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Queer Trans-Tasman Mobility, Then and Now

**Final manuscript version: Gorman-Murray, A., Brickell, C., de Jong, A. (2017),
Australian Geographer.**

Abstract

This article situates queer mobility within wider historical geographies of trans-Tasman flows of goods, people and ideas. Using case studies of women's and men's experiences during the early twentieth century and the twenty-first century, it shows that same-sex desire is a constituent part of these flows and, conversely, Antipodean mobility has fostered particular forms of desire, sexual identity, and queer community and politics. Particular landscapes, rural and urban, in both New Zealand and Australia, have shaped queer desire in a range of diverging and converging ways. Shifting political, legal and social landscapes across New Zealand and Australia have wrought changes in trans-Tasman travel over time. This investigation into the circuits of queer trans-Tasman mobility both underscores and urges wider examinations of the significance of trans-Tasman crossings in queer lives, both historically and in contemporary society.

Key words:

New Zealand; Australia; trans-Tasman mobility; queer travel; LGBT; queer politics

Queer Trans-Tasman Mobility, Then and Now

Circuits, sexuality and space

Australia and New Zealand have a long-established inter-relationship, denoted as ‘trans-Tasman relations’. This relationship is embedded in a geographical imaginary: the Tasman Sea separates the two countries and creates an expansive but ‘fluid’ border that is crisscrossed by political and economic agreements and social and cultural networks. These connections were founded in the common history of British colonisation of both countries, and over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries they have been crystallised through shared endeavours – and ‘sibling’ rivalries – in trade relations, military activities, sport and creative industries, among other spheres (Goff 2001). One of the fundamental means by which trans-Tasman social and cultural networks are sustained and strengthened is through the porous nature of the travel arrangements between the two countries. The politically and legally sanctioned travel arrangements between Australia and New Zealand, both now and in the past, have allowed the free movement of citizens of one country to the other. Australians and New Zealanders have long been able to visit, work and live in each other’s countries, with few restrictions.

Much has been said about trans-Tasman relations in the spheres of the military and the ‘ANZAC tradition’, economics and trade, employment, sporting competition, entertainment industries and race relations (Ayson 2006; Toomey 2012; Leslie 2016). Yet surprisingly little has been written about the historical and contemporary geographies of queer people and their trans-Tasman mobilities (but see Johnston 2005; Jennings and Millwood 2016). We use ‘queer’ to denote sexual and gender minorities, such as lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans (LGBT) people, while acknowledging queer also has a deeper conceptual purchase that contests heterosexual/homosexual and man/woman binaries. The aim of this paper is to begin to redress a lack of sustained inquiry into and knowledge about queer trans-Tasman travel experiences. While ‘mobility’, as a field of inquiry, encompasses a range of movements from migration to telecommunications to digital networks (Cresswell 2010), here we use mobility to refer to queer tourism and related travel. This follows

Puar's (2002) use of 'circuits of mobility' to denote specifically queer movements across and between tourist spaces.

These queer travels are not limited to leisure-based activities: they have wider political and social purchase (Jennings and Millwood 2016). Queer mobilities, in the past and present, have been bound up with political and social marginality and the need and desire to explore new identities, practices, relationships, ways of being and communities through movement, displacement, replacement and even placelessness (Knopp 2004). This is evident, we suggest, in trans-Tasman queer mobilities. We further contend that this geographical focus allows us to consider what exigencies of place and movement – what relative attractions of Australia and New Zealand – have exerted an influence on queer travellers in different times. What may have compelled past and present mobilities to differ, due to changing political, legal and social landscapes across the Tasman? In this paper we offer a counter to the conventional discourse of trans-Tasman mobility, which foregrounds a movement of New Zealanders to Australia. Instead, we argue that geographical and historical specificities mean that there have been different push and pull factors for queer travellers, moving in both directions, over the past hundred years or so (Gorman-Murray and Brickell 2017).

The literature on gay and lesbian tourism has grown in recent years, exploring the development of 'global gay' tourism networks (Waitt and Markwell 2006), the marketing of events (festivals, parades), as well as 'gay villages' and leisure zones (Markwell and Waitt 2013), rural as well as urban queer tourist destinations (Gorman-Murray, Waitt and Gibson 2012), politics and consumption at Pride parades (Johnston and Waitt 2015) and selling gay villages and events to heterosexual markets (Waitt, Markwell and Gorman-Murray 2008). International flows of people and sexualities have become increasingly significant as globalisation has increased tourism across (as well as within) national borders. In this context, Puar (2002, 102) asks how travel and tourism shape 'the differing constructions of global and local sexualities?' Mobility plays a role in recursive processes of sexual identity acquisition and expression: travellers leave behind their everyday settings, enjoy the freedom of new social mores and relations, and encounter new ideas and experiences. The vacation affords opportunities to be or become 'oneself' in a space far away from usual social

demands, especially when holiday space – a particular resort, for instance – is specifically coded as queer (Puar 2002, 102). Hughes (1997, 4) even suggests that the ‘acceptance of a homosexual identity is often dependent upon the act of being “a tourist”’ (cf. Hughes 2006).

