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J-SETTING IN PUBLIC: BLACK QUEER DESIRES AND WORLDMAKING

by

LAMONT LOYD-SIMS

Under the Direction of Amira Jarmakani

ABSTRACT

My research provides an inquiry of Black southern queerness situated through the artistic performance of j-setting. I explore j-setting as a dance style created by Black gay men by mapping out its beginnings, and how it has (not) traveled through mainstream culture. With this in mind I interrogate how j-setting exists as a cultural scene for Black queer men in the South to celebrate who we are, while also representing a strategy for our survival against racism, heteronormativity, and other dominant forces that pathologize our realities. This project suggests that an exploration of j-setting exemplifies the resilience and vulnerabilities of Black gay men when engaging dominant/mainstream culture. I contend that j-setting represents a form of worldmaking that allows Black gay men to create new racial and gendered possibilities while grappling with the everyday experiences of anti-Black racism and homo/queerphobia.

INDEX WORDS: J-setting; Worldmaking; Black queer performance; Queer publics

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LAMONT LOYD-SIMS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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2014

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the November 2008 issue of *Southern Voice*, Ryan Lee writes one of the first articles on j-setting where he situates its beginnings away from any possibility that *Beyoncé* is understood as its creative source. Lee's article is aptly titled, "Beyoncé's Borrowed Moves," which suggests that the pop-singer utilizes j-setting as a form of cultural appropriation. The article highlights how, rather than simply existing as a style of dance, j-setting may represent a style of performance framed through the worldmaking of Black queer men. My research excavates the socio-cultural context of j-setting to understand what it does. It also explores how we understand the significance of j-setting when it is deployed in the mainstream public, rather than its indigenous space.

I do not remember where or when I witnessed j-setting for the first time, but I remember how I felt. J-setting captured me because I saw people who *looked* like me dancing like girls—they deployed flamboyantly gay sensibilities that often got me into trouble at home. It was powerful because it did not remind me of home, but some other place of feeling for me—Black gay men dancing in "deviant" ways without any fear of being caught. Home reflects much of the queerphobic hostility in mainstream culture; however, j-setting exists away from that *public* gaze of mainstream culture which (dis)misses the dialectic of Black queer oppression and resistance.

After watching the film, *Tongues Untied* (1989), my queer theory professor highlighted the film's theme of "invisibility" and Black masculinity. She asked the class to describe narratives of Black queer masculinity in mainstream media, but I heard her asking us to describe how Black queer masculinity appears in television and other forms of media. The class struggled to identify Black queer masculinity in the media, but I sat quietly because I wanted to keep secret

those ways of being that are often only recognizable and sacred to Black queers, and not a part of the mainstream public. Maybe that was a reactionary response, but I am often weary of "showing off" Black queer ways of being to folks who feel obligated to witness marginal experiences for empirical evidence, or who, like Beyoncé, want to seize for their own appropriation. Since Black queer folks do not possess large stakes in mass media, I often see Black queerness represented through our cultural work outside/away from the mainstream. J-setting, and other forms of Black queer cultural work, have some sort of sacred quality for me where I reject its (hyper)visibility for others in fear of it being stolen/exploited. One might argue that we use such forums for our own survival, where it validates our differences in a heteronormative and White supremacist culture.

In an interview during a j-setting workshop for the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe (PLAFPF), j-setter, Kendrick Robinson states, "j-setting comes from the South… we took it from the dancers and majorettes at Jackson State University and decided to add a twist and make it more technical."[1] This "twist" that Robinson speaks about refers to the ways in which j-setting has transformed into something different than the style of dance commonly associated with majorettes at Jackson State University ("J-setting", 2011). In an early 2009 issue of *VIBE* magazine, Terrance Dean contends that the style of j-setting was appropriated in the early 90s by black gay men who attended various HBCUs (Dean, 2009). Since men were typically not allowed to join drill teams or majorette squads, usually comprised of only women, they took the dance-style to Black gay clubs throughout the South. In the following chapters I explore what the "twists" within j-setting mean for Black queer men, and the significance of Black gay bars/clubs.

[1] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjXXrup8eWU

My research provides an inquiry of Black southern queerness situated through the artistic performance of j-setting. Theorists who focus on the experiences of queer people of color often think about their strategies of survival. A Black queer and feminist theoretical approach unearths how queer people of color live and grapple with the dominance of a racist, homo/queerphobic culture. My research engages that tradition by seeking to understand how j-setting creates possibilities for Black gay men who are often understood as victims or threats within mainstream culture. Since j-setting occurs mostly as a Southern *thang*, I engage with some of the discourse surrounding Black queer men in the South. I interrogate how j-setting exists as a cultural scene that illustrates how Black queer men in the South celebrate who we are, while also representing a strategy for our survival against racism and heteronormativity, dominant forces that allow the existence of pathologizing narratives about our realities. This project shifts dominant narratives of Black queer men away from discourses that interpellate us as inherent carriers of HIV AIDS; victims of homophobia within Black communities; sexually marginal subjects who escape the hostile rural South for a liberating urban North; or predators who are on "the down low." I have found that j-setting offers new racial and sexual possibilities for Black gay men.

J-setting exemplifies how Black queer folks negotiate dominant ideas about race, gender, and sexuality through *different* sensibilities that offer alternative ways of being. With this as a concern, I interrogate how j-setters encounter, adopt, and practice j-setting, a dance-style that seemingly challenges dominant presentations and perceptions of gender performance and cultural work. For example, j-setting unapologetically displays sex(uality) among Black queer men in ways that challenge ideas that we should be fearful of our sexuality, even through contemporary HIV/AIDS discourse that encourages the policing and repression of our (sexual) bodies and desires. Black queer men are often rendered as subjects (inherently) susceptible to

death through pathologizing discourses which dismiss our complex experiences (Arnold & Bailey, 2009; Cohen, 1999; Johnson, 2008). A cultural analysis of j-setting offers a different narrative that enhances our understanding of Black queer experiences in the South. We might ask if j-setting represents a form of world-making or a counterpublic for Black gay men, providing new racial, sexual, and gender possibilities. I use "worldmaking" here to reference the act of creating possibilities for Black queer male subject positions (rather than reacting to dominant narratives or constructions about them). "J-setting in Public" suggests that j-setting operates as a discursive strategy that illustrates the survival and celebration of Black queer ways of being.

1.1 Methods

I utilize ethnography and an analysis through the frameworks of cultural studies, critical race theory, queer and feminist theories, and performance studies to understand how the socio-cultural realm of j-setting exists as an expression of Black queerness. This project engages j-setting through a combination of semi-structured interviews and participant observation. I include 4 interviews of j-setters as experts of j-setting. While gathering information from j-setters as expert performers is crucial, it was also essential to include my own insight as a spectator of j-setting. I followed 2 squads throughout February and March 2013 as part of the participant-observation dimension for my research.

Queer and feminist scholars have acknowledged the way in which a social phenomenon cannot simply be understood in its present context without unearthing its historical trajectory (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p.132). This certainly informs how I frame questions that ask research subjects about the(ir) histories of j-setting to illustrate connections with Black queer southern experiences. The questions that I ask focus on how folks involved with j-setting

encounter, adopt, practice, and feel about the dance style, and its relation to the mainstream public. With this, the semi-structured interviews also consist of a co-participatory approach[2], where I share my own encounters with j-setting in the conversation (Johnson, 2008). A critical ethnographic approach makes room for me, as the researcher, to discuss how I make sense of j-setting and Black queerness. This suggests that the researcher and researched are in conversation to seek out the terrain of j-setting. This also requires that I am self-reflexive in the interview in acknowledging the concrete/material reason for this project (i.e. to fulfill the thesis requirement for my graduate program). Self-reflexivity speaks to staying conscious of the researcher's privilege (in my case, social class through education). This reminds us that the researcher is engaging with another human being (the researched) initiating a conversation, which influences responses regarding the topic.

Interviewing four j-setters allowed for an inquiry into how folks engage with j-setting. The semi-structured interviews consist of questions that frame the direction of the interview. This strategy helped me guide the interview, which also allowed the questions to shift depending on the response given by research subjects. Thus, the interviews were not constricted to my premeditated questions, and allowed space for me to receive in-depth responses which changed the direction of the interview for later analysis.

For participant observation I watched performances at Black gay night clubs, dance rehearsals, and sat in on informal conversations with other j-setters. I took hand-written notes while observing competitions, scheduled j-sette rehearsals, and group conversations among members of a j-setting "community." When viewing j-setting competitions, I did the following – 1.) remain conscious of spectators as they watch a performance; 2.) document interactions

[2] In *Sweet Tea:Black Gay Men of the South,* E. Patrick Johnson calls this same approach, co-performative. This acknowledges the influence of the researcher when interacting with subjects being researched.

between different squads during competitions; 3.) pay close attention to the music that accompanies performances (lyrics, musical genre) 4.) focus on stylistic nuances within the j-setting routines/choreography being performed. All four factors helped illustrate the atmosphere at a j-setting competition. Since much time is spent among j-setters during their rehearsal/practice of choreographic routines, I received in-depth insight when watching j-setters throughout their rehearsals. Analyzing scheduled rehearsals allowed me to cover what it means for j-setters to invest in the routine of performance. I also explore how the ritual of practicing j-setting, as a gender non-conforming art form, suggests the immense importance of the performance (Bailey, 2011). Finally, documenting informal gatherings among j-setters allowed for other nuanced information for later analysis. My process in documenting j-setting informs how it influences Black queer experiences or vice versa.

Questions of my authority manifest through this research when considering how I decipher some of the intricacies involved in the look, shape, feel, and maintenance of j-setting. It is often assumed that the "native" ethnographer has complete access to deep cultural intricacies that are unavailable to non-native researchers (Narayan, 1993). While my status as a Black queer man gave me some leverage in negotiating my interaction with j-setters, I was still situated outside of j-setting. In relation to this project I might be considered a "non-native" ethnographer, to use the language of Kirin Narayan (1993). While I recognized some things regarding a broader Black queer sociability, the reality is that my status as a graduate student, non- j-setter may have limited my access to certain knowledges which could have been intentionally withheld, or unacknowledged because of my status as an outsider.

I analyze/interpret the data that I gathered through interviews and ethnography with the theoretical approaches that I use to understand Black queer subjectivities in the South. While my

research takes place in Atlanta, many folks invested in j-setting have encountered the dance style in other parts of the South. This allows for a depiction of j-setting beyond the city of Atlanta, and representative of other parts of the South.

Through ethnography and interviews I explore the processes and structure involved in j-setting. More importantly, I think about how j-setting is developed and maintained. This illustrates *who* is involved and *how* j-setting is organized as a cultural formation for Black queer men. This also allows me to see where j-setting gets circulated as a cultural formation. Finally, hearing the voices of those within j-setting community is important with regards to rejecting sweeping ideas that may obscure their experience regarding Black queer subjectivities.

1.2 Literature Review and Theory

The manifestation of j-setting occurs as a Black queer southern experience; Black men seeking alternative forms of gender expression; a negotiation of queer sensibilities in the face of phobic energies and racism. J-setting exists as Black queer men reject the dominant idea that the dance-style associated with majorettes exists solely for women. The imagined idea of Black queer men dancing as majorettes brings j-setting to life. Since there is no scholarly work on j-setting, I want to use this review essay to mediate on how scholars situate Black queer experiences in the South, and artistic performance. With this in mind I should also mention that there is not much written on Black queer artistic performance in the south. Thus, this essay is very much a meditation on the possibilities of Black queer performance in the South.

While a "dominant" Black queer culture often eludes the edifices of the mainstream public, while blending in through assimilationist discourse, it often falsely presents itself as *the* forum for *all* Black non-heterosexuals. A dominant Black gay men's culture has a goal of assimilation into the mainstream, however, j-setting seemingly challenges the dominant social

scripts that interpellate Black men. This literature review explores how Black gay men really exist and thrive in the South. It also illustrates how disidentification and worldmaking are processes that offer new racial and sexual possibilities for Black gay men, and the creation of a counterpublic.

