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Abstract This article critically examines the interface of gender, sex and identity within the context of bathroom facilities in a South African gay club. The *public* features and behaviors are contrasted with the bathrooms' *private* and abstract zones in terms of sexualized spaces and activities. The club's bathrooms function as spatial and physical discourses in which gender stability – with reference to masculine or feminine bodily inscriptions – is questioned. The bathrooms are understood as sites of parody practices in which dissonance between sex, gender and identity is made manifest.

Keywords bathrooms, masculinities, performative, queer identities, sexual identities

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Introduction

Informed by current theoretical underpinnings of performative gender identities (masculine, queer and sexual) in public geographical spaces, this article examines public bathroom usage by gay men at a South African gay nightclub. The study is concerned with the ways in which gay identities are performed, constituted and configured in a particular setting (public bathrooms) where sexual scripts are not merely *sexual* but also *political* in the affirmation of self, personality, body politics and identities. We conclude that flexible geographical spaces allow gay men to express various aspects of contra 'straight-cultural production and reception' (Jagose, 1996: 97).

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Performative gender identities

Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990: 136) radically departs from the commonly held view of the body as a passive medium and recipient of sex by viewing gender as a 'fabrication' and 'fantasy'; and suggests that 'genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity'.

As fluid entities identities tell us about experiences, beliefs, personal histories, cultural assumptions and values in relation to discursive systems. Identities are, following Hall (1995: 65), not essences but rather 'processes that constitute and continuously reform the subject who has to act and speak in the social and cultural world'.

Genders are produced and bodies become sexed within a heterosexist discourse invested with the idea of natural or essential sex. Gender unity, according to Butler, arises from the effect of a 'regulatory practice that seeks to render gender identity uniform through a compulsory heterosexuality' (1990: 31). This regulatory practice works through 'an exclusionary apparatus of production' (Butler, 1990: 31) and power regimes such as heterosexism and phallogocentrism constantly seek to augment themselves via naturalized ontologies. Heterosexism is ideologically invested and presents itself as normal and natural. Instead of naturalizing same-sex desire, the 'usual strategy' (Jagose, 1996: 84) of gay and lesbian movements, Butler challenges gender as a category by arguing that any commitment to gender identity works 'ultimately against the legitimation of homosexual subjects' (Jagose, 1996: 84). Underscoring a specific link between gender and sexuality, Butler (1999: xii) states: 'I do not mean to claim that forms of sexual practice produce certain genders, but only that under conditions of normative heterosexuality, policing gender is sometimes used as a way of securing heterosexuality'.

Butler (1990: 33) refigures gender as a cultural fiction, a performative effect of reiterative acts, as 'the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being'. She illustrates that the commonly understood notion of an internal essence of gender is manufactured 'through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body' (1990: xv). She asserts that gender is not a state of *being*, but instead, it is a process of *doing*, and it only truly exists in its various manifestations: 'There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (1990: 25). Further, she emphasizes that performativity does not dispense with social construction, but is rather an improvement, showing the limits of the former. Elsewhere, Reddy (2004: 116) writes that

'identities are not made in a single moment in time' but they are 'dynamic and historical' and are 'supported and articulated' by social norms. More importantly, '. . . it is always in the context of a certain constellation of social power that I am able to pose the question of my own becoming differently. Through what constellations of social discourse and power was I brought into the world?'

Drawing on Foucault's work, Butler refers to the epistemological and political difficulties arising from traditional notions of 'male' and 'female' bodies, asserting that gender norms sediment into cultural expressions of 'natural sex', 'real woman', or into any other 'compelling social fictions' (Butler 1990: 140). Corporeal styles are produced over time and are interpreted as 'the natural configuration of bodies into sexes existing in a binary relationship to one another' (1990: 140). For Butler, there is no pre-existing identity, and any attempts to suggest a true gender identity should be revealed as 'regulatory fiction(s)' (1990: 141). Bodily gestures and movements mundanely constitute the 'illusion of an abiding gendered self' (1990: 140). Butler posits that gender categories, as well as other typical descriptive labels pertaining to race or sexual orientation, are ongoing discursive practices which are 'open to invention and resignification' (1990: 53).