The relationship between Australia and New Zealand reflects some of these sexed and gendered dynamics, and sometimes trans-Tasman travel is intimately connected to sexuality, as we will soon see. But let us step back a moment to consider human circulation between the two countries more generally. The notion of circuits is not confined to recent literature on queer tourism. It appears in an older, more general literature as well. In 1986 historian Rollo Arnold wrote of the ‘perennial interchange’ that characterised the years between 1880 and 1920. ‘There was a considerable and growing two-way trans-Tasman movement of population which was deep-seated and continuous in character’, Arnold wrote (1986, 1). New Zealand exported agricultural outputs and professional workers, and imported capital and would-be yeoman farmers. But this was not all: Arnold tells of the ‘trans-Tasman circuits’ of the commercial traveller, the entertainer and the tourist who shuttled to-and-fro between both countries. Arnold’s circuits shaped a ‘transcolonial Tasman World’, to use Frances Steele’s (2013, 369) terminology. Australian tourists flocked to see New Zealand scenery. Steamship cruises around the coast of picturesque Fiordland constituted a ‘mobile culture of landscape appreciation’ during the 1880s and ’90s (Steel 2013, 361).

Trans-Tasman tourism continued to expand over time. The nineteenth-century circulation of travellers between the two countries picked up pace and the twentieth century saw ships become bigger and faster. Later the flying boats of the 1940s and turbo-prop planes of the 1950s gave way to fast, frequent jet services from the late 1960s (Rennie 1990). Speed shrank distance, and soon a trip between the two countries was known as ‘crossing the ditch’. This mobility has a specifically queer cast: some nineteenth-century travellers explored their desires on opposite sides of the Tasman, as did their twentieth-century counterparts. By the 1970s the gay liberation movement – and the bright lights of Sydney more generally – lured New Zealanders to Australia (Jennings and Millwood 2016), as did the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras of the decades that followed (Johnston 2005). A reverse movement began in

2013 as the legal recognition of same-sex marriage in New Zealand encouraged Australians, denied the same right at home, to cross the ditch (Nguyen 2015).

This article explores some of the intricacies of trans-Tasman circuits of mobility. It introduces three case studies, one from the second decade of the twentieth century and two from the second decade of the twenty-first. Freda du Faur travelled between Australia and New Zealand during the 1910s, first to explore the countryside and then as she consolidated her intimate relationship with Muriel Cadogan who became her life-long partner. Travel and landscape played an important part of their self-actualisation. Moving to the twenty-first century, we see trans-Tasman movements more explicitly predicated on enacting or actualising sexual identities. Here, two corresponding case studies of gay men are offered; one of New Zealanders visiting the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (travel founded on engaging with LGBT communities and reinforcing gay subjectivities) and the other of Australians travelling to New Zealand to marry (a form of wedding tourism intended to affirm gay identities and relationships). All three case studies utilise autobiographical methods – memoir, diaries, blogs – which reflect the memories and insights of the actors involved.

Reading the three cases together, we can see how the past and the present gesture towards one another, and also how relationships between sexuality and space shift over time. At the same time, the relationships between Australia and New Zealand shape sexual citizenship in particular ways. The case studies are complementary: they reveal similarities and differences across gender, across time and across the Tasman while foregrounding various examples of sexual relations, intimacies and communities. They also speak to geographical literature about ‘rites of passage’ – often involving physical journeys, relocations and returns – that play an important role in self-actualisation, and building communities of practice and political movements (Knopp 2004; Easthope and Gabriel 2008; Gorman-Murray 2009). As Brown (2000, 48) suggests, like Hughes (1997) earlier, many feel a need to move to another place in order to know themselves as gay: ‘It wasn’t enough to just open the closet door; one had to leave its interior for a different location.’ We suggest that underexplored queer trans-Tasman circuits of mobility provide a telling focus for further nuanced discussion of such practices.

Freda's travels

Freda du Faur took her place in the ebbs and flows of trans-Tasman tourism. This daughter of a stock and station agent was born in 1882 and grew up on the border of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park in New South Wales. She showed little interest in the nursing career her parents laid out for her and soon gave it up, but her independent income meant she could occupy herself as she pleased (Dawson 2001). Freda loved the adventurous outdoor life and spent much of her time in the national park, working her way up slopes and exploring the ridges and valleys. 'During five years of scrambling I gained a very considerable knowledge of rock-climbing', she wrote in her 1915 memoir *The Conquest of Mount Cook* (du Faur 1977, 26). Freda first visited the North Island of New Zealand as a tourist in her early twenties, and holidayed there over several summers. The often-rough sea journey failed to deter this poor sailor: 'I am ever unhappy at sea, so the less said of the five days' voyage the better', she noted. 'The fact I willingly undergo such days of misery every year may give some idea of how deep is my devotion to New Zealand' (31).

