

Intimate Investments: Homonormativity, Global Lockdown, and the Seductions of Empire

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What forms of intimacies do we need to develop to truly realize social transformation?

— M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*

Imperial Project(s) of Promise and Nonpromise

As the killing of those at the margins of liberal and neoliberal sovereignty continues to be glamorized and fetishized in the name of ‘democracy,’ we are confronted with urgent questions about the ways in which life, death, and desire are being (re)constituted in the current political moment. The intensification of carnage wrought by empire has brought with it a renewed thrust to draw in precisely those who are the most killable into performing the work of murder. As we are seduced into empire’s fold by participating, often with glee and pleasure, in the deaths of those in our own communities as well as those banished to the ‘outsides’ of citizenship and subjectivity, we must ask: How are these seductions produced and naturalized?¹ What forms of (non)spectacular violence must be authorized to heed the promises being offered by empire? These are the central problematics this paper engages.²

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In 2003, a host of U.S. LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) organizations lauded the Supreme Court's six to three majority in *Lawrence and Garner v. State of Texas*, a ruling that rendered sodomy laws unconstitutional, calling it "a legal victory so decisive that it would change the entire landscape for the LGBT community."³ One major LGBT legal advocacy organization stated, "the good feeling we get from watching *Will & Grace* has been transformed into social legitimacy and legal protection that LGBT people can take to the bank."⁴ Anthony M. Kennedy, writing for the court majority, expressed the unconstitutionality of the 1986 *Bowers v. Hardwick* case by stating, "When homosexual conduct is made criminal by the law of the state, that declaration in and of itself is an invitation to subject homosexual persons to discrimination both in the public and in the private spheres."⁵ Pregnant with the promise of democratic freedoms and futures severed from histories of colonization and other forms of violence and degradation, much of the mainstream LGBT movement rejoiced at the "decriminalization of gay sexuality" with no mention of the continued forms of conduct that are made criminal, and thus remain subject to state-sponsored and state-sanctioned violence in both the public and private spheres.

The expansive effort to repeal sodomy laws coincided with, and was bolstered by, a national push on the part of a variety of LGBT organizations to legalize same-sex marriage. Both campaigns were launched under the banner of privacy rights—the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's (NGLTF) campaign to repeal sodomy laws was aptly dubbed the Privacy Project. Not coincidentally, such efforts were spearheaded by a class of queer subjects in the leading strata of the neoliberal world order, those who "benefited" most from the increasing dominance of free market capitalism, structural adjustment policies, and the privatization of public space and welfare apparatuses.⁶ Both campaigns, fought in the name of equality, proved instrumental in consolidating precisely the political and material conditions they purportedly sought to contest. In the case of sodomy laws, mainstream LGBT organizations consisting largely of media strategists, lobbyists, and attorneys—a far cry from earlier incarnations of queer social movements—heralded the "decriminalization of gay sexuality," all the while leaving unnoted and undisturbed the ongoing criminalization and pathologization of "other sexualities." Meanwhile, such desires continued to be rendered deviant by the U.S. state. We see this contradiction embodied in a statement from the executive director of NGLTF following the *Lawrence* decision: "In 2003, it's appalling that states would still argue that there's nothing wrong with the police kicking down the bedroom doors of a gay or lesbian couple and arresting them for having intimate relations with the person they love."⁷ The statement makes clear which doors will and should continue to be kicked down, and which forms of intimate relations remain outside the bounds of state-sanctioned love. This newly accorded privacy (part and parcel of constituting neoliberal "individual liberty") annexes state repression to a perverse past by embracing a more tolerant future. In the case of gay marriage, the push for state-sanctioned

kinship reconsolidates the exclusionary practices of the institution of marriage. This move recodes “good” forms of national kinship (monogamous, consumptive, privatized) while punishing those that fall outside of them, particularly those forms of racialized and classed kinship that continue to be the target of state violence and pathology. Thus both campaigns actively court a limited and precarious equality in exchange for leaving the foundational antagonisms of capitalist liberal democracy unscathed.⁸

If it is no longer the bedroom of a “gay and lesbian couple” arrested for having “intimate relations with the person they love,” whose doors, then, will continue to get kicked down? And, precisely, which “gay and lesbian couple” is even conceivable in this statement? Eluding the grasp of the looming prison–police apparatus, the newly christened “love” of this imagined “gay and lesbian couple” can only come into relief in contradistinction to those forms of desire and intimacy whose deviance renders them commonsensical property of the state. It is no coincidence, then, that the police are being called up to legislate good and bad love during this political moment. To be sure, the ruling coincides with two decades of the rapid proliferation of an increasingly privatized and corporatized prison apparatus, police state, and militarized regime of repression. During the past three decades of neoliberal (re)consolidation, the number of mostly brown, black, and poor people locked away in the U.S. system alone has increased nearly three hundred–fold.⁹ As we will argue, it is against this backdrop of, borrowing the phrase from Julia Sudbury, “global lockdown” that the “love” mentioned above becomes imaginable and attainable.¹⁰

In this essay, we wish to follow Sudbury in expanding analyses of “global lockdown” to “other spaces of confinement” to account for the affective economies of the diffuse networks of punishment, mass warehousing, and criminalization that come to constitute overlapping carceral landscapes.¹¹ By “affective economies,” we refer to the circulation and mobilization of feelings of desire, pleasure, fear, and repulsion utilized to seduce all of us into the fold of the state—the various ways in which we become invested emotionally, libidinally, and erotically in global capitalism’s mirages of safety and inclusion. We refer to this as a process of seduction to violence that proceeds through false promises of an end to oppression and pain. It is precisely these affective economies that are playing out as gay and lesbian leaders celebrate their own newfound equality only through the naturalization of those who truly belong in the grasp of state captivity, those whose civic redemption from the category of the sodomite or the criminal has not been promised/offered (which one, it might not matter . . .) by the Supreme Court. It is precisely the aforementioned “good feeling” strategically deployed through homonormativization—mobilizations that barely mask the bloody, violent consequences of neoliberal privatization, the mass warehousing and liquidation of mostly brown and black bodies, and of imperial(ist) war—that we wish to locate alongside the pleasure and glee that we were all compelled to perform in the wake of Saddam Hussein’s execution. It is this circulation

of desire and relief continually shored up in support of the relentless lockdown and torture of prisoners in both declared and nondeclared sites of global war.

