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## The Public School Washroom as Heterotopia: Gendered Spatiality and Subjectification

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Graduate Program in Education

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

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THE PUBLIC SCHOOL WASHROOM AS HETEROTOPIA:  
GENDERED SPATIALITY AND SUBJECTIFICATION

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Jennifer C. Ingrey

Graduate Program in Faculty of Education

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
Of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada

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## Abstract

This dissertation investigates how secondary school students understand their own gendered subjectivity and the discursive and material processes that contribute to it through visual artifacts (photovoice projects) the students created of school washroom spaces. Drawing primarily on Foucault's analytics of disciplinary space and the heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), I view the washroom space as producing and perpetuating gendered power relations that invert, suspect, or neutralize those existing in exterior spaces. Deploying both a Foucauldian and Butlerian analytics, these visual student responses are framed as confessional, queering or (de)subjugating (Stryker, 2006) and cartographic products, and hence, understood in terms of the insights they provide into the complex practices of self-constitution and gender subjectivities. Furthermore, through Britzman's (1998) queer reading practice and critical readings of voice, the analysis of these queer and cartographic products hopes to offer further insight into how these washroom spaces as sex-segregated and unsupervised are lived and understood by students as highly regulated and inciting self-policing strategies upon all gendered bodies. Through Foucault's other frameworks of power/knowledge and technologies of self and power, combined with Butler's work on gender performativity, the abject and gender as bodily matters, I am concerned with how gendered subjects not only are produced in schools, but also how they are capable of resistances to gendered norms through practices of the self, in the interest of pursuing democratic gendered relations that have implications for burgeoning transgender accommodation policies and more nuanced anti-gender violence policies in school boards and Ministries of Education.

**Keywords:** gendered subjectivities; heterotopia; bathroom problem; practices of self; disciplinary space; visual methodologies.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction, Background, Context and Theoretical Frameworks

### Purpose of Study

This dissertation examines how gender is understood, constituted and performed (Butler, 1990) as well as how binary gender norms are simultaneously reiterated and resisted by students in school through a focused analysis of the washroom<sup>i</sup> space in two secondary schools in a mid-sized Ontario city using the analytics of the heterotopia<sup>ii</sup> (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) and the consequent implications for gendered subjectivation<sup>iii</sup> (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2005) within those spaces. Foucault identifies “space in which we live, ... a heterogeneous space” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 23) as something warranting analysis and invites us “to describe these different sites by looking for the set of relations by which a given site can be defined” (p. 23). He invites his readers to appropriate his analytics of disciplinary power/knowledge, subject and power, and disciplinary space as “gadgets” (1982, p. 65) or tools to extend his analytics to terrains beyond the spatial work he had only begun. Not conceived as an exclusively material study, although a consideration of both material and analytic elements of the washroom space is imperative, this study is an attempt to describe the *relations* of gender as they operate through disciplinary power occurring specifically within the school washroom space. It also asks how this public space contributes to youth’s understanding of gender as performative through disciplinary tactics of gender regulation and peer surveillance, as well as through the technologies of self, in which these students operate. The school washrooms are sex-segregated sites within the school that “have a function in relation to all the space that remains” in that they “create a space that is other, ... as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 27). In other words, the washroom is the *perfect* site for analysis *because* it is heterotopic: it inverts, clarifies, and projects the exact relations of gender regulation and performativity that occur outside its doors and yet in messy or jumbled ways. Hence, central to this dissertation is the conceptualization of the washroom as a heterotopic space in its capacity to invert, clarify, and illuminate these gendered relations by bringing them into a particular heightened analytic focus.

Building on other work, namely Cavanagh (2010) whose study queered the public bathroom using psychonanalytics, and Edelman's (1996) study of the "social project" (p. 153) of men's bathrooms that "constitutes a social technology in itself to necessitate a certain relation between the male subject and his body" (p. 152), my study is specifically located in the school bathroom and thinks about the consequences upon gendered subjectivities for students as part of an educational system because the washroom comprises an under-theorized and under-examined space especially in education research. It is in this sense that the washroom is thought about as a material space and as a site for excavating "subjugated knowledges" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82): those knowledges that have been disqualified because they are "located low down on the hierarchy" (p. 82). Stryker (2006) situates transgender studies in this historical disqualification specifically within the academe. Just as Foucault reclaims these subjugated knowledges for the project of critical thinking, Stryker reclaims and renames them as *(de)*-subjugated because they are "absolutely essential to contemporary critical inquiry" and "also central to the methodology of transgender studies" (2006, p. 13).

Using student voices (while simultaneously troubling those voices), I am grounding this work in a politics of transgenderism as metaphor, and in the ontological and epistemological arena that considers gender as fluid and subjectivities as partially or conditionally agentic (see Butler, 1990, 2005; Davies, 2006) and self-forming through a Foucauldian interpretive analytics that draws attention to historically contingent systems of ethical practices and power relations. Transgender as metaphor offers the perspective that gender itself must be reconstructed to include a spectrum of legitimate identities in order to trouble the current regime of gender as binary and coherently fixed and tied to sex (Butler, 1990) and to "expand gender identities, rather than reify a binary gender system" (Namaste, 2000, p. 26). Building on Feinberg's (1998) call to fight gender oppression, Bornstein's (1994) gender fluidity, Halberstam's (1998) female masculinity, and even conceptual models of fuzzy gender (Tauchert, 2001), the metaphor is useful only on a theoretical level and *not* as a way of proscribing the lives for or reporting on the lives of transgender individuals. Its purpose is to draw attention to the violence resulting from the operations of gender normalization that perpetuates a binary system of gender through "acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires [that] create the illusion of an

interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality” (Butler, 1990, p. 173). It does not attempt to conflate these gender nonconforming lives or identities and also acknowledges the tensions embedded in a study that purports to use transgender studies (already a complex and internally contradictory field) alongside queer methodologies. Through Nash’s (2010) overview of how trans theorists reject queer epistemologies, I am cautious to avoid falling into the same trap, that which “render[s] the transgendered subject an imaginary, fictional and merely metaphorical presence in the service of a larger intellectual project” (p. 583). My language around seeing transgender as a metaphor or an imaginary is not to appropriate the “trope of queer performativity” (p. 583) through Butler’s (1990) work, but to trouble that trope, to begin to think about the possibilities for redoing and re-knowing gender *from* and *through* the transgender perspective, albeit itself certainly heterogeneous, fractured, multiple, complex and transient.

What is queering is not genderqueering. And genderqueer is different from gender variance, gender fluidity, gender nonconformity and each is both distinct from and related to transgender as well as transsexual (see Prosser, 1998). Each of these identity categories claims a nearly different epistemology and ontology. Where gender fluidity, as a term, might better describe a theoretical lens, more aligned with the queer trope (Nash, 2010, p. 583) because it destabilizes binary and coherent categories among gender, sex, and sexuality (Butler, 1990), it has very little to do with the real, everyday lives and desires of other people living somewhere under or near the umbrella term (Valentine, 2007) of transgender. The transgender metaphor is not about erasing gender differences and not about pathologizing or making a spectacle of the transgender body (see Stryker, 2006); rather, through thinking about transgender, I seek a constant interrogation of the systemic and social practices that construct gender categories through a sensitization that is possible only once we are aware of the transgender lives that are lived (Namaste, 2000) and that matter (see Butler, 1993). In this way, it is aligned with a *transgender imaginary* (Martino, Rezai-Rashti, & Lingard, 2013), “a political project of divorcing and unhinging gender expression from biological destiny” (p. 223). As a

transgender individual, activist and scholar, Feinberg (1998) calls upon other trans and non-trans individuals to form a coalition against gender oppression:

And if you do not identify as transgender or transsexual or intersexual, your life is diminished by our oppression as well. Your own choices as a man or a woman are sharply curtailed. Your individual journey to express yourself is shunted into one of two deeply carved ruts, and the social baggage you are handed is already packed. (p. 6)

These “two deeply carved ruts” represent the binary system of gender that produces gendered bodies, inciting them to perform and to be defined under the same gender regime. The metaphor of transgender invites every gendered body to a project of gender democratization over a rejection of gender categories as inherently oppressive (see Connell, 2009) and in this sense, to embrace a politics of gender justice that promotes gender diversity and unpacks the institutionalization of gender expectations for all bodies. In this dissertation, I locate the (de)subjugated knowledges of students’ gendered subjectivities at the local and base level of the school washroom, through students’ art work, voices and their desires in the interest of opening up pedagogical possibilities for them to revision their school spaces as just and inclusive.

### **Significance and Broader Context of Transgender Human Rights**

The space of the public washroom is neutralized and normalized, yet it continues to divide bodies according to a traditional notion of gender as binary due to its sex-segregated design in Canadian (and North American, in general) secondary schools. In this way, it operates on a discourse of silence. No one really talks about what goes on in the school washroom, at least not often at an institutional or systemic level. It is assumed that it is an unproblematized space for many students. It is in this way that the washroom space as a site of analytic study is subjugated (Foucault, 1980) and has the potential to be (de)subjugated (Stryker, 2006) through an examination into the tactics of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) for the pursuit of unpacking gender regulations and reiterations of gender normalization. Certain research, albeit too little, has been conducted that fills the silence. For one, the *Egale First National Climate Survey* (Taylor & Peter, et al., 2011a) provides some important data on the experiences of LGBT youth in schools which names school space and the washroom (and Physical Education change rooms) as



anxiety-inducing for or perceived as unsafe by LGBT youth: “more than two-fifth (43%) of LGBTQ students and almost two-fifths (41%) of youth with LGBTQ parents identified their school washrooms as being unsafe” (Taylor & Peter, et al., 2011b, p. 8). In gender heteronormative discourses, however, the problem of the school washroom is more likely articulated through a discourse of violence that names hegemonic boys as violent, hyper-sexualized predators preying upon innocent girls, or one that sees transgender/transsexual people as perverse and also consequently predatory. Recently, the Canadian parliamentary debates surrounding Bill C-279<sup>iv</sup> conjured some deep-seated notions heralding binary gender as natural especially as the opponents to the bill centred their concerns around the implications for public washroom spaces. Rob Anders (2013), a Conservative MP for Calgary West wrote the following:

Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present, on behalf of thousands of people who sent these to my office, petitions in opposition to Bill C-279, otherwise known as “the bathroom bill”, that would give transgendered men access to women's public washroom facilities. These constituents feel that it is the duty of the House of Commons to protect and safeguard our children from any exposure and harm that would come from giving a man access to women's public washroom facilities. I present thousands of signatures on behalf of the riding in Calgary West, and I know that there are many others that have gone to other members in this place.

In another summation of the opposition’s views on this gender identity bill, trans women are equated with pedophiles and, according to Conservative MP Dean Allison, “a young girl would [suffer trauma] ...going into a washroom or a change room at a public pool and finding a man there” (Paillard, 2013). These perspectives are laden with obvious factual errors and are highly transphobic. For one, it would not be a transgender man this hypothetical girl would encounter in the women’s washroom. Trans men identify as men and would not want to enter a women’s washroom; however, without this bill, biological sex would be recognized and enforced above and beyond gender identity thus essentially offering no other choice to trans men but to use women’s washrooms. Two, the so-called traumatized girl in the above scenario would not face a *man* in the washroom but a trans *woman* who identifies as a woman and who may very well pass unproblematically. Trans women might be born biologically male but to ignore this gender identity as woman is to reproduce the “regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence” (Butler, 1990, p. 175) that “falsely naturalize[s] as a unity” sex and gender.

And three, trans women are not men and not perverse. The repeated pathologization and demonization of transgender individuals not only denies them a dignity as gendered beings (Butler, 1993), it denies the existence of violence perpetrated by *cisgender*<sup>v</sup> individuals upon each other, as if cisgender girls and women are somehow innately not dangerous and thereby safer if segregated from men and transwomen. Ironically, these *cisgender* views are dangerous. They do the same kind of violence to transgendered bodies (Namaste, 2000) that is of concern to heteronormative/transphobic traditionalists.

However, not all political perspectives reiterate this same regulatory regime. In Canadian Senate debates, Grant Mitchell (2013), a Canadian Senator, responded to the beliefs that unisex washrooms would become dangerous for cisgender people (as articulated above):

In fact, this is simply and utterly not the case. Trans people are way more likely to suffer assault than ever to perpetrate it. Randall Garrison, the author of the bill in the house, contacted the jurisdictions in the United States that have had these provisions in place for extended periods of time. California, Iowa, and the State of Washington replied to him. All of them reported that there had been no instances of attempts to use the protections for transgendered people for illegal or illegitimate purposes. There have been no instances — zero, none.

Jinny Sims (2013), an NDP MP for North Delta, BC, wrote in support of Bill C-279, hoping there would be no need to debate the inclusion of transgender people in Canadian legislation with any “specificity” because it was “one thing we can all agree is fundamentally Canadian and the right thing to do”. She also drew on her teaching background to conclude:

for children to be successful in life, they have to see themselves reflected, but they also have to feel themselves protected. When we have transgender young people in our community who do not feel protected explicitly in our law, we leave them vulnerable.

Increasingly, major news headlines continue to feature issues of transgender rights in public places and schools specifically, especially in terms of the regulation of the school washroom: “the major issue seems to be the bathroom issue” (Penta, as cited in Bencks, 2013). Parents and advocates of transgender children are fighting to alter policy at local school district levels and legislation at state-levels (in the US) and the federal level (in Canada). Again, just as in the parliamentary debates for Bill C-279, the opponents to kids’ transgender rights operate from a transphobic framework as well as a medical

model of thinking about gender, highlighting bodily functions and anatomy above all else. Within this medical view, acting as internal critics, Drescher and Byne (2013) ask whether an emphasis on clinical approaches to gender variant (GV) youth actually “reinforce binary gender stereotypes” because it is “organized around the notion of a limited range of acceptable gender expressions – from which the minors are deviating and toward which they can aspire by transitioning to the other or opposite gender” which consequently leads to an “intolerance of GV and homophobia” (p. 215). In other words, if gender as variant or expressed as nonconforming is treated only as a clinical problem, then it is framed as a deviance to the otherwise uninterrupted normative gender system of two stable and monolithic sexes which also gets reinforced through this spectacle of the transgressive. Transgender children and anyone else not fitting into the binary gender categories must seek medical reparation thereby alleviating a school system and all school stakeholders of the social burden to rethink the harmful operations of gender as binary. And yet, it is through the gaze of the transgender body, the one that disrupts this fabrication of “true gender” (Butler, 1990, p. 174) where I locate my own study, both epistemologically and ethically. To interrogate the system of normalized gender through the understandings of youth is to operationalize (and trouble) their voices in support of a rethinking, a re-doing of binary gender. The effects of maintaining and living within an unproblematized gender regime is devastating not only for trans kids, or gender nonconforming youth, but all youth who will be hemmed in and incited to comply to the harnessing and regulatory acts of gender performativity.

This brief overview of the current political, public, and personal debates around what gender means and should mean does not intend to simplify the unique problems of transgender, gender creative, and gender nonconforming individuals that certainly go beyond the bathroom, especially considering the cisgendered environment in which they are schooled. A comprehensive examination into these complexities is not within the scope of this project; however, I imagine work that does provide these insights to run parallel with mine. Rather, this project is situated among existing critical discourses but also seeks alternative narratives surrounding the use of the gendered washroom space. It is specific to a Canadian school context where gendered spatiality is either under-studied or whose studies are under-disseminated.

I apply spatiality to education in an interdisciplinary approach, following the views of Gulson and Symes (2007) that “spatial theories are not restricted to geography, their traditional ‘home’, but travel through and between social theory and are ‘implicated in myriad topographies of power and knowledge’” (Gregory, 1994, as cited in Gulson & Symes, 2007, p. 98). Their work uses a spatial perspective to provide “explanatory frameworks, that, perhaps, disrupt understandings in, and posit new possibilities for, both ‘mainstream’ and critical educational studies” (Gulson & Symes, 2007, p. 98). Foucault’s argumentation about space emphasizes the importance of this study: “space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power” (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, p. 252). I hope to provide new ways of thinking about old and continuing problems of gender regulation and the technologies of disciplinary power that impact technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988a) as well as highlight practices of subjectification (Butler, 1995) of students in secondary schools.

## Research Questions

The research questions I outline below.

1. What are the narratives that students/custodians/vice principals tell about the use and space of the public school washroom? (How is the space experienced?)
2. Other than narratives of silence and of violence, what alternative narratives exist that focus on subjectivities of resistance or refusal to operate within a gender binary framework?
3. How does **the space of the washroom contribute to the fashioning and regulation of gendered subjectivities of youth?** (see: disciplinary space, Foucault, 1977; and heterotopia, Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986)
4. How does the apparatus of the **confessional** figure into how youth work on themselves/subjectivities through experiences of the space of the washroom? (see Foucault, 1988a; Butler, 2004; Besley, 2005)
5. What are the implications of this knowledge about youth subjectivities and the washroom as a disciplinary space for building a deeper, more nuanced understanding of power relations, gender embodiment and gender expression in schools? In short, how might such knowledge further inform equity and social

justice practices in schools and at the school board level in terms of curriculum and policy reform in education?

Although I had devised several research questions, the first two about narratives of the school washroom were preliminary and formative, leading into the main questions (listed as number 3 and 4 above) about the spatiality of the school washroom and its connection to the confessional practices of gendered subjects from Foucault's and Butler's analytics. In this I have constructed my focus to be about the spatiality of the school washroom as examined through the heterotopia (and the implicated relations of power) because of its effects upon and the production of the gendered subject as it is constituted in that space and as it continues to constitute that space as regulatory and heteronormative. The final research question attends not only to building a project that investigates into depth these complexities of gendered subjectivation in disciplinary spaces, but it also leads to implications for the field of education through curricular, leadership, and policy work.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

I engage primarily with Foucauldian and Butlerian thought on the constitution of the gendered subject through local spaces mitigated and formed by power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980) and discursive and material practices that deem certain bodies counting/mattering (Butler, 1993) over others. Centrally positioned within these frameworks is Foucault's work on disciplinary space known as heterotopias (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). In the sections that follow, I trace through Foucault's early work on power/knowledge through to subjectivation processes in his middle to later works through technologies of the self in order to funnel into a focus on heterotopic spaces, what constitutes them, and how they are intertwined with notions of disciplinary power and the constitution of the subject. Deriving from my qualification of the washroom as heterotopia is Foucault's (1990a, 2005) genealogy on confession in pre-Christian, Christian, and modern secular practices (i.e. pastoral power, of which I also integrate into the theoretical framework), as well as Butler's (2004) reading of the productive possibilities of Foucault's confessional. It is both metaphorically and analytically useful to consider the confessional in the analysis of the washroom space as contributing to gendered subjectivation for two reasons. Metaphorically, the cellular nature of both the

washroom and the confessional booth are alike and therefore, analytically, incite a certain set of techniques from the subject upon entry and within its walls. Foucault (1990a, 1990b) called the confession a truth-telling mechanism, both historically and presently, and through Butler's thinking (2004) the confession itself can frame the sorts of productive practices upon the self, both in terms of care of and knowledge about the self that I consider relevant for how youth constitute their own gendered subjectivities. Butler's work on gendered performativity and regulation as well as gendered subjectivation also dovetails throughout this overview to provide the integration of gender, a part Foucault did not explicitly identify.

What follows from the theoretical justification for considering the washroom as both heterotopic and confessional is an introduction to the queer theory and spatial scholarship of "the bathroom problem".

### **Power/Knowledge.**

To begin to think about power relations entwined with gender performativities within certain spaces, I engage with Foucault's (1977, 1980) seminal work on power/knowledge that introduces the techniques of disciplinary power and relations of power as a basis for challenging traditional notions of power as repressive. Where sovereign power defines the right and juridical power defines the law, disciplinary power defines the operations of normalization through a focus on training the body to produce "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (Foucault, 1977, p. 138) not to be in servitude, or enslavement, but to form "a policy of coercion" (p. 138) that functions as "a political anatomy" (p. 139). Indeed, these "disciplines" are "the carriers of a discourse that speak of a rule, but this is not the juridical rule deriving from sovereignty, but a natural rule, a norm" (1980, p. 106). Foucault defined the methods of discipline as "the meticulous control of the operations of the body" intended to assure "the constant subjection of its forces and [impose] upon them a relation of docility-utility" (1977, p. 137).

Foucault does not deny the existence of repressive power, sovereign power, or judicial power (Foucault, 1980), but argues they exist alongside and entwined within disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) or "relations of power" (Foucault, 1990a, 1980,

1982). Indeed, disciplinary power actually functions to conceal the effects of itself and to endorse the domain of the right, or sovereignty:

I believe that in our own times power is exercised simultaneously through this right and these techniques and that these techniques and these discourses, to which the disciplines give rise invade the area of right so that the procedures of normalisation come to be ever more constantly engaged in the colonisation of those of law. I believe that all this can explain the global functioning of what I would call a *society of normalization*. (Foucault, 1980, p. 107)

Disciplinary power and sovereign power co-exist and produce institutional discourses “at the point of intersection between the two heterogeneous levels” (p. 107). To look at power as repressive alone (which involves the juridical), Foucault (1980) argues is a “wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power, one which has been curiously widespread” and which defies the ability of power to be able to bring people “to obey it” (p. 119). Indeed, disciplinary power *incites* people to obey it, thereby becoming not repressive but productive: “it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119). Furthermore, disciplinary power is concealed by and conceals the functioning of sovereign power, or the right:

The theory of sovereignty, and the organisation of a legal code centred upon it, have allowed a system of right to be superimposed upon the mechanisms of discipline in such a way as to conceal its actual procedures, the element of domination inherent in its techniques, and to guarantee to everyone, by virtue of the sovereignty of the State, the exercise of his proper sovereign rights. The juridical systems—and this applies both to their codification and to their theorisation—have enabled sovereignty to be democratised through the constitution of a public right articulated upon collective sovereignty, while at the same time this democratisation of sovereignty was fundamentally determined by and grounded in mechanisms of disciplinary coercion. (Foucault, 1980, p. 105)

Disciplinary power as a regime functions to normalize (1977, p. 182) with the result of creating certain sorts of subjects that are made to be managed and classified according to the hegemonic codes embedded in sovereign power and endorsed by juridical power. These operations of disciplinary power include the differentiation of individuals defined against “the rule...made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move”; disciplinary power also “measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the ‘nature’ of individuals”; “it introduces...the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved”; and, “it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the

external frontier of the abnormal” (p. 183). In terms of educational institutions, Foucault (1982) defined the operations of disciplinary power there too:

the activity which ensures apprenticeship and the acquisition of aptitudes or types of behavior is developed there by means of a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation marks of the ‘value’ of each person and of the levels of knowledge) and by the means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy). (pp. 218-219)

A Foucauldian analysis of power asks *how* power is exercised, to know “strategies of power”, “technique[s] of ‘management’” (1988b, p. 104-5) of bodies, rather than *who* is exercising such power, because the exercise of power is less understood and becomes the foundation for all other questions about power. And primarily, it is these techniques of power that “actually produce knowledge” (Foucault, 1988b, p. 106); institutional knowledge, or “bodies of knowledge”, produce ‘truths’ about the classification, management and “knowledge of bodies” (Britzman, 1998, p. 80). Indeed, Foucault outlines the tripartite arrangement of “power, right, truth”: “on the one hand, the rules of right...provide a formal delimitation of power; on the other,...the effects of truth that this power produces and transmits,...in their turn reproduce this power” (1980, p. 93). The “right” is the guise of truth, bolstered by sovereign power, and is what appears to be normalized and institutionally sanctioned, and is supported by the law under juridical rule. But the “right” is only a guide that outlines the parameters of power, that in itself functions as effects, appearing also as truth. The entire tripartite arrangement describes disciplinary power working in combination with sovereign power, the former being concealed by the “right” of the latter.

To examine gender relations at a particular school is to engage in this analysis of power, in its tripartite form, to examine *how* power is exercised on and through gendered bodies and subsequently, how those bodies work on themselves (which as a process is elaborated in Foucault’s work on subjectivation and ethics of self, in the next sections). Power is “an action upon an action” (Foucault, 1982, p. 220), a regulatory technique of surveillance producing the *effects* of truth under the system of normalization. And these power relations produce a certain sort of subject who is incited to participate in the



system of normalization: “this form of power...imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects” (Foucault, 1982, p. 212). But just as this subject is not constituted *a priori* or externally to power relations for Foucault, neither is the materiality or spatiality of relations of power a container or an *a priori* element upon or within which the relations of power occur. I do not conceive of the washroom as a place that creates a certain sort of subject, but as a space that through which the subject is produced while simultaneously being a space that is produced by the effects of power.

The current public school washroom (in Canada and the US) structure divided according to two sexes supports the notion that binary gender is deemed to be normal (and the only and entire form of) gender expression; but how that structure and the use of that space contribute to a perpetuation of binary gender as normalized, is precisely what I aim to understand through the perspectives of youth, as they are themselves constituted as gendered subjects in this binary gender regime.

### **Foucault’s Subject and Power**

To understand how youth engage in self-fashioning practices in the space of the washroom and how they negotiate or make sense of the dominant understandings and practices of gender in their everyday experiences, I use Foucault’s concept of *subjectification* (subjectivation), or how the subject is constituted through the conditions under which they are made possible through relations of power. Foucault’s disciplinary power is a necessary component to subjectivation (also from Butler, 1990) because his intention from his earlier work was “to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). Despite feminist critiques that Foucault’s analytics of power excludes the agentic subject (see McLaren, 2002; McNay, 1992), favouring an overly deterministic “docile body” (Foucault, 1977) that is also decidedly ungendered (Bartky, 1990), for Foucault, “the technology of domination and power” (Foucault, 1988a, p. 19) is intertwined with subjectivation which marks the kinds of operations subjects conduct upon themselves under their complicity to these modes of power. It is about how the subject is subjected to and limited by discursive and material practices in ways that are naturalized—but also

how that subject is formed beyond determinism—and is of extreme importance when studying power relations, especially in educational spaces where Foucault also focused some attention. The subject in space, as an embodied subject, is the Foucauldian subject, and frames my thinking of the embodied subject's conditional agency (see Butler, 2005). Butler (1993) conceives of subjectivation as possessing a paradox through the notion of agency: “the subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms” (p. 15); but, this paradoxical position “locate[s] agency as a reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power” (p. 15). The effects of power function as a machine and operate through “hierarchized surveillance” (Foucault, 1977, p. 177), placing the subject in a synchronistic position, operating on multiple levels: the subject is both observed and observer, suffering the effects of power and enacting similar effects simultaneously. Foucault (1982) identifies the “double bind” where “the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures” (p. 216) acts upon the subject and therefore promotes “new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries” (p. 216), and that has been endorsed by the sovereign and juridical powers. In this mode of individualism lies the liberalist view of total agency. Foucault (1997a) rejects this kind of individuality, indeed rejects *carte blanche* notions of freedom what he calls, “processes of liberation” (p. 283) to settle upon “practices of freedom”, that are formed and defined by the State. Hence, subjects that resist, or act against norms, may not be agentic, if we are to adopt Foucault's framework, or they might be only partially agentic, an agency subsumed by their very subjection/subjugation to norms, if we are to adopt Butler's notions. Somewhere amongst these frameworks I situate my understanding of the conditional, partial, or fraught, if not feigned, agency of the subject.

The mechanism of subjectivation through disciplinary power is best understood in Foucault's (1977) metaphor of surveillance, panopticism, which derives from Bentham's prison design of the panopticon. In Foucault's theory, the subject, or the prisoner, is capable of resistance because s/he is forced to self-regulate based on the inevitability and unpredictability of the regulating gaze from the central tower, the all-seeing eye of an authority. Indeed, Foucault's subject is *always* capable of resistance within disciplinary

power that is a part of the techniques of power (Foucault, 1980). Foucault's (1982) subject must be free, or capable of resistance, because "power is exercised only over free subjects" (p. 221). Nonetheless, the added complication in the machine of surveillance is part of this paradoxical subject position: along with undergoing surveillance, the subject is also able to gaze upon others, to become the gaze of regulation because the space of observer is accessible to all. In panopticism,

any member of society will have the right to come and see with his own eyes how the schools, hospitals, factories, prisons function...the disciplinary mechanism will be democratically controlled...[in that] an observer may observe, at a glance, so many different individuals, [and the Panopticon] enables everyone to come and observe any of the observers. (Foucault, 1977, p. 207)

The Panopticon serves as a model that describes the historical workings of power and has relevance in contemporary practices of power and subjectivation. As part of Foucault's (1977) genealogy of disciplinary power, he analyzes schools in terms of their techniques of power on bodies, through spatial arrangement, temporal organization, and facilitation of exercise (p. 167) not for the purposes of satisfying power itself, but "to strengthen the social forces—to increase production, to develop the economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality; to increase and multiply" (p. 208). Shifting to a focus on gender regulation then, panoptic practices can explain how culturally dominant forms of gender identity and expression are encouraged, policed and maintained, especially in the context of schools. How students maintain gender norms within the unsupervised space of the school washroom speaks to panoptic operations. Further, the regulation of legitimated forms of gender are not practiced for the exercise of power itself, but under the dominant cultural belief that society as a whole can benefit from the eradication of othered genders and sexualities. The system of heteronormativity and transphobia directs such practices: a maintenance of heterosexual unions, a coherence between sex and gender, and a demonization of non-heterosexual behaviours are misconceptions that survive under the guise of promoting a population's growth and prosperity.

*On resistance as an effect of power.*

A note is necessary about Foucault's, as well as Butler's, consideration of resistance to truth regimes. For Foucault (1990a) resistance to cultural norms is not something that "results from the choice or decision of an individual subject" (p. 95). Rather, it is

dependent on power relations and vice versa: “where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault, 1990a, p. 95). Power relations include elements that look like resistance. In order to distinguish the relations of power, which are productive, from sovereign power or enslavement, Foucault determines that the relations of power require a certain kind of free subject: “in the relations of power, there is necessarily the possibility of resistance, for if there were no possibility of resistance – of violent resistance, of escape, of ruse, of strategies that reverse the situation – there would be no relations of power” (Fornet-Betancourt, Becker, Gomez-Muller, & Gauthier, 1987, p. 123). Thus, resistance is a permanent component to the relations of power, even becoming an effect of the relations of power.

As one example of resistance, Foucault explained that under the conditions that incite discourse, silence, if done as a refusal to speak, is a form of resistance, or a refusal to comply to cultural and social norms (see Taylor, 2009, pp. 193-194). After a subject under judicial scrutiny hears the accusations of one’s crimes, the expectation is that “there must be confession, self-examination, explanation of oneself, revelation of what one is” (Foucault, 1988b, p. 126). To be silent is to resist this chain of effects and to enact “a practice of freedom despite conditions of constraint” (Taylor, 2009, p. 194). The participants in my project who enacted silences, even if momentarily, also engaged in the contingent, complex actions that power/knowledge involves. It is within and around these moments that the subjectivation process is fully charted. Because of the complexities involved, acknowledging only how a subject is complicit in the relations of power provides an insufficient scope of the entire operations of disciplinary power. Within the movement and contingencies of power relations lies necessarily

a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. (Foucault, 1990a, p. 96)

And yet, Foucault (1982) does not only chart out the limits of resistance, or reframe it against the kind of liberatory/individualizing discourse and conditions of possibility he rejects from modern humanism. Rather, he embraces a position, indeed calls upon

action, that considers if not resistance than certainly a refusal of “what we are” throughout the “individualization and totalization [processes] of modern power structures” (p. 216). The kind of subject that is constituted under the conditions of “individualization which is linked to the state” (Foucault, 1982, p. 216) is something that can be refused, reframed, in the pursuit of creating “new forms of subjectivity” (p. 216).

Butler (1990) frames resistance as possibility: “mobilized possibilities of ‘subjects’ that do not merely exceed the bounds of cultural intelligibility, but effectively expand the boundaries of what is, in fact, culturally intelligible” (p. 40). In terms of gender, Butler (1990) notes that within the “possibility of a failure to repeat” (p. 179) exactly the same kind of gender performativity from one moment to the next therein is embedded the possibility of a kind of resistance to a repetition of gender norms. But, just as for Foucault (1990a), “resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (p. 95), for Butler (1990), it is never a possibility outside of discourse or even outside of what is intelligible:

The spectres of discontinuity and incoherence, themselves thinkable only in relation to existing norms of continuity and coherence, are constantly *prohibited and produced* [emphasis added] by the very laws that seek to establish causal or expressive lines of connection among biological sex, culturally constituted genders, and the ‘expression’ or ‘effect’ of both in the manifestation of sexual desire through sexual practice. (p. 23)

In other words, what might be resistant is only possible *within* the conditions that make said subject possible in the first place, and thinkable/intelligible to the subject.

Furthermore, the possibility for resistance constitutes the subject. A resistant subject, through my reading of both Foucauldian and Butlerian analytics, is exactly the kind of subject that is produced within and through institutionalizing discourses that is also simultaneously limited by the effects of power. A project about students’ experiences of the washroom and their simultaneous experiences of gender normalization must also be about how dominant culture is resisted and thus how these acts of negotiation between resistance and conformity comprise the subjectivation of gendered subjects in schools, indeed, how they come to be the kind of gendered subjects they are and how they come to know their own gendered subjectivity. Relations of power are indeed “very complex” (Foucault, 1982, p. 209) because they are ambiguous, contradictory, and contingent.

### Practices of self from self-knowledge to self-care.

Foucault wanted to understand how the subject was constituted through regimes of truth and certain practices of the self through historical genealogical analysis (Besley & Peters, 2007). For Foucault (1980), genealogy is

a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history. (p. 117)

His genealogies consisted of studying the historical trends and discontinuities across Greco-Roman and early Christian practices of self; in historical analyses of practices of punishment and discipline in prisons; and in other analyses focused on the medical clinic and the institutionalization of psychiatry to understand how a subject is constituted under the social and discursive and material conditions made available. Derived from Nietzsche's philosophy, these studies were not to detect origins, but discontinuities in history: "a genealogy of values, morality, asceticism, and knowledge will never confuse itself with a quest for their 'origins,' will never neglect as inaccessible the vicissitudes of history" (Foucault, 1984, p. 80). A genealogist is "a diagnostician who concentrates on the relations of power, knowledge and the body in modern society" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 105). Foucault focused on specific practices and techniques acted upon and by the self in local, specific contexts: my translation of this methodology is focused on the micro level, specifically, on those practices youth enact upon themselves within and around the disciplinary space of the school washroom that impact and constitute their understanding of themselves as gendered subjects.

To unravel the specific analytics of subjectivation, or the constitution of the subject, Foucault's lecture series, *Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2005), the seminar, *Technologies of the Self* (1988a), and the interview on *The ethic of care of the self as a practice of freedom* (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987) are helpful. In Foucault's lectures and seminar (and then clarified in the interview), Foucault explains the genealogical study he conducted of the practices of the self, to know how "the subject constituted himself [sic], in such and such a determined form, as a mad subject or as a normal subject, through a certain number of practices which were games of truth, applications of

power” (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987 p. 121). He charts the hermeneutics of the self through the “Greco-Roman philosophy in the first two centuries A.D. of the early Roman Empire and... Christian spirituality and the monastic principles developed in the fourth and fifth centuries of the late Roman Empire” (Foucault, 1988a, p. 19). He was interested in how the Stoics created the notion of the care of the self, a way of relating to the self through others, versus how the Christians participated in knowledge of the self, a preoccupation with truth through the mechanism of the confessional. And in each context, he focuses on “technologies of the self” as the following:

Specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves...[that consist of] a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 1988a, p. 18)

These technologies of the self functioned for Foucault in two ways. One, the specific practices in historical contexts constituted for him a “development of the hermeneutics of the subject” (p. 19); and two, they were important to Foucault as an observation of not exactly what these practices entailed, but *that* they existed and how they constituted the notion of the self, indeed, how technologies of self were made possible in certain historical eras that defined the discursive knowledge of the self through “certain modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes” (p. 18). In this way, he observes the historical discontinuities, or breaks in how we have historically related to ourselves: asking not about the nature of discontinuity itself, Foucault (1980) clarifies his focus is to ask, “how is it that at certain moments and in certain orders of knowledge, there are these sudden take-offs, these hastenings of evolution, these transformations which fail to correspond to the calm, continuist image that is normally accredited?” (p. 112). In his genealogies, Foucault wants to chart the techniques of subjects, “the certain number of practices” (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 121) that contribute to discursive and material practices of power to arrive at a framework through which one can scaffold an awareness of the practices of self in contemporary contexts as well. Foucault (1982) wanted not to reclaim or recuperate practices from antiquity, but to provide “a historical awareness of our present circumstances” (p. 209) and to chart what has fallen out of favour and what is deemed dominant practice today. Because the Stoic form of care of

the self “became something somewhat suspect” (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1984, p. 115) in Christianity, Foucault notes that these practices of the self do not follow an even trajectory over historical periods. The Stoic practice of self-care concerned itself with constructing a “subject of truth” that was not at all about the personal truth or sacrifice of self that became part of the Christian practice (Foucault, 2005). The student in antiquity (Greek and Roman practice) “must be concerned with true discourse” (Foucault, 2005, p. 365), yet he is in no way required to “tell the truth about himself” (p. 365); whereas, the Christian subject was *compelled* to “truth-telling about oneself [as] a condition of salvation, a fundamental principle in the subject’s relationship to himself, and a necessary element in the individual’s membership of a community” (p. 364). This truth-telling about the self was the “obligation of confession” (Foucault, 2005, p. 364) which Foucault argues was very different from any confessional-type practices occurring in Stoic judiciary or religious circumstances precisely because they were merely instrumental, “not effective modifiers that bring about change by themselves” (p. 365). In this way, Foucault charts the discontinuities over time, allowing his readers to see how certain modes of being are not natural or innate. Therein, he rejects the liberal humanist notion of individuality in favour of a view that asks how subjects come to know themselves and become subjects through practices embedded in relations of power and the mechanisms of power that become normalized and normalizing practices.

Foucault (1988a) continues to distinguish between the asceticism of antiquity and that of Christianity, arguing that “there has been an inversion of the hierarchy of the two principles of antiquity” (p. 22), specifically from the Greco-Roman belief that self-knowledge will result from a focus on self-care, and the Christian belief that self-knowledge is morally sound, unselfish, and preferable over care of the self. But this Christian preoccupation with generosity to others, and self-renunciation (which denounces self-care as egotistical and individualistic in favour of a less problematic self-knowledge) ignores the possibility of care for others embedded within the practice of self-care in the pre-Christian model. Specifically, Foucault (1988a) points to an Epicurean text to note, “teachings about everyday life were organized around taking care of oneself in order to help every member of the group with the mutual work of salvation” (p. 21). To care for the self was an ethical practice, a way to relate to and thus also care



for others because it entailed “the necessary sacrifice of the self” (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 116); the notion of self-care “was an inclusive one that involved *care for others* and precluded the possibility of tyranny because a tyrant did not, by definition, take care of the self since he did not take care of others [emphasis in original]” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 32). Foucault elaborates that in antiquity, ethical practice included a concern to observe and follow rules of conduct as a way to avoid becoming “a slave to one’s desires” (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 119). To avoid self-preoccupation, ethical practices were encouraged. To possess an *ethos* is to conform but also to possess liberty (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 117). The Greco-Roman context frames ethical practice as a way to organize society, a secular way of keeping social order and not simply a Christian-based selflessness in the way it is understood today.

Foucault does not wish to posit care of the self as a forgotten philosophical trend that must be rediscovered, as something that is “the key to everything” (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 125). But he does want to reconceive of power relations within practices of the self in the early Christian context as a coercive practice:

one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console and reconcile. (Foucault, 1990a, pp. 61-62)

Foucault focuses on how these coercive practices have traced themselves into modern societies, congealing into normalized practices in secular scenarios in psychiatry, medicine, and education:

In Greek and Roman civilizations these practices of the self had a much greater importance and autonomy than later on, when they were laid siege to, up to a certain point, by institutions: religious, pedagogical, or of the medical and psychiatric kind. (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 113)

Conversely, in the practices of the self from antiquity especially, Foucault highlights the notion of the *ascetical*, or “the self-formation of the subject...an exercise of self upon self by which one tries to work out, to transform one’s self and to attain a certain mode of being” (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 113). The subject who is constituted through and within the relations of power that vary according to historical context who also is capable of *transformation* through resistances, informs my understanding of technologies of the self. Considering secular contemporary practices of confession and truth-telling, I

am concerned how youth are compelled in this way to speak the truth about themselves as gendered subjects, how they are incited through dominant discourses about gendered identity to produce a truth of themselves in educational contexts.

Through a reframing of the confession under Butler's (2004) analysis, I consider the analytic potential for the confession as a category to produce knowledge about the self for these gendered subjects. It is appropriate to associate the confession with the practice of gendered striations that the public washroom compels because the washroom is a place that asks for a self-“confessing animal” (Taylor, 2009) upon entry. The sex-segregated washroom is already implicated in the discourse that gender can only be binary and coherently linked with a sexed body (Butler, 1990). Therefore, to function in that space is also to surrender to or stand humble before the ‘altar’ that is the sex-segregated public washroom door. If a confession demands a confessor and a confessee, the latter is any gendered body who chooses to enter while the former is the normalized discourse circulated by those same gendered bodies and yet governed by discourses of truth and right simultaneously. Indeed, the confessor and the confessee in the washroom analytics are one and the same.

For Foucault (1990a), the “confession was, and still remains, the general standard governing the production of the true discourse on sex” (p. 63). I translate this talk of sex to talk of gender because Foucault did not concern himself with the category of gender explicitly; rather, he examined sexuality and sex. Sex and gender and sexuality are aligned and contingently related through Butler's (1990) heterosexual matrix that constitutes a web of gender, sex, and sexuality where each is governed under and above power relations, coming into recognition only within the realm of intelligibility and “coherence”, norms that “are constantly prohibited and produced by the very laws that seek to establish causal or expressive lines of connection” (p. 23) among gender and sex. If each is a performance and contingently linked (Butler, 1990), then it is also appropriate to deploy an analytical examination on truth-telling practices of gender. The confessional practice derived from Christianity Foucault (1977, 1982) names pastoral power—that which derives from the confessional practices of Christianity to organize and perpetuate the dynamics of power in non-religious scenarios: pastoral power “has spread and

multiplied outside the ecclesiastical institution” to form “a new pastoral power” (Foucault, 1982, pp. 214-215).

This dissertation seeks to interrogate the practices of self and of confession, or truth-telling practices that the subject is incited to perform within sex-segregated washrooms. If the contemporary subject is obligated to declare the truth of one’s gender upon entry and within the space of the school washroom, is it different from the way that the Stoic subject might be expected to simply defer to knowledge of truth? Is it different from how the early Christian subject is compelled to obedience through confessional practices with his confessor? How is the contemporary young subject compelled to know and speak discourses of truth, namely gender? And in what ways must this young person submit to appropriate and correct ways of being gendered as it pertains to the regime of truth (Foucault, 1980) of heteronormativity undergirded by transphobia, homophobia, compulsory heterosexuality, the heterosexual matrix, and a system of binary gender? How must that student submit, acquiesce, or do self-harm through self-denial, in order simply to enter that space? Is the submission greater for a normatively gendered student, or would all subjects have the burden of submission through implied confession of self once they condone the presence of that washroom space simply by needing to use it? Perhaps, for the gender nonconforming student, the practice of submission through confession is merely more obvious, more visible, their pain more acute and conscious, than that of the gender conforming subject who fails to recognize their implicit submission, their silent conformity to a structure that harnesses a fiction that sex and gender are coherent and binarily organized (Butler, 1990).

To articulate the act of entering a washroom as a declaration of self, or a confession, if accepted at all, might not even be viewed as troublesome by today’s standards because confession has positive connotations. It has to in order to function. Power compels because without its production of knowledge or benefit, nobody would be obedient to it (Foucault, 1980). Foucault (1990a) argues the “obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points, is so deeply ingrained in us, that *we no longer perceive it* [emphasis added] as the effect of a power that constrains us” (Foucault, 1990a p. 60). Our obligation to confess the truth about ourselves, even at the threshold of

the washroom, cannot be considered at all because, as a function of disciplinary power, it must remain invisible: “disciplinary power...is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility” (Foucault, 1977, p. 187). Indeed, as a practice of the self, the confession, at least as it is recuperated from early Christian coercive practices, incites a kind of obedience, or submission, and achieves this conformity because it promises a salvation. Therein, it affirms the kinds of power relations the washroom entry compels: by confessing a truth of the self, one is also becoming recognized as an intelligible gendered subject (Butler, 1990). It does not service one who cannot or will not conform to gender norms.

Foucault’s practices of self have been read through the frames of self-mastery and self-renunciation (see Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 35) where the former describes the Greco-Roman tradition of self-care and the latter describes the early Christian tradition of self-knowledge. Ultimately, Besley and Peters (2007) argue Foucault’s work on the “medico-therapeutic confessional practices” (p. 36) reclaims a self-mastery, or at least a rejection of the self-renunciation, through confessional or other techniques of the self because “language has a performative function, speaking the truth about oneself makes, constitutes, or constructs or forms one’s self” (p. 38). These technologies turn the individual into a subject but depend on “self-mastery as a form of care of the self” (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 38). Rajchman’s (1986) work on ethics departs from the above interpretation: Rajchman characterizes Foucault’s reading of the nature of Greek self-practices as *akrasia*, “a lack of self-mastery” or, from Socrates, “it is only through ignorance that one can act contrary to what is best for one to do” (Rajchman, 1986, p. 172). Thus, self-practices in the Classical Greek period are necessarily self-renouncing, but paradoxically, to regain a self-mastery.

In another paper, Besley (2005) recuperates the confession as a tool to promote self-reflection in school counselling. As a way to get at the truth of oneself, as a way to understand how the self is constructed, Besley thinks the confession is “a narrative in which we (re)create ourselves by creating our own narrative...[which is a practice that is] compelling us to narratively recreate ourselves...to assigning truth-seeking meaning to our lives” (p. 86). But this simple translation elides the complexity and contradictory

nature of Foucault's work regarding practices of the self. He maps the discontinuity in the shift from self-mastery to self-denial through the specific historical contexts of Greco-Roman asceticism versus the practice of the Christian confession. Besley's paper theorizes Foucault's 'care of the self' through this analytic of truth-telling and confessional practices that are productive because "speaking the truth about oneself also makes, constitutes or constructs forms of one's self...[and] through these technologies a human being turns him or herself into a subject" (p. 85). The subject is dependent on knowledge of the self, telling the truth about oneself, and thus, confessing said truths. For my purposes, the intricacies of Classical Greek thought and practice are superseded by the necessity to determine how Foucault's practices of self are relevant to my project and to focus on the ways the subject is asked to know or care for the self under certain conditions and under certain norms, and in what ways this practice is itself ethical or about how the subject acts in relation to others. Of further relevance is this productive notion of confession aligned with Butler's (2004) work, and more broadly, the practices of the self. As I am interested in youth's gendered subjectivity, the confessional allows me to ask students about their own truth-telling experiences of gendered performativity and self-relationality in school spaces; furthermore, in the pursuit of just and democratic gender relations, I am interested in how such practices are inextricably tied to the incitement of a certain self-knowledge, governed by certain norms of gender.

#### **Butler on *gender performativity and the abject*.**

Butler's (1990) work on the performative nature of gender is also integral to my theoretical framework. A subject is gendered and works on the self through this gendered performance, itself a continuous and temporal thing. Central to her earlier work is the concept of the heterosexual matrix—a "grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized" and through which the "model of gender intelligibility...assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender" (Butler, 1990, p. 194). Aligned with Foucault's (1977) examination into relations of power, Butler (1990) wonders, "to what extent [do]...*regulatory practices* of gender formation and division constitute identity, the internal coherence of the subject, indeed, the self-identical status of the person?" (p. 23).

The gendered subject is made intelligible for its coherence to a regime of truth; for Butler that is compulsory heterosexuality. And in line with Foucault's examination into the subjectivation process through practices of self, Butler (1990) also aims to locate the "constitutive acts...to expose the contingent acts that create the appearance of a naturalistic necessity" (p. 44).

Thus, Butler (1990) rejects the Cartesian dualities of mind/body, and the notion of interiority, arguing instead that the categories of sex and gender are discursively produced, including their material components. No one body can exist *a priori* the performance of its gender. Gender is about its performativity: it "is 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"(Butler, 1990, pp. 43-44). This repeated stylization that is produced on the surface of the body includes "acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires [that] create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality" (Butler, 1990, p. 173).

For Butler, the "constitutive outside" (1993), especially in terms of its materiality, cannot be entirely nor exclusively outside discourse, although they *appear* as such. The body of a subject appears to be outside of the practices of discourse. However, employing Foucault's (1977) discourse on power/knowledge, Butler (1993) insists the very appearance of outside is

precisely the moment in which the power/discourse regime is most fully dissimulated and most insidiously effective...[and above all, most] successfully buries and masks the genealogy of power relations by which it is constituted. (p. 35)

The gendered subject is produced through the very mechanism that conceals its nature: gender is "a construction that regularly conceals its genesis" (Butler, 1997a, p. 405). To mark the invisible process then, Butler theorizes the position of transgender, or gender nonconforming identity, as residing at the limits of intelligibility and thus disrupting the social fiction of gender as coherent to sex. This position of the abject denotes the limits of intelligibility in order to maintain the "norms of intelligibility" (Butler, 1990, p. 23).

Indeed, these intelligible genders, those that cohere to biological sex and heterosexuality, are “thinkable only in relation to existing norms of continuity and coherence” (Butler, 1990, p. 23), or within the rules and norms that constitute them as normal. Where Foucault (1980) looks to the de-legitimized spaces or “subjugated knowledges” (p. 81) to understand power relations, Butler is concerned with the abject regions (1993) because the limits define legitimacy. She asks, “how does the materialization of the norm in bodily formation produce a domain of abjected bodies, a field of deformation, which, in failing to qualify as the fully human, fortifies those regulatory norms?” (Butler, 1993, p. 16). Those who “fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility” are “incoherent” or “discontinuous”, indeed, “the very notion of ‘the person’ is called into question” (Butler, 1990, p. 23). And yet, it is these bodies who fail to qualify, or matter (Butler, 1993) that directs attention to the fiction of the heterosexual system.

Following this tactic, to understand the processes through which gender is legitimated as well as how it depends on a certain form of policing its own borders of intelligibility, we should look to what is considered non-gendered, or less than, because for Butler (1993), these abject bodies (the transgender, the gender/sex nonconforming body) “might force a radical rearticulation of what qualifies as bodies that matter” (p. 16). Thus, coupling the two phases of my research, I have been able to include a variety of gendered and sexed bodies as “an open assemblage that permits multiple convergences and divergences” (Butler, 1990, p. 22). And to see how the washroom legitimates gender binaries and de-legitimizes other gender/sexed embodied performances, we must also see how it allows room for resistances to gender norms through a close examination of those who experience it every day as a way to understand the contingencies of the relations of power and the effects upon gendered subjectivities.

Youdell’s (2006) work is helpful in untangling some of Foucault’s and Butler’s theories but also in her application of them to an educational context. Youdell (2006) outlines Foucault’s disciplinary power to articulate how the subject is constituted through this and its effects within discourse. Of note for my project is her acknowledgement of Foucault’s (1977) “spatial distributions” within disciplinary power that “are concerned with enclosure and partitioning, the establishment of functional sites, and the ranking or

classification of bodies” (Youdell, 2006, p. 36). Specifically, how Foucault analyzes the classroom timetable as a compartmentalization of activity leads me to think about how washroom behaviour is permissible and in what ways. Youdell (2006) argues that schools form “the central sites of study...[and] can be understood as disciplinary institutions in which the discursive practices that constitute school life are permeated by the localized effects of disciplinary power” (p. 37). Her work situates the Foucauldian subject, who is associated with this “notion of power” (p. 37), in a contemporary school context. Even citing Foucault’s (1986, 1990b) later attempts to engage with a more self-aware subject through the practices of the self (in volumes two and three of *The History of Sexuality*), Youdell (2006) emphasizes this subject, “come[s] into being through the condition of subjectivation” (p. 42). This subject is also involved in “her/his own constitution...[through the] ‘practices of liberation’ *at the same time as* the constrained context in which this subject acts is indicated by ‘practices of subjection’” (emphasis in original; p. 42). The subject is not one who is able to operate without the constraints of the effects of power.

Youdell (2006) continues to explore the constitution of the subject through an examination into Butler’s (1993) work on the performative nature of discourse, which is also fundamental to my theoretical understandings of the gendered subject: “the schoolgirl and boy, the gifted and talented student, the student with emotional and behavioral difficulties, even the teacher, is so because he/she is designated as such” through discourse (Youdell, 2006, p. 42). These discourses function to conceal their operative effects, constructing the subject’s identity to appear to be fixed, innate, and *a priori* discourse, again as Butler (1990) and Foucault (1977) each contend. Youdell (2006) thinks of the *discursive performative* to think about how it can be deployed in educational contexts, namely, that which is silent, “through what is unspoken and what is not done” (p. 43). How a gender nonconforming student might be expected to conform to discourses of normalized notions of gender explains the constraining and constitutive effects of discursive power. And of most use is Youdell’s (2006) outline of how Butler conceives of the political agency of subjects: agency is discursive for the subject who is again, “simultaneously enabled and constrained through discourse” (p. 49). Within the



constraints of the subject who is excluded as abject or outsider lie the possibilities for the subject to

resist [the performative], [to] act outside the terms of this discourse,...and in so doing rest this ordinarily injurious performative out of its usual place in discourse as the aberrant, abnormal, outside and insist that [the injurious term] might not be a source of shame, pity and exclusion but something to be enjoyed, reveled in, or nothing at all. (Youdell, 2006, p. 49)

These practices of resistance are reinscriptions, according to Butler (1997), a way of thinking differently. Youdell (2006) insists they cannot occur through single instances but require “repetition and re-citation” (p. 50). Through Butler’s (1997) “performative politics”,

gifted students, clever students, challenging students, disabled students, special students, hardworking girls, naughty boys, boffins, swots, dumb kids, retards, rude girls, homeboys, gypsies, faggots, and dykes all remain, but they might all be made to mean differently. (Youdell, 2006, p. 50)

Categorization and its regulation might “remain”, but who gets counted and discounted and by what gendered performativities is the focus. Youdell (2006) concludes it is in the “minutiae of school life, its routine practices, mundane occurrences, and everyday interactions that students come to be performatively constituted” (p. 51) and where we must direct our efforts to see how the discourses of gender and sex, as one, constitute how students are constructed as certain types of learners and what is possible for them to be. Although I am not examining students as learners, their subjectivities as they are worked upon in schools is my interest. How these subjectivities are performatively and discursively exhibited, maintained, and regulated, especially in the spaces of and around the washroom, links a disciplinary technology to technologies of the self (Foucault, 1977, 1988a).

Applying Butler’s (1990) *gender performativity* theory to the discourse of space is the work of Gillian Rose (1999). In line with other geographers, Rose claims that space is relational and argues, “relationalities are performed, as constituted through iteration rather than through essence” (p. 248). Further, if gender is a doing, according to Butler, then “space is also a doing, ...[something that] does not pre-exist its doing, ...[and whose] doing is the articulation of relational performances” (p. 248). Rose also re-focuses Butler’s (1993) discussion of the abject to notice the sense of space; these

unlivable lives occupy a domain of unlivability, which “constitute[s] the defining limit of the subject’s domain” (Butler, 1993, p. 3). Furthermore, Rose explains Foucault’s (1977) disciplinary power is grounded in space: “the persistence of certain forms of spaces points to the persistence of certain configurations of power” (Rose, 1999, pp. 248-249). In Foucault’s use of space, Rose (1999) thinks of space as the “medium” through which “the flux and labor of power” operates (p. 249). Thus, a study of space is already implicated in one of disciplinary power and gendered performativities; or rather, these latter analytic categories are already imbued with a spatial sensibility.

As subjectivity understood as subjectivation (Foucault, 1980; Butler, 1990, 1993) marks part of my theoretical frame, the discourse of student voice is an appropriate extension: we know about student subjectivities through student voice. But it is not an unproblematic methodology (see Mazzei & Jackson, 2009). Cook-Sather (2002, 2006, 2007), Rudduck (2007) and Van Manen, McClelland, and Plihal (2007) advocate for student voices in educational research because these youth “have the knowledge and the position to shape what counts as education” (Cook-Sather, 2002, p. 3). Indeed, it is the “authorizing” of student perspectives that Cook-Sather argues will best inform school reform with a focus on how students themselves can “reconfigure power dynamics and discourse practices within existing realms of conversation about education and to create new forums” (p. 3) for students to self-advocate. In these discourses of voice, the student is an agentic subject engaging in “power dynamics” but with the potential to resist or work against such relations of power provided students have “legitimate and valued spaces within which [they] can speak” (Cook-Sather, 2002, p. 4). Although Cook-Sather (2002) reviews various epistemological perspectives on student voice (i.e. constructivism, postmodern and poststructural feminism), her language is couched in a discourse that is aligned with liberalist or humanist views: students are “active creators of their knowledge rather than recipients of others’ knowledge” (p. 5). In this way, Cook-Sather departs from my epistemological position: favouring self-knowledge over received knowledge, she does not appear to subscribe to the notion of “double directionality” (Davies, 2006) of subjecthood, whereby the subject is actor and acted upon; neither does she deploy an analytics of the practices of the self under relations of power (Foucault, 1977, 1988a, 1990a). However, in a later book, she does offer that the researcher will be

one involved in such a dual operation: “we as researchers must translate—and allow to be translated—our attitudes, approaches, and indeed, ourselves” (Cook-Sather, 2007, p. 829). If not the subject of the participant, then the subject of the researcher is one whose subjectivity (if not subjectivation) will undergo a transformation. As Rudduck (2007) explains, advocating for student voice is primarily a practical move because it allows teachers “insight into what learning and the conditions of learning look like from the perspective of different students”, as well as it re-arranges the hierarchical relationship between teacher and student to “one that is more collaborative” (p. 587). Van Manen et al. (2007) achieve a dual purpose in their chapter: first, they contextualize their work in the naming of student experiences, and then they argue that actual experiences of naming students is part of the same thing: “when a teacher calls a student by a name, then something is called into being: the student as a unique person” (p. 89). Regardless of the exact political/epistemological stance these researchers adopt, they contribute a justification for hearing and making room for student voice in educational research.

Student voice is not to be valorized as a truth-claim, however, according to Mazzei and Jackson (2009). In their edited volume of essays (Jackson & Mazzei, 2009), the authors aim to de-authorize the centrality of voice in poststructural qualitative methodologies in favour of a more complex, nuanced and qualified researcher position that acknowledges the problems embedded in writing research, and denies the rights to “self-pardoning” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 3) actions such as nods to reflexivity and so forth. They recommend researchers “work the limits of voice” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 3) to think about “the epistemological assumptions that continue to haunt our methodological practices” (p. 3). To contribute to a “more fertile practice” of research knowledge making, they also urge the analyst-researcher to find “the voice that escapes easy classification and that not does not make easy sense” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 4) which may or may not happen in the inquiry process of writing (see Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). I choose to spend my analytical time focusing on these not “easy” voices, these subjugated voices, that may be “transgressive” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 4) simply because they are not unified, stable or singular in order to (de)subjugate them (Stryker, 2006). In this sense, it is not the voice of the gendered minority that I aim to revere, but any and all voices contributing to my study to help build the knowledge of

student action and experience in school spaces considered through a lens of gendered subjectivity.

### **Spatiality and the washroom.**

After a detailed consideration of the constitutive processes of the subject through Foucault's genealogical studies, the remaining imperative is to outline the contribution of his studies on the theorization of space, focusing primarily on his conceptualization around the heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). Although a significant concept, his interests in space and spatiality can be traced back throughout his career, before the inception of the heterotopia. His work on disciplinary power (1977) and the constitution of the subject investigated elements of materiality:

Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc. In other words, rather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects. (Foucault, 1980, p. 97)

Butler (1993) writes that for Foucault, "power operates...in the *constitution* of the very materiality of the subject, in the principle which simultaneously forms and regulates the 'subject' of subjectivation" (p. 34). The subject is produced through the disciplinary effects within space. The spatial is the material (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault wrote about the washrooms at the 19<sup>th</sup> century École de Normal whereby the "latrines had been installed with half-doors, so that the supervisor on duty could see the head and legs of the pupils, and also with side walls sufficiently high 'that those inside cannot see one another'" (p. 173). This school was designed as a "mechanism for training" and "a pedagogical machine" (p. 172) to make docile bodies out of students through the constant panoptic surveillance available to the administration. I have noted above the notion of the panopticon, Foucault's (1977) interpretation from Jeremy Bentham's prison design, which offered a way to think about the techniques within disciplinary power. Beyond the latrines, in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, in the

chapter, “The Repressive Hypothesis”, Foucault (1990a) considered schools of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in terms of their architectural layout and the implications for disciplinary power tactics and operations:

But one only has to glance over the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organization: the question of sex was a constant preoccupation. The builders considered it explicitly. The organizers took it permanently into account...The space for classes, the shape of the tables, the planning of the recreation lessons, the distribution of the dormitories (with or without partitions, with or without curtains), the rules for monitoring bedtime and sleep periods – all this referred, in the most prolix manner, to the sexuality of children. (pp. 27-28)

Butler (1993) writes that Foucault’s concept of the material, especially in terms of his study of prisons, was not to frame space as existing prior to the power relations that occur within it but as something that is also constituted *through* these power relations, while also constituting the subject within:

there is no prison prior to its materialization. Its materialization is coextensive with its investiture with power relations, and materiality is the effect and gauge of this investment. The prison comes to be only within the field of power relations, but more specifically, only to the extent that it is invested or saturated with such relations, that such a saturation is itself formative of its very being. (p. 34)

Foucault was concerned to analyze space in relation to disciplinary power as well as in relation to his work on early Christian practices of the confession that paradoxically repressed and incited talk of sex in the confessing subject thereby producing a certain ‘truth’ of the self through these sorts of practices, and a certain sort of subject. His interest in schools, along with prisons, and psychiatric institutions, among others, marks his concern for how the subject in each of these sites is produced, whether as abnormal (i.e. the prisoner, the mad person, etc.) or not. Looking ahead, in his interview with the editors of *Hérodote*, a geography journal, Foucault (1982) claimed he wished to pursue further studies on disciplinary space: “it should be possible to conduct *an* archaeology of geographical knowledge” (emphasis in original; p. 67).

In terms of the contribution to spatiality, very little rivals the infamous lecture from 1967, under the publication title, *Of Other Spaces*, that introduced the heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) and heterotopology (which describes the process of charting history through its places), concepts that have garnered wide and prolonged

interest and interpretation. Some critique calls it incomplete or incomprehensible, and it has been read and reread, interpreted and mis-interpreted (Soja, 1996, p. 162). For Foucault (1988a), the subject is constituted by technologies of power and self; furthermore, space is produced by and produces the same subject through these technologies. As the subject is a conditional one, both constrained and constitutive (see Foucault, 1980, 1990a), the heterotopia is also ambiguous and contingent in nature. In the following section, I outline how Foucault's heterotopia shapes my understanding of the school washroom.

### *The heterotopic washroom.*

The heterotopia, although charting a new direction in Foucault's genealogical pursuits is also very much an extension of his work on the subject and power, with a focus on a spatialized history. Embedded within his dominant themes of power and subjectivity and sexuality, space is likely an important analytic focus. Foucault's third and fifth principles of heterotopias figure most significantly into my study because they describe inherent contradictions:

Third principle. The heterotopia is capable of *juxtaposing* in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves *incompatible*...

Fifth principle. Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. *To get in one must have certain permission and make certain gestures*...

...There are others...that seem to be pure and simple openings, but that generally hide curious exclusions. *Everyone can enter into these heterotopic sites, but in fact this is only an illusion: We think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded* [emphasis added](Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 26).

The third principle I will explore later, but the fifth principle, in combination with the description of those spaces labeled "others", best frame my study. A gender nonconforming body may be one who immediately experiences the washroom as a heterotopic space of this sort: by entering, "excluded", or by having one's entry denied altogether—depending on the type and degree of visibility of gender transgression in the particular body—this gendered subject experiences a heterotopic washroom every day.

The entrances are regulated in two ways: institutionally, through a heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990) and heteronormative and cisgendered framework that segregates bodies according to sex; and socially, through the most powerful of panoptic gazes from their peers. The entry is compulsory only because of the basic human right to deal with bodily functions in a civilized manner. But this gender nonconforming body, no matter how they identify or not, but by virtue of how they are perceived, is subjected also to these rites and permissions of acting within a certain gendered expectation, complete with appropriate dress, gestures, and other visual signals. The right body must enter the right space and conduct oneself appropriately, according to dominant social rule. The addendum of “other” spaces is most significant because if we are all excluded—“we think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 26)—we must all be subject to these same rites and rules, this same gender-appropriate conduct and appearance. No one is exempt; it may be more visible for the gender nonconforming body to have to navigate the anxiety-inducing experiences of choosing the “right” washroom, but each person operates at a “neutralized” and subconscious level in order for the entire system of disciplinary power to exist and perpetuate.

The heterotopia is a promising analytic category Foucault developed to describe spaces in society that are real, but simultaneously exist outside of the real as an “other place” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 24). Or, in other words, heterotopias are spaces that are legitimated, but contain the contradiction of also being places of illegitimacy; they contain actions that cohere and support cultural norms while simultaneously resisting them; this possibility of resistance in the juxtapositionality of heterotopias is the third principle as outlined above. Through this ambiguity or juxtaposition of several incompatibilities, I theorize the space of the washroom precisely because the space is normalized and normalizing and thus appears benign, but is also highly problematic for certain bodies that cannot fit the binary gender structure it supports. Through its normalization, it is a space that is also assumed to be unproblematic for cisgendered bodies or bodies who pass as non-transgressive. However, how its structure and its usage contribute to the ongoing performance (Butler, 1990) and regulation of gender binaries, the reproduction of a binary gendered regime, is also how it is a remarkable space for

analysis. Foucault concentrated his genealogical studies of the effects of power on the marginal spaces in society: the asylum, the prison, the hospital; he wished to understand how bodies in those spaces, who were then also characterized as liminal subjects, the abnormals (Foucault, 1997b)—or as Butler (1993) would mark them, the “abject”—were produced as such subjects in part due to the spatialized notion of power. But the position of these abnormals—the insane, the prisoner, or the patient—align only partially to my study. Gender nonconformists would certainly occupy the position of the abject and how they experience the washroom in a school could immediately denote the discourse of exclusion outlining the regime of gender regulation under which we all operate. But this focus would ignore the entirety of Foucault’s intentions; Foucault did not want to study these liminal spaces only to become a specialist in the marginal or the historical, but to show how disciplinary power in these spaces is translated and transposed upon other contemporary contexts. Essentially an analysis of these spaces teaches us how we conduct ourselves within our everyday lives as we are produced through institutional discourses and practices of power. Foucault (1982) expressed, “we need a historical awareness of our present circumstances” (p. 209) so that we can “understand how we have been trapped in our own history” (p. 210).

Thus, the space of the washroom is constructed to be normal and safe, but is also experienced to be dangerous and problematic for some gendered bodies. This duality marks it as a heterotopia. But the complexities continue. In his lecture on heterotopias (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), Foucault conducts a mini genealogy of lived space: he begins in Medieval times where space was about delineating the sacred from the profane, through to the Renaissance with Galileo conceptualizing space as containing movement, and finally to modernity where space is defined as one of relations: “we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites”; the analysis of these sites directs us to “describe these sites by looking for the set of relations by which a given site can be defined” (p. 23). An analysis of the lived experience of the space of the washroom in schools requires this component of relationality, how the space is connected to, supported by, or informing the space that surrounds it in the greater school building. Again, its very relationality to the school as a whole justifies a study of such a bounded, cellular and normalized space as the washroom.



