

Queering cities down-under: Place based politics of urban activism

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Farming Family Statue



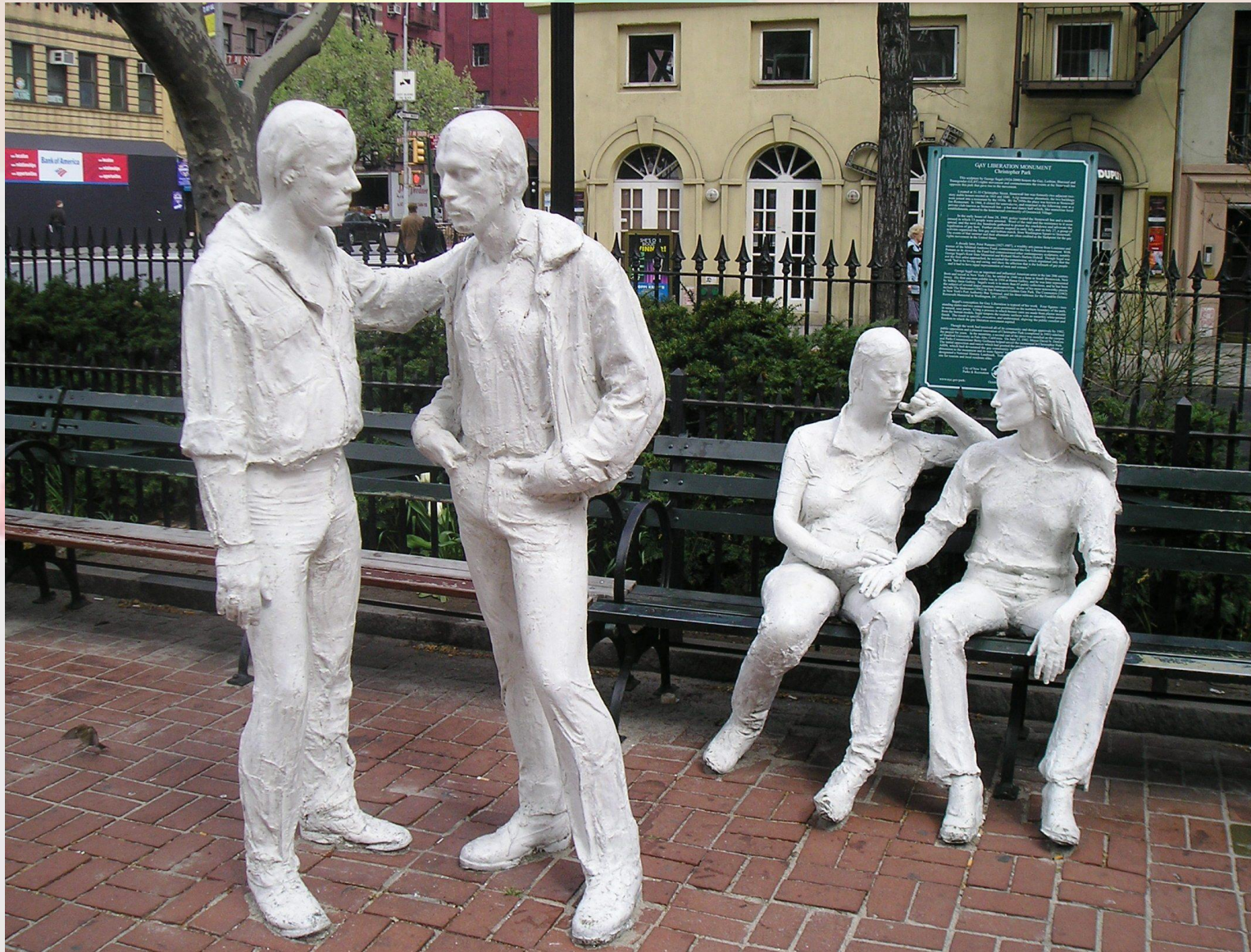
Riff Raff Statue



**SPACE,
PLACE,
AND
SEX**

GEOGRAPHIES OF SEXUALITIES

LYNDA JOHNSTON AND ROBYN LONGHURST



Gay and Lesbian Monument, Christopher Park, NYC
Image by Lynda Johnston



A person in a rainbow costume holding a rainbow umbrella at a pride event. The person is wearing a black jacket and a rainbow sash. The umbrella is large and colorful. The background is a plain wall with some signs, including one with the number '1' and another with the number '2' and a walking stick icon.

