5

Borderline Bodies

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This chapter is about borders that are made and broken at gay pride parades. Specifically, I examine the discursive and material borders maintained in tourism discourse. Binary oppositions such as self/other, straight/gay, and tourist/host provide a focus for this chapter. I am interested in where these borders wear thin and threaten to break and disrupt social order. I explore the bodies of gay pride parades because it is bodies such as these that threaten the borders of corporeal acceptability.

Bodies on display for tourism depend on particular commodifiable experiences. Within a context of gay pride parades, a tension and contradiction is maintained between parading bodies, as tourism commodities, and political displays of pride. It is within this contradiction that I situate this chapter. Parading bodies become borderline bodies—bordering on politics, streets, and tourism practices.

I begin by drawing on empirical data from two specific gay pride parades: the Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand HERO[1] parade and the Sydney Australian Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade? These parades are simultaneously forms of tourist entertainment, as well as political protests. I discuss the spatial constitution of symbolic resistance through the lens of the carnivalization of society. Streets can be queered and, as a result, heterosexuality becomes denaturalized—made obvious—during gay pride parades. Another effect of parading bodies in streets can be understood as making queer bodies seem *queerer.*

I develop my argument by suggesting that queer parading bodies can arouse feelings of abjection, which plays a crucial role in the popularity of the parades. I use the notion of abjection because it is useful to theoretical and political strategies. Abject bodies on parade trouble borders at the same time as the Cartesian subject tries to redraw them. I focus on the urge to separate self/other and straight/gay, and the mobility of subject positions that this urge creates. My intention for this chapter, therefore, is to examine the notion of fixed subjectivities by examining embodied contradictions.

SPECTACULAR CARNIVAL EVENTS

Gay pride parades have become commonplace in Western cities since the New York Stonewall riots began on the night of June 27, 1969, when police raided a gay bar called the Stonewall Inn, in Greenwich Village, New York. Three days of rioting became an emblem of defiance against normative heterosexuality and officially established the beginning of the gay liberation movement. Born of these riots, gay pride parades made public the previously private bodies of gays and lesbians. Under the public gaze, certain urban, cultural, and social geographies emerged.

HERO and Sydney Mardi Gras parades can be understood as socially contested events whose political significance is inscribed in the landscape. The presentation of marginalized peoples in public places can be seen as a subversion and transgression of what is usually termed "high" and "low" values. This presentation, however, is more than a site of hierarchical social inversion. It is worth noting that HERO and Sydney Mardi Gras are parades of the "South" and are very different from comparable events of the "North," which tend not to be structured around entertainment and difference. In this chapter I elaborate on the place and political specificities of gay pride parades down under.

Claire Lewis and Steve Pile (1996: 39) state that "In certain places and in certain times, carnival may be a ritualised resistance, or it may be a contested territory, or it may be a site of hybrid ambivalences, or it may be an opiate to the people." Carnival has been attributed with providing an opportunity for self-expression among marginalized groups, as can be seen in the Notting Hill Carnival in London (Cohen 1980, 1982; Manning 1989), and there have been several studies of the construction of gender and race at carnival events (Jackson 1988, 1992; Lewis and Pile 1996; Spooner 1996). The idea of carnival as reversal establishes the dominant social order as something that is static and "allowed" to be temporarily punctured. Carnival is understood as "a *licensed* affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off as disturbing and relatively ineffectual as a revolutionary work of art" (Eagleton 1981: 148, emphasis in original).

Carnival, therefore, can be seen as a form of ritualistic value display that redefines the meaning of urban spaces. These displays have often been discussed in terms of urban economic gain versus possible civic disruption, which tend to place city governments in a double bind. On the one hand they are interested in events that make the city attractive to large numbers of people, because money spent at events indirectly feeds tax revenue. On the other hand, they perceive such events as threats to the establishment because they are often spatially unstructured and involve large groups in playful activities (Bonnemaison 1990; Hall 1992). The political impact of the Sydney Mardi Gras affects many areas of public and civil functions, from, for example, political consciousness and organizational ability for lesbian and gay communities, to major political centers and the state (Marsh and Galbraith 1995).

