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[–] **Abstract and Keywords**

The following chapter charts critical encounters with norms and normalization in feminist analysis and praxis. We pay particular attention to how anticapitalist, critical race, and decolonial feminist methodologies interrogate norm production and maintenance across a range of social, cultural, and economic heteropatriarchal formations. Drawing from the work of Michel Foucault, we consider norms and normativity in terms of both disciplinary subjection of individuals and their bodies and minds as well as biopolitical regulation of population dynamics. Feminist and queer critiques of same-sex marriage offers a case study of how critiques of norms and normalization have unfolded. Finally, we reflect on work of contemporary social movements, especially antiviolence and prison abolition, to see how critique of heteropatriarchal norms both animates such work and provides an opportunity for critical self-reflection of our own political formations.

Keywords: discipline, biopolitics, marriage, eugenics, women of color feminism, prison abolition

The concepts of the "norm," and processes of "normalization" are significant for feminist theory and activism. Feminist theories and activisms seek to dismantle conditions of heteropatriarchy, and to do so they provide an analysis of those conditions and the logics that sustain them. Feminisms approach cultural "common sense" about gender and sexuality critically, exposing how the putative facts about gender, bodies, family structures, and work roles are historically contingent and culturally constructed, as well as both harmful and open to transformation. Much of what feminists challenge are arrangements that have been deemed "natural," such as gender role assignments supposedly rooted in immutable bodily difference. Feminist methodologies and interventions vary with regard to which norms they interrogate. For example, liberal feminisms have taken aim at workplace inequality, examining normalized practices of labor division within families and wage labor systems to propose methods of increasing women's access to participation in wage labor systems. Meanwhile, anticapitalist feminists have argued that such interventions are not enough, and feminists must interrogate and dismantle patriarchal norms that structure the entire framework of racialized-gendered wage labor system rather than just seeking participation in them. Regardless of these differences among feminist interventions, the concept of the norm is crucial to a broad range of feminist inquiries and challenges, including inclusion and equality-seeking models and radical transformative approaches.

Where heteropatriarchal conditions (such as women doing the bulk of unpaid domestic labor) are cast as "natural" preferences or capacities, feminists argue that coercive racialized gender norms about motherhood, rather than anyone's fundamental nature, disproportionately force women into that work. Where rigid standards of body and appearance endanger health, feminists identify "beauty norms" as a serious concern, shifting attention to studying the enforcement of such norms and dismantling them rather than trying to get women to meet them or blaming women for being concerned with them. Understanding the ways that ideas and rules about gender structure the world as norms allows feminists to study how these norms are invented, enforced, and lived; how processes of normalization work. It facilitates inquiries into how norms are internalized, so that we enforce them on ourselves

and each other, despite the fact that such enforcement limits our realm of possibility or causes us suffering. Gender, itself, comes to be understood as a set of norms, rather than as a natural division among people.

Simone de Beauvoir's foundational interventions in *The Second Sex* expose how a range of myths about women's biology and psychology, along with mythological female-ideal roles, such as the virgin and the mother, establish and maintain the norm of maleness and consign women to the role of "other." Beauvoir (2011, 283) famously claims, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." This statement opposes the idea of an essential womanhood or femininity, arguing that gender is constructed and enforced by social indoctrination. Judith Butler (1990, 33) describes gender as "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being." Butler argues that "the body is not a mute facticity" (129). For Butler, gender is not itself a truth, but is instead a matrix of norms and repeated practices: "If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity" (136). "Femininity is thus not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment" (Butler 1993, 232). Butler shows that gender is a set of congealed, repeated practices that produce a field of regulation in which all people are compelled to perform in order to survive (Butler 1997, 20). She describes the task of feminist theory as such: "A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender" (Butler 1990).

The chapter that follows makes three related moves. First, we review Michel Foucault's conception of disciplinary norms and the normalization of populations to illuminate the centrality of interrogating norms and normalization to feminist inquiry and activism. We then demonstrate this feminist critique through the example of feminist criticism of same-sex marriage advocacy. Finally, we look at how concern with norms and normalization guides feminist criticism and self-reflection within social movement spaces and organizations to produce transformative understandings of collectivity.

Disciplinary Power and the Norm

The work of Michel Foucault is particularly useful for tracing how the concepts of "norm," "normativity," and "normalization" relate to feminist theories and activisms. Foucault's work intervenes in accepted accounts of how power works. Foucault argued that we often think of power as repressive, as a top-down dynamic in which those who hold power tell the powerless what they are forbidden from doing. Foucault argued that this view of power hides how power actually operates. Feminist theorists and activists have extensively used Foucault's alternative account to understand both how systems of gender and sexuality operate and what resistance struggles might look like.