1.2.1 Queering Southern Blackness

According to dominant discourse regarding queer and Black folks, one leaves with the assumption that all the queers are white and all the Blacks are “straight". There has been some work done unearthing queer experiences of the South, but much of this “queering” is racialized as white. With this in mind, not only is much of the research regarding queer lives in the South based upon commentary primarily by white people, it is deployed as universal to queer experiences of the South. This certainly disregards the significance of race(ism) in understanding queer subjectivities throughout the South (Johnson, 2008). Another concern for me occurs within the field of Black studies which consists of a trajectory that depends on heteronormative rhetoric for the self-determination of Black people (Cohen, 1999; Walcott, 2005). This erases the experiences of queer folks where we ignore the reality that not all Black women want to marry Black men, and raise babies to populate Black communities; or that throughout American slavery, African men were also raped by White men. Such narratives are subjugated in ways that shed light on Black men’s oppression without regard to sexual exploitation. What does this do for Black studies? These ideas are ignored because it presents Black experiences as vulnerable in ways that dismiss the romanticization of the Black male hetero-patriarch.

While all the queers may be white, and Blacks straight, the beginnings of the field of Southern history highlights the struggles of Southern white people in countering ideas that the

South is the “peculiar other” to the liberal subjectivity of the American North (Gilmore, 2011). In reclaiming the white southerner as a liberal subject, many scholars within the field have upheld white-supremacist ideas which, for example, suggest that the slavery of Black people is justified based upon the idea that they were inherently inferior to White people—Black people were not capable of self-determination and needed the control of whites to survive.

Challenging ideas regarding the South in mainstream media as racist and homophobic, Black queer people continue living here. The reality is that Black queer folks have carved out spaces that allow them to live happy lives. Whether we look within Historically Black Colleges and Universities (which are mostly in the South), or religious institutions that uphold homophobic sensibilities, Black queer folks have managed to find and love each other and their “straight” counterparts.

1.2.2 Homonormativity

J-setting, along with other ways of performing or being queer, such as drag, suggests the failure of heterosexist interpellation. Through such performance, people resist “calls” of heterosexual normativity, and challenge how we embody gendered scripts that make us intelligible (Muñoz, 1999). In an interview with Ryan Lee, one j-setter explains his initial reaction to the dance style-- “it was different and I had never seen it before — the precision, the technique, the different personalities you [create] to put in your style… it was something different and overwhelming." He goes on to say that j-setting also allows him to express his “feminine side.” Since j-setting often consists of men embodying “feminine” expressions, the dance-style is often rejected by those invested in (homo)normative ways of being (Lee, 2008). The struggle for homonormativity rejects the feminine/queer expressions associated with the cultural work of j-setting (Warner & Berlant, 2002).

Since the style of dance stems from all-female dance lines associated with HBCUs, it seems that Black queer men who j-sette challenge normative ideas of gender performance. This idea is consistent with how the lived experiences of j-setters are shaped through a discursive history of Black queer people embracing ways of being and spaces that have traditionally been out of reach for them (Johnson, 2008; Arnold & Bailey, 2009). J-setting consists of a twist—here, the twist refers to the incorporation of traditional techniques often performed by all-female dance-lines, but also to the practice of going beyond those traditions.

While "transcending" tradition, j-setters are sometimes pushed to the side of a dance club when performing because "the young and feminine dance form runs counter to the masculine environment club promoters try to create" (Lee, 2008). The politics of respectability within such spaces demands a "masculine" way of being. Some Black gay men (as marginalized subjects) uphold a politics of respectability that demands the erasure of queerness, or at least keeping it out of the public. Embracing a politics of respectability keeps minoritarian subjects in a fictive state of safety from dominant systems of power; it requires adhering to normative ways of being. This process requires that we hide subversive ways of being, a strategy of survival for Black *gay* men looking to challenge ideas that they are innately feminine; inferior; abnormal; nonhuman (White, 2001: 31-2). The labor of respectability occurs in the face of racism and gender oppression, knowing that minoritarian subjects are always vulnerable to not achieving *the* ideal subjecthood (Butler, 1990). I use "labor" here to stress the work/struggle of policing gender expression. As mentioned earlier, j-setters are *pushed* to the side of the dance club to perform, or altogether withheld from entering the space. The energy spent to repress j-setting is important here. It is clear that men who perform in feminine ways are marked as queer and as pariahs; they move as aberrations that disrupt the project of Black (homonormative) masculinity.

Considering the influence of Michael Warner's ideas of counterpublics, one might situate j-setting as a counterpublic that depends on various "worldmakings" to legitimize the work of j-setting. I will explore José Muñoz's understanding of disidentification to illustrate *how* it is possible for Black men to be invested in the work of j-setting, considering the influence of dominant culture that would suggest otherwise.

1.2.3 J-setting and Ballroom Culture

As ballroom culture represents space that legitimizes gender "switching"— whereby participants practice to perform in different gender categories that often helps them mimic the ideal gender in public (outside of ballroom)— j-setting also provides space that allows participants some freedom when dancing in a style that is often feminized. While there is no scholarly work that explains the specific socio-cultural background of j-setters, from my experience as a spectator, it seems that j-setters consist of a similar demographic as the ballroom scene.[3] In "Gender/Racial Realness: Theorizing the Gender System in Ballroom," Marlon Bailey acknowledges how the gender system within ballroom culture challenges other social institutions that depend on dominant gender ideas. His research consists of members of the ballroom scene, encompassing "Black queer folks who often live in poor or working-class urban areas" (366). Bailey illustrates the commonplace of violence against members of the ballroom community. Referencing Judith Butler's, *Undoing Gender,* he explains that non-conforming gendered bodies become visible, and often encounter violence through homophobic means (377). Thus, gender performance within ballroom competitions is not simply "for show," but is put into practice through repetition for survival in everyday (queerphobic) spaces. The ballroom scene

[3] I employed ethnographic research as a part of my larger thesis to understand some of the social demographic make-up of the j-setting scene. Since my research was based in Atlanta, whereas j-setting occurs in many urban cities, towns, and rural communities throughout the South, I do not have a complete description of j-setters as a demographic, nor j-setting in its entirety.

allows space for practicing gender that increases participants' ability to mimic the ideal wo/man, which unmarks them as queer and allows for their survival. While the j-setting scene exists as a separate cultural site, I write here about the ballroom scene to illustrate the significant role of forums that allow Black queer cultural work among a particular demographic that is similar to the j-setting scene.

Bailey explains ballroom culture as a significant form of creativity and resource for coping in a culture of homophobic and transphobic violence. The ballroom scene exists as an alternative discursive means for challenging traditional ideas of gender, sexuality, family and community (Bailey, 2011). Keeping with creating alternative discourses, performing femininity through j-setting legitimizes the act among Black men; it challenges dominant ideas regarding sexuality and Black masculinity. Recognizing the ways in which ballroom culture works for the survival of people—particularly those who struggle against a culture of queer/effemiphobia[4]--helps us understand how/why other forums such as j-setting exists.

While j-setting stems from the majorette style that is common at HBCUs, it departs from the tradition with a twist. The "twist" within j-setting that differs from the majorette style may stem from the different socio-historical realities of j-setters (consisting mostly of Black queer men) and majorettes (Black cis-gender women). How does employing new "twists" refer to Black gay men's practice of world making —creating realms that reaffirm our realities? This may illustrate how the style of j-setting is experienced as an entirely different dance genre than the majorette style.

When writing about j-setting as a Southern experience among Black queer men, it highlights that tension with common narratives of queer life in the North East or the West Coast.

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[4] In the new preface for *Dude You're a Fag* (2012), Pascoe explains how effemiphobia vilifies queer men who fail at traditional enactments of masculinity (xv).

This examination of j-setting departs from other scholarly research on Black queer performance where "ballroom" culture, voguing, and drag performance dominate such discourse, (Bailey, 2011) often situated in the North East. J-setting is a style of dance performed primarily within black queer communities in the South. Since j-setting occurs mostly in the South, this research (re)situates queer experiences outside of the North East (New York City) and the West Coast (San Francisco; Los Angeles), which are common sites for depicting the realities of queer people. Thinking seriously about j-setting expands the ways in which we understand how Black queer folks utilize performance to construct their everyday lives in the South. Discourse regarding Black queer realities in the South is often limited to HIV/AIDS and homophobia, rejecting ways that we celebrate and honor our experiences as Southern Black queer folks (Johnson, 2008).

1.2.4 Disidentification

Muñoz explains the possibility of performance as political through his concept of "disidentification." He highlights disidentificatory ideas that exist through artistic performance as liberatory, challenging normative ways of being. Disidentification represents a process that negotiates dominant ideas of condemned subjectivities. This process occurs through a "minoritarian" subject's struggle with dominant constructivist notions of a particular identity. For example, if our culture condemns men who wear dresses, a man who chooses not to wear a dress may still identify with the idea of "men in dresses" as a form of self-affirmation-- this process of disidentification occurs through the collision, the site of impact, of the essentialist ideas of dominant culture (men in dresses = bad) and one's fixed disposition (I am a man who wishes to wear a dress). Not every minoritarian subject deviates from dominant ways of being, especially when concerning needs for intelligibility and safety. However, disidentification

allows a sense of power and agency among marginalized subjects within dominant culture (Muñoz, 1999). The remarks by the young man interviewed in Ryan Lee's article, where j-setting is understood as an opportunity for feminine expression, reminds us of the possible threat of men j-setting in public (queerphobic) spaces despite his unusual interest. Discussing disidentification in regards to the possibility of men dancing like (Black) women establishes how j-setting makes sense in a queerphobic culture. The usual existence of majorette dancing involves an extreme implication of heteronormativity, and it is the heteronormativity of that style that j-setters are disidentifying with. J-setting allows a moment for a "twist", where it challenges heteronormativity with the primary inclusion of male bodies.

1.2.5 J-setting as Worldmaking and Counterpublic

As a counterpublic, and through a process of disidentification, j-setting exists in tension with a dominant culture often maintained by some marginalized group members who are invested in assimilation. While j-setting may exist as a form of resistance to hegemonic gender performativity, it is problematic to define j-setting solely in relation to systems of oppression. In *YO' mama's disfunktional!* Robin Kelley problematizes the way in which we understand Black people as products of oppression while dismissing cultural experiences that exist, untainted by White supremacy (1996; p. 15-25); with this in mind, I must question the ways in which j-setting consists of cultural nuances that are indigenous to Black queer cultural work that may not exist in response to systems of oppression; in other words j-setting may not have been developed as an intentional challenge to Black heteronormative ways of being. For example, while Warner discusses queer counterpublics as often rejecting the significance of the familial structure (considering its deep ties with heteronormativity), this is not entirely the case in gay ballroom culture, where it often embraces and is built upon kinship formations through a process of

cultural appropriation. This reminds us of the significance of a socio-cultural analysis that does not ignore indigeneity (Smith, 2010) and difference regarding subjects in question. However, this research does acknowledge the ways in which j-setting, whether conscious among participants or not, challenges normative ideas of black heteronormativity.

The manifestation of j-setting occurs as Black queer men seek alternative forms of masculinity, embrace a form of dance often relegated to the bodies of Black women, and receive other Southern Black queer men who are called to witness, embrace, and embody j-setting. J-setting exists as Black queer men reject the dominant idea that the dance-style associated with majorettes exists solely for women. The imagined idea of Black queer men dancing as majorettes brings j-setting to life. This is how j-setting exists as a counterpublic for some Black queer men.

According to Michael Warner (2002), publics consist of participants who imagine a particular discourse as a concrete entity. In other words, publics represent a form of fiction stabilized through the circulation of discourse. The creation and maintenance of *the* public depends on a circulatory relationship of people addressing *a* public and the targeted discourse; here *the* public is brought to life and takes form when participants address the subject in question. Participants of a public represent people who address/embrace/identify with the public in question. The members of a particular public are "strangers" in relation to one another, but connect through their (dis)identification with the public in question. These strangers connect through addressing a particular discourse while bringing to life a public. The circulatory relationship involved in publics encompasses a reciprocal call-and-response between its participants and the object of address (8-13).

Counterpublics depend on world-making which include avenues that do not depend on normative or traditional forums for imagining new ways of being; counterpublics also emphasize the need to share that information with those *others* who might identify with it, which helps to ensure its sustainability. Warner and Berlant discuss the ways in which queer counterpublics manifest as "kinds of intimacy that bear no necessary relation to domestic space, to kinship, or to the couple form, to property, or to the nation"(2002; 199)-- these social realms that they discuss are mediated by heteronormativity, which often reads queer as marginal or unintelligible. While marginalized subjects may utilize counterpublics as a form of resistance against dominant systems of oppression, its manifestation depends on the socio-historical context of the particular group in question. Thus, minorities may experience and identify with a public in different ways from one another, and may move throughout various counterpublics as a strategy for survival against dominant hostile forces (Warner, 2002; Muñoz, 1999, p. 5). As mentioned earlier, some use the space of j-setting to express their "feminine side" in ways that are often repressed in other spaces. This allows an understanding that people move through a multiplicity of publics; one might also argue that publics shift, change, and transform based on the participants' needs, and are not static realms of communication.