The representation of carnival as the reverse of static, everyday normality has been an important starting point in a focus on the spectacular. Attention needs to be paid, however, to the contradictions of carnival bodies as constituted by and within the

spaces in which such events take place. HERO and Mardi Gras parades are also contained within dominant discourses of tourism and entertainment, which tend to create binaries of self/other or tourist/host. Furthermore, Sydney Mardi Gras and HERO parades are not just street parades. Their meanings are constructed from a monthlong festival of events that involve, for example, art exhibitions, theater, film festivals, health programs, and tourism.

REDEFINING URBAN SPACE

Gay pride parades do not simply (and uncontestedly) inscribe streets as queer, they actively produce queer streets (Bell and Valentine 1995). Parades can be read as deconstructive spatial tactics, a queering of the street. Nancy Duncan (1996b: 139) states, "Gay pride parades, public protests, performance art and street theatre as well as overtly homosexual behaviour such as kissing in public" upset unarticulated norms. Sally Munt (1995: 124, emphasis in original) argues that such behaviors produce a "politics of *dis-location."* Duncan (1996b) believes that lesbian and gay practices, if they are made explicit, have the potential to disturb the taken-for-granted heterosexuality of public places. The street tactics of gay pride parades are also "crisis points in the normal functioning of 'everyday' experiences" (Cresswell 1996, cited in Duncan 1996b: 139). Gill Valentine (1996: 152) argues that "Pride marches also achieve much more than just visibility, they also challenge the production of everyday spaces as heterosexual."

Discussions of the vitality and controversy of pride parades do not usually focus on the role of tourists and tourism industries in such controversial displays in public space. But I would argue that when gay bodies are on parade they are clearly marked as "different," their bodies constitute an "extraordinary" tourist attraction. This is because, as John Urry (1990: 11) argues, "tourism results from a basic binary division between the ordinary-everyday and the extraordinary." The dichotomies of tourists and hosts, or self and other, however, are not inherent or "natural" binary divisions. They are produced, for example, when bodies become gendered/sexed and sexualized at gay pride parades. Away from the parade, the tourist event, queer bodies may seem ordinary, everyday, and even normal. During parades, however, the border or binary division becomes visible and accentuated between paraders and spectators.

The creation of such oppositions provides a spectacle of queer bodies to the dominant culture. That the majority of tourists at HERO and at the Sydney Mardi Gras are heterosexual *is* strongly suggested by a questionnaire survey I conducted among spectators on the night of the 1996 HERO parade: of the 118 people returning questionnaires, 90 (76 percent) identified themselves as heterosexual.[3] The popularity of gay pride parades for heterosexual spectators, particularly the Sydney Mardi Gras, has been noted elsewhere. David Bell and Gill Valentine (1995: 26, emphasis in original) claim:

> It seems that the construction of Pride marches for a straight [tourist] spectator audience is becoming a very important issue for marches in the US and, judging by some footage of Mardi Gras shown on British TV recently, in Australia too (look at who's watching the parade).

HERO, according to the HERO project director, has always been constructed for the "straight" tourist spectator:

> Well the parade is basically put on for the straight community when it comes down to it. Like a hundred thousand people there, I don't know, 5000 would be gay? . Ah, so it's for straights and that's fine. I don't think we should have a problem with that at all. We should encourage it. (individual interview, September 22, 1995)

Another indicator of the construction of HERO for the "straight" public is that in 1997 and 1998 the full parade was presented in primetime on national television. The HERO parade as public "product" is now sold to television production companies and can be purchased as a video cassette. The Sydney Mardi Gras is also televised in Australia and marketed in video cassette form. Such products are advertised as tourist souvenirs in Sydney, along with T-shirts, tea towels, key rings, and so forth.

To summarize my discussion so far, gay pride parades have the potential to queer the "everyday" or "ordinary" streets of cities (Johnston 1997, 2001; Bricknell 2000). They also tend to be caught up in discourses that construct queer bodies as others and tourists as self. The spectacle of the HERO parade is constituted through binaries of tourist/host and straight/gay. Tourism literature suggests that these events can be theorized as the powerful producer of the exotic (Rossel 1988) and a commodifier of cultures (Greenwood 1989) that constructs "others." Next, I argue that this contradiction troubles the spaces and bodies at gay pride parades.

