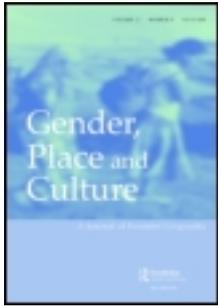


This article was downloaded by: [Purchase College Suny], [Shaka McGlotten]  
On: 01 May 2013, At: 08:59  
Publisher: Routledge  
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cgpc20>

### A brief and improper geography of queerspaces and sexpublics in Austin, Texas

Shaka McGlotten <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Media, Society, and the Arts , Purchase College, 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase , NY , 10577 , USA

Published online: 01 May 2013.

To cite this article: Shaka McGlotten (2013): A brief and improper geography of queerspaces and sexpublics in Austin, Texas, *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, DOI:10.1080/0966369X.2013.786686

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.786686>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

## A brief and improper geography of queerspaces and sexpublics in Austin, Texas

Shaka McGlotten\*

*Media, Society, and the Arts, Purchase College, 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, NY 10577, USA*

*(Received 31 October 2010; final version received 24 October 2012)*

This article offers ethnographic and autoethnographic vignettes from my research on cultures of public sex in Austin, Texas. It also tracks some of the ways my own racialization as a black queer man shaped the research project. My approach, which includes an experimental – ‘reparative’ – textual style, offers several interlocking registers of analysis. I bring together my informants’ nostalgic remembrances of public sex in Austin; the legal and media circulation of queer sex in general, and public sex in particular, as specifically ‘public’ problems requiring surveillance, administration, and management; the impacts of HIV/AIDS; and the rise of the Internet as a means to connect. In this way, I not only aim to archive sites of desire and their transformation, but to also archive the everyday and intimate affects that animate, make sense of, and give meaning to queerspaces and sexpublics in Austin as elsewhere. In its eclectic mixes of voices and styles, as well as reality and fiction, my ethnography does not simply describe material geographies (men have sex in parks and hook up online) or linear timelines (first there was public sex and then there was AIDS), rather, gesturing as it does toward a psychic geography of intensities, remembrances, and longings, it tries to conjure an expansive affective archive into brief life.

**Keywords:** sexuality; space; affect; race; autoethnography; public sex

This article is about the movement of desires, affects, discourses, politics, places, dreams, and bodies in and through queerspaces<sup>1</sup> of public sex in Austin, Texas. It is also about the passage of race or racial becomings, specifically how my own racialization mattered in the fields of desire and academic labor, sometimes operating as brake or viscous drag, and at others as lubricant or strange attractor. Race receded and it obtruded, not as a representational or linguistic effect but as an ontological event (Saldanha 2006).<sup>2</sup> Finally, this article is about worlding; it is an article that through its style seeks to move academic criticism away from the paranoid hermeneutic of suspicion that too often animates it. It reparatively performs its objects – queerspace, public sex, race, intimacy, and feelings – rather than capture and freeze them (see Sedgwick 1997). In the words of one of its reviewers, this is a ‘willfully aberrant’ experiment in critical writing. It is a polemic in which I struggle to recuperate excluded modes of sociality (among them public sex and a ‘hardcore’ ethnographic reflexivity) that are figured as failed, insignificant, or politically naïve. And it is an elegy, recuperating lost and endangered worlds of public sex, while resisting the sentimental reification that so often accompanies nostalgia.

Movement is change (Massumi 2002). This article, then, is also about change – the organic or imposed changes of spaces; the changes my interlocutors recounted in relation to space, sex, and feelings; and the changes I underwent in the field, like falling in and out

---

\*Email: shaka.mcglotten@gmail.com

of love, working with and through my racial difference, absorbing the traumas of friends and lovers, and obstinately dreaming of intimacies outside of normative ken.

This project is situated in relation to two overlapping literatures: interdisciplinary discussions about sex and space that cut across anthropology and geography [Bleys 1996; Halberstam 2005; Leap 1999; Puar 2006; for reviews, see Oswin 2008; Wright, M., “42, Arrested at Hippie Hollow on Charges of Lewdness and Indecency” (*Austin American-Statesman*, April 28, 2010, Metro/State)], as well as feminist and queer engagements with intimacy and affect (Ahmed 2004; Berlant and Warner 2000; Berlant 2008; Cvetkovich 2003; Eng and Kazanjian 2002; Hoad 2007; Sedgwick 2003; Stewart 2007). I have been particularly inspired by work that understands spatial formations in modernity as tied to normative politics of intimacy, an ‘empire of love’ (Povinelli 2006) governing gender and sexual difference (Bech 1997; Higgs 1999; see also Oswin and Olund 2010). In contemporary US culture, intimacy names the affective encounters with others that often matter most, while also functioning as juridical form, aspirational narrative, and therapeutic culture’s *raison d’être* (Berlant and Warner 2000, 1). All of this is to say that intimacy refers to things we feel and do, and it is a force, an organizing *dispositif* of biopower.

Beginning as an effort to recover something of the vitality of public sex cultures in Austin, Texas, a liberal oasis and college town turned gentrified global boom city (Bell and Binnie 2004), my desire to valorize lost worlds of public sex and write against Austin’s neoliberal urban restructuring was interrupted – by the emergence of online sexual counterpublics, by my own intimacies in the field, and by the stories of loss my informants told me.

The utopianism in my project rehabilitates the viability of sexual counterpublics and challenges the assumptions about propriety and personhood, and the failures of imagination (political, erotic), that in part buttress the permanent state of political emergency in which we find ourselves (in the academy as elsewhere), and constrained ideas about what kinds of intimate contacts count as valuable or nourishing. In this way, I follow recent work on optimism and hope that gestures toward a queer futurity, that is an immanent past in the present, as much a ‘then and there’ as a ‘here and now’ (Muñoz 2009; Snediker 2008).

The stories I present here were culled from 10 years of research with gay and same-sex loving men.<sup>3</sup> Although this material is rooted in ethnographic methods, it departs from many of the conventions of academic writing. The stylistic approaches I employ – weaving together disparate voices and scenes, dwelling in zones of contact – aim at ‘worlding.’ That is, I evoke rather than describe my objects, mirroring the movement/change inherent to encounters I witnessed or in which I was an actant. Berlant (2009) describes worlding as a ‘concept in progress’ and as a method; it is

a way of describing the activity of sensual world-making, of finding one’s sea legs in the middle of a situation and doing something to sustain it then, to make/find a rhythm of being there and moving too. A thing happened, what kind of thing is it, how can I tell a story about what I sense, how can I describe what crisped it up, and what happened next? . . . [H]ow can I dissolve the conventional descriptions that provide the kinds of handle on a problem that paralyze apprehension and potentiality?