Foucault argued that modern power is productive rather than repressive. The regulation of sexuality offered a key example. Foucault observed that people often think that the Victorian period was a time when repression of sexuality increased, what Foucault termed the "repressive hypothesis" (1990). This "common sense" story tells us that during this period new rules and regulations were created to control, for example, women's sexuality and masturbation in children, asserting a new code of silence and secrecy around sexuality. If one accepts the repressive hypothesis, the liberatory response is to "free" sexuality and ourselves by speaking openly about sexuality, including and especially our practices and desires that are considered deviant. Foucault argued that this story misses the real operation of power in the context of the new forms of regulation of sexuality that emerged during the Victorian period. Foucault described how the period that is often associated with increased sexual repression actually witnessed an explosion of discourse about sexuality. Rather than information about sexuality being silenced, such information proliferated as new scientific practices that named, described, and classified sexual acts as well as personas or identities associated with them. He famously described the invention of the homosexual, arguing that sodomy, which had been a criminalized practice among many others, was newly understood to signify a type of person who had a certain type of childhood and bore specific physical and mental characteristics (Foucault 1990). New treatments and practices were invented to manage and prevent sexually deviant behaviors and change, control and intervene on the newly invented deviant types. Sexuality became

central to how identity was understood, and enormous amounts of writing and talking about sexuality were required in order to make this happen. Rather than sex being silenced by a repressive kind of power that forbids, Foucault (1990) showed that sexuality was newly regulated through an incitement to speak about sex and sexual deviation; to know oneself and others as defined by sexuality; and to be hypervigilant about sex, sexuality, and the characteristics newly associated with deviant sexuality. Through this example, Foucault demonstrated this kind of productive power, arguing that power operates by generating knowledges about the world that shape the world. Foucault's description of power as productive rather than repressive draws our attention to the mechanisms that produce and enforce norms. Bodies, subjectivities, and their relations in space come to be in relation to norms of embodiment, behavior, and thought. Norms generate a magnetic pull in the productions of biopower.

Gender and sexuality theorists have extensively used these insights to analyze disciplinary power, power that establishes norms of good behavior and ideas about proper and improper categories of subjects. Disciplinary practices congeal in certain institutional locations such as the school, the factory and the clinic, where proper behavior is codified at the level of detail, and subjects are formed to police ourselves and each other according to these norms (Foucault 1990). Feminist activists and scholars have accounted for the development of this kind of normalizing power, and how this power works both through institutions (including families, schools, and hospitals) and through the internalization of these norms within the subjects of those institutions. The invention of various categories of proper and improper subjects, such as categories of sexual deviants, is a key feature of disciplinary power. Creating these types or categories of people requires establishing and maintaining guidelines and norms that guide the process of diagnosing or labeling.

Feminists have examined invented types like "the hysterical woman," "the welfare queen," "the good mother," "the slut," "the bitch," and many other normalizing figures. The existence of these categories relies on the constant reproduction and enforcement of racialized gender norms that govern sexual behavior, speaking styles, diet, emotional range, punctuality, manners, dress, and much more. Discourses in the social and medical sciences, popular media, criminal and immigration systems, education, and social services industries produce and uphold these norms and the stories that elicit belief in these types of people. The norms produced in these discourses are enforced through institutions that diagnose, evaluate, take formal or informal disciplinary action, or require trainings, as well as through social or internal approval or shaming. Through these processes, we learn to be appropriately afraid of being labeled in particular ways, and we learn what ideals to strive to become. We learn the norms that govern being a proper man or woman, girl or boy, soldier, worker, parent, student, member of our racial group, consumer, patriot, or member of our racial, ethnic, religious, and/or subcultural group. These norms and codes of behavior reach into the minute details of our bodies, thoughts, and behaviors. Feminists have, for example, extensively critiqued how the beauty industry produces voluminous products and media to promote those products to alter every minute aspect of women's bodies, from cuticles to labia shape to body hair and odors. These industries thrive when women internalize these norms, learn to be hypervigilant about their conformity, and relentlessly chase beauty ideals that are for the most part unacheivable. Disciplinary norms keep us in our places by helping us know how to be ourselves properly and establishing internal and external monitoring systems.

Foucault's examination of disciplinary power can be read to suggest that as disciplinary norms become internalized, more directly coercive or violent means of social control are replaced by self-regulation, so that "soft" control replaces direct violence. Anticolonial feminist theorists, including Ann Laura Stoler, Rey Chow, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, have critiqued this historicization, arguing that direct violence and threats of violence accompany disciplinary norms (Stoler 1995, 2002; Chow 2002; Spivak 1988). Violent enforcement of these norms operates alongside internalization of them. One example is the enforcement of racialized and class-specific gender norms in women's prisons in the United States. US prisons have long forced women to participate in "rehabilitation" programs that aim to train them as domestic workers or to do the type of unpaid domestic labor that is typically considered "women's work." Inside carceral systems women's rehabilitation and readiness to leave prison has often been judged based on performance of gendered norms such as appearing passive, humble, meek, vulnerable, and prepared for roles as house cleaner and child-care provider. Women who are perceived to be aggressive or unfeminine, especially black women, who are consistently cast as outside standards of femininity that center whiteness, receive increased punishment and increased likelihood of having their parental rights terminated in the related child welfare system (Roberts 2002, vi). The racialized gender norms enforced by the criminal punishment and child-welfare systems overlap with those in the outside world, and are internalized by

women in these systems to varying degrees just as by those outside. But these standards are also enforced in an exceptionally violent context using means of coercion that are very direct, such as keeping people in cages in isolation from their homes and communities; denying healthcare and adequate nutrition; subjecting people to conditions that amount to torture, such as solitary confinement and sexual violence; and terminating parental rights (Arkles 2009; Idaho Department of Corrections 2009; Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council 2011, 19, sect. J; Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock 2011, ch. 5; Bureau of Justice Statistics 2012, 18–19, 30–31).