PLACING BORDERS

HERO and Sydney Mardi Gras are intensely structured spatial events. Clearly marked borders between paraders and tourists is maintained at the roadside through the use of road markings, road barriers or barricades, parade officials and police, as well as self-policing[4] by tourists. This may be one of the reasons that the HERO parade and the Sydney Mardi Gras are so popular among "straight" tourists, because tourists are physically separated from the gay bodies on parade. When spatial segregation is maintained, there can be no confusion between heterosexual and homosexual bodies. The threat of sexualized transgression is, at one level, controlled. The dominant group (heterosexual tourists) can keep its distance from the "other."

At the parades that I attended, road barriers were erected along the sides of the streets. The barriers created a wide space in the middle of the streets that tourists could not access. At the 1996 Sydney Mardi Gras the barriers were extensive and formidable (see figure 5.1). Metal frame crowd control barriers, which were approximately one meter high, stretched the entire length of the parade route. The barriers were supplied by the Sydney City Council and were fixed into place several hours before the parade started. Streets were closed to traffic from approximately 3 P.M., five hours before the start of the parade.

Figure 5.1 Road barriers at the Sydney Mardi Gras parade
Photographs by Lynda Johnston, 5 March 1996

SAFETY FIRST

The *Sydney Star Observer's* guide to the 1996 Mardi Gras festival, parade, and party, reported that:

> The Parade begins at around 8 PM at the corner of Liverpool and Elizabeth Street, moves up to Oxford Street, turns right into Flinders Street and then left into Moore Park Road. As vantage points in Oxford Street are usually the first taken, try Hinders Street or Moore Park Road. Remember that after 7 PM it gets very difficult to get a good possie anywhere.

The attention paid to parade crowds and to places from which to view the parades and getting a "good possie" are imbued with discourses of safety. The numbers attending the Sydney Mardi Gras have increased dramatically since the parade's beginnings. The *Sydney Star Observer's* guide reports on some of the historical changes:

> But how things have changed! From 1981 ... Sydney summer and Mardi Gras energy have seen crowd numbers and float numbers grow. Some of us remember when there were no barricades between the crowd and the Parade and you could jump in and out of the marching thong at will. Don't try that now. It's—after all—safety before spontaneity these days. Crowds in 1994 topped 600,000. . . The float count should be well over 100, there'll be several thousand participants, and more than 800 officials of various kinds.

The "800 officials of various kinds" are usually volunteers who wear uniforms that distinguish them from spectators and paraders. The parade officials carry radio-telephones, hand-held megaphones, and whistles. In 1996 I waited for three hours behind the barriers at Oxford Street before the parade began, and during this time, I noted several things about safety procedures. If tourists wished to cross the street they had to ask the officials to let them through the barricades and over the street. During the parade there were no opportunities to step out from behind the barricades and cross the street. If spectators attempted this, they were stopped and encouraged to remain behind the barricades.

Similarly, at the 1996 HERO parade the crowd was encouraged to stay behind the erected street barriers. Auckland crowds were disciplined before and during the parade. One of my duties, when I worked at the HERO parade workshop in January and February 1996, was to find thirty volunteers who could be placed on streets that intersected with Ponsonby Road. Each volunteer had a "marshal" T-shirt, reflector vest, and distress flares. In addition to these marshals, each parade entry had to provide two of their own marshals to walk beside their float and to maintain an "appropriate" distance between paraders and tourists where there were gaps in the road barriers. Marshals were briefed at a pre-parade safety meeting with the organizers and police. The use of road barriers at the HERO parade has increased each year with the size of the attending crowd.

The 1997 and 1998 HERO parade organizers made use of the Auckland City Council's road barriers. These are large plastic container-type barricades, which, once in place, were filled with water (see figure 5.2). These barricades were wide and approximately waist height. Marshals and police kept the crowd behind these barricades. Tourists' bodies, for the most part, become disciplined, controlled, and carefully separated from the homosexual bodies on parade. By extension, paraders' bodies were also disciplined, controlled, and contained within the barricades.