Worlding is a struggle to cultivate an understanding in motion rather than a ‘cultural freeze-frame’ (Massumi 2002, 3), a sometimes perilous consequence of the ways meta-structural analytics such as ‘neoliberalism’ or ‘globalization’ can congeal the dynamism of lives and things as static positions or overdetermined effects. Worlding is the approach Katie Stewart uses in her book *Ordinary Affects*, where she narrates scenes of American life in which the weird and banal converge, and danger and pluck vie, in spare terms rich

with carefully rendered sensory details and compassionate recognition. My own efforts owe an obvious debt to Stewart, especially in the ways I tell stories that do not add up or offer closure but resonate with one another and generate new lines of flight, enacting what Stewart (2008) elsewhere calls an ‘unfinished world’: scenes in which life seems at once suspended, still, and resonant with unfolding change.

Situated within efforts to produce alter/native autoethnographic texts committed to rigorous reflexivity (Jackson 2004), this article is a ‘rememory,’ what Ulysse (2010, 179), after Toni Morrison, defines as ‘the manifestation of continuities and discontinuities of the past in the present, [...] an attempt to collect, document, and disseminate that which we disdain for all sorts of reasons, yet needs to be salvaged for future safekeeping.’ Not merely autobiographical, the self I performatively materialize here, through the deployment of first and third person voices, emerges from a dense ‘archive of feelings’ (Cvetkovich 2003), my informants’ and my own. This archive is less a ‘conversion of self into a textual gathering’ than a ‘contact zone’ indexing a webbed history of institutional and everyday encounters (Ahmed 2004, 14). In the text, I sometimes call myself ‘he,’ a personage tied to but distinct from a professional ‘I’ still magnetized to disciplined observation and narration. ‘He’ is less an agentive self, the real me after an authentic truth, than a figure in the thick of things, willing to be vulnerable and take risks; and sometimes ‘he’ is a stand-in or a composite, someone who speaks on behalf of common experience; ‘he’ is a singular multiplicity, a gathering against the myth of the sovereign self (see also Stewart 2007, 7); and ‘he’ helps to convey shifting perspectives, changes in vision and experience.

My use of personal experiences and what appears as a sometimes deeply intimate voice emphasize the ways the intimate and the social ‘take shape through each other, or even how they shape each other’ (Ahmed 2004, 14). Thus, the experiences of this particular brown-skinned queer body are offered in the spirit of a provocative intellectual gift exchange in which the processual movements of my flesh ‘crystallize into narratives of lived practice and engagement’ (Anderson and Wylie 2009), even if those narratives are sometimes a little exaggerated.

This article is brief because of its limited temporal scale (from about the 1980s until the early 2000s). It is improper in the ways it does not cleave to historical teleologies or disciplinary propriety. This ethnography does not simply describe material geographies (men had sex in parks and hooked up online) or linear timelines (first there was public sex and then there was AIDS). Rather, gesturing as it does toward a psychic geography of intensities, remembrances, and longings, it works to conjure an expansive affective archive into brief life.

### **In an unfolding present**

*He works hard, acts nice, and quells the black killing rage that sometimes surges up in the classroom, in faculty meetings, or in early morning emails with administrators. He has more, everything, to lose. If he acts out, he risks getting lost in a bad economy. And he is already a little lost in the hypervisibility of a sum that does not add up (for students, their parents, some of his colleagues and supervisors): black queer professor.*

### **2003: In the ‘forest’**

Neighbors and friends made good informants. They had stories to tell, especially about loss. Dale, a firefighter with a teenage son, lost his brother to AIDS; Brett, a traveling salesman still mourning the death of his partner, also from AIDS; and Betty, a contractor,

had built a little house in her backyard for a friend dying from cancer, and after he died gave herself wholly over to addiction. I would have been lost without them.

They are all white, part of an earlier wave of gentrification in which the arrival of middle-class whites and the higher property taxes that followed pressured many of the black families in this historically black neighborhood into then more Latino East Austin or new developments further north. By the time I had arrived in 1999, many of the houses in Clarksville were being renovated by young professionals, members of a creative techno-entrepreneurial class (see Florida 2004; Bell and Binnie 2004) drawn to the neighborhood for its famously good elementary school, shaded streets, and proximity to the developing downtown scene.

Dale's son Stephen embodied native Austin masculinity: beefy, easygoing, a jack-of-all-trades, willing and able to help me change my oil or build a raised garden bed. One spring, he walked me to the end of our street to what he called the 'forest,' a few wooded acres between 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Street where we lived, and 10th Street, where the few remaining black families still made their homes.

We walked down an overgrown path and he pointed out the crumbling stone walls that had edged the grounds of a rest home for Confederate soldiers. He told me kids like him used the forest to party: to drink beer, smoke dope, and make out. Down a smaller path, deeper in the brush, we came to a clearing framed by logs serving as benches. Beer bottles, cigarette butts, and junk food wrappers littered the ground. We sat down near the fire pit. He looked at me and asked me if I felt like partying. A little surprised, I did not answer at first. And it was not until he pulled two beers from his backpack that I knew I had been set up. I glanced about, laughed, settled in.

This queerspace – of quasi-hetero beer bonding – was unlike the spaces I was studying elsewhere in Austin, like the city's remaining bathhouse or the bathrooms at the University of Texas. It was not a space that made men queer (like a gay bar) or, conversely, that men made queer by the sex they had there (like some parks during lunch or after dark). This space was queer because it hummed with the live residue of teen drug use and makeout sessions, and because of the flirty way Stephen brought this past into our present, staging an event, an inverted scene of knowledge and desire, between a middle-class white teenager – an iconographic embodiment of gay fantasies for 'flexible' men who are straight but not narrow – and an interracial gay graduate student. Nothing happened, but that does not mean that there was not *something* 'waiting in the wings, nascent, perhaps pressing' (Stewart 2008, 11).

Stephen's introduction to this space resembled the ways I was introduced to other queerspaces in Austin. The 'forest,' like the public sex cultures at the University or Pease Park or, later, in the chatrooms at gay.com, were part of my everyday life in the city, yet their material and psychic geographies remained opaque to me until others taught me how to see and move through them differently.

### The 1980s and 1990s

Austin was a city famous for its cruising and public sex scenes. During a Mexican breakfast in San Antonio, the kind of breakfast that goes on for hours and starts with orange juice and ends with white tequila *digestifs*, a 60-something board member of an arts nonprofit told me that the toilets on the ground floor of the University at Texas Austin Tower were notorious even when he had attended law school there 40 years earlier. In disused bathrooms, I found graffiti from the 1980s: 'Meet here for bj/M/W fall '88.' Gay men from around the country told me stories about the sex they had off-trail at Hippie

Hollow, Texas' clothing optional public park at Lake Travis, just outside Austin. And long-term Austinites fondly remembered the sex shops that lined 'the Drag,' a commercial strip lining Guadalupe Street across from the university. In the 1980s and 1990s when HIV/AIDS and well-intentioned but frightening public health efforts were having a chilling effect on sexpublics in cities like Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, Austin remained an easy place to get laid (Saylor 1992).