Utilizing Butler's consideration of parody practices that can serve to 're-engage and re-consolidate the very distinction between a privileged and naturalized gender configuration' (1990: 146), we posit that the 'unconventional' bathroom usage by gay men at Axis Club destabilizes gender norms. Those male patrons who make use of the 'female' bathrooms challenge implicit and explicit requirements that state that 'men' can only use 'men's' bathrooms and that 'female' bathrooms are for 'women' only. This corroborates Butler's belief that the loss of gender norms destabilizes substantive identity and deprives the naturalizing narratives of 'compulsory heterosexuality of their central protagonists: "man" and "woman"' (1990: 146). When Axis's gay male patrons use the 'female' bathrooms in order to satisfy a variety of needs (described later), they seem to expose 'the illusion of gender identity as an intractable depth and inner substance' (1990: 146). Similar to how drag deliberately 'plays upon the distinction of the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed' (1990: 137), so too do the gay men who use Axis's 'female' bathrooms – the anatomy of the individual using the 'female' bathrooms (the presence of a penis) and the implicit anatomical requirements of the 'female' bathrooms (the presence of a vagina and the absence of a penis) – 'suggest a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance' (1990: 137).

Masculine identities

The terms 'male and female' suggest anatomical, or more primarily, genital difference and are gendered terms portraying behavioral and experiential differences (Buchbinder, 1994: 3). Sexual differences are never ideologically neutral, they are equally invested with social, medical and hegemonic notions that the physical body is not a *tabula rasa* on which sexual, and by extension, gender identity, gradually manifest themselves (1994: 3). Buchbinder (1994: 21) comments on the socio-political effects of the gay movement, stating that it raised questions regarding dominant notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity', which forces people to slot into either/or categories of male/female, heterosexual/homosexual and so on (1994: 21). Heterosexuality calls into existence a man who actively penetrates a woman. The gay male challenges this irreducible fact in that he may sometimes allow his body to be penetrated by another man, and he thereby 'permits that which the discourse of masculinity absolutely forbids – the disruption of the integrity and inviolability of the male body – and so challenges the authority and the power of that discourse' (Buchbinder, 1994: 60).

Male homosexuality challenges dominant discourses of masculinity (Buchbinder, 1994: 64) – if masculinity is a manifest attribute of those in the semantic and biological category of 'male', then male homosexuals, by virtue of also being biologically 'male', are also part of the larger system of masculinity.

The potential for destroying the binding link traditionally held between masculinity and heterosexuality is made apparent when physical bodies disengage from imposed gender requirements. In this instance, male homosexuality would no longer be defined as manufacturing that apparent paradox of a non- (traditionally) masculine yet male subject (Buchbinder, 1994: 86). This is echoed by Glover and Kaplan (2000: 84) who refer to the 'gradual unraveling of any simplistic divide between 'gay' and 'straight', part of a wider recognition that the relation between 'sex' and 'gender' is much more fluid than the division between 'nature' and 'culture' with which these terms are sometimes confused'.

At the Axis Club the bathrooms themselves bear no outward physical indication (in terms of signage) that they are gender divided. The use of Axis's bathrooms is indeed, not gender-rule bound, but governed according to individual social needs, including the need for social interaction, drug-related activities as well as for sexual encounters.

Queer identities

For queer theory the key issues are the question of a commitment to and critique of power, and of the way in which such power represents the queer

subject within discourse. The field suggests that the homosexual experience is central to the moral, textual and political economies of modernity (see for example, Hewitt, 1996). For us, queer theory signals a 'queer turn' in feminism and gender studies in that the object of inquiry is not just the homosexual *per se*, but also the homosexual as a subject in relation to the fissures of identity (such as race, ethnicity, culture, class, sex) – identity itself often being used as a reason for censoring heterocentric critical practice. Queer theory therefore, decolonizes heteronormative assumptions of homosexuality.

Queer theorists view queer identities as oppositional and resistant, implying that representations disclose the queer subject as dissident in that 'queer' troubles the hetero/homo binary in the heterosexual matrix. 'Queer' is used in our project to suggest a self-chosen alignment with two recognizable meanings: the pathological and the possibility of resistance to pathological derivations. 'Queer', therefore, signals an active force that motivates and asserts gay and lesbian identity by challenging compulsory heterosexuality. 'Queer' denotes 'a relation of resistance to whatever constitutes the normal' (Jagose, 1996: 99). In this essay, we purposely emphasize the latter to make apparent certain behaviors which both consciously and sub-consciously, violate predominantly heterosexist, phallogocentric and patriarchal 'bathroom norms'.