However, Foucault complicates the analytics further by adding that his particular interest is in the sites

that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way *as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations* [emphasis added] that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect. These spaces, as it were, are linked with all the others, which however contradict all the other sites. (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 24)

This notion of contradiction signals the third principle that indicates heterotopias are real spaces containing the juxtaposition of incompatible spaces operating simultaneously. To transpose the analytics of heterotopias upon the space of the washroom is to acknowledge this internal contradiction: how the space can be both linked to and contradict (or work against) all others to which it is in relation. In other words, how the space can be safe and also dangerous. The washroom then is not a simple mirror, but a potential inversion of the reflection of its surroundings: it has the potential to continue to do the work that occurs in the school at large, but also to invert, reverse, or contradict those workings. It is this last qualification of the space of the heterotopia that is most promising for my analysis: because I do not wish merely to replicate the work that has already contributed to our knowledge of the washroom as a problematic and dangerous site for transgender and queer or gender nonconforming youth, my concern is to locate a revised perspective with which to understand the experiences that occur within. And that revision occurs in the articulation of the contradictory nature, the potential resistant nature that the space invites. In this way, coupled with the discourse of disciplinary power upon the subject, I investigate the capacities of queering and transgenering of the space to find something productive beyond the discourse of violence of gender nonconforming youth.

Beyond inversions, heterotopias can also “suspect” or “neutralize” that which they reflect in the greater context. To “suspect” points to a criticism of the whole; in my case studies, I attempt to outline the school’s current “gender regime” in order to establish a whole against which the localized practices within the washroom can be examined. Indeed, an examination of the washroom incites my suspicion that what is completely normalized outside its space, what even legitimizes its very presence and usage, is situated within the gendered binary system. But, theoretical access into the washroom as an analytic space may be complicated by the fact that it is also a space that

“neutralizes” its relations to the outside; in this case, through its very operation, its very usage, it is a space that works to conceal, to neutralize the conditions that make it possible. As Butler (1990) in following Foucault, explains, power is both juridical and productive whereby the “law produces and then conceals the notion of ‘a subject before the law’ in order to invoke that discursive formation as a naturalized foundational premise that subsequently legitimates that law’s own regulatory hegemony” (p. 3). The mechanism of power is insidious because it operates to conceal its own existence.

The space of the washroom is one that is also bounded and specific, and quite local which is precisely where Foucault focuses his genealogical studies. Foucault recommends conducting an analysis of power ascending from the most cellular, local, specific capillaries of power—the “cells and most basic units of society” (Foucault, 1980, p. 100)—to the macro, institutionalized centres of power effects. Foucault’s concern is “to understand how these mechanisms [of power at the local level] come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole” (p. 101). To begin at the micro level is to notice the effects of power in ways that are impossible otherwise; indeed, through examining “daily struggles at grass roots level” is to find “where the concrete nature of power became visible” (Foucault, 1980, p. 116). At the centralized, generalized source of power at the macro level, the mechanism of power works so effectively as to conceal the mishaps or problems associated with it. One would never see the real effects of power at the level where its main operation is to conceal its workings (1980). The washroom is a local space whereby the most basic of human functioning takes place; it is also a single unit, with cellular divisions within, that can exemplify the discursive and material techniques of power at a macro level, that of the school’s gender regime and its discursive community.

### *The pastoral power of the washroom.*

Considering the last remarks of the fifth principle of heterotopias regarding the rites and activities of purification, Foucault (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) offers the examples of the Scandinavian spa or the hammam (a Turkish bath) each for their hygienic or hygienico-religious purpose. But an analysis of the space of the washroom may be able to include both, especially if deploying Cavanagh’s (2010) analysis in queering

bathrooms. Here she equates gender regulation with hygiene intending to show “how modern lavatories are gendered and shaped by a white hygienic superego” (p. 6) which marks “gender variance and homosexuality [as] linked to dirt, disease, and public danger” (p. 7). At its literal level, the washroom is a place devoted to hygiene. Yet, examine the practices of such hygiene, the physical structure of facilities and the layout of such and we may figure the space is constructed upon a religious principle: the cleansing of the masses for submission to a higher order. Both the washroom and a religious operation work to individualize bodies, divide them through stalls (the toilet cubicle; the Catholic confessional), and then direct them to cleanse the body (or part) whilst in the presence of each other as witnesses. The confessional booth is a place where bodies are incited to reveal and repent for their sins for the purposes of preparing their souls to be cleansed in public through communion (the reception of the Eucharist). By entering the space of the public washroom, one is compelled to confess, even to subject one’s body to the architectural and symbolic confines of the closeted stall, or to produce the truth (Foucault, 1990a, p. 58) of one’s gendered self; by entering a stall, one is confessing or exposing something about the self, of the body and of identity. The toilet stall is a reproduction of the confessional in secular contemporary practices that incite a certain practice of the self under certain regulatory norms and conditions. Foucault (1982) introduced the seminal idea that the confession “is linked with a production of truth—the truth of the individual himself” (p. 214). The “confession was, and still remains, the general standard governing the production of the true discourse on sex” (Foucault, 1990a, p. 63); I interpret that concept to include a discourse on gender that is framed to be true, or right and is exercised through a subject’s subjectivation within the binary gender regime.

I am not literally framing the washroom as a religious site, but consider its basic elements and operations as one that embodies, through its design and usage, the principles and techniques of a religious site whereby bodies move and operate upon each other in much the same way; the public washroom operates with similar techniques of power that also formed church practices. There is a combination of private activity and public witnessing in both. There is submission to the rules of order of the space; there is the facing of the self (either through confession to one’s confessor, or in the washroom

mirror in the presence of other cleansing bodies at sinks). How power operates upon bodies in an institutionalized/public space does not differentiate between secular or religious sites. Foucault's (1990a) work on the compulsory talk of sex in relationships of pastoral power, in his genealogy on the history of sex, undergirds my thinking. By analyzing the historical techniques of power by the church on bodies (Foucault, 1982, 1990a), Foucault is able again to transpose his findings to a contemporary secular context: pastoral power "has spread and multiplied outside the ecclesiastical institution" to form "a new pastoral power" (1982, p. 214-5). Foucault (1977, 1982) studied the translation of pastoral power to the spaces of the psychoanalyst's office, the space of a classroom, or the office of the physician treating a patient. I have investigated through speaking with students who experience the washroom in their everyday lives in school, how this space is embedded within disciplinary power (suggesting a kind of pastoral power) only to root it more firmly in the analytics of heterotopias.

### **Spatial and Queer/Trans Analyses of the Washroom**

To elaborate my thinking on this heterotopic space, I turn to other theorists, feminist geographers and those working in spatial studies, and queer and transgender theorists who problematize the space of the bathroom for genderqueer or gender nonconforming folk, especially those whose work theorizes the toilet, the bathroom, or the urinal. First, the bathroom problem is an essential discourse derived from queer and transgender frameworks and must lay the foundation for a queer theorizing of this space. Second, I will tend to other analyses of the space of the toilet.

#### **The bathroom problem.**

The bathroom problem is significant not only for its contributions to problematizing the under-theorized space of the toilet, but also because it allows us to see the margins of gender normalization. Butler (1993) argues for the limits of intelligibility: by entering these spaces that butt up against the edges of what is normalized, without exceeding these limits, we understand what is included and what is then excluded. The realm of the abject, or the unintelligible, reminds us how rigid the system of regulation and surveillance operates upon and through bodies in perpetual and often unchanging motion.

By tending to these spaces, or attempting to notice the edges of intelligibility, the bathroom as problematic space begins to tell us how the bathroom is not a neutral or benign space. The taken-for-granted attitude that the bathroom is efficient, safe, and a non-issue, is dismantled through Butler's analytics.

Thus, we can turn to how Halberstam, Rasmussen, and others have experienced and theorize the bathroom as problematic and notice their contributions to the discourse of gender normalization beyond its effects on only the sexually and gendered minoritized populations. In one of Halberstam's (1998) seminal works, *Female Masculinity*, ze<sup>vi</sup> introduces the concept of the bathroom problem (p. 20), beginning with hir<sup>vii</sup> own experience of gender misrecognition in the airport bathroom. It was in this space, one that requires individuals to literally move through space and time, that led to higher levels of gender policing and "an intensified version of a larger 'bathroom problem'" (p. 21), as a way to fix something in such unfixable circumstances, Halberstam argues. For the genderqueer or gender nonconforming individual, the binary gendered washrooms incite fear and anxiety because their bodies are not cohesively linked to their sex, or they embody a gender ambiguity that unsettles not only the gender order, but also others' perceptions of the norm. Yet for Halberstam (1998), this anxiety over unreadable gendered bodies is unfounded and puzzling: ze notes that because "there are very few people who are completely unreadable in terms of their gender" (p. 20), there is an element of elasticity to gender norms; yet this elasticity is also precisely why the binaries are so persistent and survive. If very few bodies could inhabit these polar locales of masculinity and femininity, then the system would have to be re-worked. Because only the gender ambiguous bodies, albeit in the minority, are the un-locatable bodies, their deviance is insufficient grounds to re-work a system that is so workable for so many other bodies. I maintain it is through an examination of these stories of gender non-conformity that the regime of gender regulation can be unearthed and scrutinized for its implication upon all gendered bodies. Even those people whose bodies do pass or fit are subject to regulatory practices, both as subject and object, and beg for attention to their plight also.

These gender nonconformers are subjected to harassment, ridicule, or gender regulation and punishment simply for entering the public space of the washroom. Rasmussen's (2009) experiences align with Halberstam's in that she too, in embodying gender nonconformity, became the subject of gender regulation in the public washroom. Arguing that these circumstances teach us that toilets are not only structural realities, but contribute to the social organizing of our bodies is an invaluable insight into the discourse of the bathroom problem:

Toilets don't just tell us where to go; they also tell us who we are, where we belong, and where we don't belong. I therefore consider the space of the toilet using a post-structuralist theoretical perspective that sees space, architecture, sex and gender as things that are relational, and thus constantly renegotiated. Such a framework enables a consideration of some of the ubiquitous assumptions that underpin school toilets and the implications these have for all members of the community on a daily basis. (Rasmussen, 2009, p. 439)

Looking to the bathroom problem in schools puts Rasmussen's work in a necessarily invaluable position for my project. Theorizing youth subjectivities within this space, Rasmussen argues against a politics of gender undoing, preferring to continue the project of gender theorizing precisely because gender "is something [she] can't do without, and definitely something that [she] cannot avoid, or be freed from" (p. 439) even in spite of her desire to eradicate the gender binaries. And her focus on the toilet is only as a "useful point of departure" (Rasmussen, 2009, p. 440) to consider how gender is relational, and this toilet space as integral to gender regulation is also relational to other spaces within schools. It is at this point of "departure" and "relationality" that I borrow from Rasmussen's analysis of the bathroom problem. My theorizing does not isolate either the materiality or the analytic qualities of the bathroom, but consider them in tandem, in strict intertwinings with each other and the operations of gender regulation in the school environment at large.

Other work that problematizes the bathroom is also the work of queer and transgender theorists. Sally Munt (1998), in *Butch/Femme*, writes about the public toilet as a "discomfort station" (p. 202), particularly those in truck stops, because for the genderqueer or gender nonconforming person, choosing where one's body fits according to the available structures is certainly not one generating rest or comfort, as the euphemisms suggest. Preferring the disabled toilet, Munt calls this her "third option" and

primarily because it is a single occupant room, it can be a space that she temporarily queers: it is a safe space in which she can “yield to a vulnerability...and momentarily procure an interval from the gendered public environment, and psychically replenish” (p. 202). And yet, she concedes this third space demarcates the user as strange, disabled, or ungendered: it is itself a “borderline,...an anachronistic designation,...simultaneously dis- and en-abling” (Munt, 1998, p. 203). At this point, I highlight the ambiguity of such a space: according to Foucault’s notion of heterotopias (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), the space is one of contrasts: it is an alternative place with some relation to the outside spaces but simultaneously inverting the relations to that surround. Munt (1998) captures this paradox in detailing the experience of the washroom as one that “enables” and simultaneously “disables”. Thus, the washroom, at least fortified by Munt’s explication of the disabled toilet, is heterotopic. For the normatively gendered person too it must also contain an element of ambiguity: how it is normalized but also contrived, or how it can be safe and yet also strange or anxiety-provoking, are contrasts understood best within the framework of the heterotopia.

### **The space of the bathroom.**

Barcan (1999) examines space in Australian terms, specifically in this chapter, the urinal. Beginning with the notion of the normal body, or the imaginary body imparting a certain wholistic, homogenous body logic, Barcan applies Freud’s idea that technology is an extension of this body to the way space is experienced in domestic and public spaces. Noting the relationship between the naming of rooms in the Australian house (similar to the North American lexicon) to the functions of the body (i.e. playroom, dining room, living room), Barcan also differentiates the spaces that contain functions deemed more culturally private or taboo: these spaces, the bedroom, the bathroom, are named after their furniture rather than an explicit body part or function (p. 78). The significance of these taboo spaces is that they “produce a particularly fraught, complex and semiotically loaded spatiality” (Barcan, 1999, p. 78) and destroys the coherency of body logic; in other words, the notion that one universal body exists not only denies cultural contingency, but also may “ignore the experiences of certain groups of people and limit alternatives” (p. 76). In this way, Barcan’s analysis of the spatiality of the urinal is

already sensitive to the aims of a queer or gender nonconformity epistemology, yet not explicitly situated as such because her preference is for outlining the “scopic regime” (p. 82) of the men’s room, focusing on the experiences of men in this “panoptic technology” (p. 84). Theorizing the space as one of “architectural regulation” (Barcan 1999, p. 84), Barcan uses Edelman’s (1996) work to differentiate between the spaces of the cubicle and the urinal and then to think about their alignment with discourses of the private and the public: the most tabooed body part, the penis, Barcan argues, is allowed to be on display in this space of the urinal, indeed, is required, with the necessity that “no one must be allowed to think anything of it” (p. 84). Mapping the semiotics of the men’s room in this way articulates certain “unspoken laws” (Barcan, 1999, p. 84) and highlights the process of distinguishing between the normal and the deviant in this space.

Using Giddens’ theory of structuration, Shilling (1991) links the study of space to schooling noting the gap in existing research as evident where space is “implicit or only partially acknowledged in most studies of classrooms, schools and the education [sic] system” (p. 23). Drawing on the spatial aspects of structuration, like Giddens, Shilling prefers the agentic notion of the subject as an actor within space, not unwillingly implicated by space in an overly deterministic sort of way, but seeing that spatial structures provide “rules and resources which women and men draw on and have to take account of in their daily lives” (p. 27). In this paper, Shilling does not conduct empirical research herself, but reviews other ethnographic studies of schools, specifically focusing on the gendered relations of boys and men dominating girls and women through “patriarchal ‘rules’ and ‘resources’” (p. 24). But what is most useful from her theorizing is that structures (within and of space) are “both the medium and outcome of social intercourse” (Shilling, 1991, p. 24), or that “spatial settings...serve to *produce* social relations and personal identities, and are in turn *produced* by the practices of individuals located within them” (p. 27). In this dual action, producing and being produced by, Shilling maps Foucault’s (1977) dynamic of disciplinary power onto the semiotics of space. In Foucault’s (1980) discourse, if power produces certain sorts of subjects, then these subjects, in their complicity, also produce power relations in their interactions with each other, marking the process as chain-like or operating as a network (p. 98), rather than in terms of power as a commodity, which is a populist notion (or an understanding



of sovereign, rather than disciplinary, power). And like Foucault, Shilling prefers to study not the reasons why certain gender relations exist and are perpetuated within space, but *how* these operations occur and in what insidious ways: as Foucault (1980) insists, “one needs to investigate historically, and beginning from the lowest level, how mechanisms of power have been able to function” (p. 100) through various techniques, procedures and technologies. Although not explicitly referencing Foucault, I am interpreting Shilling’s work in Foucauldian terms to serve better my own project and its theoretical underpinnings.

### **The washroom as closeted space.**

Through literary analysis, Sedgwick’s (2008) *Epistemology of the Closet* provides the seminal work outlining the queerness of the closet as a construct of secrecy and self-disclosure. However, she refrains from using the term ‘queer’ except in the 2008 preface to qualify her intentions that queer is the “resistance to treating homo-heterosexual categorization—still so very volatile an act—as a done deal, a transparently empirical fact about any person” (Sedgwick, 2008, p. xvi) arguing instead that binarisms of sexuality, established as opposites, are indeed “not a natural given but a historical process, still incomplete today and ultimately impossible but characterized by potent contradictions and explosive effects” (p. xvi). Sharing Butler’s (2004) perspective, Sedgwick explains these sexual categories are contingent upon each other rather than fixed or closed entities. And she defines the nature of the closet construct as invariably linked to homophobia, even though it is “vibrantly resonant...for many modern oppressions” (Sedgwick, 2008, p. 75). Indeed, she observes the male is central to the organization of meaning in Western culture, thus colouring the “closet” as a predominantly gay trope (p. 72). And yet, I wish to transfer some of its symbolic significance to the space of the washroom to unpack the operations of gender as well as sex categorization and regulation that are performed within and produced by such a public space. I do not see it as an unreasonable extension to apply the closet as a construct of homophobia to the workings of genderism (Browne, 2004) because the two are overlapping systems of oppression (see “heterosexual matrix” in Butler, 1990, 2004). For Sedgwick, new closets are arising all the time for queer individuals in the form of

restrictive interactions with bosses, colleagues, and so forth, that require the act of closeting for the protection of the queer person: in much the same way as Foucault (1977) explains the classification of docile bodies through disciplinary power, Sedgwick (2008) alludes to this mechanism in the self-policing of queers, subjected to the gaze of authority figures who “extract...new surveys, new calculations, new draughts and requisitions of secrecy and disclosure” (p. 68). The public washroom might be one of these new sorts of closets, one arising spontaneously for certain subjects/youth who must navigate the sexual and gender surveillance of their peers each time they choose to use this public space.

Certainly deriving from Sedgwick’s (2008) work on the epistemology of the closet, Brown’s (2000) book theorizes the closet as a spatialized metaphor. He points out the lack of spatiality in queer theory - even in poststructuralism, more generally – and aims to pair his analysis of the closet with the aims of geographers: to think about context, embodiment, and the material beyond the textual. Preferring to extend certain social theories, Brown positions his own spatialized closet alongside the work of Butler’s (1990) performativity and Foucault’s (1988a) governmentality (Brown, 2000, p. 21) to name a few, but also situates them within case studies dominated by experiences of gay men. Reflexively admitting a limitation in scope, Brown’s epistemology delves into only certain closeted experiences, denying those of the transgender queer, for example (p. 23). In this way, Brown’s work contributes to a situated notion of queerness (i.e. the gay experience, but not the lesbian or bisexual, for instance) and refrains from spatializing all forms of queerness. My work, albeit not exclusively about queerness but situated within an epistemology of genderqueerness or transgressions in gender, can only do what Brown himself contributes: to notice a gap in thinking and extend the dialogue from Butler to Brown to my own understanding of the washroom as a form of spatialized closet.

Among an extensive literature review and an articulation of the gaps in thinking about the closet in queer theory, geography, and poststructuralism, what is particularly useful in Brown’s (2000) work is the coupling of space (and time) with power/knowledge. Citing Foucault’s (1980) discourse, Brown (2000), argues space is not just representational of power, but “materializes it” or produces it through concealing,

erasing, or denying inhabitants and “in ways more multiple and complex than the closing of a closet door implies” (p. 3). Brown situates his work “at the intersection of [the closet’s] materiality and its metaphor” and hopes to move beyond the closet as a metaphor only of oppression, because “whereness enables and constrains social relations” (p. 3).

Using comparison theory (which he later refutes as being too simplistic compared to an extended poststructural analysis), Brown (2000) describes this metaphoric/material closet as a place whose “*location* and *distance* suggests proximity to some wider (more important, more immediate, more central) room, but it’s a certain kind of proximity: one that limits *accessibility* and *interaction*” (emphases in original; p. 7). The closet interacts with the room in which it is located. To translate this particular dynamic of relationality to the washroom is to use Foucault’s notion of heterotopic spaces (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) whereby the closet, as a heterotopia, is related to the larger space surrounding it, but also is separated from it, concealing its inhabitants, segregating them from full participation, thus potentially *inverting* the social relations of the closet with its environment. Again, the ambivalence of relationality and inversion are two elements of a heterotopia, according to Foucault, and are evident in Brown’s understanding of the metaphoric closet. However, Brown complicates his analysis with the help of poststructuralism, citing the crisis of representation through Nietzsche’s and Derrida’s work, arguing “there can be no proto- or pre-discursive language that escapes metaphoric moves” (2000, p. 12). Citing Sedgwick’s (2008) poetic and paradoxical language in *Epistemology of the Closet* as an example of slippages in meaning, Brown (2000) asserts Sedgwick’s work is decidedly textual and aspatial. However, he also insists poststructuralism can conceive of spatiality in a fluid way, subverting the “very stability” of the closet as spatialized metaphor, and allowing us “insights into how we know the closet” (p. 15).

The public binary washroom is a form of closet: it conceals and confines its users; it is a space that segregates its occupants from the environment; but it also excludes other bodies that cannot fit into one of its two allotted options. It is a double exclusion: isolating bodies from each other in a Foucauldian (1977) disciplinary sense,

and then separating out those abject bodies that fail to matter (Butler, 1993). And the connotation of the closet as metaphor is based in a context of heteronormativity that stifles and conceals queerness and genderqueerness. Brown (2000) conjectures as to the origin of the term *water closet* and its relationship to this metaphoric closet for queers, as does Sedgwick's (2008) outline of definitions of the closet from the *OED*: "1. A room for privacy or retirement; a private room; an inner chamber;...Such a room as the place of private devotion;...Short for 'closet of ease', 'water-closet'" (p. 65). Interestingly, these definitions incorporate the analytical qualities that I highlight are applicable to the washroom space. The private room speaks to the literal design intention of a washroom cubicle, but the paradoxical reality that it is more often practiced (and suffered) as a public space. The place of private devotion connotes the pastoral power of the washroom as I have elaborated earlier, using Cavanagh's (2010) work and a Foucauldian analysis. And the allusion to the "water-closet" as a space of ease (Sedgwick, 2008, p. 65), although perhaps just a retired signifier, is now laden with contradictory implications: how the public washroom is neither one of rest nor comfort (Munt, 1998) for certain queer and genderqueer individuals we already know.

But the binary washroom is a metaphor situated alongside this queer discourse, if not overlapping, because the washroom space is exclusionary not only for genderqueer individuals but lesbian, gay, and bisexual queers also. Sexuality can be monitored and feared within heteronormativity in much the same way gender is policed. The public washroom becomes its own metaphor for the gender regime of heteronormativity and coherence to normative gender and how this regime operates in a highly regulatory way. Both the closet and the washroom can perform as spatialized metaphors for the purpose of a poststructural analysis of gender relations and regulation.

## Conclusion

Through Foucault's (1977, 1980, 1982, 1988a, 2005) analytics of disciplinary power, subjectivation, technologies of the self, and care of the self, I add Butler's (1990, 1993, 1995) work on gender performativity and gendered subjectivities to conceive of the gendered subject as one capable of resistance, but embedded simultaneously within the effects of disciplinary power. As an extension of his thinking, heterotopic spaces mark

how Foucault (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) applies disciplinary power to the material. And it is through these theoretical lenses I examine how students in schools think about their physical space of the washroom, its regulation of gender through local practices, and its implications on their own performed gender. Further, because I witnessed some moments of both submission to normalized expectations of gender and mastery over these norms (Davies, 2006), I conceive of these complexities all within the analytics of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1980). And following Foucault's (1980) advice to a proper analysis of power—to examine the effects of power on gender performativities—I go to the most local level of gender striations within a school context, the washroom.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

To examine the theoretical and empirical studies involving the intersections among spatiality, washrooms, and subjectivation, with a focus on gender and transgender lenses, is to make some difficult decisions about what is most relevant and what is not.

Furthermore, it is a challenge to ascertain what studies contribute more broadly and what inform specific understandings of Foucauldian and Butlerian thought, especially involving the works on disciplinary space and heterotopias (Foucault, 1977; Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), and subjectification and bodily matters (Butler, 1990, 1993). Many studies are related in some way; some contribute more to my theoretical understandings rather than informing other pragmatic, empirical decisions, and so these I have included within the first chapter, especially those concerning interpretations of Foucauldian heterotopias and Butlerian subjectivations. Furthermore, specific queer theory informing the “bathroom problem” I have foregrounded in the previous chapter. For this chapter, in an attempt to be economical and comprehensive, I have divided the literature review into two broad areas: those studies involving spatiality concerns and/or studies that consider the specificity of the public toilet space; and, those studies involving youth and subjectivities, especially those concerning gender. Within this last category on subjectivation, I include studies that look at the violence and harm done to LGBTQ groups not because it is the lens through which I look at sexual and gender minoritized groups, but because it provides necessary background and context for how these groups have been studied. Overall, I outline how each study is relevant and contributes to my understanding in a specific way.

### Toilet and Space

The following studies theorize either the spatial relations within the public toilet, spanning across various perspectives, disciplines or theoretical frameworks (i.e. legal field, public activism, Foucauldian analyses, etc.), or examine toilet usage and the materiality of the toilet itself. The gap in the literature that is common across these varied studies is that little work exists of spatial studies in schools (except for the more

notable work of McGregor, 2004a, and O'Donoghue, 2006, 2007); little work exists focusing on the toilet space in schools (for a preschool context of study see Millei & Gallagher, 2011); and no work exists of these spatial studies in a Canadian context, whether of the toilet or not; and thus, little to no work exists of spatial analyses in schools in Canada.

Lunblad, Hellstrom, and Berg's (2009) study looks at the regulation of youth toilet behaviour by school officials, namely teachers, who create rules and timelines for private acts of bodily emissions. Based on literature of childhood incontinence, and other related health concerns, this qualitative study included interviews of 16 youth (9-16 years old) asking such questions as "what [is it] like in your school when you need to go to the toilet?" and, "Can you tell me what your teacher usually says when you need to go to the toilet during lessons?" (Lunblad et al., 2009, p. 220). Authors conducted analysis of data through coding sub-categories including, "school's attitude to going to the toilet" and "rules for going to the toilet" (p. 220), along with others, contributing to the "latent meaning: exposed to the disclosure of that which is most private" (p. 222). Although not operating within a transgender or queer theoretical framework, this article is useful for garnering youth experiences of the institutional regulation of toilet behaviour from a normative standpoint. Employing Foucault's (1977) notion of power as disciplinary, the authors find the management of children's bodies perpetuates and "can be seen as a relic from the authoritarian upbringing of the past where children's natural needs were subordinate to the needs of adults" (Lunblad et al., 2009, p. 222), specifically the subjugation of pupil toilet needs by teachers' control of the classroom and the lesson.

Findings include student fears of public knowledge of their private bodily needs, iterating a power of surveillance: "It's really embarrassing, I should be able to go without everyone's eyes on me". Other students tried to use the washroom during lessons claiming, "It's safer if everyone is in class"; unfortunately, exactly what is dangerous for these students is not articulated except that one student remarked the toilet cubicle could be opened from the outside with a coin, which led to a feeling of insecurity (Lunblad et al., 2009, p. 221). Among other student concerns was that the toilet was a dirty, "disgusting" place, and overwhelmingly, that time pressure was intense: "don't

have time to go to the toilet” and “I have to hurry” lead to the result that “you tense up [and] only a little pee comes so you need to pee again in half an hour” (p. 221). If children are “forced...to reveal for their classmates that which was most private, their toilet needs” (p. 222), then I ask what else youth are forced to disclose in this process of using the school toilet. In terms of gender, they must be declaring a gender identity that coheres to their gender expression if they are using the washroom space unproblematically. But the role of the teacher, and the school authorities at large, operate within a mechanism of disciplinary power that regulates the private needs of student bodies with implications on their gendered performativities.

A similar study (Millei & Cliff, 2013) conducted upon two preschool bathrooms in Australia deployed Foucauldian analytics to think about the practices of self preschool children were incited to act out in the disciplinary space of the toilet. Not to think of them as gendered subjects, but as “particular constitutions of ‘childhood’”, the bathroom was of particular interest because it framed these children’s bodies as “a likely target not only for disciplinary but for biopolitical tactics and strategies that seek to discipline and regularize children’s conduct in the preschool” (Millei & Cliff, 2013, p. 2). The authors investigated two school bathrooms through interviews of children and their teachers, observations of children’s bathroom use (for which they secured informed consent), and activities in which they invited the children to participate including “reading children’s books on toilet use, building life-size bathrooms from large wooden blocks and other building materials, and constructing bathrooms from play dough or in the sandpit with real water features” (Millei & Cliff, 2013, p. 3). They concluded that some children worked on their own bodies, as body projects, as a practice of the self; for instance, one girl consistently wet herself or fought hard to try to avoid doing so. For other children, the bathroom as a disciplinary space failed to operate as such: “children...skillfully and often strategically navigate their lives in the bathroom, variously resisting, challenging and at times even invoking discourses depending on how they are positioned by others and position themselves in relation to bathroom use” (pp. 2-3). Of interest to my project, beyond the deployment of visual methodology to investigate an already highly visual/visible space, is that the authors’ interpretation of Foucault’s (1977) panoptic



practices figured within the “scopic regime” (p. 5) of the preschool bathroom and contributed to the shaping of subjectivities of children within.

Outlining some policies related to gender and space within the feminist movement in Taiwan, Bih (2006) focuses on the “Women’s Toilet Movement” which includes the accommodation of appropriate breastfeeding rooms in urban planning of educational settings. The author recounts a 1996 survey conducted at the National Taiwan University of campus toilets, detailing the number of “female and male toilet stalls and the availability of urinals”, “assessing floor space, lighting, ventilation, location, flooring, washbasins, coat hooks, waiting space, doors, and barrier-free facilities” (Bih, 2006, p. 28). The results from the survey were announced on Women’s Day on March 8 complete with a public art performance entitled “the March 8 New Position on Women’s Toilets Allows Me to Pee at Ease” which consisted of a temporary transparent toilet stall surrounding a toilet situated on a public walkway on campus. This public protest fed into a wider women’s toilet movement of 1996 leading to regulation changes in public washrooms and those in schools, specifically advocating for more washroom facilities for females, allowing for flexible usage depending on temporary need (i.e. in the case of events or exhibitions where the need for women’s washrooms might be greater than usual); further changes considered “switching the location of male and female restrooms” so that women’s rooms were no longer isolated in less traveled areas of buildings thus increasing their potential for danger. However, on this last point, the assumption reinscribed is that men would be safer than women in isolated washrooms because men are more physically capable of defending themselves – an attitude which belongs to a rigid, heteronormative and genderist (see Browne, 2004) framework. Although not working within a queer or transgendering context, this article contributes to the knowledge of public movements in Taiwan deploying student activists that study the problem of the bathroom – and despite one small claim that unisex toilets will “solve the obvious difficulties experienced by transgendered people” (Bih, 2006, p. 29), its focus on women’s issues situates it within a strict heteronormative frame. But attention to the public bathroom at all, with a clear focus on changing the structural realities, is what is pertinent for my study. How students can become motivated and eventually

operationalized to advocate for their own physical and social needs within the space of the school is this article's greatest contribution to my work.

Also situated within a heteronormative framework, Morton and Glynn's (2005) article advocates for the redesign of a detention centre in Massachusetts - formerly housing a "boys' detention unit in a state mental health facility built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century" (p. 88) – with a specific focus on accommodating the physical and social needs that are unique to girls. Foucault's (1977) work on disciplinary space could contribute to a critical analysis of this project based on how bodies are managed and classified according to their subjugated status. However, not engaging in critical theory, the authors recommend these changes will lead to a climate of rehabilitation more effectively if the girls are not subjected to the usages of space previously belonging to boys (Morton & Glynn, 2005, p. 108). Noting that girls "require more privacy due to issues related to body image, and [that] they have extra grooming needs" (Morton & Glynn, 2005, p. 89) as opposed to boys, the authors detail the new facility will provide more individual showers, toilets, and grooming areas in communal units named 'houses', and the bathroom layout will include "real glass mirrors behind plexiglass", all providing "girls with more privacy and respect" (Morton & Glynn, 2005, p. 92). Yet reinscribing girls as communal creatures who require privacy and extra time for grooming (and by default framing boys as not requiring these accommodations) perpetuates notions of hegemonic femininity and masculinity. Further, the authors call the facility "ground-breaking" with a "forward-thinking design" that will hopefully become the "yardstick to measure other Massachusetts facilities" (Morton & Glynn, 2005, p. 108).

In her study on queering bathrooms, Cavanagh (2010) troubles the space of the public bathroom beginning with a history of the enclosures of bathrooms. For example, she recalls Timothy Eaton's 'lady's gallery and waiting room', a Canadian innovation of the women's room after only men's public restrooms existed thus relegating women to the private sphere. In this study, Cavanagh interviewed 100 LGBTQI subjects in major Canadian cities about their experiences in gendered facilities based on the premise that gender variant individuals (e.g. masculine females or trans women) suffer harassment when in a gendered bathroom:

this book endeavours to theorize *how* and *why* the public washroom is a site for gender-based hostility, anxiety, fear, desire, and unease in the present day as the washroom is also a site of homoerotic desire. *Queering Bathrooms* is concerned with the nuances and vicissitudes of trans and homophobic hate and the harm incurred by gender-exclusionary spatial designs. My analysis seeks to expose how sex-segregated designs function to discipline ways of being gendered that are at odds with a normative body politic. (Cavanagh, 2010, p. 5)

Cavanagh recommends not to do away with sex-segregated bathrooms, but to build gender neutral bathrooms/unisex bathrooms (the one room with locked door, not marked by gender) for those who find the gendered bathrooms exclusive or harmful: “my intention is to consider how the gendered spatial design of the public bathroom is dependent upon a cissexist and heteronormative ideal and the various ways this design impacts upon LGBTI people” (p. 15). Additionally, Cavanagh (2010) focuses on how we construct what is hygienic or not, the dirty and the unclean, and how each is constructed socially and through gender norms. In terms of advocating for unisex washrooms, Cavanagh (2011) chooses not to ignore heteronormative concerns about violence against women, but takes issue with how the signs on binary sexed washroom doors allow members of the public to harass and police individuals entering these spaces who do not conform to gender norms. Further, she argues how the dark, enclosed spaces of binary sexed washrooms actually perpetuate acts of violence because of their secluded nature. Cavanagh’s (2010) study is foregrounding for my own interests. Deploying a psychoanalytic lens, as well as refraining from examining the spaces of *school* washrooms, are two distinct points of departure between Cavanagh’s study and my own intentions.

To understand an application of Foucault’s theories of spatialized power, I turn to Salter’s (2007) study of the governmentalities of the airport. Using the theories of heterotopias (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) and the confession from Foucault’s (1990a) work, Salter (2007) examines the space of a Canadian international airport for its disciplinary and regulatory effects on the governing of the subject, one whose “possibilities of resistance” (p. 49) are restricted. Building on the literature of critical human geographers and those working with the concept of surveillance “who have theorized mobility, subjectivity, and spatial politics” (see Heyman, 2001, Lloyd, 2003,

Mountz, 2003, Adey, 2004, as cited in Salter, 2007, p. 50), Salter locates his own work within the “theoretical space for empirical analysis of the expansion of surveillance practices and controls over mobilities in the site of the airport” (p. 50). In his theorizing of the airport as heterotopia, Salter examines how the “airport represents a combination of the sovereign power to ban or exclude, and the disciplinary surveillance of mobile citizens” (p. 51), thus targeting the two strands of power Foucault (1980) outlines in his Two Lectures in *Power/Knowledge*. And in direct relation to my own understanding of the heterotopic space, Salter highlights two major elements that mark the airport (or in my case, the washroom) as heterotopic: the entry and exit into territorial nation-states signify the rituals of entry into the space of the airport as isolated space; furthermore, the “spaces of transit” from “national, the international, and the non-national” (2005, p. 52) represent the ambiguity of heterotopias that are “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several places, several sites that are themselves incompatible” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 25). In the airport, these alternate spaces are defined by the presence of the various bodies that inhabit it: “for the citizen, the immigrant, the refugee or the asylum-seeker, airports are places of extreme interrogation of one’s identity and home—and one airport may represent oppression and another potential freedom” (Salter, 2007, p. 52). How the same space can be experienced and even transformed from one of freedom to one of oppression is exactly the sort of process that I understand occurs in the usage of the washroom space. Depending on the amount of policing that accompanies each individual body, the gender non-conformist will experience quite a different space than one body more normatively gendered. And to “enable consumption, mobility and social sorting...[vis-a-vis] the disciplinary tactics of the airport” (p. 53) these spaces are differentiated further by various functions: namely, “arriving, departing, accompanying, and supporting staff are all hidden from one another” (p. 53). The key to this separation of function allows the airport to appear to run smoothly and systematically, argues Salter, which is precisely the nature of power, both disciplinary and sovereign: the latter conceals the operations of the former for its very survival.

Salter’s application of the confessionary complex in the airport is based on the ways that “public and private authorities gain our consent for our surveillance and social sorting” (Salter, 2007, p. 57). Salter argues Foucault’s subject within disciplinary power

depends on the confession to define its very subjectivity; indeed, the confession allows for and supports the effective operation of disciplinary power. The confession is part of how the subject is complicit in his/her own subjection. In the airport, it is not sexuality that marks deviance, but the act of mobility; the traveller must submit to the “examining power of the sovereign...[by] confess[ing] their history, intentions, and identity” (Salter, 2007, p. 59). The surveillance of the airport reduces travelers “from citizens, foreigners, and refugees, with complex identities and claims to home into objects of danger or benefit” (p. 59) much the same way the person is reduced to a gender conforming or nonconforming body when entering the space of the public washroom. To enter either space of the airport or the washroom is to “tell the story of ourselves that defines us as docile, obedient sovereign subjects” (p. 59).

Situating the study of spatial relations in the place of schools, McGregor (2004a) looks to teachers’ workplaces, theorizing the “materiality of schooling” (p. 348) in this article drawn from a larger empirical study in the UK. Considering the tools of schooling, which she terms “objects and technologies”, as well as the “persistence and stability of certain (power) relations” (p. 348), McGregor outlines the classroom space, storage space, pedagogical technologies, department as network, and curriculum for their spatial and relational effects on teaching and teacher identity. Her study takes her into the recesses of the school, even to a neglected attic space above the History classroom containing “the traces of previous cultures of teaching” made redundant by revamped pedagogical policies in the National Curriculum and technological changes of copying (p. 356-8).

Theoretically, McGregor (2004a) contends with common notions that space is “a passive container for social action” preferring to understand space as “constituted through the social, with interactions creating social space. Space is then performed...” (p. 351). Contributing to her theoretical framework, McGregor explains Actor Network Theory (ATN) in terms of Foucault’s (1980) analytics of power as a set of complex actions: “ATN treat[s] social relations, including power and organization, as network effects” (McGregor, 2004a, p. 352). However, she does not extend a Foucauldian analytics directly to her understanding of space; still working in some ways complementarily to it,

McGregor highlights the *relational* aspect of space and subjects: “space, is now taken to be dynamic, contested, and multiply constructed from relations intersecting (or not) ‘beyond’ the place as it is immediately experienced by individuals” (p. 352). What is relationally constructed is the nexus among teachers as individuals, their material technologies, curricula, and pedagogical practices, as well as their connection to the actual physical space in which they work. Although I am not concerned with teachers’ work, the value of understanding space as relational and implicating identities (p. 354) is translatable to my project of the gendered space of the washroom. McGregor highlights the gap in current educational research that ignores this relationality between identity and materiality of space.

Of particular suitability to my study, O’Donoghue’s (2006) work stems from a larger empirical study examining spaces in four single-sex boys’ primary Irish schools (and one College of Education) through the elements of the foyer, the corridors, the restrooms, cafeteria, and playgrounds, among others. Primarily, O’Donoghue focuses on the production of masculinities within the consumption of these spaces. Employing the methodology of *a/r/tography*<sup>viii</sup> (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004), O’Donoghue (2006) works at the nexus of artist, researcher, teacher to conduct a visual or arts-based methodology of photographing the spaces in schools, during the first phase of his study, so that the “gaze of the camera...documents and surveys, records and catalogs *spaces* –...[and] records the *methods* and *materials of construction*, and the *systems of surveillance* made possible through the design, construction and organization of these places and spaces” (pp. 21-22). Only during the second phase of his study does O’Donoghue look to the space of the toilets within which he exhibits the photographs from the first phase upon the backs of the toilet stall doors in the College of Education. His intent was

to encourage students (many of whom will be future teachers) to engage with and think about space and place and the meanings that are embodied, conveyed and communicated in the spaces we construct and create, appropriate and organize, regulate and maintain for purposes of control, display, performance and surveillance. (O’Donoghue, 2006, pp. 21-2)

Rich in methodological creativity, this study is pertinent also for its contribution to an understanding of the impact space has on the making of identity, specifically, of a gendered kind. O’Donoghue (2006) investigates the implied meaning of material

structures beginning with the trophy case in the foyer whose lit objects are “merely for display...out of reach” and “serve not just as a reminder that organized sport is practiced in this institution, but more important, that commitment and competition is highly valued and acknowledged” (p. 25) which certainly has implications on the kind of masculinity that is revered at this school. Furthermore, the qualities of “solidity, strength, tradition, permanence, detachment and rationality” (p. 26) O’Donoghue applies to the hard surfaces of construction materials: walls, floors, and the wooden doors that are institutionally hard and cold. Students respond to these spaces with a renewed sense of what masculinity is supposed to look like: competitive, strong, similarly detached and cold, and permanent. O’Donoghue’s thinking contributes to an understanding of how subtexts of gender are communicated through the construction of school space, both materially and relationally.

Following from the study mentioned above, another study of O’Donoghue’s (2007) focuses on the non-curricular, unofficial places of a school where learning “lessons about ‘self’ and ‘other’ are learnt” (p. 62). Theorizing masculinity in its performative sense, according to Butler (1990), and using the concept of intersectionality, O’Donoghue (2007) thinks of the way space affects the repetitive and stylized acts of gender: “The feeling of being in a physical space, positioned above, below, or on ground level, surrounded or exposed, in darkness or in light because of the structure or form impacts how one experiences that space” (p. 63). The participant sample comprised 17 boys aged 10 to 11 years old; the data set involved contemporary art practice, informed by a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004) whereby the boys took photos of school spaces and recorded notes about their personal meaning. The article title stems from one participant photograph of a corner in the playground that O’Donoghue (2007) interprets to contain both a revealing of itself as a place of collision and physicality, a place “James always hangs out” (2007, p. 67), and one of concealment from the sightlines of the yard at large. Through further pictorial analysis, O’Donoghue (2007) generates themes that articulate how a school setting sustains “dominance, hierarchy, surveillance and segregation” (p. 69) which is primarily how disciplinary space operates and what I imagine is at work in the space of the school washroom.

In a special issue of *Forum for promoting 3-19 comprehensive education* on space and schools, Doreen Massey (2004) provides the forward that arguing space is “integral to the construction of the relations between us” and denotes a “sphere of the spatial” (p. 1). McGregor’s (2004b) editorial reiterates her own theoretical perspective as outlined in her article, “Space, Power and the Classroom” (in this issue, 2004c), as well as in her previous work. It is a combination of the material and the analytic, or the physical and the social space—that is, the “interaction between the two” (2004b, p. 2)—that comprises the notion of spatiality and allows for this investigation into “the way space is organized in schools” and how that combination “produces particular social relations” (p. 2). Outlining existing research that fails to consider both sides of this bipartite model of spatiality, McGregor (2004b), notes also that space “is only recently becoming acknowledged in education” (p. 2). And it is significant because schools as embedded within “socio-spatial relations” are in constant process, “continually *remade*” (McGregor, 2004b, p. 2), which allows for the possibilities of power relationships, as fueled by spatial structures, to also be remade or readjusted. McGregor advocates then for a “spatial literacy’ which is alive to the possibilities of different and more democratic relationships” (p. 5).

Of particular interest in this issue is McGregor’s (2004c) article on spatialized power in the classroom which contributes theoretically to any study of school space, providing justification for its value in the idea that the “taken-for-granted quality [of space]...blinds us to the fundamental ways in which ‘the school’ is spatially constituted” (p. 13) and thus how power relations are produced and maintained. Additionally, Paechter’s (2004) article on power relations in the staffroom offers a spatial analysis of the typical groupings of school staff in the shared space that marks their position in the social hierarchy. Based on her own research and witnessing of staffroom dynamics in UK schools, Paechter observes, among others, the monopoly that Science and Maths teachers territorially exert over the other staff, the absence of Design and Technology teachers who stay in their own classrooms, the relegation of supply teachers to “the darkest and least hospitable corner of the room” (p. 33), and the hegemonic masculinity of male Physical Education staff who loudly announce their homophobia and desire for domination. Paechter notes the school staffroom, through an analysis of spatial mapping,



“can give important insights into the prevailing power relations within a school” (p. 34). Paechter’s analysis illustrates the potential for detailed spatial analyses of power relations in any space in the school.

Finally, the journal issue concludes with a review of an activist group, School Works, in the UK, who empowers students to contribute to the design of their schools in fundamental and significant ways (Wright, 2004). Wright argues for the authentic participation of youth to be intimately involved with the process of design so that they can “feel part of it” (p. 42). This journal does not cater to an exclusively academic reader; its audience extends to the practitioner as well. But in that vein, this issue is a valuable source not only for outlining the terrain of studies of space and schools, but also for disseminating its activist message to the frontlines of those who can begin to develop a notion of “spatial literacy” in youth and an “architecture of resistance” (McGregor, 2004b, p. 5).

In Barcan’s (1999) study of “men’s experiences of men’s rooms” (p. 85), she first acknowledges the common discourses associated with women’s public toilets as private, places of “communality”, and constantly begetting long queues, but insists the men’s toilets are places “regulating masculinity” (p. 79). She argues the place of the public bathroom, which is “filled with anxiety and unspoken rules” (p. 80) for women, transgender people, and men, is also ironically named the restroom, inciting anything but restful activity. The public space of the washroom is a place “where authority is at stake...where adults author themselves as adult subjects, and where modern society reinscribes its rule that there are two bipolar sexes” (Barcan, 1999, p. 82).

Her interviews collected data regarding the social codes embedded in the use of the men’s room: ranging from conscious indifference—“everyone’s aware of...not looking...because they’re all trying so hard not to be aware of it”—to complex knowledge of the code—knowing “how close you can stand, when you should leave, where you look, *how* you stand” (Barcan, 1999, p. 85)—many stories related the experiences of gender normative men. However, one instance Barcan (1999) describes from the perspective of a gay man who claimed to be fearful of ever using the washroom

at his high school. And yet, the other examples reinscribe a hegemonic masculinity of sporty men in a pub engaging in “matey” behaviour, chatting over the urinals at sporting events, and some even wielding their member as a writing tool: in one particularly disturbing scenario of a college boy recalling his intrusion on a freshman (he urinated between the younger boy’s legs as a joke), Barcan remarks that hegemonic masculinity includes a co-mingling of “fraternal jocularity and hierarchical relations” whereby “homoeroticism is disavowed” (p. 89).

Rather than deconstructing the notion of gender as binary, Barcan’s (1999) study focuses on the deconstruction of the *space* of the men’s room that participates in the formation of the categories of men and masculinity. Highlighting the complex and ambiguous interplay between private and public places within the space of the men’s room and outlining the way her participants negotiated those places is this chapter’s contribution. Neither explicitly situated in a queer politics, nor advocating for the destruction or reconstruction of the space, Barcan’s study provides useful theoretical understanding of the social production of the unique space of the public washroom but departs from my study that is interested in how students can not only understand but actively contribute to their understandings of gendered space and subjectivity.

Engaging in an historical study of school architecture built in Spain at the turn of the last century, Benito’s (2003) article appears to be of little relevance to my project except in its justification for studying schools as material spaces. Claiming the school system through its architecture is a kind of semiology to be read, Benito explains it also as a “programme as well, a class of discourse which, in its materiality, institutes a system of values” (p. 53). Further, Benito insists that studying the material is in no way a pursuit of the trivial because “all the elements of educational culture are integrated by the synthesizer that is the school building which underlines the relevance of this study for the understanding of the whole system” (p. 55). Space can become the unifier for all acts of disciplinary power and subjectivation within the school. Ironically (because feminist geographers, Massey, etc., resist the notion that space is an empty box waiting to be filled), space is an analytic container for studying social relations in the school. It is a way to bound a study that is otherwise so complex; a sort of lens, even, to mix metaphors.

Although Benito examines also the period's curricular and pedagogical trends, associating them with the school architecture, I depart from this broad analysis, preferring to investigate the forms of gender regulation that occur currently. But what is useful is Benito's observation that new members of social spaces must first learn "the rules and prescriptions of the use of the spaces, which also include the prohibitions" (p. 56). How a gendered person is incited, each time s/he enters a washroom space, to declare a gendered identity speaks to the "rules and prescriptions" (p. 56); and if that gendered body should fail to pass or conduct oneself without fear or anxiety, speaks to the gendered "prohibitions" (p. 56) that are continually performed in said space.

Claiming that the gap in the literature is centred around the limited thinking about these spaces, Benito (2003) also underlines, "the importance of these material structures for the knowledge of education's past has been underestimated, condemning such realities to the opaque world of silence or obscurity or...considering them to be trivial and of little relevance" (p. 54). Similar to Foucault in two ways, Benito is conducting a sort of genealogical study of disciplinary spaces and regards them according to their subjugated status, or their status as "subjugated knowledge" (Foucault, 1980). It is in this way that my study intersects: through an examination of both the material and the semiological significance of the school washroom, I am conducting a study of a subjugated space and the knowledges that accompany it. And, indirectly, the historical trace of the public facility, if not deliberately outlined, is evident in that, according to Foucault (1977), the space is part of a "regime of disciplinary power" (p. 182) and has arrived as such through normalization over time.

Derived from the field of legal studies, Braverman's (2009) article has transferable value to my Foucauldian and Butlerian perspective because it highlights the regulatory quality of public washrooms and claims a "relationship between law and spatial design [whereby] the law not only reflects certain social practices and beliefs, but also makes them less changeable, less flexible...[resulting in] the embodiment of certain social and cultural practices in the physical space" (p. 46) that not only are legally codified, but also socially regulated. It is at this last point where my focus enters: the social regulation through disciplinary power of gender in the space of the washroom.

And this article, again, focusing on the legal regulation can also stand as evidence of Foucault's bipartite model of power that includes sovereign along with the disciplinary power:

I believe that in our own times power is exercised simultaneously through this right [sovereign power] and these techniques [of disciplinary power] and that these techniques and these discourses, to which the disciplines give rise invade the area of right so that the procedures of normalisation come to be ever more constantly engaged in the colonisation of those of law. I believe that all this can explain the global functioning of what I would call a *society of normalisation*. (Foucault, 1980, p. 107)

Thus, the techniques of disciplinary power—upon which Foucault focuses his attention and encourages others to do the same—that operate on a local level, merge with or implicate the area of sovereign power thus becoming disguised and perpetrating a fiction that sovereign power is the only form that exists. It is through this legal study of Braverman's (2009) then that I can see how both these arms of power (the sovereign/legal and the disciplinary/social) operate in tandem. In this Foucauldian sense, Braverman does the work that complements a social study of gender regulation in the public washroom.

This study looks at the way the space of the public washroom has become standardized despite the apparent "liberty" of its "everyday users" (Braverman, 2009, p. 47). Naming it an ideological result (a term Foucault rejects), Braverman (2009) argues the washroom design reflects societal and "moral values" (p. 47) while presenting itself as neutral. And capturing the complexity of this space, the author argues it is a liminal one, primarily because it contains acts deemed both private and public simultaneously, and signifies both the hygienic and un-hygienic, the pure and the dangerous (p. 48). Braverman continues to provide a brief history of the public washroom, a sort of genealogy akin to Foucault's aims, charting from ancient Greece to Industrialization where the invention of the water closet began the conception of defecation and urination being private and necessarily secluded acts. Acknowledging the disciplinary arm of power, Braverman then outlines how the washroom is currently regulated through architectural design, "either directly through formal legal norms such as sex-segregated washrooms, or indirectly through subtly disciplinary means such as potty training, specific dressing codes, and the particular design of public washroom features" (p. 53). It

is through an analysis of the material structure of the public washroom that my study traverses, at least initially.

Of particular note on the materiality of the washroom, Braverman (2009) has researched the significance of partial partitioning between stalls in American washrooms, similarly to Foucault's (1977) study of the latrines in the *École de Normal*: "while marketing brochures and architectural manuals explain this partition as resulting from the need for optimal ventilation, one need only consider her own personal experience to realize the increased surveillance achieved through this architectural design" (Braverman, 2009, p. 55). Citing Foucault's (1977) panoptism, Braverman (2009) notes this design allows for public scrutiny and surveillance of the acts supposedly deemed private occurring within the stalls. As for its implications upon non-normatively gendered bodies, as articulated in the notion of the bathroom problem (see Chapter One), this public scrutiny can result in physical and psychological harm, beyond mere discomfort as might be experienced by the normatively gendered, albeit shy, individual.

Although Braverman (2009) does not situate the study in a transgender politics, the author does survey certain state codes pertaining to the sex-segregation of these public spaces. Citing plumbing codes of New York State, for example, Braverman notes that a transgression of such legally sanctioned sex segregated washrooms "might even lead to arrest" (p. 58) if the "wrong" sex were to enter a particular washroom. After reviewing codes referring to facility management (i.e. counting the ratio of female to male washrooms available), Braverman concedes that the law "reflects the current state of the struggle over the washroom as a gendered space, in which all actors seem confined, despite their best of intentions, to neo-liberal number counts that mask moral values" (p. 61). Placing the transgender body among disabled bodies (and Muslim bodies who require special facilities for prayer cleansing) as those who do not fit the normalized structure of sex-segregated washrooms, Braverman reviews the implications in the law for this mass group of "untouchables". Despite this erasure of the uniqueness and diversity of excluding bodies in binary gender structures, Braverman's legal genealogy contributes significantly to the ways legal power/sovereign power operate

upon the design of washrooms which then implicate and are implicated by the social and moral values of its population.

Introducing the term “genderism” to the discourse of queers in the public bathroom, Browne (2004) also incorporates the notion of “performative geographies that understand space as continually (re)created” (p. 332). Genderism refers to those “hostile readings of gender ambiguous bodies...[those] often unnamed instances of discrimination based on the discontinuities between the sex/gender with which an individual identifies, and how others, in a variety of spaces, read their sex/gender” (Browne, 2004, p. 332). Conducting qualitative research of interviews, diaries and “auto-photographs” (p. 332) with 28 non-heterosexual women in the South of England, Browne’s article focuses on nine of these women and their experiences of being mistaken for men thought through the frame of genderism. Of particular interest to my study, Browne also theorizes the space of the toilet as “sites where individuals’ bodies are continually policed and (re)placed within sexed categories” (pp. 332-333). Combining the theories of spatiality to gender performativity, specifically, spatiality of the toilet, fills the gap in the literature: “the site of the bathroom has been given limited attention in discussions of gender transgressions” (p. 336). Browne thinks of the categories of gender as produced and performed within context, within a space that surrounds and supports their production: she argues, “just as place is (re)making (and sexing) us, it is being (re)made (and sexed)” (p. 335).

Through data analysis, Browne (2004) notes a connection between the experiences of her own participant and Munt’s (1998) in the motorway service stations in the UK, and the theorizing of Halberstam’s (1998) genderism in the airport toilet: in each place designated for travel, people are more apt to regulate for gender because they are otherwise so destabilized in time and place. In nightclubs, as well as service stations, Browne’s (2004) participants describe the toilets as heterosexualized spaces that demarcate the bodies along sexed lines; either in the gay nightclub, whereby one masculine female participant, Janet, is able to move freely, or in the straight nightclub, whereby the open design of the male washroom permits too much visibility for Janet’s safety. Thus, she is placed again, or replaced into the women’s washroom. Here, sex and gender conflate; transgressions of one might implicate the other. However, the same

is true for both transgressions: when a body does not fit, the gendered system and its “sites and locations [are] revealed as unstable and requiring reiteration...[thus] provid[ing] insight into how sexed bodies and spaces are maintained by sexed regimes of power” (p. 342). Browne’s study contributes to the notion that genderism operates upon sexed bodies but also through sexed sites, including the public toilet, continually reproducing a binary gendered system.

Using Nancy Fraser’s (1995) politics of recognition and redistribution, Skeggs (2001) theorizes the position of the female in the washroom as part of a scopic regime “whereby...we enter and know our positioning in relation to others via their bodily and visual value” (p. 303). Studying the experiences of white working-class women, Skeggs translates Bourdieu’s cultural capital to a physical capital and finds the body “is the most tangible manifestation of the person” (p. 303) which has impact in the space of the washroom where women are judged, scrutinized, and evaluated by their visual presentation of the body: “toilets heighten the sensitivity to appearance because looking is one of the main things to do when standing in a queue” (p. 302), Skeggs argues. However, Foucault’s (1977) disciplinary regime functioning through the techniques of surveillance and policing also explain this scopic space of the washroom; gender is under constant regulation in a space that demarcates gender based on binaries and enforces gender segregation based on one’s ability to pass visually. What is also of interest in Skegg’s (2001) theorizing is the place of the mirror in the female washroom: “the mirror confirms whether or not the appearance is convincing” (p. 304). For gender nonconforming individuals, this confrontation of self-image in a public space of surveillance is an overwhelmingly anxiety-provoking event (see Munt, 1998, for example). Skeggs (2001) cites that this act of confirming femininity in the mirror is a form of “mis-recognition” because it mis-recognizes or denies “the structural and historical formation of femininity” in favour of a naturalized and fixed femininity (p. 304). She concludes that working class women rely on their appearance as cultural capital, a feat best appreciated in the female washroom where “excessive femininity is read as a sign of the truth of the person” (Skeggs, 2001, p. 305). The embodiment of the feminine body in a female washroom is tied to a scopic regime, inextricably linked also to the heterosexual matrix, which itself “is held in place by the mirror, the queue, and the

invite to gendered bodily inspection” (Skeggs, 2001, p. 305). Skeggs’ study is important for thinking about the gendered body in visual terms and its specific relevance for how bodies are read in binary washroom spaces (i.e. namely, by appearance and fitting the hegemonic mould of femininity or masculinity).

### **Subjectivation and Gendered/Sexed Youth**

In this section I review studies that theorize subjectivity and subjectivation, most notably from either a Foucauldian perspective exclusively or somewhat of a Butlerian interpretation of Foucault’s position, or some combination of both. Primarily, this work helps to contribute some elaboration or practical application, within an educational context, or with a focus on youth. Furthermore, I use this section to review work focusing on sexual minority and gender nonconforming subjectivities. I consider both studies that reiterate the narrative that sexual and gendered minorities are victims, and those that contribute to a more nuanced and productive notion of these subjects as agentic and capable of forms of resistance.

#### **Subjectivation and subjectivities.**

Renold and Ringrose (2008) theorize resistance in a more nuanced way than what they outline exists in current literature. They deploy Butler’s (1990) theory of the heterosexual matrix combined with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) schizoanalysis. Avoiding the “molar”-izing application of resistance, that considers it in complete opposition to regulation, the authors wish to seek those spaces of imperceptibility, to map those “ruptures” of the heterosexual matrix essentially to understand resistance in partial ways and the subject as capable of resistance even within regulatory frames. Their aim to map the disruptions of norms hopes to “signal moments of deterritorializations, becomings, and lines of flight” (Renold & Ringrose, 2008, p. 319). Their theoretical contributions are invaluable for my own understanding of the complexities embedded in the process of subjectivities as well as the subtle and discrete way to understand resistance, perhaps as it occurs in less overt or totalizing scenarios. Small moments of resistance, albeit intertwined with other moments of regulation, seem to expand the



notion of resistance and allow for higher probability of witnessing these moments, if one is able to notice them.

Renold and Ringrose's (2008) paper investigates archived data from their own respective studies of girls' narratives and their own ethnographic field notes to locate and "articulate girls' active investment in, as well as subversion of and challenges to, the heterosexual matrix" (p. 320). Dividing their data into two sections, Renold and Ringrose examine in the first section the "top-girls" and "spice-girls", as examples of hyperfemininity, who resist heterosexual normativity only to be subsumed by a matrix of class and race, allowing them hierarchical privilege and denying them total resistance; their second section looks to two case studies of individual girls resisting gender norms through tomboyism that crosses class and race, however, still retaining an element of ambivalence. Tracking the breakdown of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990), the authors, Renold and Ringrose (2008) interrogate what is continuing to happen for girls negotiating girlhood, whose complexities include the intersections of race and class upon their own gendered identity. Calling for a larger project that investigates the "lines of flight" within "the regulatory force of the heterosexual matrix" (p. 333), Renold and Ringrose argue helps researchers not "to miss the micro, molecular movements, the rhythms of rupture and reterritorialization, and the sustained lines of flight, whereby doing 'girl' and theorizing 'femininity' otherwise might emerge" (p. 333). Again, this nuanced and complex analysis opens up the theoretical possibilities not only for me to be able to notice ruptures from the normative in what my participants told me, but also to understand their subjectivity, and subjectivation, in a way that embraces ambivalence, even if it is messy, or complicated. The authors' notion of momentary ruptures provides a valuable framework to re-theorize subjectivity in both Butler's terms and Foucauldian theory.

Bronwyn Davies' (2006) paper on subjectification draws on research with teachers and students to apply Butler's (1995) work to an educational context, to "re-think our understandings of those students who are marginalized in schools" (Davies, 2006, p. 425). What Davies highlights from Butler's subjectification theorizing is the duality of mastery and submission, arguing the "subject might resist and agonise over

those very powers that dominate and subject it, and at the same time, it also depends on them for its existence” (p. 426). This strange ambivalence, or almost paradoxical meaning to describe the subject, is not unique to Davies’ interpretation of Butler’s work (as well as its relevance for Foucault’s (1982) work on subjectivation and the subject and power), but she does articulate it specifically here which is aligned with my own reading and deployment of subjectivation. Further, she rejects a deterministic viewpoint of the subject, insisting that “Butler’s subjects have agency, albeit a radically conditioned agency, in which they can reflexively and critically examine their conditions of possibility and in which they can subvert and eclipse the powers that act on them and which they enact” (Davies, 2006, p. 426). It is at this interpretative point that I find Davies’ work most valuable: in the way that Renold and Ringrose (2008) wish to look for “moments of rupture” in the subjectivities of their participants, I have looked for those moments or “conditions of possibility” (Davies, 2006, p. 426) that tell me these students are *contingent* subjects, conditional subjects, who navigate the twists and turns between agency and determinism. I sought moments of surprise, or scenarios of the unexpected, to tell me how youth survive in their schools of disciplinary space.

Davies’ (2006) participant teachers were asked to journal their experiences in a reflexive way. One teacher recalls two separate scenarios involving two boys who are disciplined by the teacher and then later mock the incident with the sing-song retort, “we are the naughty boys” (p. 428). Davies applies the analysis that subjectivation undergoes “double directionality...we are both acted upon and we act” (p. 428) to understand how these boys can suffer subordination and then equally “attempt to oppose” (p. 428) it, all the while maintaining an ambivalent positioning: “they both do and do not escape the dominating force of the category” (p. 428). Furthermore, Davies discusses how teachers’ narratives of students re-iterate and reinforce “the right sort of subject” (p. 433) that students take up: one boy calls himself a “helper” because his teacher positioned him as such, for example. Even some of these specific findings are relevant for me to understand how a student performs and is coerced or prompted to perform a certain form of gendered subjectivity; either through teacher narratives or student resistance, youth are conditioned to be subjects in schools and, without critical reflection, can be thought to be fully agentic or living unproblematic lives.

Following suitably, Allen (2008) theorizes the concept of subjectification (using Butler, 1995, 1997) through Davies' (2006) work on the "double directionality" of submission and mastery of the subject. Davies' and Allen's work complicates the notion of subjectivity whereby participants find themselves in "contradictory state[s] of simultaneously opposing and submitting to discursive forms of power" (Allen, 2008, p. 566). Employing a critical youth studies perspective, Allen (2008) thinks of students as "social agents who are active meaning-makers" (p. 565) which implicates her methodological ideals and complicates the reality as it is intercepted by ethical reviews concerned about researching young people's understanding of sexuality. Especially because Allen's methodology involves student-produced photography of sexuality (including bodies of youth, of which mine excludes), her work encountered many ethical roadblocks (for one, clearance took seven months) and serves as an empirical example of what subjectification studies look like with real subjects. Thinking of reiteration in performance of gender/subjectivity (according to Butler, 1993), Allen (2008) considers these moments as the "possibility of agency" (p. 567).

This article (Allen, 2008) uses data from a previous study that examined the sexual culture of two secondary schools in New Zealand, employing the perspectives of 22 teenage participants (aged 16-19). Students were invited to create photo-diaries of their school culture regarding sexuality. Allen (2008) armed each photographer with a "prompt card" that served to guide students in their procedure of photographing consensual and legal (of-age in NZ is 16 years old) students, as well as including the ethical mandate that photographed students be allowed to withdraw at any time. Moments of agency, or more complicated scenarios of mastery and submission, Allen outlines in the remainder of the article. In one example, a student photographs the off-limits spaces of the school toilet block. Here he is mastering his own agency by transgressing the school and research project rules of entering spaces not deemed appropriately populated for safe student occupation; however, he acquiesces to the underlying rationale for the rule by avoiding photographing any bodies of students in these spaces. Thus, according to Allen (2008), this student is both submissive to the school rule and simultaneously mastering his own subjectivity. Primarily this paper serves to extend Davies' (2006) initial analysis of subjectification and to apply to another

school context, one that examines specifically sexuality and its understandings. Furthermore, it speaks to the tensions and paradoxes embedded in my reading of Foucault's (1990a) practices of self that depend on a subject who is *capable* of resistance as well as Butler's (1990) notion of the conditional, contingent and limited 'agency' (or the appearance therein) of gendered subjects who are never exterior to discourse.

In another study about self-fashioning practices of youth, Linville and Carlson (2010) deploy the analytic framework of Foucault's (1986) care of the self, rethinking ethical relations among high school students in the US as relating to the self as well as to others. Contextualizing this study in then-recent debates surrounding the future of sex education in the US, the authors argue abstinence-only programs miss the complexity of gendered and sexual relations, and are framed within a heteronormative presumption. Literally translating Foucault's (1986) four major aspects of the care of the self into organizers for each data set, Linville and Carlson (2010) might be extricating a complex analytic in too reductive or simplistic a manner. However, whether they do justice to Foucault's work or not, they do complicate the sexual relationships and gendered subjectivities of youth in innovative ways. Also innovative is the methodology: writing letters to imaginary LGBTQI students coming into the school, and journaling daily for one week, participants also participated in a focus group which I had considered for my study except that I could not resolve how to reduce the vulnerability students may feel examining with peers their own experiences of such a private activity as entering a washroom space. The authors here simply state that they did not ask about personal experiences; their questions are framed in more generalized terms to inquire into students' "beliefs and expectations" (Linville & Carlson, 2010, p. 252) *about* the ways gender and sex are understood, but also not from the perspective of LGBTQI students because "most of the students who participated in this study identify as 'straight' or heterosexual...[giving] the perspective of those who inhabit the normative spaces in the school" (p. 253). By not looking at sexual minorities exclusively, Linville and Carlson's study is both limited and relevant to a broader conforming audience. And intersecting with my own methodological choices (i.e. not looking for sexual or gender minority students exclusively), I appreciate a study that can analyze gendered and sexed relations for *all* students in the school, as long as certain assumptions are not concluded about

gender nonconforming students or sexual minority students without their own endorsement (see Jacob Hale's Suggested Rules for Non-Transsexuals Writing about Transsexuals, 1997).

### **Narratives of violence and suffering for LGBTQ youth.**

The following articles serve to show (and trouble) how youth of LGBTQ status have suffered and endured violent situations, thus laying the foundation upon which much of the literature on LGBTQ youth issues is set. For one, Wyss' (2004) study on gender nonconforming youth provides insight into specific forms of harassment under the regime of gender regulation these students endure daily. From a technical standpoint, Wyss' work also contributes an invaluable overview of terminology, including genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and gender-variant, all of which I find useful. Situating her study in the context of violence upon youth who identify in non-normative ways, both sexually and through gender performance, Wyss focuses on the voices of seven individuals in this paper to tell about this under-studied population and analyze their experiences of school-based violence. Ranging from physical to sexual violence, Wyss also includes the strategies these students adopt for dealing with recurring incidents, namely, avoidance tactics including silence, various forms of retaliation, and basic survival. Not only is her work useful for my project because of its contribution to the gap in literature on school experiences of genderqueer youth, but it also introduced for me the concept of resistance, in less than overt ways, as theorized by Renold and Ringrose (2008) as "moments of rupture" (p. 319). Wyss (2004) too thinks about silence, for example, as a form of resistance in that students must remain highly vigilant in their conscious silence for the purposes of survival. Resistance to disciplinary modes of gender regulation does not have to appear in a political or highly visible way; in many ways, it is the quiet, unwitnessed form of resistance that is most effective for youth experiencing gender violence. In this subtle and significant way, Wyss' study does more than reiterate the discourse of violence on youth as victims.