Friends and informants often cast the sexual history of the city in utopian terms. Once upon a queertime, they could find sex and other intimacies in now largely vanished spaces. Shane and James gave me a tour of the Drag:

Shane: There used to be a *wonderful* gay bar called Dirty Sally's over on 29th and Rio Grande ... People would go back and forth between the porn store right over there, Pleasureland, and Charlie's, the bar over on 12th St., and cruise along the way and do *whatever* it was they were gonna do.

James: There used to be another porn store down by Veggie Heaven.

Shane: Yeah, that used to be *really* cruisy. There was a great bar called the Boathouse, affectionately named the ButtHutt or the DickDock, and that was the best bar *ever*. But you would walk to Charlie's and if you didn't get a date at Charlie's, you'd walk to the video store. And no one ever did anything to stop it. You'd just look around and there'd be everyone from college boys to skankin' homos.

Queerspaces of public sex saturated Austin's social landscape. These were distributed across one of the city's most heavily trafficked geographies – a central swath encompassing the university and Drag, Pease Park to the west, the State Capitol, and, to the south, the downtown 6th Street district of bars and live music venues and 'Greenbelt' of parks lining Town (now Lady Bird) Lake. Moreover, as Shane noted, sexpublics formed in the spaces *between* particular venues, on the streets people used to walk from one place to another, in adjacent spaces like Dobie Mall or nearby Pease: men cruised along the way and did '*whatever*.' Failure just meant moving on.

These spaces not only provided access to sex or sexual materials (Warner 1999) but to what Delany (1999, 111) calls 'interclass contact and communication conducted in a mode of good will': straight, bisexual, queer, and 'skankin' homos'; young, old, and middle aged; black, white, and brown men all gathered and encountered one another in these spaces. A user's comments about Hippie Hollow from the popular online cruising site Squirt.org (2001) conveys, in telegraphic erotic flashes reminiscent of William S. Burroughs, the sense of egalitarian freedom (and excess) of queerspaces during the 1980s and early 1990s: 'gay boy fuck heaven ... brick shithouse black men posing over cliffs with erect 9 inch boners ... 15 year old boys in exhibitionist fuck fests.' In this transgressive celebration of underage sex and fetishized racial difference, the queerspace of Hippie Hollow is explicitly organized around public sex. Of course, this depiction of underage sex and 'shithouse black men' likely triggers the intellectual anxiety condensed as 'problematic,' as in, 'the claim that pedophilic orgies and stereotyped endowments index something egalitarian is problematic.' Yet, it does not really matter whether things really were egalitarian, or whether displays like the ones described above actually happened. What matters is how my informants remembered, however fantastically, a communally shared sexual culture, an exciting space of colliding differences and pleasures, and felt the absence of its loss. Paraphrasing Walter Benjamin, the truth is less a matter of exposing a secret than a revelation that does justice to it (Benjamin in Taussig 1999, 2). So, whether or not it really was, in the 1980s and 1990s Austin was something of a public sex paradise.

**Memento mori**

I cannot find the picture anymore. But in my *rememory* the photo captured Jasper and Shane standing on a trail near the Chain Drive, a leather bar known for its cheap drinks, occasional semi-public sex, and proximity to paths like this one. Jasper's farmer's tan stands out next to his sleeveless white t-shirt and Shane's fairer skin. Jasper leans his slight frame against Shane, and at the same time, laughing, appears to be trying to break free, as if from a sibling's playful embrace. When I took the image I have since lost, I am in love with Jasper. He had inspired my fieldwork, encouraging me to look at Austin's landscapes of public sex before focusing on gay life online. Jasper was the one who pointed out the graffiti on bathroom walls, telling me, 'Study this before it all disappears.'

The path Shane and Jasper stand on used to carry men looking for sex along the edge of Town Lake after Chain Drive stopped serving drinks. Now, the lake and trail have been renamed after former First Lady 'Lady Bird' Johnson, and these routes are more likely used by serious cyclists or residents of downtown luxury condos on their evening constitutionals than by men looking for an anonymous encounter.

The spatial and social geographies that form the backdrop of this image have shifted, as have the psychic geographies around which my life was organized. Things have moved on. At the moment of this remembered photo, I was in love and enrolled in an anthropology program in which I had planned on studying queer cultures in the black diaspora but found myself transcribing notes scrawled on the partitions of out-of-the-way campus bathrooms. Writing now, some of these vanished things (spaces, people, feelings) return, and I feel a glimmer of the delight of being in love, in adventuring through the city's (to me) hidden histories of sex, as well as other half-sensed things, like the worn bitterness that lingers in the wake of loss. And it recalls for me what some others perceived as my failure to do what I was expected to do, that is, spend time with a different group of natives, tracking diasporic homosexualities maybe, rather than sleep with the enemy in the heart of whiteness. This scene is neither wholly alive nor dead, but it still possesses an atmosphere that presses on me. Even after all these years.

**Barbeque**

*On a humid day in April, he fell asleep waiting on Brad's second floor porch. They had connected on outinaustin.com. He was not doing sight unseen hookups anymore, so they had agreed to meet in person the following day. He woke up as Brad reached the top of the stairs. They smiled at one another, liking what they saw, Brad apologized for being late, and he followed Brad inside to continue his nap.*

I met Brad at Ruby's, a famous barbeque joint on Guadalupe. An attractive white man in his late thirties, he had retired from the financial industry at an enviably early age. Most of his relationships since had been with younger men of color. At Ruby's, he elaborated a compelling, if disturbing, eroto-economic philosophy, one I understood to be deeply informed by his work as a financial analyst disciplined to see the world in terms of value. He had come to understand that among gay men, as in the broader US culture, white men enjoyed not just greater economic but erotic capital as well. The demand for white men had made them scarce. As a white gay man attracted to men of all races, he was well positioned in this marketplace of desire, enjoying access to a diverse array of potential partners. Years later, when I asked him if I could use this story, he agreed on the condition that I include a caveat: in this libidinal economy, he was not guaranteed romantic or sexual

opportunities, only ‘comparatively advantaged’ over racist whites not open to men of color or men of color only interested in white men.

After three dates, we stayed friends.