In what follows

1. Gay pride festivals and parades queer cities and create safe spaces of belonging;
2. Critique the construction of Auckland (Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest city) as a queer, cosmopolitan and inclusive city; and,
3. The importance of Māori (Indigenous) urban activist queer politics.

Subjectivities, Knowledges, and Feminist Geographies

The Subjects
and Ethics of
Social Research

Liz Bondi
Hannah Avis
Ruth Bankey
Amanda Bingley
Jayce Davidson
Rosaleen Duffy
Victoria Ingrid Einagel
Anja-Maaike Green
Lynda Johnston
Susan Lilley
Carina Listerborn
Mona Marshy
Shonagh McEwan
Niamh O'Connor
Gillian Rose
Bella Vivat
Nichola Wood

Queering Tourism

Paradoxical performances at
gay pride parades

Lynda Johnston
Routledge Studies in Human Geography

Routledge
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SPACE, PLACE, AND SEX

GEOGRAPHIES OF SEXUALITIES

LYNDA JOHNSTON AND ROBYN LONGHURST

TRANSFORMING GENDER, SEX, AND PLACE

GENDER VARIANT GEOGRAPHIES

Lynda Johnston

Routledge

1: Gay pride festivals and parades queer cities and create safe spaces of belonging

- Festivals and parades are about pride, defiance, visibility, remembrance, and celebration
- By appropriating streets (surrounding transport systems, car parks, pubs, city parks, shops etc) and filling them with lesbians, gays, bisexuals, people who are transgender, intersex, takatāpui etc for gay pride festivals challenges the complacency of the heterosexual street



1: Gay pride festivals and parades queer cities and create safe spaces of belonging



HERO Marching Boys: 'Marcho Men'
Ponsonby Auckland 1997

1: Gay pride festivals and parades queer cities and create safe spaces of belonging



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonewall_riots



<https://www.cntraveler.com/bars/stonewall-inn>

1: Gay pride festivals and parades queer cities and create safe spaces of belonging



Stonewall

**"Transvestites,
transsexuals, gays and
lesbians stood shoulder-to-
shoulder here, so it's
appropriate to salute
their fearlessness here."**

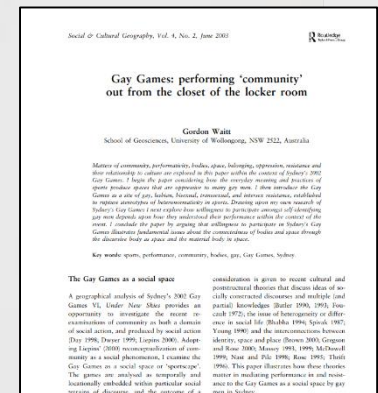
**- Jimmy Pisano,
Stonewall Owner**

Photo taken by Fred McDarrah the day after the Stonewall Riots, just outside of the Stonewall Inn.

http://transadvocate.com/stonewall-plus-22_n_8669.htm

1: Gay pride festivals and parades queer cities and create safe spaces of belonging

- Pride events are 'parties with politics' (Browne, 2007).
- Gorman-Murray and Nash (2016) tease out complicated urban power dynamics in their discussion of the City of Toronto's winning bid to host 2014 World Pride.
- Sport scholars (Caudwell, 2018; Davidson and McDonald, 2018; Sykes, 2016) are rethinking the advancement of human rights and Pride sporting events.



1: Gay pride festivals and parades queer cities and create safe spaces of belonging

- Elspeth Probyn's performative conceptualisation of subjectivity (2003) and emotion (2000) to better understand bodily registers in how people are mobilised to participate in a gay pride events.
- Probyn's (2003) 'spatial imperative of subjectivity' is useful here, because she details the conceptualisation of subjectivity as always emerging-in-and-through-place.