Filax and Shogan (2004) contribute a study that offers empirical evidence of the struggles for gender ambiguous youth, focusing on two individuals in Alberta, detailing their life histories. They are interested in "what counts as gender" and pursue a "shifting

[of] the margins of what counts as gender” (Filax & Shogan, 2004, p. 81). In this way, they problematize the gender regime that confronts all youth, forcing them into gender normalization “within an arbitrary two-sex, two-gender, one-sexuality system” (Filax & Shogan, 2004, p. 82). But again, despite the violence and suffering they outline in the lives of the “queer young dyke”, Jill, and the “sissy-fag queer”, Jack, these are not tales of woe but “stories [that] are representative of lives of considerable pleasure” (Filax & Shogan, 2004, p. 82) because the participants relayed a sense of catharsis in telling of their experiences. Similar to Wyss’ (2004) study and analysis, Filax and Shogan (2004) may be contributing to a discourse of violence on gender non-normative youth, but refrain from reiterating these individuals as victims. These studies are productive in their contribution of knowledge and their refusal to subscribe to a dialectic of suffering, thus re-marginalizing the individuals who identify as gender variant or genderqueer.

Another study situating itself alongside Wyss’ (2004) and Filax and Shogan’s (2004) intents to theorize resistance in genderqueer youth provides knowledge about “gender-quiet teenage males on gender-bending” (Davidson, 2009, p. 615). Through his data analysis, Davidson (2009) introduces a spatialization of genderqueer bodies. Naming these boys as “borderland dwellers” and performers of “fluid gender” (p. 616), Davidson outlines the educational context as being primarily heterosexist which implicates girls as well as boys if they are “challenging norms of gender roles and resisting expected behaviours” in schools (p. 618). Noting the complexity of gendered and sexed identities, and their overlapping characteristics, Davidson’s participants may be gender-bending but not all ascribe to a sexual minority identity. Some are openly gay, some heterosexual, or even attest to a “mixed sexuality” (Davidson, 2009, p. 621), but each identifies with a “girlyboy” (p. 621) status, a “happy hybrid” of gender (p. 621) or generally, just “nonconformist” (p. 622). In this way, their performances and identities reveal a system of sliding signifiers: gender and sex are not aligned in a coherent binary, heterosexualized fashion, as Butler (2004) argues, but are contingent terms, constantly being re-interpreted and re-iterated in each performance. Davidson’s work helps to complicate the relationship between sex and gender, denying a hierarchy of categories and inviting a new reality of self-defined and local gendered subjectivities. The boys’ forms of resistance include the creation of safe spaces, places where these boys

“discover, strategise, create, expand and share...for their synthesized, hybrid masculinity” (Davidson, 2009, p. 622). These are “protected spaces”, as one participant explains, where “you share in the isolation...because you’re all invisible together” (Davidson, 2009, p. 622). But these are not real spaces because they travel with the participants, forming and reforming around these boys as required, helping them protect their own subjectivities.

Combining my interests of sexual and gendered minority populations with subjectivation, Youdell (2005) writes about the relationship between sex, sexuality and gender in an article (looking at girls’ experiences) based on a previous ethnographic study of secondary school students in south London, UK. Examining their daily practices of self-presentation, Youdell (2005) adopts Butler’s (1990, 1993) framework to argue these “school practices are permeated by enduring hetero-normative discourses that inscribe a linear relationship between sex, gender and (hetero-)sexuality within the heterosexual matrix” (Youdell, 2005, p. 253). One particular daily practice involves a detailed description and analysis of sitting in an assembly hall and its gendered derivatives. For teachers, girls and boys, the practice is different, “both intentional and tacit”, but not merely about self-consciousness, as Youdell (2005) argues; rather, they necessarily must be “repetitious and citational” because the practices of “these embodied subjects...are sexed, gendered and sexualized” (p. 256). Furthermore, Youdell (2005) notes her study stands alongside others that “demonstrate the subtle processes through which girls are constructed as gendered in school contexts” (p. 251). And it is at this conceptual (and practical) point that I witnessed in my participants’ stories of their experiences of school space. Using the space of the washroom is a genderizing process, rooted in the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990, 1993); however, through inquiry into daily practices of students, I garnered insights into ways students have attempted to resist this heteronormative tendency.

To exhaust the narrative that transgender and queer students suffer violence in schools, a more comprehensive literature review would exceed the scope of this dissertation. However, I provide an outline of some of these studies, predominantly from the fields of counselling and educational psychology, that reiterate the mental and

physical health risks of sexual and gender minoritized populations of students. To begin, attempting to cover all that is known to the date of the publication, Holmes and Cahill (2004) write their own literature review of school experiences of LGBT youth, and yet fail to find an adequate amount of work on the ‘t’ of the acronym. A trend in many studies on sexual minorities promising investigation into the LGB *and* T populations, transgender youth are often rendered invisible, a position also noted by Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli (2001) in their article about gender performativity and normalizing practices in schools. Ultimately this work highlights the gap in the literature; further, Holmes and Cahill’s (2004) review also focuses on an American context (deriving much of their conclusions from the 2001 National School Climate Survey, Kosciw & Cullen, 2001, as cited in Holmes & Cahill, 2004), thus reiterating that the Canadian context of transgender youth experiences is a doubly understudied area. Although they consider the intersectionality of identity categories, subdividing their review into sexual minorities of colour, for example, they also observe that, “none of the articles [they found] focused specifically on transgender youth of colour” (Holmes & Cahill, 2004, p. 56). Finally, although they do concede that much of the research of LGBT youth “paints a predominantly negative picture of school life” (p. 59), considering this group’s high risks for suicide, drug abuse, eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, and so forth, the authors also find research on the “strength and resiliency” (p. 61) of these sexually minoritized youth. Unfortunately, this section is sparse and identifies this research area as one still in progress.

Mufioz-Plaza, Crouse Quinn, and Rounds (2002) fall into the trend outlined in Holmes and Cahill’s (2004) review: although the work of Mufioz-Plaza et al., (2002) claims to consider the social supports for LGBT students, *again* the transgender students are actually never a part of the study. Despite the efforts of the researchers to recruit transgender students, none chose to participate, and yet Mufioz-Plaza et al., (2002) continue to elide transgender experiences with those of sexual minorities. Their work is based on this premise that the narrative of violence is so pervasive for LGBT students that the authors require an examination into how students cope with the various health risks they suffer in high school as a result of “the widespread social stigmatization of homosexuality” (Mufioz-Plaza et al., 2002, p. 53) and the frameworks of



heteronormativity and genderism (Browne, 2004). Furthermore, their study, even if it happened to be relevant, also looks only to an American context of study.

In this same vein of studying the health risks of sexual and gendered minority youth, Jordan's (2000) study examines substance abuse among LGBT and Q (for questioning) students, arguing school psychologists are required to support these students to "help alleviate the isolation and loneliness common to these teens" (p. 205). Henning-Stout, James, and MacIntosh (2000) repeat the narrative of violence in their study on harassment of LGBTQ youth in schools. At least functioning to redirect the focus from simply documenting these incidents of mental and physical harassment, the authors aim to reduce the suffering by advocating for school-based programs initiated for such a purpose. Kosciw, Greytak, and Diaz (2009) outline the factors that contribute to these conditions of suffering for LGBT youth. Calling it a "hostile school climate", the authors necessarily establish how these factors "negatively impact...access to education" for this population, leaving LGBT youth to feel "uncomfortable or unsafe in school" (Kosciw et al., 2009, p. 976). Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, and Azrael (2009) study the emotional distress of LGBT youth, but again fail to include the transgender perspective in this quantitative analysis primarily because they understand this population through their identificatory category of sexual orientation. Fortunately, Grossman and D'Augelli (2006) attempt to fill this gap: their study names the transgender youth as invisible and vulnerable, which is evident both in schools and in the research. Their work fits into this narrative of violence, however, because they outline the health concerns of this population as well as the fear around lack of safe school environments. One participant suggested vulnerability: "I have no comfort or safety zones, and that puts me at risk for suicide" (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006, p. 123). Others claimed attending alternative schools was also isolating, even though somewhat safer. Ultimately, transgender teens are still considered, at least in this study, to be traumatized by school experiences; and although this is a necessary understanding, it is also not complete.

What is missing from these studies rooted in school psychology is the notion of the young person as a subject, whether with conditional agency (Davies, 2006) or full agency (as in some feminist readings). Indeed, their lack of consideration of this position

actually posits the LGBT group as fully determined, un-agentic subjects, but without even the complexities involved in discourses of power (Foucault, 1977). Devoid of any theorizing that is akin to my study (Foucauldian disciplinary space or Butler's subjectification and gender performativity), these studies only reiterate the narrative that sexually minoritized and gender nonconforming adolescents are victims, suffering at the hands of others. It is from here I depart, locating other, more nuanced understandings of theirs and *all* gendered subjects' experiences as part of the process of subjectivation.

## Conclusion

The above literature review surveys the research terrain that intersects with my dissertation. I have categorized these empirical studies as either contributing to my understanding of the bathroom as disciplinary space, if not producing and produced by the relations of power, or underpinning my understanding of processes of subjectivation, especially in youth practices. Within each category lies reference to the other: how disciplinary space conditions subjects and how subjects condition spaces. They are two sides of the same coin. Many other studies have connections to the two broad topics, of course, but to maintain an analytic economy and to keep the focus on these practices of self within spaces, especially of the toilet in schools where possible, demanded a discipline of another kind. The last category is not intended to re-pathologize or victimize youth of sex and gender nonconforming identities, but it does serve to contextualize the existing discourses on bodies that fail to matter (Butler, 1993). Furthermore, this review has articulated a gap in the research within which my study is positioned. Examining subjectivation and practices of the self of gendered youth in school spaces, namely the school bathroom, through visual methodology (of which I will discuss in the following chapter) is a project related to many current and past studies in some small capacity at least in its constituent parts, but I hope as a whole, through its Foucauldian and Butlerian analysis, it can contribute to the much needed literature that untangles the complexities of youth subjectivation in transgender studies combined with queer epistemologies.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology, Methods and Research Design**

### **Introduction**

Methodology and methods are distinct and yet intertwined ventures where the former informs the details of, indeed, makes possible and coherent the latter. In this chapter, I explore the methodological and therefore, epistemological, underpinnings that inform the research design as well as outline each stage of the design. Because I conducted two phases of research, interviewing five recent high school graduates online in the first, and 24 current high school students in the second several times (along with three administrators, one Art teacher, and two custodians), the stages of each phase are fairly involved. Therefore, I provide overviews and explanations of the data instruments and collection sandwiched between methodological justification and analysis and ethical extensions at the end.

At the beginning of this chapter I set the methodological stage, exploring the following: case study, queer and transgendered-inspired epistemologies, visual methodologies, student voice, and crystallization. Following this, I outline the research design as well as include the poststructural, queer and visual analysis methods I employed. At the end of the chapter, I investigate various issues in qualitative methodology, namely, of access to participants and ethical reflexivity of the researcher. In this way, I attempt to become sensitized to the kinds of analysis I conduct on the verbal and visual products from my participants, to conduct a meta-analysis upon the decisions I made as a researcher, and to “question the ethics of representing the voices of others” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 2).

### **Qualitative Research and the Case Study**

I have engaged with qualitative research because of its potential to pay attention to the marginalized, to have the intention to “understand the ‘other’” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 2) which, although a lofty and possibly problematic claim, I argue, with qualifications, begins to situate the intentions within a framework of equity and social justice; through researcher reflexivity, and critical theory, recent qualitative work addresses this “painful history” of colonialist pursuits of knowledge (p. 5). Productively, it is the distinct ability

of “case studies and qualitative research...to delve into the complexities of social life” (McCall, 2005, p. 1782). Because my paradigmatic framework is poststructuralist and Foucauldian, queer and transgender-inspired, methodology must be commensurable, even if the theoretical frameworks appear to contradict that commensurability. Where Elliot (2009) investigates the tensions among queer and transgender research epistemologies (even tensions among transsexual versus transgender ontologies), Foucault himself denied the category of poststructuralist. Indeed, I also acknowledge the inherent tensions among poststructural and Foucauldian analytics especially surrounding the concept of the subject as either agentic, in the former, or capable of resistance, in the latter (Foucault, 1980). Furthermore, tensions abound between queer and transgender epistemologies where fluidity and destabilization might better describe the positionalities within the former and ‘passing’ and assimilation might better describe the latter (see Stryker, 2006). And yet, I forge through these complexities. Creswell (2007) emphasizes that in qualitative inquiry “the *process* of research [is] flowing from philosophical assumptions, to worldviews and through a theoretical lens” (p. 37). I conducted an inductive, exploratory inquiry, with elements of the deductive:

inductive in the early stages, especially when...figuring out possible categories, patterns, and themes...[where] the final, confirmatory stage of qualitative analysis may be deductive in testing and affirming the authenticity and appropriateness of the inductive content analysis, including carefully examining deviate cases or data that don’t fit the categories developed. (Patton, 2002, pp. 453-454)

Following Anyon’s (2009) advice, while writing and reading simultaneously to data collection, I continually revised my understanding of theoretical frameworks against my observations. I engaged in theory all along the way, right up into the last days of writing, engaging in the micro-tuning of analytics against and within the data, the “process of ‘kneading’ the theory/research/data mix” (Anyon, 2009, p. 13).

I investigated the ways secondary school students make sense of their lived experiences of the public school washroom as it is embedded in a context of institutionalized binary gender relations. In effect, I investigated the “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1980) of washroom experiences: those knowledges “that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition

or scientificity” (p. 82) in an effort to (de)subjugate (Stryker, 2006) them. I have looked into how the washroom space is experienced, known, understood, and how its practices are silenced and through which certain gendered subjectivities are perpetuated; because it is normalized and normalizes, it is a space that is disqualified in dominant culture and thus denotes a position of Other. Because I undertake an analysis of the washroom space as it applies to all gendered bodies, I am not speaking for, or about, the Other (Kumashiro, 2000), but engaging in the process that is “critical of privileging and othering” (p. 35).

My research sought the experiences and understandings of a variety of gendered students as they related to the social use of the public school washroom to investigate how their subjectivities were impacted/produced. Furthermore, I learned from custodial staff who maintain the washroom spaces about what they had witnessed, removed from the walls, or overheard. Finally, to achieve a (de)subjugated knowledge (Stryker, 2006) to triangulate the data, I spoke to the vice principal and/or principal directly in charge of discipline (including those activities that may occur in and around the washroom), to ask what they had surveyed and acted upon. Their perspectives were useful in providing further insights into the washroom as a subjugated and regulatory space in terms of how it perpetuates certain norms about gender as a binary system tied to sexed bodies coherently and unproblematically.

I conducted interviews at two secondary schools that I name Best Secondary School and Corey Heights Secondary School. Because the space of the washroom is already bounded and cellular, it fits that I would design the study as similarly bounded. Thus, I have constructed two *instrumental* case studies (i.e. one for each school I accessed) because I want “to provide insight into an issue” (Stake, 2005, p. 445), to present “effects in real contexts” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 253) such as the gendered striations at work in the disciplinary space of the school washroom. Case studies “enable boundaries to be drawn around” them which “may be shaped by organizational or institutional arrangements” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 253). I have bound the inquiry to the washrooms in schools to permit the “rich, detailed, and concrete descriptions of people and places” (Patton, 2002, p. 438) that good qualitative studies

require. Because the case study was split across two school sites containing several stages of interviews with students (along with interviews with custodial staff and administration), it takes on characteristics of a multiple case study approach with a subcase built in to the first case (Yin, 2006). But to avoid comparative analysis, I focus on different themes in each. Opting to conduct case studies as opposed to a more open qualitative study helps “in refining theory, suggesting complexities for further investigation as well as helping to establish the limits of generalizability” (Stake, 2005, p. 460) while providing in-depth description and analysis of the issues at hand. Although during the time of data collection, a certain level of immersion was necessary to arrange and complete the required number of interviews; these case studies bear only slight resemblances to ethnography, namely in the diversified forms of instruments of data collection, that is, the visual methodology paired with the multiple interviews, and in the amount of time spent in each school. The data analysis is divided into two instrumental case studies with elements of ethnographic immersion, which Yin (2006) argues is actually an inherent part of case study methodology. Indeed, in deciding on the nature of each of the case studies, a certain amount of in-field analysis was necessary, as recommended by Yin (2006), which differs from the separation and chronology of data collection and data analysis in other methods. Nonetheless, resisting the tendency to make premature conclusions during data collection also requires a fine balance, whereby Yin (2006) insists “you need to master the intricacies of the study’s substantive issues while also having the patience and dedication to collect data carefully and fairly—potentially hiding (if possible) your own substantive thoughts” (p. 113). Noticing themes arising in each school’s participant sample meant that although I could probe into certain issues with certain students, I also could not presume to know their responses. For instance, at Corey Heights, when a few students had spoken about the categorization of students within the school cafeteria, I wanted to ask other students about this specifically; however, I also did not want to speak for them, or ask questions in such a way that would already shape the sort of knowledge the students were willing to offer. Instead, I had to speak around the issues, asking what they noticed about certain spaces, if anything at all; and, in the cases where the students did not have the same knowledge or

could not say anything about the school cafeteria, in this case, I was obligated to follow their own knowledge pathway instead of trying to forge my own.

Patton (2002) recommends “thick description” will provide the foundation for qualitative analysis (p. 437); Yin (2006) argues analysis can follow from decisions made during the initial stages of the research design (p. 118). Through the use of “rich description, thoughtful sequencing, appropriate use of quotes, and contextual clarity” (Patton, 2002, p. 65), a qualitative researcher is one who can be credible, authentic and trustworthy. To achieve such depth and richness of data, that will also permit findings to be “as robust as possible” (Yin, 2006, p. 115), I conducted several semi-guided interviews with most student participants and at least one with the secondary groups (custodians, and administrators) to explore what these participants already knew and what they experienced in their schools on a daily basis. In this way, the case studies “strive to portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality...of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 254). Used in this sense, the semi-guided interview is an exploratory approach, following a conversational style that seeks to generate “more engaged personal narratives and more candid opinions” (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005, p. 223). Interviewing allows “us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (Patton, 2002, p. 341) to figure out what we cannot observe, namely, “feelings, thoughts, and intentions [and] how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world” (p. 341).

Furthermore, I collected other sources of field data affiliated with case studies, namely my own field notes, my own documentary photography of the space of the washrooms, annotated drawings/maps from the students, and photography from the students. The justification for the visual data I describe below. Multiple sources of data triangulate the data. Only through multiple points of access, Yin (2006) advises researchers might be able to penetrate the “collective mantra” (p. 116) that develops as part of the institutional discourses of schools because “triangulation helps to identify different realities” (Stake, 2005, p. 454). Whether this multiplicity points to

crystallization over triangulation might require a more in-depth investigation, but I certainly begin with Richardson's concept of the crystal

...with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, and are altered, but they are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 963).

I find myself aligned also with Ellingson's (2009) adoption of crystallization:

Crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about social constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (p. 4)

Ellingson's crystallization elaborates upon the original concept from Richardson (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) in the pursuit of an ontological, epistemological and methodological framework that is best suited for social constructionist and critical paradigms (Ellingson, 2009, p. 4). Deploying visual methodology alongside theory inspired by queer and transgender studies through case studies that seek depth of knowledge about the phenomena of gender performance in school spaces all with the intention of pursuing a social justice agenda qualifies my study to be read as engaging in crystallization, according to Ellingson's criteria. Through the lens of crystallization we are provided "with a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 963).

### **From Queer to Trans Theory and from Queer to Trans Methodology**

Theoretically I engage with Foucauldian (1977) theory of space as disciplinary and Butler's (1990) work on subjectification and gender performativity to understand how students are gendered subjects, always in the process of constructing the self and implicated by their spatial surroundings. I also access an analytics of spatiality, thinking of the washroom as a heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), a place relating to and inverting relations to the school environment, and societal norms at large. In this space, the analytics of pastoral power can be overlaid to understand the mechanisms of disciplinary power. And the washroom can also be thought of as a closeted space (see



Brown, 2000; Sedgwick, 2008), one that conceals, segregates, and shames its users, especially those identifying their gender and/or sex in non-normative ways. In other ways, the shaming may not derive from non-normative behaviour but simply via the incitements to live up to a certain norm even in the most private and basic of bodily functions. No body escapes the matrix of intelligibility (Butler, 1990), not for a moment. In line with my entire theoretical position, I embrace transgender studies and queer theory as a way to conceive of gender *and* sex as interconnected, fluid, non-binary constructs. Thus, as Foucault and Butler deploy the liminal as a space that can teach us about the dominant forms of power relations, I too wish to look at the washroom through a queer/trans perspective, one that is critical of dominant assumptions and practices of a binary gender/sex regime, only to queer the experience for every body who uses its space and is ultimately produced, as a certain sort of subject, by its material and discursive structure.

Thus, queer theory and transgender studies (Stryker, 2006; Valentine, 2007; Wilchins, 2004) locate my key theoretical tradition alongside the analytics of Foucault (1977, 1980, 1988a, 1990a) and Butler (1990, 1993, 2004), which ultimately inform my methodology. In general, because queer theory dominates trans studies in the mainstream methodology literature, it is necessary to chart its derivation. Just as queer theory emerged out of feminist action, transgender studies emerge out of the limitations of queer theory (Stryker, 2006), while simultaneously retaining certain ontological characteristics of queer theory. Branching from the tradition of critical theory, queer theory not only critiques systems of construction according to the effects of power, especially in terms of sexual orientation and identity, but it avoids a simple valorization of the single story, the lived experience, without attention to the construction of the story's subject, thus differing from social constructionism or other theories of social transmission (Bennett deMarrais & LeCompte, 1995), like phenomenology. Thus, when qualitative inquiry purports to "hear silenced voices" by "allowing [people] to tell the stories" (Creswell, 2007, p. 40), through a queer and/or trans (and Foucauldian) lens it must also contextualize those stories, and analyse them in terms of their embedded power structures and complicit subject positions.

In its critique of disciplinary power structures, queer methodology can be aligned with an analysis of gender normalization, but not without articulating some of the tensions and commonalities embedded in a combination of these two diverging fields of queer and transgender theory. Queer theory can intimate a sort of queer methodology by virtue of its ability to mark out the epistemological and ontological beginnings of inquiry. Similarly, space might be made for a transgenering methodology also. Queering is a process, coined by Britzman (1995) in terms of pedagogy, “a mapping” (p. 216), that attempts “to exceed such binary oppositions as the tolerant and the tolerated and the oppressed and the oppressor yet still hold[s] onto an analysis of social difference that can account for how structural dynamics of subordination and subjection work” (p. 226-227). Indeed, Britzman begins to formulate a practice aligned with queer theory which includes “the study of limits, the study of ignorance, and the study of reading practices” (p. 215) whereby “each method requires...an interest in thinking against the thought of one’s conceptual foundations; an interest in studying the skeletons...[that] haunt one’s responses, anxieties, and categorical imperatives” (p. 215-6). In other words, queer methodology “seeks to uncover ‘truths’ (instead of a universal truth) as they are experienced and represented” (Holliday, 2000, p. 518). Transgender studies formulate the same sort of reading practice because they also point to the limits of what is considered normal in terms of gender identity and gender expression; transgender represents the unlivable lives (Butler, 1993), the spaces inhabited by the abject. And in so doing, it makes visible the very constructedness of a system that otherwise appears invisible: binary gender, in a sex-gender-coherent framework, is naturalized, made benign in this dominant discourse. A literary theorist, Clarke (2004) proposes, “a future for queer theory...as a method, or a practice, a set of tools which can help us to re-read and over-read historical traces, spaces and gaps” (p. 80). Like Renold and Ringrose’s (2008) ruptures of the heterosexual matrix, queer theory and transgender studies promote an analytic process that wants to identify that which exceeds comprehension or sense (Butler, 2005), even if it proves ultimately impossible.

In line with my study that seeks to understand the subjectivation process as it is qualified by the space of the washroom, Clarke (2004) decides “queer methodology would seem to be a primary way to discover subjects and subjectivity” (p. 82). Perhaps

Halberstam (1998) provides a more direct definition of queer methodology as “a scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects who have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behavior” (p. 13). Transgender as a methodology might look very similar to Clarke’s and Halberstam’s queer modes of inquiry; however, where it might stray is in one, the primacy of sex and sexual desire to define an individual and its relative relationship to sexed norms (Stryker, 2006); and two, in the theoretical application of queer that overlooks the contingency of gendered knowledge for each individual (Stryker, 2006, p. 12). Indeed, Stryker (2006) names transgender studies as methodologically aligned with Foucault’s (1980) subjugated knowledges; analysis born out of transgender epistemologies is “absolutely essential to contemporary critical inquiry” (Stryker, 2006, p. 13). Through these descriptions, the sort of qualitative inquiry I take is a queerly-identified, trans-inspired journey; that is, it matches the aims of a queering gaze to look to the structures of power that silence, if not particular subjects, then the institutionalizing processes that construct certain gendered subjects (thereby excluding other possibilities of gendered performance) according to heteronormative standards and a binary system of gender and sex. It is a queering that accepts the contingency of gendered knowledge for individual subjects. In keeping with a “scavenger methodology” (Halberstam, 1998, p. 13), multiple instruments of data collection, of the verbal and visual type that I have collected from participants, comprise the material forming the two case studies.

Alone, transgender studies mark an emerging framework; transgender is not even an acknowledged epistemological position in many existing methodology texts, which leads one to assume these sources are outdated, unaware, or dismissive, or that they conflate transgender with queer theory as in the designation, LGBTQ. Patton (2002) names queer theory as one “orientational qualitative inquiry [because it] begins with an explicit theoretical or ideological perspective that determines what conceptual framework will direct fieldwork and the interpretation of findings” (p. 129); ultimately, the work then is “oriented in a particular direction” (p. 131). Under this category there would certainly be room to call transgender an “orientational perspective” (Patton, 2002, p. 131).

Bearing similarity to queer theory that works to dismantle or disrupt the system of normalization of certain subject positions (Luhmann, 1998), transgender studies, or transgender “phenomena” (Stryker, 2006, p. 3) as a field

is concerned with anything that disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we generally assume to exist between the biological specificity of the sexually differentiated human body, the social roles and statuses that a particular form of body is expected to occupy, the subjectively experienced relationship between a gendered sense of self and social expectations of gender-role performance, and the cultural mechanisms that work to sustain or thwart specific configurations of gendered personhood. (Stryker, 2006, p. 3)

In other words, both queer and transgender frameworks question the production of gendered/sexed hierarchies; however, where they differ is important to clarify. While queer may seek deconstruction to the point of embracing “a fluid, permanently shifting, and unintelligible subjectivity” (Luhmann, 1998, p. 146), transgender studies seek to “reveal the operations of systems and institutions that simultaneously produce various possibilities of viable personhood, and eliminate others” (Stryker, 2006, p. 3). The fluidity of queer theory is not the same thing as the “various possibilities” of gender identity allowed by transgender studies. Queer theory may want to dismantle power structures in order to rework them whereas transgender studies may want to avoid a complete deconstruction because it brings visibility and violence to the embodied individual. Transgenderism paradoxically possesses a “promise of flexibility and its reality of a committed rigidity” (Halberstam, 2005, p. 21). For the lived experience of any transgender person, fluidity may not in fact be desirable. Indeed, transgender studies might even be differentiated further between its macro and micro applications. As a field it “represents a significant and ongoing critical engagement” (Stryker, 2006, p. 4) with issues of gendered subjectivity, a form of queering of the establishment of gendered and sexed norms through criticality; as a lived experience, transgender may mean something very different, very non-queer.

Cavanagh’s (2010) recent work on queering bathrooms lends insight into this tension. She articulates a clear distinction between queer theory and trans studies, claiming each has divergent goals; while the former critiques “sexual norms engendered by compulsory heterosexuality” (Cavanagh, 2010, p. 18), the latter is “centered upon

sexed embodiment and gender identity” (p. 19). However, she does argue for a framework that is informed equally by both queer theory and trans studies because “by segregating [them] we are in danger of losing sight of the nuances, complexities, and interlocking disciplinary devices through which we are subjugated to networks of power” (Cavanagh, 2010, p. 19). Although it is pertinent to heed Noble’s (2005) move to look to the post-queer, for now I choose to read queer as not incommensurable with all things trans, preferring queer to mean a “destabilizing of the spaces it flags” possessing “strategic and contingent efficacy” (p. 165). More than not, queer paves the way to trans-inspired methodology for me. Taking Cavanagh’s (2010) lead at negotiating these two fields, I explore these nuances of disciplinary power through both queer and trans theory in as much as they do not conflict with each other, but how they might both be productive at troubling gender and sex regimes.

Transgender as a theoretical and methodological framework is informed, but not limited, by queer theory and is not a project for a minority population alone (Stryker, 2006), but a way to re-think gender normalization in terms of gender as fluid (Bornstein, 1994), or a de-hierarchized gender regime, and a gender system that aims to be just and democratic (Martino, 2012; Martino, Rezai-Rashti, & Lingard, 2013; Connell, 2009). However, following Jacob Hale’s (1997) advice, this metaphor of the transgender cannot replace the lived realities of a transgender individual. Drawing from Butler’s (1990, 1993) work on troubling gender paired with a critique of bodies that matter, Bobby Noble (2007) positions “trans” as something that “marks not only gender trouble but also category trouble that has the potential to reconfigure not just gender but embodiment itself” (p. 169). Using trans to “render something in-coherent” (Noble, 2007, p. 171) to be able then to acknowledge that “what we construct as knowledge is really a regime of received ideas, ideologies, prejudices and opinions” (p. 174), Noble (2007) shows us that trans can also show a “way of not knowing that one does not know” (p. 174). To position trans as a theoretical tool, if not a methodological tool, that can unearth the ignorance within knowledge regimes of gender normalization, is to begin to bring equity and social justice to all gendered bodies in schools.

## Visual Methodology as Queer/Trans Methodology

To maintain the methodological pursuit of queering (and applying transgender studies as an epistemological lens), visual methodology is a suitable complement. Holliday (2000) argues that queer methodology is aligned with visual research “since the visual dimension has close associations with queer identities and is one in which queer subjects have particular skill” (p. 518). I would add transgender studies are also complementary to visual methodologies in that they interrupt a hegemonic “visuality”, or that which belongs to a “scopic regime” which is “intimately bound into social power relations” (Rose, 2007, p. 5). To be more precise, visuality and visualization are more in line with transgender studies, especially as Wagner (2006) conceptualizes it. He argues too much research reproduces a “sloppy use of ‘visible’, ‘visual’, and ‘visualising’” (Wagner, 2006, p. 56). What is visualized is what is brought into understanding, or comprehension, “a mode, process or dimension of understanding, a strategy of comprehension or conceptualisation” (Wagner, 2006, p. 55). This act of comprehensibility is governed by certain regimes of truth and, through the processes of sight/vision, is aligned with how the embodied realities of many transgender, genderqueer, or gender variant or nonconforming lives are conversely judged and categorized as incomprehensible, incoherent (Noble, 2007), and unlivable (see Butler, 1993) through a visual performance and a culture of repeated and regulating surveillance (Foucault, 1977).

If transgender studies aim to make visible the operations of normalization of gender and the hierarchies of gender (Stryker, 2006), then visual methodology acts as a pun and a metaphor both, as well as a way into literally making visible that which often goes unnoticed primarily because it is so normalized. It is through visual research that is meant “to extend observations” (Glesne, 2011, p. 80) and provide “*specific* information” (p. 81) that we can “understand both the symbolic and the physical meanings of the built environments of schools” (Prosser, 2007, p. 15) that often represent dominant visuality and impact upon the lives of those made visible by not conforming to gender standards. Acting not as an illustration to life, but as a tool of provocation, visual methodology provides a way to prod a deeper, more enriched understanding of lived realities and spaces of gendered youth in schools.

Haraway's (1988) conceptualization of the visible to reach an *embodied* objectivity is grounded in critical feminist epistemologies and has relevance for transgender studies. She redefines objective knowledge to mean that which is situated and therefore one that "privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections, and hope for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing" (Haraway, 1988, p. 287). Indeed, she names subjugated knowledges the only way to *be* privileged because they are already "situated and embodied" rivaling "various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims" (Haraway, 1988, p. 286) that belong to "those occupying the positions of the dominators" (p. 289). Because "vision is *always* a question of power" (Haraway, 1988, p. 287) in her estimation, it is the responsibility of the viewer to claim one's location, and name one's knowledge as partial. Not only theoretically does her work have bearing on the visual politics of transgender studies, but it also offers pragmatic advice to researchers doing transgender work. Regardless of their insider/outsider status, the researcher must acknowledge that "the knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and *therefore* able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another" (p. 288). To do research with a particular population—especially if using visual means to collect data as well as targeting a population that is already made visible in dominant culture—is to bear the responsibility of embodied objectivity and situated knowledges both of the researcher self and of the research participants.

Visual data can be categorized as researcher-created, participant-created, or collaboratively-created (Glesne, 2011; Prosser & Loxley, 2010). I have attempted to cover all of these categories in my research design. Through researcher-created data the possibilities for photo elicitation emerge. Intended to be "provocative and disruptive" and "to elicit suppressed views" (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998, p. 124), photo elicitation took place during the second set of interviews I conducted with students where I showed them photographs I had taken of the school washrooms to elicit responses and "prompt much more talk about different things" (Rose, 2007, p. 240) than what a standard interview could allow. According to Holm (2008), this "researcher-produced" photography is "rooted in the use of documentary photography in anthropology" and

must be considered within the larger context (p. 327). Harper (2002) calls this type of photo elicitation “scientific” (p. 13) and occupying just one end of the continuum in his outline of the history of the development of photo elicitation. Harper argues that the photograph “evokes a different kind of information” (p. 13), citing the first named study using this technique by Collier in 1957 whereby “the researchers felt that the photos sharpened the informants’ memory and reduced the areas of misunderstanding” (Harper, 2002, p. 14). Despite Harper’s discrete categorization of photo elicitation studies, I find mine confounding. Although I do not include people, these photographs could be argued to fit into all of his categories: “social organization”, “community”, “identity”, and “culture/cultural studies” (p. 16). Although Collier (2001) offers both direct and indirect analysis potential from photo elicitation, I found more possibilities from the latter whereby, in his words, “the richest returns from photo elicitation often have little connection to the details of images, which may serve only to release vivid memories, feelings, insight, thoughts and memories” (p. 46). I showed participants the photographs of the school space not to have them focus on details, but to prompt more from them about their experiences of the space than what mere questioning could achieve. I outline my photo elicitation process in detail under the research design where I conducted a sort of “visual inventor[y]” (Collier, 2001, p. 13) of the elements within the space of the school washroom.

Of the second category, participant-created, I capitalized on the tendencies to visual expression of some of the student participants to ask for visual responses following the interviews, primarily surrounding some of the issues that emerged during these interviews. In some cases, these responses took the form of photovoice. Photovoice, or the photo novella as it was historically known (Thomson & Gunter, 2007), uses “people’s photographic documentation of their everyday lives as an educational tool to record and to reflect their needs, promote dialogue, encourage action, and inform policy” (Wang & Burris, 1994, pp. 171-172). It is not to be about the researcher’s photography, but those with subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 1980) to “include new voices in policy discussions by facilitating collective learning, expression, and action” (Wang & Burris, 1994, p. 172). Although it does figure into youth studies, photovoice is most prominent in health research rather than education (Holm, 2008, p. 330), thus named a



“participatory health promotion strategy” (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001, p. 560). For my purposes, engaging photovoice (and photo elicitation) to examine school washroom space is a rather innovative move, at least according to Prosser (2007) who states, “curiously, visual research has played little role in the study or design of school architecture”, concluding that “contemporary school design is thus a wide-open field for visual researchers” (p. 15). Advocating for such research, Prosser (2007) argues that photovoice can contribute “valuable input from teachers, pupils, and others who actually inhabit the built environments” (p. 16).

The third category of collaboratively-created visual data had inspired me to think about the possibilities for mapping, or *ethnocartography*, as Glesne (2011, p. 84) outlines. She describes participants together with a facilitator engage in “mapping or diagramming together some material aspect of their lives...to discuss what works well and where problems lie” (p. 84). Linville’s (2009a) study included a creative and critical activity that involved asking genderqueer and non-straight identifying students to map out their school in terms of safe and unsafe zones. Some of the students from Corey Heights produced maps of their school, which emerged during the second interview. Specifically, these students classified the school space according to which students tended to occupy certain enclaves or areas consistently thereby outlining a hierarchy of space based on social hierarchies. Although these cartographic products (as I have now named the photographs of mapped space from the students) are not collaboratively created, they are methodologically and epistemologically aligned with participatory action research (PAR) that work alongside my interest in the gendered subjectivation of youth.

The student maps also resemble a queer reading practice (Britzman, 1998), a sort of “imaginary site for multiplying alternative forms of identifications and pleasures” (p. 85), a way to think “against one’s thoughts” (p. 85) that are so much the product of a dominant social regime defining what is possible and what is abnormal. They provide a way to stay in line with student voice discourse, indeed, to imagine how student voice can lead to student-as-researcher (Thomson & Gunter, 2007), whereby “students have a right to determine the nature, scope, and conduct of research they do, and to be involved

in making recommendations and be involved in their implementation” (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 378). Providing students with the opportunity to think about and possibly rethink their space and the way they live in it becomes a matter of ethics.

## Research Design

My research design took the structure of two phases: the first conceived as a sort of pilot study to ascertain current narratives or discourses employed around the space of the washroom; and the second, an investigation into two school sites through interviews with students and staff (administrators, teacher, and custodians). During the first phase I conducted interviews online via Skype or the telephone. The second phase involved several stages including interviewing principals and/or teachers as well as custodians of each school followed by multiple interviews (up to three) of 12 students per school. Of these 24 students in total, 14 produced some type of visual product, which included drawings, photographs, and mixed media assemblage.

### Phase 1: Finding narratives with recent graduates.

The first phase of my research project generated narratives about the experiences of the washroom space. It was born out of a need to test two major themes from the literature: the narratives of *silence around the washroom* and *violence of the washroom*. The first is the normalization of the space of the binary gendered washroom, how the space is unproblematized, allowed to continue in its basic functioning to divide docile bodies through enclosure and partitioning (Foucault, 1977), despite the problematics engendered and documented by queer subjects (see the bathroom problem elaborated upon in Chapter One). Part of Foucault’s analysis of the space of the classroom, as *tableaux vivants* (1977)—which marks also how the hours in the day are regimented—speaks to how toilet habits can be part of this regime. Certain schools will allow only designated times to release students to the washroom; as is the case in Corey Heights, students were directed to use only certain washrooms, located outside of teaching corridors, during certain periods. Certainly, schools designate washrooms according to students’ biological sex, for the most part (although activist movement and some school board policies, namely the TDSB, include transgender accommodations that include preferred washroom usage),

which forms the basis for my study. While schools might allow for individual student release during the day, these are mostly overlooked in the management of the class to allow for minimal disruption to the pedagogical activities. In this case, a teacher may only notice a student's usage of the washroom if a problem occurs; otherwise, it is silenced, concealed by the normal regimentation of the school day. According to one recent study, this discourse of disciplinary space and the narrative of silence is evident: "the teacher sometimes distrusted a request to go to the toilet" (Lundblad et al., 2009, p. 222) presumably thinking the student was only using it "as a place of refuge...a place to drink water, to check on appearance and as a pretext to take a break" (p. 221) and not for an urgent physical need. What is missing here is the private agency of students to negotiate their own bodily practices within their own time and space for themselves, against this disciplinary tactic from teachers and that inscribed in the washroom space itself. Interestingly, Halberstam's (2005) work on queer time and place figures into a critique about mandating and therefore normalizing time for individuals in schools.

The second narrative is a reaction to the first: the experiences of gender nonconforming bodies that cannot pass as normal or function without interruption, contribute to the discourse of *violence of the washroom*. Physical, mental, verbal, sexual abuse between girls and boys, and between girls and girls and boys and boys, perpetrated upon victims who are minoritized sexually or through their gender expression and performance, comprise this discourse (see Browne, 2004; Halberstam, 1998; Munt, 1998; Rasmussen, 2009; Wyss, 2004). But even despite the growing literature on the topic and the thinking that an unsupervised space could be unsafe for queer, genderqueer, and more so normatively gendered bodies, the first narrative of silence paradoxically perpetuates throughout in that the problems of the gender minoritized are ignored or pathologized, especially at an institutional level. In recent North American news headlines, of issue is the request by parents to accommodate their transgender child's toileting needs in schools that demarcate washroom usage according to a fixed and unproblematically identifiable gender identity. Instead of deferring to staff-designated or medical-designated washrooms, advocates want children to have access to their own washroom to protect their privacy and dignity. Any resistance on the part of the school board, or state-level

of school administration, must be seen to exist in a system of heteronormativity and transphobia.

Although I have opted to omit discrete and concentrated analysis from this first phase in this dissertation (due to the scope of this dissertation), it does provide a conceptual backdrop not only to my questions for the second phase, but also to my ability to analyse the responses from the second phase. In this first phase, through an investigation into the experiences of five recent graduates (within five years from graduation) from secondary school, I elaborate upon these narratives either through further illustration or through the addition of new narratives or analytical frameworks. I drew a “purposive sample” (Stake, 2005, p. 451) to achieve a depth of knowledge. What these students remembered about their experiences in schools, and how they understood them at the time of the interviews, with some distance, helps to ascertain some of the existing narratives of school space and gendered relations. Accessing this group of recent graduates provided a twofold benefit: one, as they were of legal age (18 years plus), I did not require parental consent and so it facilitated ethical clearance; and two, recent graduates are closer to their experiences in secondary school and thus perhaps retain greater clarity of memories than for anybody with more years between their high school experience and their current age.

To ease my recruitment further, I accessed two student participants from my Master’s research who had graduated, using the email addresses I was permitted to use for follow-up. Two more participants for this first phase were people I had met at an academic conference and with whom I had exchanged contact information; and one participant was the effect of a snowball from one of these previous contacts. Given the regional and temporal restrictions on this first phase, I used Skype and the telephone to interview these recent graduates. Although I had video access to the Skype interviews, I only audio-recorded each one, which means I have retained a record only of what was exchanged verbally via audio digital files and accompanying transcriptions.

In the second phase of the research, these narratives provided categories to think about how subjectivities are formed, worked upon, and could continue to be worked upon

for the purpose of a research/pedagogical imaginary: to think how the architectural space of a washroom could be redesigned and re-experienced to better serve all of its users. Although I did not pursue this trajectory in this project, it certainly marks future research directions. Furthermore, this first phase produced rich and transgender-specific material that was more difficult to obtain in the second phase primarily because no participant identified as genderqueer; only one student identified as a feminine boy while another was a lesbian, without comment on her gender.

### *Limitations of online video interviewing.*

The visual element of online interviewing is one that I have considered through reflection. During this first phase of the project where I interviewed recent graduates from high school, I conducted online video interviews, recording only the audio, but retained access to the visual during the interview. In at least one vivid example, the response from the participant held more impact, even created a sub-text, because of the visual availability of the researcher's embodiment. In this case, as the researcher, I asked the participant about a set of "mean girls" from *hir* memory in high school who had dominated the washroom space: "what did they look like?" I had asked; "blonde, long hair", was the reply, which led to a shared non-verbal retort in the form of a laugh because at the time, I embodied that very image. Not addressing it outright, because it did not follow my interview plan, I moved on, but how that irony played out for the participant for the remainder of the interview is unknown. If the researcher asking about gendered subjugation in a participant's past actually resembled the dominant normatively embodied girl group who also did indirect damage to this participant's understanding of self in terms of gender, how could gender justice be served? How could the guise of the dominant gendered group ever do the work for the under-privileged class? And what of my aims at dismantling the gender hierarchy if I played into and capitalized on the benefits of privilege myself? Some of these tensions and ethical/personal quandaries I untangle in the section at the end of the chapter that explores reflexivity as productive confessional for the purposes of dismantling gender privilege in pursuit of projects of gender justice.

These issues of researcher embodiment are not unique to online interviewing, of course, because they are equally likely to happen during in-person exchanges. However, online communication allows the separation of bodies to be brought together visually, which brings with it an uncontrolled environment especially when the participants' spaces are private versus public (as in at-home versus at-school or at-work). In Haraway's (1991) *Cyborg Manifesto* (one essay within the volume, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*) she names the household, "the *oikos*", as being as part of the "social relations" of the cyborg, as part of the "technological polis" the cyborg is able to define (p. 151). Does research conducted online make cyborgs of research participants? A computer screen frames a certain space around the head and shoulders (usually) of the user. The view the researcher has of the research participants online is selected, dividing them into parts, not unlike a cyborg form. How else are the interactions online between researcher and participant better understood than through the spectre of the cyborg?

Beyond the body, the environment too is important to consider in online exchanges. Even though I retained informed consent from these participants, I wonder how they chose what would be made visible to me during the interview. Did these participants consider what else I could see of their personal space in that selected frame? Did that matter to them? How did it affect what I assumed about them? How did what they saw in my personal space inform their assumptions about me as the researcher? In the case of these five participants, only four were made visible to me; the fifth participant suffered innumerable technical difficulties so that we reverted to a telephone interview set to speaker mode to facilitate audio recording. Of the four conducted visually through Skype online, I could see into their rooms, which consisted mostly of work spaces with books, desks, and so forth. I was somewhat deliberate in selecting the view the participants would be able to see of me; I too was at home, and even though I had de-cluttered and simplified the space, certain visual information could be ascertained regarding my socio-economic status and so forth that I could not control in the same way that I could if conducting an interview in a public space.

According to Pink (2007), "technologies [as] part of the research project...play a role in how both researcher and informant identities are constructed and interpreted" (p.

26). As described above, the participants in Phase One who chose to conduct a video Skype interview with me were able to affect their representation on the computer screen, in essence, selecting their environment and image as part of their expression. To better understand the effects of one through the other, Pink suggests acknowledging the “intersection between...image-producing technologies and the ethnic, racial, gendered and other elements of the identities of those who use or own them” (p. 26). For certain participants in this first phase of the study, namely Pliny (who identified as genderqueer) and Jacques (who identified as a transsexual man), the level to which they could actively select and control their embodied presentation might have great significance. Not only could the participants choose their screen shot, they could also affect the camera angle, the lighting, conceal parts of their body, and present themselves in a more controlled state that in-person public venue interviews would allow. The kind of gender presentation might have been preferred. Driver’s (2005) work on queer youth in online spaces provides insights: “youth make use of the Internet as a realm to try out, play with, and perform their identities and desires through provisional combinations of images, words, and narratives” (p. 111). Because Leander and McKim (2003) find that youth “do not see their experiences online as remarkable or separated from their day-to-day lives” (p. 218), this does not mean that online play or work has no impact on the physical relations in which youth engage; rather, youth might suffer similar “panoptical nightmares” (Sanchez, 1998, p. 101) online as off simply because of their entanglement in relations of gendered power (see Foucault, 1977). But they are nonetheless, contingent subjects, according to Davies (2006), because their embodiment is both regulated and freed online and off.

Indeed, these digital technologies can also step in line with the kind of technologies of self and power Foucault (1988a) surmised, whose interaction formed the concept of “governmentality” (p. 18). He intended governmentality “to cover the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other” (1997a, p. 300). Perhaps ahead of his time, Foucault’s theories of technologies might be applied to digital technology, where the technologies of the self specifically, might have greater impact if read through De Lauretis’ (1987) technology of gender which takes off from Foucault’s

1982 lecture, the technologies of the self. Foucault wanted to know how a subject is formed through the intersection between techniques of domination and of the self (1988a, p. 18) by studying historical practices. De Lauretis (1987) names a further sub-set of the technologies from Foucault: that of sex, derived from his History of Sexuality study. Branching off this tenet, De Lauretis is concerned with “not only how the representation of gender is constructed by the given technology, but also how it becomes absorbed subjectively by each individual whom that technology addresses” (p. 13). Although studying cinematic techniques through feminist film theory, De Lauretis contributes the gendering of the technologies of the self that we can now extrapolate to those relations as implicated by digital technologies. The technologies of the self for genderqueer, gender nonconforming and transgender individuals can be mitigated through technologies of the digital age in new ways, but not beyond comprehension and certainly not without the trappings associated with power relations in physical off-line spaces. Off-line and online, gender is relational because it is negotiated through and within social interactions (Pink, 2007, p. 25); Pink’s (2007) work on visual ethnography prompts me to ask, what happens when the image producer is also the image? What are the implications for gender nonconforming individuals if they get to produce their online persona in their desired performance? How does gender get negotiated and performed online, especially for youth who might embrace the confines and paradoxical freedoms of cybercultures that differ from the kind of corporal limitations physical space imposes upon them in everyday circumstances? Just as digital technology is a burgeoning, albeit explosive field, the kind of research in education that exists to help us understand the impact of digital technologies on the technologies of the self is also in its infancy. According to Holm (2008), “more research is needed on how these images [i.e. digital images produced and disseminated online and through cell phones, etc.] are produced, perceived, consumed, and interpreted” (p. 338).

### **Phase 2: Talking with current students, deploying visual methodology.**

The research follows instrumental case study design employing qualitative methods of interviewing and visual methodology to suit the theoretical focus of examining space in the production of gendered subjectivities. The activist and collaborative elements of



deploying student voice and inviting mappings of school space, hinge on the notion that subjectivities are ongoing. Design suits the purpose(s) both theoretically (through Foucauldian *subjectivation* and Butler's *performed* subjectivities) and empirically (through a consideration of improving student experiences of their school space).

*The instrumental case studies: Best Secondary School and Corey Heights Secondary School.*

The data can be divided into two instrumental case studies (and then a further sub-case within the first) where each comprises a series of semi-guided interviews, visual methodology in the form of photo elicitation and techniques of photovoice (which is somewhat linked to participatory action research, although is not my focus, it is in line with such activist methods). I accessed two secondary schools in Ontario to conduct a case study within each. I have entitled each under the following pseudonyms: Best Secondary School and Corey Heights Secondary School. Although I outline the specific demographic data that were available to me within each case study chapter, overall, in each school, only a minority of students were from low-income housing and fewer than the provincial average were ESL or EAL<sup>ix</sup> students. Higher than the provincial average for both schools were the percentages both for students identified as gifted and students whose parents had some university education. Despite the numbers I read, the feeder neighborhoods closest to each school are working class and/or lower-middle to middle class SES (socioeconomic status) households. Unique to Best Secondary School is that the SES extremes are more apparent: located close to a government-subsidized housing neighborhood, which contains “the most vulnerable learners”, according to its principal, Best S.S.’s boundaries also include rural addresses and university housing, as well as “a very affluent community”, thereby housing “an enormously diverse population”. As well, Corey Heights’ boundaries stay within the city limits and include more middle to upper-middle class SES neighborhoods. In terms of race, ethnicity, or other markers of identity within the student populations, I did not have access to the data. Middle Eastern families are growing in number in the neighborhoods that feed into Best S.S. More detailed descriptions of each school continue in the analysis chapters. Despite the lack of class and ethnic and racial diversity, especially in my samples (which I discuss below), I

was limited by the kinds of access I was permitted from the school board to certain schools. These schools are not meant to be comparative or representational of the school system in general but to provide a richer pool of participants.

*Participants: Recruitment and selection processes.*

From each school I had hoped to find ten to 15 students, of as equal a mix of boys and girls as possible, and from different ethnic and racial backgrounds but also from various gendered and sexual identities to achieve a purposive sampling (Stake, 2005, p. 451). However, asking students to identify in terms of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression is ethically compromising. Instead, I focused on the grade level, and depended on my teacher contacts to recruit interested students for me. Specifically, the teacher contact at Best S.S. was the Art teacher in whose capacity allowed me access to her classroom of Art students already sympathetic and acclimatized to visual expression. The teacher contact at Corey Heights was the department head of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Work Internship Program Coordinator and could access students interested in social work, psychology, or social justice projects.

In terms of accessing a rich or diverse sample of students racially or ethnically, again I was subject to the voluntarism of the students. Interestingly (or not, given I am a white female) the majority of my student participants were white females. Indeed, more probably, this was an act of ethnocentrism, if not indirectly mine; in this way, the lack of racial diversity in my sample is a limitation in this study. Of the 24 student participants I had secured, only a few were not white and of the nine students I feature prominently in the analysis chapters of this dissertation, only two were non-white: Tammy, at Best S.S., was Latina from Colombia; and, Trina, from Corey Heights, was Middle Eastern. Samara was Swedish, but her mother was Iranian. In terms of sexual or gender diversity, only Shelly identified herself as a lesbian, and another student whom I do not feature here, Kevin, was Asian and identified as a “feminine boy”. I did not ask the student participants to identify themselves at all, either in terms of their gendered or sexual identities or their racialized or ethnic identities because I did not want to intimidate them or make them feel this was how their contributions would be classified. All information I

have about them is what they offered to tell me through answers to other kinds of questions. I am conscious of the reading that I am simply perpetuating an ethnocentric analysis of these gendered discourses, or that I am not engaging enough into “how as researchers we are always already shaping those ‘exact words’ through the unequal power relationships present and by our own exploitative research agendas and timelines”, according to Mazzei and Jackson (2009, p. 3). Although I did not set out to include an intersectional analysis, or one that considers “interlocking systems of oppression” (Collins, 1990, p. 222), the erasure of race in transgender and queer studies is a commonplace practice, where “perspectives of whiteness continue to resonate, largely unacknowledged” (see Roen, 2001, p. 253). Roen’s (2001) paper examines the perspectives of gender liminal (a term she prefers over “transgender”) indigenous people in New Zealand for the purpose of foregrounding “cultural identity rather than gender identity” (p. 253). Her view is that “perspectives of whiteness echo, largely unacknowledged, through transgender (and queer) theorizing and to thus inspire more critical thinking about the racialised aspects of transgender bodies and gender liminal ways of being” (Roen, 2001, p. 262) scholars must take up an intersectional, post-colonial lens. To become more critical and aware of my “own racialised politics in a way that is productive for those who place race first and gender second” (p. 262), to be conscious of white privilege (see McIntosh, 1988), these are tasks that intersectionality and post-colonial theory, if not critical race studies, can help untangle, but they are no easy ones at that. McCready’s (2013) specific concern is “to develop multidimensional frameworks that take into account the complex ways race, class, gender, and sexuality contribute to the marginalization of Black gay and gender nonconforming students and, more generally, all queer students” (p. 141). Roen’s hope is that through a theorizing of transgender that also addresses race, class, “indigeness and colonization [it] might provide more discursive pathways for indigenous people struggling to live in gender liminal ways” (p. 260). Furthermore, an intersectional approach complicates, or “fractures” (Broad, 2002) the essentialist, homogenous identity of transgender, a move that is necessary for political action and activism, according to Broad. Broad’s (2002) chapter looks at transactivism in the mid-1990’s to consider how sexuality and notions of queer, race, and class have the potential to fracture or deconstruct the otherwise

homogenizing identity of transgender that “has been assumed to be predominantly white and middle class” (p. 253). Through interviews with “trannies of color”, Broad determined that “whether challenging the assumption of a universal white transgender experience or asserting that destabilizing categories of gender also challenged dichotomous racial categories, trans voices of color insisted that contestations over a transgender collective identity were fractured by race” (p. 253). In terms of the bathroom structure itself and its potential to be theorized through race, Cavanagh’s (2010) study on queering bathrooms considers the “white hygienic superego” (p. 6) as seen in the white porcelain toilets and sinks in public bathrooms in North America as representing, if not producing, for gender nonconforming people of colour, “angst about a racialized and class-specific gender purity” (p. 7). I briefly consider more of this view of whitewashing the bathroom space and its implications for gendered and raced subjectivities in the analysis of the case studies. As for my own reflexivity around race and the potential interpretation of the erasure of racialized differences (as well as differences of ethnicity, class, ability, etc.) throughout my project, I assert that I needed to think about a focused, in-depth analysis of gendered subjectivation through Foucauldian and Butlerian thought which may have consequences of which I can only be aware. Of course, I do not want to erase race or reproduce a white reading of transgender, genderqueer, queer, or nonconforming gender epistemologies, but neither can I do justice to my own research tasks if I broaden my focus beyond the lenses I set out to deploy. I hope that I am at least “mak[ing] transparent” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 2) how I made my decisions to “give voice” and to whom.

In an effort to “make transparent” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 2) these decisions of voice, I should note the process for selection of participants for featured analysis in this dissertation. Due to the fruits of the visual methodology, I framed the bulk of the analysis around the visual products from the students, grouping them according to how they linked thematically with either each other or with the gendered discourses I observed within their respective schools. In the case of Best S.S., I determined six students contributed rich visual work but that they could not be examined in one chapter or under one theme alone, thus, I sub-divided the case of Best S.S. into those students who participated in the school public art project that took place in the bathroom and those who

actively resisted participation. For the students at Corey Heights, I selected only three students based on the kind of photography they presented to me, as well as the potential for framing these photographs analytically as cartographic products (which I outline and elaborate upon in Chapter Six).

To triangulate/crystallize (Ellingson, 2009) the data, I also interviewed the vice principal at each school and the principal at Best S.S. as well as one school custodian at each school who was appointed by the principal and/or vice principal as having knowledge of the washroom space and the time to speak with me. Students enrolled in Grade 11 suited my intentions because they would presumably have spent a couple of years already at the school (although this was not a requirement) or at least have spent two years in a secondary school program; further, they would not be graduating immediately which would perhaps do two things: one, allow them further time, after the study, to think about or implement some changes in their own personal practice or their school environment regarding school toilet use; and two, allow me time, as a researcher, to contact them for follow-up with data verification and clarification. However, upon recruitment and through the advice of teacher contacts, my participant pool included students from Grade 10 through to Grade 12. In the end, I was content to secure any student as a participant who was interested in the topic and willing to talk with me.

Initially, I hoped to look to two areas in the schools to recruit student participants: student leadership groups and the visual arts classes. Leadership groups, including GSAs and social justice groups, are already sensitized to certain issues, especially gender and sex (see Linville & Carlson, 2010). Although I attempted to make contact with Corey Heights' social justice group through their teacher representative, I did not receive a response. Best S.S., because of the curricular project of the girls' (and later boys') bathroom art (which I will outline in detail in the analysis chapters), proved to provide a bounded grouping of students in the Visual Arts classes that required no further pursuit of other student groups. The partnership/collaboration with a teacher in the Visual Art classroom at Best S.S. allowed me to find students who were willing to engage in art-making activities (that constituted my visual methodology). As well, I was able to link the project with students' curricular responsibilities. Instead of asking for a visual

response from the students at Best S.S., I entered a class that was already engaged in making art in the school washroom. I simply followed several students through their own art-making and discussed with them their artistic intentions and how these projects informed their understanding of gender. Not only was this project a moment of serendipity for me as a researcher wanting to link visual arts responses with washroom as gendered space, it also alleviated the obligations of participants to provide an extra visual response for the project; instead, I collected visual data or digital copies of the work they were already doing for their curriculum.

The teacher contacts in each school were from previous acquaintances in the school board. Due to the particular teacher contact I had secured in each school, the pool from which participants were sought actually came from whichever class that teacher suggested. As previously stated, in Best Secondary School, the teacher contact directed me to her Grade 12 Visual Arts class; in this school, I was also invited to speak to another Grade 12 Visual Arts class and a Grade 12 English class. I spoke to approximately eighty students in total and collected 23 email addresses of students who were interested. During my pitch presentation in each class, I briefly described the project, outlined the benefits of participating and the confidentiality they would be guaranteed and answered any questions. I invited students to give me their email address immediately, or simply to take the flyer I had prepared that outlined the study (followed by the information and consent letter) and provided my contact information. At Best S.S. I secured 12 student participants who worked with me; nine of these students sat for a second interview including photo elicitation and six sat for a third interview and/or provided a visual response. In Corey Heights Secondary School, the vice principal (who was my previous acquaintance) appointed the teacher contact. This teacher invited me to speak to her Grade 11 Parenting class. She also secured invitations for me to speak to her colleagues' two senior Sociology classes (Grade 11, Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology and Grade 12, Society, Challenge and Change). The procedure for recruiting students was much the same as I have outlined above for Best S.S., except that the first teacher had already collected five email addresses along with informed parental consent for me prior to my speaking in her class. Her colleague insisted the students who were interested in participating were to line up along the side of the class after I had finished

the pitch to give me their email addresses. At Corey Heights, I spoke to approximately eighty students, collected 25 email addresses of students who were interested but secured 12 students for the first interview, eight for the second interview, and four for the third and/or who provided me with a visual response. From the overall number of students (approximately 160) I spoke to in classrooms about the project to the actual number of consenting student participants (24), I retained 15% of participants for at least the first interview.

I attempted the snowball technique, especially to recruit more males, but this approach did not prove successful. One student, Trina, from Corey Heights, for instance, agreed to speak to some of her male friends, four of whom contacted me and gave me permission to contact them through email. However, not one of them was actually able to meet even for an initial interview. In a follow-up interview, she asked if I had met with her friends. When I told her no, she suggested my flier that had the word “queer” on it might have turned them away. She said they had initially verbally agreed to participate while in conversation with her, but only after they had perused the letter of information/consent, and before she had flipped down the flier:

I think that freaked them out, cause like, the one kid, like he read it, because I like handed it to him, I had that pamphlet like flipped back and like when he flipped it, he was like, ah, I don't think I want to do this anymore...I think he thought, I don't know, maybe that freaked him out.

She postulated the word “queer” (which I had included as one of many buzz words hoping to pique interest) might have offended or at least decided for them that this was not a study in which they were willing to participate, especially considering the regulation of homosexuality amongst male youth (Pascoe, 2007). Rosie, also from Corey Heights, told me one male friend might have been interested especially since she thought he was struggling with being open about his sexuality. However, even after he had agreed to meet with me, he later retracted his agreement claiming he was too busy.

### *Stage 1: Photo documentation for photo elicitation.*

In tandem with the recruitment process, I took documentary photographs of the school washrooms at the outset of my study, as permitted by the school administration (as well as the research office of the school board). In Best S.S., I photographed two girls'

washrooms and three boys' washrooms because one was located in the Technology wing of the school, a place (both in the curriculum and in the school) traditionally accommodating a majority of male students. Covering five washrooms, I took 119 photographs. I did not photograph the washrooms connected to the gymnasium change-rooms in either school because that discourse of physical education exceeded the scope of my intentions. At Corey Heights, I photographed three of each single-sex washrooms, which included those located near the gymnasium, but excluded the washrooms within the change-rooms for the reason listed above. In this school, I took 126 photographs of the six washroom spaces. The purpose of this initial photography was to provoke responses from the participants the interviews in the form of photo elicitation whereby students look at the photos and through semi-structured questions, reflect on what they see through personal experiences of these spaces. In an effort to remain documentary, these photographs contained no bodies and were structured as if I were walking through the space as a user, as a form of mapping the space. Although a complete composite is impossible unless in a "clinically controlled situation" (Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 163), the method of mapping turns the photographs into "researchable visual data", or something that is "countable, measurable, comparable" or systematized (p. 163) and then capable to provoke responses in the participants who view them during photo elicitation. I photographed the exterior of the doors, followed by the view from the entrance through the doorway, and then a systematic ordering of photographs that covered the entire visible space in the washroom. Continuing on the virtual walk, I entered washroom stalls and photographed them from the exterior as well as the interior perspective. I was also able to photograph the interior walls of the stalls and included some details a viewer might witness while inhabiting this space. I photographed the sinks, or series of sinks, the urinals in the boys' rooms, and the walls that included various paraphernalia, hand dryers, soap dispensers, tampon machines, and posters. Through this attempt to document the space through photographs, I achieved two aims: one, to capture an anonymous user's perspective of each element; and two, to capture a wider view of the architectural elements of the space. I intended to provoke verbal as well as photographic responses from the students.



### *Stage 2: The interviews.*

I conducted 59 interviews in total, which includes all participants in Phase Two. Of the student participants, I conducted 52 interviews in total. All 24 students, of course, were interviewed at least once; 18 sat for a second interview and ten sat for a third. The adult participants included six: one principal of Best S.S., two vice principals and two custodians (one each from each school), and one Art teacher from Best S.S. Because I interviewed the custodian from Corey Heights twice (for clarification purposes), I conducted seven interviews in total with the adult participants in Phase Two.

All interviews were transcribed using a transcription service with comparable and fair rates. They assured destruction of audio files, once the “receipt of the transcripts is confirmed by the client” coupled with the “fail-safe, [that] each file uploaded is assigned an expiration date” of 14 days whereby they are “automatically deleted and purged from the system...to ensure client confidentiality”. I used pseudonyms in the writing of the data to protect the confidentiality of all participants.

The first interview (30 minutes to 1 hour) with all 24 student participants inquired into their general experiences with gender and sex in schools. I began in a very generalized way before leading them to the space of the washroom, so that I could ascertain any issues or themes (either during this interview or later in analysis) that required further probing or elaboration. Because my study is not focusing on the washroom as a material space exclusively, but how it operates *within* the larger school environment and its disciplinary regime, I wanted an overall sense of how this larger school environment was experienced by my participants. I wanted to know how the washroom functions for them within this overall disciplinary space, of course, focusing on the regulation and performance of gender. Because the knowledge of the washroom is *subjugated* (Foucault, 1980), it required easing into it both for my purposes and the comfort of my participants. If I began with questions of the washroom at the outset, I could have inadvertently inhibited student responses out of sheer social unease.

I had thought that I would use this interview to determine who I would like to invite to meet for a second interview. However, I actually invited most students, even if I

was uncertain about how much interest they had in the topic, or if they would want to contribute beyond this initial interview. The only students I did not invite were quite obviously to me not comfortable speaking with me, or sharing any ideas regarding the topic. If students were able to relax and show interest during this interview then I pursued a follow-up interview. Most students (18 out of the 24) accepted a second interview (75% rate of retainment).

These second interviews lasting 45 minutes to one hour elaborated upon the issues formed in the first interview as well as prompted students about the use of the washroom space through the documentary photographs in the technique of photo elicitation. I asked questions not only about their own experiences, but how the particular elements of the photograph (i.e. framing, focus, depth of field, subject matter, etc.) might influence or affect what they think about the space. In this way, these questions not only prompted experiential recall, but they also prepared students for their own work later in the project (see O'Donoghue, 2006, 2007).

At the conclusion of the second interview, I invited each participant to conduct his/her own visual response to the washroom space, from their own perspectives and informed by their own experiences. I encouraged photography, but I also wanted to tailor this visual response to their own tastes or aptitudes, so I welcomed sketches, drawings, collages, paintings, and so on. If they were photographing the space, I insisted that these photographs could not showcase bodies; and although this absence could prove a challenge to the purpose of a personalized perspective, I could not guarantee the privacy of other individuals if I allowed people to be the subjects of the photographs, or to be photographed at all. Holm (2008) discusses the ethical problems when photovoice projects capture images of people especially in terms of how and in what context the images can be shown, arguing, "participants [as subjects in the photographs] might not be aware of all the possible ways a visual image can hurt them or provide advantages for them, even after giving consent" (p. 331). Ethically and to match the aims of my study, it must be that only the space was documented through photography. However, the lens of the camera acts as a surrogate eye, and can substitute for an empirical physical presence, especially through framing, focus, cropping, and proximity to subject matter, all

techniques of photography that I integrated into my initial questioning during the photo elicitation stage of the interview. In their own photographs and/or other forms of visual responses, I encouraged students to use this opportunity to examine or elaborate upon some of the issues they discussed during their two interviews. If that meant something they were anxious about, concerned about, or even something that simply stressed their own personal perspective of the space, this was the opportunity to express it all in photographic or visual form. These visual expressions are akin to visual mapping, a form of visual methodology linked to participatory action politics (see Linville, 2009a, 2009b). Most students were willing to participate in this visual response, even if they required some clarification around the purpose or prompting from the discussions we had already had. For instance, Callie from Corey Heights, expressed vulnerability and fears of exposure in the washroom spaces; I simply reiterated what she had already told me during the interviews to help give her direction in her photography project. Later, she showed me 19 photographs she took of the washroom and surrounding space that elaborated upon these and other themes.