There are several implications of this attention to crowd safety. In making the parade site safe and controlled, a distinction is created between paraders as spectacle and heterosexual tourists as watchers. When safety is well publicized and barriers are erected and maintained by barricades, marshals, and police, more people are attracted to the parade site. Of course one could argue that the barriers really are there for safety, to stop the crowd from being crushed by a large truck, or spectators run over by motorcycles. However, my experience, from attending both barriered and nonbarriered parades, is that the barriers tend to increase risk of physical injury. The barriers concentrate large numbers of people in small spaces, and because people cannot move away from the roadside barriers they become dangerous obstacles.

At the 1996 HERO parade, I was elated to see the final parade "product," which I had helped to create. I was also video recording the parade and hence did not form part of the main crowd at the side of the road. I walked with the parade at times. Carrying a video recording camera marked me as different from the other spectators. At the 1997 HERO parade, however, when I observed the parade from behind the barricades as a lesbian tourist, surrounded by mostly heterosexual tourists, I felt uneasy. I was physically "trapped" and I became caught up in the feelings of those around me. In field notes made after the parade, I reflected on my feelings of being a tourist at the 1997 HERO parade and I documented some of the comments that were made while I watched:

> One woman said to the man who was watching the parade with her: "There are some *normal* people in the parade, there are some *normal* people in the parade, you know, *straight* people. It's not all gay"
>
> "Oh—what?—that's sexually dysfunctional" (said a man as he watched a float containing a lesbian sadomasochistic performance).

These comments can be interpreted as (heterosexual) tourists' attempts to reconstruct gay bodies as deviant and "other" and establish their own "normalcy" Despite the physical barriers that maintained some distance between parading bodies and tourists, some heterosexuals employed other measures to preserve the border between self and other. For example, I observed the "coupling" of heterosexuals at both HERO and Sydney Mardi Gras parades: men draped their arms around their female partners; women and men held hands; and, even more provocatively, some engaged in kissing and other sexual behavior in the street. Stereotypical jokes were made by heterosexual men about "keeping their backs to the wall." I asked a white heterosexual man: "Why did you come to the parade tonight?" He responded: "Because cute women hang out with gay boys." Such a response serves to maintain distance between the self and the other, the tourists and the hosts.