This article is underpinned by an understanding of identity as being linguistically and ontologically incapable of expressing complex human behaviors. 'Queer' (Jagose, 1996: 96) is fundamentally indeterminate, 'always ambiguous, always relational', but its use is 'widely perceived as calling into question conventional understandings of sexual identity by deconstructing the categories, oppositions and equations that sustain them' (1996: 97).

Suggesting an important link with Butler's performativity, queer is characterized by denaturalization and deconstruction, and demonstrates that sexuality is a 'discursive effect' (Jagose, 1996: 98). This research foregrounds 'queer' as it disrupts unmarked theories of identity, community and politics; and challenges normative assumptions of sex, gender and sexuality (Jagose, 1996: 99).

Sexual identities in public geographical spaces

Our research suggests that at the Axis Club, private sex was sometimes made public, and was characterized by both spectator and participator emotional ambivalence. The Axis's bathrooms were actively created public spaces, to some extent by the patrons to allow for 'safe', non-policed, sites of active sexuality. Weeks (1991: 108) refers to the explosion of 'public sex' amongst gay men in the 1970s, in 'bath houses, backroom bars and

public cruising areas where casual, recreational sex with multiple partners became the norm' (1991: 108; see also Gove, 2001; Mumford, 1997). These homoerotic (and sexualized) spaces of principally gay male sub-cultures, while directed to pleasure, are also imbued with politicized meanings as spaces of identity.

Recognition of the socio-political construction of homosexuality focuses on ideas about spaces of identity and resistance for gay men and women (see Greenberg, 1990; Riggle and Tadlock, 1999; Rimmerman et al., 2000). David Woodhead (1995: 238) alludes to some male homosexual public sexual spaces: 'bars, clubs, cafés, community centres . . . parks, heaths, car parks, beaches, public toilets, saunas and sex shops'. Identity is formulated (and negotiated) through recognition of that which is supposedly other, including that which is other in terms of space (see for example, Keith and Pile, 1993). It is therefore also possible to view 'space', following Soja (1996: 1) as an interpretative thread of a discursive modality underpinned by continual change in terms of ideas, events, and meaning, where related markers of place, location, landscape, environment, home, city, region, areas and geography coalesce.

These gay public spaces, sometimes inaccessible to heterosexuals, are not viewed with equanimity by all gay people and they are often the site of heterosexual policing and criminalization. The latter does not refer to Axis's bathrooms, which, for certain patrons, are a forum for sexual expression and experience. Woodhead (1995: 239) suggests that having sexual encounters in a bathroom cubicle entails a locking out of the outside world, as well as a constant reminder of the potential for 'locking up' or imprisonment. The bathroom cubicle is never entirely private, but is situated within a public macrocosm, and is always, to some extent, open to the rest of the public world. The 'private' and 'public' belie a particular structural and hierarchical power dynamic (see Chartier, 1989). The 'private' signifies the individual, the personal, confidentiality and secrecy and could be defined as that which is to be set apart from the 'public'. The 'public', viewed as a privileged signifier, is marked by notions of visibility and exposure, unconcealed from 'privacy'. The private-public bathroom usage by gay male patrons at Axis discloses a range of meanings: that which is seen/unseen, known/unknown, secrecy/disclosure, knowledge/ignorance, active/passive, innocence/initiation and so on (see for example, Collins, 1990; Hearn, 1992).

Fieldwork

Data for the study was conducted by Sonia at a gay nightclub that caters for both men and women in the greater Durban metropolitan area, the Axis Club. The club has been open for approximately seven years, and

prior to its opening, it served as a popular straight nightclub frequented almost exclusively by Durban's Indian youth. It is situated in an area populated by low-income housing, several sex-shops, escort agencies, late-night food establishments and by many local and refugee drug lords.