In 1906 Freda visited the South Island for the Christchurch Exhibition, and was thrilled to see pictures of Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest peak, some 330 kilometres inland. Wanting a first-hand look, she decided to travel to the Hermitage Hotel at the foot of the mountains (Figure 1), a journey by train and then by primitive motor bus. Freda was spellbound. 'The great peaks towering into the sky before me touched a chord that all the wonders of my own land had never set vibrating', she wrote (du Faur 1977, 27). 'I left behind me all the worries of everyday life and felt free and irresponsible as the wind that stung my cheek' (32).

The day after Freda arrived at the Hermitage, an experienced guide suggested she accompany a party up the Sealey Range, a walk suitable for a beginner. This very moment convinced Freda that 'earth had no greater joy than to be a mountaineer' (28). Freda's account of her time in New Zealand is replete with intense descriptions of her affective responses to the landscape. She described what her surroundings looked like – the Tasman Glacier, she wrote, 'flows down for eighteen miles in waves of white ice' (34) – and also how they made her feel. 'Soon I stood alone on the crest of the range, and felt for the first time that wonderful thrill of happiness and triumph

which repays the mountaineer in one moment for hours of toil and hardship' (du Faur 1977, 28). Freda wrote *Conquest* five years after she successfully climbed Mount Cook, the first woman to do so (Dawson 2001, 182).

We would do well to consider Freda's book in relation to wider questions of life writing. Not only is an autobiography a personal record of lived spaces and spatial habits – everyday spatial practices, in other words – but its author describes which places enable sexual difference and which do not (Gorman-Murray 2007a). Some locations evoke especially strong links between place and identity, and these play a role in an author's process of becoming (Moss, 2001). With this in mind, we might read Freda's account of her earlier years through her subsequent identification with same-sex passions. What are we to make of this passage, for instance: 'An unsympathetic environment and want of opportunity may keep this love hidden even from its possessor; but alter the environment and give the opportunity and the climber will climb as naturally as the sparks fly upward' (du Faur 1977, 25). 'This love' surely refers to mountaineering: she had an 'inborn love of climbing' (29) that she released through her passionate encounter with the landscape around her. But was Freda also referring to her feelings for another woman? The concept of a hidden or secret love was common at this time; the phrase 'the love that dare not speak its name' appeared in relation to the widely publicised trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895 (Kaplan 2005, 233). There are other hints too. The English sexologist Havelock Ellis popularised the term 'sexual inversion'. He told his readers that, in some people, homoerotic tendencies were inborn – just like Freda's inner love for mountaineering. In inverts, he wrote, 'the sexual impulse is *organically and innately* turned toward individuals of the same sex' (Ellis 1918, 4, our emphasis). Freda would later adopt a version of this idea for herself: she felt she experienced 'hedonistic inversion' (Irwin 2000, 231).

Some time before 1915, when she wrote her book, Freda had fallen in love with Muriel Cadogan, a physical culture instructor whom she had met in Sydney when Freda built up her endurance for mountain climbing. Muriel was Freda's personal trainer – as we would now say – at the Dupain Institute in Hunter Street. The pair worked together at boxing, ball punching, weight lifting, and rhythmical exercises. In 1910 Muriel visited New Zealand with Freda, and she soon caught the

mountaineering bug. Of Muriel, Freda wrote: ‘I saw every sign of her catching the mountaineering fever badly and was thereat greatly rejoiced’ (du Faur 1977, 145).

Freda, it seems, saw her passions – for both Muriel and the mountains – as coterminous. Sometimes she experienced one form of desire as an intensification of the other: the physical environment unlocked the passions of the body. Morin, Longhurst and Johnston suggest that Freda developed something of a ‘sexual-erotic relationship with the mountain’ (2001, 127). Muriel too was significant in the affective moment. *Conquest* includes several profound descriptions of Freda’s and Muriel’s time together. They sallied forth from the Hermitage, ‘clad in oilskins, with our lunch in a rucksac’:

I dragged Muriel out at some unearthly hour to show her the first glimpses of Mount Sefton and Mount Cook. Her sympathetic understanding was all I expected it to be, and I felt infinitely the richer by a thoroughly sympathetic companion, the first in all my seasons in the mountains (du Faur 1977, 139-140).

The evening was so lovely that Muriel and I considered it a sin to waste it rushing down to be in time for dinner. The others being of a different opinion, we sent them off without us. Then we threw ourselves down in the soft grass at the margin of the lake and drank in all the beauty of the ever-changing night sky. Two happy hours slipped away ... (141).

These excerpts demonstrate how the beauty of the natural environment cemented the two women’s affective bonds. The drama of the setting brought them together and excited their emotions: they ‘drank in the beauty’ of the night sky and of one another. The pair headed back to the Hermitage and swapped wide open spaces for something cosier. ‘Quarters were rather cramped and we finished up our experiences by trying to sleep together in a top bunk three feet wide’, Freda wrote, before adding enigmatically: ‘It was an exciting experiment but hardly restful’ (145). In each of these examples, space became a container in which intimacy took particular forms (Brickell 2010, 609). As space shapes the experiences of those who occupy it, David Bell (2006) suggests, it is rendered intimate in turn. An open meadow and a cramped bed gave rise to differing kinds of entanglement, while the hotel’s public spaces might have occasioned other kinds of interaction. Was Freda quite as tactile with Muriel in the Hermitage’s lounges and sitting rooms? We cannot know for sure.