Scholars and activists have also documented the ways that systems and institutions that create norms of mental health and categorizations of deviance use both "soft" and "hard" control to enforce racialized gender norms (Scholinsky 1998; Jackson 2002; Bird n.d.; Metzl 2009; Kanani 2011; Haritaworn 2013; LeFrancois, Reaume, and Menzies 2013). Violating gender norms makes people vulnerable to being labeled mentally ill and potentially being imprisoned, experiencing forced medication, or other loss of bodily autonomy and subjection to violence (Metzl 2009). Similarly, rehabilitation is often assessed according to a person's compliance with gender norms. Feminist theorists in trans studies have particularly examined this with regard to mental health diagnoses that are about failing to meet gender norms, such as gender identity disorder and gender dysphoria (Wilson, Griffin and Wren 2002; Spade 2003; Wilchins 1997). These diagnoses produce categories of "healthy" and "unhealthy" ways of being gendered, pathologize people whose gender identities or expressions deviate from the rigid norms of the binary gender system, and create systems of vigilance where people, especially children, must be subject to surveillance for signs of variance and "treated" to correct as needed. The creation, maintenance, and enforcement of these norms is wrapped up in systems of scientific expertise and authorizes particular professionals as gatekeepers, and can include forced or denied medication and other healthcare treatments, including "reparative therapies" and involuntary psychiatric imprisonment. Gender norms, then, operate both through constant internal enforcement in each of us as we daily prepare our appearances, modulate our voices and gaits, and feel shame about our bodies as we move through all the institutions of social control and deviance management that are authorized to intervene directly on the bodies of those categorized as violating these norms.

Much feminist theorizing and activism can be understood to be resistance to disciplinary power and the enforcement of racialized gender norms. Feminist resistance to this kind of control often focuses on opposing norms that center maleness; gender binarism; whiteness; heterosexuality; Christianity; and standards of beauty, health, intelligence, and reason that produce violent hierarchies of value. One key intervention of these strategies is to expose norms as norms, denaturalizing them. When feminists show that women are not naturally sexually passive and vulnerable, but, rather, are perceived as such and coerced to be so in a culture dominated by severe sexual violence, the romance myth, and the privileging of male sexuality, they are exposing gender norms and challenging them, arguing that things could be another way. When activists form consciousness-raising groups that encourage people to question standards about how they perceive their own bodies and identities and replace those norms with other ideas that they consider better, they are engaging with disciplinary power. White feminist activists and intellectuals in the 1970s are a commonly cited example of this type of work, but it was taken up broadly at that time by Puerto Rican, Black Power, lesbian and gay, and women of color groups, among others. Such groups examined white beauty standards, heterosexism, monogamy, hierarchical governance styles, and other norms and proposed alternatives ranging from natural hairstyles to polyamory to vegetarianism to collective governance structures. In all these movements, discussion of gender roles, beauty myths, and sexual violence played an important part.

Critique of media representations of women is another example of feminist resistance to disciplinary norms. The famous Bechdel test, proposed by artist Alison Bechdel, is a well-known example of this kind of critique. The test asks whether a work of fiction features at least two women who talk to each other about something other than a man (Associated Press 2013). The test is a commentary on the fact that in most representations of women in fiction, women's relationships with men are prioritized over all other relationships. Women are consistently depicted as solely interested in heterosexual love and romance, and their lives are only important with regard to how they relate to men. The Bechdel test is a popular critical tool and commentary on how media representations enforce harmful gender norms.

Feminist media critique can also be seen in feminist scholarship and activism about welfare policy. Black feminists, in particular, have extensively analyzed how deviant mythological types of black women invented and circulated by white scientists, scholars, media producers, and politicians are mobilized in debates about welfare policy (Neubeck and Cazenave 2001; Mink 1990; Sparks 2003). Patricia Hill Collins has named these "controlling

images." The figure of the "welfare queen" was famously invoked by Ronald Reagan in a 1976 speech but was based in long-standing discourses dating back to the chattel slavery system in the United States about black women as sexually immoral, overly reproductive, irresponsible, greedy, and unfeminine. This image has consistently been portrayed in welfare debates. Black feminist scholars and activists have attacked this portrayal, exposing how it is invented by various institutions of expert knowledge, how its circulation demonizes and harms black women and black populations more broadly, and how it becomes enforced by individual caseworkers in welfare offices on a daily level to deny black families government services (Ernst, Nguyen, and Taylor 2013). Feminists have observed how racialized gender norms circulate in the welfare debate and in the broader context of debates about women's roles in the workforce and in domestic labor. While the myth of the "welfare queen" and the policies it is used to promote portray black mothers as lazy and undeserving if they do not work outside the home for a wage or in "workfare" while raising small children, white women are often encouraged to give up wage labor and be stay-at-home moms. Gender norms about labor roles portray an ideal of white motherhood that drastically contrasts with the way black motherhood in interpreted, and different forms of coercion apply to enforce these norms. Examination of these roles, the norms that govern them, and the institutions and arrangements that enforce them is a central task for feminism.

