queer Marxism is that while practices of white feminism argue that women’s subordination is based on economic, political, legal, and cultural systems that validate the masculine body as superior to the feminine body, I also, in addition, recognize that economic, political, legal, and cultural systems play a significant role in identifying and validating what is actually considered to be a “feminine” body.

relations that exist among certain “types” of women.⁸ On the one hand, women, who “fit” within the model of the nuclear family unit, or within its ideological expressions, are marginalized based on the relations of domination and subordination that exist within this structure, while, on the other hand, persons who do not fit within this model are marginalized, in part, based on the relations of domination and subordination that try to re-enforce or normalize it. In other words, gender “normative” women, or white, middle/upper class, abled-bodied, cis-heterosexual, native born women, are subjected to sexism, while their “non-gender normative” counterparts are subjected to not only sexism, but white genderism, homophobia, transphobia, trans-misogyny, and biphobia, as well as other forms of *complementary* discrimination and disempowerment, like colonialism, racism, or classism.

During the historical period of industrial capitalism in which the transformation of current gender norms occurred, it was only white “aristocratic” women and men who were identified as “legitimate” social bodies, or for a lack of a better word, as citizens (Andersen and Hysock, 2011, p. 114).⁹ The Canadian Sixties Scoop¹⁰ and Residential schools¹¹ illustrate that

⁸ The claim I am making here is similar to those that have been made by many Race/Ethnicity/Imperialism (REI) or post-colonial feminists who focus on the intersections between gender and other systems of subordination, domination, and power. These feminists often look at the divisions that exist not only between men and women, but between “white (or Western) and non-white (or non-Western)” women and men in evaluating the “position of men” as the dominate group within a society by focusing on the relations that exist “*between* women” [emphasis added] (Beasley, 2005, p. 76 – 77).

⁹ My issue with using the word “citizen” in this context pertains to the fact that even white women at this time were largely viewed as the property of their husbands. However, white women did have some rights and were notably more politically and legally free than their non-white peers. For example, in 1771, New York required that a (white) husband get his wife’s consent before selling any of her property that she brought into the marriage (McGee and Moore, 2014). In 1839 Mississippi allowed white women to own property in their own name, and in 1843 the Married Woman’s Property Act was passed in New York, all other American states passed similar versions by 1900 (McGee and Moore, 2014). This act stipulated that white women were not automatically responsible for their partner’s debts, that they could enter into legal contracts by themselves, receive an inheritance respective of their husband, and could collect rent and file a lawsuit as independent persons of the state (McGee and Moore, 2014.) Notably, white women also had the right to get married, and while a problematic institution in and of itself, this right was not awarded to all women, especially enslaved women or those who wanted to marry members of the same-sex.

¹⁰ The sixties scoop occurred from the 1960s to the late 1980s and was a program that removed aboriginal children from their families and placed them into foster homes or up for adoption (Sinclair, 2007).

the political and legal rights and freedoms of Aboriginal people were not only disrespected, for example, but often systematically violated and denied. The Racial Segregation of African Americans in the United States, which persisted from the 1800s up until the 1960s, also reflects the major political, social, economic, and legal restrictions that were placed on black people living in the U.S.¹² Black people were similarly segregated and discriminated against in Canada, along with Aboriginals, the Chinese, Japanese, and East Indians (Howard, 2015). During World War II, for example, both first and second generation Chinese Canadians were forced into internment camps,¹³ while in 1908, two orders-in-council that were designed to ban East Indian immigrants from coming to Canada were implemented by the Canadian government (University of Guelph, 2016).¹⁴

There were also multiple cultural systems put in place that promoted the discrimination, marginalization, and stigmatization of non-white Canadians and Americans. Minstrel shows,¹⁵ for example, dehumanized and infantilized the African American population and represented them as inferior to white people. These shows were then followed by popular films like *The*

¹¹ Residential schools were total institutions, institutions in which people are isolated from the rest of society; their daily lives regulated and subjected to authoritarian ran schedules which aim to “re-socialize” them, that were designed to “Christianize” aboriginal children (Brym, 2014; Stout, Dion and Kipling, 2003). Residential schools, in accordance with The Bagot Commission Report (1844), deemed all Aboriginal parents unfit, and stated that children of Aboriginals had to be properly “civilized” in residential boarding schools (Young, 2006). In these total intuitions, children had little to no contact with their families, and experienced complete separation from all of the cultural norms and beliefs that were essential to aboriginal social and family life (Stout, Dion and Kipling, 2003).

¹² This included the segregation of facilities, services, and resources, such as the segregation of schools, hospitals, housing opportunities, work place venues, and transportation methods between black and white people (Hasday, 2007; Margo, 1990; Sitloff, 2008).

¹³ There is also the infamous head tax implemented for Chinese immigrants coming into Canada which, in 1903, charged each individual 500 dollars for citizenship (University of Guelph, 2016). Moreover, in 1923 the Canadian government passed the “Chinese Immigration Act,” which prohibited future Chinese immigrant from coming to Canada, with some exceptions (Morton, 1974)

¹⁴ The first one increased the amount of money an East Indian immigrant was required to have upon arrival to a total of \$200 (University of Guelph, 2016). The second one required immigrants to directly travel from their native country to Canada in order to be considered for citizenship, and at the time, there were no direct routes from India to Canada (University of Guelph, 2016).

¹⁵ Minstrel shows were a form of “entertainment” that developed during the 19th century in America which included musical and comic acts that satirized African Americans as stupid, lazy, immature and childish, superstitious, cheerful and easy going (Mahar, 1998).

Birth of a Nation, which portrayed African American men as feeble-minded rapists, while depicting the Ku Klux Klan as admirable, courageous, and heroic (Griffith, 1915). In addition, the majority of popular North American films throughout the 1920s and up until the 1980s, most of which are considered “classics” by today’s society, featured predominately white, middle class characters.¹⁶ Moreover, around the same time during what people commonly call “the golden age of television,” television shows like *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave it to Beaver*, *Bewitched*, *Father Knows Best*, *I Dream of Genie*, and *I Love Lucy*, all centered on white, heterosexual middle class married couples and/or families, and tended to romanticize and normalize the nuclear family unit (Coontz, 1992).

The above examples, as well as the examples of LGBT-based discrimination that I documented in the last chapter, illustrate that white, middle/upper class, cis-straight women and men were the only people identified as and/or respected as “genuine” citizens throughout the majority of the 19th and 20th century. At this time, the gender and family relations of the nuclear family unit became the “norm,” since it was only these experiences that were validated by the dominant culture of the time. In turn, these relationships were designed and regulated in a manner that could explicitly serve the interest of capitalists (Barrett, 1988). The ideology of the ideal “traditional” nuclear family unit is now reproduced and produced anew by current society because it reproduces the relations of capital, just as the gender roles that constitute it are

¹⁶ Examples of such films include *Wizard of Oz*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Metropolis*, *Casablanca*, *Citizen Kane*, *It’s a Wonderful Life*, *Rear Window*, *Some Like It Hot*, *12 Angry Men*, *Psycho*, *Jaws*, *Annie Hall*, *Taxi Driver*, and the *Star Wars* franchise.

reproduced because they provide the best way to organize, dictate, and regulate gender performativity in the service of capitalism.¹⁷

All bodies that contradict the universality of these norms are marginalized and disempowered by complementary forces that aim to reinforce and protect them, such as white genderism. The transformation and development of *dominant* gender ideologies during the industrial revolution was strongly influenced by the fact that only the gender and family relations of the elite were identified and validated by the dominant social structures of the time. As a result, they were universalized and romanticized within and by North American culture, while “contradicting” narratives were undermined and ignored.

4.2 Queer Marxism and Intersectionality

While white women in Canada got the right to vote in 1918, women of colour, such as Chinese women, East Indian women, and Japanese women, did not get the right to vote until the late 1940s (CBC, 2013). Moreover, The Indian Act stipulated that Aboriginal women could not vote for band councils until 1951 or in federal elections until 1960 (CBC, 2013). While both African American and white women got the right to vote in the 1920s in the United States, only African American women, especially those who lived in the Southern states,¹⁸ were targeted by methods of disenfranchisement which systematically aimed to reduce the amount of “black”

¹⁷ Wolf (2009) alludes to this idea that the nuclear family and associated gender roles are an important aspect of capitalism that not only reproduces capital, but does so as a functioning appendage of it, when she claims: “LGBT oppression, like women’s oppression, is tied to the centrality of the nuclear family as one of capitalism’s means to both inculcate gender norms and outsource care for the current and future generations of workers at little cost of the state” (p. 19).

¹⁸ African-American women living in the South were often subjected to physical assault if they attempted to vote, and/or were threaten, or charged, with false criminal charges in an effort to discourage them from voting (Terborg-Penn, 1998). These issues faced by Southern African-American women in voting practices persisted up until the 1960s (Terborg-Penn, 1998).

voters (Prescod, 1997; Terborg-Penn, 1998).¹⁹ Both Native American women and men did not get the right to vote in Arizona and New Mexico until 1948, and, similar to African Americans, multiple disenfranchisement tactics were put in place across states to minimize the amount of Native American voters (Chavers, 2012; McCool, et al., 2007). In addition, Chinese Americans could not even become citizens until 1943, Asian Indians until 1946, and Japanese Americans and other Asian Americans until 1952 (AALDEF, 2016).