2: Critique the construction of Auckland (Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest city) as a queer, cosmopolitan and inclusive city



<https://twitter.com/nzherald/status/701280514339119105>

2: Critique the construction of Auckland (Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest city) as a queer, cosmopolitan and inclusive city



<http://www.gayexpress.co.nz/2016/02/no-pride-prisons-says-no-pride-parade/>

“Police and Corrections officers have no place in any pride parade. Both of these institutions deal violence to marginalised groups, including queer and trans people” says Sophie Morgan of No Pride In Prisons, “It wasn’t long ago that the police were systematically beating and jailing people for engaging in non-normative sexuality and gender practices ... It is not because the police have had a change of heart. The police are part of an oppressive institution which has no place being celebrated in a pride parade” (Bedwell, 2016, np).

2: Critique the construction of Auckland (Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest city) as a queer, cosmopolitan and inclusive city



http://www.gaynz.com/articles/publish/45/printer_16997.php



<http://thedailyblog.co.nz/2015/02/23/notproud-of-pinkwashing/>



http://www.gaynz.com/articles/publish/2/article_17826.php



http://www.gaynz.com/articles/publish/45/printer_16997.php

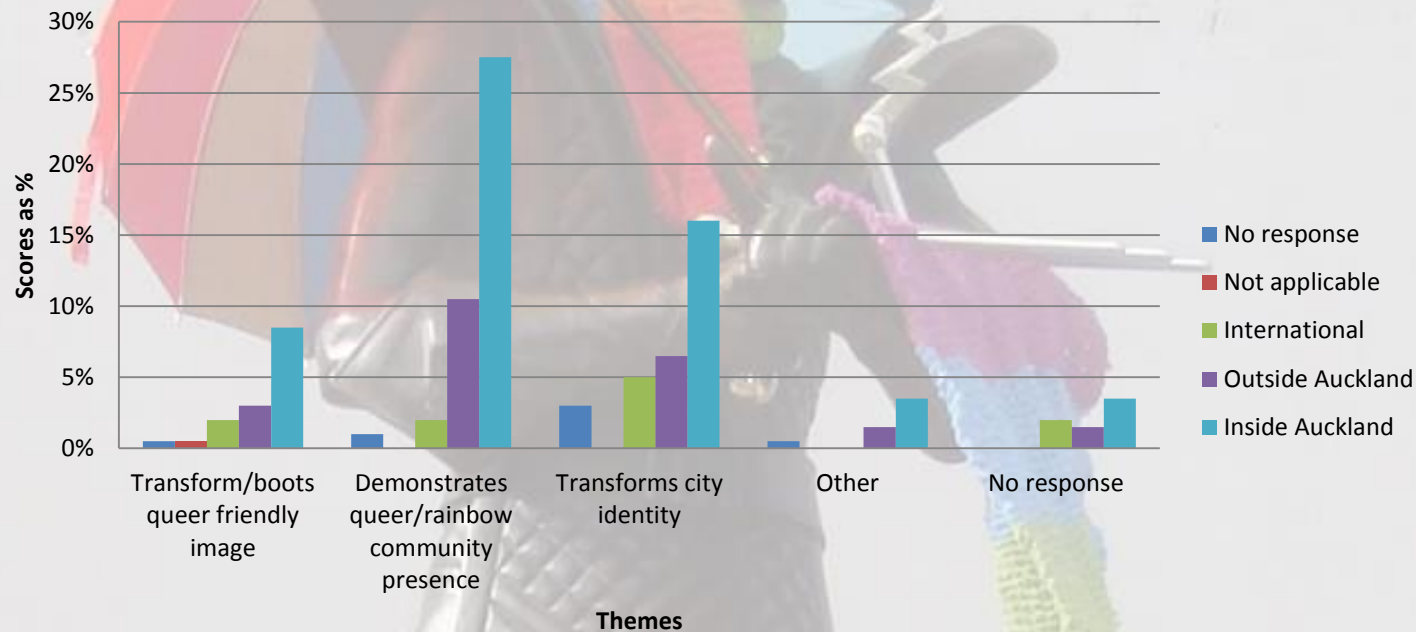
2: Critique the construction of Auckland (Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest city) as a queer, cosmopolitan and inclusive city