How, precisely, did the presence of others shape Freda's and Muriel's engagements? In leaving Australia for her New Zealand holidays, Freda left behind her parents and others in her small community who tended to keep an eye on her. These trips, though, did not take Freda and Muriel far from the attitudes that restricted women's lives in Australasia. When Freda first sought to climb in New Zealand's mountains with a single male guide and no additional chaperone, she found herself 'up against all the cherished conventions of the middle-aged' (du Faur 1977, 36). The male chaperone guaranteed respectability in the mountains (Morin, Longhurst and Johnston 2001, 125). 'One old lady implored me with tears in her eyes not to "spoil my life for so small a thing as climbing a mountain". I declined gently but firmly to believe that it would be spoiled' (36). Still, she agreed to go up with a porter as well as a guide. 'I sighed, not for the first time in my existence, over the limits imposed on me by the mere fact that I was unfortunate enough to be born a woman' (37).

Hughes suggests holidays contribute to the making of sexual identity. In escaping family and entering spaces of pleasure, he writes, the subject encounters possibilities for 'regeneration, self-realisation, freedom, ego-enhancement, evaluation of self, prestige and escape' (Hughes 1997, 5). In short, they offer the opportunity for a flowering of the self – even if an awareness of sexual difference has not yet fully taken shape and/or is not yet articulated. We do not know precisely when Freda became aware of her own attraction to other women, although the historical record reveals that Muriel considered Venus, the Roman goddess, the epitome of ideal female form during her years at the Dupain Institute (Irwin 2000, 131). Muriel was an early gender rebel, though: 'it is nothing for me to be uncorsetted because I do not care for public opinion', she said (131).

Freda's first-wave feminist consciousness was highly compatible with the physical culture movement exemplified at the Dupain Institute and elsewhere, but her feminism clashed with older ideas about gender propriety. In the prevailing mode of Antipodean tourism, men chaperoned women and chivalrously helped them straddle streams and scramble up hillsides (Brickell 2014). Freda was a trail-blazer, and she knew it. Freda employed an outdoors metaphor when she expressed her wish to help other women of her generation 'climb out of the dark woods and valleys of

conventional tradition' (du Faur 1997, 37). She succeeded to some extent: her obituary, written after her death in 1936 by the editor of the *New Zealand Alpine Journal*, noted that '[w]omen climbers will always have reason to thank Miss du Faur [for] she fought the battle for emancipation of her sex in matters of mountaineering'. Over time her reputation grew, and she became 'free to do as she pleased without protest from the self-appointed guardians of morals at the Hermitage' (JAS 1936, 389). Mountain climbing had come to allow – if not to signify – an escape from social convention. New Zealand's mountains were a setting for gender politics, intimate self-realisation, and the interaction between the two.

Puar (2002, 122) suggests feminist activist networks constitute one conduit for travel by lesbians during the latter part of the twentieth century, but a sketchy image of such networks emerges from Freda's earlier life. These nascent networks were transnational in character. Freda and Muriel brought their feminist convictions with them from Sydney to the Hermitage, put them into play in New Zealand's mountains, and then they set out once more. The pair left the Antipodes for London in 1914, lured by the prospect of greater freedom than they had in New South Wales: 'there were no brothers to say this or that was wrong, no school friends to be shocked' (Irwin 2000, 232). At a time when many women shared houses, the couple took a bohemian cottage in Pinner. Both women soon became passionate supporters of Suffrage (Dawson 2001, 193; Irwin 2000, 229-230). New networks helped consolidate Freda's and Muriel's relationship. As Freda's biographer summarises: 'Spending so much time together, their emotional dependence and, no doubt meeting up with women like themselves, the sexual side of their relationship flourished' (Irwin 2000, 231). Friends described them living 'like a married couple' (251).

In another twist in the spatial arrangement of Freda's life, the traveller's departure from New Zealand did little to erase her significance in the country where she had become famous. Quite the opposite, in fact: she left a legacy, became something of a feminist heroine, and inspired those of the next generation. Alison McLeod grew up in Christchurch, and during her teens she embraced the opportunities presented by an outdoor life. Late one night, just before bed, she wrote in her diary: 'Wednesday July 16th 1919: Came home, & read Miss du Faur's during the evening. Her climbing descriptions make me feel rather envious' (McLeod 1919). *The Conquest of Mount*

Cook made quite the impression, sparking Alison's desire to spend time in the high country. Then, on 28 August, she returned the book to its owner, a Mr. Kennedy. 'I regret having to give Miss du Faur's back, I have enjoyed it so much'. This was not the end of the matter though. She rang up Mr. Kennedy and he suggested climbing Mount Herbert during the school holidays. 'Mary & I said months ago we wanted to try it', she wrote of her best friend (McLeod 1919). Mount Herbert is 920 metres high, a steady four hour climb – much easier than the tricky ascent of 3,720 metre high Mount Cook – but Freda's climbs spurred on Alison and Mary's enthusiasm. Sometimes autobiographies have a community-building function, especially among socially marginalised groups, and Freda's was one example (Gorman-Murray 2007a, 8). Freda left the mountains for good (she and Muriel visited Sydney and Wellington in 1919, but not the South Island) but she opened the way to new engagements with the outdoors for other girls and women.