The fact that women's suffrage was not a universal condition in North America after the 1920s when most white women got the right to vote, is an example of how the "female" signifier has been historically imbued with racist ideology. The 19th amendment, for example, proposes "an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women" and claims that "the right of citizens of the United states to vote shall not be denied or *abridged* [emphasis added] by the United States or by any state on account of sex (U.S. Const. amend. XIX)." Similarly, section 33 of the 1917 War Time Election Act in Canada, which set the precedent for Canadian "women" to get the vote in 1918, stipulates that "*every female person* [emphasis added] shall be capable of voting at a Dominion Election, who is the wife, widow, mother, sister or daughter of any person, male or female, living or dead, who is serving, or has served...in the present war."²⁰ In both instances it must be assumed, seeing as many non-white women either could not vote or had their voting rights "abridged" during this time, that the words "women" and "female" meant "white" women and "white" female, and that the use of the term "sex" in the

¹⁹ After being awarded the right to vote, the high degree of African American female voters as well as notable female activists such as Annie Simms Banks caught the attention of white Americans who began to fear the socio-political power that the black community was gaining (Terborg-Penn, 1998). As a result, African American women faced significant problems in exercising their right to vote, such as paying head taxes and being subjected to unreasonable waiting times (Prescod, 1997).

²⁰ This quote was retrieved from an image of the Act I found online, retrieved May 21st 2016, from:

<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-ypIsOsQUIpk/UKJVCmN1dHI/AAAAAAAAANQ0/8OBGLZv3970/s1600/wifewidowelectionactAELLLELEL.JPG>

19th amendment was used to refer to white women only. This implies that non-white women were not actually considered women at this time, and that non-white individuals were not considered citizens, or even persons for that matter, when the 19th amendment and War Time Election Act were issued.

It is not surprising then that the historical development of contemporary gender norms was strongly influenced by white supremacist ideology. In accordance with this, we saw the emergence of the popular ideology “the cult of true womanhood” in North America during the 19th century, which depicted the ideal women as domestic and morally obligated to be the “perfect” wife and mother (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). The working and labour intensive realities of racialized and/or working class women at the time, however, directly contradicted the cult of true womanhood, suggesting that this ideology was nothing more than a mythologized representation of women’s past and present experiences (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).²¹ Throughout history, femininity has been viewed as synonymous with the gender roles and norms of married white middle/upper class women and men. This has resulted not only in the marginalization of LGBTQ2+ people, but also in the marginalization of Aboriginal and Native American women, African American and black women, poor women, and Asian women,²² to name a few, who have been historically excluded from such structures.

²¹ As Andersen and Hysock (2011) write, during the 19th century “the aristocratic lady of leisure became a model to be emulated and set the ideal, although not the reality, for women of the bourgeois class” (p. 114).

²² It is important to note that the gender, class, and race-based marginalization of non-white and/or wealthy women, does not always take the form of de-feminization. For example, while many black women and lower class women are “de-feminized” by dominant western culture because of their race and class, women of Asian descent tend to be hyper-feminized. However, this still reflects racist and white supremacist ideology, as this “hyper femininity” assumes that Asian women are equally exotic and submissive. These stereotypes largely date back to the popularization of the story “Madame Chrysantheme” in the eighteen hundreds which depicted Asian women as docile, hyper feminine and “doll like” (Parker, 2014). In addition, this story was the inspiration for the canonized play “Madame Butterfly,” which is still played hundreds of times a year in current North American society (Parker, 2014). The marginalization of Asian women reflects concerted effects of racism and sexism in North America that

When the cult of true womanhood was popular, for example, African American women were actually slaves and as such “no ideal of femininity was bestowed on them” (Andersen and Hysock, 2011, p. 114). Female slaves not only performed the same jobs as their male counterparts,²³ but as an instrument of capitalist production, the slave body was inevitably a body marked by “productive” qualities (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). In addition, as a legal form of property, African American women could not legally get married nor could they exercise any legal rights over their children (Newman, 1999). This stands in stark contradiction to the notion that femininity is defined by a women’s role as a wife and a mother. Moreover, as a form of property, black women were routinely raped by their white masters, since they technically belonged to them, which undermines the “feminine” tenets of fragility, innocence, and virtue (Newman, 1999). We can see that the cultural legacy of colonialism, slavery, and exploitation within North American society has historically marked the black body with a social status of inferiority, animalism, and savagery that is incompatible with the figure of the dignified “true woman” of white feminism (Newman, 1999).

In contrast to their white counterparts, the gender performances of black women have been regulated throughout history by capitalist forces that developed in the aftermath of both “traditional” patriarchy as well as slavery.²⁴ For the most part, contemporary depictions of “black femininity” are based on racist and sexist stereotypes that were produced by the slave institution

represents *their* specific history of oppression, and similar to the “de-feminization” of black, Native American/Aboriginal, and/or poor women, the hyper-feminization of Asian women reflects the fact that such women were dehumanized by North American culture.

²³Notably, in addition to the jobs they shared with men, black women also performed domestic labour in both their master’s home as well as in their own (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).

²⁴ The Atlantic Slave Trade, like patriarchy in both the past and the present, was an institution that served the relations of capital. The plantation and slaved-based economy represented a shift from agricultural based mode of production to industrial capitalism in which slaves provided inexpensive labour that was completely controlled by their owners (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).

which supported the wealth of the Bourgeois Family unit.²⁵ White and Dobris (2002) argue that due to the racist and sexist representations of black women that we have seen throughout the history of North American culture, black women nowadays tend to express their genders as “a rhetoric of survival” (p. 36) in order to undermine the racist and sexist stereotypes that have come to culturally regulate gender performativity within the black female population.

Common stereotypes of black femininity include the “black lady” and “the jezebel.” The jezebel, which refers to the “over-sexualized, lower-class black woman,” can be traced back to the hyper-sexualisation of the black female body that occurred during and after slavery (Reid-Brinkley, 2008, p. 246).²⁶ It can also be linked to the economic and political deprivation of the black community that persisted in a neo-slave state. In contrast, the “black lady” is the stereotype of the black, middle class woman who is considered to be the opposite of the stereotypical black “jezebel” (Reid-Brinkley, 2008). Popular representations of this figure in contemporary North American culture would arguably include the characters of Olivia Pope and Rainbow Johnson in ABC’s popular shows *Scandal* and *Blackish*. While seemingly more positive than the stereotype of “the jezebel,” the stereotype of the “black lady” is still used as a “tool to regulate black behaviour” and the gendered social actions of black women, in the sense that it tells black, middle class women in today’s society what not to be, based on sexist, racist, and classist stereotypes (Reid-Brinkley, 2008, p. 246).

²⁵ Eric William (1980) writes in *Capitalism and Slavery*, for example, that “the origin of Negro slavery... was economic, not racial; it had to do not with the color of the laborer, but the cheapness of the labor. [The capitalist] would have gone to the moon, if necessary, for labor. Africa was nearer than the moon, nearer too than the more populous countries of India and China. But their turn would soon come” (p. 7).

²⁶ The now (in)famous story of Sarah ‘Saartjie’ Baartman, for example, is proof to this effect. Baartman toured Europe as a “freakshow” who was put on display because of her ‘abnormally’ large butt and genitals which resulted in her being objectified by Europeans who, at this time, considered African Americans to be “oversexed” and inferior to whites (Davie, 2012).

The cultural message of black female inferiority that exists in North American society originated from the concerted efforts of patriarchy and slavery within capitalism to exploit African Americans, women, and especially African American women. In turn, research suggests that black women's gender expression has been historically used by the black community to destroy these taken-for-granted assumptions of black female inferiority. It is important to note that while black women can and do perform gender in an effort to undo the history of white supremacy, slavery, and patriarchy that has disempowered them, gender performativity in this context is also, in addition, characterized by efforts to diverge from the dominant gender-race norms that inform public discourses of gender and racial representation.

This emerging, intersectional, and multifaceted “nature” of gender performativity within the black, female community has not escaped the attention of contemporary researcher Shanara R. Reid-Brinkley (2008) who states: “black women construct discursive communities ...*through* [emphasis added] their interaction with a masculinist, racist, classist, and heteronormative American society” (p. 242). What this demonstrates is that in universalizing the “white feminist figure” in the transformation and emergence of current North American gender ideal types, capitalists were able to produce and reproduce gender *and* race-based relations, among others, that benefited the reproduction of capital. Through institutionalizing the gender and family relations that existed within the nuclear family unit, the reproduction of class, race, and “gender” hierarchies across changing historical contexts has been more or less achieved.