Foucault's description of disciplinary power as productive rather than repressive can help develop feminist perspectives on how resistance can be mounted against heteropatriarchy. When we imagine power as primarily repressive, we often imagine that to make change the main thing is to go to those who "have power" and are at the top of the hierarchy, and take over their roles and/or convince them to pass new rules and laws forbidding the prior behavior. So, for example, we might prioritize passing laws to make sex discrimination, rape, domestic violence, sexual orientation discrimination, and gender identity discrimination illegal. These actions, according to a view of power as repressive, should work to make the operations of heteropatriarchy stop. Interestingly, many of these things have happened in the United States. Yet sexual violence and intimate-partner violence remain endemic; the wage gap has not been eliminated; people still work in highly gendered labor roles (such as 90 percent of secretaries are women) that correlate to pay inequity; parenting roles remain highly gendered and parenting labor remains inequitably divided; and, in general, rigid gender norms remain vibrantly alive and violently enforced. Some would even argue that the passage of such laws exacerbates heteropatriarchal conditions because it serves as a mask for these conditions, creating an illusion of equality and of the government as the protector and guarantor of equality, meanwhile apparatuses of racialized-gendered violence, such as the child-welfare, criminal punishment, and immigration enforcement systems, expand. By reconceptualizing how power works and attending to different forms of power, we can account for the seeming contradictions of systems where control occurs in multiple intersecting ways, including through processes of norm creation and enforcement that help us all see, experience and reproduce ourselves and the world according to racialized gender hierarchies.

Biopolitics and the Norm

Discipline was not the only model of power that Foucault described. Foucault also analyzes what he calls "biopolitics," and an understanding of biopolitics and its relationships to discipline is important for understanding the significance of the concepts of norms and normalization to feminist theories and activisms. While Foucault's model of disciplinary power helps elucidate the ways that norms and processes of normalization in terms of gender, sexuality, and race operate in systems of heteropatriarchy, Foucault also offers a statistical sense of norm that operates at the level of population. Foucault uses the term "biopolitics" to describe normalization at the level of populations. Whereas the objective of disciplinary power is to invest in and shape individuals' subjectivities, bodies, behaviors, and interactions, biopolitical power shapes at the general level of population composition. Foucault points to the emergence of state-based statistical gathering practices and the emergence of demographic sciences as evidence of the emergence of biopolitics.

Foucault also points to the ways that processes of normalization are central to biopolitical projects. For Foucault, the consolidation of a population also involves identifying and eliminating the "weak" elements in that population. Weak here designates anything that seems to interfere with or threaten the growth of the population, especially figured in terms of a national population and its relationship to the economy of the state (Clough and Willse 2011). Foucault uses the term "state racism" to describe the process of identifying and cutting out weak elements. This "cutting out" occurs both indirectly through social abandonment, and more directly through mass killing. While Foucault emphasizes that the racism he uses implies the "human race" and he is not thinking only of racialized

categories of life, analysis of the racial state and racial capitalism, following David Theo Goldberg (2001) and Cedric Robinson (2000), among others, reminds us that racial subordination is central to the project of nation-state making, and hence to a biopolitics of the population as well.

Biopolitics as a racial project of homogenization that requires killing off weak elements means that eugenic projects, far from an aberration of modern society, are central to any modern state. To understand this claim, we can look to how Foucault writes that the norm travels between the realms of disciplinary and biopolitical power:

> In more general terms, we can say that there is one element that will circulate between the disciplinary and the regulatory, which will also be applied to the body and population alike, which will make it possible to control both the disciplinary order of the body and the aleatory events that occur in the biopolitical multiplicity. The element that circulates between the two is the norm. The norm is something that can be applied both to a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize.

> (Foucault 2003, 253)