### ‘I love mutts’

*The hottest (white) guy he knows and fantasy polyamory husband explained part of his attraction (apart from the shared love of yoga and cultural studies) in shorthand, ‘I love mutts.’ It did not bother him, it did not stick. Not like when the guy he saw for a few weeks stood naked in his kitchen and said he had never been on a second date with a black guy before pausing, ‘wait, I’m not sure there was a first.’ His Chinese massage therapist said he clearly ‘inherited’ more white because the other phenotypical markers just did not add up. That is, until he got a semi, which prompted a joking amendment, ‘except for this.’*

Race, like sex, *mattered*, but it mattered in uneven or even opaque ways. As Saldanha (2006) observes, ‘Race can be as stark as apartheid, but mostly it is fuzzy and operates through something else’ (20, my italics). Race mattered in the ways the singularity of my difference interrupted the racial homogeneity of particular spaces; my corporeality interrogated, even if implicitly, the contours of the social worlds through which I moved. Or it became a site for some shared recognition. It mattered in the ways it afforded me access to informants or to the intimate experiences that shaped so much of my fieldwork; some black men only spoke to me (or slept with me) because they saw my difference, and some white men were really into ‘mutts.’ In academic contexts, race helped provide access to educational resources. The Diaspora program at the University of Texas, for example, provided me with funding, until my drifting away from a traditionally conceived activist racial politics toward the archives of longing and loss I explore here became a handicap that subjected me to critiques of not having a racial politics, or good ones. All of this is to say that ‘[r]ace is a whole event, much more than just a statement, important though that statement may be in the emergence of the event’ (Saldanha 2006, 12). Saldanha’s (2006) efforts to reontologize race through the notion of viscosity are particularly relevant:

Neither perfectly fluid nor solid, the viscous invokes surface tension and resistance to perturbation and mixing. Viscosity means that the physical characteristics of a substance explain its unique movements. There are local and temporary thickenings of interacting bodies, which then collectively become sticky, capable of capturing more bodies like them ... (18).

Rather than cede race as an immutable social fact in the social constructionist line of argumentation, Saldanha’s wonders ‘what race *can be*’ (21). Races and racisms proliferate in creative and compelling ways, into what he identifies, following Grosz (1994) and Deleuze and Guattari (1987), as ‘a thousand tiny races’ (Saldanha 2006, 20). Rather than a de-ontologized race divorced from scientific work on heredity or complexity theory, and likewise opposed to a postracial humanism, Saldanha ultimately argues for a form of cosmopolitanism that embraces ‘pleasure, curiosity, and concern in encountering a multiplicity of corporeal fragments outside of common-sense taxonomies’ (Saldanha 2006, 21).

In the fields of academic labor-cum-desire I navigated in Austin, this generous cosmopolitanism was less evident than another kind of viscosity, an anxious sense of something pressing, something crystallized by some stated recognition of racial difference that virally multiplied a thousand tiny racisms. Sometimes, the anxiety bled into paranoia, in which some, even minor, event was snapped into a world-building narrative of anti-black racism in which I was the victimized center; or, in which I had to speculatively peer

into the ‘underground’ of discourses or interactions in search of racist hearts (Jackson 2008; McGlotten, 2013). (‘I think you’re the only black man I’ve been on a second date with’: there has been one other black person, so I am not racist; there have been so few, so I am; I am not prejudiced even though I mainly date non-black people; I am sharing this because I feel guilty, or close to you and safe.) Were my encounters with friends, lovers, and informants characterized more by racist microaggressions or anti-racist miscegenation politics, or by an earnest desire to feel connected? Race certainly mattered, but how it mattered was often less than certain.

### **2000: Queerspace is the space of the screen**

*He fooled around with this on-again-off-again couple. One of them looked like him, black, white – mixed – with a likewise shared history of moving around with his military family. It was exciting and not just because the sex was good. He had hardly ever been close to other mixed race men. Later he became the white one’s boyfriend, replacing the one he called ‘brother’ in his head. The one who ended up leaving the picture, the one whose place he took, said, ‘Look online. That’s where all the action is. On gay.com you can get dick to your house faster than pizza.’*

*So for the next 5 years, he spent a lot of time in the ether of the virtual, talking to people from Austin, but also from around the USA, from Brazil, South Africa, Canada, Mexico, and Guatemala. He bought a video camera he used for camsex with dozens of men. He used websites to meet men: gay.com, outinaustin.com, whatafag.com, manhunt.net, cruisingforsex.com, menforsexnow.com. Some of the men he never saw again, some he saw more than once, some became friends, some gave him crabs and gonorrhea. Virtual life bled into the real thing as he met online buddies at bars and visits to the STD clinic, where he was always, not unexpectedly, anxious. He would leave determined to be more careful, refusing to contribute to the epidemiological trends of infection in which men of color were disproportionately represented, the trends the one he replaced, his ‘brother,’ got swept up in later.*

*He had never thought of himself as promiscuous. He had never spent so much time at a computer. He never thought he could use technology to reach out and touch someone and expect to be touched back even if the touch lagged because of the compression artifacting of data loss.*

### **1996: ‘Of course things went too public’**

Sex in public predictably attracts the ire of moral conservatives, public health activists, and the police. As Irvine (2008, 18) observes, the ‘transient feelings’ that accrete to panics around sex are ‘emotional publics [...] engaged in moral politics.’ In 1996, these moral politics were deployed in a wave of sex stings in Austin that resulted in the arrests of more than 200 men.

Already home to a number of high-tech enterprises, including National Instruments and 3M, among others, in the 1990s Austin was dubbed ‘Silicon Hills’ and groomed for expansion. And during the dotcom boom, venture capital preceded the designers, programmers, and communication specialists and their families who flooded the region to work in a range of dotcom startups. Although Austin remained a liberal (and libertarian) oasis deep in the heart of Texas in which ‘Keep It Weird’ emerged as a populist bumper sticker refrain against gentrification, everyone, the universal subject of the mass public sphere (Warner 1993b, 1999), agreed that public sex had to go. The sexual activity in the

University Tower was disturbing participants in orientation tours; used condoms littered the trails of popular parks; and the sex at Hippie Hollow had become brazen. One gay man told me that he saw things getting out of hand. He told me that cruisers had stopped respecting the rules that governed the open secret of public sex, so ‘of course, things went too public.’

Responding to complaints that police entrapped men during the stings at Pease Park, Austin Police Department’s Sgt. Maddox countered, ‘We are not targeting any group or segment of the society. We targeted persons committing certain acts in the park. We didn’t arrest them for homosexual conduct’ [Obregon, E., “78 Men Arrested in, Around Pease Park” (*Austin American-Statesman*, June 19, 1996, Metro/State)]. And facing criticism for their salacious and shallow coverage of the arrests, the editors of the *Austin American-Statesman*’s made a similar claim:

Despite protests from some in the gay community, the recent arrests for lewdness and indecent exposure in Austin’s Pease Park were not about homosexuality but criminality.

Public sex in a city park is a crime, and it doesn’t matter whether that sex is heterosexual or homosexual. [Editors, “Pease Park is For All” (*Austin American-Statesman*, June 22, 1996, Editorial)]

The editorial, like the police’s response, sought to shift attention away from the active production of the criminal behavior police sought to eradicate (in the stings, hot cops went undercover in the parks, showed up in bathrooms in enticingly short shorts, and acted like consensual cruisers) to categories of individual criminality such as lewdness and indecent exposure. Leaving aside the fact that no copulating straights were arrested during the sex stings in Austin’s parks, the claim was in bad faith because in 1996, homosexual acts, whether conducted in public or private, were illegal in Texas. The US Supreme Court overturned Texas’ sodomy law in *Lawrence v. Texas* only in 2003.