Initially, I had anticipated access to photography equipment to be an obstacle. However, I encountered no real problems because most students had access either to their cell phone camera, a digital camera or, in the case of Corey Heights, were enrolled in the photography class which allowed them access to the equipment, the darkroom for developing, and knowledge about techniques, composition, and design. Of course, *depending* on students to provide their own technology or means to be able to conduct my research project would be unethical and contradict equity mandates both institutionally sanctioned (see Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009) and ontologically sustained through my theoretical frameworks of anti-oppressive research and queer and transgender studies. I was flexible with student participants; if they were willing to use their own technology and continue participation in the study, I welcomed it and helped them figure out what or how they could contribute a visual response. If they did not have access to or want to use a digital camera, a cell phone camera, or a SLR camera (as provided in the photography class), and were still willing to contribute something, I encouraged other means of visual expression, beyond the photograph. In three cases, I even provided the student participant with actual copies of my own documentary

photography of their school washrooms to incorporate into their own work. I was prepared to purchase disposable cameras (the most I could afford) so students could still participate in the photographic portion of the project if they so desired. No student accepted this offer. I did not want students to have to incur any monetary costs to be able to participate in this project. I offered to print photographs and in most cases, this was not even necessary because they were all able to email to me the photographs they had taken. For those students who created a drawing or painting, I was able to meet with them in person to be able to see it. If they had brought it to me physically, all students let me keep their work, even though I had notified them they could just let me photograph it or retain a digital copy. In one case, I returned print copies of her photographic collage so that the student could keep these for her portfolio.

I received 14 artistic responses or visual artifacts, six from Corey Heights, eight from Best S.S. At Corey Heights, it was serendipitous that some of the participants were also enrolled in the photography class so that they already possessed an aptitude and a preference for photography work. In Best S.S., I recruited from two Visual Arts classes and even followed three students' curricular work because it was suited to the project and happened after my interviews with them, in some ways, influenced by the research. Not all of these responses were necessarily tied to a third interview; I received some of them during the second interview and others were emailed to me after the second interview but did not follow through into a third interview. The responses varied in artistic intentions and abilities; from Corey Heights, four students provided photographic work, where one (Callie) stood out in both quantity and engagement with the work; two students provided sketches of the school space during the second interview. From Best S.S., no student actually produced any photography; six students completed some sort of drawing or painting, even if this included collage with found photographs (i.e. researcher-provided); one student completed a digital collage on her tablet using iPaint; and one student collected internet images to create a sort of idea-board or document that she later emailed to me. I invited all students to accompany their visual work with written explanation or personal journaling of the process in line with Foucault's theory that self-writing allows "the writer [to] constitute[] his [sic] own identity through this recollection" (1997c, p. 240), a part of the technologies of the self (1988a). However, the explanations I received

were all in oral form during the actual interviews; I conceive of the visual as a form of writing of the self.

The third and final set of interviews (30 minutes to 1 hour) with student participants consisted of ten, thereby retaining 42% of the original participants; however, I received 14 visual responses from students which means four students gave me visual work without sitting for a third interview. I retained 54% of the original participants for this phase of contributing some sort of visual data. Students presented their photography work (or virtual map of the school space) and discussed their experiences through this medium. In a sense, without linking to curricular expectations directly, this interview resembled a form of artist talk because the students related not only their personal experiences of the washroom and gender performance and regulation in the school, but also their aesthetic and material choices of the process of making their project. And it forms a text not unlike a writing of the self (Foucault, 1988a).

I conducted one interview each (lasting between 20 minutes to 1 hour) with the custodians appointed to me by the school administration at each school primarily because these staff were either in direct contact with the maintenance of the school washrooms and/or held a supervisory role as the afternoon shift leader. I was able to meet with the custodian from Corey Heights a second time for follow-up questions. The custodian from Best S.S. was rushed during the interview (it was part of her regularly scheduled day) and I thought it best to leave follow-up questions via email if need be. The custodians shared some of their experiences of what they had witnessed in the space, both in terms of student interactions, as well as tracings left on the walls or other surfaces documenting student use. These custodians possess the subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 1980) of the school because although their work contributes to the daily functioning of the schools, their knowledge remains at a very technical and local level and does not necessarily dictate school discourse or school policy in as much as it contributes to it from the ground level. I do not analyze their interview material explicitly but allow them to inform my understanding of each school's context more broadly.

Finally, I interviewed the vice principal in each school in direct contact with discipline of the student body, as well as the principal and the Art teacher in Best S.S. because they had knowledge about that school's bathroom art project and its origination. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The vice principals became invaluable both as my initial contact for student recruitment and for the knowledge they possessed regarding student use of the washroom that is regarded as problematic under health and safety or bullying mandates. I asked in this semi-structured interview questions about their knowledge of the space to the extent that it is unsupervised by staff. This final participant sample allowed for a triangulation of interview data.

Upon further reflection, I had posed some follow-up questions to the vice principals, the principal at Best S.S, and the custodians in an email form asking them to consider the questions and then respond either in kind (i.e. in email) or schedule an appointment to meet me in person again. I offered them the preamble that due to the language I had been reading in Safe Schools Policy and Inclusive Education Strategies at the Ministry level, I wanted to clarify what they understood about both gender identity and gender-based violence. I also posed the following question: How do schools address "gender-based violence" and protect students from suffering this? The responses were slight. Only the custodian, Mr. Bob Lance (a pseudonym), from Corey Heights was able or willing to meet with me. The other participants delayed the meeting time and again so that it became less a priority than completing the project in its entirety. Bob started this second interview by asking if my interest in gender was personal or professional and then wanted to know what I was "foretelling" about gender issues: "kind of just not sure where you're going with it", he told me. Overall, he seemed to conflate gender with issues of homosexuality as well as prudishness on the part of shy boys hiding their bodies in stalls and corners, instead of wanting to be exposed in open urinals or change rooms. Gender-based violence meant homophobia, to him, (e.g. "that's so gay"). And although he used the word "inclusive", he was confounded about my research intentions and the unpacking of gender issues at all. When I explained I was working towards an equity of access and treatment for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity, he responded: "to make it acceptable for everybody certainly that would be a tough thing...I don't think I'm ready to get my head around that yet". In this case, follow-up did not prove to

provide any more clarity about the definition of terms; rather, it proved that the definition of terms and the pursuit of such a conversation regarding definition, was put off by various means (i.e. stalling, delaying, or talking around the subject) by various participants. Inquiring into gender equitable relations, especially considering the language available to school employees through board policy, is more difficult if that policy does not have relevance or get translated to the everyday machinations of school personnel.

## Analysis

Analytically, I follow Foucauldian and Butlerian frameworks (as I have explicated in Chapter One). To serve as a bridge between the raw data and these theoretical frameworks, I deploy visual analysis through the social semiotic approach as adapted by van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001). In the following sections I provide an overview and justifications for my analysis. I consider how poststructural analysis intersects with Foucauldian and Butlerian concerns, and provide detail about the visual analysis. Furthermore, I attend to the pragmatic concerns about how I organized the analysis chapters in this dissertation. Although there are some contradictions between poststructuralist preoccupations with the discursive and Foucault's concerns with the material along with the discursive, poststructuralism offers considerations beyond the primary analytic frames of Foucault's heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) and relations of power (Foucault, 1977, 1980) and Butler's (1990, 1993) gender performativity and subjectivation. Furthermore, despite the tensions between the social semiotic approach and Foucauldian and Butlerian analysis, as a method it served to answer how to think about the relevance and fruitfulness of the visual products from the student participants. These photographs or drawings or collages require a specific type of analysis that values the unique capacity of visual products to be texts in their own right, beyond the mere accompaniment to other verbal texts. To make sense of these visual products, and to consider them as objects in the subjectivation of students, indeed, to consider them as types of confessions, they require their own analytic untangling.

### Poststructuralist analysis.

According to Glesne (1992), “writing is a political act” (p. 171). Beyond even paying tribute to the words and ideas of one’s participants, which is on the way to creating ethically sound research, the sort of knowledge that gets produced and reproduced in research requires special attention during the writing phase. Writing is not just a writing-up, but an integration of analytical frameworks, theoretical underpinnings and data findings all producing effects of a political nature either intended or not. Writing in qualitative research is a selection process that can obscure or do harm to the integrity of one’s participants. As Laurel Richardson argues, writing is a product (as well as a process) that “always involves value” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 960) which “produces meaning and creates social reality” (p. 961). No research writing is neutral, objective, or even completely free from harm. Writing is always about “the unequal power relationships present” and must consider “whose interests are served by particular reinscriptions and whose are further marginalized” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 2). Lather and Smithies (1997) negotiate this balance between writing and doing wrong in research by acknowledging “the limits of what can be said and known about the lives of others” (p. xiv) because they insist that certain qualitative research can actually be “a service and a learning...to risk the necessary invasions and misuses of telling other people’s stories in order to bear witness with fierce but unsentimental conviction that such stories can transfix, overwhelm, linger, and compel” (p. xiv). I bear witness (see also Ropers-Huilman, 1999), as a gender privileged researcher, to the ideas and experiences of certain gender nonconforming youth and consider the implications of school structures for gender nonconforming youth. Not only does this work require a sensitivity, a critical self-reflexivity, or a confessional reflexivity (which I elaborate upon in the ethics of research below) but it also demands transparency—of researcher subjectivity—and disclosure—of my own lenses of privilege that write this work all because more knowledge must be built around gendered spaces in schools and the lives that are lived within them.

Analysis is also an art. In one metaphor, Patton (2002) describes data analysis as the process whereby “findings emerge like an artistic mural created from collage-like



pieces that make sense in new ways when seen and understood as part of a greater whole (Patton, 2002, p. 432). Analysis is about “transformation”, “transmutation”, “conversion”, “synthesis”, “whole from parts”, and “sense-making” (Patton, 2002, p. 432). A political negotiation, yes, but a crafting of ideas from raw material, a honing in to something remarkable or at least discernible, analysis makes something out of masses of information. If analysis is an artistic pursuit, as well as the writing that works in tandem with it, imagine the complementariness of a project that already begins with artistic materials and asks participants to engage in the art-making also. Writing artistically and ethically about artistic activities that are also articulating socially relevant issues for young people is a coherent process.

My epistemological framework is informed by Foucauldian (1977, 1980, 1982, 1988a, 1990a) and Butlerian (1990, 1993, 2004) theory and transgender studies (Stryker, 2006). According to Søndergaard (2002), all are aligned in their mutual “curiosity about the subjectivating processes, the constructions of social and cultural conditions, [and] the effects of discursive power” (p. 189). Where poststructuralism fails to signal the effects of materiality upon subjectivation, Foucauldian and Butlerian thought fill the gap:

‘materiality’ designates a certain effect of power or, rather, *is* power in its formative or constituting effects. Insofar as power operates successfully by constituting an object domain, a field of intelligibility, as a take-for-granted ontology, its material effects are taken as material data or primary givens (Butler, 1993, p. 34 -35).

I am concerned to investigate not only the discursive, but also the material effects of disciplinary power upon and through the spaces of the school washroom, as well as upon and through the subjects of students themselves in their constitution as gendered subjects. Søndergaard’s poststructuralist analytic approach considers the “inclusive and exclusive discursive processes” (p. 189), which examines “the processes whereby categories [of identity, namely gender and sex] are constituted” (p. 190). Where “material positivities appear *outside* discourse and power” this is “precisely the moment in which the power/discourse regime is most fully dissimulated and most insidiously effective” (Butler, 1993, p. 35). Søndergaard’s framework serves as an entry point for analysis primarily because I worked with a varied sexed and gendered population and had to begin with their discursive understandings of gender and sex before I could examine the

materiality of how these understandings impacted their lived environment. Søndergaard recommends that the researcher should read for discursive practices that mark what seems comprehensible to the subjects, “why something is spoken into existence as taken for granted, how and when something is taboo or a subject on which there is silence, [and] on what is told as a rupture” (p. 191) all for the purpose to “make the processes of constitution explicit” (p. 191). Butler (2004) reminds us that what is taken for granted might be difficult to detect because “norms ...when they operate as the normalizing principle in social practice, they usually remain implicit, difficult to read, discernible most clearly and dramatically in the effects that they produce” (p. 41). According to St. Pierre (2002),

deconstruction insists that we not gloss the incongruous, the paradoxical, the inconsistent, or the ambiguous but rather that we seek out such interruptions and focus on the breakdowns, the absences, the hidden internal contradictions, and the warring forces of signification that are operating in whatever text...within which we are working. (p. 418)

Because I am interested in the materiality of how the space of the washroom is lived, experienced by all gendered bodies in order to understand the processes that constitute gender and its exclusionary practices in schools, I must pay attention to discursive assumptions, taboos, silences, and ruptures; this approach is also a way to read against my own personal frameworks, to create some analytic distance for me to “destabilize what is taken for granted and expose it for reflection” (St. Pierre, 2002, p. 191).

However, according to Patton (2002), in “naturalistic inquiry”, analysis is not a discrete activity that happens apart from or even after data collection but works in tandem with the latter (p. 436), as I have already discussed through Anyon’s (2009) “‘kneading’ the theory/research/data mix” (p. 13) metaphor. Because I am poststructuralist (with Foucauldian and Butlerian materialism in mind), my research design has followed this paradigm, as well as how I structured tools for data collection. Indeed, the same sort of conceptual bleeding, from one stage to another, has occurred during fieldwork, allowing me at the time to begin to form “ideas about directions for analysis” (p. 436); the process is one of kneading theory, research and analysis (Fine, 2009, p. 191). Patton (2002) recommends a balance between deciding on “premature conclusions” and repressing analytic insights in the field (p. 436); the key is to understand the nature of qualitative design as emergent. Thus, the analysis has been informed by my initial epistemological

position, which consequently informed my theoretical frameworks, which clearly provided the orientation for a methodological structure for the study itself.

I opted to analyse my data employing the general strategy of “relying on theoretical propositions” (Yin, 2009, p. 130); each case study emerges from the theoretical lenses of transgender studies as rethinking gender as well as Foucault’s disciplinary space technologies. And yet, to capture the complexity of each case, I also consider the counter voices, those “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1980), ruptures (Renold & Ringrose, 2008; Søndergaard, 2006), “interruptions” (St. Pierre, 2002) or “rival explanations” (Yin, 2009, p. 133). Mazzei and Jackson (2009) prefer the “polyvocal and multiple nature of voice within contexts that are themselves messy and constrained” (p. 1) because this approach de-centralizes the singularity, or authority of voice in many qualitative methodologies, instead hoping to make transparent the researcher’s own agenda and voice in the research process. Patton (2002) calls these “data irregularities” (p. 480) that, if accounted for, actually help to strengthen the researcher’s interpretation of the data. Each case is bound to either two chapters (for Best S.S.) or one (for Corey Heights) for this study; of course, multiple possibilities exist for reframing and extending analysis within each school’s set of data. However, I chose to frame the data in the thematic ways that emerged during data collection and continued to resonate within my theoretical perspective throughout analysis. In this way, I have been “looking for *recurring regularities* in the data [that] reveal patterns that can be sorted into categories” (Patton, 2002, p. 465). These categories comprise each case study of the schools. To create cases out of raw data requires a certain degree of interpretation whereby “attaching significance....making sense of findings,...considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order on an unruly but surely patterned world” (Patton, 2002, p. 480) are part of the license of the researcher, albeit honed by ethical obligations to those who might be affected by the interpretations, namely young people in schools. Pink (2007) suggests that it is the responsibility of researchers, especially when conducting visual methodology in the form of photographs, to “consider the personal, social and political implications of the publication of these images for their subjects” (p. 166). The same is true for the words and ideas of participants. Although certain extrapolation occurs in terms of interpretation, or reducing the amount of data through inductive means

(Seidman, 2013), this distance cannot betray the subjects who made the images, or spoke those words in the first place.

### **Visual analysis and social semiotic approach.**

**Seeing comes before words...The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled. (Berger, 1977, p. 7)**

Because I collected visual products from ten student participants across both school sites and because I wanted these texts to complement the verbal texts from the interview transcriptions, I needed to pay particular attention to the process of analyzing them. Collier and Collier (1986) suggest that after going through visual data, “intuitive discovery” (p. 172) might lead to categories of analysis. Indeed, to trust one’s researcher instincts, or to be able to “affirm [one’s] own ability to recognize” (Seidman, 2013, p. 121) what is of essential interest not only in the visual data but the textual/interview data as well, is the key to analysis that is coherent with the aims of the project as well as the theoretical frameworks. Prosser and Loxley (2010) advise that, “analysis should therefore not be seen as an afterthought when all the data have been gathered/constructed, but iteratively tied into that very process” (p. 207). Another mode of visual analysis involves the ordering of photographs as if to map the physical space they represent in order to turn the photographs into “researchable visual data”, or something that is “countable, measurable, comparable” or systematized (Prosser & Loxley, 2010, p. 163).

For organization and analysis of the photographs, I followed Collier and Collier’s (1986) text on visual anthropology that argues photographs can be transformed from “their limitation as *documents or illustration* and allows them to become the basis for *systematic knowledge [italics in original]*” (p. 170). Pink (2007) also contributes in her departure from this position, arguing that visual artifacts are not *only* useful once they are translated to text, but can be productive in their relationship *to* verbal text. Where visual and verbal intersect, and how they might inform each other, is certainly accessible through photo elicitation, but probably more imaginatively in photovoice or other modes of visual response from participants. Making sense of each is a labored and ongoing task. And it might not even be unproblematic. Locating the complexities/contradictions

between the visual and the verbal is another challenge presented to the visual methodologist.

I deployed two general techniques of visual analysis: categories arising through inductive reflection to comprise the two case studies; and mapping through photographs to create the photo elicitation stage of interviewing. Consequently, some of the students' photographic projects mapped the space of the school washroom. I consider in the analysis chapters how mapping as a methodological tool helps to classify the visual responses of the student work, especially in the case of Corey Heights.

Patton (2002) suggests, "qualitative inquiry can be thought of as mapping experiences, our own as well as those of others" (p. 27). Pascale (2011) argues the metaphor of mapping, or cartography, in methodology "alludes to geographies of power expressed in technologies for generating knowledge" (p. 1). Spencer (2011) suggests that, "maps can be seen to operate as metaphors for our relationship to the world" (p. 72). Maps represent power relations because they have traditionally been "a tool denoting possession, ownership and delineating boundaries" (Spencer, 2011, p. 71). However, the poststructural map metaphor, as a methodological framework, can "highlight the subjective and political experience of mapmaking as well as the constructive processes of reading" (Pascale, 2011, p. 2). Specifically, Pascale insists methodologists must consider their philosophical grounds to understand the "profound implications for the production of knowledge" of social research (p. 2). Because maps cannot reproduce reality exactly, therein lies an element of distortion that is significant for the process of qualitative inquiry from data collection to analysis to dissemination. Pascale advises the ethical qualitative researcher must not simply conduct a map-making project, one that presents findings unproblematically, but engage in the politics of cartography to be accountable to their subjects and the research audience. Mapping as method and methodology are twinned efforts that foreground the ethics of research.

Mapping, as a methodological metaphor, shares the qualities of another developed from Foucault's (1966) genealogy of 19<sup>th</sup> century practices of classification in natural history. The naturalist brings certain objects (i.e. exotic plants and animals) into

existence by naming them. Similarly, the map brings spaces into existence, and possession, also by naming them. By seeing, or observing, one is able to speak something, and thereby own it, manage it, or construct its meaning. Through visibility, both objects and spaces are discursively possible. Both historically agents of power, cartographers and naturalists deployed methodologies of visibility that can be translated to poststructural usages; to adopt this naturalist methodology of visibility is, in my case, to de-naturalize the space of the school washroom, and to put it up as a legitimate space for study to make apparent the gendering this space reproduces. I am taking the highly ordinary, the banal, and applying a methodology intended for the foreign, exotic, or extraordinary to help us re-learn/re-see it.

Following Wagner's (2006) insistence on the distinction between mere visual data and visualized theory, the visual artifacts are the photographs whereas their significance and what they can do both in the stages of photo elicitation and in photovoice are relevant if thought through how they have been visualized by the participants. What the participants choose to recognize, speak to, address, and elaborate upon in their own creations is part of how they understand their space around them. They attach visual significance to what resonates with them; they visualize, through the visual, their comprehensions of gendered space.

To provide a preliminary analysis of the visual responses the students produced, I follow the "social semiotic approach" of visual analysis adapted and simplified by van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) from a more dense text from Kress and van Leeuwen (1996). I take the more simplified approach because this visual analysis does not comprise my entire study and, as van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) warn, the original approach requires "elaborate explanations every time the method is used" (p. 154). As well, because it is "essentially a descriptive framework" (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 154), it does not "offer all that is needed for the sociological interpretation of images" (p. 154) which is how I intend to use it in the analysis of what the students produced because I also want to pair this analysis with an interweaving of Foucault's (1988) and Butler's (2005) work on the subject and "giving an account of oneself" (Butler, 2005). Instead, van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) suggest the social semiotic approach to visual analysis is "meant as a tool

for use in critical research...[which] only becomes meaningful once we begin to use its resources to ask questions” (p. 136). The visual analysis provided a vehicle for thinking through the visual products, literally carrying my analysis from description to Foucauldian and Butlerian analytics. Furthermore it established a base upon which I was able to think about the implications of these visual responses in terms of how the students are both making use of the spatial possibilities for creating visual work (in the case of Best S.S.) and how they are understanding themselves as gendered beings in the space through their self-technologies (Foucault, 1988a), which, serendipitously enough (because I am engaging in a visual pursuit), Butler (2005) calls a “crafting” (p. 22) of the self. To provide a visual analysis of this ilk recognizes that these students, although creative and may have other influences, certainly “draw from the visual resources which Western culture has developed over the centuries” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 134). Indeed, the authors assert that even if artists or image-producers do not follow these codes, essentially by “breaking the rules”, they must then be “people with a large amount of cultural power” to be permitted to do this “at least in public spaces” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 134). Because “most of us have to conform” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 134) except in private spaces, I apply this thinking to be able to divide the students according to where and how they made their visual product: those who made the public art in the washroom spaces might in some ways be conforming and those who opted to create a private response might in other ways be “breaking the rules”, or queering the bathroom project. I elaborate upon these divisions in the analysis chapters.

The social semiotic approach from van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) comprises several stages and sub-sections of analysis, not all of which are relevant for my purposes. To outline briefly their process, they divide “meaning” according to the image’s qualities of representation, interaction, and composition. Within each category of meaning are further sub-sections of analysis. Under representational meaning, although some of the students’ work might have narrative structures, as in something is happening within the piece (p. 141), I am more apt to consider how they contain conceptual structures, as in possessing an “essence” or “being something” or providing a “key to understanding discourses” (p. 141). Certainly within this sub-section are further divisions of structures including classificatory, symbolic, and analytic. Beyond conceptual structures, an image

may have interactive meaning which comprises the level and nature of contact between the picture and the viewer, the distance between the picture and the viewer, and the point of view of the viewer and the artist. This interactive meaning as well as the third and final category of meaning, compositional meaning, are rich in potential analysis for the student work. Compositional meaning includes informational value (p. 147), framing (p. 149), salience (p. 150), and modality (p. 151) of the pictures.

After analysis, Pink (2007) argues that images get transformed “when they move from one context to another” (p. 118). They possess a sort of biography (Pink, 2007). To interpret these images requires an ethical adherence to the dignity of the subjects and to their ideas as they told me during interviews. To interpret, but not define, to add to a body of knowledge about youth voice, art-making practices, and gender performance, is to navigate with care. It is a constant negotiation where a researcher must work the hyphen (Fine, 1998) during analysis, writing and defense.

#### **Organizing the cases and the subcase.**

The analysis chapters are organized around the data as case studies where the first school, Best S.S., can be divided into one case, the bathroom project, and an embedded subcase (Yin, 2006), the responses to the bathroom project. The second school, Corey Heights, comprises the material for the second case study. Overall, I have organized my analysis around three major theoretically informed themes: visual products as confessionals, as queer art, and as cartographic art. These themes align with each chapter and therefore, with the case studies. In Chapter Four, I examine the students at Best S.S. participating in the bathroom project who produced the stall art that I conceive as confessional products. Chapter Five considers their counterparts: those students who resisted the bathroom project only to offer their own alternatives, and the queering of the bathroom project. And Chapter Six looks at the students from Corey Heights who produced cartographic images that literally mapped their understandings of gendered and regulated behaviours upon the heterotopic space of the school washroom. Indeed, I could find connections even within and among these categories, but the current outlines provide a rich and diversified framework for thinking about the possibilities for student art, student voice and experience, and queer/trans-informed curriculum.



The organization of both these cases, and subcase, derived from an intuitive process of categorizing and classifying the data that Seidman (2013) suggests should be articulated to “give ... readers a basis for understanding the process the researchers used in reducing the mass of words to more manageable proportions” (p. 129). For me, the classification of responses was already undergirded by the bathroom project itself and the various responses to it. In the second case study, the thematic links were more difficult to ascertain because there was no school project. The students I interviewed at Best S.S. who participated in the bathroom project for curricular purposes I could easily distinguish from those students who refused or resisted participation. This latter group presented their own form of resister-art, a response to the public art projects the first group willingly embraced. Foucault’s (1982) subject is only possible because of the constraints of disciplinary power surrounding him (or her/hir). Indeed, resistances are entwined with “relations of power” and these resistances “are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations are exercised” (Foucault, 1982, p. 142). The “point where relations are exercised” is in the bathroom project, which includes the proponents and the resisters. This divide between student participants is not to simplify the nature of the responses, however. Those students who did participate did not necessarily do so uncritically. As I discuss in the first analysis chapter, within that group, two students, Tammy and Zack, extended the project into the boys’ bathroom space as a form of independent action from the original group of bathroom project artists. Just as complicity cannot be simplified and homogenized, neither can resistance: each is “multiple” (Foucault, 1982, p. 142) and complex. Butler (1993) agrees that subjectivation is itself a paradox because of this multiplicity: “the subject who would resist ... norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms” (p. 15). The student who resists the bathroom project not only relies on it in order to be resistant to it, but the very conditions that enable the production of the bathroom project (i.e. understandings and normalization of gender as sexed, etc.) are also contributive, if not exclusively, to the gendered understandings of the so-called resister artists. The second analysis chapter examines the ‘resister art’ from these students who refused all participation in either the girls’ or the boys’ bathroom project. Because Corey Heights did not lend itself to the same kind of organization, I look at three students’ work, for parallelism to the other

chapters, and consider the capacities for resistance within an analysis of the students' gendered subjectivation as seen through their photographs that map the school washroom space.

### **Ethical Issues: Access and Reflexivity**

In the following sections I pay attention to the ethical entanglements involving accessing students to talk about toilet spaces in schools along with their understandings of their own gender constitutions, which feeds directly into a discussion about my own researcher reflexivity. I consider this last issue alongside and within the analytics of Foucault's (1990a) and Butler's (2004) confessional practice of self as a way to rethink the possibilities and processes, not only for myself as a researcher but also for students, of producing knowledge about the self that occurs under particular conditions.

#### **Access to students and school spaces.**

Because I have researched the experiences and knowledge from gender variant youth (which also included straight, along with queer, and gender conforming along with nonconforming individuals) I had to navigate the recruitment process with tact and precision. This is not a study of only one or the other group; I wanted to avoid homogenizing or redrawing the boundary between straight and queer or gender conforming and genderqueering, but I wanted a diversity of experiences and identities in my sample of students. I have heeded Ma'ayan's (2003) warning that accessing youth populations of non-normative gender or sexuality is a regulated gateway: "I quickly ran into roadblocks in my attempts to gain permission from the school district. It seemed that asking young people about gender was seen by some as too risky" (p. 125). Yet she argues that "access to marginalized youth participants compound the already existing silence in educational research regarding their experiences" (Ma'ayan, 2003, p. 125). I adopted Linville's (2009a) approach to recruiting students according to existent self-selected groupings: she recruited from an after-school leadership program which already identified these youth as interested in issues of social justice in schools, sexuality and gender included. Because these students were self-identifying, Linville was absolved from the trouble of naming or having teachers name queer students. Although I did not

find a group that already named its participants according to gender identity or interest in gender identity, I focused upon students according to curriculum, that is, the Visual Arts classes and the Sociology classes which proved to favor a certain tendency toward either visual art-making or sociological issues, both in line with my research. And the subset of students that emerged from these classes had an interest in gender in one way or another simply by virtue of the fact that they (and their guardians) gave informed consent to participate.

Nonetheless, accessing participants in Phase Two proved to be more difficult than Phase One. In Phase Two, students were under the age of majority and required parental consent; coupled with the research topic asking about washrooms and queer issues of youth, accessing participants was not easy. But it was not impossible either, primarily because I had negotiated the language in my correspondence with school personnel carefully, deciding ahead of time, with my supervisor, what to emphasize and what to omit. Even before this stage of speaking to youth, I had to pass through several other gatekeepers, none of which was without its challenges. After receiving ethical clearance from the university and the school board, I had trouble locating schools. It was the policy of the school board research department that cold-calling schools be limited to single attempts. I was told to send an email to the research officer outlining the study, its purpose, procedures, who I would like to participate, and approximate time commitment for participants. As well, I was to designate certain schools I wished to contact regarding my study. The research officer would then send out my email from the school board's official email address via the research office. However, if I did not receive any replies to this mass email recruiting attempt, I was not permitted to contact those schools via the principal again. I had even contacted two senior administrators at the board level, asking for guidance and endorsement which resulted in only good wishes and absolutely no action. After several email attempts through the research office to various schools and waiting several weeks with no replies, I had to resort to my own contacts within the school board that I had retained from my own employment in the past. The two schools that I secured were the result of these personal contacts vouching for my study and me as a researcher to their principals, which essentially let me in the door to present the study myself instead of the principals most likely deleting the email request outright.

Of particular concern, however, once I had actually secured participants, was the locale of the interviews, especially at Corey Heights. In Best S.S., I was invited to book a conference room that was located within the main office area that provided ready access to school staff along with the door I was able to close if the students felt comfortable and required more privacy. At Corey Heights, however, I was invited to use a classroom during set times in the school day when this classroom would be vacant. This did not mean that student participants also had this period available. Although I was limited with these timeslots, I only progressed because I was flexible with my own availability and willing to go back and forth between school sites several times a day, which of course, incurred personal expenses in terms of gas and mileage on my own personal vehicle. As well, I had recently purchased a smartphone where I was then able to have access to students through their email and messaging contacts virtually anywhere. This technology eased the scheduling of these multiple interviews, allowed me to confirm and/or remind student participants of their interviews, and even provided audio-recording backup to my other recording device. Before starting this project, I was unaware how accessible handheld technology was to certain students; of course, availability also speaks to a certain higher socio-economic status these students possessed. I did not expect students to have technology, but I was open to communicating with them in whichever mode they preferred.

The privilege I am afforded through my socio-economic status that allows me access to smartphone technology and a personal vehicle to keep interview appointments, as well as through my gendered identity as cisgender have implications in terms of the kind of research knowledge I am producing, and even what kinds of knowledge I am able to access from my participants (see Mazzei & Jackson, 2009). As Pink (2007) cautions, researchers should maintain an awareness of how different elements of their identities become significant during research...[and] ought to be self-conscious about how they represent themselves to informants...to consider how their identities are constructed and understood by the people with whom they work. (p. 24)

How these participants, especially the students, understood and then responded to my embodied privilege has effects on what they were willing to say; essentially, they negotiated and then together we constructed knowledge mitigated by power differentials

and social hierarchies. Through an examination of researcher reflexivity I can begin to articulate some of these mechanisms of power in the researcher-researched relationship.

### **Critical and confessional researcher reflexivity.**

Indeed, I have rethought researcher reflexivity through the analytic of the confession, as fueled by my readings of Foucault's confessional practices (1990a) and technologies of self (1988a) and Butler's (2004) analysis of bodily confessions. Through a critical confession of self that allows the researcher to confront the privileges of the self, (in this case, gender privilege as cisgender, socio-economic privilege as middle-class and educated, racial privilege as white, and so on) an awareness of one's positionality is possible, as well as a growing sensitivity to how privilege informs the sort of knowledge that is produced (and reproduced) through research (see Roen, 2001). Beyond mere "catharsis of self-awareness for the researcher", *critical* awareness and reflexivity (Pillow, 2003, p. 177) seeks to produce knowledge about the researcher's position as well as "provides insight on how this knowledge is produced" (p. 178). It is not a navel-gazing venture, but a more complex turning back on oneself to make visible "the practice and construction of knowledge within research" (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). Swan (2008) prefers to turn the confessional into critical reflection, moving away from a solipsistic indulgence to think of the self "as a social and historic event" (p. 396). For Butler (2004), the self that confesses is embodied. Because the speech act necessarily derives from the body, confession is a bodily act, one that "is presenting the body that did the deed, and is doing another deed at the same time, presenting the body in its action" while asking, "whether that speech will be received" and "will that body be received as well" (p. 172). Butler's (2004) work helps to trouble the confessional tale to allow room for something more productive to emerge about the researcher's self-knowledge that enables an ethical practice of qualitative research. The researcher must speak through the body to acknowledge how embodiment and the material interweave with the discursive for rethinking not only the researcher's positionality, but also how the researcher/research positions research subjects as embodied.

If qualitative research can be "a tool of domination" (Fine, 1998, p. 131) we must unpack these trappings in the envisioning of a more just process and product of research.

One way to do that is to follow Fine's (1998) strategy of working the hyphen to investigate "what is 'between' ... [u]nearth[ing] the blurred boundaries 'between'" (p. 134) the Self and Other to see how the two are "knottily entangled" (p. 135). As critically reflexive and confessing researchers, we can "work the hyphen [to reveal] far more about ourselves [as researchers], and far more about the structure of Othering" (Fine, 1998, p. 135). A reflexive researcher understands that "what you know about your research – reflected in your interpretations—is intertwined with what you know about yourself" (Glesne, 1999, p. 190). By acting as a witness to the research, the researcher can ask "why do I interact with Others in certain ways?" and "How am I positioned in the process of knowing?" (Ropers-Huilman, 1999, p. 29).

However, critical reflexivity does not allow for a preoccupation with guilt. Researcher guilt leads to narcissism (Boler, 1999; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012), which is both troublesome and distracting to the aim of socially just research. A critically reflexive researcher may engage in the practice of confession to become a recoiling subject (Butler, 2004), one able to ask certain questions about the self with the aim of transforming the self through the research (Cook-Sather, 2007). A confession is also a form of *testimonio*, one that asks its readers to acknowledge their own "relative position of power" through a "self-reflective participation" (Boler, 1999, p. 166). But it asks its writer to be that reader also. How the 'us' and the 'them' (or 'I' and the 'other') in educational research are positioned in power structures and how those positions enable and limit certain knowledges of the self and of the system of Othering are the very mechanics that critical confession makes visible. Without an awareness of researcher privilege, the knowledge that is produced from gender research, in this case, will perpetuate the privileging structures that consequently also punish the bodies that are deemed unworthy by virtue of their non-normative gender identity and expression.

Although I do not self-identify as queer or trans or gender nonconforming, it does not mean that I cannot or do not have an affinity to any participant who does identify as any of the above. My heterosexual status is highly political and not at all personal; where homosexuality is an invention (see Foucault, 1988b), heterosexuality is also an invention (see Adams, 1997). Indeed, my cisgendered status is also socially informed rather than

biologically determined (see DePalma, 2011). Both my gender and sex are constantly performed (Butler, 1990) and produced (Foucault, 1977), becoming the effects of the powers of heteronormativity. And yet, although I want to continue to unlearn, to lose my “gender expertise” (DePalma, 2011), I am also aware of my outsider status. I do not have access as insider to a sexual or gender minoritized population. I take advice, however, from Jacob Hale’s (1997) online guide for non-transsexuals writing about transsexuals, namely, his warning not to metaphorize the transgender subject without paying equal attention to the lived subjectivities of transgender people. By employing a transgender metaphor (see Chapter One) to my framework, I am also careful this outlook does not reduce the trans person to a trope, a symbol, or a literary figure, but that the real experiences, lived realities of this population are also considered, complicated, and represented with diversity, because as Hale also reminds us: “Don't imagine that there is only one trope of transsexuality, only one figure of ‘the’ transsexual, or only one transsexual discourse at any one temporal and cultural location”.

Despite these challenges of being outsider to many of the lived realities of gender and sexual minorities, I refuse to subscribe to the discourse of Self and Other where Self is Same (and white, and straight, etc.) and therefore neutral and natural and the Other is Different, the perverse, the abject, (and non-white, queer, etc.). My self has been implicated, translated, and re-worked during interaction with my participants. I have worked *with* my participants, not *for* and certainly not *about* them (Kumashiro, 2000). I “write against othering” (Fine, 1998, p. 140) to interrupt Othering, to recognize my own privilege, and to avoid reproducing any Other as a homogenous and intact whole, instead listening to all my participants voices before categorization. Indeed, I have deployed Britzman’s (1998) queer pedagogy as a methodology to engage in “thinking against one’s thoughts” (p. 85), thoughts that perpetuate my position as privileged researcher. And I believe in the promise of queer (and trans) methodology (as I am translating it from Britzman’s pedagogy) that it implicates everyone, queer and non-queer, “to consider the grounds of their own possibility, their own intelligibility, and the work of proliferating their own identifications and critiques that may exceed identity as essence, explanation, causality, or transcendence” (Britzman, 1998, p. 81). My own sexuality, desire, identity, and gender are as worked on as if I were the researched—not autoethnographically, but to

secure my place at the hyphen (Fine, 1998). Finally, primarily because I include the “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1980) about the washroom space, Fine’s strategy allows me to hear this “as the source for radical rethinking of the law” (Fine, 1998, p. 145). Weis, Fine, Weseen and Wong (2000) argue it is our social responsibility to be reflexive in our research that represents the experiences of others. Through critical (and confessional) reflexivity researchers can think about the transformative effects for both the researcher and the research that can contribute to the field of gender equity in education itself. It is only through critical and ongoing awareness of Youdell’s (2005) reflexivity, Søndergaard’s (2002) analytic approaches, Britzman’s (1998) queer pedagogy, and Fine’s (1998) strategy of “working the hyphen” that I hope to produce transformative work for both my own subjectivation and those of my participants as well as for the field of gender equity in education itself.

## Conclusion

I have crafted this chapter to achieve a lot: by outlining my methodological (and therefore ontological and epistemological) positionality in both qualitative research, broadly, and within transgender and queer and poststructural frameworks, more specifically, I do so not to create a mass of unintelligible contradictions, but to outline the intersections of these methodologies in the pursuit of a gender just and democratizing project. Certainly I have also wanted to consider how these methodological decisions and concerns intersect with the already established Foucauldian and Butlerian analytics presented in the first chapter. In addition, this chapter has outlined, in detail, not only the discrete methods of the research design in its two phases, but also provided justification for the decisions in time allocations, chronology and variety of methods as well as how they cohere with the theoretical framings. Under discussion of the participants, I have also paid attention to the potential limitations in not conducting a rigorous intersectional analysis but opting instead to focus on a transgender/genderqueer lens as well as upholding the major tenets of Foucault’s analytics of the heterotopia. Within these limitations, I have argued that a confessing researcher, through critical reflection, is necessary in projects that are situating themselves in social justice and equity frameworks. And, to integrate the macro and micro constituent elements of this project



design into one chapter is also a conscious choice: I have not wanted to be redundant in explaining certain details over and over again to introduce various ethical concerns, and I conceived of many ethical implications deriving from the very pragmatic decisions I have made in actually conducting the research. What happens in the field, whether planned or not, produces opportunities for critical reflection. And decisions made at one's writing desk have implications once out in the field. The intertwining qualities (see Anyon, 2009) of these methodologies and methods along with their ethical consequences are necessarily presented in a single cohesive chapter.

What follows is the design in action. Under the framing of two major case studies (with an embedded case study, or a subcase, in the first), I investigate in detail a selection of texts from the data, both verbal and visual, from the student participants, integrated with the interview data from their custodians, vice principals, or teacher. After introductory analysis to situate the school and a contextualization of a gender regime, each chapter is organized around major visual contributions from students, which comprise three sections in each. These sections I interweave with both visual analyses and Foucauldian and Butlerian analytics among other relevant scholarship on bathrooms, subjectivities, and gendered possibilities for students.

## Chapter 4: Case Study #1: The Bathroom Project at Best Secondary School

### Introduction

Best S.S. was a serendipitous site. The students were already engaged in a community-based, activist art project they called the bathroom project. Students in the senior Art class were taking their independent study projects literally to the toilet. Painting on stalls, on walls, and hand driers, and over mirrors, the girls' washroom at Best S.S. was a satellite art classroom, a temporarily queered space (Halberstam, 2005), a "heterochrony", which is a heterotopia "linked to slices in time" (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 26) and therein, a heterotopic site. In seeking visual products about the gendered space of the sex-segregated school washroom, I was generously supplied with data upon entry into the site. What follows in this chapter is an overview of the school, a description of the bathroom project, the gender regime from whence it comes, and then a detailed analysis through frameworks of the visual social semiotic approach followed by Foucauldian and Butlerian theories, of the work of three students, Tom, Zack, and Tammy, who participated in the bathroom project. Although I spoke to 13 students at Best S.S., I chose these three students because of the artwork they produced in one of the two sites where the bathroom project was situated. Tom was the first male to work in the girls' washroom and Zack and Tammy were the first students to bring the bathroom project to the boys' bathroom space. I was interested in the kinds of inversions their gendered positioning had on the gendered space and conversely, how the gendered spaces were inverted by their gendered positions. In other words, I wanted to think about what it meant for a boy to paint in the girls' washroom while other girls were around, and what it meant for the bathroom project as a whole to be transferred to the boys' bathroom.

I have realized this entire school site as possessing heterotopic elements because of the criteria of inversion and ambiguity, if not because of the juxtaposition of incompatible spaces (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), upon which I elaborate within this chapter. In each case, the washroom space was de-gendered, or re-gendered, for a particular time slot during the day, and then returned to its normal functioning complete with the appropriate tacit rules for gendered conduct (i.e. sex-segregated spaces), for the

remainder of the day. In essence, the time and place were temporarily queered (Halberstam, 2005). The bathroom project, in its original form and intention, queered the bathroom space, inverting normal gendered relations for the purposes of interrogating gender norms and the regulation of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990). If a bathroom and knowledge about it is subjugated (Foucault, 1980) because it is de-legitimated or silenced (see discussion in Chapter One), these students participating in the bathroom project were involved in the complicated processes of (de)subjugation (Stryker, 2006) and (re)subjugation. Where Stryker aims to re-legitimate these knowledges once disqualified, to (de)- or (un)-subjugate them for the purposes of contributing to transgender studies, the bathroom project is an effort to do just that. Because the teacher and administration brought the initiating graffiti in the bathroom into the curriculum, the bathroom project (de)subjugates a knowledge about bathroom spaces and the gendered norms they reproduce, thereby legitimating certain graffiti. Where students have contradicted those intentions, I consider as reinserting either hegemonic or heteronormative gender readings (and paintings) upon the space; in some instances, a form of (re)subjugation occurs, especially with the work of Zack and Tammy. I elaborate upon these analytic effects throughout the analysis in the following two chapters. In all, participants in and resisters to this bathroom project exercise practices of self that impact their gendered knowledges in an effort to transform not only themselves but also their school.

### **Best Secondary School: “This is a good place to be”**

Located in a mid-sized Ontario town near a shopping mall and low-income housing (although only 13% of its entire student population lived in low-income households) Best S.S. had an enrolment of over one thousand students serving Grades 9 – 12. It is a “community school”, possessing “a number of specialized programs” including French immersion, a developmental program with “medically fragile” students, and board-initiated restorative justice strategies to address bullying, according to Ms. Brown, the principal. It scored higher than the provincial average for both English and French students in the number of students achieving the provincial standard in Academic Math and in the category of students who passed the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

(OSSLT)<sup>x</sup> on their first attempt. Although no data on the racial or ethnic demographics of the school was available<sup>xi</sup>, the percentage of students whose parents had some university education was significantly over the provincial average at 46%. The number of ESL or EAL (see footnote iii) students was only at 10% compared to the 23% provincial average but the percentage of these students who were new to Canada was on par with the provincial average at just around 3%. The number of students identified as gifted was almost double the provincial average of 1.4%<sup>xii</sup>.

Lavender, a Grade 12 student, described the school, “kind of like a mishmash of everything”. After her own description of the diverse population of students, Ms. Brown framed the school’s philosophy in terms of equity, boasting, “we really have perfected social transitions to our school that helps to see every kid from wherever they come from as being a valuable and respected member of this community”. The vice principal, Ms. Cardigan, credited the “community feel” of the school to the programs as well as to the guidance staff, and the students themselves. She explained that senior students who take on leadership roles encourage junior students to buy into the “consciousness in the school” and want to perpetuate these actions, to contribute to “the long history of building community and rapport”. Aside from, or because of the programs, Ms. Cardigan admitted, “we seem to just have really, really good kids too” which led to her determination that Best S.S. is “a good place to be”.

The other side of the story I heard later. The descriptions above belong to “the same institutional mantra developed over time for speaking with outsiders (e.g. parents and researchers)” (Yin, 2006, p. 116). Underneath this mantra I observed dirty toilets, refuse on the floors of bathrooms, and racist, sexist, and bodily graffiti scrawled on toilet stall doors. Ms. Small, the afternoon custodian, told me about other offenses she had witnessed in the washroom space, including clogged toilets and semen sprayed in the stalls. Ms. Cardigan told me quietly about drug use she suspected was occurring in the bathroom: “but I think that’s one thing I haven’t been able to get my, you know, grip on”. Even Ms. Brown admitted “Best S.S.’s not perfect” and then told me about the difficulties of negotiating her own sexual identity as a lesbian woman entangled with her

public persona of principal in an environment easily described as heteronormative, if not homophobic:

There's this assumption of heterosexuality that we live with, right? There absolutely is. And so most teachers don't need to come out, you know, declare, 'I'm a heterosexual', right? I don't want to declare and say, 'guess what? I'm not', you know? (Ms. Brown)

These moments of interruption might be understood using Renold and Ringrose's (2008) work on mapping malleability, or the ruptures and resistances through the "partial, troubling...ways" (p. 315) and "micro movements" (p. 316) of certain subjects. Ms. Brown's mitigated discourse might be a "technique of 'management'" (Foucault, 1988b, p. 105). Certainly, these two faces of Best Secondary School also translate well into mapping the conditional agency (Butler, 1990) or the "situated agency" (Nelson, 1999, p. 347) of gendered subjectivities, as well as the ambiguous, heterotopic nature of the school washroom, a site differentiated, queered, problematized and troubled, specifically in the bathroom project. As a subject in recoil (Butler, 1990), the principal herself has both the capacity to resist certain norms and expectations and also feels indebted to comply.

### **The Bathroom Project: From Subjugation to (De)subjugation**

The bathroom project came into being naturally. The Art teacher, principal and custodial team responded to students' graffiti in the washroom. An unknown/unnamed group of girls had written their ideas about beauty, looks, and being a girl, with Sharpie markers on the walls and stalls of the first floor girls' washroom in June of the previous year. They were reclaiming the space to speak against messages that girls should only be beautiful for the consumption of the male heterosexual desiring eye. Opportunistically, one of the Art teachers, Ms. Surrey, happened to see the condition of the washroom immediately before the custodian, who was upset at his extra task, washed it off. The custodians were used to cleaning graffiti, these subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 1977), off the walls, according to Ms. Small, and did so frequently<sup>xiii</sup>. Disappointed at the erasure of this graffiti in the girls' washroom, but recognizing the pedagogical and activist potential, Ms. Surrey and Ms. Brown, the principal, spoke about making the writing more permanent. In these efforts, they listened to the written voices of female

students and moved to (de)subjugate, or legitimate the graffiti. The bathroom project was born. It had started in June and continued into the new school year becoming part of certain students' curricular projects in the Grade 12 Visual Arts class under Ms. Surrey's supervision. Although it began in the girls' washroom, it expanded into the boys' washroom during my research, with two students, Zack and Tammy, whose work I examine later in the chapter.

From its grassroots beginnings, to its inclusion into the Visual Arts curriculum, the bathroom project went through several stages but it was always about what the students wanted to do of their own volition. The spring session of the project, its inception, was more informal. With paint and stencils, students were printing inspirational quotes and drawing simple graphics, rather haphazardly and randomly. During the fall term, Grade 12 Visual Arts students claimed the stalls for their independent projects. I first saw the project at this stage (see Figures 1, 2, 3, 4).



Figure 1: (above left) The Bathroom Project Girls' Washroom

Figure 2: (above right) The Bathroom Project (Girls') tree and mirror view



Figure 3: (above left) Stencil on stall door (in the Bathroom Project, Girls')

Figure 4: (above right) Stencil on wall (in the Bathroom Project, Girls')

While timid as a visitor in the Visual Art room, I felt nearly invasive in this new pseudo-classroom when I first entered the girls' washroom. I felt I was entering a clandestine space. Certainly, I was entering a heterotopic one due to the curriculum being inserted into this space of base function. And as such, the conditions under which I had to enter were unclear to me: "the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have certain permission and make certain gestures..." (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 26). For one, I was an adult, not associated with the school, and a former teacher. These positionalities led me to believe that I did not belong, and really *should not* be in that space at all probably due to the years I endured of Foucauldian discipline allocating certain spaces in schools for teachers and students. As one student, Zack, explained it, "I guess they [teachers] don't want to be like accused of anything" if they were to enter the students' bathrooms. Furthermore, the space was at the time usurped by the student painters: several paint pots, brushes, water cups, rags, papers, pencils, an art cart dominated the open space in front of the stalls. Beyond these, I observed the walls covered with remnants from the earliest phases of this bathroom project. Stenciled messages, freehand cartoonish pictures (particularly one image of a girl looking into a mirror), graphics of hearts or other symbols, and one giant tree were spread and interspersed amongst the sinks, mirrors, hand dryers, and soap dispensers (Figures 1 and



2). A painted bird perched atop the real hand dryer, a giant heart asking someone to “never give in” (see Figure 6), and messages about smiling framing one wall mirror were among the varied artistic and activist markings on the walls.



Figure 5: The mirrored girl (in the Bathroom Project, Girls')



Figure 6: On wall beneath hand dryers (in the Bathroom Project, Girls')

Of the stenciled messages, the phrase, “You are Beautiful” (see Figures 3, 5, 6, 7), was repeated most often. “You’re gorgeous” was painted below a mirror in the corner so



that the viewer was simultaneously viewing the self and the message (Figure 2). Longer messages were placed in the entry vestibule: for example, “To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment”, or “You know who’s beautiful? Read the first word again.” (Figure 7)



Figure 7: Stencil: You know who's beautiful? (Entry into the Bathroom Project, Girls')

Shannon, a Grade 12 student in the Visual Arts class, was a key participant in the bathroom project. Perceived as “helper girl” by her Art teacher, Ms. Surrey, Shannon was positive about the project: “the bathroom thing really caught my eye ‘cause it was ... it was out there and, like, involved. And it wasn’t just for me, like, it was for everybody, so that’s why I really liked it.” Ms. Surrey reflected that this project was probably useful for Shannon because at the time she was “also dealing with some stuff at home. So I think she just felt really ... it was comforting to her, [at] this time in her life to help people do stuff.” I did not talk to Shannon about her stall design, but she was “doing colour work” according to Ms. Surrey. Her stall was covered in cartoon multi-coloured flowers upon a turquoise wash background, both inside and out. On the toilet paper dispenser is stencilled in black, “You are Beautiful”, in the same graphic as used elsewhere in the washroom. Presumably this was already present when Shannon started painting the flowers. I considered what her design could mean against what Ms. Surrey had told me about her home life. As Shannon told me, “when I’m having a bad day, and you walk into the washroom and it’s all like, ‘Hi’ ... like, ‘You’re beautiful’, like, all this

stuff on it, it like makes you feel better about yourself". Shannon used this opportunity to continue the spirit of the bathroom project in her own stall design. Her florals are easily gendered, traditionally feminine, and symbolizing female anatomy. Shannon thought girls should be a certain way, pretty, petite, and respectful. For her, self-respect and the conduct of the body were very key indicators of one's femininity. Indeed, etiquette, and being proper, also signified appropriate femininity for her. In the little contact I had with her and through the insight I gathered from her Art teacher, Shannon was embodying and expressing her ideas of being a girl through this activist art project. For her, the bathroom project in all of its best intentions, really was working.

Due to the gendered nature of these quotations and images, or at least the gendered readings given they were painted by girls in a girls' washroom for girls, their reclamation of gender normative discourses was also an effort to dismantle the intricate operations of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990). In this attempt, this project, conceived as a student initiative, was also a way to (de)subjugate both the form of graffiti as a legitimated form of communication and art, as well as the bathroom itself as a place ripe for curricular and activist potential. I consider the transformation from facility to classroom in the next section.

Since the completion of Shannon's stall project, black marked graffiti had been added: "Today you are You/ that is truer than true/There is no one alive who is you-er than you"; and "Why fit in when you were born to stand out?". Interestingly, these phrases speak to a form of individualism Foucault (1980, 1997a) rejects because it belongs to a liberal humanist tradition. Shannon might think she is an individual who is fighting for female empowerment through her floral colour-work, but her repetition of gendered norms speaks to a different operation of power and self, one complicit to relations of power that govern these norms and produce the heterosexual matrix, the very operations the bathroom project was formed to speak against in the first place. Shannon was not alone in repeating gendered norms, but her stall art and others that do the same, counteract the (de)subjugation process.

## The Bathroom Project: A Spatial Curriculum

Ms. Brown: I mean, if you can go to the bathroom at school and your bad day has suddenly gotten a little bit better like –

Interviewer: That's incredible.

Ms. Brown: It is, truly.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Ms. Brown: Yeah. I love it.

At the outset, I wish to outline the nature of the pedagogy and leadership that foregrounded the bathroom project. From illegitimate graffiti, to its legitimation through transfer to the curriculum, the bathroom project produced a kind of (de)subjugation (Stryker, 2006) of the knowledge and space of the bathroom. But In Ms. Brown's words, the bathroom project was legitimated because it was important to show they were "just honouring the fact that people had been leaving positive messages because kids need to know that we've seen and we've heard them and appreciate it". A school used to beautification projects already, Ms. Brown insisted, "we were not going to discipline anybody...that wasn't what it was about". Rather, it was about something much more positive:

They [the students] are so proud of it and it means something to them and that's the most important thing to me is that when they go in there they feel affirmed, you know. Their voice has been heard and that's important. (Ms. Brown)

Student voice, she emphasized, "is really important", citing knowledge of research that documented if students "have their voices heard, they're much more engaged with what's going on with all of the learning that go on in the classroom". To some, this single instance of graffiti could easily have been interpreted as vandalism thereby remaining under the jurisdiction of the custodial staff and vice principal. Ms. Brown had told me, "I would not necessarily be brought in when graffiti was in the school". Her forethought and acceptance, if not creative outlook on the possibilities of writing on the walls in the washroom, in collaboration with her equally insightful and creative staff member, Ms. Surrey, positions her as a model principal. Her personal convictions are not separate

from her public responsibilities and action. When she told me she wanted to pursue this bathroom project because of its potential to showcase student voice and respond to their needs at a ground level, her eyes filled with tears, intimating her emotional investment in the students' experiences at Best S.S.:

And I trust our kids. We have... We have so many kids who are so wise and so involved in social justice initiatives and I want their experience in high school to be one that helps them develop that, moves them forward, so that they go out in the world and they make a difference. If you shut them down, they just have to wait until they get to an experience where they can live that. That's all I want to do. (Ms. Brown)

Beyond the leadership of the principal, a real catalyst to the bathroom project's inception was the working relationship and compatibility between the Art teacher, Ms. Surrey, and the principal, Ms. Brown. Certainly Ms. Surrey recognized Ms. Brown as one who could appreciate innovation in a school system that is otherwise encumbered by rules: "The thing that was great about Ms. Brown, she was like 'Well, why don't you just ...' And then, you know, you fill in the blank, right? ...And so that was really important; really, really important". Likewise, Ms. Brown told me she had great respect for Ms. Surrey as well as for her entire staff: "I trust Ms. Surrey implicitly and I didn't ask for any control over this [bathroom project] because I trust her". Ms. Cardigan, the vice principal, corroborated that Ms. Surrey was "a really lovely Art teacher" who recognized the potential "good thing" in the bathroom graffiti and turned it into a pedagogical opportunity because "that's kind of how it works here...if a kid has a good idea or a staff has a good idea we tend to go with it, you know, and build on that". The supportive environment allowed Ms. Surrey to do with her students and their interests what she always saw as the role of education, to allow for the curriculum to be shaped to the needs of her students instead of the other way around:

Like for me the best kind of curriculum goes outside of the classroom, right? It's empowering. It's something they want to do. It's a no brainer. I mean it's brilliant what they want to do, I think. It's really positive. I'm always happy to break out of that curriculum box. (Ms. Surrey)

Both literally and figuratively, the bathroom project is a spatial curriculum and a place of pedagogy; it turns the school washroom into the classroom, thereby making the washroom space a form of heterotopia. In the times it was designated an art-making space, during lunch hours and the period when the senior open Art class was in session, it was an extension of the Art room. For the majority of the first term, the project remained in the girls' first floor washroom; nearing the end of the first term, the boys' washroom became the next pedagogical site. In each space, the participating members were not sex-segregated as they would be required to be during the bathroom project's off-hours. In the girls' space, at least two boys were participating artists. I spoke with one, Tom, and chart his process later in the chapter. In the boys' space, at least two girls were the original artists, one of whom was a participant in my study (Tammy). Where Foucault outlines a heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) must be a real place *related to* but separate from its outside, the bathroom project imposed just that upon the washroom space. Because boys (if only to paint) were allowed to enter the girls' washroom, the rules of the sex-segregated spaces were temporarily suspended, thereby declaring them heterotopic, unlikely, unconventional, and an *inversion* of the normal (p. 24). Indeed, because Ms. Surrey's rejection of the typical "curriculum box" led to a re-conceptualization of viable teaching spaces in the school setting, she was also "juxtaposing in a single place several spaces" (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 25). Female students still entered to use the facilities for their intended purposes during the painting sessions; the toilets were both stalls and studios, cells and confessionals, simultaneously. For Ms. Surrey, this was the best option: "I really think our schools should be a whole lot ... you know, different in many ways", including, in my concern, how and where we designate what bodies can enter which spaces and under which conditions. In this way, the bathroom project was also a "responsive curriculum" (Fisher & Kennedy, 2012) making students-'as-researchers' (Thomson & Gunter, 2007) and giving them the voice they needed to allow educators "insight into what learning and the conditions of learning look like from the perspective of different students" (Rudduck, 2007, p. 587). Troubling those voices is also important work too which I consider in a later section.

Indeed, the nature of the work happening in these washroom spaces derived from the action and agency, necessarily supported by the necessary administrative and teaching staff, of particular students. In this way, the students' agency is conditional upon the approval of the administration and institutional power. According to Butler (2005), "if there is an operation of agency or, indeed, freedom in this struggle, it takes place in the context of an enabling and limiting field of constraint" (p. 19). Where approval is not granted, as in the case of vandals, the agency of students is further limited, as I discuss in the following chapter. These students were operating under the intersection of freedom and discipline. As Foucault argues, space and subjectivity and power are interlocking elements and it would be "somewhat arbitrary to try to dissociate the effective practice of freedom by people, the practice of social relations, and the spatial distributions in which they find themselves" (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, p. 246). In his estimation of the twinning of even simply space and power, power gets disseminated through certain subjects who are inevitably mitigated by spatial relations. In other words, these students, for example, could only do this public activist work in this washroom space, which is also the place that constructs relations within it. Therefore, the bathroom project is a set of "spatial techniques" (p. 254) that have relevance for the kind of subjects that get produced by virtue of working within and outside of this space. The subject is constructed via spatial relations that are themselves the effects of power; how these students interrupted those relations of power to be able to re-create their own space is part of their contingent agency (Butler, 2004; Davies, 2006).

In this spatialized/curricularized space, Boler's (1999) pedagogy of discomfort capitalizes on the kinds of teaching and learning that can arise from such a heterotopic space. In the sense that this "pedagogy of discomfort emphasizes 'collective witnessing' as opposed to individualized self-reflection" (p. 176), both teachers and students are called together to consider the gendered messaging students receive and reproduce repeatedly. For Ms. Surrey, it was about social justice: "So do I see it as social justice? Absolutely, because it's ... you know, it's their voice and they are claiming their space in a really positive way... I think very much it's their place to claim". How they claim it, through the messages on the walls and stalls, and how the messages remained or disappeared speaks to how a common forum includes voices that are held up to critique,

heralded and resisted, and made public within a very private space (especially if these messages are written behind stall doors). Only once these discomfiting truths are shared can students begin to think through them to face the discomfort for themselves. It is not about one message or one experience must fit all. Boler's (1999) pedagogy of discomfort does not preoccupy itself with the individual or the singular experience; it acknowledges discomfort or guilt as a part of encountering difference that teaches us how "to bear witness to ourselves... [and] to understand discomfort as an approach ...for how we see" the world (p. 197).

However, whose voices that are heard (and seen) in the bathroom project were not representative of *all* voices at Best S.S. even if the walls appeared chaotic or if the project seemed inclusive. Only those who complied with certain tacit guidelines had their work part of the canon (in that it became semi-permanent on the school walls). Paradoxically, the students designed the agenda, and yet the students were not all permitted equal access. Those who had a different voice, either through vandalism, or contrasting ideas, were literally erased (see Zack's stall art later in the chapter), or felt denied participation (see the resisters, Sasha, Samara, and Lavender in the following chapter) thus marking the conditions under which art was governed and regulated (both institutionally and through disciplinary regulatory power) to be acceptable in the washroom space. Applicable to this school-based project, Mazzei and Jackson (2009) ask important questions about how voices are heard and selected:

Who was listened to, and how were they listened to? How might voices be distorted and fictionalized in the process of reinscription? And indeed, how are those voices *necessarily* distorted and fictionalized in the process of reinscription? The task would then be to examine whose interests are served by particular reinscriptions and whose are further marginalized. (p. 2)

Indeed, whose interests are served if this bathroom project is a successful student-centred pursuit of social justice? How does the project contribute to Best S.S.'s reputation of being "a good place to be"? Moreover, what are the implications of this problematization of voice for my choices as a researcher? I have been explicit about whose work I selected to feature in the analysis; but what have I missed in this selection process? Whose voices will continue to be silenced because I did not think about them enough?

The bathroom project was both activist and prescriptive. It was informal and extra-curricular as well as formal and curricular. It invited participants while denying others: in this way, it fortified its own rituals of entry and exit: “everyone can enter into these heterotopic sites, but in fact this is only an illusion: We think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 26). Embodying the traits of an ambiguous, heterotopic space, the girls’ washroom was transformed through the bathroom project to be pedagogical and activist, indeed, something imaginative, something hopeful, and yet incompatibly restrictive, exclusive and reproductive.

### **The ‘gender regime’ at Best S.S.**

The bathroom project arises out of a specific set of understandings around gender performativity, expression, and identity, otherwise known as a “gender regime” (Kessler, Ashenden, Connell, & Dowsett, 1985) that is produced by and produces the school community. It derives from Foucauldian thought on regimes of truth where “‘truth’ is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation statements” (Foucault, 1980, p. 133), or discursive and material regimes (p. 113). A gender regime “may be defined as the pattern of practices that constructs various kinds of masculinity and femininity...and ...orders them in terms of prestige and power” (Kessler et al., 1985, p. 42). Through Foucault’s analytic on the practices of the self, the subject is constituted under certain conditions as a certain type of subject. Martino (1999) argues that these tactics or strategies of power are the “particular cultural techniques for working on and fashioning the gendered self, which are made available through existing regimes of practice” (p. 240). A gender regime is not an ideology that works from the top down, he explains, but it is a discursively and materially imbued practice that is visible through these effects of power (Foucault, 1980) and the kinds of gender subjects that emerge. This gender regime is not necessarily unique to this school environment simply because the borders cannot be drawn alongside the architectural walls of the school: what the students and staff understand does not remain within the building, but carries with them outside into the larger community and into home-lives, being fed and consequently feeding the regime at school. Indeed, the



washroom space is a microcosm of that gender regime because it is a heterotopic space: it inverts the messy, jumbled, complicated relations of gender and makes them clarified through the cellular units and divisions and enclosures (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986).

The notion of a regime is Foucauldian: this “regime of power” (Foucault, 1982, p. 112) is both “discursive regime” (p. 113) as well as material. Foucault urged a genealogical analysis take place to note the techniques that perpetuate the “functioning of the wheels of power” (p. 116), those strategies and tactics that appear at the local level. From the principal, to the students I interviewed, each may have had difficulty defining gender understandings explicitly, but they certainly expressed their understanding of the school’s gender regime. Their silence or perplexity I read as part of the effects of power that operate to conceal the very origins of its machinations (Foucault, 1980). The operations of power cannot be visible and therefore the way that gender is both regulated and made to be intelligible is an operation that cannot be noticeable in order for it to succeed with its insidious effects.

I had conducted an informal version of photo elicitation with Ms. Brown, mostly because I wanted to share with her a record of the initial stages of the bathroom project. She looked at the photographs and told me which images or messages she preferred: “I like this one just because it’s so simple, you know. ‘Look in the mirror’, you know. ‘Appreciate yourself’. And I think, you know, as women we constantly struggle against that image of what beauty is in our society”. Here she reiterated a feminist view that essentialized females and femininity. Her understanding of boys reproduced a hegemonic masculinity: “I think it’s harder to have this conversation with boys because not all boys reflect the same way that girls do. They process this stuff like differently.” She continued: “I think boys struggle with it [social pressures] just as much,...and try to find a way to be enough, themselves”. In her differentiation of girls and boys, and the characterization she placed upon each, Ms. Brown reiterated a discourse of ‘boys will be boys’, and girls, their opposite. She defined the operating gender regime that expressed the conditions under which gendered subjects were incited to act. Within these gender norms, she did identify the boys who would not fit the ideal, who might struggle more: “in particular boys who may not be, you know, the student athletes”. As “spectres of

discontinuity and incoherence” (Butler, 1990, p. 23), these boys were noticeable because they did not fit the masculinity norm, but they were “themselves thinkable only in relation to existing norms of continuity and coherence” (p. 23). Pascoe (2007) translates this operation directly to that of boys and masculinity: “for boys,...achieving a masculine identity entails the repeated repudiation of the specter of failed masculinity” (p. 5). As long as the jock boy (as some of the students described them) stayed at the top of the social hierarchy, and therefore remained synonymous with the ‘good boy’ (according to Ms. Cardigan, the vice principal), these other boys could not fit. The social and cultural capital of athleticism for boys was recognized by several students as well as the administration, if not almost institutionally mandated. Martino and Palotta-Chiarolli (2005) explain that “the role of sport [is] a social practice through which boys learn to validate their masculinity and to gain the status of ‘tough’ or ‘cool’ through enforcing a distinction from those subordinated boys considered to be inferior” (p. 84). In their own study of boys problematizing masculinity in Australian high schools, Kehler and Martino (2007) found similar dynamics and hero-ization of the school footballers; they explain that this valorization (especially from the vice principal, in my case) is about “the validation of a culturally specific form of embodied hegemonic masculinity that is institutionalized and taken for granted” (p. 101). One student they identify as Dave suffered “a questionable status” (p. 102) as a boy because of his perceived effeminacy despite his athletic success. For Zack, in my study (whose work I feature below), being athletic seemed to work for him. He explained a kind of compensatory practice upon which he capitalized as an avid soccer player to avoid the homophobic slurs his interest in music often garnered. Ms. Brown dismissed the need to be too worried or concerned for these “spectres of discontinuity” (Butler, 1990, p. 23) assuring me that Best S.S. was a “pretty accepting and diverse place”. Further, she rationalized that “there’s an understanding maybe amongst youth now. They are very reluctant to label themselves. And I think that that’s very different amongst this generation”. In her somewhat contradictory examples of gender performativities, Ms. Brown both reiterated and had the capacity to rethink some of these gender norms.