To (re)consolidate itself, empire requires and solicits the production of certain ways of being, desiring, and knowing (while destroying others) that are appropriately malleable for what comes to be constituted as the so-called new world order.¹² Just as the strategies of execution and criminalization are crucial to the practices of global war, including prisons, this strategy of creating and liquidating enemies is offered, quite importantly in the wake of trauma, as a solution for fear and insecurity. In other words, as the imperial hold grows all the more tenuous, more and more violence is required to maintain its virulent mirage.¹³ To deal with pain, fear, and insecurity, this logic tells us, the demonization and demolition of the racially and sexually aberrant other must be performed again and again.¹⁴ Moreover, within this imperial fantasy, this production, consumption, and murder of the other is to be performed with gusto and state-sanctioned pleasure, as a desire for witnessing executions becomes a performance of state loyalty.¹⁵ Likewise, in the case of prisons, it is the continual and powerful mobilization of discourses of “protection,” “safety,” and “victim’s rights” that elicit support for what seems to be limitless prison expansion.¹⁶ Lastly, it is our argument that this promise project is always reliant on a series of (non)promises to those on whom the entire production is staged. Offering certain classes of subjects a tenuous invitation into the folds of empire, there are always the bodies of (non)subjects that serve as the raw material for this process, those whose quotidian deaths become the grounding on which spectacularized murder becomes possible. Thus, while it is central to our thesis that the sexualized production of the racialized other holds together these ostensibly different moments, this is a variegated and heterogeneous process that simultaneously creates others as monolithic and draws up and exacerbates internal divisions within different communities. There are, thus, the “enemy Others” and the “other Others” whose life and death do not even merit mention or attention.¹⁷

Importantly, as we shall argue, we must locate what many have called “the homonormative turn” within this broader (heterogeneous) imperial logic: following the traumas of state-sanctioned repression of queer communities, the creation and obliteration of new outsides become the answer for ongoing pain and devastation. As exemplified in the U.S. state-supported HIV/AIDS pandemic—and the broader war on the poor, people of color, and dissidents launched in the wake of the radical social movements of the 1960s and 1970s—we are told that only an insatiable appetite for annihilation could soothe the pains of our pasts. We would thus locate the mobilization of highly individualized narratives of bourgeois belonging and ascension within a larger promise project that offers to some the tenuous promise of mobility, freedom, and equality.¹⁸ This strategy is picked up in a privatized, corporatized, and sanitized “gay agenda” that places, for example, gay marriage and penalty-enhancing hate crimes laws at the top of its priorities. This also helps us to understand the

ways in which revolutionary and redistributive yearnings that would challenge the foundations of the U.S. state, capital, and racial relations have been systematically replaced with strategies for individualized incorporation into the U.S. moral and politico-economic order. It is this promise project that has been crucial in rerouting so much of queer politics and longing from “Stonewall to the suburbs.”¹⁹

Resituating the Homonormative Turn

What bodies, desires, and longings must be criminalized and annihilated to produce the good queer subjects, politics, and desires that are being solidified with the emergence of homonormativity? As we have already suggested, it is a highly privatized, monogamous, and white(ned) docile subjectivity that has been decriminalized and ostensibly invited into the doors of U.S. national belonging through recent shifts in the gendered and sexual order. As we have also suggested, it is not only sexual and gendered arrangements that have been rendered flexible in the wake of neoliberalization but an entire retooling of the possibilities for life that is attempted through a neoliberal narrative of private rights, peace, and security. This move works hand in hand with a deeply racist and imperialist symbolic, affective, and material order that increasingly requires the soldiering, gatekeeping, and prison-guard labor of so-called formerly and currently marginalized subjects to this order.

One site where we might begin to explore how this process operates is a recent advertisement from the Human Rights Campaign’s (HRC) “Million for Marriage” campaign. The ad, partially reproduced on the next page, tells the story of Keith Bradkowski, a middle-aged white businessman, and his quest for state recognition of his relationship with his late partner, a flight attendant on the first plane that struck the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 (see fig. 1).²⁰ In stark black and white, the ad exudes a grave authority: a blurry American flag waves behind Bradkowski’s sharply framed head, his photograph flanked by a quotation from his testimony before the U.S. Senate. The quotation reads: “Terrorists killed people not because they were gay or straight — but because they were Americans.” The ad produces the prototypical good queer citizen: white, upwardly mobile, and willing to die in the battlefields to protect the security of the homeland, both within and outside of its borders. To proclaim that the terrorist attack was launched against a nation regardless of its citizens’ sexualities is to unite an imagined community of Americans in their common victimhood at the hands of foreign others. Through this move, the good queer citizen gains entrance into the nation through the displacement and explicit effacement of racial, sexual, and class antagonisms and inequities.

Theories of homonormativization, in part, offer us some insight into the moves performed in this advertisement, highlighting the turn embodied in the image of a white gay male — turned — imperial gatekeeper in the competition for (apparently limited) marriage rights. As defined by Lisa Duggan, “homonormativity” refers to “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assump-

“The terrorists killed people not because they were gay or straight –



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but because they were Americans.”

—Keith Bradkowsky, Sept. 4, 2003, testifying before the U.S. Senate

Like many Americans, my life was shattered on September 11, 2001. Jeff Collman, my devoted partner of 11 years, was an American Airlines flight attendant on Flight 11, the first plane to hit the World Trade Center. The last time I spoke with Jeff, he called to say, “I love you and I can’t wait to get home.”

Losing him was the hardest thing I have ever experienced. But because gay and lesbian couples in long-term, committed relationships do not have the same rights and protections under the law, Jeff’s death was only the beginning of my nightmare. For two years, I suffered through an expensive and stressful legal battle just to hold onto the life we built together.

Although we both always paid Social Security and other taxes, I wasn’t eligible for the death benefits offered to spouses. Even obtaining his death certificate was a monumental task.

Why talk about this now? Because extreme political organizations like Focus on the Family and the

Family Research Council are playing politics with the lives of people like me and Jeff. These so-called “pro-family” groups claim that providing basic protections to devoted gay couples would bring about “the end of society as we know it.”¹ They even want to amend the U.S. Constitution to deny any legal protections for gay partners and our families.

Meanwhile, gay and lesbian couples in long-term, committed relationships aren’t eligible for government-issued civil marriage licenses and the legal protections they provide. Although no government should ever tell religious institutions who they can marry, the government should not discriminate in providing civil marriage licenses to any devoted couple.



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION

America has problems – an uncertain economy, the loss of millions of jobs, and threats to our national security – but loving couples like us are not one of them. Like every other couple in America,

gay and lesbian couples in long-term, committed relationships deserve the same benefits and protections under the law.

¹ Sandy Riis, President of Concerned Women for America, October 2, 2003, National Press Club

Love and Commitment Deserve Protection.

To learn more please visit us at www.hrc.org

HRC commends the excellent representation provided to Keith by Lambda Legal, www.lambdalegal.org.

Figure 1. The Human Rights Campaign “Million for Marriage” advertisement featuring Keith Bradkowsky, whose partner, Jeff Collman, a flight attendant, died on September 11, 2001. Photograph taken by Judy G. Rolfe. Image © 2003 The Human Rights Campaign

tions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency, and a gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption.”²¹ Through the stress on monogamy, devotion, and a relationship constrained within the bonds of privacy and propriety, the ad participates in the demonization of all other forms of sexual expression, practices, and relations—as per Duggan’s argument, heteronormative logics are refueled in the production of the good gay subject. His taxes paid and his tie tightened, Bradkowski is called up to declare his allegiance to the U.S. nation-state through a moral economy of value in which (normative) queerness might be offered incorporation into the parameters of citizenship in exchange for violence. It is crucial to note that this is a bargain brokered in exchange for closing his eyes to other kinds of violence committed daily on bodies of other queers, indigenous, black, and other people of color, the terrorists, and members of the working class. Moreover, the ad reveals the interpenetration of the state’s war-making agenda, the mandates of capitalist interests, and the officially declared gay and lesbian agenda. This convergence of agendas can only occur within an assumed economy of scarcity in which the white gay male competes with the imagined terrorist and with job-stealing immigrants for limited recognition. Also implicit within this ad is the veiling of legacies and ongoing processes of slavery, colonialism, and imperial plunder that have enabled capital accumulation. “Although we both always paid Social Security and other taxes,” Bradkowski laments, “I wasn’t eligible for the benefits offered to other spouses.” Recapitulating a narrative of the deserving versus the undeserving (non)citizen, Bradkowski places himself in the category of the rightfully entitled and legal citizen who deserves rights, resources, and recognition not because he is alive but because he pays his taxes.