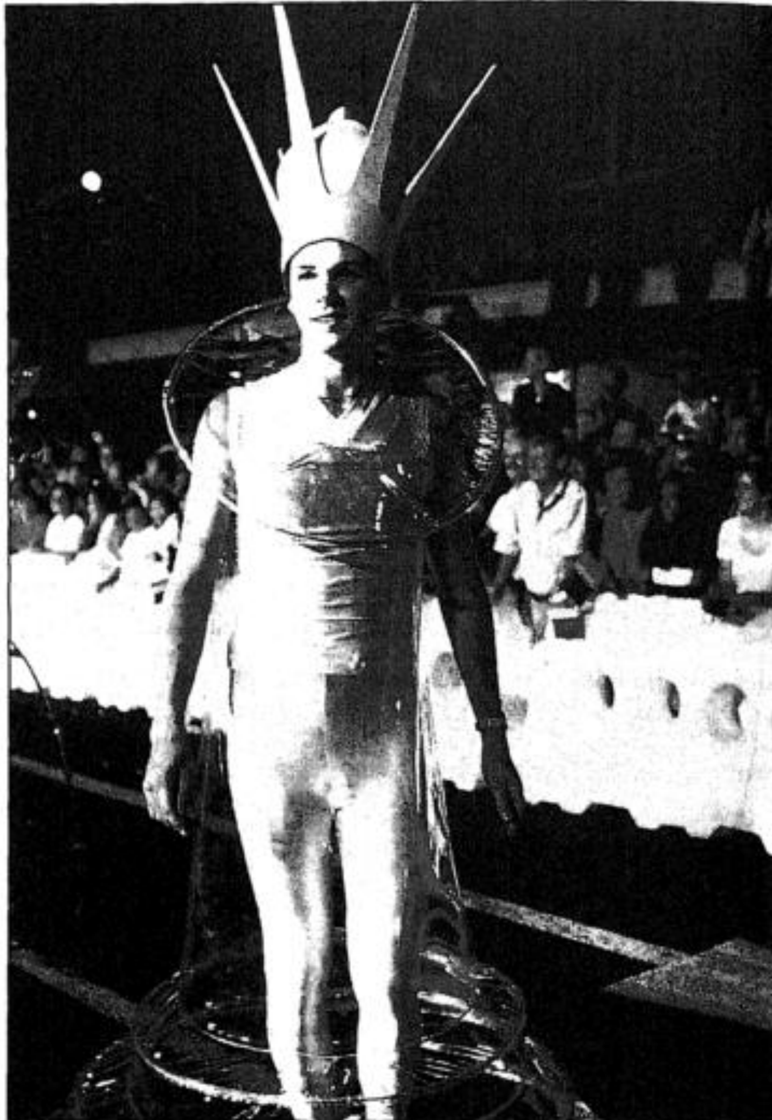

Figure 5.2 Barricades, tourists, and a HERO parader

Photograph by Ann Shelton. Reproduced with permission of Australian Consolidated Press, publishers for *Metro* (Crawshaw 1998, 33).

GAY ENCLAVES

The majority of tourists at HERO and at the Sydney Mardi Gras are, as I have already noted, heterosexual. There are, however, also gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered tourists behind the barriers. At the 1996 HERO parade I was aware that the spaces occupied by gay tourists were quite different from the spaces occupied by heterosexual tourists. I began distributing questionnaires a while before the parade was due to start. Doing this on Ponsonby Road, which has many gay-owned and operated restaurants and bars, I became aware that many of the people eating at the tables lining the street were gay. They were very willing to fill in my questionnaire, talk to me about my research, and openly identify as gay (the majority were gay men). They had positioned themselves in the restaurant seats by the road, as well as upstairs in restaurant and bar windows, and had come to watch the parade and engage in associated activities ("find a man," "check out talent," "watch the 'girls"). In areas like this, gay tourists maintained spatial enclaves away from the large number of heterosexual tourists. Gay guides to viewing the Sydney Mardi Gras suggested that people could rent rooms in hotels, guesthouses, and restaurants from which to view the parade.

The pleasure obtained by these gay tourists provokes a reconceptualization of the definition of "tourist." On the one hand, gay tourists can be positioned as hosts and part of the gay pride parade spectacle for heterosexual tourists. Gays and lesbians watching the parade, eating at restaurants, drinking at gay bars, and "picking up" partners on Ponsonby Road are in their "authentic" or home location. On the other hand, some gay tourists position themselves as "normal" or "ordinary and everyday" (self), and position the gay paraders as exotic and extraordinary (other). These binaries of self/other, straight/gay, and tourist/host are subject to contestation and never remain stable or static.

Tiered seating behind a fenced-off area created another bordered area at the 1998 HERO parade. This was a fundraising initiative by HIV/AIDS organizations with pre-sold tickets at $45, which could be considered expensive given that many spectators are attracted to the parade because it is free. The area included a bar where drinks could be bought and there were toilets. I bought a seat in this area for the 1998 parade. The majority of people in the tiered seat section were queer. Couples could visibly "be" together, hold hands, and so forth. I could not hear any comments that may have been made by heterosexual tourists that "othered" and degraded the bodies on parade.

While I had thought this space would be a "gay spectator enclave," it also contained a complex mix of VIPs such as National Party member Jenny Shipley, the then prime minister of Aotearoa/New Zealand (accompanied by her husband), other (Opposition) politicians and media representatives. The VIPs were in an area demarcated with a white picket fence, with gay tourists sitting on the tiered seats beyond. The white picket fence seemed to act like a sanitized border that kept the "extraordinary" people and the "ordinary" queers separated. I saw a spare table in the VIP area where I sat. In this area "we"—gays, straight and gay politicians, queer

entertainers and television celebrities—became another part of the tourist entertainment. Television cameras focused on the prime minister's reaction to each float. People from outside the area watched us. I found *myself* watching for the prime minister's reactions as floats passed by her. My roles as researcher and gay/lesbian activist were overshadowed by the allure of celebrity watching! Behind "us," in the tiered seating, gay men made sexual comments about the prime minister's husband. Thus, discursive and material borders between straight/gay, self/other, tourist/host shifted constantly.