Counterpublics often exist as the antithesis of a dominant public. The counterpublic nurtures different rules mediated through a mainstream culture. J-setting, as a counterpublic, also represents a subordinate status in relation to the larger public; this is often recognized from the struggles that counterpublics undergo considering the dominance of the larger public. Through my research, I am interested in the ways that j-setting represents a counterpublic sphere, consisting of young Black queer men who (consciously or unconsciously) challenge hegemonic gender performance for Black men. Understanding j-setting as a counterpublic fosters an

assumption that the subjects involved represent a marginalized group. As counterpublics exist in tension with a dominant public, consisting of marginal discourses that challenge norms, its members are interpellated by that tension, struggle; then, they embrace, or respond to that struggle bringing *a* counterpublic to life. The dominant public often calls for a rejection of *other* discourses in order to maintain such dominance; thus, marginalized subjects are such because they reject that demand. However, this does not suggest that j-setters are entirely marginalized and necessarily challenge white heteronormativity. Warner writes that it is not clear that counterpublics always exist as a social space for "subalterns"—those who are socially outside hegemonic power formations (15). Here, it is clear that people who are invested in white-supremacist gender normativity may find themselves dancing or enjoying a j-sette routine.

1.3 Conclusion of Introduction

Considering the cultural context that mediates Black queer men's subjectivity in the US South, what is the significance of j-setting? This essay explores how j-setting is shaped through a discursive history of Black queer people, and not simply a dance style made famous by Beyoncé. A Black queer studies lens reminds us of the marginalized status of Black queer folks considering the nationalist- heterosexist discourse within the Black studies project (Cohen, 1999; Walcott, 2005); the historical attempts of erasing ideas of Black self-determination within the field of southern history (Gilmore, 2010); and the dominant circulation of queer subjectivity as whiteness (Cohen, 1997). This reality offers significant context with regards to j-setters when considering (and going beyond) their demographic location. Considering the cultural context that mediates Black queer men's subjectivity, what is the significance of j-setting? With this research I consider how j-setters, through their performance, are challenging systems of White supremacy and heteronormativity.

Thinking about how j-setting works as a form of resistance considers the ways in which this cultural formation includes subjects who are often required to maintain a politics of respectability that lessens the attention given towards those affected by HIV/AIDS, poverty, and the deviant expression of femininity. Those invested in j-setting presumably disregard such ideologies that solidify the innate inferiority of those who fail to embody/enact white-heterosexual dominance.

However, Black queer men do not experience oppression through white supremacist heterosexism in isolation. While this is a shared experience with other groups (i.e. Black women; Latino queer men), j-setting is the deployment of a counterpublic, representing the unique response of some Black queer men in the South to their oppression. While I highlight some of the ways we may understand j-setting as a counterpublic, I do not mean to romanticize its existence as liberatory and a direct result of oppression. Finally, much of the labor and rituals involved in j-setting may reference indigenous forms of expression that speak to the ways in which Black queer men are (not) affected by racism and gender oppression.

J-setting as an opposition to normative gender performance for men shifts from a liberatory pursuit solely for Black gay men when encountering new discursive formations. It seems inevitable that the sacred qualities that Black gay men witness within j-setting shift when encountering other discourses. This does not mean that j-setting cannot be recognized as such, or have (new) sacred qualities. But it will be seen and engaged differently as a new form of j-setting develops when encountering new bodies, spaces, styles, etc. In the following chapter, I discuss how j-setting and its unique potential for compression and expansion, where the performing body flows between compact motions and explodes outward, represents a metaphor

for the fluidity that is necessary for sustaining j-setting.[5] We might imagine the use of compression within j-setting the moment where its followers become intimately familiar with the style, while the expansion of j-setting allows it to be deployed and shared with others, and other worlds.

[5] In the link below, dance choreographer Jumatatu Poe briefly discusses in an interview how j-setting uniquely illustrates compression and expansion in dance.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjXXrup8eWU

2 WHAT IS J-SETTING?

As far as I know, the origin actually comes from Jackson State University. All of the teams model after dance lines at other HBCUs, but the name, "j-setting", comes from the Prancing J-settes.

– Tim (aka Sincere) (aka Tammy)

J-setting is a style of dance commonly performed by Black gay men throughout the Southeast. It usually consists of a small group performing as a squad (team) in synchronized, lead and follow routines. While influenced by a number of different styles of dance including jazz and hip-hop, j-setting stems from the majorette style associated with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (Lee, 2008). Majorette dance-lines exist as one of the spaces for women within band culture, which is very popular on the campuses of HBCUs. I might add that this style of dance is common at historically Black high schools and other colleges with large Black student populations.[6] However, in the epigraph, Tim, who j-settes with J-Phi based in Atlanta, speaks about the influence of dance-lines at HBCUs on the dancing styles of various j-setting teams. It also seems clear that the style of j-setting has not stayed within the realm of the majorette dance-lines that consists predominantly of women. According to many of its followers, j-setting exists as a "twist" from the majorette style of dance, a deviation from the traditional dance-line style that is performed along with band music at HBCU football games. The twist that j-setting offers is enticing for Black gay men because it is not tied down by dominant masculinity. It is a force that swerves away from gender norms that limit the possibility of our bodies.

[6] This point often goes unacknowledged with people familiar with j-setting and its connection to HBCUs. There are schools with a predominantly Black student population that are not captured under the title of HBCU, but also have a similarly deep affinity towards band culture.

2.1 J-setting and the Majorette Style

There are several characteristics involved within j-setting that speak to this "twist" or deviation from the majorette style—1) The name "j-setting" exists as an example of the direct departure from claiming the "majorette" name. It stems from the "prancing j-settes," the majorette group at Jackson State University. The prancing j-settes are known for introducing this particular style of dance that moved their dancers away from depending on baton twirling to a more stylistic dance form, which incorporated thrusts and high kicks (Dean, 2009). 2) The physical spaces utilized for j-setting performances might include night clubs and public parks, whereas majorettes often showcase their performances on the football field and stadium. Not only does football demand heteronormativity, the space where it is performed (on the field) reaffirms heteronorms with the example of female majorettes performing on the side, within the bleachers of the stadium, as the football players take "center stage" on the field. There is rarely space for women to participate as football players, and few opportunities for majorettes to garner the same amount of attention as male football players.[7] There is also no space for (gay) men who prefer to perform as majorettes. Thus, j-setters have taken their performances to *other* spaces where they are the central focus. 3) Finally, as stated earlier Black (gay) men are the primary producers of j-setting, whereas the majorette style often refers to the dance line formation performed by women. J-setting allows male bodies to move in particular ways often relegated to female bodies. Here, Black male bodies explicitly deviate from the performance of gender normativity that is scripted for their subject position. J-setting challenges the belief of gender as an inherent norm that depends on a sexed body (male/female), as it invokes the failure

[7] During "half time" performances, majorettes often share the field with band members consisting of women and men.

of gendered practices as authentically female or male. Thus, the majorette style is not solely possible for women to achieve, but can be performed by men with the example of j-setting.

As most HBCUs are located in the South, it is no surprise that j-setting has particularly developed from Black gay men living in the South, those who also admire the performance of majorettes. The South exists as the regional space that holds many of the traditions associated with HBCU's, particularly the phenomenon of band culture, and has been the primary space for the development of j-setting. While majorette dance-lines exist as women-only social spaces, aside from the presence of male choreographers, men often showcase their interest in the majorette tradition in spaces where they can be the main focus, particularly Black gay night-clubs throughout the South. The practice of male majorettes performing in night-clubs developed throughout the early 1990s. Male majorettes took their routines across the South to popular Black gay clubs such as Club 708 in Atlanta, Club City Lights in Jackson, and Allusions in Memphis (Dean, 2009). Specifically in Atlanta, where I have conducted my research, we can see j-setting at Club Rush (formerly Club Chaparral), or in Piedmont Park particularly during Atlanta's Black Gay Pride (Lee, 2008). Such spaces exist as meeting grounds for j-setters to "battle" one another, learn new routines or trends from other squads, engage in communion with dancers and others who support j-setting, all working towards sustaining j-setting as cultural work. In fact, most of the j-setters whom I have interviewed explain that their first encounter with j-setting occurred in a night-club. I got a chance to hear how significant Black gay clubs are for witnessing j-setting for many Black gay men. The interviewees for this research are all members of squads that travel to different parts of the South to perform and compete against other j-setters. These dancers battle and share their routines with each other across the South,

while imitating the majorettes of HBCUs, and in the words of j-setter, Kitty, "even going beyond what the 'real girls' do."

2.2 HBCUs, the South, and the Owners of J-setting

Yes, j-setting is big here because there are only real Black majorettes in the South.
–LaKendrick

We are into our marching bands down here, especially at HBCUs. It's a Southern tradition.
–Kitty

It seems that it has largely become difficult within public discourse to imagine gay men existing in the South, where they have created their own spaces in response to a culture fueled with queer/homophobia. The existence of j-setting in the South challenges the notion that the region is solely characterized by gay suffering and death. It helps us rethink the idea that gay folks only run away to New York and California for their liberation, and highlights the reality and possibility of creating our own cultural formations. There is certainly public discourse regarding the realities of Black struggle throughout the South, yet it has the largest concentration of Black people than other regions in the U.S. as more Black people continue migrating back to the region (Frey, 2004).

In "The Big Idea: J-setting Beyond Beyoncé," Terrence Dean reminds us that the j-sette style at Jackson State University came into existence once majorette Shirley Middleton suggested that the dancers retire their batons and adopt dance routines that require line-formations while marching to the music of JSU's marching band, "The Sonic Boom" (Dean, 2009). Instead of choreographing routines that focus on baton-twirling, the Prancing J-settes adopted dance styles that included thrusts and high kicks while wearing pumps. However, Dean does not explore why Shirley Middleton decides to encourage the PJs to forego baton-twirling for new routines, or where she found the inspiration for the different dance style that eventually

inspires the creation of j-setting. Middleton, a trained ballet dancer and former majorette, encouraged the sixth president of JSU, Dr. John A. Peoples, to allow the dancers to abandon their batons and perform to popular music while incorporating more athletic dance routines. Performing to popular music heard on Black radio made their dance-line completely different from others as they were able to better engage their student audience. Middleton also had the help of Hollis Pippins, a former twirler at JSU, who worked with the Prancing J-settes as a choreographer (Jackson, 2013). According to one particular blogger who describes him as a member of "the boys' club", it was rumored that Pippins was gay (Dee, 2006). While there is not much written that elaborates on Pippins' contribution to the early formation of the Prancing J-Settes, his existence and work is a reminder of men's early influence on the majorette style. Many j-setters often explain that the style of dance began with women, but this bit of information regarding the history of JSU's majorette style illustrates how gay men have also been creative influences on the style.

Though the Prancing J-settes of JSU are credited as the primary influence for j-setting as we know it today, majorette dance-lines are common at other schools with large Black student populations. More importantly, band culture is huge at HBCUs, and majorette dance-lines are often constructed under band departments; for example, the Prancing J-settes are a supplementary organization within Jackson State University's marching band, "The Sonic Boom of the South." In the epigraph above, Kitty, who j-settes with Toxic (based in Atlanta), alludes to the way in which the South represents a regional space and culture that is very familiar with band culture. Here, we can imagine the possibility of the majorette style of dance lines as a largely southern experience—one not entirely owned or solely created by the Prancing J-settes.

It is difficult for one group to claim ownership for founding a style of dance if we understand the larger context of Historically Black Schools. As a child I remember visiting family in Alexandria, Louisiana, and attending football games at Peabody Magnet High School. My mother never hesitated to remind me that her parents attended the school, along with the rest of Alexandria's Black high school student population until legislation leading to the desegregation of public schools. I remember watching majorettes perform along with band music, taking my attention away from the football games. Everyone in the football stand seemed to be familiar with the moment—the popular r&b music played by the band, the chants led by the cheerleaders, and the excitement of the field-show. I had a similar experience when watching Southern University's football games and field shows, where many members of my family attended the HBCU in Baton Rouge. Many US cities and small towns with large Black populations that practiced acute racial segregation through schooling consisted of generations of family members that lived in the same community, who also attended the same Black schools. The reality of generations of Black families and community members involvement in Historically Black Schools helps sustain the cultural work and creativity that comes out of such institutions. For people living in such communities, the point of contention occurs with the lack of resources given to Black schools compared to their white counterparts. Historically Black Schools are often recognized as important cultural sites, where community and parental involvement exist in significant ways that support predominantly Black student populations, but often suffer a tremendous lack in resources (Shircliffe, 2002). Considering the racial segregation of schools that existed until the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and proceedings of desegregation that occurred throughout the U.S. (Freeman & Thomas, 2002), historically Black institutions, such as HBCUs (and also at the high school level), work as major cultural centers. These social sites are

heavily depended upon for the intellectual and leadership development of African American communities, and this is so also with the creation of majorette dance-lines and j-setting.