Many scholars who have taken up the homonormative to address the specifically racialized dimensions of neoliberal (re)structuring. Martin Manalansan, for example, has argued that a consolidating racist order is encoded within narratives of gay assimilationism and ascendancy in gentrifying neighborhoods in New York. Examining the gentrification that increasingly displaces queers of color through the criminalization of racially pathologized spaces, Manalansan shows how (certain) spaces of public queer sex and practice have become sites for the rounding up of immigrants and people of color in the ongoing war on terror. Juxtaposing this increased criminalization of queers and broader communities of color in the face of new elite gay spaces in gentrified neighborhoods, Manalansan productively traces the collaboration of neoliberal urban restructuring and the politics of homonormativity.²²

Manalansan’s analysis of the production of people of color as terrorists and criminals is helpful in unraveling the process of enemy production performed in the advertisement. In exchange for begging for state rights and recognition, Bradkowski participates in the process of creating new outsiders and outsides, those whose racial, sexual, and economic aberrance bear the mark of counter-national, as decidedly un-

American difference. The advertisement, then, operates as a homonormative revision of the “heteronormative patriotism” that Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai articulate in their essay, “Monster, Terrorist, Fag.” For Puar and Rai, the collaboration between heteronormativity and patriotism allows for certain forms of queerness (or sexual “deviance”) to be incorporated into the project of national reproduction while others are rendered continually abject, unworthy or unable to be assimilated into either hetero- or homonormative citizenship. They call this a “dual process of incorporation and quarantining,” whereby those sexualities and embodiments that fall outside of white heteronormativity must be contained and banished for the sake of national sexualities, even queer ones. The HRC ad dramatizes this dual process by allowing white, middle-class lesbian, and gay sexualities to enter citizenship while simultaneously participating in the policing and criminalizing of racially pathologized sexualities seen as threatening to the nation: the terrorist, the inmate, the “welfare queen,” the illegal alien. Importantly, as this process of creating spectacularized or exceptional enemies unfolds, there is always a simultaneous production of nonspectacular others, those whose lives and deaths do not even register within this moral economy. These are the forms of predatory and pathological sexualization that must be marked and liquidated for good (queer) citizens to stage their entrance into the body politic.

M. Jacqui Alexander has helped to articulate the ways in which this process of “incorporation and quarantining” is part of larger processes of “enemy production,” which are foundational to projects of nation- and empire-building. For Alexander, enemy production elicits the labor of gatekeepers in exchange for seductive promises of membership into the (so-called) new world order. Turning to the 2001 and 2002 forms of the U.S. PATRIOT Act, as well as to the National Security Act of 2004, Alexander traces how such acts exemplify the logics of empire that rouse desire to “explicitly and simultaneously link the imperial project to militarization and nation building.” In this production, a certain mooring of desire and the production and mobilization of pleasure is summoned up in the affective calling toward “enemy production.” This process, she argues, is crucial in the ongoing solidification of the prison industrial complex as a (re)colonizing gesture. As she writes:

Nation building can be . . . accurately understood as a form of hypernationalism with constituent parts: the manufacture of an outside enemy to rationalize military intervention, and secure the annexation of lands; the production of an internal enemy to rationalize criminalization and incarceration; the internal production of a new citizen patriot; the creation and maintenance of a permanent war economy, whose internal elements devolve on the militarization of the police and the resultant criminalization of immigrants, people of color, working class communities through the massive expansion of a punishment economy whose center is the prison industrial complex.²³

A populace increasingly willing to engage in this process must also participate in the production of an external enemy in the form of the “terrorist,” as well as the formation of an internal enemy in the form of the “criminal.” Such simultaneous formations anchor a desire for safety and security to the violent work of colluding with the state and the market in producing enemies, in turn justifying nothing less than murder. Stated otherwise, once such enemies and criminals are produced, their degradation and murder is ostensibly justified. Furthermore, these formations depend on the mobilization of racialized psychic and libidinal economies: “It is [a] dark inside threat that must be cordoned off, imprisoned, expelled and matched simultaneously with the extinction of the dark, external threat, in order that the borders of the fictive, originary nation be secured.”²⁴

With this in mind, we might return to the HRC advertisement to consider the process of nation- and empire-building operating through the practice of enemy production and the mobilization of desire. Looking more closely at the visual economies on which the advertisement draws, it is clear that the image of a white gay man holding a picture of his dead lover harkens back to other moments of mourning and loss within collective queer memory, especially those of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.²⁵ The photograph invokes an earlier moment of mass death (which, evidently, has shifted its target since the rise of the epidemic in predominately white gay communities in the late 1980s). The reader, constructed as queer or queer friendly, is meant to breathe a sigh of relief: this is not a death caused by egregious neglect and disavowal on the part of the state, the medical establishment, or our own families. Nor shall this particular death be blamed on poverty, discrimination, or the lack of any substantial welfare state or safety net to care for the working poor. Rather, in a swift and powerful reversal, the enemy is no longer the establishment but rather the “terrorist.” Killed or left to die not because he is queer but because he is American, Bradkowski’s lover’s death constitutes a neoliberal replay of queer mourning that solicits racist, xenophobic protection as the only way to redress the pain, insecurity, and even homo- and queerphobia that is left intact throughout this process.

Consigned now to the “past” is the ever-ravaging pandemic that continues to steal the lives of millions of poor and working-class people and people of color worldwide. Thinly covered over as well is the threat of death, the ongoing pain, despair, and grief that Bradkowski and his generation, race, and class of queers faced two decades ago. As we discuss, these forceful forgettings and re-memberings of life lost and discarded are vital strategies for the consolidation of the new world order.

Technologies of Empire: Sodomizations, Lockdowns, and Other Punishments to Come

With this analysis in mind, we argue that the homonormative turn must be located within a larger imperial project of promises and nonpromises that, while contin-

gent on incitements to fantasy and the mobilization of desire, cannot be confined to questions of “queer politics” as such. It is thus critical to connect various forms of homonormativization that fall outside of what is commonly identified as “the homonormative”—or even “the sexual”—to expose how this strategy of seduction as an affective calling is issued in varied and contradictory sites. For instance, as critical postcolonial and women of color feminists have pointed out, many social movements in the process of acquiring funds have “NGOinized” themselves, albeit contradictorily, as a “non-profit-industrial-complex” has been built up. In exchange for funding, this critique argues, NGOization has served to reroute radical political goals to desires for legitimacy, professionalization, and (relative) power.²⁶ Thus it is not only queers in the first world context whose intimate desires, feelings, needs, and hopes are sites of value for empire and neoliberal capitalism to draw into their fold, but all of us.²⁷ In these instances, seduction toward something better promises subjects an end to pain, marginalization, and violence in exchange for being recognized as legitimate subjects who can potentially participate in global capitalist relations and its futures—collusion becomes the cost of belonging. Lest we slip (back) into the realm of the hated, the despised, the killable, and the disposable (that is, if we ever had a chance to leave), we must actively support and often embody the threat of force that lies on the other side of this tenuous promise, or so the logic goes.