The physical, or material, borders that operate at HERO and the Sydney Mardi Gras are predicated on discursive borders between paraders and tourists. In the next section I consider psychoanalytic theory on abjection (Kristeva 1982; Grosz 1989, 1990, 1994; Young 1990) as a way of understanding further some of the reasons why HERO and Mardi Gras have become such popular tourist events.

BORDERING ON ABJECTION

Young (1990) uses the concept of cultural imperialism to examine general forms of group oppression and violence. Cultural imperialism works to keep a group invisible at the same time as it is marked and stereotyped. The most visible "others," for example, women, blacks, and disabled people, are clearly marked as different from the dominant white, male subject. However, a border anxiety is present when the other is least visible. Young (1990: 146) argues that "homophobia is one of the deepest fears of difference precisely because the border between gay and straight is constructed as the most permeable; anyone at all can become gay" The border is most threatening when the gay body cannot be distinguished from the straight body. Only when gay bodies are clearly marked as different, as in gay pride parades, does this border become visible and therefore less threatening to the dominant culture.

This corporeal border was illustrated in many questionnaire responses. At the roadside (behind the barrier) one respondent (male, white, and heterosexual) had come to the HERO parade to "have a look" and defined the HERO parade as a tourist event because "It's strange, a freak show and a laugh if you're straight." This response can be read not only as an attempt to mark the parade participants as different from the dominant white, heterosexual subject, but also to mark the parade bodies as "freaks." Several responses from heterosexual tourists (including men and women of differing ages and backgrounds) illustrated a desire to maintain a border between straight and gay:

"Altemos deserve to have their lifestyles exposed a bit—makes us more comfortable."
"To watch the strange people."
"To perve."
"Have a look, entertainment."
"Out of curiosity"
"Have a look, to see it firsthand."

There were many floats that directly emphasized the threat that queerness poses to social order. For example, the "Demon Float" and "Salon Kitty" (which is a bondage and sadomasochistic float described as "Rubber/Latex fetish: Dressing for pleasure") both challenged the heteronormative notions of acceptable sexual desire and pleasure through their displays of sadomasochism; the "New Zealand Prostitutes Collective" bought the bodies of illicit sex workers into public view; the "TransPride" float challenged the authenticity of rhetoric about two genders/sexes; "Miss Kitty and Friends," which consisted of a six-foot-six tall drag queen with two men on dog leads dressed as poodles, provided an animated debate about sexuality, bestiality, and gender/sex roles; the "Safe Sex: No Ifs, No Butts" float, which consisted of a large revolving polystyrene penis and eight dancing men and two women whipping each other, exposed the penis/phallus in a public place; and finally, the "Body Positive" (an HIV/AIDS organization) and the Herne Bay House floats brought defiled, diseased bodies into view. Such bodies do not constitute proper social bodies (Grosz 1994). They threaten to disrupt order and purity, but, and at the same time, they reinforce societal order by remaining in the parade and not spilling into the watching tourists. Thus, these parade entries, which tend to be perceived as some of the most risque, also tend to reinforce a dichotomy between heterosexual and homosexual.

Julia Kristeva's (1982) notion of abjection is very useful in understanding the ways tourists at gay pride parades combine fascination in, with revulsion against, queer bodies. According to Kristeva the feeling of abjection is one of disgust, often evoking nausea, and it is

> an extremely strong feeling which is at once somatic and symbolic, and which is above all a revolt of the person against an external menace from which one has the impression that it is not only an external menace but that it may menace us from the inside. So it is a desire for separation, for becoming autonomous and also the feeling of impossibility of doing so. (Kristeva 1982: 135)

That which is abject is something so repulsive that it both attracts and repels; it is both fascinating and disgusting. The abject exists on the border, but does not respect the border. It is "ambiguous," "in between," "composite" (Kristeva 1982: 4). The abject is what threatens identity. It is neither good nor evil, subject nor object, but something that threatens the distinctions themselves. Kelly Oliver (1993: 56) claims: "Every society is founded on the abject—constructing boundaries and jettisoning the antisocial—every society may have its own abject." Kristeva (1982) maintains that the impure can never be completely removed. Abjection's ambiguity means that while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it; on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger.