Mardi Gras travel

Sexuality's political, legal and social landscapes have changed significantly since Freda du Faur's journeys during the early twentieth century. Since the late-1970s there has been increasing legal recognition and social visibility of LGBT people, stirred by the 'gay rights' movements of that decade. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, social and geographical visibility of LGBT communities was arguably greater in Australia than New Zealand, especially given the global prominence of urban spaces and events in Sydney, which has been positioned in marketing media and public discourse as the 'gay capital of the South Pacific' (Markwell 2002). These included the consolidation of Oxford Street as a 'gay village' (Knopp 1998; Nash and Gorman-Murray 2015) and the success of international 'hallmark' events like the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (Markwell 2002) and the Gay Games (Waitt 2005). Such attractions have long lured queer travellers from New Zealand (Jennings and Millwood 2016; Gorman-Murray and Brickell 2017).

Our second case study presents the experiences of two twenty-something gay male New Zealanders – Jason and David – who travelled across the Tasman in March 2014 for the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival. Both Jason and David conveyed how queer trans-Tasman mobility – specifically their travel for the Mardi Gras

Festival – reflected broader enactments of gay politics, community building and identity development. They reflected on this queer trans-Tasman experience in daily diaries undertaken for a project conducted by one of the authors, and from which we draw thematic insights. Daily diaries were chosen because they rendered a way to temporally and spatially *move with* participants during travel. Diaries were autobiographical, offering a space for considered, self-curated narratives that developed with each entry; both David and Jason often returned to similar themes for further exploration or to examine like ideas from alternative perspectives. Autobiographical diaries also identified how Festival reflections were informed by, and positioned as part of, the life course. Jason trained and worked in human geography before moving to policy advisory roles in men’s sexual health. His ruminations on travel to Mardi Gras utilised critical theories of society and space, as well as work experience in sexual health in New Zealand: ‘As someone turned on by critical social theory Sydney Mardi Gras raises so many questions. Who is it for? Who gets to participate? Who is excluded? Does it challenge or promulgate queer stereotypes?’ (1/3/2014).

The trip from Auckland to Sydney was a regular ‘circuit’ for Jason, and he referred to his ‘years of practice’ in navigating the crowded spaces and events of the parade and party, alongside an acquired ability to manage his own body throughout the demanding weekend. In reflecting on his motivations for attending the Festival, he said ‘it is true that for me Sydney Mardi Gras is political’, and that part of that political practice is building a sense of community and collective affirmation around sexuality: ‘I always find it fascinating that one marker of who we are as people, our sexuality, can bring so many people together in such a massive celebration’ (1/3/2014). Jason pointed out that New Zealand visitors are an integral part of this community celebration: ‘It was also great to run into lots of Auckland people on the streets who I don’t see at home’ (1/3/2014). This comment is telling. Jason suggests not only that quite a few New Zealand acquaintances attend the Festival, but that he is more likely to see these people across the Tasman, in a circuit of mobile practices, than ‘at home’. Indeed, over 2007-2009 Air New Zealand operated a ‘Pink Flight’ from Auckland to Sydney, specifically to cater for New Zealanders attending Mardi Gras. At the same time, however, Jason recognised the privileged position of those able to travel across the Tasman for such purposes: ‘The privileged will gather on

behalf of those who can't. I'm one of the lucky ones' (1/3/2014). Both Jason and David identified how their personal socio-economic positions enabled the possibility for travel.

At the end of his diary, Jason considered how his relationship to Mardi Gras had changed over time and what this signified for his sense of self and his role in gay politics and community building:

I used to need Mardi Gras – it made me feel connected and like I belonged somewhere/somehow. I know now that I don't need Mardi Gras – I belong anyway! In reality, it is Mardi Gras that needs me. If I am back it will be to contribute to the power in numbers, knowing that the weekend will come and go and I will be the same person but that I have a been part of a statement about something much bigger! (2/3/2014)

Travel to Mardi Gras has been part of Jason's self-actualisation as a gay man, although that 'need' has waned over time. Instead, the role of the Festival in gay visibility and affirmation – 'the power in numbers' – has become more significant. Meanings of trans-Tasman crossings have transformed for Jason, alongside his own identity construction. His trans-Tasman travel is no longer primarily about his sense of self, but part of a bigger 'statement'. There is an interesting historical contrast here. While Freda du Faur's travel was in one sense a matter of reducing visibility – the oversight of her parents and their friends – Jason's trip has come to embrace a highly politicised form of visibility.