Stressing this politico-economic context, it becomes possible to read many of the contradictions of the homonormative moment *alongside* and *within* the recent intensification of the war on terror and of global lockdown. One could argue that it is not a coincidence that the Supreme Court reversed its decision on sodomy during the period in which the United States penetrated Afghanistan and Iraq. One may wonder what is at stake in these simultaneous modes of power relations: war and death, on the one hand, and the reinsertion of the constitutional rights of “sodomites,” on the other. If, for a second, we read the granting of constitutional rights to queer subjects as the moment at which a war becomes deployed on the bodies of Afghans and Iraqis, then we may wonder what is at stake with regard to the imperial order and its necessary subjects. Are the imperial order and its necessary subjects in crisis? Do these become strategies of reinserting a particular order and granting legitimacy to specific subjects, or do these become strategies of discipline and control within defined borders while anarchy and death are unleashed on others?²⁸

First, we must contextualize the *Lawrence and Garner v. State of Texas* decision. It is important to note that while Chief Justice John Roberts called for the support of the U.S. queers rights, he simultaneously called for the Guantánamo Bay detainees’ loss of rights in the United States Court of Appeals, for the District of Columbia Circuit, on July 15, 2005. What, then, does it mean to endorse queer rights within the borders of the United States while simultaneously justifying the nonspectacular “(non)scenes” of torture on other others?²⁹ We argue that these are not incidental or nonconnected moves, but form part of a continuous episteme: the

privatization of the freedom of the queer subject enshrines a culture of loss of rights for non-U.S. citizens while naturalizing the backdrop of (specifically black) (non) subjects within the United States whose civically dead or dying status has rarely been assigned rights to lose. The violence and torture of the detainee comprises the raw material on which the privatized, territorially contained (and also national) freedom of the U.S. queer is articulated. Here we see how the support of queer rights in *Lawrence and Garner v. State of Texas* becomes a stage for both the playing out as well as the masking of racial, class, and national contestations.³⁰

In taking a close look at the *Salim Ahmed Hamdan, Appellee v. Donald H. Rumsfeld, United States Secretary of Defense, et al.* case that Chief Justice Roberts supported twice in his appellate courts, we read:

Afghani militia forces captured Salim Ahmed Hamdan in Afghanistan in late November 2001. Hamdan's captors turned him over to the American military, which transported him to the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba. The military initially kept him in the general detention facility, known as Camp Delta. On July 3, 2003, the President determined "that there is reason to believe that [Hamdan] was a member of al Qaeda or was otherwise involved in terrorism directed against the United States." This finding brought Hamdan within the compass of the President's November 13, 2001, Order concerning the Detention, Treatment, and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism, 66 Fed. Reg. 57,833. Accordingly, Hamdan was designated for trial before a military commission.³¹

This case essentially grants to the president all power to make decisions regarding the future of those deemed terrorists. In this case, Hamdan, considered a member of al-Qaeda, had no rights to make any claims in U.S. or international courts, but rather had to be tried before military commissions. While his appellate court was considering this case, Roberts met with officials in the White House and was interviewed by George W. Bush to become the next judge on the Supreme Court. He ended up supporting twice the Bush administration's desire to legally acquire the presidential power to "try battlefield captives and foreign terror suspects before military commissions."³² As Bob Egelko writes, "In the 3-0 decision, written by another judge and joined by Roberts, the court allowed Hamdan's military trial to proceed and said that the U.S. courts cannot enforce the Geneva Conventions on behalf of individual detainees. On another issue, the court ruled 2-1 — with Roberts in the majority — that the Geneva Conventions apply only to nations and not to alleged combatants for terrorist groups." Of course, we may argue, along with many legal scholars, that he "was not required to remove himself from all government cases, but this was no ordinary case — Bush himself was a defendant, and the issues were crucial to his claims of presidential power."³³ Roberts's support of Bush's presidential power here ends up assuming and hierarchizing the episteme that claims and

assumes the power of the legal sovereignty of states in world politics thereby voiding individuals of any legal claims especially through the Geneva Conventions.

A reading territorialized and constrained to the United States might suggest that Roberts's position indicates a "liberal" or pro-queer stance. Moving away from such U.S.-centric readings, however, much more is revealed. In juxtaposing these two decisions, we come to recognize some of the tensions that emerge in the consolidation of the "new world order." Roberts's position in the sodomy case is informed by liberal principles of power and social relations if the focus is only inside the United States. With Justice Antonin Scalia's articulation of his position in the sodomy case we observe a shift from Roberts's dichotomization of the world (a strategy nevertheless of power) into sovereign nation-states, internally ordered and organized and with anarchy outside them. Scalia's position is based on moral grounds and seems to be informed by a neoconservative moment upholding as its basic normative subject a heteronormative one. In sum, both strategies enable the "re-privatization" of sexuality whether in the name of hetero- or homonormativity.

It is important to turn to Scalia's narrative to understand the nuances of this homo-/heteronormative (re)production of imperial bodies as raw material in the making. Scalia dissented, labeling the decision "a massive disruption of the current social order." It is crucial to highlight that Scalia's decision, while ostensibly on the other side of the fence, is also made possible through a set of similar epistemic assumptions of privatization and the production of a privatized subject. This (re) privatization of sexuality, that is, the constriction of sexual and affective ties through individual citizens, is given greater latitude within the democratic liberal context. Take, for example, the first part of Scalia's statement: "I have nothing against homosexuals or any other group, promoting their agenda through *normal democratic means*."³⁴ This articulation is informed by the assumption that the liberal (capitalist, of course) democracy is the most productive site of regulating and mediating social relations. This (liberal capitalist) democracy comprises citizens that operate within very narrow confines of behavior and subjectivity. The borders of these permissible modalities of existence and interaction are signaled by Scalia's definition of "normal democratic means." Indeed this "normalcy" becomes the sole space in which this new decriminalized (homo)sexuality can operate. Clear, then, is the tension between this unmarked liminal boundary that demarcates even this newly found (neo)liberal promise of freedom and the fantastical national manly subject of empire. The outside is always marked by the tension between the national (i.e., always bound to the territoriality of the state) and the transnational (i.e., flexible subjectivity not bound by anything).³⁵ To (re)invoke earlier terms, freedom depends on the (re)founding of unfreedoms.

Scalia continues: "Social perceptions of sexual and other morality change over time, and every group has the right to persuade its fellow citizens that its view of such matters is the best. . . . But persuading one's fellow citizens is one thing,

and imposing one's views in absence of democratic majority will is something else." Here we see the delimiting of legitimate forms of protest that once again reinscribe boundaries of the normal. As with, for example, critiques of NGOization and the so-called non-profit-industrial-complex, we see how certain forms of liberal protest are enabled precisely through the disabling of others. For Scalia, imposing one's views (i.e., protest, revolution, movement building, to name but three examples) is tantamount to criminal activity. What, one may wonder, constitutes such democratic citizens, and for what project?