Nonetheless, the denial that ‘gays’ or ‘homosexuals’ were the targets of the stings was technically accurate. As Humphreys (1999) noted in his famous, and famously controversial, account ‘Tearoom Trade,’ many men who have sex with other men in public do not identify as gay: many are heterosexually partnered men. A number of informants who remembered or were caught up in the arrests linked the police stings not only to a desire to clean up the city’s image for a new gentrifying class or to discourage sex in public, but as a threat designed to push those ostensibly straight men having sex in the bathrooms at Pease Park or in the underbrush at Hippie Hollow to return to their heteronormative habitus (Figure 1).

### **youandme@the.matrix**

By the time I had arrived in Austin, sex had gone virtual. The new private life of public sex was in the matrix; its weighty technoscientific promise (Haraway 1997, 41) drew cruisers and queers in. There were new worlds to explore, worlds animated, above all, by desire – including the desire to shake off the fetters of sneaky groping or fears about the reputational harm that would come with getting caught. Online privacy felt absolute and people were as outspoken and slutty as they wanted to be. That is, until the limits of online publicity became clear: anonymity was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it enabled people to act out (of character or sexual norms); but on the other, refusing to disclose personal information (like one’s name or, increasingly, sexually explicit images), increased the likelihood of being rejected by a potential partner. Privacy on the net meant being able to speak one’s own truth – ‘looking now for no strings sex’ – and colliding with the blunt truths of others – ‘sorry, into white only.’



Figure 1. The sign on the right reads, ‘The Austin Police Department in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Department have adopted this park as a Crime Free Zone. Patrons of the park may be undercover Austin police officers. Any violators will be prosecuted. All arrests will be public record.’ *Source:* Photo by the author.

*Online he felt free from everything, except, of course, from the constraints and failures that came with desire and sex, such as unrequited feelings, love triangles, jealousy, playing safe (or not), promises and their transgression, or capitalism, or racism. After all, things changed when he started having to pay to log onto gay.com chatrooms, when he had to go to therapy to allay his boyfriend’s fears about camsex cheating, and when he got that chat message asking him, ‘nigger want to suck some dick?’ (McGlotten, 2013). He learned that even in the progressive city he had made his home, desire, rather than enjoying anarchic freedom, was more likely to be snapped into the discourses of the market: competition, sexual supply, and demand. Among the variables in this economy, ‘none [were] more central and salient than “the gift” of racial whiteness. Whites know they have it, others know they will never have it, and virtually everyone wants it’ (McBride 2005, 125). Rather than let him transcend or rework race, the private publicity of online spaces enabled dramatic scenes of racial injury. Anyway, he had never been called ‘nigger’ before. @ the matrix, he found desire on the move, its actualization flowing along uncertain lines of expression, and folded into everyday patterns of racist exclusion. Still, if it did not work out, if he was not into it, then so what, he could tune out, log off, and live. Right?*

### ‘In ’84’

Queertime indexes a utopian before and a traumatic after in the stories of gay Austinites. Nostalgia for public sex venues mixed with melancholic stories about losses incurred as a result of HIV/AIDS. Shawn told me:

In ’84 this town hadn’t really been affected. I mean, I knew about AIDS since I was a freshman in high school in 1980 and I *still* had unsafe sex. But down here, it was just really not prevalent here . . . It really started getting bad anywhere from 1990 to 1992, and then in ’93 I was going to like three funerals a week. I mean it was terrible, *just terrible*. It was weird. But it was great too. I mean, we had rubber fairies. We’d go around to the bars dressed as flaming fairies and give rubbers to *everybody*.

Shawn’s stories show the ways that the effects of HIV/AIDS in Austin involved both intense feelings of grief and creative transformations of that grief. While Shawn’s ‘rubber

fairies' participated in what some would define as activist outreach, it is important to note that this was not simply a matter of turning grief into anger: a range of affective responses was transformed into a range of actions – from direct political interventions like lobbying for more monies for research, treatment, and testing, to humorous but nonetheless important interventions like dressing up like fairies and handing out condoms at downtown bars. The queerspace of death and the queertime of HIV/AIDS generated new politics, forms of sociality, and fantastic (if also sometimes paranoid) attachments.

There were the people who took to the bars or the streets, and then there were the people who stopped going out, stayed at home, couplified or alone, waiting for the 'whole AIDS thing' to blow over, waiting for all the bad queers having non-monogamous sex or toilet sex or S/M sex to die off and 'stop ruining it for the rest of us.'

Then there were the people who just wanted the facts. Just the facts about AIDS, about how people got it, about who was getting it, about whether you could get it from swallowing.

Twenty years or so after '84,' I was confronted by a senior researcher, who, after I related Shawn's story in a lecture, emphatically declared, 'I was doing public health research in Austin in the early eighties, and I can tell you with *assurance* that AIDS was there and that people were dying and that it was already an epidemic.' I told him that Shawn's story was not about the truth; it was about the power of memory and forgetting. Facts warped with the impact of loss. Shawn's memories do not convey the truth about AIDS in Austin; they poetically story queerspaces as real, virtual, and affective, as a still unfolding queertime. Rather than cold hard facticity, Shawn evoked an emotional history shimmering with the heat of grief.

### **2001–2005: For every queerspace there is a queertime**

In my earliest rememories of public space in Austin – the assemblage of fantasies and nostalgically charged stories about the sort of great sex I had never had – public sex had come under attack through the collusion of moralists, developers, police, and an opportunistic media. But the longer I spent in the field – in the parks and toilets, @ the matrix, and in the cafés and restaurants where I met my informants over too much coffee or wine – the more another queerspace intruded, an emotional space saturated with terror, death, and loss: the space/time of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

*Fantasy: a pervert's time machine. He wondered what life might be like now if hundreds of thousands of his brothers had not been murdered by moral scapegoating and governmental indifference.*

*In his queertime travelogue, he loved and fucked beautiful and bright boys and men he never knew, who were open and serious about love and sex without worrying about naming their sexual identity, or having a good politics, or 'being realistic.' Of course, he knew that sex was not repressed and that it could not be liberated. He knew that things were always more complicated, that people still ended up fucked up. But this was not about reality; it was about an attachment to these admittedly imaginary queertimes and spaces in which folks could love and fuck without identities or shame or condoms. It was a wish for a queertime when AIDS never happened, when the horizons of social experience stayed magically open to experimentation, exploration, and the play of desire. It was a desire to disavow and forget the queertime after AIDS, a when he barely understands – how could anyone who every loved anyone survived so many successive waves of loss? His nostalgia was not sentimental, it was not sedimented loss, rather it animated: the past rose up to meet the present in the forms of contagious affects (he did*

*not know what he missed until men told him what they missed) or ideals (like the revolutionary sexual politics that cyclically electrify youth, when they are not being banal or conservative).*

### **In my kitchen; or, queerspace is the space of desire and death**

Keith: I mean, the term ‘barebacking’ is a word that was chosen fairly recently to give a name to something that people have always done. But the only people who bareback are gay men. Everybody else is just having normal sex. But when *we* choose to have normal sex, we’re barebacking . . . I don’t understand why it has to be a public discussion. It’s a very private decision that two, six, twenty people should make . . . I’m not gonna lose a lot of sleep over what a fifty-year-old man chooses to do with me.