Jason's reflections are a useful framework for critically reading David's experiences. David attended his first Mardi Gras in 2014. He grew up in Auckland, with a self-described conservative Chinese-Vietnamese upbringing. An interest in the ideals of the Labour party led David to become politically active through the Student Association during university. Later moving to Wellington, he got involved in New Zealand's marriage equality campaign. Becoming economically independent through full-time employment once in Wellington, David began to undertake identity-affirming travel to San Francisco and Melbourne in the two years preceding travel to Mardi Gras, which informed his diary reflections while in Sydney. As with Freda du Faur, transnational circuits of mobility rendered escape from social convention, providing David with a form of freedom for evaluation of the self. He wrote that

travelling to Mardi Gras ‘would be another milestone in the development of my identity and of me as a whole person’ (21/2/2014). Such identity work foregrounds David’s sexual subjectivity – he felt his travel to Mardi Gras complemented and ‘support[ed his] continuing growth as a person’. Indeed, travel to Mardi Gras was also part of a shorter temporal circuit of mobility, for he had travelled to Auckland just one week prior to march in that city’s Pride Festival, then in its second year. Broader transnational circuits of mobility were also crucial to the meanings of travel between New Zealand and Australia: ‘I have developed and grown much further as a person since the last time I visited Sydney at the end of 2011. I’ve become a far more socially confident person following my travels to San Francisco and Melbourne’ (24/2/2014). David’s account, as well as Jason’s, supports Hughes’ (1997) assertions about the potential of travel for self-development and identity work.

David’s discussion of his arrival and disembarkation highlights the significance of mobility and place-based exploration in what Knopp (2004) has called ‘queer quests for identity’. Alongside trans-Tasman mobility, subsequent in situ movement around Sydney’s queer neighbourhoods was key for David’s reflection on identity and community. His account of exploring Oxford Street (Figure 2) evocatively conveys his building excitement:

Flying into Sydney I did feel that sense of anticipation. ... Oxford Street is one of the first places I went to this morning. ... Oxford Street is the place I had heard about as the main concentration of gay and queer-related activity in Sydney. ... I felt a mix of anticipation and giddiness as I approached the northern end of Oxford Street near Hyde Park. The north end does look quite banal ... still I can’t help but feel the history or sense of the innumerable people and different places that have made up Oxford St over the years ... I feel happy and excited to walk up to Oxford Street. Once I get onto the street I deliberately slow down (I tend to walk quite fast), just to relax and try and feel more of the sense of atmosphere on the street. ... I end up being on Oxford Street and/or being close to Oxford Street on almost every day of the rest of the week. (24/2/2014)

As David writes about walking, anticipating and relaxing, he demonstrates how ‘embodied emotions insinuate into queer migration processes’ (Gorman-Murray 2009, 442; cf. Gorman-Murray 2007b).

David's place-based explorations also provoked reflections relating to the gendered and sexual histories of Sydney's Oxford Street area. Discovering the Lamp for Mary¹ by surprise, David noted:

I linger for a little bit to reflect on what might have happened, what it meant, and what it spurred afterwards, which it appears was that the queer community took the opportunity to make something better out of what the attack had symbolised. I feel glad it is here, as I sometimes worry whether we remember enough of our own history or even know much of the histories of the places around us. Often these places might be usually forgotten, except for an annual commemoration or event? (1/3/2014).

Such reflections depict the ways Pride events and queer travel can be bound up with memory and commemoration of past historical and political landscapes, that continue to inform and construct queer mobilities and geographies.

Later in his diary, David became critical of 'touristy', 'commercial' advertising of the Festival on Oxford Street (including rainbow symbols on billboards and ATMs), and he underscored his concern with gay politics and community. Like Jason, David stressed:

For me ... Mardi Gras is more about community, identity and diversity. I think it's about collective strength and unity in the face of adversity ... which you can only get when you get so many people together who are different in so many ways yet are united by their sexuality being outside the heterosexual 'mainstream'. (27/2/2014)

David's final reflection on his Mardi Gras journey reads: 'It's helped maintain a sense of pride in who I am, and it's great to just celebrate and be euphoric just for being' (2/3/2014). Both David and Jason's diaries are powerfully suggestive of the importance of queer trans-Tasman travel – Mardi Gras travel, in particular – for their senses of gay identity, community and politics.

Wedding travel

At the same time the allure of Australia is wearing thin. In the twenty-first century, the legal recognition of LGBT rights has arguably been greater in New Zealand than

Australia, especially with the passage of legislation allowing civil unions in 2004 and then, importantly, same-sex marriage in 2013. This form of partnership recognition is still unrealised in Australia (Waitt 2015), and this has created different legal and social landscapes for LGBT rights across the Tasman (Nguyen 2015). This, in turn, has prompted a significant flow of Australian same-sex couples to New Zealand in order to marry legally in a wedding ceremony (Robin 2015). Within a year of the enactment of same-sex marriage, commentators estimated that at least a quarter of same-sex marriages performed in New Zealand were between Australian nationals (Akersten 2015; Sainty 2015). The most recent New Zealand government statistics, released 3 May 2017, confirm the considerable numbers of Australians accessing trans-Tasman same-sex marriage (and even suggest a slight under-representation in earlier estimates). Stats NZ report that 49 percent of same-sex marriages celebrated in New Zealand in 2016 were between overseas-resident couples; in comparison, only 11 percent of opposite-sex marriages were between overseas-resident couples (Stats NZ 2017). And significantly, ‘couples from Australia accounted for 58 percent of overseas same-sex couples’ and thus almost 29 percent of all same-sex marriages during 2016 (Stats NZ 2017, n.p.). This new reality is consequential for our present argument and demands closer consideration.