First, what we see through the decision is that granting rights to the sodomy subject becomes crucial toward the constitution of the heteronormative/imperial fantasy subject. Scalia's position on this decision gestures to the tensions that exist among negotiable interests (what we term here neoconservative and neoliberal). Along this liberal mode of deliberation, we see another strand of interest—that of the neoconservative position expressed by Clarence Thomas, who states, "Punishing someone for expressing his sexual preference through noncommercial consensual conduct with another adult does not appear to be a worthy way to expend valuable law enforcement resources. Notwithstanding this, I recognize that as a member of this court I am not empowered to help petitioners and others similarly situated."³⁶

What, exactly, is "noncommercial consensual conduct"? Embedded within this phrase is a market (and indeed, the interests of its agents must be protected) in which the democracy and the social order on which Scalia commented can only be envisioned. This noncommercial consensual conduct remaps the subject/being within a consent-force binary that cordons social protest, and alternative racial, sexual, class, and colonized positioning, to the terrain of the chaotic, unlawful, and hence killable zone. Such a construction of "noncommercial sex" effectively dichotomizes sex and the market, and, effectively, capitalist relations. However, as women of color, Marxist, socialist, and materialist feminists have argued for nearly three decades, sexual and economic relations are always already inscribed within one another. Forging such dichotomies between sex and the market hence silences the myriad interconnections aptly detailed by such thinkers regarding the imbrication of sexuality, the market, colonial, racial, and class relations.³⁷ In addition to eclipsing these connections, the marking of sex as outside of capitalism masks precisely how this homonormativization serves the interests of capital. Moreover, by silencing the sexualized dimension of the market, thwarted and covered over are multiple histories of struggle, such as feminist and anticolonial struggles that have long acknowledged how imperial and slave relations are gendered, sexualized, and racialized within the context of a capitalist patriarchy.³⁸

More specifically, the move to privatize and contain intimacies and sexuality within the realm of the private is at the same time another facet of a neoliberal strategy that absolves collective accountability and public intervention. Indeed, the state,

as the defender of the primacy of the ontology of profits and resources needed to enable such accumulations and productions,³⁹ refuses to perform particular services necessary for the reproduction of neoliberal capitalist relations. Thus, the disciplinary nature of this ruling, which effectively guarantees unfreedom to less flexible and upwardly mobile subjects, obfuscates power relations of violence and death. Despite the reference to a noncommercial-conduct sodomite sex that is morally unacceptable, the true force of the market emerges in the next sentence. Stripping away the affective, erotic, and dangerous dimensions of sex, and particularly of queer or deviant sex, it is reduced to “conduct.” What demarcates the boundaries of this acceptable sex/relationality/being, of course, are the confines of profitability, expendability, and the “retention of law enforcement resources.”

Thomas’s claim that if he were a member of the Texas legislature he would vote for the ruling also points to some disjunctures. He suggests that at the state level, he would relegate the decision-making capacity and power to the state because ultimately a state decision would benefit the individual (i.e., a more libertarian position here). What guarantees profitability of a different kind other than the flexible and the flexibility accorded to sex and intimacy by the U.S. Supreme Court—a Texan lifestyle choice? This profitability is guaranteed by drawing on global lockdown to ensure and embody social relations of violence, exploitation, (non)safety, and/or (non)freedoms.

Global Lockdown and the Ends of Pain

We now turn to the threats of pure force and discipline that go hand in hand with the newfound freedoms of empire’s (non)promise projects. In her introduction to the anthology *Global Lockdown*, Sudbury offers an understanding of lockdown to connect diffuse and varied networks of captivity, punishment, and mass liquidation with transnational practices of empire-building and neoliberal globalization: “‘Lockdown’ is a term commonly used by prison movement activists to refer to the repressive confinement of human beings as punishment for deviating from normative behaviors. Although prisons and jails are the most visible locations for lockdown, the term encourages us to think about connections with other spaces of confinement such as immigrant detention centers, psychiatric hospitals, juvenile halls, refugee camps, or Indian boarding schools.”⁴⁰ In this foregrounding passage, Sudbury seeks to create analytical and political possibilities for bringing together various spaces and technologies of confinement that discipline nationally, racially, psychically, and culturally “aberrant” subjects, or those, as she will later theorize, who are “surplus or resistant to the new world order.”⁴¹

Sudbury further elaborates on theorizations of the slavery-prison continuum, which have been compellingly argued by W. E. B. Du Bois, Angela Davis, and Joan Dayan. These scholars and activists, among others, have posited that in the wake of

the failed project of Emancipation, a vast network of cultural, legal, and politico-economic apparatuses were inaugurated to (re)criminalize blackness and ensnare black subjects within intensified forms of punishment, confinement, and expropriation. These included the Thirteenth Amendment's recodification of slavery in the prison, convict lease systems, black codes, paramilitary terror, and increasingly complex systems of captivity and servitude to extract profit from locked-up black and brown bodies. As the legal scholar Guyora Binder has argued, if we expand our definition of slavery beyond a specific iteration of forced labor and instead look to the culture, custom, and institutions of race themselves, it becomes more difficult to assert that the project of Emancipation has ever been completed.⁴² Additionally, as Linda Evans, Eve Goldberg, Christian Parenti, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore have argued in their respective works, in the era of globalization, the U.S. government's successive wars on drugs, poverty, crime, and terror have consolidated a prison industrial complex in which transnational corporations run globalized for-profit prisons, manufacture federal and local military- and law-enforcement technologies, expropriate prison labor, and bid for multibillion-dollar contracts for prison construction.⁴³ These analyses foreground the multiple, overlapping private, public, national, and international investments in the mass lockdown of poor people and people of color transnationally, and the naturalized and strengthened long-term lockdown of black people within U.S. borders. Many of these theorizations of the slavery-prison continuum and of the expansion of the prison industrial complex help us articulate how global lockdown not only naturalizes but also *produces* capitalist racial, gender, national, and sexual social formations. In this way, global lockdown and its technologies function as central sites for ontological production, for *making* subjects on all sides of prison walls: those who can and must be killed, warehoused, and watched, and those whose civic duty requires their complicity in the killing.

The prison, thus, cannot be understood as outside of social production, but rather as foundational to it. In *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Angela Davis shows how the prison functions as a mode of social production through her analysis of the "human surplus" produced at the confluence of an intensified capitalist economy and the mobilization of white supremacist imaginaries:

In the context of an economy that was driven by an unprecedented pursuit of profit, no matter what the human cost, and the concomitant dismantling of the welfare state, poor people's abilities to survive became increasingly constrained by the looming presence of the prison. The massive prison-building project that began in the 1980s created the means of concentrating and managing what the capitalist system had implicitly declared to be a human surplus. In the meantime, elected officials and the dominant media justified the new draconian sentencing practices, sending more and more people to prison in the frenzied drive to build more and more prisons by arguing that it was the only way to make our communities safe from murderers, rapists, and robbers.⁴⁴

In the wake of the neoliberal gutting of an already precarious and punitive welfare state, the prison stepped in to produce, mark, and manage human surplus. It is through the mobilization of racist sexualized fears of “murderers, rapists, and robbers” and through misguided yearnings for safety that the prison binge of the 1980s and its progeny (*re*)produce subjects who must be locked down, as well as those who must do the locking. These same economies of panic and security legitimize the systematic dismantling of revolutionary social movements that oppose state repression through the mounting use of torture, imprisonment, disappearance, and massacre,⁴⁵ both within and outside of the United States, and a litany of technologies of anti-black, anti-immigrant, and anti-poor terror narrating the history of racial state formation including lynching, execution, and rape.