While most j-setters whom I have encountered name the Prancing J-settes as the first group to develop this style of dance, I could not help but think about the possibility of this being not completely true, especially with regard to the possible exchanges among Black institutions with regard to cultural work. We do not know what encouraged Middleton to shift the style of dance with the Prancing J-settes. Moreover, we do not know if Middleton and the PJs were influenced by other Black schools, or even dancers from non-Black institutions. One might realize that certainly styles of dance often build from others that already exist; this idea rightly pushes one to question arguments suggesting that the Prancing J-settes are the authentic owners of the majorette style as we know it today. While the name "j-setting" speaks to the influence of the Prancing J-settes in the creation of the dance style, it necessarily leaves out the wider cultural context from which it emerged. The j-setters that I have interviewed for this research agree that j-setting stems from the PJ tradition, while also discussing how some j-sette squads pull from majorette traditions associated with other HBCU's, such as Southern University's "Dancing Dolls," and Alabama State University's "Stingettes."

During the interview, LaKendrick, the captain of Toxic, reminds me that while majorettes and drill teams are popular in the South, they certainly exist in other regions as well. He discusses how he also looks at predominantly white schools that have dance-lines for inspiration for his choreography. The idea that the stylistics involved in j-setting do not solely depend on creative inspiration from the South also speaks to the adaptability of j-setting—it can exist in multiple places outside of the South. LaKendrick mentions a popular j-setting squad from Detroit, known as DDZ, as an example of the style of dance existing outside of the South. He

explains that DDZ is actually a "legendary" squad, meaning that it receives the highest regards within the j-setting community.

Nevertheless, LaKendrick makes a loaded comment explaining that the "real Black majorettes" are only in the South. This not only discredits the impact of other regions on the style of dance, but it brings into question majorettes who are not Black and/or female bodied. I want to make clear that the insertion of "real" in the quote that begins this section refers to "female" bodied women who are members of majorette dance-lines, as oppose to "male" bodies who j-sette. A few of the j-setters that I interviewed would often refer to the majorettes as the "real girls," when referencing the women on dance-lines. The distinction that j-setters make between "real girls" on majorette squads and men who buck (the other "girls") acknowledges the ways in which they have come to realize their participation in a style of dance that is often designated as the embodiment of femininity. Thus, embodying femininity is not only a possibility for female bodies which men such as Hollis Pippins exemplified when training the "real girls" at JSU to perfect the majorette style. One particular way that men are read as queer occurs through a depiction of them as feminine or existing in feminine spaces (i.e. the choir, theatre, majorette dance-lines). In the following chapter I discuss more about what it means for men like Pippins voluntarily step into those feminine spaces.

Throughout my interviews, there was an assumption that the "real girls" created and developed the majorette style as we understand it today. This assumption is used to displace any possibility that gay men were also there, assisting in the creation of the majorette style. During my interview with LaKendrick, he suggested that anyone who does not know about Hollis Pippins does not know the history of j-setting or the traditional majorette style. Unfortunately, I neglected to inquire about how he became familiar with Pippins' work with Jackson State

University's Prancing J-Settes. Naming Hollis Pippins as a significant figure in producing what we have come to call j-setting also helps to reflect on the existence of Black gay cultural producers in the South. The website for JSU's band, The Sonic Boom, offers very little commentary about the Prancing J-Settes, let alone its history with Pippins, compared to the attention given to its marching band.

It is also important that we recognize how the established queer formations that are privileged within Western discourse often make it impossible to imagine Black queer folks as cultural workers. The image often produced within such discourse produces a White homonormative temporal narrative for queer experiences and progress (Ferguson, 2007). Thus, it is no surprise that a figure like Pippins, who grew up in Mississippi, attended an HBCU in Mississippi, and helped produce a definitive style of dance is simply not known about, but difficult to even imagine as a possibility. Erasing the possibility of Pippins involvement in the beginnings of the majorette dance-lines happens when j-setters suggests that their way of dance was simply appropriated from the 'real girls.'

2.3 J-setting in Keeping With its Roots

Marching in is still a tradition… that goes back to the real girls.
–Dennis

J-setting is femininity itself… we don't wear something 'masculine' and actually expect to look masculine.
–Kitty

J-setting is often determined by the team. Memphis Elite is a masculine squad… they'll come and dance in basketball uniforms.
–LaKendrick

When it first started, it was to mimic the girls. Not until hip-hop was incorporated did it become masculine. Memphis Elite was the first to start incorporating hip-hop which inspired others.
– Tim (aka Sincere) (aka Tammy)

It is very easy to witness the creative inspiration for j-setting as its history is often put on display during performances. During a j-setting workshop for the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival

and Philly Fringe (PLAFPF)[8], dance choreographer, Jumatatu Poe explains that he found j-setting intriguing while thinking about how it engaged physical compression and expansion within dance. He suggests that the "huge, explosive bombastic movement" within j-setting stems from majorettes performing in confined spaces such as football stadiums. This is one of the qualities of j-setting that caught his attention—the ability to be physically explosive within a tight space. The space of the football stadium is quite limiting, thus, the "bombastic" dance-moves are surprising. This is the discursive image that Jumatatu recognizes as a particular tradition that one can *witness* within j-setting.

Before engaging with the notion of j-setting occurring in different spaces aside from football stadiums, along with other technicalities that differentiate it from its predecessor, I will continue with the style of j-setting and its relation to majorette dance-lines of HBCUs. According to Kitty, dancers may wear leotards and perform specific routines that are familiar due to their similarity to well-known women's majorette squads such as those mentioned earlier. While baton twirling was abandoned by some majorette squads, it still shows up sometimes as part of routines within j-setting. It has been my experience that j-setting competitions may pay homage to its history which includes baton-twirling, and other "traditional" styles that consist of performing to band music, as opposed to solely hip-hop or house music, which are common genres for j-sette routines. At some formal competitions, there are specific categories that exist for a "field show" routine, consisting of music that utilizes band instruments. We might also see squads marching into the dance space, harkening back to the "real girls." For example, during my interview with Dennis, he reminds me how marching in to the performance space exists as a ritual that his particular squad adopted from the Prancing J-settes. He explains that this

[8] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjXXrup8eWU

particular marching technique is known as "salt & pepper," where the dancers perform the following—

1. March with knees at a 90 degree angle.
2. The left leg goes out in front, along with the right arm (and vice versa); this happens simultaneously as if you are using salt and pepper shakers.
3. Keep switching as you continue marching to your destination.

While the Prancing J-settes utilize the marching technique known as "salt and pepper," Dennis also states that marching in to the performance space is a tradition among most majorette dance lines. However, he could not elaborate on other squads' marching traditions, which speaks to the dominance of the Prancing J-settes. Considering the ways in which j-setters pull from the Prancing J-settes dance style, they continue to be innovative with their own sense of j-setting.

Typical of any cultural formation, j-setting carries particular aesthetics that help mark its unique existence. The specific and sometimes abstract qualities of j-setting helps participants measure the dance form. In other words, a j-setter knows when they are witnessing j-setting. These qualities showcase the roots of j-setting (the majorette style) along with particular "twists" imparted by Black gay men. While many Black institutions, such as "the" Black Church (Cohen, 1999), Historically Black Colleges and Universities may wield the force of heteropatriarchy, j-setting exists as an example of how some Black gay men have (re)appropriated certain traditions out of such spaces that affirm our experiences. As stated earlier, the majorette style of dance is presumably held for women, yet j-setting exists through the work of Black gay men participating in a style of dance gendered as feminine, and making their own innovative dance formation. Considering the quotes above, it is clear that while j-setting continues to develop, there remain nuances within the dance style that illustrate its roots. Kitty reminds us that j-setting exists

through the embodiment of femininity despite how it continues to change. In my conversation with LaKendrick he mentioned that most j-setting squads attribute many of their techniques to well-known majorette dance lines. Those familiar with the majorette style performed at HBCUs know that it consists of pelvic thrusts and hip movements and routines that may seem similar to rhythmic gymnastics and modern dance, especially when performed in a large space such as a football field. We should remember, for instance, that modern dance, as a genre that resembles the majorette/j-setting style, was created by women as an oppositional dance formation that countered the male dominant genre of ballet. Within ballet women worked as laborers and the material canvas where their bodies were manipulated by male managers and choreographers. The women who pioneered modern dance sought other, more freeing ways of performing; thus, the creation of modern dance acted as a liberatory pursuit for women and their bodies (Hanna, 2010).

In the same interview footage for the PLAFPF, Kendrick explains that "we took it from the dancers and majorettes at Jackson State University and decided to add a twist and make it more technical." While the added "twist" that differentiates j-setting from the traditional majorette style may refer to Black gay men experimenting with femininity, it may also refer to new routines and extended dance counts. These changes may have been difficult to imagine before the naming of j-setting itself.

The quotes above speak to the fluidity (or instability) of femininity, and the gendered subjects that it embodies—this is part of the twist that distinguishes j-setting from the traditional majorette style. While j-setting may encompass a space for men to embrace femininity, many performers are also read as masculine. Living in a culture where queer men are condemned through feminizing rhetoric, it seems that j-setting provides liberatory space where Black gay

men re-signify the slur of the feminine man (sissy) as an affirming project. While j-setting seems dependent upon femininity/masculinity, it seems to me that it is not tied down by the gender binary—there is room to play outside of narrow constructions of gender.

The way in which j-setting allows for a new discursive performance of gender that is not tied to normative femininity/masculinity leads me to think about the "sexiness" of j-setting and its implications. As sexual minorities, when Black gay men are explicitly gay, read as non-heterosexual by others, they are also sexualized. They are more specifically read as sexual deviants, in that they disrupt the heteronormative project of the nation-state, by fucking each other instead of women, and implicated in the spread hiv/aids (Cohen, 1999). During the same interview on j-setting for the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe (PLAFPF), j-setter, Donte Beacham briefly describes j-setting as "real funky and sassy." "Funky" and "sassy" are terms that often refer to expressions of sexuality. It seems to me, for example, that when queer men express their funk for others to witness, they are being faggots in public. The term 'faggot' is held as a symbol for demonizing queer men and their sexual pursuits. But when gay men, as already sexualized subjects without even trying, embrace their sexuality in public, there seems to be a resignification of the homophobic nature that a term such as 'faggot' carries. Conjuring a funky aesthetic into existence requires decolonizing and reclaiming one's erotic desires (Herukhuti, 2007).

While the use of femininity continues as a tradition from majorette dance-lines, j-setting also incorporates masculinity that does not entirely depend on normative standards of masculinity (remember that it is impossible for j-setting to be seen as masculine, even when dressed as such). Tim offers the example of the squad, Memphis Elite as one of the first squads to incorporate a "masculine" stylistic within their j-sette counts. This is the shift within j-setting

where it is not solely focused on mimicking the "real girls." He explains that the inclusion of hip-hop music, as oppose to the more typical house music and traditional band music, led to a more masculine aesthetic within j-setting. Here, hip-hop, as a style of dance and music is understood as masculine territory which helps differentiate j-setting from the majorette style. Kitty also suggests that some of the routines that male j-setters perform are more difficult than those common within the majorette style. He suggests that j-setters perform routines that go beyond the traditional 8 counts, while often dancing 16 counts and upwards of 32 counts. The 8 counts (or beats) refer to the number of movements that go along with the music's beat or tempo. Kitty also discusses the male body as physically powerful, in comparison to women, allowing them to explore more "complicated" routines. I would argue that men are often engendered to move their bodies in more "powerful" ways, making difficult bodily thrusts and positions much easier to accomplish through the routine practice of challenging bodily endurance; this occurs through a process of what Butler discusses as gender performativity, or the repetition of physical, and other social acts that are attributed to a masculine or feminine style (Butler, 1990).

What is important to remember about j-setting, like most forms of cultural work and performance, is how it exists as a temporal modality for an oppositional subject position; it allows those involved to experience and witness a performance that does not depend on normative masculinity, while also expanding traditional stylistics that they identify with. In the following chapter I will discuss more about understanding the ways in which j-setting represents an intentional form of queer production that depends on time and space.