Foucault also argues that sexuality serves as a kind of hinge between individuals and the population, suggesting that this may explain why sexuality achieves such a important and contested status in modern societies. Rey Chow has amended Foucault's history of sexuality, arguing that it might be better framed as a description of the "ascendancy of whiteness." In so doing, Chow draws out the centrality of processes racialization submerged in Foucault's account and highlighted by critical feminist interventions. With this in mind, we can understand better the emergence of the women's birth control movement in the United States in the early twentieth century in relation to race population control strategies. Following both emancipation and new waves of immigration, fears of a "race suicide" circulated among white elites in the United States (Haraway 1984/85, 57). Margaret Sanger's campaign to provide women with information and means for birth control was not simply a feminist project. Rather, it was meant to provide tools for poor white women and women of color to curb what was seen as their hyperreproductivity, a reproductivity that threatened to outnumber the children borne of the proper elements of US society, middle-class and wealthy white women. Here, then, we see the collusion of norms of behavior, including new norms of "empowerment," to use a modern phrase, in women taking control of their bodies by using birth control with statistical norms of the racial and class composition of the US society. This is exactly the subtle forms of state racism Foucault argues characterize the modern state, a kind of positive eugenics of growing the right kind of population by cutting out in advance the wrong kinds. Here we see processes of norming at the level of individual discipline and the normalization of population forms and patterns. Feminists have used terms like "population control" and "ethnic cleansing" to talk about this kind of normalization of the population, where the growth of certain elements is encouraged while attempts are made to reduce the prevalence of subpopulations that are considered undesireable.
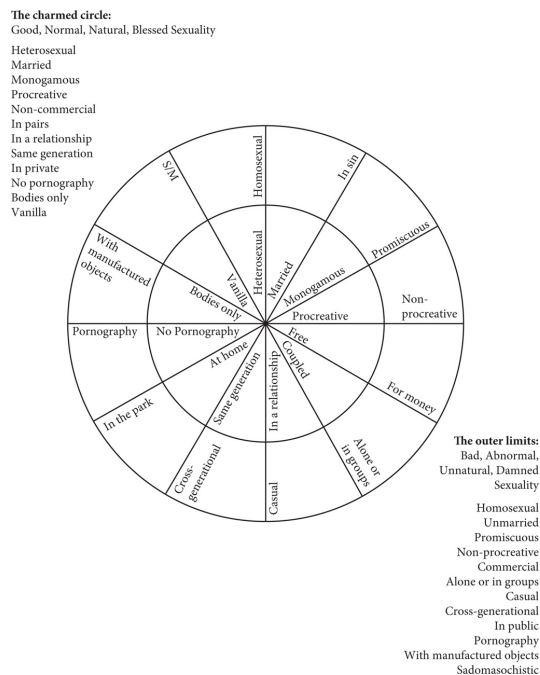
Less subtle versions of this have persisted as well, as evidenced in the history of forced sterilization of indigenous, black, and Puerto Rican women in US health clinics. Sterilization has been a regular practice in US prisons as well, emphasizing again feminists' insistence that directly violent forms of domination and control have accompanied the emergence of disciplinary regimes of self governance. Bringing a biopolitical analysis forward helps keep the violence of modern normalization in view.

Applying an Analysis of Norms and Normalization When Strategizing Change: Case Study on Heteropatriarchy and Same-Sex Marriage Advocacy

Foucault's emphasis on norms, categorization, and processes of normalization are vital insights for feminist resistance strategies. Foucault's work draws attention to some significant traps that people and groups resisting heteropatriarchy can fall into if we employ an oversimplified understanding of power. When power is conceived of as repressive, the imagined solution is often to redeem what is repressed and have that despised identity or category become accepted, tolerated, or even supported. To follow Foucault's famous example of homosexual identity, from the perspective of the repressive model of power, it would make sense to attempt to move homosexuality out of being labeled criminal and deviant and toward being understood as a normal and acceptable variation with sexual practice and identity. Indeed, this has been one strategy of gay rights reformers in the United States—to get sodomy decriminalized, to remove the bar to military service for gays and lesbians, and to advocate for sexual orientation non-discrimination laws and for same-sex relationships to be recognized as the same as

heterosexual relationships by allowing same-sex couples to marry. These reforms seek to change laws understood to repress homosexuality, and to instead establish in law that gay and lesbian people and their relationships must be treated the same as heterosexual people and relationships. Such reforms purport to achieve equality by having the authority of law (where power is understood to reside) come down on the side of "gays are the same" rather than "gays are different and bad." This model seeks to punish discriminators and eliminate legal distinctions.

The charmed circle:
Good, Normal, Natural, Blessed Sexuality

Heterosexual
Married
Monogamous
Procreative
Non-commercial
In pairs
In a relationship
Same generation
In private
No pornography
Bodies only
Vanilla

The outer limits:
Bad, Abnormal, Unnatural, Damned Sexuality

Homosexual
Unmarried
Promiscuous
Non-procreative
Commercial
Alone or in groups
Casual
Cross-generational
In public
Pornography
With manufactured objects
Sadomasochistic

Click to view larger

Figure 1 The sex hierarchy: the charmed circle versus the outer limits.

Source: Rubin (1984).

When processes of normalization are considered, change seekers can assess whether a particular approach will have the transformative impact they hope. Gayle Rubin's famous 1984 essay "Thinking Sex" helps illustrate how the project of becoming accepted, or being declared the same as heterosexuals, is at odds with feminist approaches to dismantling sexual hierarchies created by heteropatriarchal regimes of normalization. Rubin describes how systems that hierarchically rank sexual practices change as part of maintaining their operations of control. Sexuality is divided into those practices that are considered normal and natural—what she calls the "charmed circle"—and those that are considered bad and abnormal—the "outer limits." Practices sometimes cross from the outer limits to the charmed circle. Unmarried couples living together, or, perhaps, homosexuality when it is monogamous and married, have moved in mainstream US culture from being highly stigmatized to being considered acceptable (see Figure 1).