In the first stage of data collection we distributed brief and easy to understand questionnaires to the male patrons of the club. The questionnaire included a brief introduction to the research project as well as explicit assurance that all research would be treated confidentially and anonymously. It comprised three questions, with the first asking the patrons to indicate which bathroom facilities they made use of at Axis; the second requiring the respondents to indicate if they made use of female bathroom facilities at other clubs; and the third providing the respondents with a list of six possibilities pertaining to why they make use of the bathrooms that they indicated in the first question. The six possible responses were:

1. They are cleaner [*Option 1*]
2. They are more convenient [*Option 2*]
3. To take/deal drugs [*Option 3*]
4. Your friends also use them [*Option 4*]
5. To socialize [*Option 5*]
6. Somewhere where you can have physical/sexual interactions [*Option 6*]

In addition, the respondents were asked to leave their contact details if they were willing to participate in subsequent interviews. Only three respondents were interviewed due to time constraints, as well as the desire to closely examine the actual 'voices' of a sample of Axis's male patrons.

The second part of the data collection involved participant observations in which Sonia closely observed entry into, as well as the use of, both bathroom facilities. We had to be cognisant of the fact that bathrooms are typically considered private spaces in which intimate bodily functions (e.g. urination) are performed. Sonia deliberately limited her observation to scenes which were openly visible, unless invited by a patron into a more private locale, such as into a closed cubicle.

Data analysis

A total of 120 questionnaires were completed and placed into the box on the club's front desk. The 'male' bathroom was used primarily for sexual interactions, and to some extent for drug taking and dealing, while the 'female' bathroom was used mainly to socialize, participate in drug-related activities, and to a smaller extent, for sexual interactions. In response to question 1, 30 respondents indicated that they used both bathrooms, with 70 indicating that they used the 'female' bathroom and 20 indicating use

of the 'male' bathroom. Interestingly, in response to question 2, all of the 120 respondents indicated that they *did not* use female bathrooms at other clubs. In relation to question 3, explaining the choices they indicated in question 1, and circling as many of the six possible reasons which they felt represented why they used a particular bathroom, 60 of the 70 respondents who preferred '*female bathrooms*' chose them because they were *cleaner*, while 10 of those who preferred '*male bathrooms*' did so for this reason.

A total of 15 respondents (consisting of nine preferring '*female bathrooms*' and six choosing '*male bathrooms*') reported that their preferred bathrooms were *more convenient*. Of the 120 respondents, 65 (made up of 60 who preferred 'female' bathrooms and 5 choosing 'male' bathrooms) indicated that they used these *to take or deal drugs*. Thirty respondents, of which 10 used *both bathrooms* and 20 used '*female bathrooms*', indicated that they chose these because their *friends also use them*. Furthermore, 90, of which 70 used the '*female bathrooms*' and 20 used *both bathrooms*, indicated that they used these *to socialize*. There were 80 respondents, of which 10 used *both bathrooms*, 30 used the '*female bathroom*' and 40 used the '*male bathroom*', who wrote that they used these *in order to have physical or sexual interactions*. Options Four and Five (friends and socialization) were the reasons indicated by an unclear number of men because these figures form part of the group who responded that they used both the 'female' and the 'male' bathrooms, and thus, it was not possible to ascertain their preferences.

The three respondents interviewed in the study: Michael, Pravin and Brett were interviewed first individually and then collectively. Michael is a 19-year-old white man who had moved to Durban from a small town in the interior of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa two years before.

My parents still live in Newcastle. It's dead there because all you can do is go to church or go out drinking with 'the men'. I made sure that I got away from that hell-hole. You wouldn't believe how much pressure there was to have a girlfriend, maybe even get her pregnant young so you could get married. That wasn't me. I mean, I like girls, but I love men. My parents are very Christian, homosexuals all go to hell; they are freaks. That's what they think. I couldn't breathe there, needed to find some fun. I'm a waiter at a coffee shop in town. I come to Axis every weekend. Sometimes I take 'E', but I like to dance. Sometimes I find someone, just for a few hours. I don't even think about it, I use the girl's toilet, a real moffie, [Sissy or gay] hey? Sometimes it's just for a bit of kissing, but damn, I've had some hot sex in the cubicles, with people outside talking or pissing in the one next door. Ja, [Yes] mainly kissing and blowjobs, sometimes all the way, hey. Where else can I have sex? I share a flat with three guys, they're all straight, and they know my family. Everybody would kill me. Get kicked right out of the flat and my family. It's just sex, sex with two moffies. My parents would die. (Michael)

For Michael, the bathrooms, in particular, the girls' bathrooms, provide a space imbued with opportunities. The cubicles allow him a sexual forum without heterosexist recriminations.