For our final case study, then, we offer a story of New Zealand wedding travel, focusing on Melbourne-based couple Michael Barnett (45yo) and Gregory Storer (51yo), whose New Zealand marriage ceremony and its preparations were featured on the SBS television documentary series *Living with the Enemy* (2014).² This is an example of queer trans-Tasman mobility that contrasts with but complements the contemporaneous journeys undertaken by Jason and David. It contrasts in terms of trajectory – Australia to New Zealand – but complements in terms of highlighting the role of trans-Tasman travel in constituting sexual identities and relationships. The case study thus bears some resemblance to Freda’s journeys to New Zealand from a century earlier, though in a very different trans-Tasman legal and social landscape. In keeping with the previous case studies methodologically, this too takes an autobiographical approach. In this case, insights are drawn from Michael and Gregory’s (separate) personal blogs, in which they have documented their marriage journey, including their choice to marry in New Zealand and its political and social imperatives.³ Such blogs constitute a contemporary mode of autobiographical writing,

dovetailing with the critical reflections gleaned from Freda's published memoirs and Jason and David's diaries.

In 2014, one month before Jason and David travelled from Auckland to Sydney for the Mardi Gras, Gregory and Michael crossed from Melbourne to Queenstown to celebrate their marriage ceremony on 30 January at Stoneridge Estate (cf. McQuillan 2017 on same-sex weddings at Stoneridge Estate). New Zealand has been a highly marketed destination for heterosexual wedding tourism since the 1970s – well before the legalisation of same-sex marriage – and Lynda Johnston (2006) has interrogated the relationship between international wedding tourism, New Zealand's natural landscapes and heteronormative constructions of love and romance. Johnston (2006) contends that place is both physically *and symbolically* important in wedding tourism. Particular discourses about 'nature' as pure, exotic and romantic have been utilised in the New Zealand wedding tourism industry to help constitute the 'naturalness' of heterosexual love and marriage. The passage of same-sex marriage recalibrated these discursive associations. Gregory and Michael's wedding is one instance of a growing trend that 'queers' New Zealand wedding tourism. Rather than 'naturalising' heteronormativity, New Zealand has arguably come to be seen as the place where Australian same-sex couples can enact the rites and rituals of marriage, the place in which same-sex love and marriage is 'naturalised' – a 'gay paradise', according to one commentator (Tan 2015, n.p.). This is rendered in Gregory's blog entry about the wedding day at Queenstown:

We walk through the bush and climb to the top of mountains and look in awe.
... I have surrounded myself with love. I have taken the most important people in my life and brought them here. I want the love that surrounds me, the love of my closest brother and sister, the love of my wonderful children, the love of my best friends, I want this love to surround me and I want it to surround you. ... You [Michael] too have brought to this place those you love, you have surrounded yourself with love. ... There is here today over 200 years of marriage between our friends. We are engulfed by love. (5/9/2014)

While this is evocative (and certainly meaningful for the grooms), as critical scholars we also concede that the incorporation of same-sex marriage into New Zealand wedding tourism is an example of homonormativity, defined by Lisa Duggan (2002,

179) as ‘a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption’. The extension of marriage to all – same-sex couples alongside opposite-sex couples – is arguably an enticement to homonormativity, which threatens to depoliticise and demobilise gay relationships and communities, and enfold gay culture in mainstream normalcy. In this context, Australian same-sex couples’ trans-Tasman wedding travel could be understood as a manifestation of homonormative politics. Moreover, this is unavailable to all same-sex couples – a certain class privilege (e.g. income) seems necessary for planning and executing a trans-Tasman wedding. Yet we also want to heed the critiques of homonormativity as an all-encompassing structure, applied by researchers without adequate consideration of the ‘specific geographies of social, political and economic relations’ that shape local LGBT lives (Brown 2012, 1069; Brown 2009; Gorman-Murray 2017).

Simultaneously, then, we want to highlight the resistive politics that Gregory and Michael, and other Australian couples, muster through trans-Tasman wedding travel. While certainly recognising homonormative critiques, there are also important interpersonal politics and aspirations for social change invested in same-sex marriage (Smith 2010). Gregory and Michael’s wedding travel was about symbolically realising and legally recognising their same-sex relationship, and their wedding vows demonstrate the deep love and commitment they have for each other.³ At the same time, they also used their blogs and the documentary *Living with the Enemy* – which televised their marriage – to leverage their wedding travel in order to make a political statement about the persistence of inequality for same-sex relationships in Australia. This couple utilised queer trans-Tasman mobility for political purposes, highlighting ongoing legal and social barriers for LGBT people in Australia. As Michael wrote in his blog:

Of course, the question has been asked, in which country will you guys get married. Not a question most engaged couples get asked I suspect, because the expectation is they would celebrate their nuptials at home, wherever that was for them. Yet for us two Australians, getting married at home is not so straightforward, because there is no legal option for us to do this in Australia currently. (11/9/2013)

A month before *Living with the Enemy* aired on 3 September 2014, Michael's eight-year-old niece wrote to then Prime Minister Tony Abbott to call out the inequality facing Australian same-sex couples:

My unklz are gaye and we had to go to
New Zeland to have ther wedding it is going
To be on TV it's called Living with the Enemy they
wont to get married in Astralea but that's eligle
I'll write to you once a day for a week.
P.S. I wold like the law changed.