4.3 Queering Capitalist Relations of Domination and Subordination

Dictionary.com defines the adjective “queer” as: “strange or odd from a conventional viewpoint; unusually different.”²⁷ This notion of strange in the hands of the bigot was extended to mean unnatural in reference to the LGBTQ2+ population, in which Queer, as a noun, has now come to refer to: “Slang: Disparaging and Offensive... a contemptuous term used to refer to a homosexual...[or] to a person who does not conform to a normative sexual orientation or gender identity.”²⁸ In response to this bigoted perspective, the LGBTQ2+ community has reclaimed the word queer as a positive or neutral signifier (Warner, 1993).²⁹ Use of the term queer within the LGBTQ2+ community describes gender and sexual identities that “queer,” or problematize, the gender binary ideology and cisnormativity (University of Michigan, 2016).³⁰ In other words, in some contexts, it is important to note that the word queer is employed as a verb. Using the word queer in this sense represents a conscious effort to undermine queer as a “contemptuous term,” while also describing a social condition that does not “conform to a normative sexual orientation or gender identity.” Like derogatory uses of the term, the LGBTQ2+ community denotatively defines queer as “strange,” but unlike derogatory uses of the term, they change queer from a negative to a positive signifier in order to represent this “strangeness” as exceptional.³¹

²⁷ This definition was retrieved on May 11th 2016 from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/queer>.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Notably, not all LGBTQ2+ people, or even LGBT activists, adopt the term “queer” as a term of endearment. Wolf (2009) actually rejects this use of the term queer, and states in her book *Sexuality and Socialism* that “right from the get-go, I must admit that I cannot use what I perceived as an offensive epithet that was scrawled across my high school locker and spat at me from the mouths of innumerable bigots – the word “queer” – as a positive signifier in a book about the history, politics, and theory of sexual liberation” (p. 17). In addition, queer as a positive signifier tends to be a self-identified label that is used within the community, opposed to a label that is used by non-LGBTQ2+ people to refer to LGBT members, whether in a positive manner or not. This is similar to how the word “Indian” is used within Native American communities or the use of the term “nigger” in the black community.

³⁰ Queer can also be used as an umbrella term that refers to the entire LGBTQ+ community as well as the term “gay,” as in “queer community,” or “gay community.”

³¹ I use the term exceptional here to refer to “unusually excellent.” Retrieved May 11, 2016 from: <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/exceptional>.

A well-known example of the LGBTQ2+ community using queer as a “positive signifier” appears in the document “Queers Read This,” which was published by the organisation Queer Nation, and distributed anonymously at a New York Gay Pride Parade in the summer of June 1990 (Queer Nation, 1990). The document included a passage entitled “Why Queer” which explained why they adopted the queer title:

Using "queer" is a way of reminding us how we are perceived by the rest of the world. It's a way of telling ourselves we don't have to be witty and charming people who keep our lives discreet and marginalized in the straight world. We use queer as gay men loving lesbians and lesbians loving being queer.

The above quote demonstrates that the positive signifier queer calls upon love and acceptance for and among sexual and gender minorities, while also conjuring a destructive force which reminds us that, as a queer, “every day you wake up alive, relatively happy, and a functioning human being, you are committing a rebellious act. You as an alive and functioning queer are a revolutionary” (Queer Nation, 1990). Identifying and rejoicing in the queer as a “rebellious act” embraces what Bornstein (1994) calls “gender outlaws,” people whose gender identity and expression cannot be easily placed within dominant gender and sexual binaries and, as a result, problematize the hegemonic presence of gender and sexual norms (Nelson, 2010). Use of the word queer within the LGBTQ2+ community demonstrates how these “outlaws” are brought together by their shared marginalization “in a straight world,” while also recognizing their concerted efforts to undermine and problematize cis-heteronormativity.

Queer is about de-stabilizing the “normal;” it is both a social position that exists outside of normative boundaries as well as a social intersectional perspective that challenges dominant norms that regulate individual behaviours, beliefs, and ways of identifying and expressing the body and self. While queer theory situates sexuality and gender as a main point of social analysis

in an effort to recognize the “common history of devaluation” that LGBTQ2+ people face, and to challenge the current power structures that promote cisnormativity, heteronormativity, and compulsive heterosexuality, it is not necessarily solely addressed to gender and sexual-based concerns (Nelson, 2010, p. 97). Ultimately, queer theory aims “to destabilise identity through the construction of ...supposedly “inclusive” [and] non-normative” social narratives, as queer theory first “sees identity as thoroughly socially constructed and [therefore] as internally untestable and incoherent” (Beasley, 2005, p. 112). At the heart of a “queer” perspective, then, is an attempt to problematize and disrupt not only “socially imposed categories” (p. 112) of gender and sexuality, but all such categories imposed upon selfhood and self-expression.

Keeping this intersectional and destructive logic in mind, we can define queer as any social condition that is “strange or odd from a *conventional* viewpoint,” because it does not “conform to ...normative” representations of identity and, as a result, threatens to undermine their normalcy. “Queer” social positions are those that queer the hegemonic relations of subordination and domination by existing outside of and/or in contradiction to them. This includes transgender people, bisexual people, “masculine” women and “feminine” men, but also bi-racial people and mixed classed people. A queer social perspective draws on the “revolutionary” vantage point of the queer and embraces it as the guiding principle in efforts to destabilize and over-come systems of oppression and marginalization. Similarly, Queer Marxism “adjectivicates” the title of Marxism with the term “queer” because this perspective positions the “queer” body as the central focus of analysis when investigating the relations of domination and subordination that produce, reproduce, and produce anew the relations of capital.

As the past few paragraphs have begun to suggest, Queer Marxism is a fundamentally intersectional perspective, and as such, it ultimately rejects the logic of “identity politics.” Often in an attempt to combat mainstream feminist and LGBT movements that “exclude or marginalize” their concerns, identity politics driven feminists and LGBT activists begin with the analysis of their own oppression when considering how to move towards a more equal and just society (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). Although things like cis, white, and class privilege do negatively affect the development of collective socio-political movements, identity politics driven activists do not remedy such issues within mainstream feminism and/or Marxism. Instead of recognizing that gender, sexuality, race, class, and other identity-based labels, or standpoints, are *targets* of the relations of domination and subordination, identity politics theorists treat things like class and white privilege as the actual sources of domination and subordination within our society.

In contrast to identity politics driven theorists, a Queer Marxist perspective sees that all forms of oppression are based on dominant and subordinate relations which support a common goal, maintaining the relations of capital, and if one wants to understand the fundamental nature of social inequality, they need to first recognize, understand, and *treat* all forms of oppressions as somehow connected and as all equally significant. Of course, privilege, especially white, male, and class privilege, is no stranger to the feminist and/or LGBT movement. White, middle/upper class women and men have, and still do, overlook or downplay the importance of racism and classism, among other “isms,” in their political efforts to address gender and sexual inequality, just as many cis-straight men and women have tended to downplay sexism or LGBT discrimination in their political efforts to address class inequality. But identity politics driven

perspectives do not address these concerns, they simply overemphasize the history and experiences of some people, while underemphasizing or ignoring others (Pritchett. 2005).³²

Within capitalism especially, identity politics functions to divide the proletariat from one another in their efforts to fight for economic, cultural, political, and social equality (Wolf, 2009).³³ Capitalists simply use “gender” to box people into certain gender identities, sexual and gender expressions, and gender roles, based on regulatory and oppressive gender norms (Wolf, 2009). Queer Marxism, like Marxism, rejects such limitations, while also validating and recognizing, like queer theory, the socio-culturally imposed differences that exist among people both across and within categories of gender, race, sexuality, class, age, body-type, religion, (dis)ability, and ethnicity. A Queer Marxist perspective maintains that capitalism attempts to regulate all identity performativity, including, but not limited to, gender, in order to reproduce dominant social structures which reproduce the relations of capital. Social problems such as homophobia or sexism will never be properly addressed in North American society if the potential collective power of the oppressed is divided based on the very relations of ruling which serve to benefit from this division. Instead, people should unite based on both their common and respective oppressions in order to break down these barriers.

4.4 LGBT Rights, Capitalism, and the Power of Visibility

Operating through the nuclear family unit, the heterosexual matrix regulates gender performativity based on the gender binary ideology in order to reproduce and produce anew

³² Identity politics also arguably promotes the continuation of inequality by dividing people based on the relations of domination and subordination that marginalize them in the first place.

³³ Another important criticism to note about identity politics is that in their attempts to “transcend difference,” identity politic-based movements actually homogenize the group that they represent and end up conflating or ignoring “intragroup difference” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). If a movement looks at the injustices East Indian Canadians experience for example, it could potentially over-look differences between third and first generational immigrants, Hindu, Catholic, and Muslim Indians, rich and poor Indians, and so on.

gender roles and norms that support the reproduction of the relations of capital. However, LGBTQ2+ people, even if they are members of LBGTory or Log Cabin Republicans,³⁴ even if they are as conservative as Caitlyn Jenner,³⁵ or even if they are absurdly “straightened” up, like Mitch and Cam on ABC’s *Modern Family*,³⁶ inevitably challenge this function. The fact that LGBTQ2+ people can legally have same-sex relationships, gender themselves in non-normative ways, and/or exist on a gender and/or sexual continuum of self-expression, “weakens and even defies traditional sex roles” by the simple fact that they pursue alternative gender and sexual trajectories (Wolf, 2009, p. 221). This of course undermines the cis-heteronormative belief systems that reproduce (unequal) gender relations that support a well-developed and well-run capitalist economy.