Shaka: And what about the idea of full disclosure? Of disclosing your status and knowing your status?

Keith: Anyone who believes that someone is telling the truth about that is kidding themselves. Especially now where it’s actually *a crime*. I mean there are people behind bars right now for doing nothing more than having consensual sex and the partner finds out they have HIV . . . You think I would tell the truth? *No way*.

In my kitchen, desire and death moved into intimate proximity. Keith, amateur pornographer and webmaster of *cruisingforsex.com*, one of the most heavily trafficked gay sites in the late nineties and early naughts, had agreed to talk with me about the Internet and gay sex, and, later, to digitally capture me for his site. *Cruisingforsex.com* offered message boards and listings of places where men meet for sex in public and semi-public spaces; the site had been essential for my own initial forays into Austin’s public sexual cultures. Keith traveled North America to explore the various public sex locales the site’s users had recommended (foreshadowing the emphasis on crowd-sourcing popular in Web 2.0) and to photograph and film men for the amateur porn section of his site.

He was both a savvy web entrepreneur and lay cultural critic. And so I found his perspectives on the ways discussions about barebacking reproduced notions about gay sex as pathological and criminal astute, even as I was disturbed by his ideas about the negotiation of sexual risk as what he later described as ‘a private matter that people are supposed to make on their own.’ His emphasis on personal responsibility conflicted with my own attachment to ideas about sex as a communal practice that, even (or especially) if it did not create stable identities or communities, could nonetheless function to enhance rather than diminish our ethical exchanges with others. Although Keith matter-of-factly assumed that it was ridiculous to believe what people said about their serostatus, in my own discourse, ‘full disclosure’ represented a desire to care both for the self and the other, simultaneously. Of course, I also assumed an HIV-negative subjectivity that implicitly suggested that it was the responsibility of the HIV-positive partner to take the moral high ground, tell the truth, and make every effort to prevent another’s seroconversion. At the time, I could not understand or imagine that people might not care, or that they might want to convert.

Barebacking fascinated me as a practice charged with risk and death; barebacking represented a death drive, a desire for what Dean (2009) calls ‘unlimited intimacy.’ I was angry after this conversation, feeling like I had more at stake as I worried about becoming a statistic – another black flag with AIDS – a fear made intimate by my relationship with an HIV-positive man. If for some gay men barebacking represented a passage, whether banal or ritualized, from one state (of intimacy or serostatus) to another, for me it represented a fearfully close space of death.

### December 2001: hardcore reflexivity

*Nervous about being photographed, he interviewed the pornographer first. But he was nervous about the interview, too. In his mind, the pornographer was a minor celebrity and sexual liberation activist in the service of desire, using technology to bring men around the world together into one global fucking village.*

*He was nervous. His voice cracked. He made awkward comments about his 'research' to add a veneer of professionalism. He managed to begin a sentence, 'This morning when I was reading some Foucault . . . .'*

I had contacted Keith with a dual purpose in mind: to interview him and to model for his website. My desire to be on the site was partially linked to a desire to upset and reverse the ethnographic gaze. Rather than simply study those sites and people embedded in practices of objectification and circuits of sex and capital, I wanted, in the mode of gift exchange, to offer myself up, to put myself (my body and my propriety) on the line and on display. I knew, too, in a spirit of pornographic activism, that I could become one of the few models of color on the site. When we first met, Keith told me that I reminded him of his similarly mixed race boyfriend and that it was hard finding black and Latino models.

As an entrepreneur whose business encouraged men to engage in quasi-legal acts, Keith was uniquely positioned to comment on the relationships between desire and its management. He painted a complex picture of the successes and failures of the gay and lesbian rights movement and, in comments echoed by many men I spoke with in Austin, linked the successes of the identity politics of the of the 1980s and 1990s to an increase in the policing of desire and the conflation of acts with identities. By many accounts, it was not simply that various political leaders or police agencies were increasingly attuned to public or other kinds of nonconforming sex and therefore made efforts to survey and manage these unruly sites of desire, but that the gains of the gay and lesbian movement itself brought an ever greater viscosity to particular identity categories. The movement of identities and desires, though never fluid in the way celebrated in some postmodern theories, were nonetheless crystallized in new ways:

Keith: Well, if you wanna add to the list of things that have come about to add to the destruction of public sex arenas, I would put the gay rights movement right at the top of the list, right up there with economic prosperity . . . We have created another box that we've forced people to go inside of, and that is: you've gotta be gay. You're either straight or you're gay. And that has had a profound impact on the ability of men to have sex. A good friend of mine who now lives in Fresno, California, and moved there specifically for the good opportunities for sex, says that his first rule of thumb [ . . . ] is to see if there's a gay community center in the town, and if there is, he *will not* move there!

In Keith's account the gay rights movement froze some people and practices in place, into static positions that kept them from going on the prowl, even as it encouraged others to run away.

### The then and there of queerspace and time

*In an unfolding present he works hard, acts nice, and quells the black killing rage that sometimes surges up (Muñoz 2009). He has a job, an office, and something like an upwardly mobile life, or at least one that is superficially distant from the savage precarity that governs the lives of so many. One misstep, though. Of course, he stands out as one of only a handful of faculty of color. There is scrutiny, expectations, and projections. He remembers to work a little harder 'just in case,' to watch out 'because white people are crazy' and 'you just never know.'*

*Visiting another university for a conference, a stillness settles and then thrums with desire. Things surface. He logs on and takes note. He goes for a wander. He is on the move. He finds a bathroom tucked away in a basement. There he finds traces of desire: peepholes drilled into the partitions dividing the stalls, arcs of dried cum, and scrawled at the base of the partition in unsteady capital letters, 'TAP FOOT FOR BJ.' There are the usual crude drawings, old messages, and, near one of the peepholes, a note that says, tantalizingly, 'FYI the women upstairs are doing it too.' Someone enters the next stall; he lifts and lowers his foot, and waits for the response: tap, tap, tap.*

I have used a 'more-than-representational' approach (Anderson and Wylie 2009; Lorimer 2005; Thrift 2008) in this article to dwell in remembered worlds, and to create new ones. My memories draw on encounters in real and virtual spaces, and the traffic between them, in an effort to evoke the felt materiality of Austin's queer sexual geographies and the changes they and my informants underwent. I have transgressed disciplinary forms, especially academic attachments to dispassionate observation unsullied by a researcher's erotic or racial subjectivity, to better convey the ongoing and hard to capture sense of movement – of spaces, feelings, bodies, and desires – that characterized the vitality of my field sites. In this article, movement appears in the ways seemingly disparate scenes and voices resonate with one another in an archive of feelings made up of longing, loss, and hopefulness. It appears in the multiple points of view – my own first person perspective, a composite and literary 'he' who serves as a point of (dis)identification, and those of the men with whom I worked. Movement appears as well in my focus on race's mattering, to the ways racialization shaped my fieldwork in hard to grasp (and represent) ways, through shifting speculations, microaggressions, and erotic affinities – race is an event that lubricates scenes of encounter, or that registers as a thickening of glommed up bodies.