However, to speak of gender discretely and explicitly was confounding for her: “I don’t know what the discourse is around that [gender] here at Best”. Out of context,

gender and gender violence were topics she failed to have time to think about. I had asked the administrators in each school about their understanding of board policies against gender violence. Where Ms. Brown had touted the praises of her school with assurance, in terms of gender, she was less sure. Perhaps her failings had something to do with her own sexual identity and the silence was a response to me asking her something that conflicted with her institutional responsibility, her stake in “maintain[ing] norms of intelligibility...[through] coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire” (Butler, 1990, p. 23). Accessing her personal understanding of gender, sex, and sexuality, had the potential to disrupt her heteronormalizing front, and in consequence she maintained the illusion of the heterosexual matrix, or the fiction that gender, sex, sexuality cohere and remain intelligible (Butler, 1990), something she had a professional investment in upholding. On the other hand, Britzman (2012) might argue about the inherent madness in asking someone to speak of gender:

I have been struck by the strangeness of trying to explain something like why we have gender at all...I have also felt that it is difficult to know when we are *not* talking about gender. This strangeness can be found in our classrooms, our theories, our activism, and in clinical practice. We can say with some certainty that one cannot be talked into gender or out of it even though gender seems to be an odd combination of given and received ideas, social pressure, and cosmetic manipulation. (p. 41)

Although I do not follow Britzman’s (2012) analytic on the psychoanalytic reading of gender – as belonging to an unconscious – her articulation of the inarticulability of gender, the strangeness of asking someone to speak of something that is already there, offers another view that is not un-Butlerian. In this context she is speaking about the scholarly work of gender speak, but the notion has relevance here. I read that both Britzman and Butler are concerned with the discursive and material effects of gendered relations of power that are so sedimented their very naturalness is difficult to question.

The students themselves were also complicit in shaping this gender regime as mostly binary and traditional. They either reiterated a traditional gender discourse or were aware of its presence but participated in it in more uncertain, or contradictory terms than others, exercising their own capacities for resistance in more audible ways. Shannon thought girls had to be proper, petite, and quiet, although with opinions. Boys “are more rowdy, ruckus-y”. And yet Tammy, although dividing gender along the “females and

males” line, was not a self-defined “girly girl” and decided, “there’s just no right or wrong idea of being a girl or a boy”. Zack had witnessed similar traditional ideas, but resisted them. He told me that “to be masculine like you have to do certain things” and “people are like, ‘oh, a girl has to be beautiful ... like to be beautiful she’s got to be like a size zero pants and really skinny’”. But Zack did not want to have to wear the appropriate masculine attire to define his own masculinity: “it’s like a piece of clothing, it shouldn’t define you”. He did not want to avoid doing art just because it was not necessarily deemed most masculine: “I don’t see why guys can’t be creative”. Sasha agreed. She distinguished between gender expectations and her own version of living through these norms: “girls have always been expected to depend on guys to complete them”, but she was an individual. For Samara, gender meant, “sexes of humans...[are] more biological...whereas gender would bring out lots of issues and lots of discussion”. Gender was only one of a series of important “factors” that pressure young people, especially girls: “[boys] don’t have the need to boost up their confidence because ...they’re pretty accepted the way they are”. Tom called gender “kind of like the group you specify with, I guess, you know, like if you’re a guy or a girl”. But he also included in this categorization, “people in the world that don’t really know what gender they are too...people that are gender indifferent”. In this he described changing clothes from girl to boy as part of the expressions of a gender indifferent person, something akin to Bornstein’s (1994) description of gender fluidity: “gender fluidity is the ability to freely and knowingly become one or many of a limitless number of genders, for any length of time, at any rate of change. Gender fluidity recognizes no borders or rules of gender” (p. 52). For Tom, these alterations were not a refusal to conform, not an act of freedom, but invoked a kind of sadness because these “gender indifferent” people could not “feel comfortable in [their own] skin” (Tom). His understandings of the possibilities of gender expression may have allowed for more conceptual room than Shannon’s bipartite scheme of petite girl versus “ruckus-y” boy, but it also did not include an entire realm between and beyond the binary of girls and boys.

Tom did think his liberal views on painting in the girls’ washroom as a boy were due, in part, to his personal comfort with his own sexuality. Indeed, the other students talked about sexuality often when they were trying to identify someone they knew who

transgressed gender norms. Tom thought these gender indifferent people might actually be gay and “they haven’t come out yet or anything”. Zelda identified gay kids as gender transgressors. She explained that although a gay person is “just like...a normal person, ...it’s their choice”, she also said, “I’m against it in the way that I think it’s wrong”. Zelda’s complex tolerance/intolerance of non-heterosexual acts derived from the teachings in her Christian faith. Tammy thought the two students she recalled as doing gender in an abnormal way were loners, probably Emo<sup>xiv</sup>, always wearing black and “always by themselves”. Lavender noticed that while girls dressed “really slutty, skanky” and wanted “to be perceived as like experienced”, boys “are sometimes scared of being perceived as gay, like they would be offended”. Youdell (2004) argued that “the identity ‘fag’ silently constitutes hetero-masculinity” (p. 481) in a confrontation of the spectre of non-normative sexuality. To protect one’s masculinity, is to demonize all else that attacks it, namely, homosexuality (see Pascoe, 2007). Referencing Butler’s (1990) heterosexual matrix, Youdell (2005) calls it a constellation of identities, where, “sex–gender–sexuality, then, are not causally related; rather, they exist in abiding constellations in which to name one category of the constellation is to silently infer further categories” (p. 256). Sexuality, whether of a misogynist, heterosexist, or homophobic nature, directed the actions of some of the boys and girls in this school. Those students who were identified as not fitting in through gender norms, were doubly excluded through other transgressions, either due to minoritized sexuality or having emotional and mental problems (i.e. the Emo psyche and just being confused and sad). Shannon imagined gay relationships existed at her school but insisted, “it’s not visible”. That which is visible, are the heteronormative and homophobic assumptions that undergirded the gender discourse at Best S.S., a conflation noted in Butler’s (1990) heterosexual matrix as well as in Pascoe’s (2007) study of gay teens.

### **The Stall as Confessional: (De)subjugating and (Re)subjugating the Bathroom**

Foucault (1980) insisted, “one needs to investigate historically, and beginning from the lowest level, how mechanisms of power have been able to function” (p. 100). These

mechanisms or “tactics were invented and organized from the starting points of local conditions and particular needs” (p. 159). Although I do not and cannot at this point conduct an historical analysis or figure out the “starting points” of these conditions, I do attend to the “lowest level” in “local conditions” in a microcosmic form of analysis to be able to understand not only how gender is understood in a highly gendered space such as the school washroom, but also how it is perpetuated, regulated, and policed, and to engage in an analysis of disciplinary power through various techniques of the self and power. The washroom stall is a basic unit within the larger unit of the washroom that serves to become “the lowest level” both in terms of its singularity (it services only one body at a time) and its base functioning (it accommodates very base/basic human bodily activity). Through a bi-partite analysis, one that focuses on the visual modes, and one that coheres the washroom activity with the theoretical frameworks of heterotopias and confessionals, I examine three of the students’ stall designs (see Figure 8). Not only are these spaces already functioning as heterotopias through their translation into curricular spaces from washroom space (as discussed above), these individual artistic pieces provide further material for consideration of the space as heterotopic, or ambiguous, inverting and suspecting (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). Furthermore, the single stall, or the singular unit that accommodates one body at a time resembles other units of space: the closet—which has implications for queer theory through Sedgwick (2008) and Brown’s (2000) work—and the confessional. For my purposes here, especially since the three students did not come out as queer, I do not want to extrapolate queerness for now. Probably more appropriately, because I believe queer can be a lens not necessarily attached to queer bodies, I prefer to reserve a queer analysis (Britzman, 1998) for examination of the works of the students who resisted participation in the bathroom project (see next chapter). In this chapter, rather, I aim to think through the metaphor of the confessional to consider how these washroom stall projects are momentary visual confessions of the students’ subjectivities as they are constituted and understood in school spaces. And, through Butler’s (2004) reading of Foucault (1990a), I do not deploy the confessional to think in terms of a regime of truth that incites guilty subjects to surrender for salvation. Rather, I think about the confession’s productivity to rethink the self in relation to others.



**Figure 8: The stalls in the Bathroom Project, Girls' Washroom**

### **Analysis of stalls through social semiotic approach.**

I have already provided an overview in the methodology chapter for the justification of deploying the social semiotic approach as adapted by van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001). Here I attend to it as introduction to its application within the stall art analysis. Because the social semiotic approach does not expect exact meaning but indicates a “field of possible meanings” (p. 135) it serves well as an initial stage of analysis of the images in my study. In this way, interpretation itself cannot be exact, neither from my own perspective nor from that of the students. But what it can provide is the idea that “semiotic resources are at once the products of cultural histories and the cognitive resources we use to create meaning in the production and interpretation of visual and other messages” (p. 136). The social semiotic approach acknowledges that no visual product exists in a vacuum but allows for an analytic entry-point into how students are literally illustrating their own understandings of the self in society. In the case of Best

S.S., these students' self-knowledge is embedded in their understandings of gender norms as they opt to focus their art on a highly gendered space and discourse. If paired with the poststructuralist warnings by Mazzei and Jackson (2009) about using voice too unproblematically in qualitative research, visual social semiotic analysis is an entry-point also for the researcher to begin to think about what kind of knowledge is re-inscribed in the research analysis process. Certainly, these warnings undergird Roen's (2001) concerns that race, ethnicity, and indigenesness get erased in transgender studies. It is a necessary distancing that takes place when a more "formalized" analysis can begin to tease out what is more important in the data as a first stage; but the discernment of what is important and what is not is "always already" a part of researchers' "exploitative research agendas and timelines" (p. 2). Visual methodology and its analysis, along with qualitative methods of interviewing and analysis through emergent themes, are only part of the methodological equipment necessary to begin to untangle the meaning of these students' gendered lives in schools. But they are divergent in both nature and outcome, which relieves the burden of 'truth' for each and might lead to a more complex understanding, a more 'messy' grasp, that is still not without its contributions.

In the following sections, I introduce three students, describe their stall art, and conduct two forms of analysis: one through the visual social semiotic approach, and one through Foucauldian and Butlerian analytics of the confessional and subjectivation. As mentioned above in the methodology chapter under recruitment and selection of participants, these three students I selected because of their positionalities within the bathroom project: where Tom was the first male to paint in the girls' washroom, Zack and Tammy were the first students to bring the bathroom project to the boys' washroom. These inversions and translations contribute to a rich potential for thinking about the implications on these students' gendered subjectivities as well as qualifying the washroom as heterotopic.

### **Tom.**

Tom was already interloping in the bathroom space, chatting with the students who were painting their own stalls. He did not actually propose to his teacher to participate in the bathroom project until I had chatted with him upon recruitment. He claimed it was upon



the insistence of his female friends that he join them in the project. Once we met for the first interview, he had already started designing his stall. He told me about playing in several bands, one sort of punk-rock, another more rap; he combined his love of music and art in certain commissions for band t-shirt or logo designs. He enjoyed school better at Best S.S. than his Grade 9 year spent at a Catholic school “because you can hang out with kind of whoever here; it doesn’t really seem like it’s a big deal”. Tom described his personal style as punk-ish, inspired by band wear, “spike bracelets”, “skinny jeans and band T-shirts”.

### *Description of Tom’s stall art.*

Tom started his design by actually being in the space; not a proponent of pre-sketched ideas, he preferred to let the images flow, to draw directly onto the wall surface, with perhaps only a few undefined ideas to guide him: “I just thought it would be a really cool idea to maybe bring something else that [the female students] necessarily wouldn’t paint”. Basing both his process and his style on “tattoo flash”, Tom explained his artistic intentions as not being “sexist”, but distinct from the flowers, the “pretty stalls” and the “positive kind of thing”. Instead he wanted to harken back to “old school, ...Americana...with bright colours, ...roses, like eagles and stuff like that”. He seemed to lament the reputation tattoos now garner, especially in the older generations in which his gran belongs: “some people just lose that whole sense of like, it’s not an art form”. This stall design was a showcasing of the artistry of the tattoo with a nod to its origins of sailors and a “rough a tumble thing” to “put some of it up and maybe some people would fall in love with the artwork, just like [he] did, kind of thing”. Tom did not think the space of the girls’ washroom influenced the content or style of his project, claiming, he would have done the same thing in the boys’ washroom.

Each surface of the stall inside contains a grouping of several images that vary in size but share the aesthetic he described, big bold lines and bright colour blocking. The single image located centrally on the outer stall door is an “old school” flower (see Figure 10), a take on the traditional rose in tattoo art with the banner reading, “hold fast” which Tom explained is about how “you ride out the roughest storms and stuff”. The rose evolved from a moment of censorship, however. It had begun as an upside down cross

that while still a pencil sketch on the stall door, received some negative feedback leading to his Art teacher asking him to change it. He explained that he was not trying to offend anyone with the upside down cross; he thought of it as “a symbol of power and the symbol is supposed to represent like you know, like you’re not as worthy as God; like you can’t like have a saying... like there’s always like a higher being that has a final say pretty much”. The inverted cross is particularly poignant considering Tom opted to leave Catholic school after Grade 9. No matter his distaste of the school or the religion, or his intention behind this provocative symbol, the rose with its embedded banner had to replace the inverted cross. Sasha told me “right now the meaning has kind of been taken out of [the upside down cross]” and it was not that Tom wanted to depict the anti-Christ, “it’s just a hipster thing now”. Lavender thought the upside down cross on the toilet stall “was hilarious” but also just assumed that Tom would “get into trouble” for doing something potentially religiously offensive because “this is a school”. Lavender’s reaction pointed to an implicit code of conduct; schools are places of regulation at every level, administratively and through peer relations. And this type of regulation was to harness non-normative beliefs or expressions of any kind.

Other images in Tom’s stall design included a ship in a bottle labelled, “sailor’s grave” and “RIP”, a cartoon cat head (see Figure 10), a frightened cat on the number 13, a star, a bell, a skull smoking a pipe wearing a sailor hat, and a bust (head and shoulders) of a woman with rouged cheeks and painted lips also embedding a banner that in this case, reads, “pin up girl” (see Figure 9). Some of these derive from his mentors in flash art, even replicating exact images, while others are just “to fill up space”.



Figure 9: (above left) Tom's Pin-up Girl (in the Bathroom Project, Girls')  
 Figure 10: (above right) Tom's yonic stall (in the Bathroom Project, Girls')

*Analysis of Tom's stall art through social semiotic approach.*

Because the entire design (as well as no single plane) contains vectors—an imaginary or real line that connects images (see van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001)—Tom's stall is not narrative. Rather, its representational meaning is conceptual containing the classification structure which, “bring[s] different people, places or things together in one picture, distributing them symmetrically across the picture space” (p. 143) to highlight their commonality. Tom described his fascination for flash tattoo art; these images are evenly spaced across the plane as if they are exemplars of tattoos hanging on the wall (literally) of a tattoo shop. Certainly, the rose on the outer door contains symbolic value because it is distinguishable from the other images by its singularity and centrality. Its banner that reads “hold fast” is therefore given pride of place and introduces the viewer to the main message of this stall: a message of perseverance borrowing sailing lingo both resurrects flash tattoos' origins as well as has relevance for its current viewers (girls in a girls' washroom) especially considering the greater context of inspirational quotations on other walls in the washroom.

The interactive potential is limited by the vacant look in the “pin-up girl’s” eyes (indeed the irises are white and the gaze looks off to the viewer’s right) as well as the blackened eye-holes of the skull. And yet, each image is at the same pictorial distance from the viewer: in filmic terms, each is at a medium distance, neither close-up nor long distance. Is this an attempt to bring the viewer in to each image or rather to maintain the commonalities among each image more like stock pictures lined up for display? Because the space is not designed as a whole picture, but rather a space that can contain several pictures, the compositional meaning is compromised. No image is framed except by its lack of framing, or the amount of space that surrounds it. Certainly where images are placed in a stall that is three-dimensional and contains an interior and an exterior viewing space is significant to the potential power of composition. Except for the consideration of the front panel (the outer door), all images seem to be randomly placed.

*Analysis of Tom’s stall as confessional.*

The rose that used to contain the upside cross now looks “yonic” according to Ms. Surrey. A term not often known, and presumably (according to Ms. Surrey) not by Tom either (he did not speak of this to me or to his teacher), yonic refers to shapes and forms that reference the vulva (while the more common term, ‘phallic’, references the penis). If Tom claimed he was not interested in the gender of the viewers or the gendered-ness of the space in which he painted, then it is an irony if not a simple coincidence that the featured image of his stall in the girls’ washroom is a flower symbolizing female anatomy. The famous American painter Georgia O’Keefe painted flowers that were critiqued as yonic. Inside his stall, the pin-up girl references the 1950’s era in which tattoo art originated. In this context of the bathroom project, the pin-up girl might be read more ironically—or more irately—by the girls in the washroom who are otherwise surrounded by messages that thwart the beauty ideal the pin-up girl embodies. She literally confronts these girls in their moment of vulnerability: she is painted on the back of the stall door and is viewed only after the door is closed and probably after the person is already seated and engaged in a most private act. To be bodily exposed and then faced with the pin-up girl image might be most intrusive to some girls and certainly contradicts the positive messages painted throughout the space.

In this way, the vagina-like red flower on the front of the stall door and the pin-up girl on the back are beyond mocking, but strange versions of the panoptic gaze: “an inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself [sic]” (Foucault, 1980, p. 155). Tom has painted the interiorizing gaze upon the interior space of the toilet stall; he marks the front of the stall in the same way bathroom doors are marked via anatomical differences. The geometrical figures on North American public bathroom doors typically include triangular shapes for females indicting a dress, or skirt, (Ciochetto, 2003) but also signifying a vulva in its yonic form. Tom has replicated this anatomical marker signalling not only the function of the space, but also the nature of gender as sexed and reducible through biology to such a state. Tom’s design aligned with gender norms, indeed reinscribing them to such a vivid and violent extreme: he replicated a giant vulva and then created a pin-up heteronormalized version of hyper-femininity as a virtual prison warden of gender staring down the real female occupant in her own vulnerable state. The gaze upon the female, but in the form of another female, is an inversion of the male gaze, and yet it functions to do the same. Via panoptic operations, this real female is now her own prison warden, confronting her own version of gender, compelled to measure herself up against the 1950’s version of femininity, a version produced for male heterosexualized consumption and desire. Through this inverting gaze, the cellular space within the bathroom project is its own kind of heterotopia. If the bathroom project itself temporarily inverted the relations of power, Tom has recuperated these operations of the heterosexual matrix. If the bathroom project originated through girls’ desires to express discourses of empowerment, to redefine the norms of beauty, Tom has erased these intentions by reinscribing those beauty ideals and reinserting/reasserting his own heterosexualized hegemonic masculinity.

In a moment of “rupture” (Renold & Ringrose, 2008), Tom indicated the boys’ washroom would probably contain more sports-related imagery, not necessarily that he would participate in producing this, but this is what he would expect boys would want to see as well as what the boys would want to paint in that space. He explained that the boys’ washroom users would probably not tolerate the kinds of inspirational quotes that

abounded in the girls' washroom and yet the rose leads with "hold fast", a message meant to inspire, according to Tom.

A certain tension lingers behind Tom's words. Although he claims he "never really felt unsafe coming [to Best S.S.], like never felt out of place kind of thing", he quickly followed with "I don't really care" and then explained that if people did think something ill of him, it would not really bother him. When he described how his dress used to attract negative attention in elementary school, in high school he thought people would not be as direct or obvious with their distaste, not really confronting "[you] as much to your face". How he knows this he did not say, but then he followed with, "nothing's really happened here, like... no one's really made fun of me or anything."

He reclaims the number 13 in his picture to signify not misfortune, but something else. The upside cross signifies not Satan, but personal power and resistance, he claims. If not an active resister, Tom is not a conformist either. Recalling his comments about feeling more regulated in his previous Catholic school, how he plays with the religious iconography signals a response to these ideologies, a personal rejection of, if not the religion itself, then the experiences he had at the Catholic institution. In Kehler and Martino's (2007) paper investigating the experiences of boys in public and Catholic schools, they determine that "at this interface of experiencing a loss of power or a sense of constraint, as a consequence of subscribing to norms governing relations of hierarchical masculinities, possibilities exist for mobilising boys' capacities for self-problematization in schools" (p. 108). Tom's stall art conducted in the toilet of a public school that literally inverts the symbols of power and right signifying Catholicism and perhaps his Catholic school experiences, is also a kind of "possibility" with which he mobilises his own capacity for self-problematization (p. 108), if not effecting his own gendered constitution. Tom explained his motives in the following way:

if someone gets so offended by your artwork, or so moved by your artwork that they feel like they need to go complaining, or feel that they that they, you know, like need to go and compliment someone about it, I feel personally like that's one of the biggest compliments you can give to an artist.

For Tom, being able to know he has an audience for his art means more to him than the level of approval from that audience. Similar to Zack who paints his ideals, Tom's stall

design is a tribute to his own interests, regardless of its impact on his audience, or perhaps because of it. He wants to exhibit his interests, even to teach about them, and does not shy away from doing that in a confrontational or provocative way. Provocation, confrontation, but conducted in the *girls' washroom* in a *public school* create very different conditions of regulation for him as *a boy* and from when he was in a *Catholic school*.

If the confession to Foucault (1990a) was to produce the truth of the self, the stall art from Tom is a certain “production of truth” (p. 58). He claims to reject authority and invites censorship. But he also claims to paint as he goes, not planning it, as if he is thinking through his painting (see Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). He ‘writes’ or ‘paints’ the self and in so doing, he conducts a certain practice of the self (Foucault, 1988a) that is possible *only* in these particular conditions. Through painting, Tom can “reactivate for [him]self the truths [he] needed” (p. 17) to create a certain kind of gendered subjectivity. Through charting his path, his ‘truth’ is a complex matrix of traditional gendered understandings alongside certain resistances. He reverts to the iconography from the 50’s binary gender regime only to do so in a space that is temporarily queered and heterotopic. While acting as rebel in a space that was already ‘grassroots’ and queering, Tom did not contribute to the queering through his artwork. His body in the space might have queered (or inverted) it temporarily, but by virtue of rewriting (or re-painting) discourses of normative femininity through the heteronormative male gaze, as well as essentializing and reducing femininity to its anatomical constituent parts, Tom actually (re)subjugated the efforts of the bathroom project. If not de-legitimizing it, he denied the queering capacity of this bathroom project by reiterating the sex-segregated lines demarcating bathroom spaces.

### **Zack.**

Zack was a student in the Grade 12 Visual Arts class who was originally not involved with the bathroom project. When I was visiting the classroom on the invitation of the Art teacher, trying to make initial contacts with students, he seemed interested but it was difficult to catch his eye. I was hesitant to interrupt his work; at the time he was engaged

in another project. But I did approach him after several minutes in the classroom and just asked if he might be interested in chatting with me at some point. He seemed to acquiesce only after I assured him confidentiality in all transactions. Once we met in the private office away from the art classroom, he began immediately to disclose personal family history. He had suffered mental health issues; his mother also was a recovering addict and had experienced suicidal tendencies. He intimated being in a position to care for her, if not himself, as a younger person.

To Zack these details served to necessitate his love of art and music and soccer, which, at times, became coping strategies. Indeed, his band itself viewed itself as a change agent writing songs “for the kids that like everybody kind of looks down at, the kids that didn’t really have a family or...didn’t come from the rich family, that didn’t come from a good background”. He told me about his aspirations to build a career in art, perhaps teaching art after attending university while maintaining a side business doing art for commission. He cited his teachers as friends who cared about the whole of the student and really supported him in his ambitions. He had friends at Best S.S. and preferred to move from clique to clique rather than stay in any one grouping; he described the pressures of kids pushing drug on other kids, explaining it was usually a generational sort of thing where younger kids were the recipients of older kids’ pressures, something he recognized but did not admit to escaping. His personal style used to be sports jerseys but now he preferred to wear “edgy stuff sometimes kind of like, not like rocker stuff but like other stuff”. Despite his heterosexual status, he said he had “been accused of being gay” because he was sensitive and was a singer in a band and yet he participated in recuperative/compensatory efforts (Pascoe, 2007) through developing his ability to be the best screamer vocalist, a definitely not-feminine attribute. He practiced screaming to the point of temporarily losing his voice on occasion through repeated strain of the vocal chords. In navigating between these tensions (i.e. musicality read as effeminate and musicality read as masculine), Zack was tiptoeing along a fine line. According to Kehler and Martino’s (2007) study, certain musically inclined males may be questioned for their ability to do hegemonic masculinity; some compensatory efforts will fail, especially in Kehler and Martino’s findings of the footballer, Dave, whose athletic prowess was insufficient to safeguard him from homophobic assaults. The



“abject” identity of the musical male is a regulated and punishable category, one whose constant repudiation is necessary to uphold the boundaries of the norm. According to Pascoe’s (2007) reading of Butlerian (1993) analytics of the abject gender category as applied to masculinities, “the abject identity must be constantly named to remind individuals of its power. Similarly, it must be constantly repudiated by individuals or groups so that they can continually affirm their identities as normal and as culturally intelligible” (p. 14). For boys, this abject position was repeatedly named ‘the fag’:

A fag is profoundly unmasculine, yet possesses the ability to penetrate and thus render any boy unmasculine. More than femininity, more than powerlessness, more than childhood, the abject nature of the specter of the fag required constant, vigilant, earnest repudiation. These repudiations constituted, in large part, boys’ daily relationships and communication rituals. (p. 157)

Zack had to fight the specter of the abject fag, daily, and in everyday decisions. He even mentioned having dated girls before as if that act could serve as a weapon against these repudiations, these threats. In this constant vigilant safeguarding of self, Zack ventured into the boys’ washroom to participate in an as yet uncharted space in the bathroom project. Together with Tammy and another student I did not interview, they designed their own stalls and the general wall space also with graphics from the Joker, from Batman iconography, and popular alternative music/band imagery.

#### *Description of Zack’s stall art.*

Zack was only beginning to work on the outer door panel of his stall when I saw the project in the boys’ washroom. He was painting with Tammy and another student who were working on the wall mural. They were making the space their own with music playing, chatting and art materials strewn on the floor. For the period in the day they were working, this space was designated an art studio; of course, it still functioned as a washroom, but the students did not mention whether boys were continuing to use the washroom for its intended function while it was a studio space. In the girls’ washroom project, several students told me that girls would continue to come in and use the stalls even while the boys were in painting.



Figure 11: Zack's stall art (in the Bathroom Project, Boys')

I came to see Zack's panel before it was complete. It was divided into four quadrants with green, yellow, red, and black backgrounds (see Figure 11). On three of these sections he had begun rendering the images. In the top left he had a head and shoulders figure dressed in black, with long-swept black hair holding a microphone. The words, "rock out!" floated above the figure's head. Beside this figure, in the right quadrant, a black outlined curved shape (to be a saxophone perhaps) was starting to take form only to be superimposed upon by a smaller black shadow in the shape of a string instrument. The lower right quadrant had a red shape like a Mickey Mouse cartoon in silhouette with white circles and blue 'x's' in place of the eyes and a semi-circle white shape in place of the mouth. Below it in diagonal reads "DEADMAU5" with the same mouse shape done in blue both above and below this text. This moniker and imagery reference a contemporary popular musician. I did not ask Zack about his connection to this musician, but its presence here could indicate some reverence and relevance to him personally. The background is almost a gradient; a white starburst feathers over the black. The last quadrant, on the lower left, is only red, but with the same feathering on the edges that overlaps the edges of the other quadrants.

*Analysis of Zack's stall art through social semiotic approach.*

Representationally, one might want to read this as a narrative because the images seem to be referencing music iconography, but the separate quadrants and the lack of connection amongst the quadrants otherwise, disqualify it as a narrative structure. By default, it contains more of the elements of a conceptual structure from van Leeuwen and Jewitt's (2001) social semiotic approach. These images are certainly distributed "symmetrically across the picture space to show they have something in common, that they belong to the same class" (pp. 143-144).

Interestingly, if one were to consider this stall as one element in the bigger picture of the washroom itself, then it would be connected to Tammy's stall and the wall mural via the precise colour choices. The saturation of green and red is distinct and recognizable enough to indicate the artists are sharing the same pots of paint, but also, that they are not mixing their colours, or blending and layering with others. The reasons for this are various and speculative, but the result is that even without intentional communication about collaborative content, these designs are linked pictorially. Thus, each stall design can be and must be considered within its entire context of the washroom space. The photograph I have of Zack's stall project captures some of this context, which certainly impacts any reading of it. Indeed, an institutional open toilet with the black seat and the white bowl sitting in the stall beside Zack's stall expands the picture frame outside of the four quadrants Zack created and then affects the interactive meaning of the piece. In the painted picture, little interaction between viewer and image exists: the figure's gaze is directed off the edge of the picture frame, almost looking into the toilet stall beside. The mouse figure does not even have eyes as they are crossed out in the cartoon style that denotes death. This lack of pictorial contact results in a sense of detachment for the viewer (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 146): one is not invited in to the picture space, but confronted with passivity and death.

Informationally, according to van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001), the placement of elements is significant considering the direction of reading Roman script texts (as opposed to other languages that use other scripts). The upper and left sections of a

picture are awarded “different cultural values” (p. 148) than what falls below or is off to the right. These authors examine students’ scientific reports that place ‘given’ information on the left and ‘new’ information on the right: in the case of Zack’s composition, the figure on the left is more complete than the ‘newer’ information on the right where the instruments are not complete. Whether this placement simply indicates the direction Zack works, finishing what is on the left first, or illuminates how he thinks, putting down initial ideas on the left-hand side, it is debatable. Furthermore, van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) distinguish the upper portions of an information picture to display the ideal whereas the lower regions signify the real, or “down to earth information” (p. 148). If the same schema is translated to Zack’s picture, the musical elements (the singer and the instruments) are the ideal, perhaps even the dream if thought against his own ambitions of pursuing a music career, and the dead mouse captioned by “DEADMAU5”, is something more real. Postulating about how and why certain pictures have ideal or real meaning for Zack could only ever remain unfounded. However, the very compositional meaning of this picture does denote a compartmentalization and hierarchy of elements that Zack has determined and communicated pictorially.

#### *Analysis of Zack’s stall as confessional.*

Ironically, this picture is fronting a toilet stall in the boys’ washroom. If one is not invited in pictorially, what is the symbolic impact of its placement on the door itself? Is this pictorial detachment barring one’s entrance into the toilet stall? And to what gain or under what significance? Zack had told me that many boys prefer to use the urinals when appropriate, but not that the use of stalls was discouraged. However, he did recall other activities of drug use and dealing taking place in these stalls as well as stalls being covered with graffiti like “racial slurs and like...I’ve seen some swastikas drawn, like it’s pretty bad”. Certainly, boys do not spend a lot of time in the washroom as might be the case with girls, according to Zack. Where girls can go together in groups and socialize and chat in the washroom, Zack had never seen this happen in the boys’ washroom and if he did, “it would be really weird”, especially if it happened at the urinals. Edelman (1996) explains that men at the urinals are

preserving a safer silence that lets them pour from themselves, like a chorus replacing the voices they dare not raise, the sound of many waters, each bright

stream as much a tribute *to* as tributary *of* the law that flows through each and every one as though they were its channels (p. 160).

Although Edelman was writing about the addition of televisions fixed to the walls for the viewing of urinal users in a public toilet, the silence, the “voices they dare not raise”, was also “the law” at Corey Heights (and Best S.S.), according to several participants.

Through the representational and compositional meanings explored above, Zack’s panel might be a tribute to his own life, a montage of personal interests and ambitions. It might also be a confession of his trials, his difficulties or dark times coping with his mother’s mental illness as well as bouts of his own. The passivity and death might be components of his own truth-telling. While Foucault (1988a) identified writing and “keeping notebooks in order to reactive for oneself the truths one needed” (p. 27), Zack might be painting the self as a way to both know and take care of the self but under the conditions that render his masculinity something to be protected and declared. In Pascoe’s (2007) description of boys’ constant vigilance against the specter of the fag, she identifies the vulnerability within the aggression:

the aggressiveness of this sort of humor [of gay jokes, etc.] cemented publicly masculine identities as boys collectively battled a terrifying, destructive, and simultaneously powerless Other, while each boy was, at the same time, potentially vulnerable to being positioned as this Other (p. 157).

This paradox, of vulnerability hidden as aggression, is also part of Zack’s own negotiations of self. He paints vivid, if not violent colours, dead animals (albeit a band) and a rock star male figure and yet he is also vulnerable: guarding the presentation of a masculinity as hegemonic and heteronormative takes effort. Perhaps this stall was just another effort at playing offense, at pre-empting the homophobic questionings, at re-installing his version of masculinity.

Its place in the boys’ washroom is not only strategic as a signal to other boys that his masculinity is ‘right’ and intact, he paradoxically also expresses the very vulnerability he is probably trying to hide. In this way, he inverts the normal operations of gendered surveillance and regulations that occur within the washroom. By inserting himself (as a rock star, if it is a self-portrait) onto the stall of the washroom, he is able to fix the presentation of his gender, to assert a kind of masculinity that he feels would be safe

against homophobic threats. The space of the washroom, while inviting hyper-regulations of embodied masculinity through the visibility in the urinals and the divisionings in the stalls, can also be a place that allows a questioning of those norms through the stall art. Reclaiming the surfaces upon which hate graffiti abounds, Zack is willing to tell a lot about himself in this space that cannot be comfortable for him without a paintbrush, given the kinds of negotiations of his masculinity he has to endure outside the washroom. He tells of his own story, his ideals and his reality. In this way, the stall has literally become a visual confessional: it embodies the nature of a confessional and has incited Zack to confess not his sins but details about his life in this forum. He offers up of himself for public scrutiny, for public (mostly male) consumption. He does not do this out of guilt, but out of the love of art and music, and for the love (and care) of himself. For in Butler's (2005) estimation, the "I" belongs to "a set of relations" (p. 8), or a set of norms and therefore requires these norms to become recognizable to oneself. Zack needs the outlet of the stall, a public wall, to convey his notions of himself in order to know himself. In a sex-segregated masculinist space, the kind of boy he presents is an attempt at "giving an account of oneself" (Butler, 2005). A boy doing art in a boys' washroom might not seem troubling, but Zack as a target of homophobic epithets, heightened his sensitivity to the homophobic climate of his school. And yet he resists this climate, this fear of constant surveillance, in order to do his art; or he does his art as a form of resistance to this climate of gendered surveillance.

Zack may not hear from his confessor directly, but he will hear from his peers, and his artistic act is a call out to be heard. Butler (2004) considers that "insofar as speech is structured as confession, it poses the question of whether the body will be condemned" (p. 171). The act of confession is a bodily one. Zack's self-offering is embodied by virtue of its presence in a bodily space as well as through the notions of gendered and sexed norms he troubles. Being the kind of boy he is, sensitive, musical and artistic reads as gay, in his estimation. Consciously thwarting homophobia with his athleticism and sexual experience with girls through a continual repudiation of the notion of "failed gender" (see Butler, 1993; Pascoe, 2007), he also volunteered to paint in this highly masculinized space. In the way that he acknowledges how others have pinned him as homosexual, he consequently is aware of the normalizing operations of gender, and

therein, also recognizes that this is part of who he is as a person: “the operation of norms [is] in the very constitution of the subject, [and] in the stylization of its ontology” (Butler, 2005, p. 9). He offers another version of masculinity, both in person and pictorially, that elaborates upon the stereotypical notions. Even though he did not intend to be revolutionary or resistant, even though he wanted his artwork to ‘fit’ in the boys’ washroom, his own gendered subjectivity helps to create a space that does resist or speak back to the norms of gendered regulation and subjection. Boys can speak their hearts, paint their dreams, and beautify an otherwise neglected and negative space. They can work with girls who wish to do the same in the same space whose work is not trying to be politically inflammatory.

### *Postscript: Zack.*

Although Zack had been negotiating his own kind of masculinity, his efforts to do so in a visual way in the boys’ version of the bathroom project were rejected by the next installment of artists. Zack’s stall art was later painted over by students in the following semester. According to Ms. Surrey, he had lost interest in completing the project and therefore did not express resistance to the reclaiming of the space, at least not to his art teacher. Instead of adding to the paintings already completed, as the students were doing in the girls’ washroom, the new group of students in this boys’ washroom wanted a clean slate. Not only did they whitewash Zack’s stall, but Tammy’s also, as well as the large wall mural. The work of both Zack and Tammy were whitewashed, erased, and denied their capacity to continue to contribute to a (de)subjugation (Stryker, 2006) of bathroom knowledges. In essence, the whitewashing (re)subjugated the space, if not only Tammy’s and Zack’s confessionals.

The temporality of these pieces is emphasized in these acts: that, and the claiming and reclaiming cycle of public space that in a school washroom goes on and on; by virtue of the space’s private-public paradox, the bodies that are currently in the space temporarily ‘own’ it, it is theirs to enact their private functions. But it quickly becomes reclaimed as public once that person vacates. The same might be true for the artwork in the space: as long as the artist is present, the art is permanent. Once the artist abandons (or completes) the project, new artists reclaim the walls once again. These “writings” of

the self (Foucault, 1988a, 1997c) are as transient as the understandings they mark. Where subjectivation is a process, so too are the confessional artworks the students created. In the girls' room, the beautified stall interiors were not immune from the same-old toilet humour graffiti that the project was presumably trying to eradicate. Almost like weeds growing through the cracks, the vile hate speech, the bawdy doodles, and the interests of a new group of aspiring art activists begin to colonize the space once again.

### **Tammy.**

Born in Colombia but raised in Miami, Florida, Tammy was very enthusiastic about the two years she had spent in Canadian schools: "I definitely enjoy and love Canada so much." Contrasting her new knowledge with what she had experienced in the US, Tammy explained:

There's really nothing new that happens in schools [in the US] and teachers just do teaching because they have to, not because they really want to. I'm talking specifically in my school and where I've lived, what I've seen. Yes, that's what I see. They don't do it because they love to do it; it's more because they have to.

In the US, she went to a C designated school (rated below A and B), which contained a significant police presence and the related gang issues. She recalled the suicide of a classmate on campus who was involved in prostitution and became pregnant. She told me about finding pornography and overhearing sexual acts in the school washroom in one school, whereas in another school, she said students would "text and chill and eat" in the bathroom because it was so clean and was free of security guards. Her understanding of the problems of immigrant families and children in schools was sophisticated and nuanced: parents who worked multiple jobs were unable to check in on their kids the same way upper-SES parents could, she explained. These kids who then got into gangs, "want to be good people, but they create gangs to fill that support and to feel protected". Her American schooling had the most impact on her understanding of schools as she referred to it in most of her discussion with me. In comparison, "nothing big happens" at Best S.S. but it is a "really friendly atmosphere" and she noted that "kids care about their lives...about what they're going to do in future and they're really aware of that".

Tammy described herself as "not a girly girl", not being really "into fashion and dresses", and explained, "there are always the people in between that just don't care and



I'm one of them". In this way, Tammy claimed a less feminine, if not masculine, femaleness. But she also considered herself popular because she is "very friendly" and does not really associate with one particular clique, but makes friends across established cliques, like "music students", "the Frenchies", "the smart kids", and "the really not so smart, which are the ones who take college classes and it's mainly the ones that smoke". Her friendliness and interest in people fueled her participation in a leadership retreat the school hosts for new students. Her other interests included art, cooking, and architecture. She mused she might want to pursue a career in computer design or food photography or at least something that allowed her to "just like sit down and have like hundreds of people coming in [to] learn about them and talk about them".

Having friends and being social was really important to Tammy. She did not seem affected by the discourses of normative femininity. For instance, she did not resist the bathroom project, as did Sasha, Samara, and Lavender because she did not really contest it or its messages. Everything was "nice" according to her: people were nice, the artwork was nice; everything was nice. But neither did she subscribe to the same kind of binary gender regime, nor to the feminine position within it as did Shannon with her "girly" floral art. Tammy, in her optimism and cheer, seemed to bypass the "drama" in school. Pascoe (2007) found certain girls who embodied masculinity as a kind of cultural capital and a way to escape the "masculine approval mechanisms" (p. 162) of heterosexualized gender identities and relations. By embodying a certain gendered style, or not, Tammy did not fall into these expectations thereby producing a certain kind of gendered self. Herein lies the capacity for resistance within subjectivation: Tammy could not ultimately escape the pressures girls experienced sexually, with drugs, or boys, or through body image issues, if she also participated in those material and discursive practices that rendered the hyper-feminine girl subject. Her option was to fashion for herself a different kind of gendered expression, one that would allow her to stay friendly, unthreatening, perhaps, and non-cliquey. She was not able to resist the system of regulation entirely, but by sidestepping certain subjectivities, she consequently also sidestepped the particular kinds of regulations that accompanied it. In this way, Tammy did not really have a need to participate in the bathroom project in its first phase in the girls' washroom. For her, these issues of girls resisting beauty ideals was not interesting

to her and yet, because she wanted to participate in some way, she went to the boys' bathroom project.

As a postscript, during data checking, the Art teacher reported that Tammy's family was deported back to Colombia. Through Skype and email, she remained in contact with the teachers at Best S.S. who seemed to care about her success. They sent her some minimal art supplies so that she could continue with her work. Ms. Surrey told me that although Tammy was doing fine, staying with an aunt, she really thought of herself as Canadian and wanted to return. The family's lack of proper citizenship papers was holding up the process. She was nearing the end of her Grade 12 year in Canada.

#### *Description of Tammy's stall art.*

Tammy joined the project much later in the first semester and therefore had easier access to the boys' bathroom space instead of the already crowded girls' bathroom. During our first interview she was only considering participating in the project, and had committed to it by the second interview. Although she hesitated when I suggested she work in the boys' bathroom, I had thought it was because she did not want to be in the space as a female; rather, she was more concerned with "getting the guy's eye" or attracting a male attention in her design. To plan it, she said she had to be "thinking on the boy's side of [her] brain". The boys who were working in the girls' washroom, Tom included, had to be "thinking [in] their girlie ways; their girlie thoughts are just coming out". Of course, after understanding Tom's intentions and analysing his artwork, these conclusions seem problematic, particularly because of the traditional sailor iconography he referenced. He was not interested in thinking with his "[ 'girl's' ] side of the brain" but more so in inserting his own (masculine) perspective as a way of colonizing the female space. But Tammy was insistent that the nature of the artwork itself for her had to be dictated by its spatial context as gendered and masculine; she would not insert a feminine gaze, or attempt to colonize in the same way Tom had done. Because the initial artwork in the bathroom was dominated by positive phrasings and messages like "you're so beautiful", she concluded that all the curricular stall designs would follow suit, including the boys' work. When I pressed to clarify why she thought this, given my interpretation of Tom's stall design, she revised her idea to state that the boys would have to be "thinking more

like sports,...or like do something that...famous football players...would say; ...something sporty, something not too emotional or sentimental”, thereby reinscribing hegemonic masculinity. The spatiality of the bathroom was already governed by this gender regime, reproducing norms of gender. For her own project, during this second interview, she planned not to do any preparatory sketches because she found them limiting; instead, she explained her design process simply as, “like, I have a lot of things going on in my head”, which she thought would include the sports theme. I witnessed the fruition of these ideas only in part: when I had visited the space by the end of the term, Tammy and Zack, as well as another student I did not interview, had started to paint the walls and stalls of the boys’ bathroom, but more work had been accomplished on the wall mural directly above the urinals than on Tammy’s individual stall. On the latter, the background was bright green and contained illegible black, bold and irregular lettering. Aesthetically and based on the content of Tammy’s brainstorming, this indecipherable design might have signified a sports banner: graphic lettering on bold, simple colours.

The extensive mural above the urinals featured a vibrant red background upon which a cartoon image of the Joker from the Batman comics (produced by DC Comics under Warner Brothers Entertainment) held an unfolding deck of cards that cascaded across the entire span of the wall (see Figures 12 & 13). This deck of cards, grasped in a purple-gloved hand foregrounded in the picture, literally masks part of the Joker’s grin. Considering the popularity of the Joker through comics and several movies, including Tim Burton’s 1989 *Batman*, and Christopher Nolan’s *The Dark Knight* in 2008, Nichols (2011) analyses the antagonism between the Joker and Batman through the form of a religious combat myth as one that evokes “deep-seated social and psychological tensions” (p. 236). He explains, “in most comic and film versions, the Joker simply bursts onto the scene, his origin as inexplicable as his bizarre and violent plots, his intentions always reducible to a simple desire to kill, maim, and destroy” (Nichols, 2011, p. 238). The placement of a popular culture iconic villain above the urinals in a boys’ high school bathroom provokes rich analysis in terms of the operation of disciplinary norms in bathroom politics.



Figure 12: The Joker (in the Bathroom Project, Boys')

Tammy was no longer a part of the school by the middle of second semester and neither was her artwork. She had been deported and her artwork was obliterated from the school. A new group of students in the Art class in second semester retained permission from the Art teacher to usurp the space in the boys' bathroom. By the time I had witnessed it, all of the stalls (including Zack's stall and Tammy's) and the wall mural were whitewashed to allow new projects to begin. With a roller of paint, the previous students' art was rendered temporary and fleeting. I did not chart the progress on the boys' bathroom art from the time I had completed data collection to the time these new students came in. I do not know how complete the joker mural became or how much more Tammy was able to put on her stall design. In the place of the wall mural was a new one: much more abstract, swirls and shapes of blues, purples and greens sweep across the wall. How long it would have taken to complete (when I saw it, white patches and pencil drawings were still evident) and how long it has lasted afterwards is unknown. But the process continues: students expressing, revising and surrendering their ideas to the public space of the boys' (and girls') washroom for public consumption and reaction.

*Analysis of Tammy's stall art through social semiotic approach.*

The original Joker wall mural is as much, if not more, worthy of analysis than Tammy's individual stall design. Although she had been working on the wall mural with another female student who was not part of this study, the degree to which it was completed and the placement above the urinals distinguish it from the stall design. Representationally, this mural had a narrative structure because the movement of the eye was directed from left to right by the cascading deck of cards. An action, if not a story, is being told in this structure. The facial expression on the Joker is angry, demonic, with yellow eyes, red pupils, a furrowed brow and the infamous grin known through popular reference to the multiple iterations of the DC Batman comics and movies.

Certainly, this arrangement of shapes also has relevance for the informational value because it corresponds to the left-to-right direction of reading English text. In this way, the Joker is deemed most significant according to its spatial placement (see van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 148) as well as by virtue of its scale and emphasis. The cards mirror the line of urinals beneath them. One 'reads' the face (with the eyes and the grin) followed by the cards while simultaneously 'reading' the line of the urinals. The proximity of the Joker's head to the viewer is nearly aligned with direct eye contact, depending on the actual height of the viewer. Otherwise, the mouth is at eye level. Positioned directly above the urinals, no viewer would be able to avoid the image. What is the message? Why did these students want to confront their viewers with such a violent and vibrant image, if not cryptic, during a most private act? What occurs in the collision of such public and private spaces? The cards conceal part of the Joker's infamous grin. Further interpretation might inquire into the significance of the concealing effect of the grin, as well as the reference to the mouth especially considering its placement above the urinals.

*Analysis of Tammy's stall as confessional.*

Considering the unwritten code of conduct in toilets and urinal usage, at least according to Zack and other participants, the notion of eye contact at all in this space, even if it is

falsely constructed via a painted image on the wall, is disconcerting and ironic. If boys do not typically even speak to one another while in the space, let alone look at anyone (they are meant to look down, not even side to side, according to Zack), how would they react to the invasive head-on glare from this oversized manic cartoon character? To add insult to this pseudo-injurious act, Zack told me most boys choose the corner stalls first presumably because they are the furthest from each other: “if you go in the centre then like it’s kind of weird because then guys would be like kind of like ... it’s just kind of awkward.” Did the artists know they positioned their glaring Joker directly above the favoured spot in the boys’ bathroom? The two artists, Tammy and the other female student, would not know the details of codes of conduct in boys’ toilets from a first-hand perspective. Tammy told me her male friends told her that they do make conversation while in the washroom, contrary to Zack’s statements. Where and when and even why this communication occurs, we did not discuss.

Through a socio-geographic lens, Hubbard, Kitchin, Bartley, and Fuller (2002), consider the place of the body in disciplinary space, especially in the context of schools:

Viewed from a Foucauldian perspective, a school becomes a place of constant surveillance where undesirable forms of behavior, morality and appearance are discouraged through coercion and punishment, while good behavior and learning are rewarded by the granting of privileges, good marks and practise from tutors...Geographers have begun to think about the role of specific places in creating docile body-subjects, thinking about how the practices played out in different settings contribute to discourses that differentiate between good and bad bodies. (p. 108)

The coercion of gendered bodies happens already upon entry into this heterotopic space where certain rituals (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) are incited, along with further gestures within the space. What practice of docility is this art interrupting? How does it incite further docility in these gendered bodies? How does it literally mock the boys whom it confronts? As a joker, what is it looking at and why does it jest? What is significant about the partial concealment of the grin? And to what effect are the cards touching the Joker’s lips? The questions continue because the image is so strong and so perplexingly placed in a space not often donning artwork of any kind. The relationship between the art and the space is as important to consider as that between the painted image and the real boys it confronts.

The cruelty of the facial expression is admittedly castrating, if not also sexualized through homoerotic undertones via the concealment of and consequent gesture towards the virtual lips that hover above real exposed male bodies. The codes of toilet conduct Zack and other participants told me about are primarily embedded in homophobia. The Joker mocks, even outright rejects, this code. Edelman's (1996) essay on the men's room presents the urinal paradox in its visual terms: "the law of the men's room decrees that men's dicks be available for public contemplation at the urinal precisely to allow a correlative mandate: that such contemplation must never take place" (p. 153). Boys do not look at each other because they do not want to be seen looking; simultaneously, they do not want to be seen, especially by someone who wants to be looking. But the urinals are structured to make visible the male body. The Joker's gaze and grin emphasize that visibility. And yet, it is a particular part of the male body that is exposed over others. Where the genitals are necessarily exposed in the urinals and are thereby bestowed "a relatively 'public' status" (Edelman, 1996, p. 153), the anus is deemed private by virtue of the defecation act that must occur in the stall, an enclosed space, or a closet within the closet. These 'rules' of the space determine that "you don't show your ass in the men's room, and you don't conceal your dick" (p. 153). Cavanagh (2010) frames that the supposed 'naturalness' of exposing male bodies during urination is part of the paradox of male regulation: although "male genitalia are hyper-visible, [they are] not to be subjected to visual scrutiny" (p. 112). The ambiguity and contrariness of these complicated rules designate the washroom space as heterotopic.

Within these heterotopias, the gaze is highly controlled, itself under high surveillance. Edelman (1996) considers the men's room as

the very site of the symbolic gaze, as a space that monitors the circuitry of visual relations propping up a 'reality' in which each look of the subject is filtered through the gaze of a symbolic order that, in every sense of the word, solicits him. (p. 154)

In change-rooms, the expectations are similar; just like the toilet code of conduct, Bert, a participant from the pilot study, called it "locker room protocol" which meant, "eyes down, you don't look at anybody, you don't talk, you get in, you get out". As an out gay

male, Bert explained this self-policing is because, for him, he did not want anyone to have an excuse to punish him so he was extra vigilant in controlling his gaze:

I'm very conscientious [sic] of the fact that people know I'm gay and that that might make other people uncomfortable with the situation...I was afraid of putting somebody else in a position where they wouldn't want to be...[if] they end up changing next to me and they are worried cause I'm going to look at them or something and I didn't want to put somebody in a position that would make them kind of feel awkward, feel uncomfortable.

Participating willingly in this game of self-control and self-regulation, these boys are complicit subjects in the practices of disciplinary power: “this form of power...imposes a law of truth on him [the subject] which he [sic] must recognize and which others have to recognize in him [sic]. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects” (Foucault, 1982, p. 212). By nature of the spatial arrangement of the urinals, boys learn how to conduct themselves, even from a very early age, according to the custodian from Corey Heights. By nature of the spatial arrangement of the artwork located above the urinals, boys are now confronted with this constant, perpetual regulation of self and others through vision and visibility. Edelman (1996) considers the law of the gaze in the men's washroom deriving from men's preoccupations with “how their looking may be looked upon in return” (p. 154). Against Tom's pin-up girl in the girls' bathroom project that recuperates a masculine gaze, the Joker's gaze is a kind of inversion of that operation.

Tammy had explained she wanted to keep the design light, casual, and definitely suited to what she deemed to be male tastes. Whether she fulfilled any part of the first two qualities is in doubt whereas the latter became reproduced through its reiteration of the stereotype as well as an inversion of the norms of gendered expression. Ironically, Tammy's Joker creates a heterotopic space simply because it interrupts or inverts the normal machinations of gender regulation in this space: it looks where it should not, where looking is not permitted. Or perhaps it does something more, something that makes “suspect” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 24) the surveillance tactics that already occur, thereby re-qualifying the washroom as heterotopic (see Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). The gaze of the Joker looks back at the gaze of the male body using the urinal, whose gaze must stay in place, not sweep side to side, or else stay fixed upon



his own member (Edelman, 1996). The photograph of the Joker mirrored (Figure 13) as a reflection of this inverting gaze, doubly inverts the Joker's spectre, while also highlighting the super-surveillance made possible in the male washroom. While the mirror is a heterotopia itself (see Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986 and my discussion in Chapter Six), this mirrored image marks the heterotopic qualities of the washroom space that incite a network of gazes and regulatory actions of optics amongst boys. Where Tammy was concerned her designs had to be male or masculine enough to suit the space, her lack of intimate experience in this space rendered her authority of maleness impotent, and consequently mocked the normalized practice of self and peer surveillance; unintentionally, it also highlighted the significance of "the vector of the gaze" (Edelman, 1996, p. 154) in the men's room.



Figure 13: The Joker mirrored (in the Bathroom Project, Boys')

*Postscript: Tammy.*

How is the Joker part of Tammy's own confessional as a gendered subject? Although she was only one artist and not all of the design decisions can be directly attributed to her, she must have had some stake in its execution, both materially and conceptually. She had been deliberately "thinking on the boy's side of [her] brain", and in this way, claimed some authorship of the Joker design. In Butler's (2005) reading of Foucault's (1980,

1982, 1988a, 1990a) subject, the subject undertakes “a mode of self-crafting that takes place in the context of the norms at issue, and, specifically, negotiates an answer to the question of who the ‘I’ will be in relation to these norms” (Butler, 2005, p. 22). To give “an account of oneself” (Butler, 2005) is to do so, in part, through the negotiation of the norms in one’s context. Tammy, as a new student in a Canadian school, was engaged in the formation of herself in a newly forming subjectivity. Neither her place in this country, nor her understanding of herself as a gendered subject, especially as mitigated and formed within the gender regime at Best S.S., are permanent entities.

Unfortunately, as indicated above, not even this castrating, lawless Joker is permanent: the wall mural was painted over by the next set of students in the Art class. They thought the Joker was “stupid”, according to Ms. Surrey and preferred to begin again, literally whitewashing all of the surfaces, the stalls and the brick walls, to be able to design the space all over again to their own liking. They had traced “the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal” (Foucault, 1977, p. 183). By literally removing the artwork from both Tammy and Zack, this new group of students reclaimed the ‘right’, the normal, and eradicated that which they deemed the abnormal, the abject (Butler, 1993) as if it somehow jeopardized their version of normal. By removing the matter upon the walls, these students simultaneously removed what matters or counts as legitimate articulations within a gendered space (Butler, 1993) to both Tammy and Zack through a reiteration of the right, under the guise of democratic rule (Foucault, 1980). In this way, the erasure of the students’ work reveals the contingent operations of disciplinary power: what is done can be undone.

Although I do not examine racial or ethnic identities in this study, Tammy’s Latina status cannot be ignored. For one, she was a visible minority in the school as a non-white female. For another, her deportation and the consequent erasing of her artwork after cannot help but be considered through a racialized lens. Cavanagh’s (2010) queering bathrooms study examines the psychoanalytic categories of structures in the bathroom including the “white hygienic superego” (p. 6) of the porcelain toilet, sinks, and so forth. She claims “the oval pedestal enclosed by stall partitions functions to quarantine (and ensure) the purity of a white, feminine subject position, while the

masculine is displayed before the urinal in full-frontal (open) view” (p. 11). These interior-exterior positions I have discussed above in relation to the urinal, but the notion of the “white, sanitized bathroom aesthetic [as] colonial and imperialist by design” (p. 246) is a “spatial production of whiteness” (p. 11), which Cavanagh assigns to “postcolonial theorists [who] have noted the centrality of the English water closet to processes of racialization by European and American colonial and imperial powers” (p. 11). In another example, she reviews a study of the hand-washing practices of different racial groups, concluding that white men washed their hands far less than women and visible minorities because “white, heterosexual men who are not trans are the least likely to be seen as ‘dirty’ and socially abject” (p. 246).

The racialized readings of the bathroom have implications for Tammy’s project. As a Latina, who participated in the boys’ bathroom version of the bathroom project, Tammy is made abject and illegitimate on sovereign and disciplinary levels of power through very material, as well as discursive, means. Sovereign, state-power has ejected her from the country. But along with the ejection comes the dismissal, or rejection of whatever traces of herself she left behind. As if to say, ‘joke’s on you’, Tammy’s Joker was literally and figuratively whitewashed. Not only does the bathroom project produce certain gendered subjectivities, if not question them, it also racializes these genders, whitewashing the readings to perpetuate the normalization of white, heteronormalized gender performativities. Therein, these acts of erasure serve to (re)subjugate certain of the student art, namely Tammy’s and Zack’s.

The group that whitewashed Tammy’s art I did not interview or even meet because this phase occurred after I had collected the data. According to the Art teacher, the new group of students was comprised of several boys and one girl who was unwilling to paint on her own but preferred the company of one of the boys in this all-male space (i.e. the boys’ washroom). The mural they put in the place of the Joker on red ground is a contrast in colour, style, and content: blues, greens, purples, all in the cool colour palette; the shapes are organic, rounded, and constitute an abstracted landscape scene. Except for its graphic nature, its shapes and movement might be read as more feminine than the harsh glaring cartoon of the Joker. But the landscape is also less intrusive and combative;

especially considering its place above the urinals, it does not confront in the same way as the Joker's glare was positioned to do. In this way, it might be a new message, something more palatable, if not benign, for male users to endure than to be exposed doubly by the physical space of the urinals and the pictorial space of the grinning villain. It might actually be a reiteration of the gender norms these students were more used to producing. Two male artists along with one female artist reclaimed the wall mural, whereas two female artists had painted the old mural; this distinction is not important except that the two males were able to use the space in other ways where the females were not. This might have contributed to a different perspective on what that space should or could look like, according to the artists. Despite this reclamation, however, by the new cohort of artists, I witnessed graffiti (a pencil sketched phallus), which proved no space is sacred or owned. The hegemonic masculinist project of repudiating the specter of fag was again at work. Not only did these students raze the existence of Tammy from this school (at least in the capacity of the bathroom project—one of her more recent activities), they themselves were not immune to the constant process of writing/drawing over.

### **Tom, Zack, and Tammy: Confessional Practices in the Toilet**

To what degree the original anonymous artists of the bathroom project (not those students featured here but those involved in the first stages of the project) were enacting technologies of the self versus technologies of power (Foucault, 1988a) is an entanglement. What they might deem an expression of agency is always already mitigated and produced by the mechanisms of power; indeed an ethical self “takes place in the context of an enabling and limiting field of constraint” (Butler, 2005, p. 19). Ms. Brown and Ms. Surrey wanted students' voices to “claim” the space. In this desire, they were endorsing or nurturing practices for the technologies of self; but the tension remains, that these voices are not always problematizing the discourse. Indeed, many of the early images replicated or reproduced discourses of hegemonic femininity: empty, benign, ‘be yourself’, beauty-laden messages that confirm the female body should be foregrounded in the identity of young females. The technologies of power that normalize

discourses of appropriate gendered expressions and practices are always at work even in the apparently activist acts of painting on school walls in the washroom.

The temporal nature of the washroom art, being claimed and reclaimed by various artists and users renders the space a metaphor for subjectivity itself as well as points to its heterotopic (read: ambivalent) nature. Within this space, students are not writing, drawing or painting to merely decorate the space. They are expressing their own interests, speaking a voice (if not their own, one they want to be known). They are writing the self, to borrow a term from Foucault's (1997c) study of *hupomnemata*, or "personal notebooks used in the first and second centuries to care for and develop the self", according to Kamler (2001, p. 49). Foucault's historical interest in self-writing practices focused on pre-Christian writers whose "writing enabled increased examination and vigilance of one's moods and so intensified and widened how people thought of themselves and promoted self-understanding and mastery" (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 33). Kamler, through her application of the social semiotic theory (see Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) argues that writing is an expression of the self that has relevance for the ethical relationships between the self and others because writing "can be explained in terms of social structures and cultural systems" (Kamler, 2001, p. 51). A writer (and an artist) uses available signs that through the act of expression get transformed which in effect transform the subjectivity of the individual:

the student who uses representational resources to produce a poem and the child who uses circles to represent a car are, in a sense, not the same individuals as they were before. Their potential for producing meaning has both increased and altered. A change has occurred in who they are and who they can be. (Kamler, 2001, p. 53)

These student artists are writing/drawing the self in various ways that constitute their subjectivity. Itself a temporal study because the artwork is done and re-done, subjectivity can only be known in these fleeting moments, charted over temporary periods only to become something different once again. The changing surfaces render the overall space heterotopic also because it means different things to different people, as well as it is a space charged with power relations that are themselves always in flux. A message can be countered by a mark of graffiti thereby usurping the power of that initial artist's intention. An artist may be asked to alter their design to address the provocativeness of the image.

One layer is written upon and over again and again, literally and figuratively embodying the rewriting of the selves within the same ambiguous space. The nature of the washroom art as a re-creating organism is akin to the nature of subjectivity, and how one can know it is also within fleeting moments. This instability does not deny a reasonable purpose to examining even these small moments of understanding in the lives of students, but it does caution against the desire to extrapolate beyond the data, to think more than what the data can tell.

If subjects possess a conditional agency (Butler, 2005), they are thus so because they are constrained by available norms in the same way that visual and textual conventions make conditional the agency of the artist. But as Butler renames Foucault's (1988a) technologies of self, a "self-crafting" (Butler, 2005, p. 22), these painting/crafting techniques are simultaneously the stuff that comprises the technologies of the self. Aesthetics and ethics are interwoven practices in the subjectivation of youth in these gendered and curricular/activist spaces.

Visual products as confessionals speak to the confession as a productive space, one that allows one to "give an account of oneself" (Butler, 2005) through "a self-crafting that takes place in the context of the norms at issue and, specifically, negotiates an answer to the question of who the 'I' will be in relation to those norms" (p. 22). Indeed, the "I" is also presented in the form of the body, in that the confession, according to Butler (2004), is a moment to ask, "will that body be received as well"? (p. 172); the confession is "a bodily act" (p. 172) that signifies a moment in the process of subjectivation, a moment when the knowledge of the self is made available to the self and therein may hold the possibilities of transformation. The students' stall art are forms of confessionals because they mark the truths that person wanted to convey, if even fleetingly. And the presence of the art in the toilet stall is doubly implicated by the students as artists and as washroom users in that space. Their self-knowledge and its effects in their art are formed particularly in response to the constructs of that stall. The structure of the cellular unit makes possible a kind of bodily performance whose effects are played out in both the toilet behaviours as well as the artwork itself. In other words, the way the art is both bound to and deriving from the stall underlines the importance of

the context of the art as well as the kind of subject that results. The toilet marks only a part of the subject's self-understanding, but it is relevant beyond these bounds also because it speaks to the kind of gendered regulatory behaviours that continue to thrive.

In the analytics of the confession as told by Butler (2004), these students' artworks are confessions materialized. The stall is metaphorical for the confessional both in its size and singularity, as well as its partitioning of private space. Edelman (1996) conceives of the toilet stall not only as a closeted space, but also a "cloistered" (p. 154) one, connoting the divine protection the confessional booth offers to its occupants. The artwork on the stall is also a personal offering to the public, a sort of confession of the self, but for the purpose of both knowing and caring for the self (Foucault, 1990a). The stall art is a confession, a manifestation of this technique of the self that is temporary, fleeting, but also significant in its richness and placement in such a gendered context. And what it tells about gender expectations and norms is that students are in part buying in to these traditions, perpetuating them, even visually reproducing them, but not always in coherent and uncomplicated ways. Those moments where they contradict the stereotype—where Tammy wants to paint a masculine image and in effect depicts a mocking castrating villain that is only later eradicated by other artists; or where Zack develops a very personal musical homage in a masculine space when he himself was not always heralded as a model of masculinity by his peers; or when Tom's resistance to allow the feminized context to influence his artistic licence actually resulted in a *yoenic* symbol as his central feature and an ironic, vacant-eyed pin-up girl confronting the vulnerable washroom user—these are the moments that are rich, that provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of living and doing gender in schools. Boys and girls are separated by washroom space; although some of them resist these distinctions, at least partially, they return to these false structures and submit to their authority as the norm against which they can measure their own gendered subjectivity.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered the visual products from three students who participated in the bathroom project. Through trans-inspired studies (Stryker, 2006) and Foucauldian analytics of practices upon the self (1990a), I have thought of these visual products in two

ways. For one, I framed them as confessional products, revealing not only the practices upon the self in which these students engaged within and through the bathroom project, but also marking the conditions under which these subjects make sense of themselves as gendered. And two, they serve to unsettle gendered discourses and material practices by aligning with, troubling, or redefining the activist intentions of Best S.S.'s bathroom project, given Tom's work in the girls' washroom and Zack and Tammy's works in the extension of the project into the boys' washroom. Each of these students navigates the gendered norms and regulations that construct their own gendered subjectivities and are accessible through their artwork. Where Tom's recuperative operations of the heteronormalizing male gaze in the guise of his 1950's pin-up girl inverts the intentions of the bathroom project to be empowering for girls, Tammy's Joker inverts the gaze in the boys' bathroom in a different way. Castrating, confronting, distracting, and certainly aggressive, the Joker reproduces a hegemonic masculine discourse also, but not necessarily for desire. These two cartoon images stare out at the gendered occupants, signifying certain kinds of regulations, but also speak to the understandings and intentions from the artists. In Zack's efforts to fight against the "repudiation of the failed specter of masculinity" (Pascoe, 2007) in his aggressive, masculinist stall art, is paradoxically also where he is most vulnerable. These students participated in the bathroom project not as wholly complicit subjects because they did enact their own artistic and subjective decisions. But as subjects capable of movements to resist, they articulate the complicated processes of regulation and normalisation of gender in school spaces. And the bathroom project serves as a catalyst to exaggerate those operations. Furthermore, the bathroom project qualifies the entire bathroom as a heterotopic space, one capable of inverting relations within and to the outside. What had been possible confessing expressions for these students in the stalls, could not have happened anywhere else in the school. And yet, it is because of their existence at all that we are granted insights into the operations that play out in the school at large, beyond the bounds of the bathroom.



## Chapter 5: Subcase within Case Study #1: (De)Subjugating the Bathroom Project

### Introduction

This chapter investigates the other side of the bathroom project. It is a case embedded within a case (Yin, 2006): the resisters to the bathroom project within the case of the bathroom project at Best S.S. It is a queering of that project, a response, a rejection, a re-interpretation, a re-vision. I focus specifically on those students who refused to participate in the officially sanctioned bathroom project, but who privately—within the space opened up by the research—challenged or resisted the norms of the officially sanctioned artwork that was displayed in the washroom. The students' artwork here (Sasha, Samara, and Lavender) serves to question the intentions of the bathroom project; originally framed as a student activist project, by participating in the research these students were able to trouble the discourse of normative femininity that they perceived the bathroom project reiterated. If the bathroom project intended to (de)subjugate certain kinds of gender knowledge, the previous chapter also examined the times it failed. Tom's reinsertion of the male gaze into the girls' room toilet stall and Zack and Tammy's obliterated artwork are examples of a (re)subjugation or de-legitimizing of the transformative intentions of the bathroom project artists. The artists in this chapter attempt to correct those intentions, to re-legitimate student voice and were able to do so through participating in the research. In reimagining the bathroom project, they have also reimagined their own possibilities as gendered subjects, while providing insights into the practices of self that render subjects intelligible and unintelligible in the bathroom spaces.