Pravin is a 21-year-old Indian man who had only recently started going to Axis:

Weird now that other charous [Indians] come here, most of them straight but a few are not so straight! Of course, I must marry a good Hindu girl and have lots of babies. What a joke! I had my first gay experience here, in the guy's bathroom, with this man. I was freaked out, shit, I didn't talk to anybody for a week. But then I came back, just out of curiosity. Now it's definite, I won't be marrying a girl. I've been having fun in the bathrooms here for about three months; it's exciting, just for those moments. I see somebody on the dance floor and we look at each other, maybe he'll nod at me. Then it's 'come over darling'. We dance together. Maybe he's not so cute up close. Or, he can be a real cutie and we go off, any bathroom is fine. The ladies' bathroom is so busy, lots of 'E', some coke. Maybe also some of the young boys getting sucked. The men's bathroom is where I go most. Much less people, dirty, it's okay to be dirty. Kissing first and then, you know, all the way. It feels good, nobody to beat me up here. You can fuck without getting fucked; do you know what I mean? (Pravin)

Pravin associates the bathrooms at Axis as the site of his homoerotic sexual initiation. The bathrooms also offer convenience in their proximity to the club's dance floor – the bathrooms are literally just a few steps away. For Pravin, each of the two bathrooms performs different roles. He quite clearly associates the 'female' bathroom with drug-related activities. In addition, Pravin links the 'female' bathroom with softer or more 'novice' sexual interactions, whereas the 'male' bathrooms are where you 'can fuck'.

Brett, the oldest respondent, is 27 years old and comes from a racially mixed family who have accepted his sexual orientation:

Yee! The toilets fly with action. All the ladies and the butches, we all want the same thing, some action. I haven't had a boyfriend for three years. I come here, party hard. I'm a sister with needs. Yes, the girls' loo first to do some coke, a lot of bodies sweating in there in front of the mirror getting 'dora-ed' [Drunk] and stiff-jawed. It's high traffic in there. Of course, you don't care, lots of people go into the little cubicles together, nobody questions. Your choice what you want to do. But I just hate it when people don't wipe up, it's sis [Disgusting] man. You go to the big boys' room for the hard stuff, like old guys shoving themselves into the new ones. Went in there a couple of times, you see all shapes and sizes. Some you don't even want to see. One guy even bit me, *there*, you know, right *there* on the jewels. Some bad shit there. You've got to want it. Safer to play by the girls' cubicles. The dykes don't mind. (Brett)

For Brett, too, the 'female' bathrooms are the physical space in which to partake in drug-related activities. Like Pravin, Brett also acknowledges

the high volume of people using the 'female' bathrooms – '... it's high traffic in there'. Another parallel to Pravin's understanding is that Brett differentiates the type of sexual activities taking place in the two bathrooms. According to Brett, 'the big boy's room' is where 'bad shit' occurs. In fact, Brett alludes to the issue of physical safety in that the 'male' bathroom has the potential for harm or danger, whereas it is 'safer' in the 'female' bathrooms.

As part of the group interview Pravin and Bret suggested that Sonia go with them into the 'men's' toilets, 'just to check out the action'. This bathroom appeared to be almost empty, confirming their understanding that 'female' bathrooms were almost always busier; however, closer inspection revealed that the last cubicle was occupied. Brett then said: 'That's probably Kez, this is his room. We don't touch it. It's dirty', to which Pravin replied: 'Yes, he is dirty. He likes it rough'. Thus, Pravin also made sense of the 'male' bathroom as a locale for 'harder' or more serious sexual interactions. Sonia, Pravin and Brett left this scene and returned to the VIP bar to continue with the interview.

The interview confirmed both bathrooms as sites of sexual interactions, and each bathroom as catering for a different genre or level of sexual interaction – the 'men's' bathroom for 'harder' and 'rougher' sex, and the 'female' bathroom for 'quickies' and 'after-drug sex'. Drug-related activities also featured prominently in the bathrooms. During the observations, Sonia noticed many patrons, both male and female, going into the 'female' bathrooms and taking Ecstasy or cocaine. Certain cubicles in the 'female' bathroom functioned quite openly as places where patrons could do more lines of cocaine.