> *You don't have to be a certain age to j-sette…as long as you're old enough to get into the club.*
>
> –LaKendrick

> *It was my 18th birthday, and my friends took me out to Club Traxx on Memorial Drive where I saw the circles around the j-setter, but didn't know exactly what it was.*
>
> –Dennis

A lot of people get into j-setting from seeing it in the club.
–Kitty

I later saw "J-Phi" on YouTube while I was living in middle Georgia.
–Tim (aka "Sincere")

We already know that j-setting occurs mostly in the South, pulling from the majorette traditions that are often supported by HBCUs. But in this moment, I am thinking about the physical spaces where j-setting occurs. The spaces where j-setting exists do not typically include stadiums and football fields where majorettes typically perform. While Black gay men have been known to j-sette since the early 1990s, there is also knowledge of Black men performing dance routines commonly associated with the majorette style before the common usage of the term, "j-setting." During our interview in June 2013, LaKendrick explains that while men were prohibited from performing with the all-female majorettes, it was common knowledge that male majorettes existed. Men performing in the majorette style are sometimes allowed to give solo performances, says Kendrick. However, it is not standard for the inclusion of male majorette performances. During an interview discussing men's involvement with such dance-lines, Kitty explains that it was common knowledge that such spaces were limited to women. While male majorettes have been known to give solo performances, Kitty further states that it often consists of "baton-twirling" as opposed to the exact participation in the majorette dance-line. He states, "I wanted to be just like the majorettes, but could not because of the gender thing." Here, while the traditional space held for majorettes is inaccessible to men, we witness how j-setting exists as a space that challenges the gendered discursive space of dance-lines as a possibility reserved only for women.

Since male majorettes are withheld from performing "on the field," and largely invisible within the context of band culture, Black gay clubs became a space to showcase their desire to

buck.[9] The "field" is largely held for the labor of football players, and occasionally for the band, majorettes, and others who perform during "half time." J-setting as its own cultural formation legitimizes and gives gay men a reason to dance in ways that are relegated to the bodies of women within the context of dominant culture. In reference to Black gay clubs, Kitty explains that they often exist in the place of "the field," where they often put j-setting on display. Other j-setters testify to the way in which j-setting often shows up in a few of Atlanta's well-known Black gay clubs.

Gay bars and dance clubs have historically been community spaces for lesbian, trans, bisexual, and gay folks. This is particularly true for working-class LGBT people who do not have access to gay enclaves that exist in cities such as New York and San Francisco (Beemyn, 1997). In this same tradition, Black gay clubs have become one of the primary locales for j-setting performances. While the j-setting style has its roots in Southern HBCUs, it was taken to Black gay bars and clubs (or gay bars/clubs populated mostly by White people, but offered a "Black night") where it flourished. Most people who know about j-setting encountered it at Black gay clubs. According to LaKendrick, this sentiment of finding j-setting in clubs is also true regarding those who perform as j-setters. He mentions that he saw the dance-style for the first time at a club in Greenville, Mississippi. I asked him if his first sight of j-setting was at a gay club-- he laughed and stated that j-setting only happens in gay clubs. He describes his first reaction towards the dance-style as distasteful because it was so overtly gay. I have plenty of memories of seeing j-setting at clubs, where part of the dance floor is solely held for j-setting teams to battle each other. Dennis mentions that he encountered the dance style while celebrating his 18th birthday at one of Atlanta's popular Black gay clubs at the time, Club Traxx.

[9] Some people emphasize the idea that "j-setter" is a name specifically reserved for members of the Prancing J-Settes, and others who perform in a similar style (or "buck") should be referred to as "buckers".

In fact, during my interview with Dennis, I learned that he and Tim were to be formally presented at a popular gay night club to the community in their first public performance as new members of a j-setting squad. Thus, it is clear that Black gay clubs represent a significant space for the proliferation of j-setting as cultural formation.

Considering the limited amount of space that j-setters are able to occupy, many are often forced to rehearse in their homes, which do not typically consist of a formal dance studio. This was made clear during my interview with Kitty, where we discussed how majorettes (the real girls) typically have access to more resources since they are supported by colleges and universities. This does not mean that majorettes do not struggle to acquire resources, as many HBCUs (along with predominantly White schools) are making heavy cutbacks during economic setbacks within the academy, but they are provided more public space to perform. This is a moment to remember that j-setters still consist of Black gay men, a marginalized group based on their sexuality, gender performance, race, and class. These factors that define their social status helps limit spaces that are open to j-setting.

In July 2013 I ended my field work at a j-sette rehearsal with the Atlanta based j-setting squad, Toxic. I was invited by LaKendrick, who serves as the captain for the squad and was my primary contact for directing me to the rehearsal space. Being somewhat of an overachieving graduate student, I arrived to the rehearsal 20 minutes early. The rehearsal was scheduled for 10PM, but began nearly an hour later. LaKendrick was waiting on a ride after work from another member of Toxic. They finally arrived in a carpool with a few other members of the dance team. Five members of Toxic showed up for this particular rehearsal, and I was surprised that they were able to complete routines altogether in LaKendrick's small living-room. But as I mentioned earlier, it's quite typical to see the explosive and complicated routines of j-setting

occurring in confined spaces. During rehearsal, LaKendrick consistently inquired about my facial reactions to the various routines put into practice—he noticed my surprised reaction towards some of the more difficult components of certain routines. The rehearsal lasted nearly 2 hours, and LaKendrick, as team captain, was able to rehearse 3 routines with the rest of the squad. Some of the routines were new to various members of Toxic, especially if they missed some of the previous rehearsals. Unfortunately, for this thesis project I will not offer in-depth analysis of the time commitment for the physical training that j-setting requires. Nonetheless, sitting in on their rehearsal exemplified their commitment to j-setting which typically consists of hours of rehearsal to perfect routines. Since j-setting often requires synchronized dance formations for multiple routines, it is imperative that dancers commit a significant amount of time for rehearsal.

Considering the limited amount of spaces that j-setting occupies, the accessibility of the internet has helped the circulation of j-setting outside of the typical spaces where it proliferates (i.e. Black Gay Prides and night clubs). Tim mentions that he witnessed j-setting for the first time on the largely popular video sharing web-site, YouTube. He explains that he was aware of majorette dance-lines while living in central Georgia, but was not aware that there were other men (besides himself) performing in a similar style. J-setters have also used social networking sites to develop and promote competitions, which helps increase the visibility of j-setting to other people. But what happens with the oppositional discourse within j-setting regarding Black gay men and gender performance once the dance-style spreads to other public spaces and is witnessed by others?

2.4 Setting the Stage for Understanding J-setting as a Counterpublic

I think it's wonderful for other people to j-sette... giving it more exposure instead of just being underground. It's important to get exposure because it would keep more people busy, and you feel like you're making a difference.

–Kitty

In 2008, r&b pop-singer, Beyoncé released her music video titled, "single ladies," and I along with many others watched intently to see how well she performed the dance choreography. Certainly there are plenty of music videos that consist of dancing, but has been rumored that Beyoncé was to be dancing in a style that many of my people consider sacred. Though j-setting is a style of dance commonly performed by Black gay men in the South, as I have discussed, Beyoncé's performance was to elide this fact. Through the public display of "single ladies," the mainstream public does not come to know this style of dance as "j-setting"--- it is evacuated of its history and context, and transformed into a style of dance that originates with (and appropriated by) Beyoncé. The single ladies video becomes a new pop sensation as YouTube floods with parodies and "copy-cat" examples of the supposed original made famous by the pop-star. But we also witness the ways in which Beyoncé's "single ladies" helps expand the possibilities of j-setting as a counterpublic through amateur recreations of the choreography that gets overwhelmingly circulated via YouTube (Pullen, 2011). Thus, other spaces may exist for the potential sustainability of j-setting.

When I see this major public debut of "j-setting" through Beyoncé, I witness the erasure of its roots. I write here about Beyoncé because j-setting receives its greatest public attention in its history through the pop star. The implications of Beyoncé as "creator" erases the ways in which j-setting represents a world framed through the performance of Black queer men.

Counter to this narrative, my research explains how j-setting exists as a worldmaking project for Black queer men in the South.

While j-setting challenges norms associated with gender, masculinity/femininity and Black gay men's spaces, how is j-setting sustained as the spaces commonly associated with Black gay men shift when engaging other discursive publics? How are some of the remnants that bring life into j-setting maintained as certain spaces or rituals change? The example involving Beyoncé's "single ladies" is one way that we can recognize a shift in spaces that typically hold j-setting. Not only are the bodies involved in the video of women of color (not Black gay men), "single ladies" is also displayed on television screens within mainstream media, a particular space that is usually inaccessible to j-setting. J-setting as a stylistic art/dance form, with its explosive moves in confined spaces, is also circulated through YouTube—including Beyoncé's performance and replications of the choreography by amateurs. In the quote above, Kitty mentions that he wants to feel like j-setting is making a difference for others, possibly allowing them to experiment with a more free way of moving, one that involves explosive dance-moves in confined spaces. Considering that the spaces that Black gay men are typically confined within a heteronormative anti-Black culture, these explosive moves are liberatory. Why not share this with the world?!

This circulation is significant as "single ladies" consists of Beyoncé (and back-up dancers) performing a mating dance to attract potential husbands. In this sense, Beyoncé's "single ladies" uses j-sette choreography with an articulation of hetero-monogamous desires where women of color demand a commitment to marriage vis-à-vis, "if you liked it, then you should have put a ring on it." This is a major shift if we understand j-setting as an alternative to normative scripts for gender performance.

Considering the ways in which j-setting often occurs with particular bodies and in particular spaces—Black gay men's bodies; black gay/lesbian/trans/queer night clubs; Atlanta's Piedmont Park—some people attribute the dance style to Beyoncé and her music video for "single ladies," which does not consist of the typical spaces and bodies that usually hold j-setting. The music video, displayed in black and white, includes two women dancing along with Beyoncé on each side of her while singing, "if you like it, then you should have put a ring on it." The music video for single ladies resembles a mating call, where Beyoncé essentially "calls" for men to commit to a marriage proposal. Later, in a 2009 blog post, performance studies scholar Ariel Osterweis interviewed the choreographer for "single ladies," JaQuel Knight where he admits to having some familiarity with j-setting, and is attributed to introducing the Southern dance style into Beyoncé's dance studio.[10] I should add that in the interview Knight acknowledges the significance of j-setting, while seemingly downplaying the influence of Black gay clubs and culture as a significant factor. He attributes the dance-style depicted in the music video as stemming from the traditional majorette style. In fact, he states, "I don't even like to call it J-Setting, to be honest. I don't have a name for it. I just call it, 'the thing that the girls do in front of the band.'" Nonetheless, this the attributing moment where j-setting expands into the public realm associated with Beyoncé.

I should add that, according to Knight, Beyoncé sought an underground style of danin an attempt to appeal to a wide audience. This may explain why many cite j-setting as an influence for "single ladies" as oppose to the majorette style. J-setting is not as public as the traditional majorette style since it is performed mostly in Black gay clubs, by Black gay men. Yet, it is particularly interesting that people recognized the choreography in "single ladies" as heavily encompassing j-setting (and not the traditional majorette style typically performed by women)

[10] http://arielosterweis.com/publications/feature-articles/single-ladies-man/

before any public acknowledgement from Knight. How is "single ladies" recognizable as j-setting? While some parts of "single ladies" may have been reminiscent of the majorette style associated with dance lines at HBCUs, many Black gay men witnessed an appropriation of j-setting. While many people who are deeply aware of j-setting recognize its roots from the majorette style, the impossibility of Beyoncé performing as a majorette rather than a j-setter is a fascinating example of cultural appropriation. I would argue that Beyoncé's appropriation of j-setting illustrates an encounter between the mainstream Public with the counterpublic of j-setting. In this moment, j-setting is conquered by the Public. I intentionally capitalize the 'P' when referencing the mainstream public as an acknowledgment for its pursuit of a social totality, where it looks to conquer counterpublics that consist of alternative social discourses. The Public exists as a project that conquers narratives that question its dominance as essential and natural (Warner, 2002).