David Sibley (1995: 8) adopts Kristeva's notion of abjection to argue that "the urge to make separations, between clean and dirty, ordered and disordered, 'us' and `them,' that is, to expel the abject, is encouraged in western cultures, creating feelings of anxiety because such separations can never be finally achieved." The urge to

maintain the distinction between "us-tourists" and "them-gays" at the HERO parade and the Sydney Mardi Gras can be understood as abjection, but the separation between tourists and hosts, self and other, mind and body can never be achieved.

Abjection "is a desire for separation, for becoming autonomous and also the feeling of impossibility of doing so" (Kristeva 1982: 135), and Kristeva argues that the abject provokes fear and loathing because it exposes the borders between self and other as fragile and threatens to dissolve the subject by dissolving the border.

Drawing on Kristeva's work, Grosz (1994: 193) differentiates between types of abjections: "abjection towards food and thus toward bodily incorporation; abjection toward bodily waste, which reaches its extreme in the horror of the corpse; and abjection towards signs of sexual difference." Different floats in the HERO parade can be viewed as illustrative of each of these categories. The first category, abjection toward food and bodily incorporation, can be linked to paraders who reject the notions that

> A slim, fit body is for some a source of pride to be paraded in public places, spelling discipline, success and conformity, whereas fat is seen as a sign of moral and physical decay. Fat people are stereotyped as undisciplined, self-indulgent, unhealthy, lazy, untrustworthy, unwilling and non-conforming. . . . Unlike the disciplined slim body the fat body is not welcome in everyday places. (Bell and Valentine 1997: 35-36)

Few lesbian bodies on parade represent existing norms of "feeding regimes." Many of the lesbian bodies on display are large. Paraders, such as "Dykes on Bikes," "Marching Girls," and the lesbian float called "Lassoo," tend to ignore disciplinary regimes that aim at making a slim body. Instead there is often pride associated with being large. Tourists' abject reactions to large lesbians are evident in some of their comments. For example, two men exchanged the following comment about a large "Dyke on a Bike": "Oh, God, did you see her? She's *huge (...)* nice bike though."

The second category of abjection, bodily waste and horror of the corpse, is integral to many floats at the HERO parade and Mardi Gras. Both parades are organized to raise funds for HIV/AIDS organizations, and in resting on gay male bodies, they also rest on the notion of abjection. "Sexuality has become reinvested with notions of contagion and death, of danger and purity, as a consequence of the AIDS crisis" (Grosz 1994: 193). Gay male sex is understood (by "straight" society) to be predicated on oral penetration and fecal contamination and this carries an unspeakable connection to excremental pollution. Kristeva (1982: 71) argues: "Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stand for the danger to identity that which comes from without: the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death." Several floats in the HERO parade can be connected to this understanding of abjection. Specifically, floats that represent HIV/AIDS organizations, such as the "Safe Sex" float, Herne Bay House float (residential care for people living with HIV/AIDs), "Body Positive" float, and the "Remembrance" float, intensify the abject thoughts that disease *is* picked up off rectal walls and that death follows from this disease.

Gay pride parades are also significant sites for analyses of sexual difference, the third category of abjection. There are many HERO floats that fit this category. In particular, the following floats and paraders most obviously focused on sexual difference: "Drag Queens," "Te Waka Awhina" (a waka—canoe—with gay and transgender Maori), "Mika" (singer/entertainer in a queer Maori temple), "Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence" (gay men as nuns), "TransPride" (various people from the transgender community), "Lost Grannies" (men dressed as "grannies"), and "Surrender Dorothy" (a large shoe and yellow brick road with drag queens). These paraders disrupted and subverted conventional and hegemonic notions of sexual difference. I conducted a focus group with five people who constructed the "TransPride" float for the 1996 HERO parade, the theme of which was "Heavenly," their objective being to upset the construction of transgenders as, what Young (1990: 123) terms "ugly bodies." Aroha[5] began with a description of their float:

Aroha: All the, the costumes on the float, the majority on the float are pastel colours and gold.

Lynda: Great.