If society is willing to recognize and legitimize bodies that are not confined by traditional social roles, then it recognizes and legitimatizes the fact that social roles are highly flexible. And if it is the case that “social roles are so flexible,” if there is no natural connection between sexuality, gender, and sex, then there is no obvious reason as to why the gender binary ideology

³⁴ LBGTory is a Canadian based group for LGBT conservatives, while Log Cabin republicans are a group of people that operate within the Republican Party to advocate for LGBT rights.

³⁵ In a now infamous episode of her reality television show, “I am Cait,” Jenner stated that she thought known sexist, racist, and xenophobic republican Donald Trump would be “very good for women’s rights” if he became president of the United States, while denouncing known feminist and democratic Hilary Clinton as a “fucking liar” (Ross, 2015).

³⁶ I am borrowing the term “straightening up” from the paper “The Representations of Gay Families in Advertising: Consumer Responses to an Emergent Target Group (Borgerson et al., 2005).” While they use the term to describe the tendency of advertisements to be framed in a way that allows audiences to understand “apparently gay ads” as heterosexual, they also make the note that “straightening up” occurs when “consumers frame even fairly openly gay ads with heterosexual norms” (p. 143 /151). In a similar sense, I am using the term to refer to the tendency of mainstream media to depict gay couples, based on the gender and sexual norms outlined by the heterosexual nuclear family unit. In other words, it represents the tendency of popular culture to heterosexualize, and therefore “normalize,” LGBTQ2+ people. For instance, ABC’S *Modern Family*, the example I used, depicts a gay couple Mitchell and Cameron, who are married, have a child, and practice a “gendered” division of labour in which Mitch, a Lawyer, tends to be the breadwinner, while Cam, an overtly flamboyant now gym teacher, is a stay at home father for the majority of their child’s formative years. The show was actually criticized by fans in the first season because Mitch and Cam never kissed. A campaign called “Let Cam & Mitchell kiss on Modern Family!” popularized on facebook after the first season, asking the question: if “ABC isn’t afraid of gay characters...why won’t they let them show some love? (The Week, 2012).”

ought to be such a widely held and taken-for granted belief system (Weeks, 2003, p. 55). This is, of course, unless we are socialized to habitually anticipate cis-heterosexuality before we are actually able to consciously identify with a gender(s) and knowingly enact gendered social action (Weeks, 2003). LGBTQ2+ people, however, by their very “nature,” problematize gender norms and loosen the restrictions that are placed on gender performativity by lessening the potency of gender as a “regulatory norm” (Butler, 1993, p. xii). The significance of this is that, in addition to organizing and regulating the gendered division of labour and the dominant marriage and family institutions that are associated with it, gender norms provide a basis for other economic, legal, and cultural structures and institutions that benefit the relations of capital. Thus, undermining dominant gender norms threatens to undermine many capitalist structures and institutions, and not just gender-based ones.

For example, butch lesbians, the genderqueer and gender fluid, self-identified dykes, and feminine presenting men or masculine presenting women, inevitably dissociate “natural” femininity from the female sexed body. As a result, they undermine gender norms that support the “privatized burdens of family life” by undermining the belief that women are “naturally” domestic, and will and ought to take care of children for free (Wolf, 2009, p. 220). This sets a precedent for individuals to question the fact that women, by their very “nature,” should provide free domestic labour on a daily basis. This then undermines the taken-for-granted assumption that women ought to perform free domestic labour, which increases the likelihood that individuals will ask for the governments’ support in caring for children (Wolf, 2009)

LGBTQ2+ people also problematize the masculine gender norms that put profound pressures on boys and men to be hyper-masculine. This socio-culturally manufactured pressure

has resulted in what sociologists call “the crisis of masculinity,”³⁷ which has been linked to the prevalence of school shootings in North America as well as to the high proportion of domestic violence that occurs in lower income families (McMullin, 2010; Jackson and Jhally, 1999). Once again, LGBTQ2+ people illuminate the socially constructed nature of gender norms and inevitably bring to light the fact that these destructive and violent behaviours are not natural, but are a consequence of the society we live in. This incentivizes individuals to question the nature of masculinity, which leads the way for them to begin to rethink the “natural” pressures placed on men to be breadwinners and devoted labourers, and thus challenges the very “essence” of paid labour within capitalism.

Since they threaten to undermine the social and cultural infrastructures of a capitalist society, it follows that capitalism is threatened by the increasing presence of queer bodies in North America. To this effect, the momentum of the Gay Liberation Movement that was gained after Stonewall was met with the efforts of capitalists to negatively transform this revolutionary force into a nugatory free fall. Namely, in order to undermine the potential threat of the LGBT movement and community, capitalism has actually attempted to transform it into an expression of the relations of capital by commodifying it.³⁸ An example of the commodification of the LGBT movement is the current state of Pride Parades in North America (Wolf, 2009). While Pride Parade’s appear to have a political and revolutionary effect in countries like Kenya,³⁹

³⁷ The crisis of masculinity refers to the phenomenon in which men are unable to live up to the unrealistic expectations and pressures that are placed on them to be successful, strong, and powerful and, as a result, experience a crisis of identity as they feel they have “failed” in becoming “real” men (Andersen and Hysock, 2011).

³⁸ Notably, since it is by their very nature of being LGBTQ2+ that the LGBTQ2+ community problematizes the relations of capital, I maintain that these attempts will always be, in some way, futile in their efforts to de-politicize and de-radicalize gender and sexual non-conforming bodies. However, what the commoditization of the LGBTQ2+ community can do is de-politicize and de-radicalize the LGBT movement and its socio-political agenda.

³⁹ The first Ugandan pride parade was actually held in 2012 to protest the adoption of more severe anti-sodomy laws by the Ugandan Parliament, which included being given life in jail for homosexual behaviour which was viewed as particularly offensive (Okeowo, 2012).

Serbia, or Russia, in Western countries they have been largely de-politicized and are often regulated by monopolized businesses as a way to market their commodities to a growing LGBT consumer-base (Wolf, 2009). In turn, Pride Parades have more or less undergone a socio-cultural process of what can be called “party-ification” in which parades nowadays resemble rainbow themed street parties.

In metropolises with thriving LGBTQ2+ communities, like Chicago and New York, Pride Parades originally began in “neighborhoods where LGBT people congregate and flowed outward” to bring the message of LGBT empowerment to the general public; however, they now start in neighbouring areas and move into these original “gayborihoods” where parade goers are then encouraged to frequent local clubs and bars (Wolf, 2009, p. 152). This rerouting, or uprooting, of parade routes actually reflects efforts to support the LGBTQ2+ community by providing “gay ghetto business owners” more chances to make money. However, in what Wolf (2009) calls “an ironic twist of history” (p. 152) this rerouting of pride parades merely allowed businesses, such as corporate banks and beverage companies, to tap into the emerging “marketing potential” of the LGBTQ2+ community. Canadian cities with notable LGBT enclaves similarly embrace and/or support consumerist mentalities in celebrating LGBT pride. For example, the sponsors listed for PRIDE Toronto include TD bank, Bud Light, Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, Molson Canadian, Viagra, and Palm Bay Beverages.⁴⁰ TD is also a major contributor to PRIDE Montreal, which notably lists “cocktail” and “party” as two of the seven categories named for major programs that are used to characterize pride events.⁴¹

⁴⁰ I found this information on Pride Toronto’s official website: <http://www.pridetoronto.com/sponsors/>. Retrieved May 16th 2016.

⁴¹ I found this information on Pride Montreal’s official website: <http://www.fiertemontrealpride.com/en/pride/schedule/>. Retrieved May 16th 2016.

Pride Parades increasingly resemble corporately sponsored street parties that co-opt LGBTQ2+ people as consumers and undermine the political relevancy of these events in doing so. In fact, the “intensified commodification” of the LGBTQ2+ community in general has been investigated by many queer theorists, most of whom share a common concern for the potential negative effects that this “process” may have on LGBT politics and liberation (Clark; 1991; D’Emilio, 1983; Floyd, 1998; Hennessey, 2000; Warner, 1993; Sears, 2005, p. 104). These concerns are not unfounded seeing as much research has documented the consumer exploitation of LGBTQ2+ people by the tobacco and alcohol industry, for example, that often target the LGBTQ2+ community through direct advertisement (Bux, 1996; Dilley et al., 2008; Greenwood & Gruskin, 2007).

Manufacturing “queer” public spaces and communities around “market relations” that distort LGBTQ2+ people by conflating the entire community with the stereotype of the partying, middle-class, fun-loving sexual/gender minority, generates the myth that “queers can’t be poor” which regulates the degree to which queerness is made visible in modern culture (Sears, 2005; Wolf, 2009). In this context, queer gender and sexual bodies only become visible “through the deployment of particular market goods and services,” which “has the effect of consolidating an imaginary, class-specific gay subjectivity for both straight and gay audiences” (Hennessey, 2000, p. 112; Sears, 2005, p. 108). As a result, LGBTQ2+ people who do not fit within this idealized image of the typical male, gay, “attractive,” wealthy, able-bodied, young and often white, romanticized gay figure, actually become more invisible because they do not “match” popular narratives of what “gayness” ought to look like (Sears, 2005). In addition, the emergence of the queer figure within North American culture is made less and less threatening to the relations of capital as the conditions of its visibility are dictated and regulated by a capitalist-friendly agenda.