Subjugated knowledge, often situated within marginalized cultural contexts, subverts, challenges, and/or opposes dominant ways of being (Collins, 2001). This research helps theorize j-setting as an alternative form of knowledge involving (gay) men who deploy "non-masculine" gender presentations while performing. Dominant discourses not only overshadow alternative ways of knowing in an effort to delegitimize such ideas, but they often depend on the notion that such alternatives are a threat against its dominant force. We witness this with some j-setters claiming to be "pushed" to the side to maintain the masculine atmosphere of any particular space. Erasing or re-appropriating different ways of being exists as a major project to sustain dominant culture (hooks, 2004). Thus, oppositional knowledge(s) are always at risk of being conquered as the forces of dominant culture attempt to insert itself. Dominant culture's attempt to appropriate or simply erase "indigenous" ways of being and knowing makes remembering a

necessary process for oppositional politics. Embracing subjugated knowledge works as a conceptual tool for liberation, challenging multiple forms of dominance. Considering this reality, one may understand the significance of establishing a community as a political platform for "remembering." We see an example of Black and Latino queer community institutions through the establishment of ballroom competitions (Bailey, 2011). However, the visibility of marginalized culture may signal its vulnerability through cultural appropriation. While the use of j-setting in Public may represent an example of a liberatory pursuit for Black gay men, its vulnerability may also be signaled. J-setting is still radically unstable in that it has not been completely institutionalized. J-setting as a Black queer formation is still largely unfamiliar to the Public. The significance of Black queerness within j-setting is erased once it is made Public.

3 J-SETTING AND WORLDMAKING

This chapter theorizes how j-setting conjures up the existence of Black gay men by illustrating how it comes into being, and how it is both vulnerable and resilient within dominant culture. In "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" (1984), Audre Lorde speaks about how our deepest desires are erotic, and exist to make us feel our best selves. Engaging the erotic does not simply refer to what we do, but more fully explores a feeling of a heightened presence and sensation as we perform. This is what nourishes us as we step out to grapple with, and challenge, dominant culture. In "Poetry Is Not a Luxury," Lorde continues by claiming that naming the erotic, giving it life, occurs through poetry. This poetry represents a "safe-house for that difference so necessary to change and the conceptualization of any meaningful action" (1984: 37). Throughout this chapter, I use Lorde's understanding of desire to mean those erotic feelings and sensibilities that are often unintelligible in Public. Yet, at its best the erotic works as a liberatory pursuit when it engages the Public, not to be confused with the Public engaging (acting upon) it. This leads to a process of disidentification where the marginalized subject engaged with the erotic is not completely defined by Public discourse (Muñoz, 1999).

Thinking about the significance of our deep desires illustrates how/why j-setting exists, and what it is actually doing through its existence. What does it mean for j-setting to represent cultural work predominantly performed by Black gay men in the South? What does it mean for those who are not Black gay men to dance as j-setters? In *Dance and Sexuality: Many Moves,* Judith Hanna (2010) writes that "dance is purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, culturally patterned, nonverbal body movement communication in time and space, with effort, and each genre having its own criteria for excellence." What is important in her understanding of dance is that it is intentional and depends on temporal space. The notion of space regarding dance is

important when thinking about the significance of where such creative work occurs. My examination of j-setting is an attempt to understand it as cultural work that depends on "world-making", self-determination that exists outside of reactionary responses to dominating forms of oppression. World-making allows possibilities that reaffirm black queer sensibilities within a culture that depends on white-supremacist-heteropatriarchy. Those possibilities often take the form of a counterpublic, circulating as alternative discourse through literature, dance, music, institutions etc. I am imagining a counterpublic as a web consisting of multiple links and roads leading to an alternative discourse. These roads are often out of sight by the larger Public, hidden underground or deep in the forest where they are unintelligible. Counterpublics consist of a matrix of possibilities that allow marginalized folks to acquire freer subject positions. Is j-setting a counterpublic, or simply a part of a counterpublic? Is it possible for publics to consist of multiple counterpublics? Without highlighting such spaces it becomes impossible to fully imagine the experiences of marginalized folks, living and thriving beyond the dominant Public.

This project frames j-setting as a counterpublic (counterdiscourse), and offers some analysis of how it travels into the mainstream Public (Discourse). As mentioned earlier, I capitalize the 'p' in 'Public' to denote its pursuit of social totality, where it looks to conquer alternative social discourses. Writing this work on j-setting exists as a statement of political memory—a reminder of the dominant forces that cause(d) the creation and renewing of this cultural work. The impetus for this research stems from colonizing forces that still exist to appropriate the cultural, subversive work that roots j-setting. I think also discussing the ways in which indigenous work gets appropriated as it shifts into new spaces grounds an understanding of j-setting as a counterpublic. We are reminded that counterpublics are always sought after for corruption by the Public.

3.1 Thinking About Disidentification

When I see anyone performing, especially female majorettes, I get excited. I'd be up there as the captain if it were me… performing as if there are 12 people dancing behind me, with a band. Having the band and dancers behind us is what we want! But we're boys so we can't have that. J-setting gives me a rush and makes me continue what I'm doing.

–Kitty

Considering the testimonies of j-setters from the previous chapter, it's clear that many Black gay men have a deep affinity towards j-setting. Within a culture that endorses and demands gendered ways of being by limiting how men, women, and others exist through performance, we must discuss the different or queer sensibilities where j-setting becomes a possibility within the imagination of some Black gay men. Disidentification refers to how marginalized subjects rework the logics circulated in dominant culture to sustain new subject formations. While dominant culture strives to erase alternative discourses that may call into question its dominance, alternative ways-of-knowing slip through its domineering gaze (Muñoz, 1999). Within the context of the football field as a heteropatriarchal social space as explained in the previous chapter, boys take to the field in ways that are different than girls' relationship to it. Boys are to acquire more of an affinity to playing the field as football players and/or spectators, while also imagining their sexually exploitive possibilities over female majorettes and cheerleaders. However, this logic fails when considering men interested in participating as majorettes. Kitty explains that he gets excited, and often imagines himself as a majorette. While he may not choose to forgo entering the space of the football stadium, his narrative still exists as an example of the failure of heteronormativity as he disregards the call to embody dominant forms of masculinity. Kitty does not acquire the affinity for playing football, but he engages his desire to perform as a majorette. He does not choose to burn down the stadium in response to being withheld from participating in the dance-lines as a member of the squad; in fact, burning down the stadium disrupts his desire to witness the majorettes perform. Kitty and other men who

have the desire to "buck" have their desires fulfilled in the space of the football stadium. For example, they might mimic the majorette dancers in the Public space of the stadium. While this mimicking may at times exist through their imagination, as Kitty discusses above, it offers an awareness of other possibilities that allow their performance as male-majorettes. Those men interested in dancing in a style only allowed for women carry this desire with them. They take what they know and perform in spaces that allow their existence as j-setters, the boys who "buck."

While dominant masculinity seeks out male bodies with the demand that it is the only means of intelligibility, a queer sensibility calls its bluff and recognizes that such natural dominance is a myth. Dominant culture portrays itself through superior ways of maneuvering through it, while other ways of moving lead to struggle. However, alternative sensibilities—our deep desires—highlight routes that display the instabilities within dominant culture.

Before considering "j-setting" as a serious subject matter, I wondered how Black gay men were able to survive and thrive as themselves against a discourse that suggests otherwise. While the struggles of Black gay men within a white-supremacist-heteropatriarchal culture function in the everyday, there are subjugated spaces that have escaped the ordinary repression of Black gay men. As students within critical studies disciplines, we are often taught to destabilize the oppressive forces that construct particular subjectivities. However, the experiences of subjugated people are not solely (re)produced by dominant forms of oppression, nor do they always spark memories of a repressive history. If our goal is to unearth various forms of resistance as a strategy against dominant forms of oppression, we must grasp a more full understanding of resistance as a form of *living* that does not stem from repression, or that is not entirely defined by the challenge of oppression. As people who also exist through

marginalized subjectivities we are not simply defined through our oppression, and such claims help to perpetuate dominant systems of power that suggest otherwise. Our marginalized subject positions are simply a part of our experience. Many of us are familiar with the narratives within negro spirituals that African-American slaves used to "pass" the time when enduring intense slave labor; some of those narratives, for example, described routes traveling toward a freer North. It is said that the narratives of freedom within those songs often went unnoticed by White slave owners. But what often gets neglected are the musical rhythms and tones of negro spirituals as products that were not intentionally implicated within the narrative of emancipation; that was the magical *stuff* that survived the infliction of Whiteness through the enslavement and displacement of African people (Levine, 1977; Caponi, 1999).

This question of unnoticed discourses that are often liberatory is expanded upon by Patricia Hill Collins's (2000: 270) idea regarding subjugated knowledges--those experiences that miss the gaze of oppressive forces. Collins discusses the various ways in which the cultural work (i.e. music, poetry, storytelling, etc.) of Black women and other marginalized folks exist as indigenous strategies for their survival. We should also consider the way in which Audre Lorde (1984) elaborates on such sacred discourses by thinking about how "poetry" represents the practice of freedom, living in our deep desires that are unnamed until they are expressed and created as tangible entities. According to Lorde, "poetry" comes to life once true desires are created into words or actions in the face of our daily struggles; such desires are not solely defined by white-supremacist patriarchy, but still work as a challenge against that system of violence. While living within dominant culture, we often grapple with its daily struggles through ideas spawned by its ontological frameworks, which reaffirm its dominance as natural. Lorde is calling for us to use our own feelings as weaponry in destabilizing oppressive forces. We do not

only have to resist by adhering to standards that are implicated within dominant culture and our marginalization (i.e. formal education, the legislative process, *habeas corpus*, etc.), but through our own desires that will not make sense as resistance until deployed in the face of oppression. Kitty illustrates Lorde's demand of practicing freedom by imagining himself performing as a majorette when witnessing it performed by women. His ability to imagine himself in the full majorette effect provides a sense of excitement that for a moment allows him to forget that he is unable to participate, until he steps outside of the moment and back into his reality—the world of heteronormativity. Towards the end of the epigraph, Kitty speaks to what it means to step outside of his imagination when realizing the impossibility of being a majorette as a boy. Yet j-setting offers an alternative world— the possibility for him to more fully exist in his desire to perform in ways that are usually relegated to women. J-setting stems from the legacy of such desires. Those desires and spaces of possibility are kept deep within us, hidden from forces that seek their demise (Lorde, 1984). This partly answers why j-setting exists for Black gay men.

When I came home from college with my hair in dread-locs, a "natural" hair-style worn mostly among Black people, my mother asked me if I was taking a political stance in challenging racism. My reasoning for "locing" my hair was not intentionally political, but influenced by an aesthetic that I found appealing— I thought dread-locs were simply "cute." For my mother, she understood the significance of dread-locs as a form of oppositional representation to White supremacy. Growing up throughout the 70s, she witnessed Black oppositional representation through hair influenced by the Black Power Movement, which consisted of people wearing their hair in afros, braids, and other "natural" styles for Black folks. The Black Power Movement (re)affirmed the possibility of self-determination among Black people struggling under White supremacy (Kelley, 1996: 31-33). However, the appealing cultural aesthetic of "natural" hair is

desired by many who have natural hairstyles today, instead of intentionally presenting a political stance. From my experience, it is common for people of African descent to style their hair in locs for aesthetic purposes due to its cultural appropriation, the continuous circulation of locs as an image by and among Black people. Here, wearing locs does not simply represent political resistance, but a particular norm among Black folks which exists through the legacy of Black self-determination— worldmaking.

The aesthetic pleasures of musical tones and rhythms within negro spirituals, and the aesthetic pleasures of Black people's natural hair are inevitable additives to intentional forms of resistance. Such pleasures help to inspire social movements. While it is important to consume our desires as Lorde encourages, she also reminds us that the legacy of such work, of worldmaking, helps to replenish those desires. While counter-identification requires the privilege of creating a new world that attempts to make dominant culture inferior, disidentification allows marginalized subjects to shift accessible pieces of dominant culture in ways that reaffirm their lives, imagining the possibility of worldmaking in creating new lives that sustain their "dark" desires. Worldmaking brings to the surface those hidden sensibilities. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many young Black gay men encounter j-setting in night clubs, yet j-setting began with Black men who desired to perform in the heteronormative space of the football field; recognizing the limits of intruding into such space, they were pushed towards creating a renewed style of dance comparable to the majorettes, attracting others seeking the same desires. In this same vein, one might understand the existence of counterpublics as the legacy of worldmaking from marginalized subjects. This leads to an understanding of how j-setting is deeply indebted to an erotic power that calls it into being.