While there was some of drug-taking in the 'male' bathroom, what dominated in this space were physical interactions between men, either at the urinals or in closed cubicles. According to Brett, these urinals were popular places in which male mutual masturbation occurred, irrespective of the fact that it would be visible to other patrons. Confirming this, one questionnaire respondent wrote in bold letters that he thought 'public sex is disgusting'. Several of the female patrons shared their discomfort regarding 'walking in on the men' and having 'yukkie [horrible] sperm on our toilets, on the floors, everywhere'. Another female patron believed that 'all the dykes have quickies in here', referring to the cubicles in the 'female' bathroom. This comment is suggestive of the possibility that certain lesbian patrons also actively sexualize their private spaces (that is, the bathroom).

The bathrooms at Axis served as a safe space in which predominantly male patrons could have sexual interactions. Respondents spoke about 'just knowing about all the screwing' and walking into 'the whore house'. According to them, sometimes physical objects were left behind in the

cubicles, both male and female, which suggested the presence of sex acts, for example, used condoms, tubes of empty lubricants as well as broken poppers [Inhaled stimulant] jars. These items were predominantly found in the 'male' bathrooms. The research suggests that drug taking and sex acts, such as oral sex and mutual masturbation, formed a considerable part of how the bathrooms were used by many of the patrons.

What implications can we draw from these findings?

Conclusions

This research suggests that Axis's bathrooms act as both a material and an imagined space for its patrons. The bathrooms are locales of human interaction on many diverse levels, such as talking to one's companions, or having sex with another person. They are sexualized and politicized and are physical and visible geographies in which sex and other activities take place spontaneously and voluntarily. They offer a sense of freedom and lack of fear for patrons.

The bathrooms are simultaneously public and private. They are public because, in any given moment, several patrons are in that space, and they are accessible and available to them as there are no noticeable or implicit criteria for using them. The bathrooms also contain several private, abstract zones not entirely determined by concrete and mortar. Patrons can, and do, choose to colonize any part of the bathrooms in order to close out the public eye and enjoy a variety of sexual and other activities, while also blurring the division between public and private. The tolerance and acceptance by other bathroom users in terms of what they see and what they know to be happening, allow for the bathrooms to take on a type of a private status in which outside voyeurism or spectatorship is almost never considered to be threatening or intrusive. One of the only social risks involved in utilizing the bathrooms for sex is that the sex act itself may be observed by others. This risk, with its lack of accompanying bodily danger in the form of aggression or harassment, allows certain male patrons to create a benevolent, private space within the confines of a public bathroom.

Harding's (1998: 37) assertions that the private and the public are interdependent categories which lack meaning when considered in isolation from each other and that 'private sex made public' (1998: 37) is accompanied by indications of tolerance or rejection, are useful. At the Axis club, despite the few voicings of disapproval or disgust over the sexual acts in the bathrooms, the larger social matrix of the club's clientele demonstrated acknowledgement and acceptance of such acts. The bathrooms, as physical structures, cannot be disconnected from the human involvement, which projects into the material domain a

signification of private and personal space in which human actions can be performed.

Axis's bathrooms also function as spatial, physical and political discourses in which multiple processes of signification serve to establish certain kinds of human agency, sometimes understood as identities, which rely on repeated practices to produce a (gay) intelligibility (Butler, 1990: 144–5). Following the scholarship of Butler, the bathrooms act as sites of performative, and, to some extent, subversive identities and gender configurations.

Axis's bathroom usage in which specific gender-inscribed bodies make use of a bathroom initially conceived as being female, but which now, cannot be labeled, also questions gender stability. The primary gender identity of those male patrons who use the 'female' bathrooms could be considered as a practice of parody centering around the distinction between the anatomy of some of its users (penis, therefore, man) and the anatomy of those for whom the 'female' bathroom was originally intended (vagina, therefore, female). The fact that men use the 'female' bathroom suggests 'a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance' (Butler, 1990: 148). Such spatial negotiation reflects not only sexual practice and affirmation of sexuality, but also identity in relation to a normalization of the queer self. Informed by Hall and Du Gay (1996: 4) we believe that identities are to some extent future-oriented, a matter of *becoming* rather than *being*. Our study also suggests that identities are *performed*, *constituted* and *configured* in particular contextual settings in which sexual scripts are not merely *sexual* but also political in the affirmation of self, personality, body politics and identities.

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Biographical Notes

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