The irony of this is that capitalism is able to benefit from the gender non-conforming bodies that logically contradict the hegemonic gender norms and roles needed for its maintenance and reproduction, while somehow regulating public representations of “queerness” in a manner that does not contradict cis-heteronormativity and white genderism.⁴² The significance of this is that modern capitalism has played a fundamental role in opening up cultural and economic spaces for LGBTQ2+ people in current society, and this would seemingly contradict the political revolutionary potential of the queer figure in undermining capitalism (Sears, 2005).

However, in order to misrepresent a community, you have to first recognize that a community exists to misrepresent. In their attempts to undermine LGBT liberation, in what can be called a second “ironic twist of history,” capitalists sold their image of “gayness” to the general public which, while problematic, still brought to our attention the existence of LGBTQ2+ people. Although doing so under the guise that LGBTQ2+ people fit into a certain image, capitalists have normalized events like Pride Parade that allow LGBTQ2+ people to publically congregate and celebrate their identities. Although European-based, a recent study even found that 50 per cent of Pride Parade attendees are actually heterosexual (Williams, 2015).⁴³

The increasing public representation of the LGBTQ2+ community solidifies an existence for LGBTQ2+ people beyond that of closed doors, while also increasing the avenues to which LGBTQ2+ people may openly come together and meet. So, on the one hand, even though the

⁴² Wolf (2009, p. 242) writes for example “That a once universally despised minority was partially transformed in the public eye into a chic market niche, is testament to the ability of capitalism to commodify sex and repackage a layer of its own social dissidents into madcap consumers and purveyors of style.”

⁴³ Notably, the study did not distinguish between transgender and cisgender participants.

general public has assumptions about what queerness ought to look like, they are still aware of the fact that not everybody is straight and/or cisgender. On the other hand, while exclusionary gay stereotypes do exist within the LGBTQ2+ community, operating as a tactic of exclusion among LGBTQ2+ people, destigmatizing public queerness, in any form, opens the door for all gender and sexual outcasts to openly come together.

Since the LGBTQ2+ community is actually diverse, providing LGBTQ2+ people with the material conditions to congregate, even if internally and externally regulated by exclusionary cultural politics, will inevitably invite the diversification of LGBT collectives. For example, even Pride Parades have become more and more intersectional in the ways that they present and celebrate the LGBTQ2+ community (Delgado, 2016). PRIDE Toronto has recently begun to include more socially diverse issues in recent years, as indicated "by its position against apartheid in Isreal" and the increased representation of LGBTQ2+ people with disabilities as well as Latino Lesbians (Delgado, 2016, p. 173). "BlackLivesMatter" also led the 2016 Toronto Pride Parade,⁴⁴ while in the United States San Francisco named "BlackLivesMatters" as one of thirteen Grand Marshals of PRIDE 2016 (Batey, 2016; Patel, 2016).⁴⁵ The more intersectional

⁴⁴ While it is notable that the BlackLivesMatter movement staged a protest during PRIDE Toronto 2016, effectively stopping the parade for approximately 30 minutes, and that this protest has been met with hostility from some members and groups within the LGBT community, this protest nevertheless reflects efforts to make Pride Parades, and the LGBTQ2+ political community in general, more inclusive. BlackLivesMatter protested after their objectifications "to the very large presence of uniformed and armed police officers with their police cars and other paraphernalia in the march" were ignored by Major John Tory (Mukherjee, 2016). Their objectifications were grounded in the fact that the heavy police presence at Pride Parades undermines the "feeling of inclusion of [LGBTQ2+] people who are Black, Indigenous or of other racialized backgrounds and those in mental health crisis who've experienced violent interactions with police" at Prides events (Mukherjee, 2016). So even though BlackLivesMatter's involvement in Toronto's Pride Parade created a degree of friction among the LGBTQ2+ community, the protest that they staged arguably sparked conversations about LGBT inclusion within PRIDE, bringing to light the lack of intersectionality that has been historically present in Pride events, which will hopefully invoke the development of more diverse LGBT socio-political public collectives.

⁴⁵ The SF Pride Press released in justifying the decision to make the movement a Grand Marshall reads as follow: "Black Lives Matter is working to (re)build the Black liberation movement and affirm the lives of all Black people, specifically Black women, queer and trans people, people who are differently abled, and those who are undocumented and formerly incarcerated...Centering on those who are marginalized within Black liberation

LGBT culture becomes, whether mainstream representations of LGBT culture are commodified or not, the more potential there is to introduce queer bodies into cultural discourse that exist independently of their commodified stereotypes. In celebrating the specific interests of one sphere of commodification, capitalists provided LGBTQ2+ people with the economic, social, and cultural spaces to congregate publicly. Now that these spaces have begun to open up and diversify, they have started to actually solidify the existence of a real queer community, one that can threaten the gender binary ideology that capitalism still relies upon to legitimize its relations of production.

4.5 Conclusion

Efforts to revamp the Gay Liberation Movement reflect capitalism's attempts to bridge the current tension between the relations and forces of production that exists in current North American society, by de-politicizing the queer subject that illuminates this tension and threatens to undermine the relations of capitalism as a consequence. However, the increase of civil rights in current decades, especially women's and LGBTQ2+ rights, has made LGBTQ2+ discrimination both illegal as well as socially unacceptable in most parts of Western society. In turn, LGBT bodies still exist and are recognized as existing in public discourses. In concert with this, the commodification of the LGBTQ2+ community has actually allowed for the possibility for the queer community to solidify both a public image and a collective by allowing LGBTQ2+ people into public social spaces.

We can begin to see that there is an emerging crisis of anomie with regards to the dominant gender scripts of contemporary North American society, a crisis that can be traced

movements, Black Lives Matter imposes a call to action and response to state-sanctioned violence against Black people, as well as the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society" (Batey, 2016),

back to changes made in the relations of production; on the one hand, individuals live in a society where there are multiple cultural and social barriers put in place to try to discourage individuals from existing outside of the gender binary, as well as cultural reforms put in place to dismantle the revolutionary power of those that do. On the other hand, however, the actual political, legal, and economic conditions of our society are enabling persons to express gender in contrast to traditional gender norms and to exist outside of, and even in contradiction to, the gender binary belief system. As a result, there is an existing tension in our current culture that reflects from the perspective of Queer Marxism, capitalism's failure to balance its support of recent gains made in civil rights, while still upholding the relations of domination and subordination required for its survival.

Conclusion

“Empathy is the most radical of human emotions.”

— Gloria Steinem¹

5.1 Current North American Capitalism: a Snake that Eats Itself

There is an implicit moral objective within Marx’s work, one that is common to most Marxist inspired social perspectives, including my own. This moral aspect of Marxism most commonly manifests as the belief that the oppressed, the marginalized, the discriminated, the maltreated, the exploited, and the victimized *ought* to be liberated. In turn, the source of their disenfranchisement, capitalism, must be overthrown and eradicated. This moral agenda is so engrained in Marxian-based perspectives on the social world² that Sherry Wolf, as an example, starts the last chapter of her book *Sexuality and Socialism: History, Politics, and Theory of LGBT Liberation*, by asking the following question: “What would sexual [and gender] liberation mean?” Essentially asking the question “what would it look like?”³ Wolf neglects, however, to ask the question: why it is the case that gender and sexual minorities *ought* to be liberated at all, why it is that the exploitation and marginalization of people based on their sexuality and gender

¹ Retrieved June 25, 2016 from https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/57108.Gloria_Steinem.

² Jacques Barzun explains this moral component of Marxism well in *Darwin, Marx*, when he states: Marx undertakes to predict on the basis of what he sees happening ... and he proposes to make his prediction come true by arousing the minds of other men — the proletariat — to a sense of their future role.... We cross the inner threshold of the Marxian temple and pass from the strictly materialistic and evolutionary purlieus of history to the inner sanctum where the revelation of class consciousness and class struggle makes right belief essential, intense propaganda imperative, and ruthless political action a moral duty ... But in this [latter] part of his system Marx is really not thinking of his economic and material laws. He has become an ordinary political writer with a strong *moral bias* [emphasis added]” (Brenkert, 1983, p. 5).