In this chapter I explore how the resisters to the project have produced queer confessionals, or how their own practices of the self allowed them to create projects that not only queer the bathroom project (itself conceived as a queering of the bathroom) but also work towards a further (de)subjugation of this space (if not intertwined with (re)subjugating effects). I follow the same outline as the previous chapter: I introduce each student, describe his/her artwork, and then analyse these visual texts through the

social semiotic approach and Foucauldian and Butlerian analytics to unpack how such artwork is implicated in gendered subjectivation.

### **(De)subjugation, (Re)subjugation and Queering**

Where resistance is a part of the relations of power (Foucault, 1980) the bathroom as a heterotopia is a place of resistance (Johnson, 2006, p. 80), because it includes the operation of power relations (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). If the student proponents of the bathroom project employed confessional techniques of the self within this heterotopic space, then the resisters conducted a (de)subjugation of that same space through their own forms of confession. I take up (de)subjugation through Stryker's (2006) political hopes for transgender studies, as previously discussed, as a (de)subjugated knowledge, a way to legitimate discourses or knowledges that have been previously dismissed or ignored. Although another reading of desubjugation from Butler's (2004) use of Foucault's desubjugating processes moves away from Stryker's coinage, it is relevant in terms of gendered subjectivation. Where Stryker deems (de)subjugated to be a re-legitimizing, Butler's desubjugation actually 'risks' the legitimacy of the gendered subject. In her recounting of the story of David Reimer, the sex reassignment case that went horribly wrong, Butler considers David's own questioning of the sexologists and his pursuit to form his own subjectivity, to be also a risk for his own subjecthood, a risk at becoming unintelligible:

he establishes the limits of what they know, disrupting the politics of truth, making use of his desubjugation within that order of being to establish the possibility of love beyond the grasp of that norm. He positions himself, knowingly, in relation to the norm, but he does not comply with its requirements. He risks a certain 'desubjugation' – is he a subject? How will we know? And in this sense, Davie's discourse puts into play the operation of critique itself, critique which, defined by Foucault, is precisely the desubjugation of the subject within the politics of truth. (Butler, 2004, p. 74)

To want to bring into legitimacy not only knowledges but also one's subjecthood, that have been previously subjugated, is a (de)subjugating process. But within this pursuit lies the immanent risk of failure, a desubjugation. I read the students in my study as undergoing similar paths. Their artwork, for both the bathroom project participants and the resisters to it, contain elements of critique. The students in the bathroom project were critiquing gendered norms while the students I feature in this chapter were critiquing the

gendered norms they thought were reproduced through the bathroom project, thereby responding to the failings in the bathroom project. They were excluded from the bathroom project and therefore subjugated via their disqualification as officially sanctioned artists. Although the bathroom project had an open invitation, these students did not feel that invitation included them. They had something to say that they feared would not cohere with the norms the bathroom project perpetuated. Their work, as a response to the bathroom project, desubjugates the kinds of knowledges they thought were denied institutional endorsement. But what do they risk by doing this? How is their subjectivity framed if not within the confines of a legitimate discourse?

To conduct such critique within the bathroom space, a place that is already transplanted to accept legitimated curricular work, defines the space as heterotopic in this paradoxical invitation of responses and resistances. The heterotopia hides “curious exclusions. Everyone can enter...[but] this is only an illusion...we enter, excluded” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 26). The students who were invited into the bathroom project did not accept the invitation perhaps feeling they were in actuality excluded because they did not fit the kind of femininity (or masculinity) that was required of them. These students were not capable of or willing to make “certain gestures” (p. 26) of doing gender right in order “to get in” or felt they could participate in the bathroom project. What graffiti or subversive knowledge was invited or allowable in this bathroom project space? What knowledge was unwelcome? Who was able to make such decisions? Who else was able and equipped to uphold them?

In their attempt to produce an alternative version of the bathroom project, one that destabilizes the equation of gender, sex, and sexuality, they queer the bathroom project. I also adopt the notion of ‘queering’ in terms of where Britzman (1998) combines queer theory, psychoanalytic reading practices, and pedagogy to imagine a queer pedagogy, one that considers “the problem of how knowledge of bodies and bodies of knowledge become a site of normalization” (p. 80). These students speak back to what has been sanctioned by their teachers and administration—albeit deemed a progressive pedagogy—or, what has been normalized, and are therefore subjugated voices, not because they did not participate in the project (although that is a part of the story) but

because they are thinking against what has been thought and given as normal uninterrogated practices of gender; through a queering they are engaging in a “destabilizing of the spaces [their work] flags” (Noble, 2005, p. 165). They refuse to reiterate the notions of ‘girl’ as being concerned solely with body image, and finding comfort in the form of positive messages scrawled on walls.

Britzman (1998) asks, “can the reading of normalcy be a queer reading practice?” in the sense that “normalcy becomes the great unmarked within classroom sites, and the means by which pedagogy itself might intervene to agitate the limits and fault lines of normalcy” (p. 80). Furthermore, she outlines the possibilities within queer theory:

Queer theory is not an affirmation but an implication. Its bothersome and unapologetic imperatives are explicitly transgressive, perverse, and political: transgressive because they question the regulations and effects of binary categorical conditions such as the public and the private, the inside and the outside, the normal and the queer, and the ordinary and the disruptive; perverse because they turn away from utility even as they claim deviancy as a site of interest; and political because they attempt to confound instituted laws and practices by putting into place queer representations on their own everyday terms. (p. 82)

In some ways, the curricular opportunities that led to the painting of stall walls in the bathroom is itself a reading against normalcy, especially as the bounds of the classroom expanded to include the washroom space; as well, the normal rules of gendered use were temporarily suspended during curricular moments (i.e. girls painting in boys’ washrooms and vice versa). The bathroom project could be considered a “queer pedagogy” itself “that refuses normal practices and practices of normalcy” (p. 95). In other ways, however, even within the climate of honouring student voice, some students disagreed with the perpetuation of certain gendered norms and resisted participation. Britzman might applaud their ability even to read these practices as stereotypical and highly normalized, or at least call it a queering they enact upon the reading of the space. But the students who chose to create an alternative vision of the space go beyond a queer reading to writing (or drawing) queerly. They are literally queering their space, taking the tenets of Britzman’s queer reading/pedagogy to reimagine the limits of dominant thought, to “consider the grounds of their own possibility, their own intelligibility” (p. 81).

The students queered the space in private, however. Neither the Art teacher nor the principal were aware of the resistance to the bathroom project except through the repeated incidents of vandalism, which they decided were due to the impulses of a few disturbed individuals. In this way, the administration read vandalism as a sign not of subversion but of sickness or pathologization. The bathroom project invited criticism, but of a certain kind; through the repudiation of the vandal as the abject, the norms of proper and acceptable critique were made intelligible. Thus, the administration deemed the limits of intelligibility of not only expression, but also subjectivities within the school walls. Early in the school year, Ms. Brown was a complete proponent of the bathroom project as well as of her students and school:

So I can't see or I wouldn't even begin to anticipate that anybody who goes into that bathroom might look around and go "Oh, my god." and write something derogatory on the wall because that's just not who Best kids are, you know... They respect each other and they respect the space and can see that people have put a lot of time and effort into trying to make that be an affirming place for young women.

Nonetheless, some students did not feel the same way. The bathroom project received at least two incidents of vandalism. The one event of vandalism happened part way through the collection of my data. The new vice principal (not the one I had interviewed) texted me to alert me to this occurrence, calling it offensive. The administrative team had ascertained the identity of the vandal and the Art teacher told me she had known the student from a previous year's class. I witnessed the aftermath of one of the incidents: a green spray-painted line swept across the ceiling and a wall bisecting one student's half-completed project. The Art teacher described another sort of graffiti, phallic symbols she recognized from the doodles of one of her students. The bathroom project painters responded: Zack thought the student must have been motivated by jealousy; Shannon just "thought it was really pointless". Ms. Surrey described the way the student-artists handled it as very progressive, an act of restorative justice (as part of Best S.S.'s discipline plan, according to Ms. Cardigan); they had actually wanted to invite the student in to talk about how everyone felt about this act. Although this did not happen, Ms. Surrey thought the act itself was not something to be punished either but one that should be heard:

I mean even when you're doing it in a negative way that's ... unfortunately, it's still a voice and like each.... You don't want to nurture ... I wish there were a place where people who were angry could go and write, you know. I wish there were that kind of thing too.

Ms. Surrey had wanted all voices, all subjugated knowledges to be included in the bathroom project. But she was not equipped to make these allowances herself. The vandalism was known to many of the students I interviewed. Lavender said that the bathroom “gets vandalized every day”. She attributed this reaction to the fact that “most people are kind of like confused” about the intentions and scope of the bathroom project, as well as, “people [don't] really care about it either”. Those students (or student, singular) who were compelled to show their distaste to the bathroom project through graffiti did so in a socially offensive way.

The students in this chapter might have resisted the bathroom project but they refrained from (re)subjugating their own knowledge by refraining from vandalising the bathroom project artwork. Rather, they created art in the pursuit of (de)subjugation: Sasha created ironic photo-collages; Samara attempted collaborative drawing with a tongue-in-cheek tone; and, Lavender created a series of sketches rich in symbolism. Each image contained elements of the artist's critique of the original bathroom project as well as imagined a new project that could satisfy some of their misgivings.

## Sasha

Sasha stood out to me in the Art class because of her bright red lipstick and black hair falling into her darkly outlined eyes. She sat at a back table immersed in her work, but surrounded by a collegial group of girls with whom she was involved in conversation. After I approached her, she acquiesced to meeting with me. It was not until we were chatting in the interview that I realized the nuance and sophistication in her understanding of herself and her peers, especially in terms of gendered expectations and regulations. I had concluded originally that she sought attention based on her appearance: she had certainly caught my attention, but she talked a lot about being genuine, being herself, and then admitted to having a social anxiety predicated by being around a lot of people. She explained that this was in part why she avoided eating lunch

in the crowded cafeteria, something I had heard and would hear again from other participants at Best S.S.

Sasha was in Grade 12, 17 years old and had come from Calgary where she completed her Grade 7 to 9 schooling. Since her childhood she recalled going through several stylistic phases which were influenced by her diverse tastes in music from “60’s stuff and then blues and then psychedelic and like all the hippy folk stuff [as well as] punk rock and grunge and angrier things”. She claimed it really depended on “how I’m feeling on that day” which led to her peers calling her a “scene kid” or “emo” or even “a poser”. Sasha just said she does what she feels “in the moment” and that she is really being herself above all. She felt even distanced from her small group of friends at Best S.S. because she was different, interested in different things: “I feel like it’s kind of like me against the swarm of [them]”, she lamented. Sasha loved playing guitar, singing in a band, drawing, reading fantasy books and had ambitions to design music posters claiming the psychedelic 60’s as her artistic influence here too. Even though she was critical of the “interchangeable” girls in her school who all dressed and acted alike out of insecurity, she expressed insecurity of her own that just manifested itself differently: “if I wanted to fit in, I wouldn’t know how because I was always kind of a strange kid...I guess I was just too out there.”

#### **Description of Sasha’s art.**

Sasha did not want to participate in the bathroom project, but she certainly had an opinion she needed to express. She opted to use some of the prints I had taken of the girls’ and boys’ washrooms that we had examined during the photo elicitation phase of the interview. She then used these oversized prints (6” x 8”) as the backdrop upon which she collaged to recreate a space, to reimagine the bathroom project to suit her own aims. Sasha chose low-tech, using White Out, acrylic paint, Sharpie markers, and glossy colour cut-outs from magazines. She was interested in the stereotypes of gender, responding to these reiterations in the girls’ bathroom project, to think about them in reverse: “I was thinking maybe I could do like what I think if you took the things in the girls’ washroom and kind of made the equivalent of like the guys’ washroom”. To this end, she was

conscious of the hyperbole and the absurdity, but deployed those devices to be able to articulate how she perceived the girls' bathroom project as a resister.

She produced three pieces: one photograph from the girls' washroom, one from the boys' washroom of the urinals, and one from the mirror in the boys' washroom. The first collage (Figure 14) reinvents the original stencilled wall of the entry in the bathroom project (see Figure 15). In her collage, Sasha superimposed into an existing frame in the photograph, an image of a male torso, muscled, oiled, and in high contrast black and white. Beneath this picture, she changed the original stencilled message, "You know who's beautiful? Read the first word again" to, "You know who's strong? Read the first word again". She also rewrote "You are Beautiful" to read, "You are macho" and "You are buff", using White Out on the original word and printing in the new one to keep the alteration obvious. In bigger red print, she wrote on the lower right quadrant of the image, as if graffitied directly on the wall, "you are stronger than 1000 bulls".



Figure 14: Sasha's inversion of the entry wall in The Bathroom Project



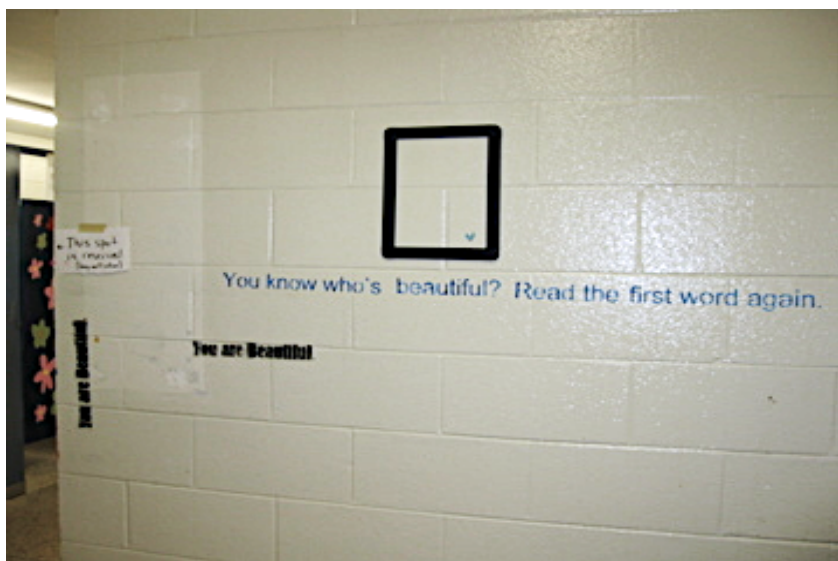


Figure 15: Original entry wall in The Bathroom Project

Her second collage of the urinals (Figure 17) reinterprets another stencil from the bathroom project (Figure 16). Sasha cut out two slogans from the girls' washroom photographs, "you're GORGEOUS" and "You are Beautiful" and pasted the first on the space above the urinals (as if directly on the wall) and the second directly on the middle urinal (probably positioned directly in the stream of urine in the urinal). In marker she wrote on the far right urinal, running vertically along the inside edge, "all the girls want you".



Figure 16: (above left) original stencil in The Bathroom Project

Figure 17: (above right) Sasha's inversion of the girls' washroom stencil

Finally, the third collage used an original photograph taken in the boys' washroom of a small wall mirror positioned on the left side of the photograph. Sasha used this as a base to respond to the original painting of the girl in the mirror from the bathroom project (Figure 18). In her collage (see Figure 19), Sasha filled this mirror with a close-up face of a male, brown skinned, bald, and chubby with a speech bubble painted in blue script above his head saying, "mirror mirror on the wall...you have the nicest 6-pack of them all...". Beneath the mirror she printed in black marker, "YOU ARE MACHO". And to the right of the mirror, occupying almost half of the photograph she pasted a crudely cut out glossy picture of a male, frontally positioned, bare-chested, with low-cut drawstring pants. His left side is cut-off by the edge of the picture, so too are his legs and his right hand. He is in full, saturated colour highlighting his tanned Caucasian skin, blonde hair and otherwise muscled physique. On top of his right shoulder and mid-abdomen, Sasha had painted yellow starbursts.



Figure 18: (above left) The original image in the Bathroom Project

Figure 19: (above right) Sasha's inversion of the mirrored girl image

### Analysis of Sasha's art through social semiotic approach.

These photographs are all representational, but perhaps more narrative in quality is the “mirror mirror” picture because of the presence of figures. How these two men are related, or whether the one in the mirror is a dystopian view and the male model an utopian view, is only understood in comparison to the similar picture taken from the girls’ washroom. This original painting played on the concept of body dysmorphia and told the story of a slender body image looking in the mirror (set up as the real figure) only to see an obese body (set up as the imagined figure) over the stamped message, “You are Beautiful” (Figure 18). The girls explained that many people (other girls) see themselves negatively and do not appreciate themselves for what they really are (or how they really look). Sasha reinterpreted this scenario but exaggerated the contrast between the two figures by placing a hyper-masculinized figure in the place of the ‘real’, extending it to the ‘ideal’. Furthermore, she changed not only the body type of the two figures, but also the race and the age. Where the face in the mirror is young (and body-less) and smiles slightly through squinted eyes, the male model is about fifteen years older with a partially open mouth and blue eyes. Both look directly at the viewer, not at each other, so the differentiation between the two is obvious. Whether this entire image is meant as a picture to be put on the wall in the boys’ washroom or whether it predicts how a real boy (as represented by the male model) might see the picture and graffiti on the wall, is unclear.

Although the other pictures contain conceptual qualities, they are also narrative because they presume to tell the tale of a boys’ bathroom project, reimagined from the girls’ version. They describe a space that inverts the elements from the girls’ room: the slogans are either translated to read as masculine, or simply transposed intact to this space to read as ironic. In this sense, these slogans are the essence of these pictures. Compositionally, they can be de-coded in terms of salience and modality. What is most salient is whatever is emphasized through certain principles of design to “be made more eye-catching than others” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 150). Certainly, the red colour and large size of the text, “YOU ARE STRONGER THAN A 1000 BULLS” draws the viewer’s attention to this phrase before the others. As well, the White Out

draws attention to the altered words in the stencilled messages. No attempt is made to disguise the alteration itself; it is an unself-conscious, bold re-writing of the girls' space. Considered in the intended context of the boys' washroom, the hyperbolic tone of all the photographs is also obvious, leading to at first, a tongue-in-cheek sort of quip, and resulting in a very unsettling realization. Does this penile confrontation of the "You are Beautiful" actually have the same effect on some girls in the washroom? Why is it so distressing to have body commentary placed around the exposing urinals but not so in the stalls in the girls' room? Her male friends laughed when they saw the urinal photo-collage and called it "awkward". Sasha called it "awkward" to be "sitting on the toilet and there's a thing in...like a wall in front of me telling me I'm gorgeous and it's like okay". Why does a nude male on the wall of a men's washroom seem homoerotic (in my reading) when none of the girls responded to lesbian overtones in the girls' washroom art?

The fact that Sasha chose to collage on to photographs of the girls' and boys' washrooms instead of drawing or painting her ideas, speaks to the effects that a specific mode can produce over others. Because photographs "are often thought of as 'images of the real', as images that show things exactly as they might also be seen in reality with the naked eye", they also represent the "specific", the "concrete", and give an "impression of reality" (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 151). It is easier to imagine the boys' washroom project with the homoerotic, hyperbolic overtones because of the photographic representation of the space. There is photographic 'proof', as it were. And yet, Sasha does not really want to deceive, as already outlined in how she deliberately highlights the alterations. The viewer is meant to be unsettled and to notice how that unsettling has happened.

### **Analysis of Sasha's art as (de)subjugation.**

Sasha's photographic collages are inversions of the girls' washroom, intentionally inverting gendered norms, and are related to the real spaces of washrooms but render suspicion in the viewer who wonders at the reality of the situation, or even the reaction if it were real. Inversion, relation, and suspicion are all elements that contribute to making a space heterotopic. This deliberate ambiguity deems a space not utopian or dystopian

but heterotopian, at least in Foucault's ideations (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). What they invert then draws attention to the "simple givens", those structures and practices that "remain inviolable, that our institutions...have not yet dared to break down" (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 23). Inverting the body lingo to have it transposed to the male washroom from the female makes her peers feel "awkward" because the unproblematic closeted space of the toilet stall is a (pseudo-) privacy not always expected of boys, as noted above (in the Joker analysis) in the complicated bathroom politics through Edelman's (1996) essay and Cavanagh's (2010) study.

Indeed, the placement of the words in the urinals themselves literally marks the urine that usually streams down them. But these words offer an alternative view to the men who avoid looking at each other only to be forced frontally to gaze upon "their own member and the arc of what it voids" (Edelman, 1996, p. 154). For Edelman, the urinal practice establishes the phallogocentrism of masculinity whereby the penis on view and viewing (through its ocular form) is what "grants him [the heterosexual man] a privileged place in the structure of social meaning as it justifies his place within the room set aside for men" (p. 155). In this network of gazes and views, the straight man is defined and confirmed through his ability to navigate through practices of nudity and exposure with other men that in any other circumstance would appear to signify same-sex desire. This strange practice of heterosexual confirmation—indeed these laws of the bathroom—defines the urinals as a heterotopia unto themselves. Through ambiguity, contradiction, "incompatible" sites "juxtaposing in a single real site" (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 25) temporal specificity and certain rites of entry, the urinal practice is one that regulates gendered and sexed expectations for men in public washrooms. Sasha's art of inversion and queering, or destabilizing these norms, make obvious these laws through highlighting their strangeness, their queerness, a queerness meant colloquially (as in strange), strategically (as in a queer reading practice) and analytically (through Edelman's theoretical forays into the politics of heterosexual homoeroticism).

Furthermore, the strangeness is amplified by the hyperbole. Indicating "macho", Sasha parodies the hegemonic masculine ideal, indeed believing it is a form of "macho bullshit" defining the practices "many boys felt they were expected to subscribe to in

order to be constructed and related to as normal boys” (Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2005, p. 83). And yet, under the guise of homoeroticism, by virtue of putting these hypersexualized nude male figures in the boys’ bathroom (or proposing to do so), Sasha is also inadvertently (or not) pointing to these regulations deriving from fear of homosexuality. If boys want to be buff, but are simultaneously afraid of looking at pictures of buff boys for fear of being called out as gay or queer (see Kehler & Atkinson, 2010), then Sasha’s artwork draws attention to this paradox. While Edelman’s (1996) essay teased out the contrariness of the male gaze in the men’s room (i.e. be seen but don’t look), Sasha’s artwork focuses on this unease, this “constant, vigilant, earnest repudiation” of “the spectre of the fag” (Pascoe, 2007, p. 157). The men in her pictures confront the uneasy male viewer, reflecting that male gaze of desire and turning it back on him. These pictures derived from her intention to offer the male equivalent, the boys’ version of the bathroom project, in exact mirror opposite, to highlight her own unease over the girls’ room pictures. Her pictures are inversions that not only give insight into the failure of the bathroom project but also highlight the production of these gendered regulations and self-policings that go on in the bathroom space and frame the space as heterotopic in its ambiguity.

The macho gaze as an inversion of gender can be rethought through Butler’s (1990) concept of gender parody, specifically in her analysis of drag. Drag disrupts the coherence between the

three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance. If the anatomy of the performer is already distinct from the gender of the performer, and both of those are distinct from the gender of the performance, then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. As much as drag creates a unified picture of ‘woman’ (what its critics often oppose), it also reveals the distinctness of those aspects of gendered experience which are falsely naturalized as a unity through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. (p. 175)

If not imitating gender, while displacing sex and sexuality, Sasha’s art work exaggerates the inter-relationships among these three contingencies. Specifically through hyperbole, these collages have the capacity to unhinge gender norms from the bodies it produces while overlaying queer readings. They serve to displace the effects of gender as coherent

and fixed, creating the space that signifies a “possibility of a failure to repeat”, as “a deformity or a parodic repetition that exposes” (Butler, 1990, p. 179) the constructedness of gender norms. Sasha, along with Samara and Lavender whose work I explore below, refuse the uninterrupted repetition of feminine and masculine normative identities. Indeed, all of these students draw or paint against the “social fictions” that tell of a natural woman or a natural man (Butler, 1990, p. 178). Through hyperbole (Sasha), whimsy (Samara), and symbolism (Lavender), they mock a certain stylization of the body, and therein the way these styles “constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (p. 179).

But are these photo-collages a kind of confession? Is it a queer confession happening in a queering of the space? The mirror as a site for confronting a gendered authority, if mocked in these photo-collages, is central to her understanding. How boys (and girls) see themselves through the reflective surface of the mirror that demands a submission to the surveillance and policing of others marks a kind of disciplinary power technique (Foucault, 1977). These photographs are not confessionals in the same way as those art works on the stalls of the washroom. But is it a telling of Sasha’s own self? A private offering up that through its iterations allows her insight into her own gendered understanding and the limits of the norms governing the officially sanctioned bathroom project at Best S.S.? Does it transform the self? In what ways is it a truth-telling of the self or even an effort to take care of herself (see Foucault, 1990a)? To some degree, these conclusions are impossible to make. One cannot know the impact art has on the artist or her understanding or even how it might affect her in years to come. One moment is all she has captured in these images. But it does come from somewhere: her concerns about how the space has been normalized and consequently reproducing normal iterations of feminine gendered behaviour. The kind of gendered being she wants to be is working against and within the gendered expectations she has had the opportunity to resist visually. It is as if Sasha “invariably struggles with conditions of [her] own life that [she] could not have chosen” that mark her temporary liberating act of resistance as also an “ethical agency...neither fully determined nor radically free” (Butler, 2005, p. 19).



However, it is certainly a queering of the space and of the practices of gendered normalization that Sasha resists thereby defying their authority. But that queering is done as part of her own confessing subjectivation, not for a public activist project. She handed me these photographs in a private conference room space, spoke about them in a private interview and kept them out of her curricular portfolio as opposed to her peers who did work in the washroom stalls. Sasha shared this work with her friends, both female and male, but she did not proclaim it publicly, and therefore this pseudo-private rebuttal to the bathroom project cannot be claimed as official discourse. Indeed, Ms. Brown and Ms. Surrey, as representatives of the institution of the school, were not privy to this artwork because Sasha thought it might offend them, as well as the original artists of the bathroom project, students in her class. On a school-based level they were unable to act on any of her reaction to this project that they had cultivated specifically to generate student voice. The student voice that was exhibited in this bathroom space was not as diverse as it could have been. In that Sasha does not queer the space publicly, she is further constrained, but so too is the potential for a more just and democratic expectation of gendered expression and identity at Best S.S.

The cost of speaking against a dominant message is rated too high for some people and therefore the knowledge constructed around particular issues is not representative. Furthermore, other knowledge does not become part of the discourse. If the original bathroom project was intended to be a 'queering' project it did not do so on the grounds that it was able to "confound the intelligibility of the apparatuses that produce identity as repetition" (Britzman, 1998, p. 81) especially since the confoundingness happens only in the voices such as Sasha's, in her collage work that exceeds the intelligibility of gender norms. Her individual, silenced project engages in "avowing and disavowing forms of sociality and their grounds of possibility" (p. 85), because it questions the norms that produce these gendered messages as well the norms that are produced as a result of them. It would be productive to the entire school if this "avowal and disavowal" were done so in a way that could be exposed to more people. Hiding her artwork denies its rightful place in the pedagogical activity that this Art teacher and principal can condone. And although it is a result of the initial pedagogical structure, or it came out of a pedagogical opportunity, it does not become part of the knowledge of



that pedagogy or that school because it is hidden, and therefore subjugated, lying beneath the official knowledge endorsed by the school system through the bathroom project. The richness that derives from it and the works of some of the other students who resisted participation in the bathroom project are denied acknowledgement.

And yet, despite its lack of place in the school knowledge at large, Sasha's artwork is still a queering pedagogical product/process, at least for her, because it unpacks the grounds of normalcy and has allowed her access into thinking about the grounds of her own possibility as a gendered person. Perhaps the fact that she has denied a public reception of her artwork speaks to the very "unthinkability of normalcy" (Britzman, 1998, p. 87) and deconstructing normalcy. Britzman (1998) articulates the conceptual space that exceeds the repetition of certain identities (i.e. as in something that moves beyond reconstituting girl as body conscious, or girl as body dysmorphic) as that which belongs to subjectivation, or the creation of self, but especially in terms of a new possibility of self. Sasha has made visual her ability to think beyond the norms set out for her, those norms that have been exalted and repeated unproblematically by her peers and condoned by the school administration. She has exceeded these norms, and even the self ( Britzman, 1998, p. 92), and stands as a momentary marker of these possibilities that students can consider for themselves.

### Samara

Samara agreed to meet with me after I approached her in the Visual Arts classroom. At the time, she was sitting at the same table as Sasha. I saw her as quiet, maybe shy, working with her head down and dressed in an army-green baggy jacket with her brown hair hanging in her eyes. Once we started to chat, I quickly noticed how articulate and thoughtful she was.

Samara was born and raised in Sweden and had only come to Canada to start Grade 10 at Best S.S. because of her mother's work. Her father was still in Sweden. She was in Grade 12 at the time of the interview. She told me she was seriously considering returning to Sweden for university because as a Swedish citizen she would not have to pay tuition. At home she spoke "a strange mix of, like, English, Swedish and Iranian" or

Farsi, because her mother is from Iran: “I feel pretty multilingual”. Moving to Canada also gave her a different perspective on her home country:

you learn a lot when you move to new places...you get a, sort of, wider understanding of things... ‘cause when you’re in one place all the time you, sort of, assume that everything is like your own living, your own situation. (Samara)

But the transition was difficult. At first she was pining for Sweden and after a recent visit, her perspective had changed: “I had this, sort of, moment when I realized that I’ve romanticized everything I knew about Sweden and everything. So right now I’m kind of like, hm, where is my home, I don’t really know”. Her state of happiness does not depend on her geographical location, she now realized. Her town in Sweden is not an idyllic place but just “an okay city”.

Samara loved reading fantasy and science fiction novels and expressed ambitions to be a writer and to travel: “that’s basically my two things... But I know that to travel you need money and to write you need to work hard”. She valued education and feels the pressure from her family now especially to choose the right post-secondary path. Her passions also included learning about and discussing World issues which she attributed to “the education system in Sweden [that] emphasized more on the common knowledge” which contrasts to her observations of Canadian students: “lots of people here did not know world history and common things that I’m just ... maybe that’s just me but I just assume that everyone should know, like, just history of different people and different places”. Samara considered Canada and Sweden “quite accepting” especially when measured up against other countries; for one, she recounted a story from her mother’s family in Iran: “if you are gay in Iran you get stoned...my mom has a ...cousin...he always dresses up really feminine...but when he does this he has to be inside, he cannot leave the house”. Her bi-national background allowed her to maintain balance:

Well, I do think many people worry about things they shouldn’t worry about. I worry about things that I ... like, sometimes I catch myself worrying about really silly things and you’re kind of like, ‘Well, I shouldn’t be ... I should be grateful.’

Samara also valued genuine people, and expressed concern that girls have far too many pressures on them in Canada that boys do not. Samara sketched one drawing in response

to my invitation after our second interview. We spoke about it in the third and final interview.

### **Description of Samara's art.**

#### **If you really want to say something important then the bathroom wouldn't be the first place to say it. (Samara)**

Samara called her drawing “a reaction to the bathroom [project]” which she had intended to be collaborative. For her, art is for the people; coupled by the fact that she was depicting a public space, she wanted this art to be representative of the public beyond what a single person could create. Only one of her friends contributed to the piece. Samara's intentions were to create an alternative to the girls' bathroom project by envisioning a more gender-neutral, politically-neutral space, one that, ironically, “is more as a decorative thing, to make it prettier, to make it more enjoyable.” Her very protest against the girls' bathroom project was that it “represents [a] very sort of me-me attitude...it's all about me, I am beautiful, yes, you are beautiful, whereas there's so much more in the world that is more important than beauty and that should be brought up”. Yet, in this reaction drawing, she refused to reference religious symbols, or anything else that might be construed as controversial arguing, “If you really want to say something important then the bathroom wouldn't be the first place to say it”. Even though this was a reaction to the superficial, Sasha deliberately kept the tone of the drawing at the level of the superficial, the light, decorative, and neutral.

The picture is a simple line drawing of a school washroom. The view is frontal and symmetrical focusing on the communal sinks that are flanked by walls decorated by ‘neutral’ non-symbols. On the right is a cascade of a series of swirls down the back wall of the washroom beside the mirror. To the left-hand side of the picture is a rendering of a tree with sweeping, twirling tree branches upon which is perched a cartoon owl or bird with a frown. Peeking from within the depths of the tree is a pair of cartoon eyes. These are the whimsical reinterpretations of the original bathroom project that Samara contributed. Also central is a slogan bordered in dots: ‘May your lavatory experience be pleasant’. This message captures her intended tongue-in-cheek tone for the entire drawing.

To the far left of the picture is the work of Samara's friend, the collaborating artist, who sketched in small floating heads with eyes and one with a moustache and a top hat. In a form of reverse photo/picture elicitation, I offered some of my readings of the piece just to garner some clarification and elaboration from Samara. For one, I had told Samara the heads looked like skulls from the Mexican celebration of the Dead. Although she did not disagree with my interpretation, Samara denied any connection to this religious event, even though she was not the artist. Below these floating body-less heads reads another saying: "DAYS UNTIL THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL". This text is followed by a tallying of 10 marks. A wide-eyed puffball figure with splayed legs sits beneath this tally. When I told Samara that this section reminded me of a scene of a prison, she agreed, even though initially she had thought it was just something funny referencing the practice of graffiti in school washrooms. Upon further thought, she drew on the prison-school connection saying school is "a very limited environment" where a student is not a prisoner, per se, but

in many ways you can feel like a prisoner because...you're kind of in a pattern that you can't get out of...it's the entire time and like learn and then test and then learn and then test and then you have your results.

Samara translated the physical walls of the prison to be metaphorical for the symbolic walls of the school curriculum and its expectations, complete with Ministry of Education practices of standardized testing and policy addressing the achievement gap amongst different learners. Later she extended this metaphor of confinement as deriving in part from the structure of the washrooms themselves where "the stalls are quite small and for a claustrophobic person...would ..be quite stressful".

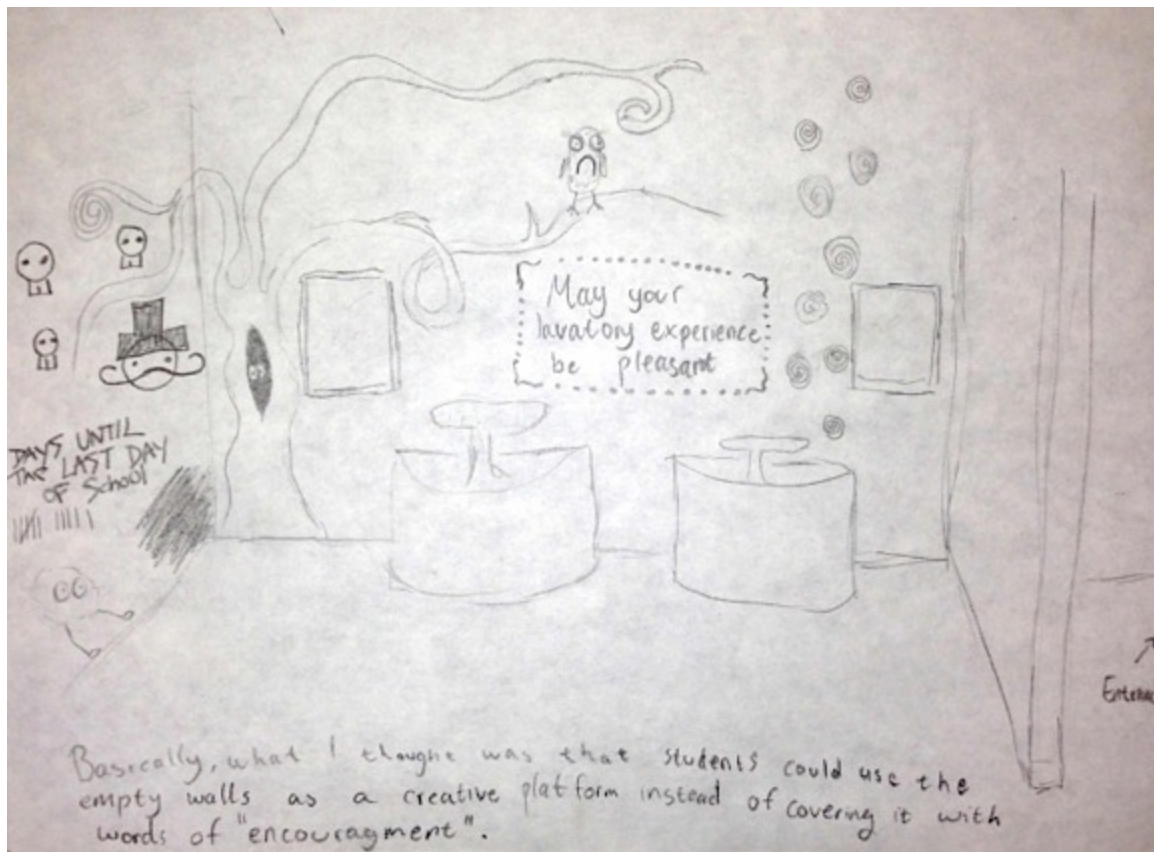


Figure 20: Samara's sketch: "May your lavatory experience be pleasant"

### Analysis of Samara's art through social semiotic approach.

Based on Samara's description of the drawing, the piece (see Figure 20) has narrative structure: it is an environment, a backdrop that depicts both the physical space as well as the imagined artwork upon the walls of said space. An environment assumes a player, which anticipates a story. The user of this space is meant to have a "pleasant" "lavatory experience", and yet is confronted by the strange little bug-eyed creatures scattered across the walls. Compositionally, the vector (see van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 141) is constituted a great deal by the tree branches that direct the viewer's eye across the picture, connecting all the otherwise disparate elements underneath one far-reaching arm. Interestingly, only part of the story is told: the urinals and/or stalls are absent from this picture. Only the side of the washroom that displays the sinks and the mirrors (akin to the layout in the girls' bathroom project space) is visible and is open in one-point perspective like a box or a proscenium stage. The players to this story are not yet out, but they will be exposed on this virtual stage, offered up to the viewer's scrutiny. Through

interactive meaning (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001), the kind of eye contact the figures attempt with the viewer is eerie, despite Samara's claims at neutrality. Creepy little figures peek, glare out or look glazed over, a curious array of expressions that are meant to make the space "enjoyable". The salience (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) of the slogan is countered by the connotations of death that the skull figures conjure.

### **Analysis of Samara's art as (de)subjugation.**

Paired with the reference to school as prisons, Foucauldian panopticism is a strong link here and also qualifies Samara's view of the washroom as heterotopic because it is translated to another form. According to Foucault's (1977) historical analysis of the "discipline-mechanism" (p. 209) of power, the Panopticon represents a way to examine how "the exercise of power may be supervised" (p. 207) and its effects upon its subjects. Originally a prison design from Jeremy Bentham, the Panopticon "could be used as a machine...to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals" (p. 203). Foucault transposed the military, the hospital and the school into this design for a prison to think about the similar techniques enacted within each. To this list, one can add the heterotopic space of the school washroom that functions in much the same way to train, correct, regulate, and manage bodies. The space can be examined for the presence of such techniques of management: "power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up" (p. 202). Although Samara seems amused at her friend's conception of the prison-esque school, she is a part of this disciplinary system. Not only did she acquiesce that the similarities between prison and school were clear, she also had talked of feeling entrapped in such a system of curricular, policy-driven and social pressures.

The image of the prison also references the policing of gender norms: "as a strategy of survival within compulsory systems, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences" (Butler, 1990, p. 178). By drawing the school washroom as a prison, Samara constitutes the space as well as gendered norms that operate within it as imprisoning. For Foucault (1977), the soul was the prison of the body (see Butler,

1997b). This drawing considers the sex-segregated girls' high school bathroom as a space that imprisons the body of the gendered subject:

The subjection signified by the exterior institution of the prison does not act apart from the invasion and management of the prisoner's body: what Foucault describes as the full siege and invasion of that body by the signifying practices of the prison – namely, inspection, confession, the regularization and normalization of bodily movement and gesture, the disciplinary regimes of the body...The prison thus acts on the prisoner's body, but it does so by forcing the prisoner to approximate an ideal, a norm of behaviour, a model of obedience. (Butler, 1997b, p. 85)

Where Butler describes the operations of disciplinary power upon the body of the prisoner to construct a docile subject, Samara's artwork translates the prison to the school and the prisoner's body to the student's body. The same "disciplinary regimes of the body" also act upon the body, but do so in a way that depends on the complicity of the subject, a complicity Samara questions. In this way, as Butler explains, the docile subject is "formed", but not "caused" or "determined" (p. 84). Samara wishes to reject the naturalness of certain gendered norms that position the female as superficial and image-obsessed. She would rather think less of her gender, move to a de-gendering kind of place, where gender is de-centralized from her daily life. By not doing gender at all, she might also escape the punitive effects of failing to do gender right.

If she drew the space as a stage, perhaps she is the imagined actor playing/pretending upon it. But 'playing at' is what is key: Samara has erased the distasteful, the base, and the provocative; she omits the toilets, discards the beauty messaging, and almost sarcastically asks her viewers to enjoy the show. Does she know her dream of a safe, comfortable school space is impossible? Does she rely upon the codes of parody to protect her vulnerability? That is, if she makes fun of this imagined space, she cannot be accused of taking it all too seriously. If she only meant it in fun, then any critique upon the real system of normalization (both gender and other) cannot be attributed to her. Even in this private submission (she did not participate in the public art project) she is self-protecting, wary of social punishment. The laughter, the amusement, the parody are all techniques of self-preservation. But do they produce a docile subject? Or is Samara succinctly aware of the lurking demons beneath? Is she outlining these pitfalls or punishments that befall a resister to social norms through experience of her

own? What truth-telling or technology of self (Foucault, 1988a, 1990a) does Samara's drawing reveal? Those glaring eyes, the strange little creatures that peek out from the shadows are reminders that not all can be decorative, neutral, or enjoyable in the space of the washroom. Something much more dire and dreadful awaits and Samara can acknowledge this darker side while pretending she does not. This work conveys the complexity of resistance, of conditional agency (Butler, 1997b, 2005).

Samara queers the version of herself within this school space, perhaps even unbeknownst to herself. That carefree, worldly person is also haunted and watched. The idyllic, utopian washroom is recreated as a strange fantasy world, a heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) through Foucault's analysis only because it is not a utopia after all.

### Lavender

I recruited Lavender from another Grade 12 Art class; because she was not part of the class that started the bathroom project, I thought she did not have the same opportunity to participate as those who were already in Ms. Surrey's class. However, Lavender told me she did hear the call to join the project but declined: "participating isn't my thing". Born and raised in the same city as Best S.S., Lavender attended Best since Grade 9 and was now in her Grade 12 year. She described herself as kind of a loner but comfortable with her own solitude, for the most part. Her musical interests she characterized as "kind of indie" including The Smiths, Dire Straits, and Elton John: "my father like raised me from birth to listen to [him]". Her personal style was also a signature of her identity: "clothes are very important to me, like I use that to express myself and music does go along with that for sure". She wanted to dress to "feel like... an artist" so she chose clothing that reminded her of paintings: "I don't like to look like other people". Lavender also described herself as "not very girly" because she did not swing her hips in a typically feminine way when she walked; she was "kind of doing the vegan thing right now"; and her self-proclaimed atheism ("I'm just putting that out there", she told me) led to her impression that "people don't like me as much as I think they would if I were – like the religious people that I know".



Her independence sometimes led to discomfort in school; she thought the hallways were very crowded and stressful, as well as the cafeteria at lunchtime: “there’s so many people everywhere, it’s loud, it’s very nerve-wracking”. Because she had a fear of people touching her, or being near her, Lavender thought the washrooms induced anxiety by virtue of the closed-in shared space: “I avoid [using the washrooms] if I can”. She attributed her social anxiety to her elementary school experience where she had “issues with bullying”. Even though she had her own set of friends, Lavender claimed that she “never enjoyed being at school” which contributed to attendance issues. She described herself as “one of those the world’s on my shoulders people I think, like everything is in my brain”.

Lavender expressed a mixture of appreciation and distaste for the bathroom project. A friend of hers had painted one of the stalls and she thought it was “very pretty” and “well done”. However, she deemed the earlier slogans, those completed before the project became a curricular option, to be aesthetically chaotic and disconcerting. Overall, she could not figure out the relevance for painting murals in the bathroom space, and she decided she “wasn’t fully on board with what most of the things are about” in terms of the messages that construct girls as image-conscious and needing to be reminded that they are beautiful:

I would say there are more important things than thinking that you're... Because I mean, beauty is for me, is on the inside, it’s what you do with your life, it’s how you make other people feel. I mean, why should I be reduced to how I look?

During the third interview, while she was explaining her drawing responses to me, Lavender indicated a more intense rejection of the bathroom project. She had overheard “some pretty mean comments” from other students about the bathroom project, which seemed to confirm her choice to avoid participating: “That’s kind of uncomfortable, it’s weird. I just wouldn’t want to get involved”. At no other time had I heard that the reaction to the bathroom project was bullying or harassing. If the bathroom project was a grassroots response to some general toxicity in the school, it failed to resolve anything, according to Lavender.

I met with Lavender three times in total and received two sketches and one watercolour painting from her.

### **Description of Lavender's art.**

In our first interview, Lavender told me if she were going to do a piece for the bathroom project, it would have to be something “that would be open to interpretation. People can each have their own thoughts about what is there”. About her first drawing (Figure 21) she apologized: “And I can draw much better than this, I’m sorry”. On the top she had drawn “a little lock with an eye” because she did not “think the lock systems [were] secure”. The eye represented the gap between the stall wall and door where “you can see through the door, and that’s uncomfortable”. She was not alone in expressing unease about this gap; others of my participants, especially Trina at Corey Heights, were especially concerned about this gap and the lack of secure locks. But perhaps Lavender was already predisposed to a heightened anxiety due to her self-proclaimed social issues with people. Beneath this lock and eye is a bank of box-like structures that represent the imagined design of stalls: they are to be solid structures with “no gaps for sight”. In the lower right-hand corner, Lavender drew a set of three (and a half) sinks with mirrors, explaining the communal sink that is currently in use in the girls’ washroom is a problem because “you all crowd around and like touch each other”. Instead, she thought “individual sinks, soap dispensers, mirrors” allowed for some more personal and secluded space, “if that’s even possible in a public space”.

In a second pencil sketch (Figure 22), Lavender wrote several phrases and drew smaller pictures or symbols. The overarching quotation came from Tolstoy and reads: “What a strange illusion it is to suppose that beauty is goodness”. She explained she thought “that’s something not a lot of people think about” and considered it a direct reaction to the bathroom project that originated with the slogan, “you’re beautiful”.

Beneath the Tolstoy quotation, Lavender placed three lines of phrases that read: “LIVE BEAUTIFULLY”, “DREAM PASSIONATELY”, “LOVE COMPLETELY”. Beside these she had drawn a peace sign, a dove, and two other symbols, an anchor, which she explained is known for strength and then an Om symbol to represent non-denominational “spiritual energy”. The peace sign is relevant for “groups of people” in the washroom, according to Lavender. The dove represents love, and the messages

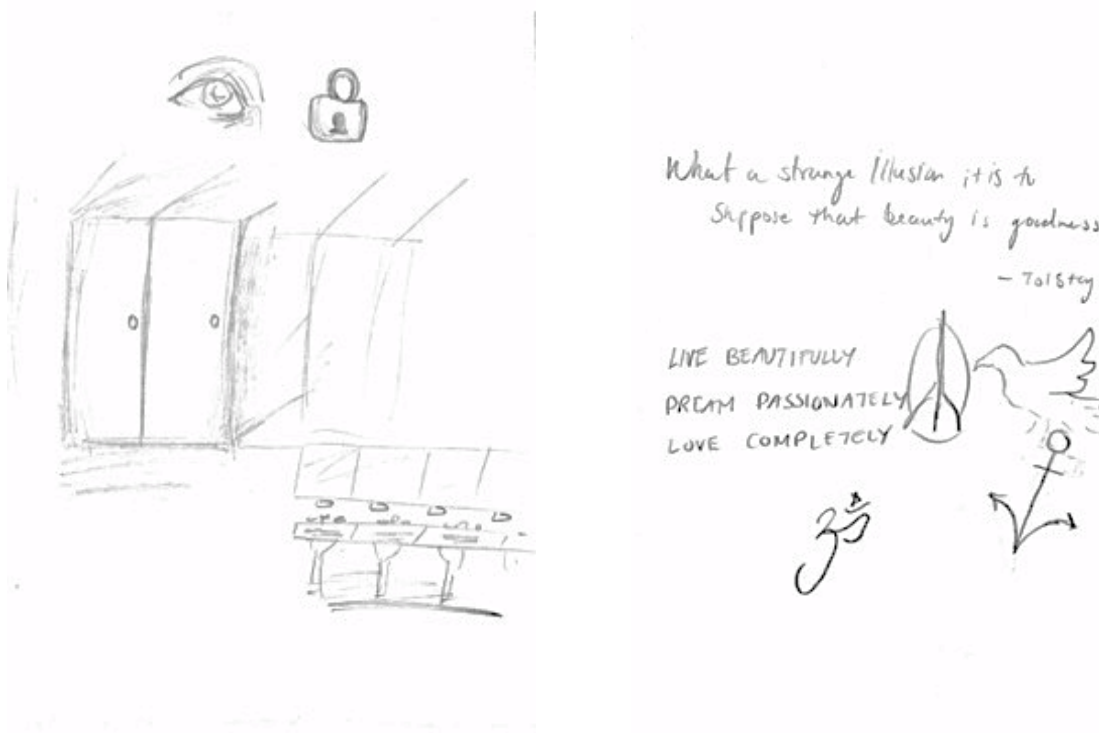


Figure 21: (above left) Lavender’s sketch, the eye and the lock  
 Figure 22: (above right) Lavender’s sketch, “LIVE BEAUTIFULLY...”

themselves, she thought, are just “better” than what was originally in the bathroom project.

Finally, Lavender painted a watercolour containing purple and blue paint splatters over the painted words, “BE POSITIVE” (Figure 23). She imagined this piece to be what she would do on the walls if she were to participate in a bathroom project. She wanted it to be “just nice to look at”, mirroring Samara’s intentions to keep her washroom project design light and casual. In this pursuit, Lavender used “cool tones [to be] relaxing, not intimidating” because “blue is supposed to relax you I believe, and it also goes along with creativity”.

### **Analysis of Lavender's art through social semiotic approach.**

Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) explain that the contribution of the social semiotic approach to visual analysis of images is in the “syntax of images as a source of representational meaning” (p. 141). In other words, examining the sequencing of elements of a picture in space (versus time which has relevance for musical analysis) can inform the representational meaning of the picture. Lavender's first sketch with the eye and the lock placed above the bank of locker-type cubicles and the three sinks/mirrors off to the lower right warrants a study of spatial syntax. The eye and the lock possess equal representational weight because they are paired, spaced evenly apart and positioned centrally at the top of the picture. These represent the overarching or initial thoughts about the space. Visual vulnerability (as seen through the eye) and the desire to lock oneself away (as represented by the lock) are the representational meanings Lavender explained herself. How these ideas literally overshadow the imagined space of the preferred stall structure and the individual sinks (which is itself almost an afterthought, so sequestered to the side of the page as it is) also refer to the placement decisions relevant in deciphering compositional meaning (as seen in van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, pp. 147-149).

However, I would argue Lavender's explanations seem to contrast with van Leeuwen and Jewitt's formatting deconstruction where Roman script dictates a “given-new” structure (p. 148) as in informational texts. Lavender does not present what she knows at left and what she has discovered at right; indeed her sketch is laid out in a top-down format instead. It also does not follow the informational format where the “ideal” is placed at the top and the “real” is at the bottom (p. 148), again according to van Leeuwen and Jewitt. Rather, Lavender has reversed this format, preferring to place what she already finds in reality, albeit disturbing, at the top, followed by the ideal (as best as she can imagine within the constraints of what she thinks is available or do-able) at the bottom register of the picture.

The second sketch is organized not narratively, but conceptually (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). The phrases and the symbols are not placed in a representational space, and do not seem to be interacting with each other. Rather, they resemble the haphazard

scatterings of a sketchbook or doodlepad. Almost reflecting a brainstorming process, these sayings and signs form the beginnings of Lavender's ideas that were meant to extend the bathroom project and to correct its limitations: they replace a "better" way to live "instead of worrying about if you're beautiful or not". In this way, this second sketch actually works best if placed in between the other two. Where the first is an outline of the structural problems of the space, this second one moves beyond critique to suggesting the philosophy behind a new space, and the third is an elaboration upon this foundation. The phrase, "LIVE BEAUTIFULLY", "DREAM PASSIONATELY", "LOVE COMPLETELY", is originally attributed to Oscar Wilde, and is abundantly available via a Google search on various sites dedicated to 'inspirational quotes' and personal blogs. Its place in mainstream discourse in this way, as well as its original author, is ironic considering Lavender was trying to trouble the messages she was reading in the bathroom project that were already results from internet searches, or recycled slogans from public internet domains. Furthermore, Wilde as a person to whom the invention of homosexuality as we know it today is attributed is an especially interesting choice as his ideas are now being appropriated by a hyper-feminine discourse. Foucault (1990a) marks the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the "date of birth" of homosexuality, as a "psychological, psychiatric, medical category" (p. 43), where

homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. (p. 43)

Lavender gave no indication she knew the original source to these words or how her ideas might resonate against its history.

Lavender's third and final piece, the watercolour (Figure 23), is easy to categorize as non-representational because it is abstract. However, she had articulated the colour choices were deliberate as were the decorative paint splatters. In this way, an abstract has representational meaning, probably more so in its "symbolic structures" (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 144) rather than any narrative quality. This piece was also meant to act as a prototype for what Lavender envisioned could be part of a bathroom project; its conceptual value is now compounded because it exists as both a piece unto its own and a prototype for another piece. Although she did not talk about her method of creating this

piece, the splatters look as though some of them have been the effect of watercolour falling onto the surface from a tool (a brush, etc.) either intentionally or no, whereas others look as though the artist had encouraged the movement of paint by either blowing at the bead of watercolour or manipulating the paper to control the direction of the fall of the paint bead. Regardless, the result is a series of splatters, trails, smears, and drips. In the space of the bathroom, drips and smears and trails might reference some other bodily actions that functionally take place in said space. The added gradation of pink or red in the blue colour is a closer reference to bodily by-products. I did not critique this piece or even probe for critical reflection from Lavender, but through visual analysis, and in consideration of one of its intended contexts, this is a relevant consideration. It could be received as non-art, as response to the bodily activities in the space, or as an attempt to even beautify these activities; but mere decoration it is not. And whether viewers would feel calm upon first glance as Lavender had intended, is also unknown, but debatable.



Figure 23: Lavender's watercolour, "BE POSITIVE"

#### **Analysis of Lavender's art as (de)subjugation.**

One slogan from the bathroom project reads, "Why fit in when you were born to STAND OUT?" Because it was not there when I had witnessed the stall paintings initially, and because the hand-writing matches other marked messages printed over various stalls, I

presume it was done by a person other than one of the Art students who were painting the stalls. Written in black marker on top of a painted green background, it invades the inside of the stall adorned with brightly coloured flowers. Not that Lavender saw it directly, but the message from this slogan counters Lavender's desire for privacy and protection in the public space of the washroom. To want to "STAND OUT" would not be construed as a positive, uplifting cheer; to Lavender, especially in the cellular space of the washroom stall, it would be devastating to stand out: "teenagers scare me so much...They're scary people. They're so mean". In response, Lavender drew the boxed in stalls as an architectural protection against the "scary people" who mill about outside. Imagining a structurally protective space seems to mirror Lavender's wish for emotional protection. Art for her was a way to express her fears, to work through her anxieties: "I think art is one of the most positive things in my life...because art doesn't make me sad. Well, it does, but not in a bad way. Like, it's emotions, it's good". Lavender's social imaginary is conceived and designed through her art.

The floor-to-ceiling stall doors and walls resemble a bank of lockers; if this is Lavender's ideal washroom set-up it is ironic because she had also expressed unhappiness at the locker situation in her school claiming it was very difficult to retain an individual locker because of the school's overcrowding issues. To cram her body into a locker-type space might not be ideal, but it would be the best she could imagine given the available situation. Her ideal was limited by the scope of reality she thought was a factor in her design. In this way, her agency is exercised as a conditional, limited one, one already working within "the context of an enabling and limiting field of constraint" (Butler, 2005, p. 19). She may have been partially enabled completing this visual response task, but she is also not operating outside of the system of normalization in which she has become a subject; herein lies the limitations upon agency.

Furthermore, the sinks as individualized units paired with the mirrors would answer to Samara's concern that eye contact is uncomfortable in the washroom space. Not to have to share even a reflected space with another person, not to have to confront oneself in the mirror while confronting and being confronted by another, is a luxury Lavender wishes she had in the school washroom. A stall might be a legitimate place

where one could request more privacy—less so in a mirror. This heterotopic space (according to Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986; or Cavanagh, 2010) is one that is equally exposing, if not more so, than the physical cellular space of the stall where one’s partial nudity is of issue. Cavanagh (2010) would argue the mirror is the place where the psychic confrontation of the self is mitigated by gender norms and acts of surveillance; when a gendered body confronts that of another, especially in the mirrored space that invites self-scrutiny, gendered norms get repeated, reiterated, or else the failure to meet these norms is emphasized. Lavender as a socially uneasy person recognizes the capacity of the mirror to confront and compare, to regulate and normalize, and so she recreates it.

Although she described the eye as a symbol representing the visual vulnerability she feels in the washroom stall, its placement above the lockers is reminiscent of an all-seeing eye, something mystical or archaic as well as fantastical, like Big Brother. Its connection to panoptic practices (see Foucault, 1977) is an easy one to make. The surveillance tactics to which Lavender seems exposed might be in reference to the expressions of gender, but more readily they are about the personal bodily practices performed in a gendered and public space. The gender surveillance is a by-product—by virtue of the space itself being gendered—of the practices of surveillance that are produced by the space itself being both private and public.

The Panopticon relied upon the “visible” and the “unverifiable” (Foucault, 1977, p. 203), the subject (or inmate, or patient, or student, etc.) is constantly visible and constantly unable to verify when someone is watching. The effect of power works on this premise of fear: never knowing when or how or to what degree one is under surveillance and thereby judged, regulated, and recognized. It is by the very nature of disciplinary power that a subject is made, according to Foucault. Indeed, disciplinary power, through the Panopticon, functions as a double division or a “binary branding”:

Generally speaking, all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way). (Foucault, 1977, p. 199)



Lavender is a subject made in this space, and recognized through this imaginary offered as a confession, that is predicated on her fear, which is a form of complicity. Her fear elicits the need to confess, to tell the truth of herself (Foucault, 1990a). To fear being watched is to participate (to be complicit) in this system of disciplinary power that regulates and normalizes: because the subject “knows himself [sic] to be observed...he [sic] becomes the principle of his [sic] own subjection” (Foucault, 1977, p. 203). Lavender cannot verify the nature of observation but she certainly fears it; she desires a lock-down, a cellular hide-away that is secure, impenetrable, and concealing. Foucault wrote, “visibility is a trap” (p. 201); ironically for Lavender, this trap leaves her to wish for a further entrapment. The Panopticon produces a “major effect: to induce in the inmate [or student] a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (p. 201). Furthermore, it produces a system that is about efficiency: the efficient and automatic management, classification, and ordering of bodies into individualized units for surveillance, control, and the continuity of the mechanism of normalization.

The kind of gendered person Lavender wants to be, through her expressions of dress, and her resistance to reiterations of dominant hyper-feminine discourse, are mitigated by her complicity in a system of disciplinary power, itself a product of and produced by the structural functioning of an institutional space that perpetuates panoptic techniques of gendered normalization. Crowds repel her; Lavender is frightened by masses of people who might touch her, or invade her personal space; but she is also helpless to opt out of becoming part of the management of this crowd. Disciplinary power may turn a crowd into individuals, but not for the purposes of empowerment or agency; rather, it seeks to create manageable units that prevent easier control, easier observation, and lesser opportunities for mass revolt, according to Foucault (1977, p. 201). Lavender is complicit in this operation. Whether consciously or no, she embraces the units of individualization in her drawing of cellular stalls, and seeks further isolation because of the effects of a system that isolates individuals for the purposes of controlling them.

The watercolour containing the phrase, “be positive”, is also a form of counter-art, a queering of the school’s public art project. Through her painting, she was able to show her resistance to the bathroom project. But this one was intended to be more decorative, even though it does contain an obvious and literal message. When I asked her the significance of highlighting the positive, she indicated for her it was really because she had difficulty being positive: “I’m your classic pessimist, introvert. Like my friends always joke about the one thing I’ll say is like, ‘Well, I’m just a speck in the universe, it doesn’t matter’. I’m one of those people”. Almost demeaning her significance, reducing herself to a speck of atmospheric dust is, conversely, a way to create a sense of herself, to create a subjectivity. Telling a story of a girl who shies away from people, who hides from the crowd, who is pessimistic, and introverted, Lavender is also defining her presence and distinguishing it as something separate from the masses of people she likes to avoid. Perhaps deriving from fear, and a complicity in a system of normalization, Lavender also possesses a desire to resist and repel the effects of this system by designing strategies and images of a better way of living in school through giving an account of herself (Butler, 2005) through a queered confessional tale.

### **Sasha, Samara, Lavender: Queering, (De)subjugating Knowledges**

Sasha thought she was a “strange kid” and “too out there”; Samara felt sort of suspended between two countries, Sweden and Canada; and Lavender claimed to be independent, and a loner. All of these girls did not quite fit in, but they could articulate what fitting in meant and they were consciously avoiding it. Girls who succumbed to the pressures of high school acted beyond their years, according to Lavender, especially sexually. Certainly, drug pressures were also present for many kids; Lavender spoke about this more openly and, similarly to Zack, explained how the pressure worked on vulnerable kids, as well as indicating that they were able to stay out of it. To be an independent thinker, to try to resist the norms, indeed to trouble and queer the gendered norms, did not come without a social cost. Butler (1997b) critiques the capacity for resistance, asking if it can “only undermine, ...[and if it has] no power to rearticulate the terms...by which subjects are constituted, by which subjection is installed in the very formation of the subject” (p. 89). Never able to completely extricate themselves from the system of

normalization, because no subject is outside of discourse or its material effects, these students did not fail to *attempt* to flee the regime of gender normalization. They did not fail to be critical of the kind of subjects disciplinary power can produce, and that consequently, produce it. What they did “fail” to do, however, was to “repeat” the acts of normalizing gender in their performance of gender, which, as Butler (1990) conceives, lays open the “possibility” of re-doing gender norms, or at least, “reveal[s] the temporal and contingent groundlessness” (p. 179) of the norms of gender. In their pursuit of a kind of freedom from these norms, they are producing themselves as subjects who are capable of resistance and whose capacity is necessary for the pursuit of gender just spaces.

Britzman (1998) conceives of the self exceeding the repetition of the norm as a way to imagine a new possibility of self that is nurtured through queer reading practices, or what she terms, “queer pedagogy”. The practice of expressing their ideas, desires, fears, and wishes in the form of visual work had allowed these students to avoid repeating the norms they had witnessed and resisted in the initial bathroom project. By virtue of this research project, these students were given the opportunity to exceed the curricular expectations of this already-exceeding bathroom project. Itself conceived to interrupt the discourse of hyper-body conscious femininity, the students who resisted the bathroom project and created their own counter-art to it complicated the notion of resistance. Indeed, they even problematized the bathroom project as a queer pedagogy indicating it probably repeated norms instead of exceeding them. A message about being beautiful, even if it is intended to boost a girl’s ego, does not interrupt a sexist discourse; it merely elaborates upon it, at least according to Sasha, Samara, and Lavender. To think about femininity only in terms of beauty or appearance is to limit oneself and the capacity for thinking about and through the self. These students had to engage in a riskier behaviour than those students who participated in the bathroom project only because the content in the resister art did not replicate a norm. Britzman (1998) argues that to refuse “normal practices and practices of normalcy” is itself “always already about risking the self” (p. 95). In this way, queering is also a risk at desubjugation (Butler, 2004).

These students refused to resist publicly and so they declined participation in the public avowal of this bathroom art; but their work is still an act of risk because it exists.

They did not simply showcase another form of the harmful discourse of normalized femininity to which they all expressed distaste; they rejected it, satirized it, mocked it, or defied it all in their visual texts and verbal explanations. Their audience might have been more limited than the bathroom project artists' work, but they do expose their critique in a safer way, and in a much more productive way than if they had done nothing at all. Their artwork is now material for analysis of the subjectivation process—or as Britzman (1998) calls it, “how one becomes a social subject in a place called ‘the classroom’” (p. 95) or the school—and how that process is mitigated by and produced by the structural capacity of the school bathroom. Their artwork is also a product of a reaction to the bathroom project. Their work can stand up to help scholars think about the techniques of the self that are produced by power relations that are consequently also produced by the space itself. Yet more importantly, perhaps, their work is necessary for these students in their subjectivation process both as it is lived and as it is understood. How they understand themselves as embodied subjects in the school bathroom space is articulated and mirrored back to them in a visual form.

The students who opted to paint within the public space of the girls' and boys' washrooms must do so under the surveillance of both their teacher (who is enacting the administrative wishes also) as well as that of their peers. Certain instances of resistance to this surveillance are surely corrected, as far as I had witnessed (see Tom's discussion on censorship and the scenario of the student vandal). Those students who opted not to participate in the public art project did not necessarily do so because of a lack of opinion or willingness to engage in the discourse. In the cases of the three students I highlight, they might have been responding to this surveillance (of artistic as well as gendered norms). According to van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001), “in private, in the smaller groups and ‘sub-cultures’ we live in, we may have more freedom, but our semiotic productions and interpretations are not likely to spread much beyond those small circles” (p. 135). However, as informed and consenting participants in this study, these students who resisted the public project are still able to contribute to our knowledge about gendered norms and productions in high school because their images can now be put up for analysis and added as “something new...to the culture's [at least for the significance of the local school culture] treasury of visual resources” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p.

135). If not contributing directly to their school climate (because they chose to accept my promise of confidentiality) then at least their understanding is contributing to the knowledge more generally that research can provide about how students make sense of themselves as gendered beings in their school spaces.

## Conclusion

These students might have thought they were drawing against the normative regime of gender at Best S.S.; but by the fact that they were incited (in part through this project, but mostly due to their own initiatives) to produce a response to the gender project in the washroom, the project itself not only was a thinly veiled reiteration of gender norms, it was also, contradictorily, a queering of itself. Its very presence asked for a queering or questioning and, although these responses did not seek or receive the same kind of public reception as the original bathroom project, these three private responses, conjoined with the responses I have not included from other students who spoke out against the bathroom project, constitute a satellite bathroom project.

This case within a case, the queering of the bathroom project at Best S.S. (overlaid with analytics of desubjugations) within the case of the original bathroom project at Best S.S., maps out the contradictory operations of gendered subjectivation in that where one is incited to reproduce gendered norms marking the lines of normative gender, one may simultaneously be capable of edging upon the limits of that performativity (Butler, 1990), approaching the ends of discourse, or the unthinkable, while not quite surpassing them (i.e. becoming desubjugated). To speak against an institutionally mandated project (even if that project were originally framed as grassroots and progressive) is not a unidirectional movement. Therein must lie certain contradictions, so too in the project of gender constitution. A gender is not made in precise replication, but in a mode of repeated acts (Butler, 1990) that “in the possibility of a failure to repeat” may contain “the possibilities of gender transformation” (p. 179).

## Chapter 6: Case Study #2: Cartographies of School Washrooms at Corey Heights Secondary School

### Introduction

This chapter looks at the case of Corey Heights Secondary School, another high school in the same school board as Best Secondary School, its analysis linked through the same theoretical frameworks of heterotopic spaces and confessional practices of self. Where the case of Best S.S. focused on the bathroom project, the case of Corey Heights focuses instead on the cartographic responses from three of the student participants (Shelly, Callie, and Trina) to trace out the washroom space in their school as heterotopic. These students were not involved in a school-based endeavour such as the bathroom project. Thus the students' work from Corey Heights is not easily categorized into 'proponents of' or 'resisters to' a specific project; rather, they are organized by theme and purpose to attend to the particularities and boundariness of the specific case under investigation, indeed, to constitute the case study itself. For analysis in this chapter, I selected these three students for the capacity I observed in their artwork to contribute to this analytic frame of cartographies.