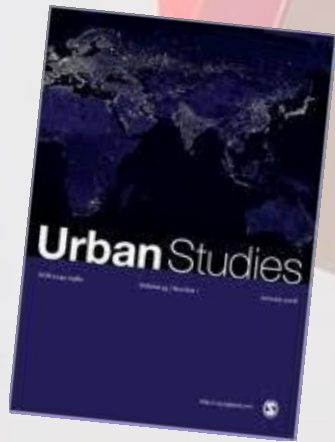
<http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2016/03/03/decolonising-queer-movement-australia-we-need-solidarity-not-pink-washing>

2: Critique the construction of Auckland (Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest city) as a queer, cosmopolitan and inclusive city

What does Auckland Pride do for Auckland's Identity? (By postcode)



2: Critique the construction of Auckland (Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest city) as a queer, cosmopolitan and inclusive city



Special issue article: *Placing LGBTQ + urban activism*

Urban Studies

Play, protest and pride: Un/happy queers of Proud to Play in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

This article extends discussion of urban activism through paying attention to the emotional and embodied politics of a sports event. We draw on research of the 'Proud to Play Games', an inaugural regional multi-sports event held during the Auckland Pride Festival in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2016. Feminist and queer theories of emotion and affect – particularly the promise of happiness – produce nuanced understandings of urban gay pride events. We focus on the experiences of three Proud to Play participants as they illustrate the tensions of play/protest, happy/sad and pride/shame in Auckland. The portraits highlight: a homonormativity pursuit of happiness and youthful masculine athleticism; precarious happiness and oppositional lesbian desire; and, the pursuit of indigenous happiness. Through attention to affective and emotional politics, we demonstrate that Proud to Play can challenge heteronormative urban space by simultaneously fighting for a better future and making a claim for the right to be unhappy.

Keywords

affect, cities, emotion, gender, sexualities, sport, unhappy queer activism

2: Critique the construction of Auckland (Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest city) as a queer, cosmopolitan and inclusive city



Auckland Pride Festival 2016





Pride Tennis Tournament



Roller Derby



Road Running



Social Dance



Swimming



Tenpin Bowling



SKYCITY Touch Rugby

<http://www.proudtoplaynz.com/sport/>

A person is seen from behind, holding a large, multi-colored rainbow umbrella. They are wearing a dark jacket and a quilted vest. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a sign with the word 'LOVE' and some numbers. The overall scene is outdoors and festive.

Kate

‘I live in a straight world. I work in a straight world. I want to be able to socialize in a gay and lesbian community and this is why it [Proud to Play] is really important. I can come here and just be me. I’m not going to worry about getting judged because I’m a lesbian, you know, or being thought that I’m weird or perverted or whatever.’

A person is holding a large, multi-colored umbrella with a rainbow gradient. The person is standing in front of a sign that says "WE ARE HERE". The sign is partially visible and has a red background with white text. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a hat. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Kate

‘Usually when I start working somewhere I don’t, I’m not out because I want people to see **me as me** and not as **the lesbian**. After a period of time, I get to know them and they get to know me, and I don’t have a problem being out, umm, and I’ve only just recently started working in, you know, a registered training organization and I’m not out there as yet for those same reasons ... But generally, in every other work place I’ve been, I’m eventually out, yeah but like I said, I don’t want to be seen as **just the lesbian** (emphasis in original).’

Proud to Play



3: The importance of Māori (Indigenous) urban activist queer politics

- Tama's experience illustrates Māori activism in Auckland's Pride Festival.
- Coming out, Tama says, 'wasn't at all easy for me and basically I acted it out by working ridiculously hard'.

'being part of a collective and spirituality is just normal and the connection to land and people is just all really normal.'

3: The importance of Māori (Indigenous) urban activist queer politics

‘had no real role models within our community ... it was all just unsaid ... So, no real stories from our cultural contexts in relation to takatāpui.’