³ Wolf (2009) starts the last chapter of her book, entitled “Sexual Liberation for all!” with the following passage: “What would sexual [and gender] liberation mean? We can, perhaps, agree on what must disappear – institutional and legal discrimination against LGBTQ2+ people, fixed gender roles and sexual identities... etc. While many of us dream of a world in which we are free to do as we choose with our bodies and sex, living under capitalism, where sex is bought and sold, bodies objectified, and relationships constrained by material forces out of our control it seems that even our fantasies must be limited somewhat by the world in which we live” (p. 270).

is morally wrong? In typical Marxist fashion,⁴ Wolf assumes that it is obvious that LGBTQ2+ people and women are in fact people, and that as persons, LGBT rights and women's rights, by definition, are human rights. It is implied in her work, as well as in the works of many neo-Marxists, that when we deny the rights of people based on the social constructs of gender, sexuality, sex, race, ethnicity, class, age, body type, and religion we engage in an immoral social act.⁵

Unfortunately, it is not the case that all people believe that women and LGBTQ2+ people ought to be respected first and foremost as persons. For many, it is not always obvious that sexual and gender minorities, as well as minorities in general, should have access to fundamental human rights. Take, for example, the organization "TFP Student Action: Defending Moral Values on Campus," which has a page dedicated to outlining the 10 main reasons why Gay Marriage should not be legalized, one of which states:

In the name of the "family," same-sex "marriage" serves to validate not only such unions but the whole homosexual lifestyle and all its bisexual and transgender variants...Legal recognition of same-sex "marriage" would necessarily obscure certain basic moral values, devalue traditional marriage, and weaken public morality.⁶

And consider this comment written by the account "Mdmohiuddin" on Debate.Org, which was written in response to the question "should mothers stay at home and look after their children?" Mdmohiuddin states that: "Man is mortal. If something happens and both working parents die

⁴ The normative ethical component of Marx's perspective of Historical Materialism is implied, but not explicitly addressed, in many of the neo-Marxists works that I have mentioned in this project, for example, such as Dorothy Smith (1999), Max Weber (2000), Theodor Adorno (2004), and Kevin Floyd (2010). However, a notable exception to this general observation is the works of Jurgen Habermas (1979).

⁵ It is not unreasonable to assume that the majority of neo-Marxists are attracted to Marx's theory of Historical Materialism because of this implicit moral assumption; for example, the Dalai Lama, who is an icon of peace, love, and equality in the modern world, recently identified himself as a Marxist, making the claim that: "we must have a human approach. As far as socioeconomic theory, I am Marxist" in a lecture entitled "A Human Approach to World Peace" (Phillips, 2015).

⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.tfpstudentaction.org/politically-incorrect/homosexuality/10-reasons-why-homosexual-marriage-is-harmful-and-must-be-opposed.html>, June 1, 2016.

while outside the home, who will take responsibility for those orphaned children? That's why mothers should stay at home and look after their children. Men are harder workers, so they're the better choice to hold a job.”⁷

Wolf (2009) and I take without question the fact that gender and sexuality are attributes of persons, and that as such gender and sexual minorities ought to have the right to work in paid labour or to get married – or to not get married for that matter. There are many groups and individuals, however, who, without question, believe that this is most certainly *not* the case, and who, just like us, are driven by a different moral imperative. In addition, I do not think that either Wolf or myself would experience much success in attempting to explain the necessity of sexual and gender liberation to the TFP organization or to the 56 percent of people on Debate.org, who, like Mdmohiuddin, responded “yes” to the question “should women stay at home?”⁸ As long as capitalists benefit from gender and sexual-based exploitation, ideologies like sexism, homophobia, biphobia, white genderism, transphobia, misogyny, and trans-misogyny will prevail, and the moral sensibilities and responsibilities of many will remain underdeveloped. Put simply, we cannot achieve social liberation by merely appealing to a common moral goal, by telling people that they ought to support the rights of all people, because as long as capitalism is the dominant material force, the moral principle of respect for persons will never gain recognition by all. Instead, the identity of others will continue to be conceived in reference to the socially constructed roles and statuses that they occupy and the moral judgements made by and about them will fail to acknowledge the fundamental principle of respect for persons (Habermas, 1976).

⁷ Retrieved from <http://www.debate.org/opinions/should-mothers-stay-at-home-and-look-after-their-children> June 1st 2016.

⁸ Ibid.

However, the fact that capitalists will inevitably try to produce ideologies that justify the exploitation and/or marginalization of LGBTQ2+ people and women does not mean that the fight for gender and sexual-based liberation is a futile one and that we should not try to organize collective social action in the pursuit of gender and sexual freedom. Nor does it mean that gender and sexual liberation will only emerge as a consequence of a proletariat revolution. Of course, gender and sexual minorities will never be completely free in a capitalist society that thrives off of their disenfranchisement. However, it is possible that recognizing the liberties of gender and sexual minorities could begin to revolutionize the material, economic, and ideological conditions (even more so than they already have) which restrict gender performativity to cis-heteronormative and sexist boundaries. In turn, such boundaries may be weakened and blurred in the eyes of the general public, thus allowing for gender and sexual diversity to become more commonplace. And as gender and sexual diversity becomes more commonplace LGBT and women's rights will become increasingly recognized as the rights of persons to express their selves and bodies freely. This would undermine the normalcy of cis-heteronormativity and patriarchy, ideologies that ultimately support the reproduction of capitalism, and this creates the potential to threaten capitalism by creating cracks in its infrastructure. This is where such social collective action invokes change; it can weaken the bonds of the relations of capital and create tensions between these relations and the forces of production, creating the spaces for emancipatory change to occur.

In an attempt to adjust to changing economic and political circumstances, capitalists made tweaks to the economic and material conditions of 20th century North American society, change that facilitated the rise of social movements, namely feminism and LGBT rights, which ultimately threatened the stability of its capitalist social economic structure. In response to

overwhelming circumstances like economic depression and war, capitalism was required to introduce white, middle class women into the paid labour market, thus violating the basic assumptions that upheld the gender norms of the bourgeois family unit. As a consequence of this, we have seen the emergence of socio-political movements that prompted major shifts in the political, social, cultural, and economic rights that are awarded to both women and the LGBT2Q+ community. This has only served to further facilitate access to civil rights among gender and sexual minorities.

By legally validating LGBTQ2+ people and most women as legitimate citizens, the political and legal structures of North American society have essentially endorsed diverse and complex expressions of gender and sexuality that exist outside of the gender binary ideology. As a result, many of the material and economic restrictions that were placed on gender performativity within North American society have been broken down. And although gender and sexuality are still culturally regulated through the heterosexual matrix, these regulatory forces have been weakened so that the economic and political realities of our time do not match up with the cis-heterosexual and sexist narrative that our culture tries to sell us. This socio-cultural imbalance makes it increasingly unlikely that younger and future generations will willingly anticipate a cis-heterosexist and androcentric⁹ viewpoint on gender, sexuality, and the family that serves to reproduce the relations of capital.

Let us break down the gender binary ideology one last time. It is constituted by images that are associated with the breadwinner model of the nuclear family unit which is reproduced through the mechanism of the heterosexual matrix of discourse. The breadwinner model of the family unit stipulates that there is a man and a woman who are married, middle class, cisgender,

⁹ Androcentric refers to a perspective that centralizes the experiences and rights of men (Brym, 2014).

and heterosexual, with the added yet often unspoken assumption that they are also white. Within this relationship, the man goes to work to provide for his wife and children, while the woman stays at home to take care of the house and the children. While the ideological expressions of this social contract are still more or less intact in today's society, they are being increasingly undermined by the actual realities of women and men. For example, in 2005 and 2003, 60 percent of American women and 75 percent of Canadian women were employed in the labour market, while in the United States the percentage of married women with children who worked in the public sector tripled since the 1960s, and increased in Canada from 39 percent to 72 percent from 1976 to 2003 (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Nelson, 2010).¹⁰ It has become increasingly more difficult to tell children that a women's place is in the home when the vast majority of them have mothers working for pay or profit outside of the home (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). It also becomes more difficult to tell children that women belong in "feminized" jobs when the origins of this sexist stereotype are being replaced with the commonplace image of the working mother.

At the same time that the cis-heterosexual traditional family unit becomes undone, same sex relationships are becoming more normalized with the legalization of gay marriage dramatically increasing the number of same-sex couples in North America. For example, in 2011, the Canadian census reported a total number of 35,195 gay couples and 29,380 lesbian couples (Statistics Canada, 2011). Moreover, there are 1.2 million Americans that are currently in a same-sex domestic partnership in the US and 390,000 that are currently married (Schwarz, 2015). The increase of same sex couples, especially married ones, further undermines cis-

¹⁰ Notably, the majority (63%) of the Canadian female labour force is actually constituted by married women and the percentage of employed men in North America has steadily declined over the last few decades (Andersen and Hysock, 2011)

heteronormativity by normalizing same-sex relationships in North American society. One could argue that because approximately 35% of same-sex couples in Canada and the United States are in fact married, that the legalization of gay marriage will support the nuclear family unit by supporting the idea of long term monogamy (Schwarz, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2011). But the fact remains that the nuclear family unit is ultimately a function of the heterosexual matrix, which makes cis-heterosexuality a fundamental aspect of the “traditional” family structure. When marriage involves two men, two women and/or at least one trans-person, there is no clear gender division of labour and, therefore, no obvious power differential between partners which undermines the gender and sexual-based relations of subordination and domination that support capitalism. Same-sex marriage invites LGBTQ2+ people into an institution that has traditionally played an instrumental role throughout history in their marginalization and disenfranchisement. By introducing LGBTQ2+ people into an institution that they will destabilize, capitalism further illuminates the tension that exists between dominant gender norms and the actual practices and realities of gendered and sexual bodies.