These shifts, however, do not eliminate the ranking of sexual behaviors. In other words, the shifts do not challenge the existence of a charmed circle and outer limits—they do not disrupt a system in which people are coerced and shamed into engaging in certain practices and not others. Freedom and equality are not achieved when a practice crosses over to being acceptable. Instead, such shifts strengthen the line between what is considered good, healthy, and normal and what remains bad, unhealthy, stigmatized, and criminalized. The line moves to accommodate a few more people, of whom society suddenly comes to approve, adjusting the system and keeping it in place. The legal marriage system—along with its corollary criminal punishment system, with its laws against lewd behavior, solicitation, indecency, and the like—enforces the line between which sexual practices and behaviors are acceptable and rewarded, and which are contemptible and even punishable (Extein 2013; Pittman 2013; Center for HIV Law and Policy 2013).

The trouble with the strategy to "get the law to say gay is the same" is that it promotes equality within the oppressive frame of heteropatriarchy. Rather than questioning the terms and categories through which sex, love, and romance are disciplined and controlled, this approach embraces such terms and categories and reproduces

them. Critique of romance and marriage as cultural institutions central to the subjection of women, the creation of harmful gender roles, and cultivation of sexual violence is part of the bedrock of feminist thought. As feminists have attacked the institution of marriage, they have both attacked the romantic myths that accompany it and hold it up, and drawn attention to the structural violence in the way that marriage as a legal institution is used to distribute such basic needs as healthcare and immigration status.

As part of seeking entrance into marriage, gay rights advocates have taken up messaging that is deeply invested in these same myths and reproduces them. Same-sex marriage advocacy has included talking points about how children benefit from having married parents, about how expressing love through marriage is important to human dignity, about how married love is the most important relationship people can have, about how the marital family is the proper place for care to happen. Feminists have fought to remove stigma from unmarried childbirth, to expose marriage as a form of social control rather than a voluntary bond based in love, to expose marriage as a key site of sexual and gender violence and labor exploitation, to break stereotypes that declare women "selfish" if they are not willing or able to endlessly provide care labor in the marital family, and to expose how marriage is a site where women are forced into unpaid care labor while governments and employers reap the benefits of the workforce being reproduced by this uncompensated work. Roles and categories that feminists have critiqued and worked to denaturalize, such as "good wife," "romantic couple," and "legitimate family," have been embraced by same-sex marriage advocacy. Rather than being concerned with the harmful norm enforcement entailed in the maintenance of these categories, these advocacy efforts have sought to prove that gay and lesbian people can also occupy these roles and carefully follow the norms they require.

Feminist scholars and activists have imagined a break from the norms of romance and the marital family, but same-sex marriage advocacy has introduced a new celebration of the traditional trappings of the institution of marriage, complete with blood diamonds, white gowns and destination weddings in colonized locales. Feminists have dared to imagine a world in which sexuality and reproduction was not tied to the couple form or the marital family, in which the moral enforcement of sexuality through the figures of "slut," "mistress," "adulterer," and "faithful spouse" might fall away, in which people would not spend their lives believing that being unmarried is a personal failure, or remain in harmful marriages because of emotional and economic coercion. Further, they have dared to imagine a world in which immigration status, healthcare, and other life necessities are not conditioned on entering into the state-approved family form. Such imaginings and proposals challenge the disciplinary norms of marriage and the romance myth, and are deeply at odds with a project that identifies liberation not by questioning norms and exposing their operations to dismantle them, but by being considered normal.

In addition to analyzing the limits of same-sex marriage advocacy from the perspective of disciplinary norms, feminist scholars and activists have also articulated how such advocacy abandons feminist analysis of the ways that marriage is used to manage populations. Specifically, feminist analysis has exposed how marriage is an apparatus of racialized-gendered population control—a key tool of anti-black racism, xenophobia, and colonialism that ensure that black people, native people, immigrants, and other racialized people are controlled, subjected to significant state violence, displaced, and disposed of.

Since the founding of the United States, regulating family formation has been key to anti-black racism and violence (Spillers 1987; Hartman 1997; Willse and Spade 2013). Slaves were not allowed to marry. Denying the family ties of slaves was essential to slavery—ensuring that children would be born enslaved and maintaining black people as property rather than persons. Sexual violence against black women was central to the system of racial chattel slavery. After emancipation, the US government scrambled to control black people, coercing marriage among newly freed black people and criminalizing them for adultery as one pathway of recapturing them into the convict lease system. After *Brown v. Board of Education*, which challenged formal, legal segregation, illegitimacy laws became a favored way to exclude black children from programs and services (Mayeri 2011).

The idea that married families and their children are superior was and remains a key tool of anti-black racism. Black families have consistently been portrayed as pathological and criminal in academic research and social policy based on marriage rates, most famously in the Moynihan Report (US Department of Labor: Office of Policy Planning and Research 1965). Anti-poor and anti-black discourse and policymaking frame poverty as a result of the lack of marriage in black populations. President Bill Clinton's 1996 dismantling of welfare programs, which disproportionately harmed black families, was justified by an explicit discourse that said that poverty results from unmarried parenthood (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act 1996). Under both

President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama, "healthy marriage promotion" initiatives have been used to encourage low-income women to marry, including at times offering cash incentives (Silag 2003; Olson 2005). Demonizing, managing, and controlling black people by applying racist and sexist marital family norms to justify both brutal interventions and "benign neglect" has a long history in the United States, and remains standard fare.