Continuing her line of thought, Davis argues that the prison operates to naturalize and intensify the generalized violence deployed by the state and its citizens against communities marked as criminal, specifically black, Latino, Native, and poor communities, as well as poor and racially pathologized communities in the global South. In particular, she writes, “prison is a space in which the threat of sexualized violence that looms in the larger society is effectively sanctioned as a routine aspect of the landscape of punishment behind prison walls.”⁴⁶ In this way, the widespread sexual abuse of people in prison, and particularly women, queer people, and transgender people of color, emerges not as exceptional, but rather as indicative and productive of a larger regime of gratuitous force that marks bodies as surplus *through* the use of violence and imprisonment. Sexualized violence against those in lockdown should thus not be understood as “cruel and unusual” spectacles aberrant to the political order, but rather as *foundational to it*, and as central to the production of civil society as well as its outsides.⁴⁷ This is a move difficult to understand if we do not pay attention to how feelings are mobilized to garner legitimacy for the prison project. The construction of those in lockdown as “murderers, rapists, and robbers” and the pervasiveness of sexual violence in prisons thus should not be seen as coincidental, but rather as indicative of the powerful imbrications of desire, fear, and safety in the production and disposal of those who are “resistant or surplus to the new world order.” Just as we have argued that promises of belonging, value, recognition, and worth are issued to certain marginalized subjects, it is always on the ground of other (non)subjects. Heeding the same logics of expendability, once again a promise for safety and happiness can only be issued as a simultaneous call for murder and human demolition. This is but one of the central affective economies that produces the prison industrial complex as a seductive facet of our collective common sense.

Through the mystifying narratives of “‘crime and punishment’” and “‘law and order,’” the prison is offered as an end to pain and as a catch-all solution to violence of all kinds. The prison promises citizens and subjects a future filled with freedom, security, and safety. Individualizing pain and harm such that they might be

reduced to “crime” and “perpetrators,” the prison promises safety, order, and redress severed from the persistence of structural murder and the exploitation fundamental to the capitalist democracy itself. Importantly, the futures that global lockdown promises its docile disciples can only be imagined through the unending creation and preservation of outsiders, nonsubjects, nonfutures, and nonhumans. In effect, the citizen-subject cannot be free or perhaps even alive without the captivity and (social, corporeal, and civic) death of the noncitizen, nonsubject, and those cordoned off to the realm of human surplus or, as Davis calls it, “detritus.”⁴⁸

We understand the promise project playing out through global lockdown in a variety of ways, from ongoing prison expansion efforts to soothe the crisis of prison overcrowding and fatal prison conditions, to the proliferation of citizen-led reformist measures in the name of rehabilitation and redemption, to our daily reliance on police as the primary way we might feel safe. To return to the site of (recognizable) queer politics, penalty-enhancing hate crimes legislation is proposed and supported as a solution to systemic transphobic and homophobic violence. In these campaigns, the prison offers the seductive promise of security if we might authorize and support the ongoing roundup and lockdown of subjects marked as threatening. As the HRC advertisement demonstrated, safety can only be called into being through a hypernationalism that requires the cordoning off and disposal of those deemed criminal, enemy, and surplus. It is specifically through the sexualized violence inherent in being “brought to justice” that enables the end of pain offered by global lockdown. Very clearly, then, the neoliberal empire has quite effectively commandeered our affective yearnings for safety, security, redress, and peace and collapsed them with carnage, punishment, and confinement such that they might appear synonymous. It should come as no surprise, then, that so many of the gains made by formerly marginal subjects over the past many decades have been simultaneous with intensified forms of violence and abjection against surplus populations. It is precisely *through* these forms of aggression that those gains have been made possible.⁴⁹

Global lockdown thus functions as one of the looming underbellies and conditions of possibility of the (un)freedoms and (non)futures being promised by neoliberal empire. Consigning the collective traumas of slavery and colonization to a remote and irrelevant past while drawing on their logics to instantiate its rule, global lockdown shows itself to be neither cruel and unusual nor exceptional, but rather as foundational. Importantly, these (un)freedoms and (non)futures carry very different promises and pleasures depending on our relationship to the human surplus motor-ing the global political economy. Global lockdown, then, is not simply the newest outside, but quite literally the material redefining off what life can even mean in the wake of so much “necessary” death.

Toward an Intimate Politics of Decolonizing Abolitionism

We have thus far argued that across diffuse spaces and moments—the homonormative turn, the neoliberalization of the economy, the war on terror, and global lockdown—we see different dimensions of a promise project, which is also a project forever seeking to (re)consolidate empire. On the one hand, there are those for whom subjectivity, capital, and satiating pleasures and rights are being forever promised. This occurs, we argue, at the expense of compliance with, or perhaps distraction from, the larger structural underpinnings of social relations and processes. On the other hand, there are the (non)subjects for whom the same promise has not been issued, the abject(s) whose lives and deaths are completely nonspectacular within the dominant imaginations. Adding to this contradiction is the dimension that even the promises themselves are tenuous: indeed, as elite queers privilege homonormativity over more radical political and economic praxes, neoconservative forces continue to criminalize queerness. While first and foremost queers outside this elite or national racial strata are produced as exterminable sodomites, the category of the abject and killable always threatens even elite queers in first world spaces. This is part of the politico-economic and affective logics that have fueled a frenzied search for an end to pain: continue imperial soldiering in exchange for a mirage of security, or spend your energies fighting other queers for a prized space as most radical. With such a paucity of choices, our energies are directed away from building solidarities and exhausted by fixing on individualized solutions and fueling the (re)production of neoliberal, neoconservative, homonormative, and ultimately heteronormative worlds.

If the neoliberal turn has been part of a larger strategy of counterinsurgency mobilized in the wake of revolutionary decolonization movements threatening capitalism, (hetero)sexism, and white supremacy, it is important to pause on some of the impacts of that (counter)mobilization. In this paper we have worked to foreground the affective logics that function on the level of feeling and desire in the service of a neoliberal project of a world remade. To begin to articulate the ways in which our most ‘intimate’ sensibilities—our fears, desires, mourning, and yearning—are being mobilized by a regime of global lockdown is to make urgent the production of solidarities not premised upon exploitation, profit, or death. For those engaged in movements dismantling the prison industrial complex and any form of imperial violence, it is precisely these affective economies to which we must be attentive. If we do not work to articulate the ways in which we become libidinally and erotically invested in the status quo of mass lockdown—in effect, the various promises that the prison issues—we run the risk of reproducing the racialized and sexualized economies of benevolence and exploitation that fortify so much of conservative, liberal, and even radical praxis. However, as we have sought to argue, the price of such dismissals is nothing less than participation in imperial violence that, ultimately,

impacts us all. Amidst the many affective callings and seductive offerings we are issued, we must continue the work of imagining alternative ways to feel, be, and love in this moment of intensified empire-building. To become completely drawn into challenging homonormativization without attention to the larger structural underpinnings of social relations and processes may ultimately prove unproductive as it misses the larger imperial logics that may be embodied differentially in other sites. Moreover, it becomes impossible to discern the relationship between our own struggles and the set of promises and nonpromises offered to other others. Foreclosing potential and increasingly crucial solidarities, we are drawn into our own corners and ultimately diverted from the possibilities of massive, cross-bordered mobilizations, movements and revolutionary projects.