Finally, while these stories pointedly do not add up or offer meta-theoretical closure, I have suggested throughout that public sex continues to index one route toward a more capacious and democratically rich array of intimate configurations, including those that refuse or fail to endure. And as a text (dis)organized by stories about sex, this queerspace, the one we are together in now, has become a sex public. Reader, we have been having public sex, transgressing academic norms, frozen categories of identity, and miscegenation taboos. Was it good for you?

### Acknowledgements

An earlier version of this article was presented at the Center for Gender Studies at the University of Chicago, where Lauren Berlant and others offered important insights. I am grateful as well to Marlon Bailey and Rashad Shabazz for their invitation to participate in this themed section. I also thank Scott Webel, Beverley Mullings, and the three anonymous reviewers for supportive, generous, and incisive critical feedback. Of course, any errors are my own.

### Notes

1. The literature on queerspace is vast. In Oswin's (2008) useful review, she challenges identitarian queer politics and notions that queerspaces are inherently progressive. Akin to other recent work in queer studies (e.g. Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz 2005), she argues on behalf of a queer theory that takes poststructural critiques of identity alongside 'feminist, materialist, postcolonial, and critical race theories' as its points of departure (Oswin 2008, 89). Wright, M. ["Arrested at Hippie Hollow on Charges of Lewdness and Indecency" (*Austin American-Statesman*, April 28, 2010, Metro/State)] offers a review of work in geography that cuts across queer and feminist research. Feminist and queer writing on public counter-public spheres inspired my own initial

efforts (see especially Fraser 1992; Warner 1993a, 1993b) along with early work on queerspace (e.g. Bell and Valentine 1995; Betsky 1997; Sanders 1996). For the purposes of this article, I understand queerspaces to be those spaces – geographical, institutional, affective – that queers have made, that have made queers queer, and that possess some of the elements common to queerness – resistance, obduracy, obscenity, among others. Unlike Oswin, then, I retain queer as an umbrella term referring to sexual identities and practices, although, like her, I also understand sexuality and its spatialization as governing effects of biopolitics and the task of queer theory to attend to the normative exercise of power. My writing, while queer in its orientation and methodology, is still very much invested in focusing on the microphysics of queer lives (contra Oswin 2008, 100). I view sexualities and spaces as conditioned by the persons who animate them, who through ordinary and extraordinary practices negotiate the possibilities and constraints of self-sovereignty under liberalism (for an important transnational example, see Povinelli 2006). Here queerspaces describe the spaces where Austin men met for love and sex; and they describe affective zones of desire and loss. The queerspaces in this article moreover index sexpublics, an assemblage that coheres not only through nominally shared identifications or practices but also in and through the ways broader publics and politics (national, hetero-, and homonormative) define the people and practices that accrete to queerspaces. Typically, sexpublics are not communities, though they might share some of the qualities of communities such as common relations, feelings, or organizations. But unlike communities, their members do not necessarily share notions of a ‘permanent state of being’ (Warner 2002, 53), an identity. Public sex has remained an unusually commonplace practice unassimilable to rights-based demands for recognition. It is thus a particularly useful practice to highlight the exclusions produced by the mainstreaming of lesbian and gay politics (see Berlant and Warner 2000; Colter and Dangerous Bedfellows 1996; Delany 1999; Leap 1999) as well the heterogeneity of intimate practices and spaces (for an example that indirectly theorizes the impersonal intimacies common to public sex, see Bersani and Phillips 2008).

2. For two other ethnographic accounts that resonate with my own interest in phenomenologies of race, rather than its symbolic or linguistic effects, see Bailey (2009) and Allen (2009).
3. Although my research was largely based in Austin, Texas, I also conducted interviews in San Antonio, Texas, and New York City. I engaged in active data collection in 2000–2001, 2007, and 2010. As part of a larger project that explored the transformation of Austin’s sexual landscapes and the growth and influence of the Internet on Austin’s gay sexpublics, a significant portion of my research focused on online intimacies. Over the course of my fieldwork, I conducted dozens of online interviews with men from Austin and around the world. I conducted nearly two dozen face-to-face interviews in and near Austin. Given the sensitive nature of my research topic and the potential risks to my research subjects, my research methodology relied on participant observation and snowball sampling. As I outline below, the voices and stories I present here include verbatim quotations, autoethnographic confessions, and composites that represent common threads among my interlocutors.

### Notes on contributor

Shaka McGlotten is an associate professor of Media, Society, and the Arts at Purchase College, where he teaches courses on media, ethnography, and digital culture. His research focuses on the intersections of media technologies with categories of gender, sexuality, and race in particular. Shaka also works in what might be broadly called ‘affect studies,’ or the study of the ways feelings are central to our individually lived and shared social experiences. His book *Virtual Intimacies: Media, Affect, and Queer Sociality* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013) examines a range of media sites – DIY porn, online gaming, gay chatrooms – to examine the mutual intensification between digital media culture and the creativity of queer sociality.

### References

- Allen, J. S. 2009. “For ‘the Children’ Dancing the Beloved Community.” *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society* 11: 311–326.
- Ahmed, S. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge.
- Anderson, B., and J. Wylie. 2009. “On Geography and Materiality.” *Environment and Planning A* 41: 318–335.