Enforcement of gender and family formation norms has also been central to the processes of colonization of North America by European settlers. Colonizers often portray invasion as rescuing colonized populations from their backward gender and family systems. Forcing indigenous people to comply with European norms of gender, sexuality and family structure and punishing them for not doing so has been a key tool of US settler colonialism in North America. Marriage has been an important tool of land theft and ethnic cleansing aimed at disappearing indigenous people in many ways. The US encouraged westward settlement by promising male settlers 160 acres to move west, plus an extra 160 if they married and brought a wife (Matthew n.d.). At the same time, the United States criminalized traditional indigenous communal living styles, burning longhouses where indigenous people lived communally, eliminating communal landholding methods, and enforcing male individual ownership. Management of gender and family systems was and is essential to displacement and settlement processes. Enforcing gender norms in boarding schools as part of a "civilizing mission," and removing children from native communities through a variety of programs that persist today are key tools of ethnic cleansing and settlement in the United States (Morgensen 2010; Smith 2005; Rifkin 2011).

The racialized-gendered ethnic cleansing that produced and produces the United States, of course, requires not only the displacement and erasure of indigenous people but also racialized-gendered population control at the borders. Since its origins, US immigration law has put in place mechanisms for regulating those migrants it does allow in, always under threat of deportation, and labeling other migrants "undesirable" to make them both more exploitable and easier to purge. Keeping out poor people, people with stigmatized health issues, and people of color has been urgent an national priority. Marriage has been one of the key valves of that control. The Page Act of 1875, the first restrictive federal immigration law in the United States, sought to keep out Asian women, hoping to prevent Asian laborers in the United States from reproducing, but allowed the immigration of Asian merchants' wives (Abrams 2005). Marriage continues to be a deeply unjust tool of immigration control in the United States, with marital family ties being one of the few pathways to immigration. One impact of this system is that it keeps people trapped in violent and harmful sexual and family relationships because their immigration status depends on it (Dutton, Orloff, and Haas 2000).

Given these analyses of marriage as a key tool of normalization at the population level, feminists have questioned the wisdom of same-sex marriage advocacy which, rather than challenging the ways that marriage regulates access to property, healthcare, and immigration status to maintain white supremacist and colonial arrangements, embraces marriage and an institution and seeks to slightly reform it so that those who may benefit from it within gay and lesbian populations can get their piece of the action. Marriage operates as a tool of population regulation, cultivating the life of the desired population, and producing conditions of vulnerability, ranging from lack of access to healthcare to imprisonment and deportation, for those marked as disposable or threatening.

Norms and Normalization in Feminist Resistance Formations

Analysis of norms and normalization processes allow feminists opportunities to evaluate the impact of heteropatriarchy across several scales—our individual psyches, our immediate interactions with other individuals, our experiences of coercive institutions, and the broad management of populations by multiple, overlapping structures and methods of governance. In addition to helping feminists assess these conditions and evaluate various resistance strategies to see how they might participate in or dismantle various norms, an analysis of norms and normalization also draws our attention to our own methods of organizing ourselves. Biopolitics and state racism, and the processes of normalization they require, are not limited to governments. Any group that imagines a good way of life and the kinds of people who would live that life and be the ideal subjects of that life is creating and enforcing norms. Various social movements, including the nationalist anticolonial and antiracist movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, often imagined a revolutionary subject that was, by default, male, and often reproduced heteropatriarchal gender and family formation norms in discourses about restoring power and ownership to those subjects (Combahee River Collective 1980; Yuval-Davis 1997; Kaplan et al. 1999; Anzaldua 1987; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Moraga 1983; Mohanty 1988). In the mid-sixties, women in the civil rights and

student movements made key interventions when they spoke out against being relegated to "second sex" status by men in the movement (Evans 1979). Black feminists and other feminists of color have analyzed how white feminism and white women's movements have imagined white women as the subjects of feminism, have centered their needs and struggles as the issues feminism is concerned with, falsely universalizing white women's experience as "women's experience" in ways that collaborate with and reproduce white supremacy (Moraga and Anzuldua 1981; Sandoval 2000). These analyses of the production and enforcement of racialized gender norms within resistance movements draw attention to both disciplinary and biopolitical processes of normalization as well as to their intersections.

At the disciplinary level, these analyses ask activists to consider the ways that we create social movement culture. What are our meetings and social spaces like? Who speaks and whose perspectives are privileged? What behaviors move people into leadership roles or get people kicked out? What norms about valued bodies, gender expressions, ways of having sex or forming families are enforced in the movement culture and how are they enforced? In contemporary movement spaces, we can see the impacts of these feminist inquiries. Contemporary social movement organizations frequently utilized "anti-oppression" curricula with members to address harmful dynamics within groups. Increasingly, feminist and queer organizing meetings begin with individuals identifying what pronouns they prefer to be referred by and what accessibility needs they have for the meeting. These innovations are the results of trans people and people with disabilities advocating for analyses of how these spaces reproduce ableist and transphobic norms and what might be done in the immediate context of a meeting to begin to shift these dynamics.