In the place of this vision, we offer first and foremost a disruption of complicity, a refusal of empire's promise project. The series of wars in which empire asks us to participate are utterly genocidal, rather than constituting processes that enable our security and healing. As members of different and overlapping communities and struggles, the authors have each grappled personally with this process. As activists and intellectuals who are engaged in struggles around war, migration and trafficking, labor and homelessness, mass imprisonment, and state violence against queer and transgender communities, we are confronted with the seductive—yet ultimately murderous—promises that are described in this essay. Moreover, as members of the academy at different levels (undergraduate student, graduate student, and faculty member), we have witnessed how the strategies of promise and nonpromise projects have worked to fragment, divide, and conquer people of color, working-class people, queers, transgender people, postcolonial subjects, and others within powerful academic zones of knowledge production. Recognizing that we can never be outside empire's seductive offerings, we engage these questions out of rage, hope, and the desire to form life-sustaining solidarities and intimacies. We strive with others toward a politics that enables intimacies as both means and ends, as a strategy of movement-building in which relationships are formed not to instantiate empire's incessant production of internal and external enemies, but to disrupt it. This is a politics that would challenge histories that dichotomize and fragment our worlds, and instead offer praxes of erotic resistance in which we might be able to glimpse a breathing space for reconstituting connections and relations based in collectivity and healing.

With this analysis in mind, all attempts to separate and make discrete struggles for social justice and transformation—those working for prison abolition, sexual and gender freedom, decolonization, and the end to war, for example—prove unsuccessful. They are always already imbricated in one another. When one struggles to resist coercive sexual or gender regimes—heteronormativization as well as homonormativization—one is already engaging in a politics deeply implicated in the wars on terror, poverty, and drugs, and in the (neo)slaveries of the prison industrial complex.

This is true not only because of the devastating impacts these wars have had on queer communities and sexually aberrant (non)subjects locked away, and because of the ways in which a racializing “sodomotification” is drawn on to produce the criminal and the terrorist. Indeed, the violence and death that we authorize and face operate through and within our libidinal, erotic, and affective investments, investments that we must engage directly and rigorously if we are to disrupt the seductive workings of power in their most intimate dimensions.

If, then, all queer politics are already organizing around and implicated in the buildup of global lockdown and imperialist war, the question is not *if* a praxis of decolonization and abolitionism is pertinent to queer struggles, but *how* and *why* it is. If it is true that our deepest desires, feelings, and arousals are tapped into for imperial production, it also becomes crucial to ask how we might organize, mobilize, and form alternative intimacies and desires. These alternatives, which continue to be nurtured in radical and revolutionary movements and collectivities, are forged as a disruption to individualized, consumptive, and privatized erotics in the name of broader collective projects of freedom and transformation that cultivate the pleasures of substantial connection and the production of more egalitarian relations. These are the intimacies that form the core of decolonizing imaginaries, those that understand sexual freedom only through collective self-determination. It is only when we engage the traumas *as well as* the yearnings of our pasts and our futures that we might be able to seize the possibilities increasingly foreclosed by empire’s seductive promises.

Notes

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1. The idea of seductions of empire comes from a larger project that Agathangelou is co-authoring with L. H. M. Ling and is (forthcoming) *Empire and Insecurity in World Politics: Seductions of Neoliberalism* (Routledge). For a definition of seductions see more specifically Anna M. Agathangelou and Kyle D. Killian “Electronic Attachments: Desire, the Other, and the Internet Marital Trade in the Twenty-First Century,” in *Cross-Cultural Couples: Transbordered Relationships in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Terri Karris and Kyle D. Killian (Binghamton, NY: Haworth, forthcoming).
2. The idea of promises and non-promises comes from a larger book project that Agathangelou is working on. It is more specifically on the terror-necrotic practices of “empire” and the “rewards” promised to participate in the formation and reconsolidation of such projects. Please see Anna M. Agathangelou, “Ontologies of Desire, Empire, and Capital: Recolonizations, “Security” and the ‘Near East.’” Invited by the Institute of Political Science, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan. Presented at the International Academic Conference, “Asian Security Facing Hegemony: Nationalism, Immigration and Humanity,” June 2, 2006.

3. Lambda Legal, "Seismic Shift," www.lambdalegal.org/our-work/publications/impact/2003/fall/page.jsp?itemID=31989920 (accessed May 9, 2007).
4. Ibid.
5. Sodomy Laws, "*Lawrence and Garner v. State of Texas*," www.sodomylaws.org/lawrence/lawrence.htm (accessed May 9, 2007).
6. We place "benefit" in quotes not to underscore the contradictory material acquisition and privilege gained by this (whitened) class of queers or to understate the violence performed, but to suggest that this so-called membership in the new world order is indeed precarious. In this neoliberal content of instrumentality and competitive advantage, anyone can be used as a friend or an enemy, as friends and allies of yesterday become the enemy to be hunted and killed today. One need only look at the history of U.S.-backed regimes and the state-sponsored coups in Argentina, Chile, and Central America of the 1980s and 1990s. Saddam Hussein and the Taliban are good contemporary examples of friends turned enemies of the U.S. state. On the other side of this, for example, is the ongoing persecution of Assata Shakur, who currently has a 1 million dollar price on her head, and the recently rearrested so-called San Francisco 8. These are figures who are persistently produced as enemies of the state and as threats to public safety. See Committee for the Defense of Human Rights, "FBI Hunting the Dead: Can John Bowman Ever Rest in Peace?" www.cdhrsupport.org/what_to_do.html (accessed May 9, 2007); and New Jersey State Police, "New Jersey's 12 Most Wanted," www.state.nj.us/njsp/want/chesimard.html (accessed May 16, 2007).
7. Matt Foreman, "National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Welcomes Supreme Court Sodomy Decision—Calls Opinion Major Advance for Individual Liberty," National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, www.thetaskforce.org/press/releases/pr551_062603 (accessed May 9, 2007).
8. For a more in-depth discussion of these contradictions, see Dean Spade and Craig Willse, "Freedom in a Regulatory State? Lawrence, Marriage, and Biopolitics," *Widener Law Review* 11 (2005): 309.
9. Sentencing Project, "Facts about Prisons and Prisoners," www.sentencingproject.org/Admin/Documents/publications/inc_factsaboutprison.pdf (accessed May 16, 2007).
10. Julia Sudbury, "Introduction: Feminist Critiques, Transnational Landscapes, Abolitionist Visions," in *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender, and the Prison-Industrial Complex*, ed. Sudbury (New York: Routledge, 2005), xxii.
11. Ibid.
12. By referring to "empire" we in no way see this as a complete project, but one whose heterogeneous consolidation is both continually in the (un)making. See also Neferti X. M. Tadiar, "Cultures of Empire" (keynote address presented at the "Convening US Empire Conference," University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, January 8–10, 2004), effsc.focusnow.org/NT-cultures.html.
13. Highlighting the symbolic work that 9/11 does in the imperial imagination does not mean to trace it as the source of instability and conflict in the Middle East, as most U.S. narratives would report. For instance, Anna M. Agathangelou argues that 9/11 becomes a "fetish object" within discussions of democracy and that the war on terror forecloses the possibility of asking other questions that (1) locate historically the attacks on the World Trade Center towers; and (2) engage with conflicts and tensions globally, including with what come to be constituted as civilizational clashes. See Anna M. Agathangelou, "A Transborder Feminist Critique of the Epistemologies of Militarized Neoliberalism: Solidarities and Practices of Substantive Democracy" (paper presented at the International Studies Association, Chicago, February 28, 2007; conference was held from February 28 to March 3, 2007).