- Bailey, M. M. 2009. "Performance as Intravention: Ballroom Culture and the Politics of HIV/AIDS in Detroit." *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society* 11: 253–274.
- Bech, Henning. 1997. *When Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity*. Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press.
- Bell, D., and J. Binnie. 2004. "Authenticating Queer Space: Citizenship, Urbanism and Governance." *Urban Studies* 41: 1807–1820.
- Bell, D., and G. Valentine. 1995. *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexuality*. London: Routledge.
- Berlant, L., and M. Warner. 2000. "Sex in Public." In *Intimacy*, edited by L. Berlant, 311–330. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Berlant, L. G. 2008. *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Berlant, L. G. 2009. "Unworlding.", . <http://supervalentthought.com/2009/05/13/unworlding/>
- Bersani, L., and A. Phillips. 2008. *Intimacies*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Betsky, A. 1997. *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire*. New York: William Morrow.
- Bleys, R. 1996. *The Geography of Perversion: Male-to-Male Sexual Behaviour Outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750–1918*. New York: New York University Press.
- Colter, E. G., and Dangerous Bedfellows. 1996. *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Cvetkovich, A. 2003. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Dean, T. 2009. *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Delany, S. 1999. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. New York: New York University Press.
- Deleuze, G., and F. Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Eng, D., J. Halberstam, and J. Muñoz. 2005. "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" *Social Text* 23: 1–17.
- Eng, D. L., and D. Kazanjian, eds. 2002. *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Florida, R. L. 2004. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fraser, N. 1992. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by C. Calhoun, 109–142. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Grosz, E. 1994. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Halberstam, J. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press.
- Haraway, D. J. 1997. *Modest-Witness@Second-Millennium.FemaleMan-Meets-OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience*. New York: Routledge.
- Higgs, D., ed. 1999. *Queer Sites: Gay Urban Histories Since 1600*. New York: Routledge.
- Hoad, N. W. 2007. *African Intimacies: Race, Homosexuality, and Globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Humphreys, L. 1999. "Tearoom Trade." In *Public Sex/Gay Space*, edited by W. Leap, 29–54. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Irvine, J. 2008. "Transient Feelings: Sex Panics and the Politics of Emotion." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14: 1–40.
- Jackson, J. L. 2004. "An Ethnographic FilmFlam: Giving Gifts, Doing Research, and Videotaping the Native Subject/Object." *American Anthropologist* 106: 32–42.
- Jackson, J. L. 2008. *Racial Paranoia: The Unintended Consequences of Political Correctness: The New Reality of Race in America*. New York: Basic Civitas.
- Leap, W., ed. 1999. *Public Sex/Gay Space*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lorimer, H. 2005. "Cultural Geography: The Busyness of Being 'More-Than-Representational'." *Progress in Human Geography* 29: 83–94.
- Massumi, B. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- McBride, D. A. 2005. *Why I Hate Abercrombie and Fitch: Essays on Race and Sexuality*. New York: New York University Press.

- McGlotten, S. 2013. "Feeling Black and Blue: Online Gay Sex Publics and Black Affects." In *Virtual Intimacies: Media, Affect, and Queer Sociality*, edited by B. Williams and J. Woodruff. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Muñoz, J. E. 2009. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: New York University Press.
- Oswin, N. 2008. "Critical Geographies and the Uses of Sexuality: Deconstructing Queer Space." *Progress in Human Geography* 32: 89–103.
- Oswin, N., and E. Olund. 2010. "Governing Intimacy." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28: 60–67.
- Povinelli, E. A. 2006. *An Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Puar, J. K. 2006. "Mapping U.S. Homonormativities." *Gender, Place, and Culture* 13: 67–88.
- Saldanha, A. 2006. "Reontologizing Race: The Machinic Geography of Phenotype." *Environment and Planning D* 24: 9–24.
- Sanders, J., ed. 1996. *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Saylor, S. 1992. "Amethyst, Texas." In *Hometowns: Gay Men Write About Where They Belong*, edited by J. Preston, 119–135. New York: Plume.
- Sedgwick, E. 1997. "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction is About You." In *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction*, edited by E. Sedgwick, 1–37. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sedgwick, E. 2003. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Snediker, Michael D. 2008. *Queer Optimism: Lyric Personhood and Other Felicitous Persuasions*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Squirt.org. 2001. "Hippie Hollow." Reference no longer available.
- Stewart, K. 2007. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Stewart, K. 2008. "Weak Theory in an Unfinished World." *Journal of Folklore Research* 45: 71–82.
- Taussig, M. 1999. *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Thrift, N. 2008. *Non-Representational Theory: Space|Politics|Affect*. New York: Routledge.
- Ulysse, G. A. 2010. "Little Gina's Rememory #2: An Soudin (In Secret)." *Feminist Studies* 36: 174–179.
- Warner, M., ed. 1993a. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Warner, M. 1993b. "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject." In *The Phantom Public Sphere*, edited by B. Robbins, 234–256. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Warner, M. 1999. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free Press.
- Warner, M. 2002. "Publics and Counterpublics." *Public Culture* 14: 49–89.

## ABSTRACT TRANSLATION

### Una breve e indecorosa geografía de los espacios queer y los públicos del sexo en Austin, Texas

Este artículo ofrece viñetas etnográficas y autoetnográficas de mi investigación sobre culturas del sexo público en Austin, Texas. También sigue algunas de las formas en que mi propia racialización como un hombre queer negro moldeó el proyecto de investigación. Mi abordaje, que incluye un estilo textual experimental "reparativo", ofrece varios registros entrelazados de análisis. Uno los recuerdos nostálgicos de mis entrevistados de sexo público en Austin; la circulación legal y mediática del sexo queer en general, y del sexo público en particular, como problemas específicamente "públicos" que requieren vigilancia, administración y manejo; los impactos de VIH/SIDA; y el auge de la Internet como medio para conectarse. De esta forma, no solamente apunto a documentar sitios de deseo y su transformación, sino también a documentar los afectos cotidianos e íntimos que

animan y dan sentido y significado a los espacios queer y los públicos del sexo en Austin y otras partes. En su mezcla ecléctica de voces y estilos, así como en la realidad y la ficción, mi etnografía no describe simplemente geografías materiales (los hombres tienen sexo en parques y se conocen online) o cronologías lineales (primero hubo sexo público y luego hubo SIDA), sino que, gesticulando así hacia una geografía psíquica de intensidades, recuerdos y deseos, intenta dar vida breve a un archivo afectivo y expansivo.

**Palabras claves:** sexualidad; espacio; afecto; raza; autoetnografía; sexo public

### 德州奥斯汀中短暂且失当的酷儿空间与性公共地理

本文从我自身对德州奥斯汀公共性爱文化的研究，提供民族志与自我民族志的描述。本文同时追溯我自我种族化为黑人酷儿男性以形塑研究计画的部分方式。我的研究取径包含了实验性的“修復”文本风格，提供众多相互扣连的分析注记。我搜集受访者对于奥斯汀的公共性爱之怀旧记忆；法律与媒体传播中的一般酷儿性爱，特别是公共性爱，做为必须被监控、督导与管理的特定“公共”问题；人类免疫缺乏病毒 / 爱滋病的影响；以及网路的兴起做为接触的管道。我不仅藉此纪录慾望的场域及其变迁，亦同时纪录如同其他地方一般，在奥斯汀中驱动、理解并赋予意义的每日生活及私密情慾。我的民族志折衷地涵合了各种声音与风格、写实与虚构，因此并非单纯地描述物质地理（男性在公园内交媾并在网上勾搭）或线性的时间轴（公共性爱伴随而来的是爱滋病），而是相反地朝向展现强烈情感、记忆与渴望的精神地理，试图将延伸性的情感记录召唤至短暂的生命中。

**关键词：**性慾；空间；情慾；种族；自我民族志；公共性爱