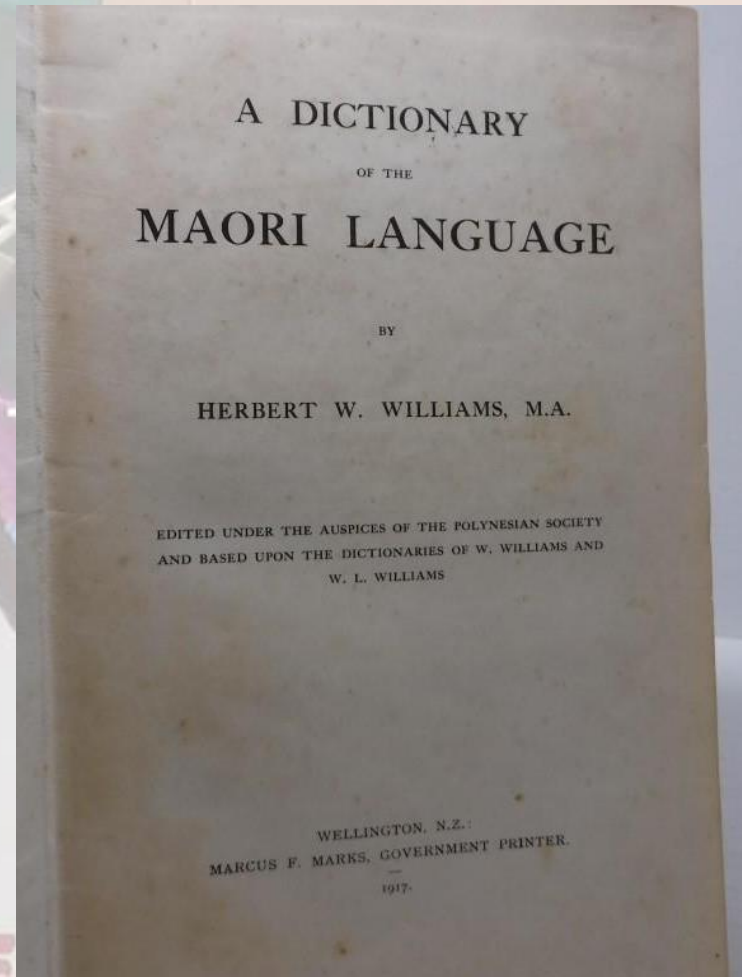
Tama explains takatāpui as:

‘Essentially having a relationship with another from the same sex, sharing intimacy with another from the same sex. So, it need not be a sexual relationship, it can be a very close friendship and there are precedents for that, for those types of relationships in Māori history where it was the norm, as opposed to the colonising by the Christians and all of a sudden, the creation of new terms in the case of sexuality.’

3: The importance of Māori (Indigenous) urban activist queer politics

‘intimate companion of the same sex’ (Williams, 1971: 147).

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1991: 37) urged: ‘we should reconstruct the tradition, reinterpret the oral history of this land so skillfully manipulated by the crusading heterosexism of the missionary ethic’.



3: The importance of Māori (Indigenous) urban activist queer politics

- Tama left his home town and moved to Auckland where he did play netball and volleyball.
- ‘so I joined them and started coming along. I came just as much to connect with the queer community and swimming ... It is what I need to do to connect with this community.’



A person is shown from the chest up, wearing a large, multi-colored rainbow umbrella. They are also wearing a black quilted jacket and holding a long, knitted beanie with rainbow stripes. The background is a light-colored wall with some red signs, including one with the number '1' and another with the number '2' and a white stick figure icon.

3: The importance of Māori (Indigenous) urban activist queer politics

‘ancestors that I can see now and those who I can’t see, are here [at Auckland Pride] and our connection is with this area here’.

He told us about how his ancestors arrived from the ocean, and that one ancestress, in particular, was gender nonconforming.



Conclusion

- Place matters when creating safe LGBTQI+ city spaces of belonging
- Gay pride parades and festivals need to be understood within place based politics
- Auckland Pride Festival is an example of the shifting and complex spatial dynamics and lived realities
- Aotearoa is a postcolonial nation where colonisation continues on a daily basis. Tama's narrative about Māori ancestry and the lived experiences of being takatāpui must be told so that neoliberal politics of pride, whiteness, and nationality can be troubled.

Thank you