14. For important analyses of the conflations between the racially and sexually aberrant within the post-9/11 landscape, see Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," *Social Text* 20:3 (2002): 117–48.
15. For a more detailed analysis of desire and the production of the other in the war on terror, please see Anna M. Agathangelou and L. H. M. Ling, "Power, Borders, Security, Wealth: Lessons of Violence and Desire from September 11," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004): 517–38.
16. It is precisely the mobilization of victim's rights and rehabilitation that California legislators recently used to justify the most recent of the state's ongoing prison expansion efforts—the biggest in the history of the world—agreeing to spend over \$7.3 billion to build nearly fifty-three thousand more prison beds to address the state-proctored crisis of prison overcrowding and the lack of rehabilitative programs. To look at the history of prisons in the United States is to see this logic of the "bigger, friendlier" prison behind almost every prison-building project. As a state with one of the highest imprisonment rates annually in the country, California is a testament to the seductive slippage between supposed safety and carnage.
17. See Anna M. Agathangelou and Kyle D. Killian, "Epistemologies of Peace: Poetics, Globalization, and the Social Justice Movement," *Globalizations* 34 (2006): 453–83; and Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15 (2006): 11–40.
18. Anna M. Agathangelou, *The Global Political Economy of Sex: Desire, Violence, and Insecurity in Mediterranean Nation States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
19. Angela P. Harris, "From Stonewall to the Suburbs? Toward a Political Economy of Sexuality," *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 14 (2006): 1539–82.
20. The full advertisement is available online at www.hrc.org/millionformarriage/hrc_adcenter/keith.pdf (accessed May 9, 2007).
21. Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon 2004), 50.
22. Martin F. Manalansan IV, "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City," *Social Text* 23:3–4 (2005): 141–55.
23. M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 234.
24. Ibid.
25. The emergence of the HRC follows much of the logic we trace. Founded in the 1980s as an advocacy organization primarily around issues of decriminalizing homosexuality and HIV/AIDS, the HRC was instrumental in such struggles as barring insurance firms from denying coverage to those testing HIV positive. Now the largest and most well-funded LGBT advocacy organization in the United States, the HRC has shifted its agenda since the early 1990s to focus almost solely on measures that bolster neoliberal privatization and militarization: military entrance, hate crimes legislation, same-sex marriage rights, and adoption. As many activists and theorists have articulated, this professionalizing and neoliberalizing impulse has gained increased fervor and support in queer politics over the past two decades.
26. Sonia E. Alvarez, "Latin American Feminisms 'Go Global': Trends of the 1990s and Challenges for the New Millennium," in *Cultures of Politics/Politics of Cultures: Revisioning Latin American Social Movements*, ed. Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997), 293–324. INCITE! Women of Color against Violence, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Boston: South End, 2007).

27. See Agathangelou, *Global Political Economy of Sex*.
28. Anna M. Agathangelou, "Militarizations and Neoliberalism(s): Empire, Terror-Necrocities, and Death," forthcoming.
29. Our analysis of the often contradictory and antagonistic histories of torture(s) both within and outside of the U.S. borders draws from Dylan Rodriguez, "(Non)Scenes of Captivity: The Common Sense of Punishment and Death," *Radical History Review*, no. 96 (2006): 9–32.
30. For more on this, see Anjali Arondekar, "Border/Line Sex: Queer Postcolonialities or How Race Matters outside the U.S.," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 7 (2005): 235–49.
31. United States Court of Appeals, *Salim Ahmed Hamdan, Appellee v. Donald H. Rumsfeld, United States Secretary of Defense, et al., Appellants*, www.asil.org/pdfs/Hamdanv.Rumsfeld.pdf (accessed May 9, 2007).
32. See Bob Egelko, "Roberts' Ruling in Bush's Favor Debated: Terrorism Case Came as White House Was Interviewing Him," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 22, 2005.
33. Ibid.
34. *Laurence V. Texas*, www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-102.ZD.html
35. See Agathangelou, "Militarizations and Neoliberalism(s)."
36. In Thomas's dissenting opinion, he wrote that were he a member of the Texas legislature, he would vote to repeal the antisodomy law.
37. See Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (London: Zed, 1998).
38. See Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983); Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); A. M. Agathangelou, "Colonising Desires: Bodies for Sale, Exploitation and (In)Security in Desire Industries," in *Cyprus Review* 18, no. 2 (2004): 37–73; and A. M. Agathangelou, "Gender, Race, Militarization, and Economic Restructuring in Former Yugoslavia and the US–Mexico Border," in *Women and Globalization*, ed. Delia D. Aguilar and Anne E. Lascamana (New York: Humanity Press, 2004), 347–86.
39. See Anna M. Agathangelou and Kyle D. Killian, "Electronic Attachments: Desire, the Other, and the Internet Marital Trade in the Twenty-First Century," in *Cross-Cultural Couples: Transbordered Relationships in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Terri Karris and Killian (Binghamton, NY: Haworth, forthcoming).
40. Sudbury, *Global Lockdown*, xxii.
41. Ibid.
42. Guyora Binder, "The Slavery of Emancipation," *Cardozo Law Review* 17 (1996): 2063–102.
43. Please see Linda Evans and Evan Goldberg, *The Prison Industrial Complex and the Global Economy* (San Francisco, CA: AK Press Distribution, 1998); Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); and Christian Palenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 1999).
44. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 191.
45. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Globalization and U.S. Prison Growth," *Race and Class* 40 (1998): 171–88.
46. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 191.
47. This discussion of gratuitous (sexualized) violence as paradigmatic of antiblack racism and the production of civil society's prison regimes is hugely informed by Jared Sexton, "Racial

Profiling and the Societies of Control,” in *Warfare in the American Homeland: Prisons and Policing in a Penal Democracy*, ed. Joy James (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Frank B. Wilderson III, “Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Society,” *Social Identities* 9 (2003): 225–40; and Dylan Rodriguez, *Forced Passages: Imprisoned Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

48. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 16.
49. A number of radical and transformative political formations challenging the intersections of the prison industrial complex and racist heteropatriarchal capitalism have emerged in the wake of these double-edged gains made by many activists fighting for prison reform and LGBT rights, including the Audre Lorde Project, Critical Resistance, FIERCE!, Justice Now, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and the Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex Justice Project. In their struggles for collective self-determination, many of these formations explicitly work to develop and nourish alternative intimacies that might counter neoliberal empire’s seductive offerings of individualization, commodification, and corporatization as the only models for building social justice. This paper is deeply indebted to the political and social praxes produced through and within these formations.