(5/8/2014, original spelling)

We should not under-estimate the symbolic power that New Zealand's same-sex marriage law has in Australia. Not only is same-sex marriage unavailable in Australia, but also same-sex marriages performed overseas are not granted legal status within Australia – including those performed in New Zealand. Even so, it seems that increasing numbers of Australian same-sex couples are willing to expend the time, effort and money for a New Zealand wedding and the symbolic capital that brings to their relationships.

Gregory and Michael's story is a highly public example of a new twenty-first century discourse of queer trans-Tasman mobilities, one that both complements and contrasts with Jason and David's Mardi Gras travel. For over a century it was Sydney or Melbourne, with these cities' queer communities and events, which attracted New Zealanders looking for freedom of sexual subjectivity. With the balance of LGBT rights now shifting towards New Zealand, particularly with respect to same-sex marriage, the trajectories and imaginaries of trans-Tasman mobility have been transformed. Australian couples have been drawn to New Zealand as a place – perhaps 'the place' – where same-sex relationships are recognised (Tan 2015). In a curious way, this is a contemporary reflection of Freda du Faur's journeys made a century earlier – an Australian who travelled to New Zealand and found her love and life partner through adventures 'over the ditch'. What these stories together signify are ever-changing queer geographies within and between Australia and New Zealand, with trans-Tasman landscapes of visibility and recognition impelling queer mobilities in diverse ways.

Conclusion

If there is a key lesson from comparing case studies as diverse as ours, it is that the past and the present intersect in complex and surprising ways. Queer trans-Tasman mobilities are multi-directional, not uni-directional; push and pull factors have varied over time; and changes in legal rights and social acceptance affect trans-Tasman circuits of mobility in recursive ways. Freda du Faur experienced Mount Cook and the Hermitage as both enabling and constricting, while experiences of the landscape intensified social bonds and the enactment of gender politics. Much the same is true of those New Zealanders who, much more recently, concretised a gay identity in the streets and Pride events of Sydney, and Australians who married under Queenstown's mountains in New Zealand's South Island. Over a longer stretch of time than we may often contemplate how trans-Tasman spaces have shaped queer subjectivities in profound ways. The nervous, excited first trip from Auckland's Queen Street to Sydney's Oxford Street has not been the only queer rite of passage during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Travel has long created affective opportunities and shaped queer desire.

For all this, history has profoundly moulded the specific meanings space holds for LGBT people in the Antipodes. Pritchard, Morgan and Sedgely (1998) suggest that queer tourism disrupts public space, but it has not always done so in the same kinds of ways. Pritchard, Morgan and Sedgely wrote during the 1990s when particular zones in large cities and tourist hotspots came to be defined as 'gay spaces'. The same cannot be said of earlier decades of the twentieth century, when lesbianism and male homosexuality were not even constructed in such terms, and sexual transgressions were individual rather than collectively grounded (Brickell 2008). Freda's 'inversion' – as she put it – was hardly a public identity. This was a world away from the gay and lesbian politics of the 1970s. David and Jason's Mardi Gras experiences, though, and the particular ways those were spatialised – along with the 'power in numbers' they signified – drew from a very different order of politics. So too did Gregory and Michael's pilgrimage to New Zealand for a wedding that few would have contemplated in 1914. That the Australian government still does not recognise this possibility, though, gestures toward an ongoing geopolitical disjunction that the

Tasman Sea defines geographically. The relationship between New Zealand and Australia does not signify a neat suturing of time and place, and the cultural and political gap – and the queer trans-Tasman circuits that span it – bear ongoing scrutiny.

Notes

1. Lamp for Mary is a pink lamp art installation by Mikala Dwyer, commissioned to commemorate a violent act, which took place at the site. It aims to both pragmatically (through the use of light) and symbolically reclaim space for women and queer individuals threatened by violence.
2. See: <http://www.sbs.com.au/programs/article/2014/08/20/episode-1-same-sex-marriage> (*Living with the Enemy*).
3. See: <https://mikeybear.com.au> (Michael Barnett's blog); <http://gps.storer.com.au> (Gregory Storer's blog).
4. See: <https://mikeybear.com.au/?s=wedding+vows>;
<http://gps.storer.net.au/2014/09/my-marriage-vows/>.



Figure 1: The Hermitage and its dramatic surrounding landscape during the early nineteenth century. The peak of Mount Cook can be seen towards the right of the image. MC.94.1.8.(1), South Canterbury Museum, Timaru.



Figure 2: Oxford Street with its mix of urban commerce and queer significance. Photo taken by David from the northern end, 24/2/2014.

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