3.2 Counterpublics as Worldmaking Projects

Some gay people think j-setting is real gay because we're men, and they think it's a female thing.
–LaKendrick

We've had club promoters not allow j-setting, but allow voguing.
–Kitty

Black gay men try to imitate women because it's fun. While the goal of j-setting was to try being as feminine as possible, it has evolved to something else. Since it comes from the females, that is who we're trying to be…but we've made it our own.
–Dennis

We took it and created our own world.
–Kitty

Dennis' words remind me of how queer feelings often mean the failure of normative scripts of desire for men. The idea that men dancing in ways relegated to women can be fun is a disruption to the normativity of gender. And it is not simply fun as a spectacle for comedic relief, but fun in the ways that it provides leisurely freedom. He begins by explaining that while j-setting has roots in the traditional majorette style, male-majorettes have acquired that tradition while also developing it into j-setting, a style that is necessarily different from its roots, for the re-affirmation of its producers. This "fun" is turned into ritual to sustain itself—this is worldmaking, where play and fun turns into ritual. Robin Kelley (1997) refers to this work as play-labor, where it is common for marginalized folks to turn their desires into economic, but cultural survival strategies. We can think of young Black girls who have fun with creating new hair styles on their dolls and with each other, even considering the systematic ways in which Black women are read as embodying inferior beauty standards; this play labor has led to the cultural re-affirmation of Black women's beauty and the entrepreneurship of Black women in the beauty salon business (Wingfield, 2008).

But how is j-setting a possibility for renewed affirmation within a normalizing culture that exists through forces that police the possibility of subverting gender norms? How is acting

in ways that some consider womanly, thus deviant, fun? Within this context, concerning male bodies striving to "be" or exist in ways that are assigned to women's bodies, those interpellating forces are mediated by the normative logic of gender in an attempt to create women, men, and those who fail at being intelligible as women and men (we might call the failing subject queer). In other words, while the gender system exists for us to identify women and men, it also works as a juridical force that "clocks" those who fail at (re)producing required gender behavior (Butler, 1990). Here we shift from questioning the "clockable" subject who is perceived as embodying such failure, and problematize the juridical force of gender. This ability to "call out," or threaten dominant culture comes from the way in which marginalized subjects are already constituted as a threat. We already live in a culture that imagines and fears men who believe that it is fun and acceptable to "play" as feminine beings, thus it becomes a real possibility for those men who have such desires.

As Dennis notes, men interested in the majorette style have the desire to mimic women, but they exist within a culture that marks such desires as impossible, deviant, and unnatural. Yet they do not feel unnatural in their pursuit to j-sette. As men read as appropriating the expressions of women, challenging arguments of natural gender expressions, there is also a desire by some j-setters to not solely identify with majorette dance-lines comprised of women. J-setters have made "it" their own.

Creating their own dance style is a modality for sustaining an oppositional subject position, a space that nurtures their own desires. This is a world-making project. Let me be clear that worldmaking helps to nurture and sustain queer sensibilities that stem from disidentification. Worldmaking replenishes alternative discourses for marginalized subjects, creating roads that lead to new possibilities to thrive. Worldmaking offers instructions on

keeping roads clean and refurbished, and creating new guides for more efficient roads to establish an entire web of roads, a new public. Through my interviews with j-setters, it seems that the liberatory worldmaking project of j-setting is disrupted when it is in the view of the Public in one particular way— when intervened by the assimilating Black queer subject. Nevertheless, worldmaking projects are temporal modalities for creating and nurturing oppositional discourse. Here, we should also elaborate on the possibility of loss when one is solely rooted in oppositional discourse, those desires that "talk back" to normative ways of being instead of quietly obliging. We can imagine the vulnerabilities of oppositional discourse through a metaphorical house. The "house" was built with the intention of safeguarding marginalized subjects from the "natural" elements outside. Yet, the natural elements are consistently weathering the house, making it more vulnerable to collapse. If the house is not properly maintained both inside and outside, it may collapse on the subjects it was created to protect. Neglecting to maintain this "safe house" contradicts the project of worldmaking. One cannot simply stay in the house without stepping out into the elements outside to see what needs to be repaired. The house is not eternal, but a temporal modality for nurturing oppositional subject positions. Staying solely rooted in the house, an oppositional desire, coincides with a project of normalization, where such desire is understood as an eternal product.

While it is possible that the desires of marginalized subjects may slip pass the gaze of dominant social forces, this is not always true. Dominant logics often seek out and undermine queer sensibilities; queer sensibilities are often created by systems that exist to police and destroy them. Thus, dominant logics and queer sensibilities are often aware of each other. It is necessary to remember here that both dominant subjects and marginalized subjects may adhere to dominant logics. When invested in normativity we miss liberatory ideas that are unintelligible

because we are solely invested in the Public. We neglect to see the possibilities of freedom within *the* queer, and instead witness deviant ways of being that demand our attention (dominant subjects), or stimuli that mark us as vulnerable (marginalized subjects). This demand puts forth conditions that require us to give it space—requiring that we share or give up the space that we have claimed as our own property (dominant subjects), or the space that we believe in defending for our own safety (marginalized subjects).

Within dominant culture, queer sensibilities lead to discourses that offer different stories of how we (those invested in dominant culture) have acquired our relationship to such "property," displacing narratives of inherent authority figures and ownership. I should also add that the conditions deployed by queer sensibilities are always shifting as new subject formations are created by the dominant discourse in question. While male majorettes exist, they do not intervene entirely by creating space on the field to perform, they develop "j-setting" which makes sense somewhere else, in a different space. J-setters might engage with majorettes within the space of the football stadium as spectators or choreographers, but not as majorettes themselves.[11] Acting on disidentification does not always work as a liberatory strategy for every social forum. Dominant culture demands that folks invested in different sensibilities for their own survival already know their marginalized status, even before dominant culture "clocks" their queer sensibilities as a threat. Queer and vulnerable subjects know that it costs to deploy sensibilities read as deviant, particularly because they themselves were constructed within dominant culture and given lessons on the consequences of deviance. Thus, disidentification is not always sufficient for the survival of marginalized subjects when negotiating the public space

[11] During an interview for this research, LaKendrick explains that while living in Mississippi, it was not uncommon to witness male-majorettes dancing with majorette squads consisting largely of women. However, considering the other interviewees within this research, it seems that male-majorettes within traditional squads is still quite uncommon throughout the South.

of dominant culture in which they are implicated (Muñoz, 1999). This remains true until the vulnerable subject has access to a road that leads to a different possibility. For example, while rarely performing on the football field which is read as heteronormative space, j-setters (typically Black gay men) have largely found it necessary to perform in Black gay clubs. For most j-setters, the existence of Black gay clubs helps sustain j-setting. Yet, even within such spaces, there is still the potential for repressing j-setting.

Considering the quotes above, it seems that marginalized spaces have the potential to (re)produce normative standards. We are often reminded that marginalized folks, as subjects constructed within dominant culture, have the potential to assimilate by supporting the gains of dominant culture. Deviant subjects are produced through normative logics, making it possible to mark those who fail to adhere to the norms in question. Thus, marginalized spaces may not be exempt from (re)creating deviant subject formations. Witnessing j-setting within Black gay clubs that adopt the logic of a dominant public space may still allow us to imagine how disidentification works within already marginalized spaces. How does j-setting as a worldmaking strategy affect Black gay clubs that represent hetero/homonormative spaces?

Both Kitty and LaKendrick speak about the ways in which j-setters receive backlash from those invested in respectable presentations of Black gay men. Here, they articulate how j-setters exist as marginal subjects within an already marginalized group. All of the j-setters that I interviewed for this research agree that the dance floor at Black gay clubs represents a space that allows the possibility of j-setting. Within some Black gay clubs, j-setting gets “clocked” as queer, which is to mean that it is too gay. The struggle for homonormativity rejects feminine/queer expressions for male bodies (Warner & Berlant, 2002). As I mentioned earlier, queer expressions often represent a reminder of feeling unsafe. The gay man who acts “gay”

attracts homo/queerphobic violence, and attracts violence to the entire gay community because he is seen to represent us all. His embodied expression of a queer gay is a reminder that he is the cause for attracting the suppression of gay men. His queer way of being incites an aversion among many homonormative gay men (Warner & Berlant, 2002). Since j-setting often consists of men embodying "feminine" expressions, the dance-style is often rejected by those invested in (homo)normative ways of being. The authority figures who police the possibilities of j-setting are often other Black gay men. Some Black gay men (as marginalized subjects) uphold a politics of respectability that demands the erasure of queerness, or at least keeping it out of Public. Embracing a politics of respectability keeps minoritarian subjects in a fictive state of safety from dominant systems of power; it requires adhering to normative ways of being. This process requires that we hide subversive ways of being, a strategy of survival for Black *gay* men looking to challenge ideas that they are innately feminine; inferior; abnormal; nonhuman (White, 2001: 31-2). The *labor* of respectability involves a process of policing that is ongoing— a performative effort that is never complete considering the impossibility for marginalized subjects to fully embody a dominant subject position in Public. The assimilating marginalized subject constantly obsesses over passing as the dominant subject. The impossibility of fully acquiring a dominant subject position helps sustain a fictive state of safety. This labor produces a fictive product of safety because it is never predicated on the full ownership and liberation of the marginalized subject, but simply reinforces the anxiety involved in policing threats to the dominant Public.

LaKendrick reminds us that folks reject j-setting not because it is gay, but because it is *too* gay; j-setting represents something read as *real* gay instead of a watered down form of expression that allows the safety and protection of homonormativity. Here, the Black gay club is

a reflection of the Public. As j-setters are often pushed to the side of night clubs to limit the amount of space that they hold (Lee, 2008), Kitty reminds us that they are often withheld from performing at all. He states further that he has experienced club promoters allow voguing as opposed to the less familiar j-setting. These are reminders of the ways in which j-setting gets conquered and read as unfamiliar cultural work when performed in Public. Yet, j-setters continue performing mostly in Black gay clubs, suggesting that they cannot afford to simply disengage with this reflective configuration of the Public, or that there are some Black gay clubs that make space for j-setting. This moment reminds us that world-making strategies include terms that re-work spaces that may come to represent the Public in an attempt to make a space for j-setting.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Black gay clubs often exist as sanctuaries for the celebration of Black queer folks. While Black gay clubs provide sacred space for Black queer folks, it still exists within the larger Public, possibly attracting those subjects (both dominant and marginal) invested in dominant culture. Black gay clubs often provide space to those who do not have access to Public space, which often takes the form of private property. The Public is held for the ownership of dominant subjects, it is clear that Black queer folks are policed less in Black gay clubs than other Public spaces. If the larger Public overtly creates and polices racialized queer subjectivities, then j-setters must depend on Black gay clubs. However, during our interview session, LaKendrick makes very clear that j-setters do not only perform in clubs. Sometimes they are able to perform large competitions in hotel ballrooms. One might immediately assume that hotel ballrooms helps constitute images of elite subject formations; however, we are reminded that marginalized folks often re-work (discursive) spaces to make them accessible.

The way in which j-setting exists stems from the process of worldmaking — Black gay men embracing deep desires for a style of dance that is considered feminine; sharing those desires with others; creating ideas for developing concrete entities to hold their "deviant" desires. J-setting is not the only example of Black queer folks creating culture that affirms their desires. As j-setting provides space that allows participants some freedom when dancing in a style that is often feminized, the house/ballroom scene also represents space that legitimizes gender "switching"— whereby participants practice to perform in different gender categories that often helps them mimic the ideal gender in public (outside of ballroom). In responding to the New York ballroom scene made Public through Jenny Livingston's film, *Paris is Burning* (1990), Judith Butler warns about being stuck within the fictive safety offered by ritual play. While re-working the interpellating forces that constitute us as Black queer deviants into a more nurturing subject position, we cannot get stuck within the newly established subject position. We still have to be conscious of the potential for new oppressive forces; with new subversive ways of being, come new ways of policing. Ritual play depends on temporal space, as it exists for a particular time and place that is not eternal. This does not imply that the Black queer cultural work of ballroom or j-setting are better sustained without an institutional home, but that the sustainability of such cultural work exists through its flexibility as well. J-setters and ballroom community members often have the ability to pick-up and move when under threat, the ability to compress and expand when impeded by Public forces.