5.2 LGBT and Women’s Rights: a Snowball that Roles Itself

5.8 percent of Canadian university students report being “homosexual, bisexual, other;” 15.3 percent report being “at least partly [attracted] to the same sex;” 20.5 percent report having had an intimate sexual experience with the same sex; and 46.8 percent report fantasizing about the same sex (Brym, 2014, p. 84). 0.5 percent of the Ontario population alone is thought to be transgender, while 0.3 percent of the American population is identified as transgender (Gates, 2011; Scheim and Bauer, 2015). 1.7 and 1.3 percent of the Canadian population self-identified as

homosexual or bisexual, respectively, in 2004, vs. 1.7 and 1.8 percent of Americans who identified as gay or bisexual, respectively, in 2011 (Gates, 2011; Statistic Canada, 2015). While only 5 percent of Canadians in today's society identify as LGBT, 74 percent of Canadians claim that they know someone who falls under the LGBTQ2+ umbrella (Carlson, 2012). Some researchers estimate that 4 percent of Americans identify as LGBT, while others claim that this number is closer to 10 percent (Andersen and Hysock, 2011; Carlson, 2012). In addition, 22 percent of American men and 17 percent of American women reported having had a same sex sexual experience in their lifetime (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). In short: LGBTQ2+ people make up approximately 5 percent of the population of the United States and Canada, and approximately 20 percent of Canadians and Americans have participated in a same-sex relationship. In addition, it is likely that almost half of North Americans have thought about being intimate with the same sex.

To put the above estimates into perspective, we note that Aboriginals make up 4.3 percent of the Canadian population while Native Americans make up 1.6 percent of the American population (Statistics Canada, 2011; U.S. Census, 2016). From a purely quantitative perspective, denying the existence of LGBTQ2+ people in Canada would be like trying to convince Canadians that Aboriginal people are not real, just as denying the existence of either gay people or bisexuals would be like telling Americans that Native Americans are not real. Although relatively small, each community is big enough that most people at least know one person who belongs to each. Of course, one can argue that sexuality is a choice and transgender identity is a mental illness, while race and ethnicity are neither, but the point remains that LGBTQ2+ people are visible.

It is the case that most North Americans are not overtly homophobic, biphobic, and/or transphobic and that most actually support the rights of gender and sexual minorities. LGBT rights are recognized, for the most part, legally and politically which means that the rights of the LGBTQ2+ community are recognized as fundamental human rights by the dominant culture of our time. It follows then the majority of the North American population would support freedom of gender and sexual expression and, as it turns out, we do. In 2004, before the legalization of gay marriage in both Canada and America, 89 percent of Americans supported equal rights for lesbians and homosexuals in the workplace; 56 percent said they thought that homosexuality was an “acceptable lifestyle;” 57 percent claimed that they thought that homosexuality should be legal; and 45 percent said that same sex marriage should be legalized (Andersen and Hysock, 2011). Similarly, 68 percent of Canadians in 2010 supported gay marriage and the Forum Poll (2015) documented an increase in LGBT support among the least supportive groups of LGBT rights in Canada (those aged 55 – 65, Canadian men, and Quebec residents). While Americans are more divided on transgender rights, the percentage of Americans who support the rights of trans people, with the exception of bathroom rights,¹¹ often outnumber the percentage of those who oppose them (Lopez, 2016). For example, only 30 percent of Americans reported having unfavourable feelings towards transpeople, while the majority of people (29 percent) said that they would not be upset if their child was transgender, and 48 percent of Americans said that discrimination against transpeople should be illegal, compared to only 35 percent who said it should not be (Lopez, 2016)

¹¹ Lopez (2016) found that general support of transpeople in their right to use the gender appropriate bathroom is bimodal in distribution, with both 28 percent of respondents strongly supporting bathroom rights for transpeople as well as 28 percent being strongly against bathroom rights.

Similarly, the general public, while ironically still adverse to feminism,¹² mostly supports women's rights. In 2012, 49 percent of Canadians living in Ottawa supported a women's right to choose, while 57 percent of Toronto Canadians supported a women's right to have an abortion in 2016 (Ipsos, 2016; Kennedy, 2012). 70 percent of Canadians believe that gender inequality still exists in contemporary North America and 85 percent of Canadians support "efforts to increase the number of women elected in this country" (Equal Voice, 2008; Ipsos, 2016). In 2015, only 19 percent of the American population opposed the legalization of abortion, while 82 percent of Americans believe that women and men should have equal social, political, and economic rights and 69 percent said that they hoped that a woman would be elected president in their lifetime (Pew Research Center, 2015; Swanson, 2013).

The increase of social support for women and LGBTQ2+ people suggests that the last threads of the gender binary belief systems, its ideological expressions of cis-heteronormativity and sexism, which no longer have any material or economic basis, are now being challenged by the general public. As a consequence of changing economic and material conditions that diversified gender and sexual expression, most people not only increasingly recognize the existence of the LGBTQ2+ community, as well as women who are not confined by the traditional gender binary, but they actually support their rights to be gender and sexual minorities, or "outlaws."¹³ As civil and social rights for gender and sexuality minorities' increase, as the rights of minorities in general increase; as the LGBT population and "gender

¹² For example, 68 percent and 82 percent of Canadian and American women, respectively, claimed that they do not identify as feminists (Allum, 2015; Boesveld, 2015).

¹³ At the same time that women and LGBTQ2+ people gain more socio-political rights, the experiences and realities of non-white and non-middle/upper class bodies, which never existed within these boundaries in the first place, are becoming increasingly recognized and validated by the dominant culture of our time. For example, current popularized anti-racist initiatives, such as affirmative action, BlackLivesMatter, "I, Too, Am Harvard," The Abstraction Fund, Anti-Defamation League, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, The Anti-Racism Movement, and Anti-Racist Alliance, arguably demonstrate the increasingly mobilization of minority voices within North America.

non-normative” women, even those that are straight and cisgender, become more and more prominent, the flexibility of gender roles will inevitably become more obvious.

As gender roles become increasingly flexible and as cis-heteronormativity is increasingly displaced as the norm, the irrelevancy of the traditional gender binary will become apparent and, as a result, almost impossible to uphold in the face of extreme diversity and variation. How can capitalists maintain the charade that LGBTQ2+ people and women are less entitled to basic human rights, when compared to their male and cis-heterosexual counterparts, when you cannot turn on the television without seeing at least one popular TV show that positively showcases LGBTQ2+ people and/or empowered women? How can capitalists keep on ignoring the high rates of murder within the trans-community when calling Caitlyn Jenner, “Bruce Jenner,”¹⁴ insights a degree of moral panic within the twittersphere that rivals “elbowgate?”¹⁵ How is it to be expected that my generation will teach our children cis-heteronormative beliefs about the sexed body, when saying “that’s gay,” or “man up” in today’s society are willfully and enthusiastically met with the proclamations that such sayings are homophobic and sexist?¹⁶

The relevance of the gender binary ideology has been decreasing and if this trend continues the diversification of gender and sexual identity and expression will continue to grow.

¹⁴ Actor Drake Bell, in response to Caitlyn Jenner’s tagline for her cover photo on Vanity Fair, “Call Me Caitlyn,” tweeted the now infamous tweet “Sorry...still calling your Bruce.” Short after, there was an outcry of people on social media criticizing Bell for his transphobic comment, who ended up deleting the tweet and publicly apologizing (Nussbaum, 2015).

¹⁵ ElbowGate is a satirical term adopted by social media sites to refer to the public’s over-reaction to the instance in which Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, accidentally elbowed another legislator in parliament during a heated debate about assisted suicide (Phippen, 2016).

¹⁶ For example, Steven Petrow (2011) published an article for Huffington Post entitled ““That’s So Gay” Is Not So Funny.” Zaren Healey White (2014) posted an article entitled “5 Sexist Words And Phrases We Need To Stop Saying,” which included: rape (as a joke), man up, man-whore, bitch, and “grown some balls.” Duke University (Kingkade, 2014) also launched the campaign “You Don’t Say,” exposing the harmful attitudes behind certain phrases, including “man up,” “that’s gay,” “Oreo,” and “Run Like a Girl.”

Eventually, it will reach the point at which capitalism will no longer be able to exploit and marginalize people based on their gender and sexuality, not because it is immoral to do so, but because, without clear and definitive gender and sexual boundaries in place, they will not have easily identified targets to exploit and marginalize.

The next step for Queer Marxism would be to consider the emerging tension between existing political and legal rights that are awarded to LGBTQ2+ people and women within North American society and the apparent failure of our society to recognize and respect such groups as persons. Breaking down the gender binary ideology plays an important role in potentially undermining the relations of gender and sexual domination and subordination that support the relations of capitalist production by destabilizing its remaining ideological expressions of cisnormativity, heteronormativity, white genderism, and sexism. However, beyond this, the destabilization of such belief systems, in concert with the increasing rights of gender and sexual minorities, draws attention to the fact that our dominant culture expresses support for LGBTQ2+ people and women, while, at the same time, simultaneously attempting to maintain their marginality.