This chapter begins with a theoretically embedded justification for thinking about these student artworks as cartographic. As well, I explore the connections of these cartographies to the heterotopic nature of the school washroom while providing insights into these students' gendered subjectivation. To situate the school in a similar gender regime and context as I had provided for the case study(-ies) of Best S.S., I then introduce Corey Heights and examine the operations and regulations of gender and sexuality through the interview data from several student participants, including the three I feature in this chapter, and beyond. Finally, I examine these three student artworks through the analytics of the social semiotic approach (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2000) first only to charge the particularities in each piece and ready the pictorial elements for further analysis under Foucauldian and Butlerian frameworks.

## Cartographies of School Washrooms

Although some of this cartographic work came from literal maps the students drew during the interviews, only those focusing on the school washroom (with the exception of Callie's photograph of the hallway outside of the washroom) can be examined here. Indeed, in that respect, only Shelly drew a map of the washroom space accompanied with photographs. Callie and Trina took photographs that, I argue, are evidence of how they opted to use their camera as a mapping tool to illustrate their own navigation through the washroom. But as Pascale (2011) indicates, cartographies, especially as a poststructural conception/method/methodology, are not to be considered except in tandem with "their philosophical/theoretical foundations – which has profound implications for the production of knowledge" (p. 2). Cartographies are about the "geographies of power" (Pascale, 2011, p. 1) resembling the components within Foucault's analytics of heterotopias. The Corey Heights students I feature here do not render maps of their school washroom simply to illustrate their daily movements, but to begin to chart and to think about how power operates at the level of space and how space contributes to the production of power relations.

Furthermore, space is not an idle container waiting for things to happen within it, but as poststructural geographers contest, namely Rose (1999), "space is practiced" and is "produced through the citational performance of self-other relations" (p. 248). And, the self is produced through space that is itself a "strategy of power" (p. 248). For these students, cartography became not only a way to chart the regulatory techniques of disciplinary power within the washroom, but became also a kind of technology of the self (Foucault, 1988a). For instance, one student participant, Trina, seemed to develop a meta-awareness of her observations. While explaining the gendered policing that happens in the school washroom and cafeteria, she commented, "that's actually so weird, I've never thought of it like that". Being engaged in an involved analysis of their own lives and the implications of their school space on how they understand each other and the expressions and identities of gender produced awareness and a language to think about the self as part of the systems of normalization they were identifying.

The student work I analyse here (from, Shelly, Callie, Trina) are forms of maps that become confessional products that also provide insight into the heterotopic qualities of the school washroom. They invert the normal relations of gender by drawing attention to them, by returning the gaze back onto the viewer through mirrors, gaps, and the interplay of light and dark in school spaces (see the artworks of Callie and Trina). These products induce confessional practices, practices of the self that are mitigated by power relations and consequently formed by these relations. As these students are embodied in their everyday lives, as well as in the confessional products they create about these spaces (specifically see Shelly's artwork), their gendered subjectivation is situated within the heterotopic analytics that fashion the school bathroom space. They are subjects mitigated by these politics that organize and manage bodies and are therefore themselves the effects of disciplinary spatial power (Foucault, 1977), as well as subjects capable of articulating resistances to these normalizing effects (Butler, 1990).

The practice of mapping school washrooms can also be an act illustrating aspects of relationality and classification, also components of heterotopic spaces (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). Washrooms are related to their exterior space; the gendered regulation is only highlighted within an already gendered space, but it is not separate from the operations that persist in the school itself. The washroom is also a shared space amongst many users that although each is entitled to her own perception and understanding, the washroom space itself functions because each person complies (in varying degrees) with the mechanisms of power within it. It is in these ways that the washroom is a space is both ambiguous (another component of heterotopic spaces) and *related* to its exterior, or that the operations of disciplinary power and gendered subjectivation processes are related to those that occur in exterior spaces. In other words, what happens in the washroom is a microcosm of the occurrences beyond it in the school hallways, classrooms, and schoolyard. Of course, the washroom is also related to those operations in other public venues but a special attention must be paid when the public space is a school, an institution endowed with the political, legal, and ethical protective services from all levels of government in Canada (i.e. federal human rights legislation, provincial codes and rulings in education, and board level policies).



A heterotopic space is defined additionally by its abilities to classify, in which is implicated the management of entries and exits and ritualistic gestures (see Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). Where divisions break down a whole into constituent parts, classification assigns constituent parts to common wholes. In terms of bodies as docile in disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977), populations en masse are divided for the state's facility for management, and individual bodies are classified and organized into manageable wholes. The divisions within washrooms and the sub-divisions within washroom stalls have consequences for the divisioning of bodies and are part of the classificatory nature of disciplinary space, as well as heterotopias (see dividing practices, Foucault, 1977). Through participant mapping, these notions are articulated as visual texts. Indeed, the map itself is a form of heterotopia, both real and unreal. According to Spencer (2011), the map in visual research is "both iconic; mirroring the actual shape and contour of the land it depicts, and symbolic; employing a variety of conventional codes, symbols to indicate landmarks and features of the landscape" (p. 71). This duality of the map presents it as an ambiguous tool capable of representing ambiguity in the tales it tells; or, as participants use the map to explain something, to recollect something, or to illustrate something, it is a construction of the real as well as a part of the author's/participant's subjectation: "because the individual is subject to multiple and competing discourses in many realms, one's subjectivity is shifting and contradictory – not stable, fixed, and rigid" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 962). Just as the borders of identity, or gendered subjectivity, are unstable, so too are the borders of methodological maps partial and incomplete in their construction (Spencer, 2011).

Thus, the map in visual research, as an extension of one's subjectivity, is unique to each participant representing a kind of "foot-led" ethnography [that]...focuses on walking and the routes employed by different walkers for different purposes yielding different and unique readings of the landscape" (Spencer, 2011, p. 82). The gendered component of subjectivation is developed through the mapping of this gendered space that consequently promotes gendered relations of power. Just as this is a qualitative study, these mapping exercises are not intended to generalize the meanings of the space for all users. Institutional understandings of school washrooms are widely available and comprise the discourse of gender normalization. How these spaces are understood at the

local, individual level (see Foucault, 1982, 1977) is always the access point to understanding the techniques of disciplinary power within disciplinary space.

### **Corey Heights Secondary School in Context**

Corey Heights is situated in a mid-sized Ontario town also near a shopping centre and nestled in an older middle-income neighborhood. Where Best S.S. had 13% of the student population living in low-income households, Corey Heights was almost less than half that percentage. Each school held the same enrolment numbers at over one thousand students. In terms of students achieving the provincial academic Math standard and passing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) (see footnote iv) on the first attempt, Corey Heights had similar numbers to Best S.S., surpassing the provincial standard on both scores. Almost half of the student population at Corey Heights had parents with some university education. Significantly more students at Corey Heights were ESL or EAL (see footnote iii), yet still under the provincial standard and of these students new to Canada, Corey Heights had the same percentage as the provincial standard at 3%.

To situate the school within a context is to detail it through the understanding of some of the participants. At Corey Heights, I interviewed one vice principal and one custodian, as well as twelve students. Located in a separate area of the city from Best S.S., Corey Heights had a quite different reputation. The vice principal described the cycle of perpetuation of this reputation in the following way:

I don't want to say inbreeding, but like a continuance of the families in Corey Heights, so a lot of the teachers went to Corey Heights as students, now they're working there and a lot of the kids, they had a bit of a legacy of parents that go to Corey Heights.

Corey Heights was known as one of the “top athletic schools in the city” which probably had a part in nurturing its legacy: “if you want to play football, you're going to go to Corey Heights; if you want to play volleyball, you're going to go to Corey Heights”. Open to international students, Corey Heights did not cater to students requiring “locally developed programming”, or that which was geared provincially to students destined to college or workplace rather than university. The population at Corey Heights was not sufficient to sustain full class sizes at this level. Callie, one of the student participants,

claimed initially to like school, especially the “social aspect”: “this is like a very like community-oriented school”. Trina, a student participant in Grade 10, thought the “richer kids” attended Corey Heights which contributed, in her estimation, to the problem of recreational drug and alcohol usage at parties, including marijuana and cocaine: “Parents don’t ... ask as much about what they’re doing with their money yeah.” Although I did not examine the impact of socio-economic status on the gendered understandings of students, they articulated the operations of class as a dividing tool, a social marker that intersected with gender to produce certain genders.

The following section explores the gender regime of Corey Heights. While other markers of identity arise in the interview data from students, I do not provide sufficient theoretical analysis to unpack these intersections beyond a mere signalling of their occurrences. In order to explore the construction of a regime of truth in which the washroom is itself constructed (as well as acts to contribute to the regime) I attend more in-depth to issues of gender and sex intersections to allow for depth and specificity of particular relations of gendered spatiality.

### **The ‘Gender Regime’ at Corey Heights Secondary School**

Before conducting an analysis of the gendered mapping activities/products from select participants, I provide an outline of the gendered practices and expressions from some of the participants in order to provide a necessary context for understanding the micro-analytic practices of gender regulation and self-policing in the school washroom space. Although a complete, immersive account is nearly impossible, I am working towards outlining a kind of gender regime that acts to govern through incitement and complicity some of the decisions and behaviours of the students. This school is not only a gendered place but also classed, raced, and further sub-divided by multiple other identity categories. Although I do not attend to these intersectionalities in this case, I do not deny their impact on theoretical readings of data. But to achieve a rich, in-depth analysis of gendered subjectivation, while overlapping sexuality discourses and embodied practices (see Butler, 1990), I could consider other implications only cursorily. The analytics of the heterotopia is not well understood if one does not attend to the relations of spatiality of the washroom and their broader significance in terms of providing insights into the

school's specific gender regime. The following describes what some of the participants told me in response to the questions about gender, what it means and how they know it when they see it.

Shelly described her school as being filled with groups of girls (and some guys, perhaps, although the emphasis was on the girls) who were defined according to their interests, but also by their hostility, identifying one group over the others as starting a lot of “drama” or creating conflict with other girls. Although the term “drama” might be part of a popular culture lexicon in North America, it is more important in this case study to define it in the way the girls understand: according to one participant, Callie, these girls “act out...to get attention” because they like “just having like the school eye I guess, like the social eye on them”. But that “social eye” creates consequences and complexities, especially considering the surveillance tactics involved in disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977). Callie recounted a story about a girl at a party that typifies the sort of drama she had witnessed as common amongst the girls in her school:

I guess she, the one girl, like she'd go to a party and just sort of like act out and like almost look to—like she'd say to one girl like oh, like you look so pretty and turn around and say like the exact opposite. ... Yeah. So it was like it sort of became like she—everyone looked at her as being very two-faced actually and so she created like a negative reputation for herself. So people just consider her like she's a nasty girl.

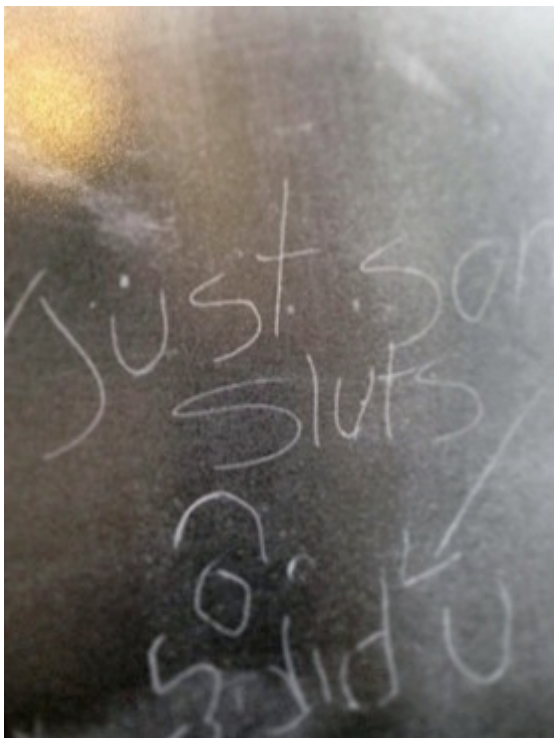
The custodian corroborated that “the girls really are angry against each other here”. Shelly defined this macro group of girls (which seems to subdivide into smaller friend groups) as liking “to party” (or if they “like to drink”, they are called “sluts”) or liking “to skip [classes] all the time” but they certainly “think they are better than everyone else” (see Renold & Ringrose, 2012; Martino & Palotta-Chiarolli, 2005; Pascoe, 2007). Trina thought the “girls that party a lot...would be considered usually like the more popular girls. They tend to be surrounded by a lot of drama and like a lot of alcohol”. Rosie, another participant, in Grade 12, told me because in Grade 9 she “wasn't a slut or...didn't drink every weekend”, she was “shunned, that kind of thing”. The term “slut” gets passed around easily amongst the students—as I understood from several participants' interviews—not because it is accurate but because it is another way to assert superiority over others or as a way “to show that they're, like, better than them [everyone else], in a

way” (Shelly). Rosie admitted many girls embrace the term and engage in self-naming: “But a lot of them will be, like, ‘Oh, yeah, like I’m a slut and...’”. Callie, another participant, took a photograph of the word “slut” scratched into the metal stall door of the girls’ washroom (see Figure 24). I investigate her understanding of the school washroom in the sections below.

Nonetheless, the use of “slut” was ambiguous. These party/slut girls Shelly describes as looking the same:

like, in those movies where they cake their faces with make-up and they, like, have like really dry hair from always straightening it and they have, like, those really short crop tops and, like, booty shorts and stuff like that.

When Shelly speaks of these girls, it connotes overtones of the kind of sexual regulation girls enact upon each other which, according to Ringrose and Renold (2012), is a phenomenon rampant in the research on girls in schools. Shelly notes thick, “cake”-like makeup, the “dry hair”, and the “booty shorts” or those that are slutty and meant for sex (booty). In this way, Shelly engages in a form of “slut shaming [that] is of course a deeply classed discourse, whereby associating ‘sluts’ with ‘prostitutes’ and ‘whores’ her sexual value is to be diminished and kept in check” (Ringrose & Renold, 2012, p. 335). Shelly’s photographic mappings, as examined in the section below, reveal that this slut regulation had great impact on Shelly’s own gendered performativity and self-policing in the washroom space. Martino and Palotta-Chiarolli (2005) found the labels, “dykes, sluts and butch” were social consequences for girls who crossed the line from acceptable to unacceptable forms of “transgressive femininity” (p. 100). These students were contributing to the shared repudiation of the specter of failed gender (Butler, 1990) thereby creating paranoia or a hyper-vigilance about the minutia of body movements.



**Figure 24: Carving into the toilet stalls of the Girls' washroom**

However, “slut” is not solely an insult; these slut girls are also really popular amongst girls and boys, where “popular” translates to knowing and being known by a lot of students at the school. Shelly thought these girls were “kind of at the top of the list” of a social hierarchy. In this way it is a sort of a recouping of patriarchal shaming in a politics of “re-signification” (Ringrose & Renold, 2012, p. 334). But this ambiguity, Ringrose and Renold (2012) characterize as the “very slippery and recuperative tendency around slut...[where] depending on the stability positioning within the popularity power dynamics of the group, slut can slip back easily into injury” (p. 337).

Callie agreed that, “there’s just like the odd group of girls” who want to be popular, but she understood popularity in a much more nuanced, complex way. She claimed this group of girls were perhaps not actually elitist or nasty but simply perceived to be elitist or “higher than everybody else” when in fact, it was everyone other than this particular group who was “kind of mean to this group of girls in particular”. Callie thought that this group of girls, although they “have that desire to be liked by everyone,...sometimes the things they do to get that isn't necessarily a good thing. So people do say nasty things about them”. Callie alights on some of the ambiguity

Ringrose and Renold (2012) notice. Even Rosie noted that these girls may have suffered a lot of peer pressure to sustain the title, implying sexual pressure to perform certain sexual acts (see Pascoe, 2007): “they’re too scared to, one, say no and, two, realize that, like, there’s more to life than being the most popular person in high school”. In this way, slut is both shaming and recouping, but if it looks like recouping, it might only be disguised as such. Even more specifically, a certain group of girls were calling themselves the “C-Crew” after the derogatory term used to refer to female genitalia, according to Callie: they would “like make it their own thing. So it was almost like embracing it, acting like they don’t care type of thing, which is so really weird.” The girls who were labelled partiers and sluts and the C-Crew, even if self-named, might appear to be reclaiming the title as an act of empowerment, even to be converting it into a kind of currency (i.e. proclaiming their sexuality as justification for their popularity) but the degree to which they are punished and regulated by other girls indicates how the term “slut” is also the very insult they seek to escape. To be reduced to genitalia, indeed to perform this operation upon the self, is an essentializing of femininity in the worst of ways. With Tom’s yonic flower (in the Best S.S. bathroom project), he reinserted the masculine male gaze into the space of the girls’ bathroom. The C-Crew reclaims this common denominator of female anatomy as signifying femininity but in what ways are they also recuperating a masculinized version of heterosexual desire? How are they re-subjugating their own status beneath the gaze of the desiring male? They deny their complicity in the same system of heteronormalized power they pretend to resist.

Furthermore, this dual movement of slut is also intimately tied to the formation of the subject. According to Foucault (1982), disciplinary power “makes individuals subjects” where *subject* is being “subject to someone else by control and dependence” and also “tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (p. 212). Where “slut” is recouping, or used by the girls in self-naming, it implicates self-knowledge. Consequently, where the other girls accuse and insult each other using the term slut, they are making these subjects through “control and dependence”. In terms of disciplinary power, a subject is a constitution by competing efforts between self-knowledge and subjugation. Power produces subjects, discourses and knowledge (Foucault, 1977, p. 119); what the effects of power have on the “slut” group of girls at Corey Heights amount

to a denial about their complicity in producing themselves as subjugated. But the impact on the girls who reject the slut-naming signals a possibility to fail to repeat the stylizations of gender (see Butler, 1990); in other words, by resisting the practices of self from the slut-naming girls, Rosie, Shelly, and Callie, articulate their own gendered subjectivation.

In less detail, the participants described the boys as falling into separate groups also. For Callie, it was a simple categorization: “you've got like the jerks and the jocks”. Rosie thought physicality, although extremely important for classifying social status of girls, was not such an issue for boys, and yet, she could only divide the boys by their body size and the corresponding sport. For example, top boys were bigger because they played hockey and football whereas “if you are, say, not the tallest guy or a little bit thinner, you're at the bottom”. These are “dividing practices” (Foucault, 1982, p. 208) that both explicate the kinds of divisions among boys as well as those made within themselves, especially as they negotiate this tight frame of the normalization of hegemonic masculinity. Kevin, another participant, recognized these gender divisions as “classifying, like, just in terms of like ... just like overall behaviour, I think”. How these divisions can be mapped onto the school washroom space, especially for the boys within the urinals and toilets, could be considered through Edelman's (1996) study and Barcan's (1999) work on male toilets.

For many of my participants (both students and adults in the schools), gender collides with sexuality. Overall, they perceived the boys as the sufferers of gender transgressions precisely because it must mean they were also sexual minorities, or gay (or bisexual, although this was more infrequently mentioned than “gay”). Some of the population of the school contained perceived lesbians, whether true or not (especially if they engaged in certain sports) but patriarchal and misogynist views led to the sexualization of lesbians for male heterosexual pleasure. Callie claimed the “majority” of the previous year's graduating class of girls were gay because most people assumed they were just “experimenting” with each other. Otherwise, gay kids were less obvious, although she thought Corey Heights had “a very open community in that sense, like there's not really any judging” in terms of homophobia. Ultimately a case of bullying that



occurred online (if not determinedly cyber-bullying), but also of misogyny, Trina recounted a story where two girls were caught on a smart phone camera engaging in a sexual act with each other. For these girls, the result was devastating, probably because it was an act never intended to be publicized. But it did not necessarily harm their reputation, especially with the boys in the school. The participants seemed to think it was easier to claim that boys were the ones who had more pressures on them to act masculine and if they failed, they were taunted with the spectre of failed masculinity (Pascoe, 2007). If a girl happened to be less feminine, she might not incur the same social punishment a boy would under the same circumstances: “because most guys are more aggressive so they’d feel like they have to pick on him” (Shelly). This explanation follows Pascoe’s (2007) reasoning that boys are pre-empting their own self-defense of their masculinity by shaming others with ‘fag’.

During my interview with Rosie, a male student walked by to whom she referred as an example of this gender transgression/sexual minority perception:

People treat him differently, ‘cause he’s quite feminine sometimes... The way he talks is kind of feminine....He doesn’t play sports...He has ...quite a lot of money, so he can dress very nice... And he’s not a big bulk kind of guy. So that’s another thing.

The embodiment of masculinity is highly policed where bulk or body size (in terms of muscle rather than fat) is a factor in the consideration of the particular boy’s sexuality (see Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2005) that can tip the scales in favour of an appropriate masculinity rather than an abjected one. Rosie’s itemized list of attributes detail infractions against gender that this boy incurs through his particular embodiment and therefore serves to explain the reason why he is treated differently (read: as a homosexual and therefore through homophobic acts) by his peers. Despite this homophobic and heteronormative regulation, or because of it, homosexual teens were not identifiable to many of my participants: “I haven’t met a gay guy at Corey Heights, like, in my grade yet” (Rosie). Indeed, Rosie admitted the toxicity of the environment, even if she did not quite acknowledge the lack of gay teens was probably due to said environment: “I wouldn’t come out if I was a guy”. Callie concurred: “I think some people are afraid of [coming out] and I think necessarily guys are afraid of it more than anything.” Because of this covert regulation of heteronormativity, the custodian felt the

boys did not act out in the same way as the girls: “Guys don’t seem to fuss too much”. The most conflict he had witnessed came from “just girls against girls” because the normalization of gender is a concealing process (Foucault, 1977).

However, girls had pressures also to be a certain kind of girl, but it did not play out the same way as it did for boys. Where boys had to protect their heterosexuality in order to deny their homosexuality, girls also had to protect their heterosexuality, but only to protect their status on the ladder of social hierarchy as a top girl, a slut, and so forth. And this maintenance was not without its risks and pressures, at least considering my interview with Trina who told me she had to leave that group of girls because it made her feel bad about herself:

- Trina: ...it’s not like the movies. ...But it’s more like the pressure is there and like you feel like you have to do more to be on like the same page with everyone because you don’t want to be sitting around when everyone’s talking and you don’t know what they’re talking about or you’ve never experienced what they’re talking about.
- Jenny: But when you say the things they’ll do you’re speaking sexually I imagine?
- Trina: Sexually yeah. Sometimes even like as far as they’ll go like... trying a drug, how much they’re willing to drink.
- Jenny: Okay. So do you think girls do things out of their comfort zone?
- Trina: Oh yeah.
- Jenny: Yeah?
- Trina: Yeah to please everyone, of course yeah.

Despite the many layers of sexuality, gender and sex discourses at Corey Heights, especially complicated by their intersections with notions of socio-economic class and culture, a complete picture exceeds the scope of this chapter. For now, this outline has aimed to draw out some of these complexities and contradictions to set the proverbial stage upon which the three students whose photographic work is featured here can undergo more focused analysis.

### **Cartographic Photographs: Students Mapping Washroom Space**

In the sections that follow, I chart the cartographies of the school washroom from three student participants, Shelly, Callie, and Trina. I introduce each student, describe their

series of photographs, and conduct two forms of analysis: one, through visual social semiotic approach as a vehicle to unpack the pictorial elements and principles, and the other, through Foucauldian and Butlerian analytics with a concentration in heterotopic qualities of the washroom space and the implications for their gendered subjectivities.

### Shelly.

Shelly, 16 years old in Grade 11, met with me several times during the course of the research project. She was a twin whose sister, Joanna, also spoke with me. They were both in attendance during one class from which I had recruited students. Besides their relationship and their shared membership in the same group of friends, they did not meet with me together or work together, or even mention each other during the interviews. Never having moved, Shelly grew up in the same city where she now attended high school. She had seven siblings and described her family as being defined by her mother's heritage as British: "she didn't grow up there but we follow those customs". Her aspirations to be a social worker she explained as "just want[ing] to help people". Not typically "very social", Shelly did rely on her group of friends with whom she spent every lunch period and with whom she travelled to the washroom en masse as a daily "habit". She felt she escaped being the target of certain girls' fighting because she just did not cause "drama". And yet, she had come out on Facebook a year earlier as a lesbian, posting it in her status bar: "A lot of people are doing that nowadays." Shelly told me about being gay as a way of explaining how she might understand the plight of a transgender person with whom she was acquainted at another school: "I'm used to this whole thing and, like, I understand that he's probably going through some ... like, things [are probably] rough enough already....So there's no point in, like, making it harder on him." Shelly wanted to stick up for people, if they needed it, but only "if it's someone who doesn't have the reputation of doing a bunch of bad things"; otherwise, a girl who was always starting the "drama" did not deserve her defense, or Shelly thought it would just implicate herself in more unnecessary "drama".

### **Description of Shelly's photographs.**

Shelly submitted to me via email her photographs that described the foot-led (Spencer, 2011, p. 82) path she undertook daily, with her friends, in the bathroom space. Indeed, these photos and their accompanying legend defined the measures she had designed, collectively with her friends, in the form of a routine that lessened their social anxiety and was a response to how they understood their social space. She explained both the photographs and the legend to me verbally also.

Four photographs that I printed in colour accompanied the hand-drawn legend/map (Figure 25) describing their chronology in the foot-led path of the washroom. The areas on the legend/map are numbered below:

1. backpack
2. look at mirror
3. use bathroom
4. wash hands/dry
5. fix hair
6. wait for friends

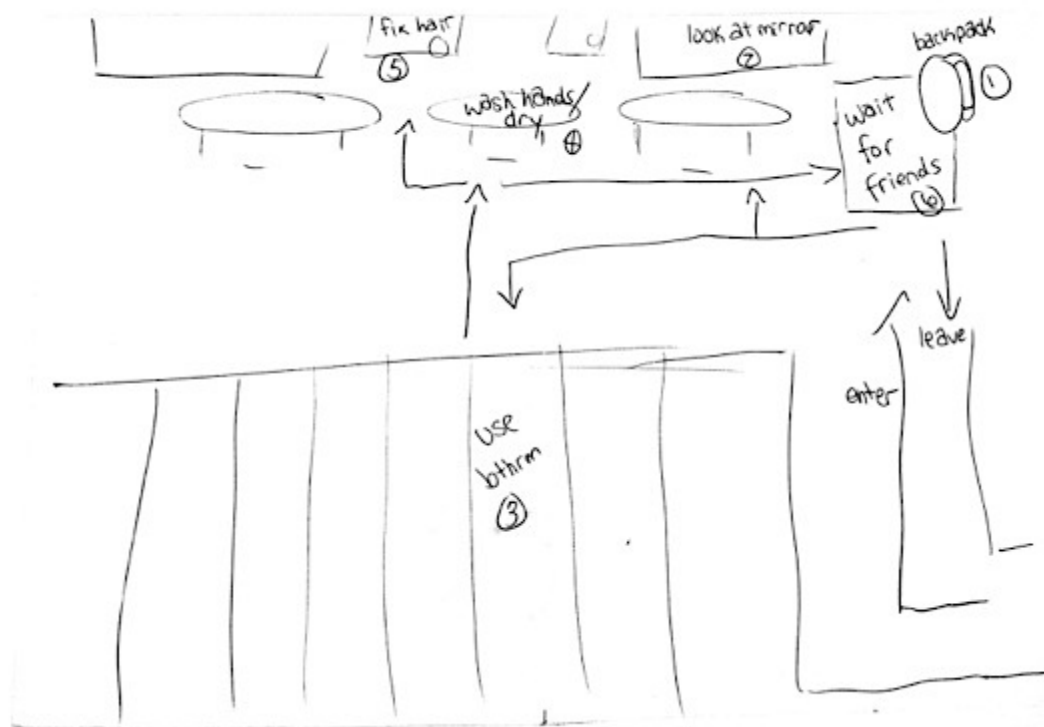


Figure 25: Shelly's map

The word “enter” precedes the “backpack” station; the word “leave” follows the “wait for friends” station. A series of lines and arrows connects these stations from one through six. She described the photographs in this order (Figures 26, 27, 28, 29): (1) “where I leave my stuff every time I come in, and it’s also where I stand when I’m waiting for my friends usually”; (2) “where I’m facing when I’m waiting for my friends”; (3) “where I look before I go to the bathroom” and “when I come out, I look at the mirror”; (4) “how I’d look out, which leads me back to the backpack area”. The four photographs correspond to the six stations on the hand-drawn map where two photographs are signaled twice. Or, the photographs are the visual illustration of the places in the washroom and their accompanied views and the map is the route she takes amongst these places. These two visual media relate but are not aligned exactly. Shelly explained the relationship between the photographs and the map during the last interview but she seemed to be working it out as she spoke: “I forgot what I put, but it’s usually always the same” and when she was labeling the photographs upon my request, she admitted, “I forgot what I was saying... okay, four... and then sometimes as I’m leaving I’ll look at

the mirror—not always—so I’ll put that one as five, yeah”. What is more significant is the element of routine that Shelly is able to map out using both photography and drawing. How she navigates the space and is able to think of it in terms of cartographic expression, even how she understands her actions to be reducible to mapped out places and routes, are both more important for this study than how to decipher her map-making process.

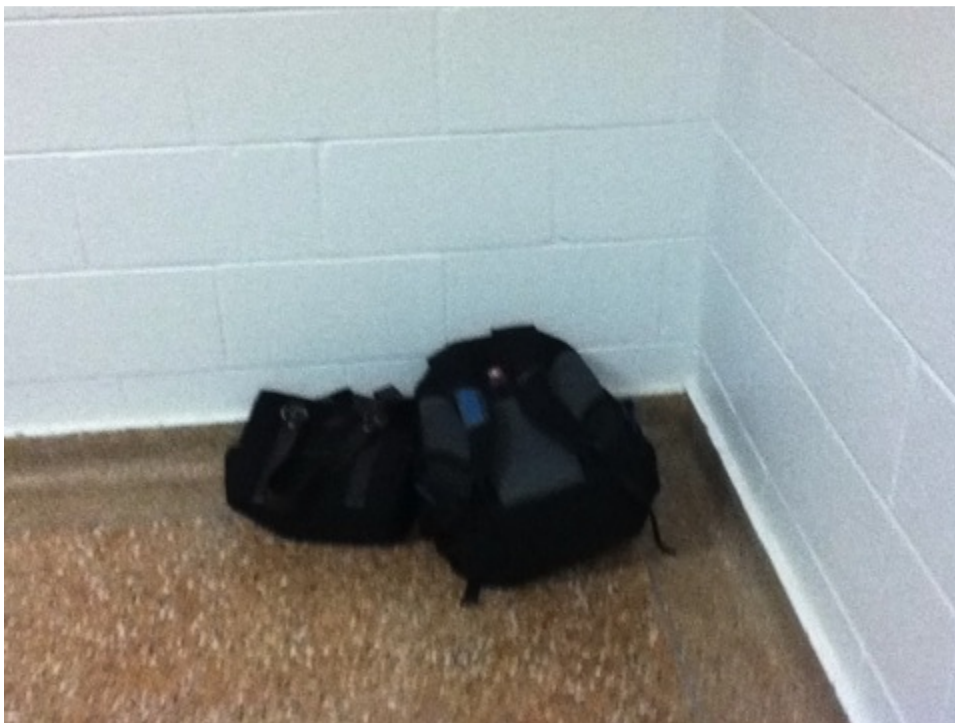


Figure 26: Shelly's photograph #1



Figure 27: Shelly's photograph #2

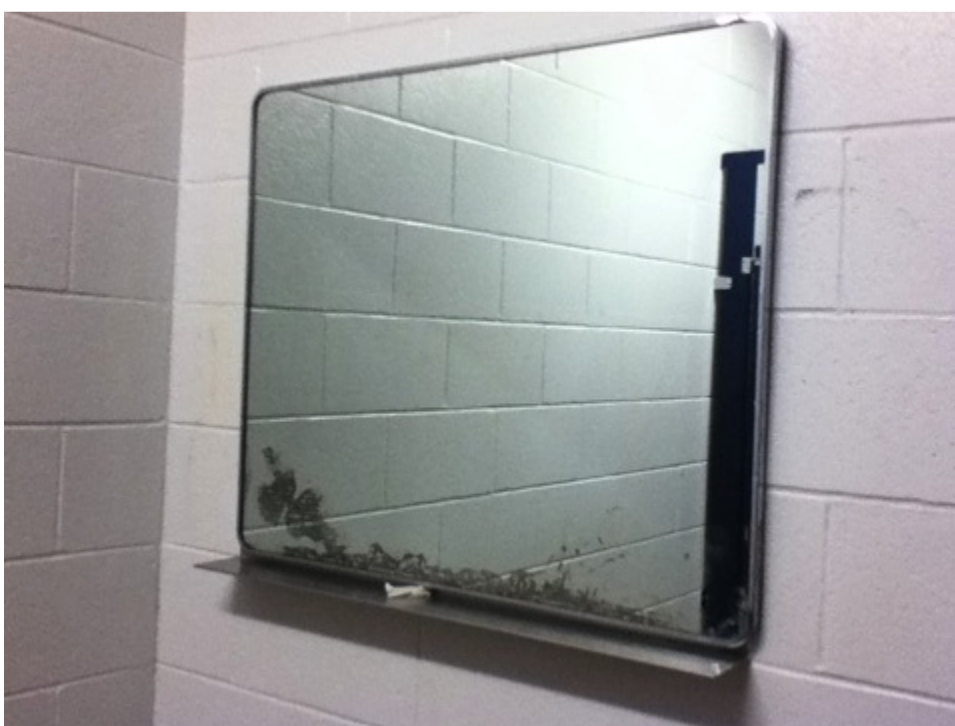


Figure 28: Shelly's photograph #3

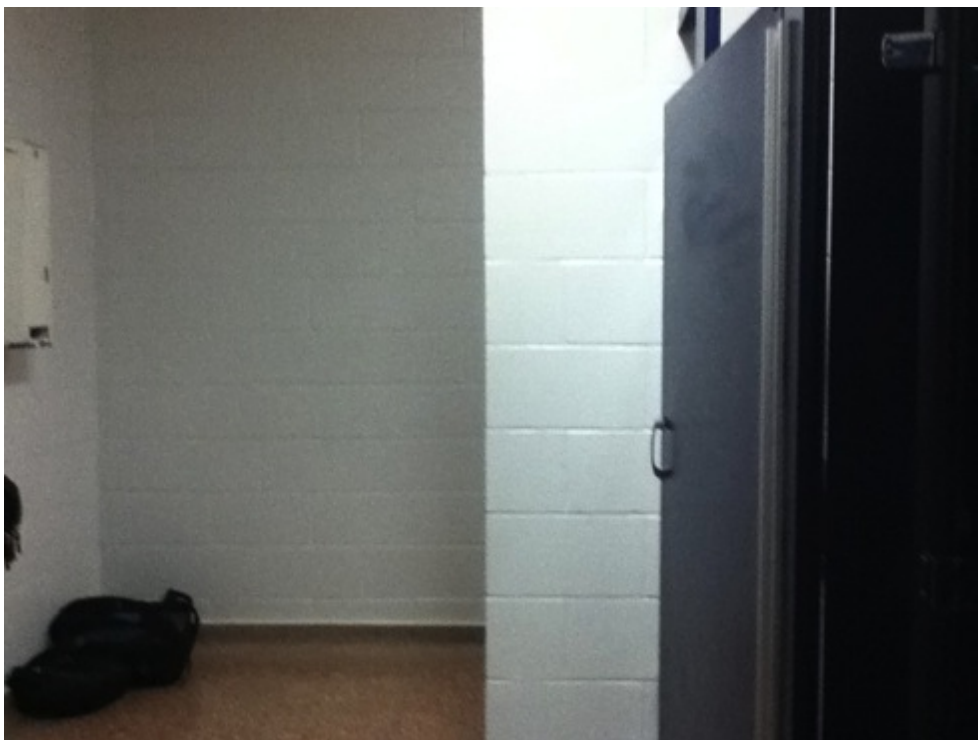


Figure 29: Shelly's photograph #4

*Analysis of Shelly's photographs through social semiotic approach.*

Through a social semiotic approach to visual analysis, these photographs and their accompanying map/legend contain elements both from the narrative category and the conceptual of representational meaning (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). However, the narrative is better understood through the verbal explanation. The visuals alone, through Shelly's intentions to be symbolic, are more readily understood as conceptual structures. The map itself is best categorized as an analytical structure within conceptual structures (p. 144) because the map contains "a part-whole structure" (p. 144). Within this scheme, the map is the "whole" which is also known as the "carrier" where the "parts" of the map are the "possessive attributes" (p. 144). The stations on the map are a good example of these possessive attributes as well as the photographs themselves extensions of these parts.

To analyse but two of the four photographs in detail provides a relevance to the analytics of Foucauldian disciplinary space. Photograph number 2 entitled, "where I'm facing when I'm waiting for my friends", features a bank of stalls on the left with doors ajar and a partial figure on the right. The overall angle is slightly slanted to the left so as



to leave the viewer with a view askance, or to generate a feeling of slight unease. The anonymity of the figure in black (because I had insisted students refrain from taking pictures of their friends or other people to avoid ethical clearance issues around publishing the likeness of non-participants) contributes to a sense of unease, if not foreboding (to read further into the composition), simply because of the dark, faceless body and the lack of information provided to the viewer. The viewer may know that this is a female washroom based on the text from Shelly, and I, as the researcher, know that this person (presumably a girl) is facing the sinks and/or mirrors. Yet, exactly what is happening is precisely the gap in knowledge that is frustrating for a viewer because the photographer hints at a story and then denies enough information to allow the viewer to be able to make adequate sense of the elements. This partiality of knowledge is certainly a poststructuralist epistemological foundation, but it cannot necessarily be the intention of Shelly to capture this; it is only in the researcher's reading that this is emphasised. And yet, Shelly does choose to keep this photograph as it appears here. She framed the scene; it might take on the aspects of a snapshot in its hurried composition, which can be significant in itself. To what degree is this photograph about simply "walking into the washroom" as Shelly explained she was trying to capture? Or does Shelly feel uncomfortable taking a photograph of a space in which she moves daily? She was accompanied by two of her friends even during this photographic expedition. Does this tilted view, partial figure, and relative lack of focal point (we do not know what she is really focusing on except the general view she has when she is stationed at point number one, near the entrance doors and her backpack on the floor) contribute to the kind of general unease Shelly herself feels in this space? She admitted to having to explain herself to several students when she went in to photograph the washroom and although they told her it was "ok", she claimed, "they're still kind of weirded out, just because, like, most people don't take pictures of the bathroom".

Photograph #3, "where I look before I go to the bathroom"/ "when I come out, I look at the mirror", features a single mirror with ledge fixed to the wall occupying the majority of the frame and reflecting a partial glimpse of the blue stall wall. The entire angle is similarly askance as the second photograph presumably because this one too was taken with the same intention to showcase what it is like for Shelly to be walking into the

space. The notion of the reflection is rich for analysis of gendered regulation in the school washroom considering the kind of exponential growth of capacity of surveillance by the person facing the mirror. The degree to which they can witness, observe, and survey the actions and operations behind and around them in the space, and how these get measured against norms of female gender expression is part of the disciplinary mechanism of power. But how Shelly features this mirror indicates an importance that is personal for her.

According to van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001), a significant consideration in deconstructing the composition of visuals is in its framing capacity. Interestingly, the mirror is itself a framing device that either emphasises the relative emptiness of the space behind it or the presence of even some of the washroom stall. Because this photograph does not align with Shelly's description of the space on a typical day (i.e. crowded, multiple girls using the facilities, waiting, etc., and the littering of makeup, cell phones and other personal items on the ledge of the mirror) the photograph possesses a ghostly, or hollow essence. Is it an empty stage waiting for its actors to play their parts? Or is it a semblance of the liveliness it could be? Or is it more likely a reduction of the space into its essential parts? Without the crowding of bodies and the other visual noise of everyday activity in this picture (that would be doubled by virtue of the reflection) the lack thereof is more noticeable but it also allows for a scrutiny of those structures that enable such actions of gendered regulation to take place and to perpetuate within this space of the school washroom.

#### *Analysis of Shelly's photographs as cartographic.*

The definition of certain places in the washroom that comprised the route Shelly could literally draw out signified not only her daily actions but also those of her friends with whom she travelled en route: "usually none of us like going by ourselves and we want someone to talk to, like, once we're waiting for everyone else." These social groupings are not necessarily benign, however, especially when Shelly described the reason behind them. If students were to navigate school spaces alone, Shelly imagined "they might feel a little more threatened" because of the potential of encountering "drama" or "they might feel like they're going to be targeted or something." Armed with her group of friends,

her safe places and her charted routine, Shelly could feel comfortable and safe in the school washroom. Each movement she could justify in these same terms of safety: the first station where she entered to drop her backpack “is just kind of like a safe spot, because you can like see if someone’s taking it”; the fleeting glance into the mirror is “just kind of because I pass it” but she does not take up residence there the way she observes the girls “at the top” doing. Although these girls can be mean, Shelly admitted they “do not bother” her; but it would appear she avoids being the target of the drama simply because she undertakes these certain movements and bypasses. She does not attract attention because she literally avoids their spaces by the mirror and stays within her fortified group. Even her choice of stall is mitigated by these navigations of safety: Shelly prefers the middle stalls because she has more choices of sinks and she is not trapped or forced into moving into threatening territory.

Trina, another participant and student at Corey Heights, corroborates the importance of selecting the right stall. For her, “since there’s a mirror right across from it, you could be looking in the mirror but still see through that crack” in between the stall door and the stall wall leading the individual in the stall to feel vulnerable and exposed. The reflection of the mirror doubles the possibility for surveillance of the user in the pseudo-private space of the stall. For both girls, it is essential to be wary, cognizant of one’s surroundings and strategic in the navigation of the space in the washroom.

Spencer (2011) describes maps as defining “political and social contours and boundaries” but they are “always partial and often make definitive lines where the situation is far from clear often for the political purpose of trying to ‘fix’ the territory” (p. 72). Although I agree that maps, as tools and products of representation, are partial, their attempt at “fixing” boundaries is not always problematic, especially, if in the case of cartographic methodologies, it is understood as a temporary “fixing”. The insight garnered from Shelly’s attempt to fix, albeit temporarily, her environment and her movements within said environment, speaks more to the political overtones of the mechanism of disciplinary power rather than a colonialist or imperialist act that seeks to own and secure territory. Indeed, Shelly’s mapping produces a reverse intention: an attempt to reclaim the environment from the institutional discourse of gender normalizing

of binary gender and hyper-femininity, and she does so by recouping the “master’s tools” (Lorde, 1979). By mapping the space according to how she understands it, according to how her actions within it have been designed to protect her, is an agentic act that, although conditional (because it is limited by the conditions of her environment), is also highly empowering. She embraces the organization of bodies, the management of her body and reclaims a self-management. Shelly may be acting out of fear of social ostracization, surveillance and punishment, but the knowledge behind her photographic mapping is formed out of a need to push against this fear.

Spencer (2011) relents that maps, although political and initially colonialist, can also be “tools of... political resistance as a form of artistic expression about shared identity” (p. 72). Shelly’s maps are artistic forms that express her resistance to gender normalization through acute sensitivity and awareness to these operations and attempts to reclaim her own space within it all. And, her spatial navigations are not only shared amongst her small group of friends, with whom she travels in a pack, but can also be markers for other youth trying to navigate difficult terrain in high school overcome by territorialization and gender normalization. Indeed, Pink (2007) sees an explicit connection between ethnographic photography and subjectivities. Glimpses of Shelly’s subjectivation are visible in these photographic moments. During our discussion of the maps, when she came upon a certain realization of some aspect of her experience in school, she noted, “I didn’t ever really think about it”. It was the occasion of this project that allowed her insight into her own understanding, a reflection from her own lived practice as a student.

It would seem, at least according to Shelly’s understanding, that she is not alone in these careful navigations of school space. One admission I had heard from several girls about their auditory vulnerabilities. Shelly told me the following: “if they’re [girls] going to the bathroom, they press the drier so nobody can hear them. I’m not sure if anyone mentioned it to you”. Cavanagh (2010) noted the auditory exposure that resulted from the construction of public washroom stalls: their partial openness might partially conceal the visibility of the washroom acts, but they do nothing to conceal the auditory qualities of these acts. In terms of gender, these sounds contribute to a de-gendering: it

is impossible to know the gender and/or sex of the individual within the stall by the audio alone. The girls at Corey Heights were not concerned about concealing their gender at all; rather, they designed a method to combat the kind of surveillance that occurs and is allowed by the structure of the stalls. Their resourcefulness led them to reclaim the limitations of the space.

### Callie.

Presenting as a quiet girl, Callie showed an interest in the whole process and met with me for three interviews during which time she also produced the most extensive photography project of 18 black and white prints that she photographed and developed herself. Her interest in photography she described as deriving from the “ability to like see things in a different light than you would like normally”. Her focus on “light” became much more than idiomatic language; she emphasized light and dark in the developing process of her photographs. At the time of the interviews, Callie was in Grade 11 taking Law, Psychology and “Environmental” as well as a Photo class. Overall she claimed to like school, especially “the social aspect of school”. Her friends were comprised of a “close group” as well as “a wide range of friends”. She thought of herself as the kind of person to “go out of my way to do things for other people or to be like generous”. To illustrate this generosity, she spoke of one incident where her soccer coach had “made it very clear” that it was her responsibility to make a new teammate feel welcome. Even though she had been encouraged by her coach, if not coerced, she attributed the act of generosity to herself.

Despite this claim to social ease and comfort at school (i.e. she started her first interview telling me she did not feel threatened at school), ironically her actual photographs and her subsequent explanations of them stood in direct contrast. She was very concerned with the safety and vulnerability of school spaces, namely the school washroom. What had transpired between the first interview and the inception of the photography project is unclear, especially if anything did happen that contributed to a change in her perception of the safety of school. But I did witness, upon her arrival to the second interview, that she had injured her foot (or ankle) and relied on the assistance of crutches. As an athlete, and captain of the soccer team (which occupied her time along

with work and her studies), Callie’s physical ability was obviously compromised by this recent injury. We spoke about its impact while we were brainstorming what she could do for her photography project: “I’m tired. I’m always trying...it’s hard to manoeuvre around in the bathroom, especially if it’s busy”. This new physical burden gave Callie a new perspective, literally, but might have also exposed latent views about her school that she was able to express in her photos.

*Description of Callie’s photography.*

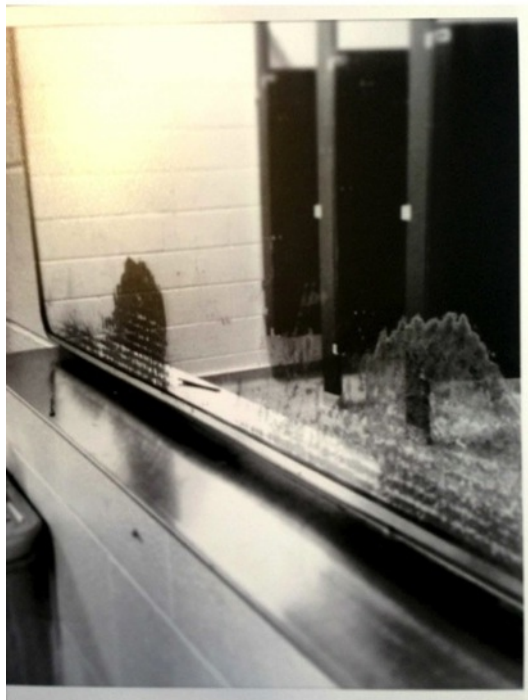


**Figure 30: Callie's photograph of the hallway**

Although Callie had printed 18 images of her forays into the hallways and bathrooms of Corey Heights, I feature only three here for the purposes of a focused analysis and because of their more salient features. Specifically, the three photographs include one of the hallway, one of the mirror in a girls’ washroom that reflects the toilet stalls behind it and one of a single toilet stall in a girls’ washroom. Of the hallway shots, Callie had taken several. The one I feature here (Figure 30) only stands in as one representative of those. What is most important, according to Callie, is the effort to focus on the light on the hallway floor. In each of these, she had captured

a beam of light that actually like transferred in through the front door and like stopped right here.... So it kind of was just kind of like a pathway sort of type thing. And you can see like the shadows of the lockers and like the lighting.

She had blurred the features of the students to make them unrecognizable. Their bodies as dark, shadowy figures are more prominent than their ability to betray actual identities.



**Figure 31:** (above left) Callie's photograph of the mirror

**Figure 32:** (above right) Callie's photograph of the toilet

Callie described the second image of the mirror (Figure 31) in the following way:

And then this one is like you can see there's build-up of something on the mirror. And like girls have left bobby pins and that's gum on the wall. And like in the mirror you can see the stalls behind you too. (Callie)

The line-up of the three stalls with the doors open is reflected in this mirror, again as shadowy figures which Callie thought of from "a bullying perspective... Like you can't really see anything, like walking, like anybody in the stalls or anything like that". On the very left edge is the corner of the sink. The mirror occupies almost the entirety of the frame of the photo thereby creating a picture that is both of the stalls and of the mirror itself.

The third photograph (Figure 32) features the edge of a toilet in a single stall where, according to Callie, “you can see into the stall and then there’s like toilet paper. See like the stall’s really worn down”. She explained this photograph in terms of her experience in the washroom overall as one that encounters a run-down, dirty and neglected space that is ultimately cramped and uncomfortable: “But again, just like your views in the bathroom are really like small.”

*Analysis of Callie’s photography through social semiotic approach.*

The hallway shot is most interesting because of its angle: most of the frame is occupied by the floor and the beam of light Callie had been intent on capturing. By virtue of its lack of conceptual meaning, it reads more probably as a narrative (see van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 141), especially considering this beam of light directs the eye nearly at a diagonal towards the figures in the background. To what end, however, does this direction serve, one may wonder, especially considering the purpose of the photography was not to capture identifiable beings but the spaces in which these beings act. How are these bodies significant in Callie’s mapping? That they are bodies is obvious, but who they are, whether she knew them or recognized them or if they even responded to her as photographer on crutches during the shooting are all unknowns and certainly not answered in this photograph. How are they players in her experience of school space? Because Callie had been on crutches during the photography shoot, she told me that her angle was decidedly lowered:

like I’m bent over all the time; like I kind of looked at things from like a lower angle almost. So like you can see in here I can’t see like the lights because I was bent over on a crutch. And I found that in the shot, like this one ... like see I’m lower in the perspective line in this one. So like my eye level is just above waist level on...

Through the low angle perspective, the floor becomes the most salient or “eye-catching” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 150) feature of the photograph. Indeed, through the composition also, the figures and doors and lockers are pushed to the upper half of the photograph, out of focus and read as mere background. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) consider that seeing people in an image from a distance where their features are blurred



“is to see them in the way we would normally only see strangers, people whose lives do [not] touch on ours. We see them in outline, impersonally, as types rather than as individuals” (p. 146). To Callie, these people cannot be friends or even important components of this picture. This picture really is about the floor, or more specifically, the beam of light on it.

The photograph of the toilet stall is also an exercise in framing and composition (see van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 147). The metal stall door and walls are black and heavy blocking most of the picture space and running off the upper edge of the frame as if to appear endless. Their presence is powerful and they literally dwarf the toilet seat, the one glimmer of white (along with the toilet paper remnant in the bottom register of the picture space) that edges out of the closeted domain. These stalls are literal and figurative closets, keeping bodies in and others out. Callie had talked about the messiness and neglect of the washroom space and had tried to represent it through the discarded toilet paper piece on the floor. Because it is out of focus, it reads as a white wisp, sort of ethereal and not at all as an example of vandalism. She had also talked about manipulating the fixer fluid in the development process of the photographs to respond to the high levels of fluorescent light in the bathroom. This photograph of the toilet stall is dark primarily because of the massive planes of black steel but probably also as a result of the attempt to balance out the hot spots of light. However, at another point, Callie had also mentioned the lack of light above the stalls. The stalls were naturally dark in her experience.

The photograph of the mirror reflecting the same toilet stalls is again a tricky composition. Just as the photograph of the hallway is about the light on the floor, this is a photograph about the mirror. It may appear to be about the stalls, but they are as backgrounded as the bodies in the hallway. They are forgotten, blurred, and distant. What is foregrounded is the ledge of the mirror, the surface of the mirror, and the mirror itself. How can a reflective surface that cannot be seen without its context be the subject of an image? Just as light can only be seen through the objects upon which it hits, a mirror can only really be seen via the objects it reflects. It is a vehicle, not an object itself. But here it is. How is this surface important to Callie’s subjectivity and

experience of school space? Light is another important element in this piece because it is centred on the ledge and the reflection of the ledge of the mirror. And yet, no reflection of the photographer appears in the mirror. A mirror in the bathroom especially is most often seen with the presence of bodily reflections.

This photograph offers a rare glimpse of the body *in absentia*. Indeed, the open stall doors, the shadowy interiors, these are meant to contain bodies and yet, in this photograph, do not. Herein we are witness to the container without the actors. Almost as if abandoned, the space contains only traces of its former occupants; one lone hair pin sits on the mirror ledge twinned by its reflection and magnified by its proximity to the mirror itself. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) suggest contact is a part of interactive meaning and can be constructed through faces of people in pictures (p. 145); because of the lack of people, it would seem the picture cannot contain interactive meaning, and yet, the mirror, by virtue of its reflective function, is itself fundamentally interactive.

*Analysis of Callie's photography as cartographic.*

**...it is an “ominous light” (Callie)**

Callie's photography I conceive of as temporary moments that together have mapped the school washroom space in which she travels. Not a one did she intend nor did I interpret to be a fixed location and therefore does not represent a fixed understanding but one that evolves with her subjectivation. In the hallway shot, the focus on the floor may only have been because of Callie's temporary ailment that required her to rely on crutches and thereby literally lowered her own bodily perspective. It is not the fixation on the floor that is important to glean from this photograph but rather how the physicality of the photographer ultimately crafts the image, which, in turn, is a momentary representation of the photographer's subjectivity. How the bodily matter *matters* (Butler, 1993) in terms of subjectivation is explicit in this visual methodology.

Bodily matters figure into the analyses of the photographs of the stalls in the washroom primarily because this space is designed to accommodate—or classify, or manage (see Foucault, 1977)—single bodies as they occur *en masse*. The toilet stall for Callie was like being “stuck within this like closed place where you can't be seen”. She

had imagined it then, through her photographs, as a “dangerous” place, especially for kids being bullied, and in this way reiterated an anxiety of hidden places in the washroom which, she notes, is important from “a bullying perspective”. Callie described the shadows haunting each stall in the row:

Like you can’t really see anything, like walking, like anybody in the stalls or anything like that... And so like I guess if you’re standing on the inside and like hiding from someone, like this is all you see...

Callie intentionally emphasized the “ominous light” and the lack of light above each stall because she was remembering a story her soccer team had circulated about a girl “being jumped” from someone waiting for her in a darkened stall: “I think as a student, I don’t think you realize how much it happens unless it’s happening to you”. Whether it was her artistic eye fuelling her imagination, or exactly how much anxiety this washroom space provoked in her are both unknown, but the images remain powerful. The photographs of the washroom and the school hallways present a lonely, institutionalized, almost abandoned sensibility (an interpretation I have gleaned from her verbal explanations and from the images themselves), which, I could argue, might signal the systemic silence around anything that happens in this washroom space.

To couple Callie’s photographs, especially of the toilet stalls, with Brown’s (2000) closet metaphor is to bring an added layer of complexity to the operations that are disciplined and perpetuated within the school washroom complete with its partitions and enclosures (see Foucault, 1977). Brown thinks of the closet to explicate the performativity of gender in gay men’s lives, to use it as a metaphor that *materializes* the regulations and performativities of gender; in the sex-segregated girls’ washroom in public schools, the operation of gender may not be all that dissimilar. Highly regulated, highly policed, this space moves people to confront each other’s own self-confrontations (as we see in the space of the mirror through Shelly’s photographs and through Trina’s and Callie’s explanations below), to measure one’s self up against another’s, and to fear the physical or social punishments that may lie in wait behind every darkened corner.

What happens in the space of a closeted interior, and its heterotopic relation to the larger washroom space surrounding it (because its *proximity* is integral to the functioning of the metaphor, according to Brown), is not a benign or private set of acts. Rather, the

closet presents here as something shadowy and dangerous whose confines either replicate the same kind of activity that occurs outside of its bounds or inverts it, if we consider it through the analytics of the heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). What might occur within that space that cannot occur without? And what occurs within that also occurs without? Beyond the obvious bodily functioning which is dependent upon the concealing properties (although partial) of that closeted stall, why does Callie signal it as a place within which danger lies? Is it due to the nature of any enclosure in a school? Or does it carry more significance being an enclosure within an already highly regulated gendered space that is also, paradoxically, un-regulated or unsupervised (by teachers and ‘authorities’)? In Dillabough and Kennelly’s (2010) study, the unsupervised space of the school corridor “presented itself as a ‘free’ space beyond the formal regulation of the school, ...where gendered regulation and mutual surveillance could be exercised in reaction to wider cultural conflicts” (p. 117). The school washroom at Corey Heights presented itself as a mitigated “free” space, one that adopted and circulated its own forms of gendered (and classed) regulation and surveillance.

Although Callie had taken the photograph of the mirror under analysis here, Trina (another student participant at Corey Heights in Grade 10) had also talked a lot about the individual features of the bathroom, which included her behaviour and feelings around the bathroom mirror (Figure 33):

I don’t know, it just makes me really uncomfortable sometimes...that’s why I try to avoid looking at it, like the mirror...like I don’t make eye contact or like look at anyone. (Trina)

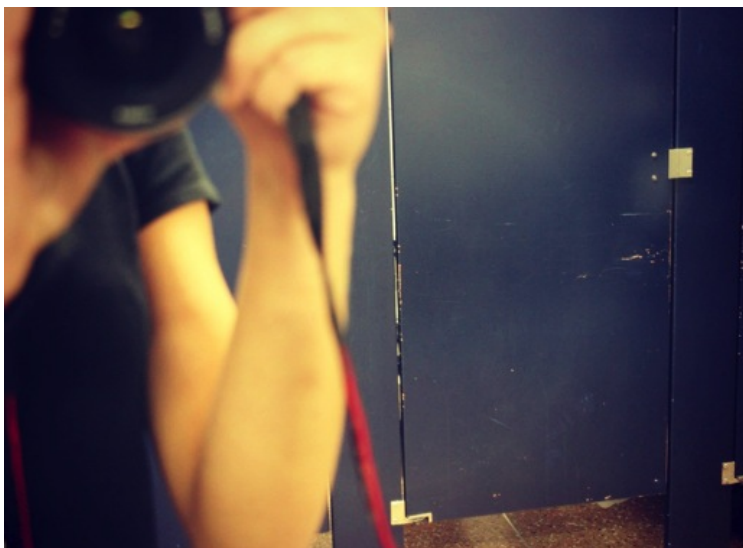


Figure 33: Trina's photograph of the gap

Trina expressed her fears of exposure whereas Callie focused more on the fear of the enclosed spaces in the washroom: two sides of the same proverbial coin. In another paper (Ingrey, in press) I have conjoined the analysis of Callie's and Trina's photographs under the paired theming, shadows and light, where the shadows signify the enclosures and the light signifies the exposure in visual methodology analysis. Trina was ultimately most concerned about the visual exposure afforded by the gap between the stall door and stall wall, which I examine in the following sections of this chapter. Even the fear of looking in the mirror was compounded by the viewer's ability to then redirect that gaze to "the gap" to then gain visual access to the enclosed space of the toilet stall. Her photograph above exemplifies this vulnerability to exposure.

Callie's photograph of the mirror with its consequent reflection of the bank of stalls speaks to the kind of vulnerability Trina had expressed in her photographs. The mirror is a rich site for analysis—a heterotopic site, at that. Foucault considers the ambiguity of the mirror to be heterotopic (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986): the viewer is both there and not. Furthermore, the mirror is a site *related to* the other sites that surround it. Both ambiguity and relationality are key principles that Foucault determines are necessary to qualify a space as heterotopic. Cavanagh (2010) deploys psychoanalytic theory (namely, Lacan's Mirror stage) to suggest how the reflective surface of a mirror becomes an intimate space: it is a place where one confronts oneself, where one sees one's public image which is relevant for the kinds of self-confrontations my participants

had intimated occurs in the bathroom mirror at school. Edelman (1996) considers the mirror as a replacement for the window in men's rooms and a site for self-reflexivity by "returning its look to itself" (p. 152) thereby creating a male subject as the container within the space itself. For Edelman, the bathroom "shapes the subject" (p. 152).

The mirror positions the body within the space that then also creates the gendered body as it is understood. Through these queer/psychoanalytic interpretations of the mirror, the analytic of the confessional is also appropriate to overlay upon the practices of self at play. The mirror incites confession, a truth-telling through a meeting of direct gazes within its utopian (read: no where) and heterotopian space. Although it is a very private act, looking into the mirror at oneself is particularly jarring when it occurs in a public space, and when in this self-encounter, someone else is engaging in the same private process. For Trina, the eye contact was most awkward and should be avoided. For another participant, Gwen, social hierarchy governed the gaze in the mirror in the girls' room:

But I find like in the bathroom there are like two mirrors usually and if like a Grade 12 is at one mirror I would go to a different mirror even if there was like a Grade 9 because the Grade 12 is like higher than me.

According to Hubbard, et al. (2002), the Mirror phase is the beginning of "the desire for completeness and self-identity [which] drives people to seek identification with certain people and things in the world outside the self" (p. 119). Cavanagh (2010) suggests the mirror creates an opportunity for one to notice how one measures up to another, and in the public washroom that is sex-segregated, one's gender is the thing that is offered up for public examination. Martino and Palotta-Chiarolli (2005) frame it as "a whole regime of self-regulatory practices involving girls' surveillance of their bodies" (p. 104). Although Cavanagh (2010) is writing about the repercussions for transgender individuals not measuring up in a cisgendered space, I think the anxieties of self-analysis and regulation can have relevance for all gendered bodies because it is about the pressure to measure up to a fictitious norm (Butler, 1990). Girls seem to suffer "a lot of anxiety...about the almost obsessive focus on body fashioning" (Martino & Palotta-Chiarolli, 2005, p. 104). By the very definition of gendered regulation, this is a constant process in which all gendered subjects participate with unique consequences for youth in

their formative stages, especially through the operations of transphobia. The boundaries of normative gender are not innately present, but must be monitored and guarded by those who are gender privileged (see Butler, 1990). Even as Cavanagh (2010) admits, “there is no transparent or linear relationship between an idealizing norm, its deployment, and the way one assumes a relation to it”. I do not mean to undermine the unique anxieties that transgendered people are forced to endure in a cisgendered society, but suggest instead there might be room to account for the negotiations of gendered reality for all gendered youth, especially as it is impacted by the space of the school washroom that claims a definition of gender as monolithic, bifurcated and static.

The mirror in Callie’s photographic cartography of the washroom space is significant for other participants also. For Trina (elaborated below) and Shelly (discussed above), to make eye contact is to acknowledge someone else as a witness to her private (and gendered) self-confrontation, as well as to notice how one measures up (or not) to the other’s external self and self-confrontation. The mirrors in the girls’ washrooms in this school were larger and more centrally positioned than what the boys’ washrooms contained suggesting a normalized view that girls prefer to self-examine, at least of their outward appearance, to primp and preen more than boys do. But the implications for such preening, in the company of other girls engaging in the same process, means each is reminded of the norms of being a girl and which practices are endorsed by the very structural design of this gendered space.

### **Trina.**

Trina was a Grade 10 student who self-selected to participate after the call from her Social Studies teacher. She spoke about party “protocol”, drugs, and sex and the implications for girls upon their status in the social hierarchy. She also told me stories about her battles with her parents involving her phone. We met twice. She was “into photography” and owned a camera. The photographs came through email and although I had invited her to meet with me again to explain them she did not. Neither did she write an explanation about the photographs even though I had asked for that in lieu of meeting. The interpretations of her photographs derive from our lengthy two interviews conducted prior to the photography project.

Of specific concern in the washrooms, Trina identified the gap between the stall door and the stall wall because in “some of the washrooms like the crack is so big, it’s a little uncomfortable” to be exposed like that. She had noticed a mirror was positioned immediately in front of the stalls which only emphasized this discomfort: “you could be looking in the mirror but still see through that crack, I don’t know, it just makes me really uncomfortable sometimes”. Doubly exposed, by the potential of a passerby peering into the crack, or someone standing in front of the mirror and able to hide their voyeurism, were fears Trina was not alone in expressing.

Providing insight into her fears of exposure and peer regulation, Trina told a story about graffiti in the washroom that she had only heard about recently but that had supposedly occurred last year:

Trina: someone wrote, ‘Trina’s bi’ in it and that’s me, so I don’t know, there’s two other Trinas so like I don’t know... I just don’t want people to be like, oh my god, she’s bi, like look at her... if a girl comes out as a lesbian, I feel like there’s more pressure, like people would be like, oh look at her, she’s looking at that girl like she...you know?

Jenny: like there’d be more monitoring of your behaviour?

Trina: yeah, like, oh did she just look at her chest? ...I know that if you don’t like a girl, like usually if you catch her staring, sometimes some girls they wear shirts that are really low cut and like ... it’s hard not to like notice or see and so if you get caught looking you’re going to be called a lesbian, ... it’s like whether they like you or not...it’s hard not to look when a girl’s chest is like out there, like when she’s wearing a triple push-up bra, or ...when girls are wearing pants that are really tight, it’s hard not to notice...

Trina’s reaction to this graffiti is born from a culture of surveillance of gender expressions, not to mention, one grounded in homophobia, biphobia and ultimately heteronormativity. Homophobic and biphobic slurs are rampantly hurled in high school hallways, washrooms and elsewhere (Wyss, 2004) and are exclusionary tactics used to regulate behaviour. To achieve a certain gendered identity, Pascoe (2007) argues, especially in terms of masculinity in her study, is to entail “the repeated repudiation of the specter of failed masculinity” (p. 5) or femininity thereby creating a paranoia or a hyper-vigilance about the minutia of body movements. The policing of one’s sexuality through an examination of one’s gender expression perpetuates and derives from



heteronormativity. Trina points to the fears of watching and being watched; in Foucauldian (1977) terms, this is the essence of panoptic surveillance, the operation of disciplinary power.

*Description of Trina's photography.*

Trina's first picture of the lock (Figure 34) is also one of a lock that does not lock, a broken lock. She had indicated that some of the stalls had broken locks, which seemed to perpetuate her fear of being invaded or not properly protected when in a vulnerable state inside the stall. The lock signifies security. On a washroom door, it connotes privacy and protection. In a wider application, it could also connote imprisonment and discipline. Considering the relations of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) in the school washroom, Trina's photograph of the lock is doubly relevant. It highlights her concerns with lack of privacy in the washroom, the vulnerability she feels while in this space; but it also refers to the operations of power, in Foucault's genealogy "of the history of penal right" (1982, p. 92) regarding the classification of bodies, and the institutionalizing forces and their effects on bodies in these spaces.



Figure 34: Trina's photograph of the lock

While Trina's photograph of the lock represents the paradoxical un-lockability of the door with a lock from an interior perspective, the photograph of the "gap" (Figure 35) offers the perspective from the exterior of the toilet stall, but it still manages to highlight the vulnerability. The gap between the door and the wall is the focus of this photograph, along with the hardware of the handle and the back of the lock. The viewer can notice the toilet in the background through the space available (i.e. the gap). But the toilet is faded, unfocused and fuzzy. Indeed, it is only readable as a toilet due to its black and white (and unfortunate haze of yellow in the centre) and its placement beyond the doors of this toilet stall. The viewer is familiar with the structure and can deduce (as long as the viewer is a user of these kinds of public spaces) the details that make this space what it is: a public toilet stall.



Figure 35: Trina's photograph of the gap

*Analysis of Trina's photography through social semiotic approach.*

The lock is in close-up which contributes to its interactive meaning (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001, p. 145) through both contact and distance to the viewer: a "close-up... suggests an intimate/personal relationship" (p. 146). Here, the viewer is intimately acquainted with the mechanism of the lock. It occupies almost the entirety of the composition where the background is simply black. The high contrast from this black to

the near-white highlights of the metal on the locking mechanism also contributes to the salience (see van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) of the image; how the lock “stand[s] out from its surroundings” or is “made more eye-catching than other” elements (p. 150) is Trina’s intention. But it is a particular nature of the lock, its function, or lack of function that is to be most salient. The lock in this photograph is not fully engaged. Its bar rests just outside of the slot thereby preventing its effectiveness. This is a lock that does not lock. This lock is on a door that can open. Trina’s decision to photograph the lock in its open state is a justifiable one: it condones her perspective that the bathroom space is not secure, that the locks do little to safeguard her body or sensibility while in the closeted space of the toilet stall.