Aroha: We wanted to create a heavenly (//)

Chris: (//) yeah yeah.

Aroha: approach.

Janet: Cos we can be pure just like anybody else ... why are we, why are we suddenly, why are we suddenly, considered dirty? (Yeah) because we want to cross a borderline sexually. You know and urn, why should we look like sluts when we don't feel like sluts?

Chris: Yeah, get rid of the typecast.

Lynda: Yeah, take away the stereotype.

Janet: Most people think transgender is a mockery.

Aroha: They do.

Janet: You know sort of taking off something.

Aroha: But then when you look at it, a lot of it, public attention is focused on girls on the street. (Mmm). They're the ones they see, but it's not always the case.

Lynda: No.

Janet: And a lot of the girls on the street are just making a living, there's nothing else they can do.

Aroha: And there is an awful lot of talent within the transgendered community.

Aroha, Janet, and Chris wanted to challenge the dominant discourses that degrade and debase transgenders as "dirty" and as "sluts." They wanted to do this by invoking the opposite of being defined as ugly, hence their float had a very feminine and pure theme. It was constructed around traditional markers of femininity in terms of colors (pastels and gold), costumes, and other props, in an attempt to offer a transgendered subjectivity other than that of "working girls on the street." It could be argued that transgenders represent a type of intolerable sexual ambiguity (Kristeva

1982). The heterosexual (cultural imperialist) tourist constructs a conceptual limit of human subjectivity. Categorizations of subjects as "freaks," "ugly," and "dirty sluts" are attempts to reposition the border between the self and the other.

CONCLUSION

Although the HERO and Sydney Mardi Gras parades contest the everyday construction of streets as heterosexual, territorial strategies of containment and control of homosexuality are fundamental to the success of the parades. They therefore provide important sites from which to discuss power relations involved in tourism processes. At these parades, borders are maintained between tourists and hosts, which are crucial to their success as spectacular events. The physical or material borders keep the (largely heterosexual) crowd separated from the queer bodies on parade, and, for the watching heterosexual tourists, this physical separation takes some of the "threat" out of homosexual bodies. Simultaneously, a conceptual border separates those who are perceived to represent the body from those who are perceived to represent the mind. This mind/body dichotomy becomes aligned with heterosexual tourists/homosexual hosts.

Young's (1990) theory of cultural imperialism adds weight to my argument that queer bodies on parade become "othered" by the heterosexual tourists. Straight tourists, or "cultural imperialists," culturally inscribe homosexual bodies as deviant, freaks, and as ugly, by which they are both fascinated and repelled in ways consistent with Kristeva's notion of the abject.

My discussion has involved theoretical and political tensions surrounding notions of liberalism, group identity, and difference and therefore inserts "political struggle" into tourism studies. Gay pride parades provide an opportunity to deconstruct acts of tourism, pleasure, and politics as these are lived through the bodies involved. This discussion of the HERO parade and the Sydney Mardi Gras and relationships between heterosexual tourists and gay hosts shows that such tourist events are both complicit with dualistic mechanisms of Western thought, and, at the same time, they contest hierarchical dualisms through a disruption of the cultural imperialist position as "normal" and neutral. Boundaries are central to Western conceptual frameworks of space and bodies. However, as my account has shown, it is possible to mobilize dualisms and to produce contradictory readings and experiences of gay pride parades.

NOTES

1. The HERO parade is part of the HERO project. The project was initially run, in 1994, to help raise funds for gay men living with HIV/AIDS. The name HERO validates the courage people have while living with HIV/AIDS. The name also incorporates both male and female genders (see <http://www.hero.org.nz/>).

2. The abbreviated title, the Sydney March Gras parade, is used from this point in the chapter.

3. Of the remaining responses 18 (of 118) identified as gay male, 3 identified as lesbian, 3 identified as bisexual, and 4 did not specify their sexuality

4. I am referring to general social control and regulation of communities that is carried out by all of its members. Individuals also engage in self-surveillance, self-control, and self-disciplining regimes (Foucault 1970).

5. In my choice of pseudonyms I have attempted to mirror the -racial" markers of each participant's real name. For example, if a participant has a Maori, I use a Maori name.