Marx may have not explicitly expressed it this way, but changes toward a celebration of universally shared identity should perhaps be considered an important stimulus for movement toward socialism. Queer Marxism takes seriously the capital foundations of gender culture and argues that capitalism has unintentionally contradicted its own interests by initiating changes in the mode of production that produced “gendered cultural contradictions,” and in so doing promotes recognition of the rights and identities of LGBTQ2+ and female *persons*. With a Queer

Marxist perspective, we, as sociologists, can now start considering how this cultural and legal recognition of gender and sexual minorities might impact the future of capitalism.

5.3 Discussion, Future Research, and Limitations

Chapters 1 through 3 of this thesis were devoted to first outlining the complex ways in which Marxism and queer theory both converge and diverge with one another in order to then set up a general logic for what has been identified here as a contribution to a Queer Marxist perspective (e.g., Landry and Mclean, 1993; Sears, 2005; Floyd, 2009; Arruzza, 2015; Liu, 2015). The remaining chapters identify and discuss some of the alienating effects of North American capitalist economic practices in order to support the claim that Queer Marxism is an important perspective for understanding the contemporary positions of women and LGBT people.

The revolutionary and critical knowledges that were developed by Marxist and Marxist feminists thinkers of the 1970s and 80s (Fraser, 1997) have in recent decades been displaced by a poststructuralist emphasis on themes of plurality and difference in feminist and queer thought. As a result, many contemporary theories of gender and sexuality increasingly downplay or sometimes ignore the role that capital plays in regulating the dominant gender and sexual order of a capitalist-based economy. This thesis, in contrast, builds upon the emancipatory logics of second wave feminism and “traditional” Marxism and synthesizes them with the contemporary poststructuralist concerns of plurality and difference. Accordingly, the important themes of intersectionality, diversity, context, and identity are discussed as being central to the development of a Queer Marxist perspective.

A Queer Marxism holds that while gender and sexual subjectivities are contextually dependent on one's relatively unique social perspective, the gendered social meanings that we ascribe to our individual expressions of gender and sexuality are still to some extent socially and historically dependent. Gender and sexual subjectivities are, in part, regulated by dominant gender and sexual roles and norms; yet, as unique, intersectional, and contextually dependent expressions of dominant gender ideologies, they can nonetheless diverge from and contradict hegemonic norms governing gender relations. Individual gender and sexual expressions and the forces of production both construct and reconstruct the gendered social meanings of North American culture within the broader context of the relations of capitalist production. For the most part, these relations reflect and help to maintain the "traditional" gender relations of the nuclear family unit, gender-based inequality, and gender-based exploitation (Wolf, 2009). Queer Marxism incorporates the contextual sensitivities of queer theory and rejects/critiques socially manufactured alienating identity categories, such as those of gender, race, sexuality, class, age, body-type, religion, (dis)ability, and ethnicity, that are imposed onto the body.

In this project, I have attempted to convey the importance of a Queer Marxism by discussing capitalistic forces and relations of production as they were manifested in the late 19th to mid-20th century. I have not investigated the possible impact of what appear to be significant changes in the practices of capitalism since then, such as the emergence of a debt-based economy or "financial capitalism." In addition, space limitations have prevented me from considering to any great extent the effects of neoliberalism on gender performativity and on the development of gender and sexual subjectivities, subjects that future research should investigate. Modern capitalism is becoming increasingly characterized by a cultural state of neoliberal individualism that has, in part, co-opted and thus undermined the significance of the social and political gains

won by decades of LGBT, race, class, and women activists struggling to fight against an oppressive capitalist regime (Campbell and McCready, 2014).

There appear to be additional, notable concerns that Queer Marxists should consider. One such concern is the need to document the effects of affective labour on the performance of online identity and how this may influence the development of self and gender in the everyday contexts of actual material and economic realms (Nakamura, 2002). Another important contemporary development that should be researched is how the growth of financial capitalism, and the use of financial leverage to override equity-capital, have possibly transformed regulatory gender and sexual divisions previously used to characterize actual and conceptual aspects of wage labour (O'Brien, 2007; Barret, 1988). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the financial crisis of 2008 suggests that future research should be focused on documenting the effects of increasing economic and social instability, and the accompanying increase of a debt-based economic system, on the social and public support lent to legal and political platforms that are advocating for the rights of LGBT people and women. Gender and sexual minorities have not only had disproportionately high rates of poverty throughout North American history, making them especially vulnerable to poverty and hardship in times of economic crisis, but have also been characterized as experiencing “merely cultural” oppressions (Butler, 1997; Dee, 2009). In an era of increasing economic precariousness, the interests of groups advocating for the rights of women and LGBT people run the risk of being pushed to the back burner of political debates in favour of more “pressing” issues such as homelessness and un/underemployment. And, seeing as minority groups such as LGBT people and women are especially vulnerable to economic instability themselves, this could have potentially devastating effects on their access to economic and political resources needed for personal and social growth and success.

Due to the lack of research done on the relationship between women *and* LGBT-based oppression and capitalism, there are still a multitude of questions and concerns regarding the current state of gender and sexual performativity within North American capitalism that have neither been addressed here nor within available Queer Marxist literature on the subject. However, despite the limited amount of research done on Queer Marxism, and on the relationship between LGBT oppression and a Marxist reading of capitalism, contemporary queer and Marxist theorists have still demonstrated a recent impulse towards resolving the conceptual division that exists between queer and Marxist domains of thought (Floyd, 1999; Sears, 2005; Floyd, 2009; Dee, 2009; Wolf, 2009; Arruzza, 2014; Liu, 2015). This recent impulse towards the creation of a Queer Marxism suggests a bright future for a Queer Marxist perspective in which all of the above mentioned unanswered questions, as well as many more, might be thoughtfully and critically considered as the field matures. It was not my objective in this current project to answer these questions, but rather to contribute to the building of a Queer Marxist logic for doing so.

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2016. (<http://theweek.com/articles/478511/5-surprising-modern-family-controversies>).

Curriculum Vitae

Name Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa

Education

2014-2016 M.A. Sociology
 The University of Western Ontario
 Classical and Contemporary Theory Specialization
 Thesis Title: An Examination of the Emergence of the Queer Figure in North
 American Culture Using a Queer Marxist Theoretical Framework

2009-2014 B.A. Honours, Sociology/English Language & Literature
 University of Western Ontario

Academic Work History

2014 – 2016 **Teaching Assistant**
 Introduction to Sociology, Department of Sociology, The University of Western
 Ontario

Responsibilities include facilitating class discussion, proctoring exams, meeting
 with students, evaluating assignments, grading participation, grading
 presentations, designing exam questions and emailing students.

Academic Awards

2009 **The Western Scholarship of Distinction**

2012 – 2014 **Deans Honour List**
 University of Western Ontario

2014 – 2015 **Graduate Student Teaching Award**
 University of Western Ontario
 This award recognizes outstanding graduate student Teaching Assistants. This
 award is given to a total of twenty Teaching Assistants annually and is awarded
 based on student nominations.

Related Work Activities and Training

- 2014 **The Spring/Fall Perspectives on Teaching Conference**
Audience Member
- 2014 -2015 **Future Professor Workshop Series**
This is a series of seminars that cover a wide range of topics which are designed to provide future professors with academic and career related skills and insight.
- Seminars attended include the following:
- *Using Social Media Effectively in the University Classroom*
 - *The Concept of Universal Design for Learning: Reaching a Diverse Group of Learners*
 - *Preparing an Effective Course Syllabus*
 - *Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement*
- 2015 **TA Training Program (TATP)**
This two and a half day intensive training program is designed for new TAs and includes workshops on grading practices, diversity in the classroom, leading discussions, using instructional technology and giving students feedback on written work.
- 2015 **The Teaching Mentor Program**
The Teaching Mentor Program provides the opportunity for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to be observed in their personal teaching environment and to receive valuable feedback from peers on their teaching methods.
- Four participants are assigned to each Mentor Group. All group members attend an organizational meeting; observe their colleagues' teaching and provide written and verbal feedback to their colleagues in a final feedback meeting.
- 2015 **The Form of the Neo-Slave Narrative Symposium**
Speaker: *A Marxist Critique of White Feminism in Valerie Martin's Property*
- 2015 **The Spring/Fall Perspectives on Teaching Conference**
Audience Member
- 2016 **Winter Conference on Teaching**
Audience Member
- 2016 **Guest Lecturer: 1021E Introduction to Sociology**

Lesbian Women and Health Behaviours: The Role of Gendered Sexuality

2016 **Guest Lecturer: 9021 Qualitative Research Methods**

Feminist Approaches and Standpoint Methodologies

2016 **Guest Lecturer: 1026G Controversies in Sociology**

LGBT controversies: The Roots of LGBT oppression

2016 **Graduate Student Conference**

Speaker: An Examination of the Emergence of the Queer Figure in North American Culture Using a Queer Marxist Theoretical Framework

2016 **Queer Research Day**

Speaker: An Examination of the Emergence of the Queer Figure in North American Culture Using a Queer Marxist Theoretical Framework

Non-Academic Work History

2008-2016 **Supervisor: Pizza Hut**

Responsibilities include: customer service, supervising and training employees, and managing the workplace environment.