But to see the lock is to see it from the inside only. Trina’s literal viewpoint is interior; she has positioned herself to become vulnerable, to reproduce those feelings for the viewer. The intimacy of the picture space belies the sort of intimacy Trina experiences; although it is a close/closeted space (both in this photograph and in the toilet stall itself), it is not necessarily “intimate” or all that intimacy connotes, although it most certainly is a “personal” space. Just as the lights and darks are in contrast, certain elements of the picture contrast with Trina’s understanding of this space.

On the other hand, in terms of composition, the photograph of the gap is very similar to that of the unlockable lock: it is another close-up, but ironically this time, not actually *of* something, but *of* nothing. It is a close-up of the space between something. Although one can see some blocks of darks and lights through this space to resemble the toilet, one cannot actually *see* the gap, but see through it, around it, and all that makes it so. The viewer is up close and “personal” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) to nothing. And it is that nothing that upsets Trina because it represents the *lack* that she articulates prevents her from feeling secure and comfortable in this washroom space.

Representationally, of course, this picture of nothing presents a conundrum. Representation must be of something otherwise it is un-representable. Yet, it is clear that this is a representative photograph, by virtue of its mode of photography and that we know it is also of the toilet stall. Through the visual social semiotic analysis, it does not fit the criteria for a narrative structure because it does not contain bodies or vectors,

although it does have the effect of narrative: we can presume the story once we know what Trina has been telling us about how she feels in this space. This photograph is more likely conceptual in structure through its symbolism where the gap (and the lock above) takes on attributes of iconography through “size, position, colour, use of lighting” (p. 144) and so forth.

*Analysis of Trina’s photography as cartographic.*

Foucault’s genealogies of prisons, mental institutions, military barracks, and so on provide insight into the mechanisms of disciplinary power. Indeed, the principal tools of disciplinary power involve surveillance tactics that produce the effects of normalization. The gap and the lock represent this disciplinary regime now occurring in the school, operating at a level that links “the absolute power...to the lowest levels of power disseminated in society”, in essence, filling “the gaps, link[ing] them together” (Foucault, 1977, p. 215). Both represent structural, institutional levels of power that afford the lower levels access to the panoptic gaze. Indeed, Foucault identified gaps for visual clearance in the *École Militaire* in 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris to allow for the headmaster ample surveillance of the contact between the students (p. 173). The ability to survey is still present in these washrooms today, but not to permit the gaze of the teacher, but of the other students, if not intentionally, certainly consequently. The lock that does not lock is a symbol of the perpetuating presence of “a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” because it “establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). Even within the pseudo-privacy of the bathroom stall, the un-lockable lock presents the impossibility of escaping this normalizing judgment: each body in this gendered/sex-segregated space is already classified, regulated within, and produced as a gendered being through these techniques of power.

Choosing particular stalls, avoiding others, and deciding when to use the mirror all become forms of self-regulation, that impact the kind of gendered understanding Trina has of herself, but also derive from a fear of peer-regulation, the panoptic operations Foucault (1977) argued create certain sorts of (gendered) subjects. Within the subdivided sex-segregated space of the school washroom, the partitioning of bodies within

closeted-like spaces constitutes the very classificatory action upon which disciplinary power and space rely. Foucault (1977) outlines the disciplinary space of the school classroom in terms of its organizational effects on students' bodies. In his analysis of elementary education in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the classroom is not only a place designed for efficiency and the "function like a learning machine" (p. 147), but also "as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding". This classroom

would form a single great table, with many different entries, under the scrupulously 'classificatory' eye of the master: 'In every class there will be places assigned for all the pupils of all the lessons, so that all those attending the same lesson will always occupy the same place. Pupils attending the highest lessons will be placed in the benches closest to the wall towards the middle of the classroom...Each of the pupils will have his place assigned to him and none of them will leave it or change it except on the order or with the consent of the school inspector' (p. 147)

I argue the school washroom functions in much the same way—as a "machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding" students within its spaces and sub-spaces that resemble enclosures, closets. A closet is a heterotopic space, especially in queer politics (Brown, 2000), because it is ambiguously secure: for the non-out individual (whether in sexuality or gender), the closet is a place to hide, one that protects and yet the very necessity of the closet remakes that individual into one who must hide and therefore *not* secure, at least, not without ample armour. In other words, to need the protection of the closet is also to be constantly on guard, under constant self-surveillance, and thus, ultimately unable to remain totally invisible.

Edelman (1996) relates the men's room to a closet literally for its lack of windows and as "site of bodily relations discursively tabooed" (p. 152). The closeted space of the toilet stall achieves this same ambiguity and not for queer or genderqueer folk alone. Very highly gendered regulatory tactics ensue throughout the washroom space, highlighted and made possible by the structural space that condones and permits certain gendered behaviour (e.g. girls need more mirrors than boys because they are more interested in their appearance; or, boys can accept a certain degree of public nudity because they urinate in urinals that are exposed and not in stalls). Trina is but one who claims the lack of visible and aural protection in the washroom is not only uncomfortable, but anxiety-inducing, and coupled with homophobia and transphobia (recall the graffiti,

“Trina’s bi”) is part of the regulatory regime that produces a normalized gender performance against which all else must succumb or be punished.

Indeed, Kevin, a self-described “feminine type” attending Corey Heights, preferred using the toilet stall for its protection and privacy over the urinal in its visibility. In this way, he opted to escape the “panoptic technology” (Barcan, 1999, p. 84) the urinal architecture propagated. He claimed most boys he witnessed used the stalls also which contrasted with what the boys were telling me in Best S.S. Of course, differences will occur in microanalyses, but it is the specificity of the usage, the generalizations made by a specific individual that is important to highlight.

The notion of the gap is significant in symbolic terms. Butler (1993) writes about bodily matters or what qualifies in a regulatory gender regime as gender, what matters in terms of gender. All else that is excluded from mattering is deemed *abject*. For Butler, the “exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet ‘subjects’, but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject” (p. 3). The regulatory effects produce one gendered subject that matters, whilst also producing that which does not, which is a synchronistic relationship similar to how nothing is dependent on something. Indeed, one cannot even exist without the other. The picture of the gap in abstract terms is representative of the “domain of abject beings” (p. 3) because it is something that is produced as a byproduct and then neglected by the domain of right. Abjection “literally means to cast off, away, or out and, hence, presupposes and produces a domain of agency from which it is differentiated” (p. 243). By noticing the gap, by even featuring it as the focus of her photograph, Trina acknowledges, if only abstractedly, the consequences of failing to live up to the gendered norms: the gap is all that cannot be done to matter as a gendered body because the norm is fictitious (see Butler, 1990, 1993). The gap is also representative of the danger of being a body that does not matter, or fails at mattering. To be seen, scrutinized, visible, especially in the vulnerable space of the toilet stall is to be under gender surveillance. The panoptic operations work not to punish only failures, but to keep every body in fear of failure (Foucault, 1977).

Semiotically, the gap, in its ambiguity, is aligned with the theorizing of heterotopias, which have implications for the qualification of the washroom overall as such a space. If Foucault determines, in the third principle, that the “heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 25), then the notion of a gap that is nothing and yet highly present, significant, and something, is inherently heterotopic. It is the very incompatibility that Trina’s photograph is able to highlight. The visual paradox not only in the picture of nothing (i.e. the gap) but also of the lock that cannot lock is salient.

### **Cartographies as Practices of Self**

Shelly, Callie and Trina produced visual projects that mapped the school space. These products now provide insights into their own subjectivation as gendered beings but also contribute to an enriched knowledge about the practices upon the self as they occur in disciplinary spaces, thereby rendering these spaces as heterotopic. These maps (either in photographic or drawn form) are “act[s] of self-writing...[which are] seen as...essential practice in the care and training of the self” (Kamler, 2001, p. 49) which is part of the constitution of the subject (Foucault, 1982). In a “post-qualitative research” era (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013), mapping is a form of “productive” research over the (tracing) “representational” research from a post-positivist paradigm (Martin & Kamberlis, 2013, p. 668) where mapping “charts open systems that are contingent, unpredictable and productive” (p. 671). Through its own contingencies, gendered subjectivation involves ruptures and recoils (Butler, 2005), and its analysis requires a mapping of “the ruptures, the detours that are continually producing new relations of power and all manner of *becoming(s)* [emphasis in original]” (Martin & Kamberlis, 2013, p. 671). The map is a powerful metaphor or methodology for charting the ruptures, the discontinuities (Foucault, 1990) in subjectivation and therefore the research that deploys it is situated as productive.

Mapping school spaces quite literally, the student photography from Corey Heights also maps the constitution of the subjects who captured them. What is important to these students, the micro decisions they are incited to make within and because of the

spatial structures and the discourses that arise from them (as well as that produce those structures, consequently) become evident in their photographic choices and the interview texts that accompany them. Through their mapping, they qualify the washroom space as something to be managed as it manages them; they highlight its vulnerabilities and places of regulation. The maps present the washroom, in the juxtaposition of incompatible sites (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), in its ambiguity and its inversions of, yet simultaneous relations, to real space, is a heterotopia. Are these to be considered confessional products in the way that Best Secondary School students' toilet stall work could be construed? These photographic mappings present a 'truth of the self' in a same way as the Best S.S. students painted their musical passions, their cultural heritage, or their political views.

Through the lens of the camera, these students were incited to confess their anxieties and doubts, to trace their regulated pathways, while constructing an understanding of what in the space (and the school that surrounds) contributes to their gendered subjectivation. In what way does the washroom itself contribute to a confessing kind of interview? In what way is it the method of photography through photovoice that incited knowledge of the self? Because I asked questions about a space that is deemed private and taboo, by virtue of these students already consenting to discuss the topic, are they in essence confessing, or telling in private something they would not otherwise dare to tell? In what ways is the power relationship between them as the researched and me, as the researcher, already a dynamic that incites their confession for the purposes of seeking a form of secular salvation? Because they consented to taking photographs of this taboo space, in the way that they understood it, were they feeling obligated to confess (Foucault, 1990a, p. 60)? Many questions might follow, but the connections among the compulsion to confess in a space that also compels (regulates) other sorts of normalized gendered behaviours could also be freeing: where "confession frees, ...power reduces" (p. 60). These students are subjects capable of resistances, and yet hemmed in by available discourses and material realities (Butler, 1990); they are both activated as subjects and limited by gender norms in the space that materially and discursively governs them as gendered subjects.



## Conclusion

This chapter constructed the case study from Corey Heights, considering the photography from three students to be cartographic products that mapped school spaces in the washroom while simultaneously mapping their own gendered subjectivation. Through visual and Foucauldian and Butlerian analysis, these images offer insights into the regulations and self-policing these students observe and in which they participate in the school washroom. They constitute their own gendered subjecthood through their “self-writing” (Foucault, 1997c) practices that include mapping the space (Shelly), playing with the symbolisms of light and dark (Callie), and highlighting their own vulnerabilities (Trina). In these acts, they not only articulate the heterotopic qualities of the washroom as ambiguous, and juxtaposing incompatible spaces, they also invert, neutralize and suspect the relations of power (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) that regulate gendered norms in the school at large. The school washroom acts for them as a space to be managed while simultaneously managing them. The intensity of a focus on the bathroom serves only to shine a proverbial light onto these practices that are also occurring in the school hallways, the cafeteria, and other teaching and non-teaching spaces in the school. Only through the analytics of the heterotopia are these connections made explicit and a focused study of the bathroom through photography, relevant and necessary.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### Introduction

In this dissertation I have introduced, investigated and analysed two case studies that I framed around the washroom spaces in two schools. The students who participated in a critical and creative reflection of these washroom sites provided rich visual and textual material to offer insight into their engagement in gendered subjectivation. This study has paid heed to the complexities of these students' negotiations within and against gender norms governed by heteronormativity, homophobia, and transphobia. Through analysis of the practices upon the self (Foucault, 1990a) that occur under these disciplinary and regulatory conditions of gender normalization, I have attempted to unpack the contingent, and therefore, heterotopic (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) nature of the washroom space as both contributing to and containing the effects of these gendered operations upon the self and others.

I have utilized the framework of the heterotopia centrally to allow room to think about the gendered regulations and practices of the self that occur within it and that constitute the conditions under which students become gendered subjects. It could be argued that I drew on Foucault almost piecemeal (i.e. disciplinary power, subject and power, disciplinary space, practices of self, technologies of self, etc.), that I have crossed invisible lines in his scholarship deploying an early, through to middle, to late Foucault. Certainly, I consider there to be an overarching commensurability among the works I have studied from Foucault, but I also responded to this invitation:

I would like my books to be a kind of tool-box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area... I would like the little volume that I want to write on disciplinary systems to be useful to an educator, a warden, a magistrate, a conscientious objector. I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers. (Foucault, 1974, pp. 523-524)

As a researcher, an educator, and a “conscientious objector” to practices of gender normalization that go uninterrupted and perpetuate harmful and violent consequences for bodies deemed not to matter, I am compelled to continue to use Foucault's analytics to find the necessary distance from my own normalized conditions, to trouble (Butler,

1990), find discomfort (Boler, 1999), or produce imaginaries that make schools better places to be gendered.

### **Confessional, Queer/Trans and Cartographic Products for (De)Subjugation**

Each of the visual products I analysed has been organized into three thematic frames: confessionals, queer, and cartographies. Each derived from Foucauldian and Butlerian frameworks as well as incorporated other literature from transgender studies and queer theory. Where some of the toilet art was confessional, others have been queer confessionals because they spoke against the official bathroom project and offered alternatives. Indeed, in the pursuit of ‘queering’ as a reading practice (Britzman, 1998), some of the confessional student art at Best S.S. was also a destabilizing of gender and sex norms and a problematization of the coherency between the two. In this way, the interplay between queering and subjugating or (de)subjugating (Stryker, 2006) and (re)subjugating is complex and entangled. Where some of these students refused compliancy to the bathroom project, others complied but queered certain norms. Still others refused to participate in one form but embraced the invitation to produce a queer or critical response in another. They refused to participate in the gendered norms about femininity and masculinity and yet were limited and coerced by these norms also. Indeed, in all of the student artwork, elements of both compliance and resistance were necessarily present because no subject is capable of resistance outside of power relations and no power relations are possible outside of resistance (Foucault, 1980). These confessionals either as queer or not were embodied products. To paint in a washroom that is sex-segregated is to do so not as a disembodied artist, but as a gendered and embodied student in a school washroom. It is to respond to and question a “knowledge of bodies” that derives from particular “bodies of knowledge” (Britzman, 1998, p. 80) that becomes embedded in their gender regime at school.

The cartographic products were evidence of the mental and subjective mapping the students undertook either daily or for this project specifically at Corey Heights. To chart the spaces within and around the washroom illustrated some of the heterotopic nature of the space through its ambiguous meaning for different users. It also demarcated the “dividing practices” (Foucault, 1977) that the cellular spaces incite within the sexed

and gendered bodies that circulate throughout who are consequently also incited to self-policing practices in terms of gender norms.

Knowledge that is subjugated is done so through a system of power relations that marks certain categories of intelligibility and unintelligibility. Normalized gender, even if read through school spaces, is harnessed, perpetuated, regulated, and performed through disciplinary complicity. No one body is exempt from the implications of this punishing mechanism. Moving from a queer to a trans inspired analytical frame, both can be of benefit to every body because they possess the potential to point back to the system that disqualifies them. Recoiling upon itself, trans as a metaphor helps us to re-think the categorization and intelligibility of gender, especially through Noble's (2007) work on the incoherence of the category of trans. As a metaphor or a tool, trans marks out what does not qualify as a legitimate gendered body, forming an incoherence of its own. Looking at Sedgwick's work, specifically, *The Privilege of Unknowing* (1993), Noble (2007) argues

these ignorance effects or epistemological asymmetries, are harnessed, licensed, socially sanctioned and regulated on a mass scale...[creating] particulate [sic] knowledges [that] circulate not as the absence of, but as part of particular regimes of truth so that making sense occurs on terms not of our own making. (p. 173)

Not only to begin to think about the possibilities of "trans-ed" – inspired pedagogy and research, but even beginning to unpack the limits of knowledge and the mechanism of ignorance, are what trans theory offers beyond studies that focus on trans populations alone.

### **Context Beyond the Case Studies**

My final research question asked how knowledge about how youth constitute their gendered subjectivities as well as how the investigation of the disciplinary space of the school washroom might contribute to a growing understanding of power relations in schools through gender performance and regulation. Furthermore, it asked how this knowledge could then contribute to equity and social justice practices at schools, both locally and at the school board level through curriculum and policy. The latter question I explore in educational implications below. The initial question is theoretically based and traced through both case studies and the confessional products derived from students'

experiences in and knowledge of the gendered relations occurring in the heterotopic space of the washroom. Knowledge must come before policy.

These two cases as separate but related are not to be compared through any formal analysis, but sit alongside each other to enrich the deployment of visual methodology that help unpack the processes of gendered subjectivation of young people in school spaces. Furthermore, they help us to theorize the space of the washroom as heterotopic through its ambiguity, inversions and relations (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) to the school space at large in order to question the “oppositions” given as natural (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 23) in our current gender regimes. According to Foucault,

this problem of the human site or living space is not simply that of knowing whether there will be enough space for men [sic] in the world – a problem that is certainly quite important – but also that of knowing what relations of propinquity, what type of storage, circulation, marking, and classification of human elements should be adopted in a given situation in order to achieve a given end. (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 23)

Translating Foucault to contemporary times in the global North, the accounting for bodies *en masse* is more relevant. For educational institutions to keep order in terms of funding allocations for schools, they must engage in management strategies that classify and categorize students (see Foucault, 1977). These practices work to preserve the norm, rather than invite disruptions. Under this model there can be no accounting for myriad expressions of gender and therefore no real respect or dignity paid to the gendered subjectivity of any body. If the school washroom space, as well as the building and the institution in which it is located, is intended to be ‘neutral’ and built upon the fiction that naturalizes coherent sex, gender, and sexuality, it does so for two purposes: one, to accommodate many bodies at once and to promote the efficiency of those bodies moving through the system; and two, to perpetuate systems of heteronormalization and compulsory heterosexuality. The stringency and fixity of these sex-segregated spaces that align with and support the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990), deny the possibilities that Foucauldian, critical queer and trans-inspired thought can create in the subjectivities of youth. Nurturing and allowing for difference must be part of this model made possible by knowledge mobilization, rather than mass accounting. Without attention paid to bodies beyond the numbers, a real gender justice is lost.

## Educational Implications

Because this study of the washroom experience in secondary schools, as sought through student voice, is subjugated as a knowledge, it is doubly vulnerable both as subject matter and through those voices I access (students as well as custodial staff who are not often consulted over educational matters). Foucault's (1980) subjugated knowledges are those that are dismissed as unworthy, irrelevant, or untrue. To work on the washroom is part of a material project, but it is also about how that space allows us to look into the mechanisms of gender power operating upon students and through them as gendered bodies. The washroom space is bounded and thus limits the study to a focus; but it is also a normalized space and deemed unproblematic. How it relates to its wider school environment makes it a heterotopic space, both through reflection and inversion (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). It is ambiguous, paradoxical and understudied. And its very guise of innocence or invalidity as a research topic marks the precise point of justification for its study. Through studying these subjugated (Foucault, 1980) spaces, and the techniques and daily practices within “offers possibilities for more intentionally changing—(re)producing—our embodied social spaces” (Kuntz, 2010, p. 152).

### Curricular and policy implications: The Arts.

The bathroom project at Best S.S. could be construed as an example of community curricular art because it was a common project, albeit situated in the curriculum, but derived from a grassroots level and depending on collaborative efforts to succeed. It points to a practice that should be more regular in schools: a “responsive curriculum” (Fisher & Kennedy, 2012) that answers the needs of the students, even if only some of them, and offers opportunities for engaged, relevant learning. Relating to arts curriculum more generally, curricular projects should be “built on empathy, democracy, and critical practice” (Ballengee-Morris, Daniel, & Stuhr, 2010, p. 14) to keep students connected to each other and their communities. Arts education is easily aligned with social justice theorizing (Collanus & Heinonen, 2012). These authors see culture and arts making as processes “constructed within various social practices in particular historical contexts” (Collanus & Heinonen, 2012, p. 85), and they view “arts making as an act of theory” (p. 87). Theory is as much a “sensuous and practical activity” (Collanus &

Heinonen, 2012, p. 87) as cultural practices, or art making. How students learn to construct and deconstruct during art making also teaches them the constructiveness of culture as well as its heterogeneity and fluidity (Collanus & Heinonen, 2012, p. 88). It is the responsibility of arts educators to take up this symbiosis of theory and culture in the pursuit of social justice.

Certainly gender-just curriculum should become integrated and infused throughout school subjects. For Connell (1993), “the issue of social justice is not an add-on. It is fundamental to what good education is about” (p. 15). However, the arts classroom lends itself to being a site rich for exploring diversity issues and engaging in queer and transgender studies. Dittman and Meecham (2006) argue that transgender, specifically, has a place in school art because artists have traditionally been about bodily matters, about *being* a body rather than *having* a body. In this way, the transgender person, or indeed any member of a minoritized group, is protected from becoming “analysed through specific forms that may be antithetical to the subject” (Dittman & Meecham, 2006, p. 410) or subjugating:

Through the imagination, other possibilities can receive concrete visual form that are not available to more traditional research methodologies and subject disciplines. It is this ability to make concrete through performance, film and sculpture that allows a different set of ideas to circulate in an interpretative community of creative practices. (p. 410)

The arts might very well become the beacon light for leading critical pedagogy dedicated to gender democratization, if not addressing all forms of inequity, including racism, poverty, abilism, homophobia, and so forth. For Maxine Greene (1995), it is through the arts that imagination, and therefore, empathy, is made possible (p. 3). Because encountering art is a defamiliarizing process, something that confronts the self in “unexpected ways” (Greene, 1995, p. 4), we can learn how to cultivate our personal and “social imagination” which includes “the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society, ...in our schools” (p. 5). Indeed it is only through imagination, that we can have at least first acknowledged that something must be changed: “to call for imaginative capacity is to work for the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise” (Greene, 1995, p. 19); and it is only through acknowledgment that “we are moved to choose to repair or to renew” through dialogue best “activated in

classrooms” (Greene, 1995, p. 5).

### **Implications for teacher and principal preparation programs.**

Ultimately this study recommends practitioners of education conduct a focus on equity within gender relations to then pay historical (if not simply current) attention to the processes that we deem naturalized in terms of how gender is understood, practiced, regulated, resisted and reformed. Egbo (2009) recommends teacher education programs must not only include diversity training for teacher candidates who teach in an increasingly more and more diverse world, but also turn the critical eye back on themselves to “uncover omissions and inclusions that are informed by hegemonic assumptions about minoritized groups” (p. 189) within their own curriculum. Only in a teacher preparation that is already critical will teachers understand that critical reflection is a necessary component to their performance as teachers who will “more likely be aware of and sensitive to the needs of their diverse students” (p. 189). After teacher education, ongoing professional development can be viewed as “capacity building” (Egbo, 2009) to continue to support teachers teaching in a diverse world.

Beyond teacher preparation, principal preparation is equally important in addressing social inequities pedagogically and systemically in education. Ludeke (2009) remarks that transgender, genderqueer, and other gender questioning youth require support systems that include their administrators not only because these are among their first contacts in schools, but also because “failure to effectively and seriously respond to a transgender student’s concerns or request for support may make a school vulnerable to legal action” (p. 16). Ludeke recommends principals not only educate themselves on transgender issues, but also become advocates for trans students by communicating with staff about accommodations, communicating with outside organizations for referral services, and addressing structural needs such as washroom and locker-room assignments for transgender students.

Leadership that pays attention to “progressive educational policies” (Egbo, 2009, p. 289), where transgender accommodation would be a part, is transformative which Shields (2010) defines as “creating rich and inclusive learning environments for all” (p.



581). Kose (2009) studies the role of the principal in the process of teacher professional development for social justice using a transformative framework that sees the principal as embodying a variety of roles including a “transformative visionary” and a “transformative structural leader” (p. 628). Based on literature in professional development for improving the quality of teaching from Darling-Hammond, French and Garcia-Lopez (2002), Kose (2009) argues for a framework for thinking about how best to prepare principals in their quest for leading socially just schools. For one, principals are required to engage in self-examination, including an analysis of their own epistemological grounding which is ongoing and involves “continuously deepening and reconnecting with the passion, courage, and responsibility of truly serving all students” (Kose, 2009, p. 656). In addition, Kose (2009) recommends professional development for principals that is geared towards a social justice lens as well as infusing this intention explicitly throughout principal preparation programs. Kose (2011) finds that “principals can play important roles in shaping transformative school vision” (p. 131).

Brown (2004) offers a process-oriented model of transformative pedagogy for school leaders promoting social justice and equity based on critical theory. Positioned within the field of adult learning, Brown argues critical reflection through “the examination of personal and professional belief systems, as well as the deliberate consideration of the ethical implications and effect of practices” (p. 89) is integral to principals’ commitment to pursuing socially just programming. In the appendices of her paper, Brown (2004) outlines the critical reflective practices of writing life histories, reflective analysis journals, and cultural autobiographies, along with participating in “prejudice-reduction workshops” (p. 90). Critical reflection enables “the examination of ontological and epistemological assumptions” to allow principals to be “better equipped to work with and guide others in translating their perspectives, perceptions, and goals into agendas for social change ...[which] leads future educational leaders to a broader, more inclusive approach in addressing equity issues” (p. 99).

Rusch (2004) examines leadership preparation programs for their lack of pedagogical concentration dedicated to discourses of equity and social justice. In this paper, she identifies a gap in the literature of leadership preparation specifically related to

gender and race. These two constructs elicit fear and discomfort in educators of leadership preparation programs resulting in “administrative aspirants” (Rusch, 2004, p. 15) experiencing “points of rupture” (p. 18) between the institutional discourses and what they experienced in their daily lives. Framing these moments as “fault lines” (p. 18), Rusch articulates the need for equity-infused discourse to enter education for education leaders in more nuanced understandings that can interrupt the perpetuation of normalizing practices around gender identities and racialized identities in leadership.

### **Future Research Directions**

The dissertation is meant to be defined, in-depth, and focused; thus, much becomes ‘beyond the scope’. Where Anyon (2009) advocates a research “process of ‘kneading’ the theory/research/data mix” (p. 13), it is both difficult and exhilarating to be able to do so in one project because much comes out of that mix. To extend the metaphor, kneading the ingredients in different ways can produce very different types of “bread”. And yet, I am limited to one, for now.

This research and analysis has beckoned me in several directions, many of which I have had to ignore, at least temporarily. Implications of conducting research online, especially through Skype lead to ethical considerations of the collision between private and public spaces, through socioeconomic, cultural, and so forth, concerns (which I have already explored briefly in the chapters above). However, de Lauretis’ (1987) conception of gender as a technology, a set of techniques or tools one crafts upon oneself in a social, ethical relation to others, is ripe for theorizing about the implications of doing gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987), of thinking about gender as a technology in a digital/technological age. Beyond the local, transnational communications lead to thinking about the forming of new identities, through post-colonial frameworks (see Mohanty, 2003; Bhabha, 2009). Of course, very much situated centrally and precursively is the first phase of research I conducted with five recent secondary school graduates. Although their words and experiences cannot be prominent in this dissertation, in many ways I have been sensitized to gender justice because of interviewing and talking with them. And if analysis begets analysis, then the musings on cartographic spaces in the secondary school must take me to thinking about the school cafeteria as a panopticon

through the interviews and sketches of some of the Corey Heights participants. Beyond this, the principal as leader for social justice is another avenue I will travel, especially considering the gendered and sexed identities of administrators as sexual minorities negotiating their work within highly heteronormative/transphobic discursive and material regimes of truth. Another project awaiting fruition is the unfinished thinking around a methodology that is specifically tailored to trans studies. Queer studies must be the foregrander, but to elaborate upon and yet be distinguishable from this epistemology is a poststructuralist task. Participant action research with trans-identifying educational practitioners might be the most authentic route to adopt to create a research that is trans-centred and anti-oppressive.

In all of these examples, analysis is waiting to happen based on the data I have already collected. But where I would want to go beyond this data would be to speaking more and more with trans youth, genderqueer youth, and young adults about their experiences in school spaces. Not enough can be collected or known yet about how to restructure our school systems, curricularly, politically, and practically to achieve more just spaces for every gendered body.

However these projects are narrow in scope. What is more widely pertinent is research that adopts an intersectional perspective to consider genderqueer identities and expressions as complexly intertwined with race, class, ability, and other categories of identity. Following post-colonial feminist research (Hill Collins, 1992; Mohanty, 2003), feminist/queer (Lorde, 1979), combined with queer (Britzman, 1995) and transgender studies (Stryker, 2006), a sophisticated theoretical lens is both necessary and productive to framing new research projects that pay heed to authorizing, while troubling, those silenced voices of bodies whose lives have failed to matter in hegemonic discourses governing education and schools in terms of curriculum and policy.

### **The Personal is Powerful**

As I approach the completion of this dissertation, I come back to the beginning. At this time in my career, colleagues and professors are inquiring about my topic and the search for the next steps in academia require me to consolidate my analytical contributions in easily digestible packages, or so it seems. Why am I writing about the washroom? How

is that applicable to anybody, especially in schools? Hasn't someone else already done that work? Did I even 'do' Foucault 'right'?

To answer some of these, I respond: the washroom is an analytical unit, a locus upon which the techniques of gendered regulation and power can be identified and transposed to the wider school environment within which the washroom practices are allowed to operate. Although I peer through the epistemological lenses of queer-informed and trans-inspired studies, the transgendered 'other' is not my primary focus, but lays the foundation, the possibilities for envisioning "a transgender imaginary" (Martino, Rezai-Rashti, & Lingard, 2013, p. 223), that democratizes gender (Connell, 2009) with implications for every gendered body in schools. I would rather see the purpose of schools to be sites for social *transformation* rather than of reproduction. To the last two quips I listed above, I only hope that I can contribute to a growing trend in education research that values transgender studies and genderqueer perspectives and I hope I have stayed in line with Foucault's interest in understanding local, practical, contextual, material practices of self and power.

I follow Anyon's (2009) advice that theory and data are forever entwined and consider that the back-and-forth, kneading-like quality a researcher must do in writing the research, can also apply to the wider dissemination of that research after the writing, in the writings of a different kind, such as the presentations, talks, and so forth. I have to return to my questions, to my theoretical lenses, to communicate the impact of this research on a wider audience, beyond my small participant pool. But as I face that judge and jury that is any colleague, fellow scholar, or future employer about my dissertation, I return to the real core of my research, the *raison d'être*. And for me, it came in a chilling, serendipitous way.

My small daughter (both in age and stature) told me recently that she did not use the toilet in her Senior Kindergarten class because it was too small, or felt too inadequate. Perhaps she meant too crowded, not enough security or privacy, or too closeted and enclosed. Beyond and within the washroom space itself, the bodies that inhabit it contribute to one's experience of it. Socialization and gendered regulation start much

earlier than high school, as the literature shows (see Eliot, 2009). According to Eliot (2009), pre-school children are aware of gendered differences and regulate each other's behaviour in gendered play and dress. To what degree and nature the socializing influence of other children in one's private toilet space is gendered is precisely what my dissertation examines but at the high school level and pointing to implications beyond (and before) the high school level. Indeed, gendered regulations are permitted because of the assumptions of adults in schools (i.e. teachers, administrators, designers, board officials, etc.) that bathroom practice is benign and private. What a child does in the bathroom may not be anyone's 'business', but what cannot happen, and how it can be anxiety inducing, dangerous, or unhealthy, certainly must be the business of everyone in education.

When research becomes personal it is either because something metaphysical has happened, or because one is transformed by the research (Cooke-Sather, 2007), and therefore open to its analytical possibilities. I have always cared about children and have grown to care deeply for the consequences they suffer in our current gender regime. But I did not realize, and probably still do not fully, how my evolving sensitivities would intersect with my own family. If not for this, my empathy, my heartfelt passion would still exist, but my commitment to my daughters goes beyond words and in turn, feeds my intensity to continue this kind of work. And if my research can help contribute to their future and their healthy and fulfilling lives as gendered beings, then I am doubly fortunate.

Because my personal and academic passions are entwined, I take reassurance that Foucault's "personal and philosophical ideas are entwined" (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 20) also where his preoccupations with his own mental health or his sexual life fed his work on psychiatric institutionalizations and sexuality. In his lecture "Of Other Spaces", Foucault wanted to talk about "the space that claws and knaws [sic] at us" (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 23). For me, that is what the school washroom has done: it incites a clawing and a gnawing that indicates something cannot be ignored; something cannot be taken for granted any longer. The way we presume all bodies experience this so-called benign washroom space unproblematically, the literature on queer and genderqueer kids

tells us is wrong. But the experiences for all students, the perpetual, day-in-day-out repetition of iterations of gender that get sedimented over time (Butler, 1990) – these are the stories from which I have drawn out only some to provide a rich description situated in schools about the impact on kids’ gendered subjectivation and the repetitions embedded in the current gender regime. As well, to examine a washroom, cellular units within a cellular unit, divisions within divisions, in a school site, is to understand how, under Foucault’s (1988a) guidance, “specific ‘truth games’ ...have developed knowledge and techniques for people to understand themselves” (as cited in Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 20), how “dividing practices” (Foucault, 1982, p. 208) work both within the subject and because of the spaces within which the subject is constituted.

### **On Possibilities for All**

According to Rajchman (1986), “Foucault sought to raise questions about who we might become – in our thinking as in our lives” (p. 179). Once aware of his (or her, or hir) own constraints and constitutionalizing processes, the subject could seek possibilities. The study of the washroom is a study in limitations of gender and the possibilities. Butler (1990) offers that gender is not performed repeatedly in exactly the same form in each moment; this “failure to repeat” can lead to the “possibilities of gender transformation” (p. 179). It is not the gender itself that will be transformed, however, but the perception or the knowledge that gender is sedimented and grounded: in the “discontinuous” and “stylized acts” (p. 179) of gender performance, the very ground upon which gender is built and understood to be permanent, erodes to reveal the temporality of gender, “a politically tenuous construction” (p. 179). The transformation of gender might also include “a radical rearticulation of what qualifies as bodies that matter, ways of living that count as ‘life’, lives worth protecting, lives worth saving, lives worth grieving” (Butler, 1993, p. 16).

Butler (2004) also termed possibility as “not a luxury” but as “crucial as bread” because of what “the possible does for those for whom the very issue of survival is most urgent” (p. 29). To frame a study of regulations, surveillance and policing around the possibilities embedded in gender subjectivation is to have an eye to the transformative. To think about transforming gender relations for all bodies, but also those bodies for

whom it is most dire, a most anxiety-ridden, vulnerable and uninhabitable existence because they have been deemed abject, is a possibility no educator can deny.

Greene's (1995) capacity for imagination in the arts and the cultivation of a social imagination necessary for addressing and redressing societal inequities translates to an imaginary particularly suited for gender justice. Martino, Rezai-Rashti, and Lingard (2013) argue for

embracing a transgender imaginary...a political project of divorcing and unhinging gender expression from biological destiny [which] has the potential for more effectively addressing gender democratization and gender justice in the lives of straight, queer, identifying, trans, and gender variant individuals. (p. 223)

Transgender as a social imaginary is the best of possibilities, the best hope for transforming the current gender regime from one of fixity and falsity to one that leaves room and space to perform.

The way one participant in the first phase of the project explained her possibility is most poignant. Pliny, a self-named genderqueer person, told me the following:

I'm not even 19 yet, I haven't even lived half my life yet so I'm still exploring, I'm learning what I love, what I like to do and what kind of people I want to be around and I feel like if I label myself they'll just, you know, put me in a box where I can only, you know, be in that space.

For Pliny, possibility is to remain free from names, labels, boxes, definitions, and the consequent regulations these incite. Although Pliny's words might be taken up by Halberstam (2005) for signaling the trend of the neo-liberal "hip queer" who denies labeling in favour of embracing "uniqueness as radical style" (p. 19), I choose to locate Pliny as a not-yet-made genderqueer, a queer in the making, and part of a "transgenderism ...[that is] a meaningful designator of unpredictable gender identities and practices" (Halberstam, 2005, p. 21). Pliny is about the possibilities for gender practices and I want to give her, as I do for all gendered youth in schools, another space, one that she can name and call her own.

## **Last Words**

Foucault said in an interview (1988a): "if you knew when you began a book what you would say at the end, do you think that you would have the courage to write it?" (p. 9).

Had I known what I wanted to say at the end of this dissertation, indeed what I am capable of thinking having gone through this project and its analysis, not only would I have not had the courage to begin it, I fear I would have stopped somewhere in the middle. Foucault claimed this unknowingness in reference to his desire to remain uncategorizable, an ironic position considering his conclusions about the subject derive from the categorizing and classificatory practices in relations of power. I fear not the categorization of my own identity or my work, but the misinterpretations of both. Patton (2002) concedes that, “engaging in analysis...is seldom life threatening, though you do risk being disputed and sometimes ridiculed by those who arrive at contrary conclusions” (p. 453). I anticipate these contradictions, I will face them head-on, and I invite them for their capacity to inspire in me the next project.



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<sup>i</sup> For the purpose of my study, I begin with the term 'washroom' because the school toilet sites that I was interested in investigating do not contain a bath; however, due to the literature, the notion of the 'bathroom problem' moves me to use both 'bathroom' and 'washroom' interchangeably. For clarity, when citing other scholars' work I maintain the terminology they use; when analyzing the school space, for the most part, I use the term 'washroom'; and, when I think about how one particular school, Best S.S. (one of the case study schools for this dissertation), devised an art project that took place in the washroom, I name it, 'the bathroom project', to align it with 'the bathroom problem' in the literature (see Browne, 2004; Halberstam, 1998; Munt, 1998).

<sup>ii</sup> Although I explain in Chapter One how I am using the analytics of the heterotopia and in more detail about what that entails, in one set of lecture notes from 1967 translated by Miskowiec, Foucault described heterotopias in the following way: they are real spaces that "because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias" (Foucault & Miskowiec, p. 24).

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<sup>iii</sup> I use the terms subjectivation and subjectification interchangeably as they appear in these variations in the literature.

<sup>iv</sup> As of March 2013, Canada's House of Commons passed the third reading of Bill C-279 (historically based in Bill C-389), a bill to rewrite the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code to include gender identity as explicit grounds of protection from discrimination. The debates were in the Senate as of summer 2013. Certain provinces, Ontario and NWT, already have legislation naming gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds in their *Codes*.

<sup>v</sup> The term cisgender refers to gender that matches sex or gender that is *not* transgender. When a person is born one sex and the gender is aligned through normative means (i.e. a boy is also male and a girl is also female), they are cisgendered. When the sex and gender are out of normative alignment, they are *transgendered*.

<sup>vi</sup> Ze is a gender neutral pronoun to replace 'she' or 'he'.

<sup>vii</sup> Hir is a gender neutral pronoun to replace 'her' or 'him'.

<sup>viii</sup> a/r/tography is the breakdown of the individual as artist (a), researcher (r), and teacher (t) (see Irwin & de Cosson, 2004).

<sup>ix</sup> ESL is English as a Second Language and EAL is English as an Additional Language

<sup>x</sup> Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) is governed by the arm's length agency to the Ministry of Education, the EQAO (The Education Quality and Accountability Office) for students in Grade 10. For more information, please visit: <http://www.eqao.com/Educators/Secondary/10/10.aspx?Lang=E&gr=10>

<sup>xi</sup> I was told by the vice principal from Corey Heights that racial and ethnic demographic information is not readily available via the board or Ministry websites; board employees must request this information via email.

<sup>xii</sup> All of the information I retrieved on the demographic information about each school, although limited, I found on the Ministry of Education website, readily available to the public. Other information I collected via my own observations and from participants.

<sup>xiii</sup> I had witnessed graffiti in all of the bathrooms I had visited at Best S.S. with a proliferation in the boys' washroom (the third of three, where girls' only had two washrooms in the school excluding those attached to the gymnasium) located near the technical education wing.

<sup>xiv</sup> Emo is a colloquial term for 'emotional', denoting a kind of sub-culture consisting of a certain clothing style and musical interests. According to my participants, Emo is recognized (or misinterpreted) in the following markers for both girls and boys: long, black hair, sometimes coloured in pink or purple streaks, usually swept in front of the eyes, dark eyeliner, and tight pants or skinny jeans.

## Appendices

### Appendix A. Best Secondary School

#### Administration/Staff Interviewed

Pseudonym	Position
Ms. Brown	Principal
Ms. Cardigan	Vice principal
Ms. Surrey	Art Teacher
Ms. Small	Custodian, afternoon shift leader

#### Students Interviewed

Pseudonym	Sex	Grade	# of interviews	Involvement in 'bathroom project'	Type of visual response
Tom	M	12	3	yes	Washroom painting (girls')
Shannon	F	12	1	yes	None
Sally	F	12	2	no	Word document
Zack	M	12	3	yes	Washroom painting (boys')
Sasha	F	12	3	no	Photo collage
Tammy	F	12	3	yes	Washroom painting (boys')
Cyrus	M	12	2	no	None
Matty	F	12	3	no	Digital collage
Samara	F	12	3	no	Pencil sketches
Zelda	F	12	1	no	None
Lavender	F	12	3	no	Pencil sketches, watercolour painting
Nila	F	12	2	no	none

## Appendix B. Corey Heights Secondary School

### Administration/Staff Interviewed

Pseudonym	Position
Ms. Veronica Lane	Vice principal
Mr. Bob Lance	Custodian, afternoon shift leader

### Students Interviewed

Pseudonym	Sex	Grade	# of interviews	Type of visual response
Trina D.	F	10	2	X photographs emailed
Gwen	F	11	2	Sketched map
Kalinda	F	11	2	One photograph emailed
Shelly	F	11	3	Four photographs emailed
Joanna	F	11	2	none
Kevin	M	12	2	none
Christina	F	11	1	None
Callie E.	F	11	3	18 photographs printed
Sheena	F	11	1	none
Rosie	F	12	2	Sketched map
Mackenzie	F	11	1	none
Sarah	F	11	1	none

## Appendix C. Letters of Information and Consent

# Western Education

## Gender, School and the Washroom Space

### LETTER OF INFORMATION—Graduates

#### **Introduction**

My name is Jennifer Ingrey and I am a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. For my dissertation, I am investigating the ways that secondary school spaces impact students' understanding and experiences of gender and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

#### **Purpose of the study**

The aim of this study is to learn more about how school spaces, namely the washroom, impact how students understand the concept of gender. I believe we can learn a lot by providing students, administration and custodial staff with the opportunity to talk about their experiences of school spaces. I am interested to learn more about how students define and understand gender identity. For example, we know that washrooms are currently divided into boys' and girls' spaces, clearly demarcating two identifiable sexes; but I am curious how students understand this concept. I am inviting students, vice principals, and custodians to help enrich my understanding of the students' experiences in and around these spaces. I would like to learn from recent graduates what they recall from their experiences in secondary school concerning the washroom space.

#### **If you agree to participate**

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to engage in at least one interview in person (at the Faculty of Education, Western University or a public place), or via an alternative mode (i.e. internet, telephone) at your convenience, lasting for approximately 40-50 minutes. You may be invited, if you agree to it, to participate in a follow-up interview (30 minutes to 1 hour each) to pursue or clarify important issues that were identified in the first interview. Overall, I will be asking about your perceptions of and reflections on your experience in school spaces. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed into written format.

#### **Confidentiality**

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. Personal information (i.e. your name and your school) will be removed from transcribed material and the final report; pseudonyms will be used. The information will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office until it is to be destroyed through paper shredding or the erasing of digital files.

#### **Risks & Benefits**

There are no known risks to participating in this study. In terms of benefits, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of gender and schooling in order to contribute to a growing body of research on gender in schools situated within a social justice framework.

#### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

**Questions**

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario at x. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Jennifer Ingrey at x or my supervisor, Dr. Wayne Martino at x. This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ingrey

**Western  Education**

Gender, School and the Washroom Space

Jennifer Ingrey, Doctoral Candidate  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

**CONSENT FORM—Graduates**

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

If Student is under 18 years of age:

Name of Parent/Guardian (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Western  Education**  
Gender, School and the Washroom Space

LETTER OF INFORMATION—Vice Principals

**Introduction**

My name is Jennifer Ingrey and I am a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. For my dissertation, I am investigating the ways that secondary school spaces impact students' understanding and experiences of gender and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

**Purpose of the study**

The aim of this study is to learn more about how school spaces, namely the washroom, impact how students understand the concept of gender. I believe we can learn a lot by providing students, administration and custodial staff with the opportunity to talk about their experiences of school spaces. I am interested to learn more about how students define and understand gender identity. For example, we know that washrooms are currently divided into boys' and girls' spaces, clearly demarcating two identifiable sexes; but I am curious how students understand this concept. I am inviting students, vice principals, and custodians to help enrich my understanding of the students' experiences in and around these spaces.

**If you agree to participate**

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to engage in one interview in person lasting for approximately 40-50 minutes at your school. If you agree to it, you may be invited to participate in a follow-up interview (**40 to 50 minutes**) to pursue or clarify important issues that were identified in the first interview. Overall, I will be asking about your perceptions of and reflections on your experience, and those you have witnessed of students, in school spaces. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed into written format.



**Confidentiality**

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. Personal information (i.e. your name and your school) will be removed from transcribed material and the final report; pseudonyms will be used. The information will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office until it is to be destroyed through paper shredding or the erasing of digital files.

**Risks & Benefits**

There are no known risks to participating in this study. **In terms of benefits, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of gender and schooling in order to contribute to a growing body of research on gender in schools situated within a social justice framework.**

**Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your employment status.

**Questions**

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario at x. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Jennifer Ingrey at x or my supervisor, Dr. Wayne Martino at x. This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ingrey

**Western  Education**  
Gender, School and the Washroom Space

Jennifer Ingrey, Doctoral Candidate  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

CONSENT FORM—Vice Principals

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Western  Education**  
Gender, School and the Washroom Space

LETTER OF INFORMATION—Custodial Staff

**Introduction**

My name is Jennifer Ingrey and I am a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. For my dissertation, I am investigating the ways that secondary school spaces impact students' understanding and experiences of gender and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

**Purpose of the study**

The aim of this study is to learn more about how school spaces, namely the washroom, impact how students understand the concept of gender. I believe we can learn a lot by providing students, administration and custodial staff with the opportunity to talk about their experiences of school spaces. I am interested to learn more about how students define and understand gender identity.

For example, we know that washrooms are currently divided into boys' and girls' spaces, clearly demarcating two identifiable sexes; but I am curious how students understand this concept. I am inviting students, vice principals, and custodians to help enrich my understanding of the students' experiences in and around these spaces.

### **If you agree to participate**

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to engage in one interview in person lasting for approximately 40-50 minutes at your school. If you agree to it, you may be invited to participate in a follow-up interview (**40 to 50 minutes**) to pursue or clarify important issues that were identified in the first interview. Overall, I will be asking about your perceptions of and reflections on your experience, and those you have witnessed of students, in school spaces. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed into written format.

### **Confidentiality**

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. Personal information (i.e. your name and your school) will be removed from transcribed material and the final report; pseudonyms will be used. The information will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office until it is to be destroyed through paper shredding or the erasing of digital files.

### **Risks & Benefits**

There are no known risks to participating in this study. **In terms of benefits, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of gender and schooling in order to contribute to a growing body of research on gender in schools situated within a social justice framework.**

### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your employment status.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario at x. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Jennifer Ingrey at x or my supervisor, Dr. Wayne Martino at x. This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ingrey

Jennifer Ingrey, Doctoral Candidate  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

CONSENT FORM—Custodial Staff

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Western**  **Education**  
Gender, School and the Washroom Space

LETTER OF INFORMATION—Students

**Introduction**

My name is Jennifer Ingrey and I am a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. For my dissertation, I am investigating the ways that secondary

school spaces impact students' understanding and experiences of gender and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

### **Purpose of the study**

The aim of this study is to learn more about how school spaces, namely the washroom, impact how students understand the concept of gender. I believe we can learn a lot by providing students, administration and custodial staff with the opportunity to talk about their experiences of school spaces. I am interested to learn more about how students define and understand gender identity. For example, we know that washrooms are currently divided into boys' and girls' spaces, clearly demarcating two identifiable sexes; but I am curious how students understand this concept. I am inviting students, vice principals, and custodians to help enrich my understanding of the students' experiences in and around these spaces.

### **If you agree to participate**

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to engage in at least one interview in person lasting for approximately 40-50 minutes at your school or the Faculty of Education, **Western University**. If you agree to it, you may be invited to participate in follow-up interviews (30 minutes **to 2 hours each with a possibility of up to five hours in total of your time**) to pursue or clarify important issues that were identified in the first interview. Overall, I will be asking about your perceptions of and reflections on your experience in school spaces.

**There are four possible interviews in total, with three being followup.** The first follow-up interview will ask you about your thoughts on the structure of the school washroom, how it is used to help you think about gender. At this time, I will also show you photographs I have taken of your school washroom, without any people in them, to ask how you understand them in relation to your own knowledge of this space. You will be prompted to think about framing, and composition, as well as anything else these images might mean to you. After this interview, if you so choose, you may be invited to take your own photographs of your school washroom space (again, without any people) from your own perspective. You may also wish to keep written reflections of your thoughts throughout this process and then share these with me; however, sharing is optional.

At the second followup interview, you can share with me these photographs and we could then discuss how you took them, and what they meant to you.

If you so choose, you may be invited to participate in a final interview that will be a focus group. This interview will be conducted with several other student participants (possibly from your school) and provide a space for you to share your ideas about school washrooms as well as brainstorm a new space for the washroom.

Your participation in any stage does not prevent you from ceasing your participation should you feel it necessary. You will not be required to incur any personal expenses for the photography part of the study. If you need assistance with any photography costs please ask me in advance. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed into written format. I will also be providing you with a list of counselling services not because I anticipate any extreme discomfort, but only to ensure that should the need arise, you do not have to ask me for these resources.

### **Confidentiality**

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. Personal information

(i.e. your name and your school) will be removed from transcribed material and the final report; pseudonyms will be used. The information will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office until it is to be destroyed through paper shredding or the erasing of digital files.

### **Risks & Benefits**

There are no known risks to participating in this study. **In terms of benefits, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of gender and schooling in order to contribute to a growing body of research on gender in schools situated within a social justice framework.**

### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status or grades.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario at x. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Jennifer Ingrey at x or my supervisor, Dr. Wayne Martino at x. This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ingrey

**Western**  **Education**

Gender, School and the Washroom Space

Jennifer Ingrey, Doctoral Candidate  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

### CONSENT FORM—Students

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

If Student is under 18 years of age:

Name of Parent/Guardian (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D. Ethics Approval Forms

  
**Western Education**  
 WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
 FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
 USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

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Review Number: 1109-8  
 Principal Investigator: Wayne Martino  
 Student Name: Jennifer Ingrey  
 Title: *Gender, School and the Washroom Space*  
 Expiry Date: April 30, 2013  
 Type: PhD Thesis  
 Ethics Approval Date: March 23, 2012  
 Revision #:  
 Documents Reviewed &  
 Approved: Western Protocol, Letters of Information & Consent, Email Invitation

---

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

---

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

*2011-2012 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board*

Dr. Alan Edmunds	Faculty of Education (Chair)
Dr. John Barnett	Faculty of Education
Dr. Farahnaz Faez	Faculty of Education
Dr. Wayne Martino	Faculty of Education
Dr. George Gadanidis	Faculty of Education
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	Faculty of Education
Dr. Immaculate Namukasa	Faculty of Education
Dr. Kari Veblen	Faculty of Music
Dr. Ruth Wright	Faculty of Music
Dr. Kevin Watson	Faculty of Music
Dr. Jason Brown	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research ( <i>ex officio</i> )
Dr. Goli Rezai-Rashti	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs ( <i>ex officio</i> )
Dr. Susan Rodger	Faculty of Education, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board ( <i>ex officio</i> )

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**Western Education**  
 WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
 FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
 USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 1109-8  
 Principal Investigator: Wayne Martino  
     Student Name: Jennifer Ingrey  
         Title: *Gender, School and the Washroom Space*  
     Expiry Date: April 30, 2013  
         Type: PhD Thesis  
 Ethics Approval Date: August 9, 2012.  
     Revision #: 1  
 Documents Reviewed & Revised Inclusion Criteria, Revised Letter of Information & Consent for Principals  
     Approved: & Vice-Principals

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

*2012-2013 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board*

Dr. Alan Edmunds	Faculty of Education (Chair)
Dr. John Barnett	Faculty of Education
Dr. Farahnaz Faez	Faculty of Education
Dr. Wayne Martino	Faculty of Education
Dr. George Gadanidis	Faculty of Education
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	Faculty of Education
Dr. Julie Byrd Clark	Faculty of Education
Dr. Kari Veblen	Faculty of Music
Dr. Jason Brown	Faculty of Education
Dr. Susan Rodger	Faculty of Education
	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research ( <i>ex officio</i> )
Dr. Shelley Taylor	Faculty of Education, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board ( <i>ex officio</i> )
Dr. Ruth Wright	Faculty of Music, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board ( <i>ex officio</i> )
Dr. Kevin Watson	Faculty of Music, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board ( <i>ex officio</i> )

## Appendix E. Interview Guide Questions

First Phase.

### **Interview with Recent Graduates.**

1. **Introduction:** What can you tell me about yourself as a recent graduate? (When and where did you attend school?)
2. What was school like for you overall? (peer acceptance?)
3. How did you understand gender? (what did it mean? For you or your friends/peers?)
4. What was significant about the school washrooms? (concerns or issues for you or peers?)
5. Describe the washroom spaces as you recall them (location, usage, social behaviour: WALK ME THROUGH IT)
6. What did you witness occurring in the school washroom in terms of student interactions? (what about vandalism, etc.; on graffiti, why do people do it? Of what nature?)
7. Did you ever think anything was problematic about the washrooms at schools? If so, of what nature?

Second Phase.

### **Interview with Vice Principals.**

1. **Introduction.** What can you tell me about your duties? (length of time at school, teaching background?)
2. What degree of your responsibilities are devoted to discipline? (nature of discipline?)
3. Do you have any connections with school custodial staff? What do you see as their role when it comes to the washroom spaces?
4. What have been your dealings with this washroom space?
5. What do you understand about how students are gendered at your school?
6. What do you think is the connection between gender and the school washroom?
7. What problems might students have in using the school washrooms? Was this of a disciplinary nature? If not, in what other capacity? (Do they have anything at all to do with gender?)
8. What have you witnessed or come to know about how students conduct themselves in the unsupervised space of the washroom? (What do other teachers/custodians tell you?)
9. Do you know of any incidents of washroom vandalism or graffiti in your school? (What do you think perpetrated these incidents? What were they about?)
10. In terms of washroom activity, what do you know that is not officially reported? And how do you know it?

### **Interview with Custodians.**

1. **Introduction:** What can you tell me about your duties? (length of time at school, contact with school washroom?)
2. Who do you communicate with on a regular basis? (supervisor, internal or external)
3. How do students use the washroom space?
4. How do you know this information? (Overhear? Witness? Traces?)
5. What do students think of the washroom space? (based on perceptions)
6. How do you think students are gendered? (What does it mean to be a certain gender?)
7. What have you had to clean off/clean up in the washroom spaces?
8. What does this tell you about students?

9. If you do clean up/clean off traces of student behaviour, when do you have to 'report' what you have seen to anyone else? (On process of reporting: How does this work? What is considered significant enough to report and what isn't?)

Justification for Ethics Revision: To include these questions and this interview after initial ethics approval

During data collection, I have noticed that one teacher had a lot of knowledge about what was happening in the bathroom at her school. Before starting fieldwork, I had no awareness of the key players in this school's bathroom project; it was being treated as a pedagogical space, intertwined with the curriculum. I would like to confirm some of the things I am hearing from students, and with the goal of triangulating the data, hearing from this particular teacher is necessary. I have up until now only chatted informally with the teacher, but a proper interview is in order just to cover any gaps in the data. The school's principal was a key source of information, but she also was one step removed from the daily activity that this teacher is able to witness and promote in her teaching capacities. For these reasons I would like to include this one teacher as part of my participant pool and I seek a revision to my ethics clearance.

Interview Questions: Teacher

1. How did the bathroom project start?
2. Why did you support it?
3. What did you see was your role as teacher?
4. How is it linked to your curriculum?
5. What procedures did you set up?
6. What other staff were integral as collaborators?
7. What would you say is your overall teaching philosophy?
8. What kind of feedback or reception has the project gotten from other teachers, students, etc.?
9. How has the project evolved during the few months it has been happening?
10. What do you see as the future of this project? Directions?

Followup interview questions to VP, Principals, and Custodians. (September email to vice principals and custodians)

I just wanted to follow-up on our interview from July. After speaking with several participants now (not including students), across my various sites, I am realizing that the idea of 'gender' is somewhat nebulous and hard to define. I think if I ask about 'gender identity' or 'gender-based violence' (using the language from the Safe Schools Policy from 2006 and Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategies policy document) I might be getting at my question a little better.

So, just briefly, I was wondering what you understand about both 'gender identity' and 'gender-based violence' and how they should be addressed in the schools in terms of equity or safe schools:

1. What is gender identity? How should it be protected against discrimination?
2. What is 'gender-based violence'?
3. How do schools address 'gender-based violence' and protect students from suffering this?

**Interviews with Students.**

**First Interview (general backgrounder)**

1. Introduction: What can you tell me about yourself? (Name, age, grade, favourite school subjects, extracurricular activities, and any ethnic, racial, religious background details you feel comfortable sharing)
2. What is school like for you? (comfort, safety, anything troubling?)
3. Where are the preferred spaces and spaces you avoid in school? Why are they marked as such for you?
4. What do you understand about gender, or sexual identity or orientation? (Give examples of people's characteristics.)
5. How are people expected to act or to behave according to their gender?
6. Do you know of any kids who have trouble at school because of their gender? (provide examples)
7. How do the school washrooms impact you or your peers?
8. What are some of the problems or issues students have with using the school washrooms?
9. Do you talk to anyone about issues or experiences surrounding gender? What is the nature of these discussions?
10. I invite you to keep a journal/reflection notes from this interview and if you would like to participate in the following interviews/exercises, I would invite you to share those written thoughts with me.

### **Interviews with Students.**

#### **Second interview (about the washroom, and invite to next sessions)**

1. Follow-up: Have you thought of anything you would like to discuss or go back to from the last interview? (anything affected how you think about your experiences in school)
2. On the experiences of space: What can you tell me about the washrooms in your school? (How are they used/misused? Are some used by certain people and not by others?)
3. Does anything bother you about school washrooms?
4. How do you see gender and the washroom connected?
5. Think about some issues that students have surrounding the washroom in your school. What are some of these? (How do you come to know this? Stories?)
6. Photo elicitation: I am going to show you some photographs I took of your school washrooms. What can you tell me about what you see in these? How do these photos relate to your own experiences of the school washroom?
7. If we were thinking about how I took these photos, we should talk about certain design principles (framing, focus, cropping, what is included/excluded). From these photos, how do some of these design principles affect what you see? What makes sense to you? What doesn't?
8. Pre-planning: If you were to take your own photos to represent how you experience or see the washroom, what are some design principles you might want to consider doing to your photos (re: focus, framing, etc.)? (think about collage, and notes/drawings on photos also). What might you be trying to communicate?
9. Invitation: If you are willing, I would invite you to take photos of the washrooms in your school, and use the display of these photos to communicate what you think about them. However, you are not to photograph any person, in part or whole; this exercise is merely for the photography of the space. (We should also talk about how you would like them

- presented, whether printed or emailed to me, and appropriate reimbursement for printing services)
10. Written Reflection: During the process, jot down notes or ideas or feelings you are having while taking the photos. You can use this writing to help you plan your work, to reflect on your work, or to think about what the school washroom space is a part of your everyday experience and how you think about gender identity in your school.

### **Interviews with Students**

#### **Third Interview (presenting student photography projects)**

1. Follow-up: What would you like to share about the process of making/taking these photos? (What was it like to get started? Challenges? Insights into gender and self?)
2. Could you go through your photos/presentation and explain to me what you took and why? (share written reflections also, if desired)
3. Explain to me some of your design decisions.
4. Now let's talk about your overall meaning. How do these photos help you to understand how gender identity exists in your school?
5. What do you think is missing or what might you change if you were to do this project again?

## Curriculum Vitae

### Jennifer C. Ingrey

#### Post-secondary Education and Degrees:

Doctor of Philosophy, Education Studies  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2009 - 2013

Master of Education  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2006 - 2009

Special Education, Part 1  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2005

Honour Specialist in Visual Arts, Intermediate-Senior  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2003

Bachelor of Education  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
1999 - 2000

Bachelor of Fine Arts  
University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
1995 - 1999

#### Honours and Awards:

Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship  
SSHRC (Social Studies and Humanities Research  
Council)  
\$105,000  
2010 - 2013

Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)  
\$15,000  
2010

W. A. Bishop Townsend Gold Medal in Education  
(Masters of Education Program)  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
2009

Gold Medal, Visual Arts Department  
University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
1999

Third-Year High Average  
University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
1998

Four-year Continuing Scholarship  
University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
1995 - 1999

**Peer-Reviewed Articles:**

Ingrey, J. C. (2013). Shadows and light: Pursuing gender justice through students' photovoice projects of the washroom space. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*. 29(2).

Ingrey, J. C. (2013). Troubling gender binaries in schools: from sumptuary law to sartorial agency. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. 34(3), 424-438.

Ingrey, J. C. (2012). The public school washroom as analytic space for troubling gender: Investigating the spatiality of gender through students' self-knowledge. *Gender and Education*. 24(7), pp. 799-817.

**Book Chapters:**

Ingrey, J. C. (in press). The limitations and possibilities for teaching transgender issues in education to preservice teachers. In E. J. Meyer & A. Pullen Sansfaçon (Eds.), *Supporting Transgender and Gender Creative Youth: Schools, Families, and Communities in Action*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Ingrey, J.C. (in press). The heterotopic washroom in

school space: Binary gender confirmed or no place of one's own? In E. J. Meyer & D. Carlson (Eds.), *Gender and Sexuality in Education: A reader*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Ingrey, J. C. (November 2012). Gendered subjectivities in online spaces: the significance of genderqueer youth writing practices in a global time. In B.J. Guzzetti & T. Bean (Eds.), *Adolescent literacies and the gendered self: (Re)constructing identities through multimodal literacy practices*. New York: Routledge.

**Under Review:**

Ingrey, J.C. (under review). Embodied researcher reflexivity: Reframing a Foucauldian analytics of confessional practice as a basis for interrogating researcher subjectivity and gender privilege. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*.

**Invited Encyclopedic Entry:**

Ingrey, J. C. (upcoming). *Gender Oppression*. The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies.

**Reports:**

Ingrey, J. & Martino, W. (2010). *From Theory to Practice: Infusing Equity and Leadership into the Curriculum* (Final Report), August 30, ETFO (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario).

**Presentations:**

Roundtable: *Navigating Regimes and Ruptures as a Gay Principal Promoting Social Justice in School*  
AERA Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA  
April 2014

Guest Moderator/Online Instructor: *Gender Theories in Education (9626A), Graduate Course Online*  
Week 11: Transgender Theories and Perspectives  
November 2013

Symposium Member: *Heterotopic spaces: Exploring the gendered and heteronormative place that schooling becomes*

Presentation entitled: *The heterotopic washroom in school space: Binary gender confirmed or no place of one's own?*  
AERA Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA  
April 2013



Invited Guest Lecturer: *Data Analysis in Qualitative Methodology*, Diverse Traditions, Graduate Research Course  
 Dr. Michael Kehler, Instructor  
 Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
 London, Ontario, Canada  
 February 2013

Invited Guest Lecturer: *Art and Social Justice*  
 Teaching Art, Bachelor of Education Program  
 Instructor Polly Stringle  
 Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
 January 2013

Invited Guest Lecturer: *Gender Issues in Education*  
 Social Foundations Course, Bachelor of Education/Diploma of Education Program, University of Western Ontario  
 London, Ontario, Canada  
 January 2013

Invited Guest Lecturer: *Privilege and Power*  
 Peace and Social Justice,  
 Instructor Allyson Larkin  
 King's College University  
 University of Western Ontario  
 November 2012

Invited Guest Lecturer: *Queer Pedagogy*  
 Graduate Equity Course, Dr. Goli Rezaei-Rashti, Instructor  
 Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
 London, Ontario, Canada  
 November 2012

Panelist: *Teaching Transgender Issues to Preservice Students*  
 Gender Creative Workshop, Concordia University,  
 Montreal Dr. Elizabeth Meyer & Dr. Annie Pullen  
 Sansfaçon,  
 October, 2012

Invited Panelist: *OGS & SSHRC proposal writing tips*  
 EDUC9715, Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki & Dr. Marianne  
 Larsen  
 September 2012

Invited Panelist: *OGS & SSHRC proposal writing tips*

Doctoral Study Group, Faculty of Education,  
University of Western Ontario  
September 2012

Talk: *Research as Witness, as Outsider*  
Queer Special Interest Group,  
Canadian Society for Studies in Education  
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo  
April 2012

Invited to participate *Speaking the Unspoken:  
Masculinities, Bodies and Body Image*  
An International Symposium, Ottawa, ON  
Organized by Dr. Michael Kehler & Dr. Michael Atkinson  
June 2011

Poster presentation: *The Public Toilet in Schools as Site  
for Gender Trouble*  
Queer Research Day, Feminist Studies  
University of Western Ontario  
April 2011

Talk: *The Public Toilet in Schools as Site for Gender  
Trouble*  
Research Symposium, Faculty of Education  
University of Western Ontario  
April 2011

Invited Guest Lecturer: *On gender fluidity*  
Teaching for Equity and Social Justice, Bachelor of  
Education  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
January 27, 2011

Invited Guest Lecturer: *Gender fluidity and Transgender*  
Teaching for Equity and Social Justice, Bachelor of  
Education  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
February 18, 2010

Invited Guest Lecturer: *From Gender Binaries to Gender  
Fluidity*  
Graduate Equity Course, Dr. Goli Rezai-Rashti, Instructor  
Faculty of Education  
University of Western Ontario  
November 2010

**Related Volunteer Experience:**

Reviewer for Education Law Journal  
2013

Reviewer for Journal of LGBT Youth  
Routledge, Taylor & Francis  
2013

PhD student representative, Graduate Programs  
Committee, Faculty of Education, UWO  
2012-2013 academic year

PhD student representative, Publications Committee,  
Althouse Press, Faculty of Education, UWO  
2012-2013 academic year

Parent Council, YMCA University Child Care  
2013

Parent Volunteer in Junior Kindergarten, University  
Heights Public School, London, ON  
2012-2013

Reader for CASWE CSSE submissions  
2011

**Related Work Experience:**

Teaching Assistant & Curriculum Development  
*Social Foundations of Education*  
Dr. Allan Pitman (supervisor)  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2013

Teaching Assistant/Instructor  
*Teaching for Equity and Social Justice*  
Dr. Goli Rezai-Rashti (supervisor)  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2012-2013

Teaching Assistant, *Teaching for Equity and Social Justice*,  
Dr. Wayne Martino and Dr. Goli Rezai-Rashti  
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2010-2012

Research Assistant  
 Dr. Wayne Martino and Dr. Goli Rezai-Rashti  
 Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario  
 London, Ontario, Canada  
 2009-2013

Teacher, Secondary School, English and Visual Arts  
 Thames Valley District School Board  
 2005-2008

Teacher, Secondary School, English and Visual Arts  
 Waterloo Region District School Board  
 2001-2004

Occasional Teacher  
 Initial Education, London, UK  
 2001

**Professional  
 Memberships:**

Gender and Education Association, 2013

American Educational Research Association, AERA  
 2013

Canadian Society for Studies in Education  
 Special Interest Groups: CASWE (Canadian Association  
 for the Study of Women and Education)  
 QSEC (Queer Studies in Education and Culture)  
 2012 to present

Certified Teacher, Ontario College of Teachers  
 May 2000 to present