At the level of population, feminist activists have asked and continue to ask difficult questions about how to build processes into our work that address the tendency of groups to create internal enemies, people who can be expelled, denied, or forgotten in the name of the health or well-being of the life being cultivated. The systems of distribution that we seek to replace, whose exclusions and expulsions feminist scholars and activisms have documented carefully, must not be replaced with systems that, though using perhaps altered norms, still sort the population into those who will live and those who must die. Tools developed particularly in women of color feminist scholarship and organizing contexts that address this are critiques of institutionalization, critiques of hierarchy and a value for horizontal structures, consensus decisionmaking, and ongoing processes of self-reflection (see Nepon, Redfield, and Spade 2013; INCITE! 2007). These tools aim to disrupt forms of governance that establish norms and ignore or exclude those for whom the norms produce harm. These tools operate on an assumption that even the most well-intentioned individuals and groups will enforce harmful norms that make some people vulnerable, and that the processes of coming to understand, denaturalize and "unlearn" such norms is an ongoing one that requires ongoing vigilance and adaptation, facilitated by consistently working to critically reflect on processes of normalization. These tools represent lessons learned from the pitfalls of often rigid, norm-enforcing ideologies enforced within social movements.

Feminist prison-abolition work represents a vibrant location where feminist scholars and activists are deeply engaging an analysis of state racism and developing innovative social movement infrastructure. Scholars and activists have traced how the rise of the antiviolence movement in the US corresponded with a historical prison boom (INCITE! 2006; Ritchie 2012; Munshi 2010). White feminist antiviolence activists, in particular, embraced approaches to domestic and sexual violence that centered criminalization (Bumiller 2008). Women of color, immigrant, and indigenous feminists critiqued this turn, arguing that increased policing further endangered their communities and failed to get to the root causes of sexual and gender violence, and that feminist analysis of gender violence was being coopted to justify devastating racially targeted prison expansion (Crenshaw 1991; Smith 2005). Meanwhile, the prison-abolition movement in the United States has been growing, asserting a deeply transformative claim that prisons do not resolve violence, but *are* violence, and that imprisonment cannot be reformed to become just, safe or fair but instead must be abolished (Stanley et. al. 2012; Davis 1998). This claim significantly challenges the criminalization-centered approach to gender and sexual violence, which purports to resolve such violence by using the state's most coercive powers to neutralize harmdoers and convince potential harmdoers not to engage in violence. Feminist prison abolitionists argue that the institutional logics of state violence, in particular carceral control, were adopted by antiviolence movement organizations when they began to collaborate with state strategies of increased prosecution and enhanced criminal penalties, at least in part because the federal government made funding available to domestic violence agencies willing to focus on prosecution strategies. Feminist abolitionists assert an opposing view about resolving violence, one centered in prevention,

healing, resolution, and root causes (Creative Interventions 2012; Generation Five 2007; INCITE! and Critical Resistance 2001).

Particularly importantly, they contend that violence should be resolved without processes centered in shaming, labeling and exiling people. These processes are analyzed by such scholars and activists using wisdom from the disability justice movement, prisoners' rights movement and antiracist movements, among others, about how such processes relentlessly enforce racialized gender norms and disproportionately target vulnerable populations with state violence. They refute that such processes produce safety, and instead presume the existence of large apparatuses of caging and punishment to be inherently racist in Foucault's sense—designed to produce, label and bring on the death of those cast by harmful systems of meaning and control as "threats." These feminist abolitionists look for the root causes of gender and sexual violence not in bad individuals who need to be exiled but in the larger processes of normalization that produce uneven distributions of life chances, including the punishment system itself. Further, they imagine that people doing harm are not dangerous outsiders to be contained or extinguished (as imagined by the criminal punishment system) but are the people we already know, often intimately. They argue that we need not throw anyone away. Instead, feminist antiviolence work can be focused on preventing harm by addressing the root causes of violence and the reasons someone has engaged in violence if it has already happened, figuring out what s/he needs to never do it again, and addressing the reasons a survivor of violence was vulnerable and what s/he needs to be safe from experiencing this harm again.

This reimagining of the core work of the antiviolence movement is significant for feminist engagement with norms and normalization in several ways. First, it engages a critique of the feminist processes that produce internal enemies and justify exiling them for the safety of the population. Second, it imagines and experiments with alternative approaches while centering an awareness of the tendency to produce killable populations and a detailed analysis of the institutional modes and normalization processes that sort the population into those whose lives will be cultivated and those who are disposable. Third, while it asserts a bold vision of an alternative society that does not exile "dangerous others," it takes seriously the reality that norms and normalization are functions of human socialization and interdependency, and seeks to engage ongoing reflection and processes of democratization to address the harms produced by that tendency rather than imagining that it can be ultimately resolved. Feminist prison abolition work, for that reason, represents a site of engaged feminist critique of processes of norms and normalization that is deploying lessons learned in prior feminist experiments.

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