In the film, Venus Xtravaganza is a pre-operative transsexual who, outside of competing in drag balls, works as a prostitute. Throughout the film, we witness her discuss desires of becoming a "real" woman so that she attracts a wealthy man, her future solidified with an image of her in a white wedding dress (*Paris Is Burning,* 1990). Venus Xtravaganza's desire for the

elite heterosexual life depends on her ability to pass as an elite, light skinned woman—this particular gender performativity would lead to a life of racial and class privilege and safety. Butler suggests that the fictive notions put forth regarding femininity on the part of Venus Xtravaganza leads to her death. She was eventually murdered by a male client who was disturbed by her (trans)sexual body. For Venus Xtravaganza, the labor of presenting "real" elite white womanhood displaced, for her, the everyday reality of violence against queer folks, women, and people of color (Butler, 1997). Yet we must remember that those invested in a counterpublic, such as the ballroom scene, are necessarily aware of their marginalized status because they cannot afford to forget about it. Many Black and Latino gay men and trans-women are subjected to racist gendered homophobic misogynist violence. While they are repressed in the larger Public as racialized sexual and gender deviants, they are sacred within ballroom culture. This bit of affirmation allows queer folks of color the *energy* needed when traveling away from the ballroom scene, and back into the Public. But there is danger in being overdetermined as sacred, where we forget about the violence that our bodies attract when on Public display. It seems that Venus Xtravaganza neglected to believe in the limitations of her sacredness—it is unintelligible in Public.

When solely and completely rooted in the fictive safety of ritual play, the simultaneous feeling of freedom still has the potential to be disrupted by the social reality of normative policing. Let us remember the earlier discussion of the metaphorical "safe house." While the house exists for a form of ritual play that reaffirms us, one must also remember the possibility of weathering that deteriorates the house. The infrastructure of the house and its vulnerability to outside forces that seek its demise must always be taken into consideration. This is not simply a call to "not forget where you come from," but to also stay mindful of the work that is required

for intelligibility, how you came into existence. Here, we should consider the politics of memory—staying conscience of the dominant oppressive forces that cause us to build houses for our own desires and survival; yet as (marginalized) subjects constituted within dominant culture (often working for and defending its power) who build these sacred spaces, there is potential for corruption within (Alexander, 2005).

This section attempts to think about how engaging with desires that exist to subvert normative tropes offers a sense of self-determination, free from experiencing yourself and others solely through controlling images. It becomes necessary to recognize the continuity that is demanded for worldmaking. Kitty states that "we had to create our own world," but this begs the question of whether we are always having to create our own worlds—that the process of worldmaking does not begin with a concrete ending point. Counterpublics are created through the precarious process of world-making. The reality of j-setters experiencing repression from more "respectable" Black gay men suggests that "safe" spaces are temporary, that there must be continuous work on creating space and re-signifying dominant tropes as a means for the sustainability of j-setting. This requires the renewing strategy of worldmaking—creating new language, spaces, ideas, that sustains our desires over colonizing forces. But what happens when j-setters themselves invest in normative logics that might disrupt the subversive resistance that brought it to life? Another question in this section focuses on getting stuck in fictive notions about our desires that prevent us from remembering how to grapple with dominant forces. This is a reminder that when embracing our "deviant" desires it allows us to stay affirmed within a culture that hates us, but it does not remove new formations of dominant culture from the cosmos.

4 WHO IS STEALING OUR COINS? APPROPRIATING BLACK QUEER CULTURE IN PUBLIC

I want the world to see what we can do, but I do not want us to be stereotyped.
– Tim (aka Sincere) (aka Tammy)

I think it would be widely accepted. When people see it, they will just see it as talent rather than gay boys acting gay. I think they will respect it. We are doing things that a lot of people would not be able to do.
–Dennis

It is another form of dance…
–LaKendrick

"J-setting in Public" illustrates the ways in which j-setting operates as a (counter)public and offers some analysis of how it shifts when captured by the mainstream Public (discourse). In this section, I elaborate on how j-setting exists not simply as a public, but a counterpublic. Michael Warner defines a counterpublic as follows:

> "…a counterpublic maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status. The cultural horizon against which it marks itself is not just a general or wider public but a dominant one. And the conflict extends not just to ideas or policy questions but to the speech genres and modes of address that constitute the public or to the hierarchy among media. The discourse that constitutes it is not merely a different or alternative idiom but one that in other contexts would be regarded with hostility or with a sense of indecorousness" (2002: 119).

This project suggests that j-setting works as a counterpublic considering that it offers a discourse that allows new racial, gender, and sexual possibilities for Black gay men. The manifestation of j-setting began with imagining Black men dancing in ways relegated to women's bodies. It also provides space for Black gay men to live in celebration through the U.S. South, against a narrative that imagines the South as a dangerous region for Black and queer people. With j-setting Black gay are unapologetically sexual against narrative that demonize because of our sexual pursuits.

Dennis' comment allows us to imagine the possibility of Black gay men and our cultural work being respected in Public. It seems that j-setting has re-worked the dominant narrative of Black gay men as dangerous intruders, to subjects deserving of respect considering the genius of our cultural work. Why wouldn't we acquire such a regard? During my interview with Tim, he

seemed to articulate exactly what it means for j-setting to persist as a counterpublic. While he would like to see j-setting spread for others to enjoy, he does not want its circulation to exploit the Black gay men and our cultural work. This moment reminds me that j-setting carries something magical that needs to be shared with others. Maybe it is the use of "explosive" dance-moves in confined spaces, a strategy for keeping our bones warm considering the stiffening space produced by White-supremacist hetero-patriarchy. Tim also mentions that he does not want Black gay men to be stereotyped within j-setting. J-setting must be deployed on our own terms, without being defined as a standard image of Black gay men via Public discourse. Tim's concern about the possibility of exploitation suggests that he is aware of the subordinate position in which Black gay men are situated within Public discourse. It is a recognition of a history of exploitation of marginalized folks when they share their cultural work with mainstream cultures. There is the possibility of losing the sacred. (Counter)Publics survive by encountering new discursive formations (Warner, 2002). How can j-setting maintain its sacred qualities while looking to sustain itself through encountering other discourses?

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I paid a visit to a j-sette practice session while fulfilling the participant observation portion of my research. During our interview session for this project, LaKendrick mentioned that he and his teammates often practice in small spaces, such as his living room, which is not typically imagined as a conducive space when training as a dancer. In one moment during rehearsals LaKendrick asked the other team members to make a particular count more "cunt." Along with the other dance members, I immediately understood what was being asked—to perform the count with a more feminine aesthetic. With this in mind, it is clear that "cunt" is a part of a vernacular that the j-setters in the space are familiar with; but the term has a different meaning than its sexist/homophobic roots intended. While within a

heteropatriarchal culture, the intention is to throw the word "cunt" out at a gendered subject read as inferior, these j-setters in this time and space have used it as a term that describes a feminine stylistic form that is desired. Deploying "cunt" in the way in which it is described above challenges the sexist and homophobic politics from which it emergers. When women are ridiculed with the term cunt, it is fuelled with sexist objectification. Similarly, when "cunt" is targeted at men it is to suggest not simply his inferiority, but the ways in which he embodies the subordinate status of a woman. Yet the example above, where cunt is redefined as an idealized form of femininity within the context of j-setting, illustrates an example of Black gay men's worldmaking agency. We have re-worked a term that symbolically represents our inferiority within hetero-patriarchal culture. But this re-working is given more possibilities within the context of j-setting, describing a desired feminine aesthetic. This is the world of j-setting that I am familiar with. Like j-setting itself, there are plenty of examples of Black gay men re-working discourse that emerges from their presumed inferior status.

It seems inevitable that the sacred qualities that Black gay men witness within j-setting shift when encountering other discourses. This does not mean that j-setting cannot be recognized as such, or have (new) sacred qualities. But it will be seen differently as a new form of j-setting as it develops when engaging new bodies, spaces, styles, etc. This is certainly true when I think about my first reaction seeing the YouTube video mentioned earlier where j-setters, Donte Beacham and Kendrick Robinson, give an instructive workshop to a predominantly White group in Philadelphia about j-setting as a dance form. I was not entirely "moved" as I usually am when watching j-setting among Black gay men in Atlanta. I was captured first by j-setting in the South, on Black gay male bodies. But j-setting as a (counter)public does not solely depend on my support — it must travel, grow, and shift in ways that capture the attention of others.

J-setting as an opposition to normative gender performance for men, shifts from a liberatory pursuit solely for Black gay men when encountering new discursive formations. How does j-setting change when presented in relation to the discursive space of the Public? What is that 'thing' that makes it recognizable, and what is the 'terrain' that it travels to become recognizable in a different space? In *Metaculture: How Culture Moves through the World* (2001), Greg Urban is useful when thinking about culture as discourse on the move-- "The interpretation of culture that is intrinsic to meta-culture, immaterial as it is, focuses attention on the cultural thing, helps to make it an object of interest, and, hence, facilitates its circulation" (3). This may explain how people recognized the appropriation of j-setting in Beyoncé's music video, "single ladies." Without Beyoncé giving a public announcement recognizing that she uses j-setting in her choreography, other j-setters "clocked" it based on the meta-cultural qualities that define j-setting. In other words, there were particular movements and/or routines that are often associated with j-setting among those closely familiar with the dance-style. In this moment, j-setting was recognized in the space of the Public—performed on television for a Public audience and through the Public figure of Beyoncé. The public statement of the choreographer JaQuel Knight further codified it.

Counterpublics exist within the larger Public, but often go unnoticed until the larger Public wields its spotlight into the dark. The Public's light seeks to capture the unseen and claim it as its own to maintain superiority. Audre Lorde suggests that the sharing of our erotic desires should be on our own terms (1984). My reservations of sharing j-setting stems from the possibility of j-setters losing the control of the sacredness within j-setting. This would not be the first time Black queer cultural work gets stolen--

"Madonna mimics black and latino gay culture and translates it into a million-dollar stage act; her performances are an attempt to originate the forms she has appropriated. This is the process by which some

performances are given the weight and authority of reality while others are relegated to shadows and imitations" (Halberstam & Livingston, 1995: 4).

The "subjects" of dominant culture often attempt to conquer ways of being that are nurtured at "the margin." Thus, it should not seem too surprising that pop-singer, Madonna found the dance-style of voguing in gay clubs as means for cultural appropriation. Artists such as Beyoncé often look for performance styles displayed by Others that have not been captured in the mainstream public. The process of cultural appropriation shifts the knowledge of the creative source from "indigenous" (Black/Latino queer people) to the "dominant" culture (White upper-class). Madonna's video for Vogue suggests a dance style created by White upper-class clubbers; however, Jenny Livingston's *Paris is Burning* gives credit to Black/Latino queer balls for the creation of voguing (Halberstam & Livingston, 1995). This act of acknowledging *Paris is Burning* counter to the music video "Vogue" represents a form of political memory; it reminds us of the "source" of vogue which offers a sense of worthiness to working-class queer folks of color.

The idea of culture, like a public, circulating through time and space as an entity that is immaterial, and often moving between bodies and other objects suggests culture as an affective force. Members of a (counter)public must be able to *witness* its discourse (not simply see it) and act on it. One can only act upon the discursive knowledge of a (counter)public by engaging other discursive materials, people, bodies, texts, ideas, buildings, etc. J-setting literally enacts wsorldmaking through movement; it is, as Greg Urban puts it, "the stuff moving through space and time [that] is an abstract form or mold for the production of something material — a story that happens to be lodged in audible sound, the abstract and reproducible outline of a gesture that happens to be incarnated in physical movements." When j-setters are able to move into other

discursive territories, it offers them new possibilities — more space for even more explosive dance-moves that counter the confined space of the Public sphere.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questions

The following consists of questions that will help guide my interviews. I have tied them to my research questions to put them in context with the research. Some of the interview questions may easily speak to both major research questions.

Research Question-- *What is j-setting doing?* Does j-setting encompass an alternative discourse for gender performance/performativity that challenges dominant masculinity/femininity? Why does j-setting exist? Where does it come from?

1.) Why does j-setting exist? Where does it come from?

2.) How does j-setting make you feel when you are performing OR watching it?

3.) Explain how j-setting engages gender performance? Is it feminine?

4.) How does the ritual of j-setting translate into everyday experiences? What does it allow you to do when you are not in the space of j-setting?

5.) Is there ever an attempt by others to repress j-setting because of its ties to femininity?

Research Question— *How does j-setting come into being?* Does j-setting exist as a space/forum (counterpublic) for an alternative gender performance? In other words, how is j-setting sustained? What are the various rituals and spaces that help define j-setting, and how significant are they? Who are the people that typically perform and "show up" to j-setting competitions?

1. How did you encounter j-setting? Where and when?

2. Are you involved in j-setting as a spectator, fellow dancer, or both? What does it do for you in that moment?

3. Who do you typically see at j-setting competitions? How important is it that they continue coming?

4. Are Black gay youth primarily involved with j-setting? Why?

5. Is j-setting mostly popular in the South? Why?

6. Describe the various rituals and dance techniques that are important within j-setting.

7. What do you think about viewing “j-setting” in the mainstream public?