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M.Soc.Sc(Clinical Psychology)

Title:

The writings on the wall: Perspectives on
South African bathroom graffiti.

Do gender differences exist in the amount,
content and tone of South African bathroom
graffiti? In what way does gender constrain
the type of bathroom graffiti produced?

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DECLARATION

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Sciences(Clinical Psychology),
in the Graduate Programme in
Clinical Psychology, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.**

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was not used. It is being submitted for the degree of *M.Soc.Sc.(Clinical Psychology)* in the faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any other degree or examination in any other University.

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Date

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Abstract

This study explored the content, tone and amount of graffiti produced in South African bathrooms in KwaZulu-Natal. Raw graffiti was collected during 2008 from ‘institutions of higher education’. One of the primary aims of this study was to investigate if gender identities continue to operate in private, anonymous contexts. Politeness theory is utilized as a theoretical framework to generate hypotheses about the direction of influence gender may exert on graffiti if it continues to operate in private contexts. Inscriptions were written down in books. Thematic analysis was then applied, which led to the generation of content categories in content analysis on which chi-squared statistical procedures were applied. The categories were analysed in terms of amount, dominant content and tone, and were stratified in relation to gender. Ecosystems theory was used in an attempt to more holistically understand our sample within the context in which it was created. This study has found that gender had a significant influence on the amount, content, and tone of the graffiti produced. It was found that males dominantly produced tags and political graffiti content, and were more likely than females to produce neutral and negatively toned graffiti. Females produced significantly more graffiti than males and dominantly produced interpersonal content. We hypothesised that our findings were due to gender roles being internalised and continuing to operate in private contexts, especially in contexts where gender is salient, like a bathroom. We argued that the cognitive representation of an inscriber’s gendered audience influences them to behave in gender-typical ways, and in this behaviour their gender is performed, even in the private, anonymous context of the bathroom

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study sampled graffiti in ‘institutions of higher education’ in South Africa. Institutions of higher education are educational institutions and are subject to laws and social norms applied to all educational institutions in South Africa. Educational institutions are supposed to be based on a common South African culture, which values political, social, economic, and gender equality (Hatchard, 1994). Graffiti is hypothesised to be a rich well of insight into the values and beliefs of the inscriber and the society from which they originate. It has been hypothesised that graffiti would be particularly useful in gauging the values and beliefs of people in the racially charged and politically sensitive setting of South Africa. Other methods of attempting to uncover censored values and beliefs may have resulted in altered, socially desirable answers. However, graffiti, as collected and analysed in this study, would allow us to circumvent socially desirable answers and uncover the frustrations, values and beliefs of an ‘equitable’, ‘tolerant’ South African society.

This study also aims to increase our understanding of the ways in which socially constructed concepts such as gender become internalised and performed, even in a private setting such as a bathroom. This study also aims to further our understanding of the ways in which gender influences and constrains the tone and content of our social interactions by analysing gendered graffiti content in light of Politeness theory, and by testing hypotheses about the gendered nature of social interactions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is hypothesized that graffiti is rich in meaning and could give researchers insights into the minds of the graffitist (someone who writes or draws graffiti). In addition it is considered to be a legitimate gauge of the moral and cultural values of the society from which they originate (Bartholome & Snyder, 2004; Farr & Gordon, 1975). Graffiti also allows us to identify and explore controversial topics within societies (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997).

When people think of graffiti they commonly envision symbols inscribed on public walls. Graffiti is also often associated with hip-hop culture and disenfranchised individuals on the fringes of society. Within the hip-hop culture, the prototypical inscription produced is a tag. A 'tag' is a personal signature which can belong to an individual or group and conventionally denotes the presence of the individual or group or is an indication of their claim of ownership over a particular area. Research argues that prototypical tagging is not just about claiming territory (spatial organisation) but also serves a more complex and pivotal function: the construction and maintenance of group identity formation.

There are many different types of graffiti inscribed in many different locations which serve a multitude of functions. However, the purpose of this study is to explore bathroom graffiti. Dundes (1966) used the term *latrinalia* to specifically refer to bathroom graffiti, and subsequent research has also adopted the coined term to more concisely and effectively be able to discuss this specific type of graffiti inscription. Unlike other conventional types of graffiti inscribed, *latrinalia* has specific rules which govern its site of inscription; these rules necessitate consideration when exploring this medium of expression. An exhaustive discussion of the rules which govern this site will be outlined later.

More ‘formal’ definitions of graffiti usually refer to writings and drawings in areas that are socially prohibited, like any area considered to be public property. When researched by Anderson and Verplanek (1983, as cited in Bartholome & Snyder, 2004), graffiti was found to contain three distinct categories: Tourist-graffiti, inner-city graffiti and latrinalia.

Latrinalia research interchangeably utilises the terms ‘bathroom’ and ‘toilet’ to refer to what most South Africans refer to as a ‘toilet’; I will continue to interchangeably use these terms depending on the research study discussed. Latrinalia broadly refers to unwanted inscriptions in toilets, however most latrinalia studies more concisely define it as unwanted inscriptions within toilet stalls. Latrinalia inscribers, more than other graffiti inscribers, have to contend with a restriction of space when trying to convey their meanings. Research suggests that graffiti can reveal strategies of communication utilised by two or more social actors who lack co-presence (Omoniyi, 2000). In relation to this, this study attempted to predict the behaviours of graffiti inscribers as a function of communication strategies commonly utilised by two social actors (males and females).

Anonymity

The bathroom has unique characteristics that make the analysis of graffiti interesting. All latrinalia studies reviewed, collect or review data from public bathrooms. Public bathrooms refer to bathrooms that many individuals have access to. Bathrooms, even public bathrooms, are thought of as private spheres. This characteristic of privacy results in a characteristic unique to bathroom graffiti: the assurance of anonymity for graffitiists. The graffitiist does not have to debate with someone and try to account for their opinion, they merely anonymously express their opinion in any way they choose (Gonos, Mulkern &, Poushinsky, 1976).

Omoniyi (2000) argued that latrinalia is a discourse between two social actors who lacked co-presence. In this study, it was suggested that the macro-context influenced what latrinalia individuals inscribed (Omoniyi, 2000). It was argued that latrinalia as a

mediated dialogic discourse would reflect group identities and group-specific norms of communication (Omoniyi, 2000).

Graffiti Analysis

Bruner and Kelso (1980) criticise the methods of analysis used by most graffiti studies. They criticise positivist (purely quantitative) and psychoanalytic (purely interpretive) approaches to analysing bathroom graffiti because they under-attribute and over-attribute meaning respectively. They suggest that to positivists, meaning is assumed to be implicit in the manifest content of graffiti; and they argue that psychoanalytic interpretations have a weak link to any actual collected graffiti (Bruner & Kelso, 1980). Bruner and Kelso (1980) highlight that in most studies graffiti is a form of communication between people of the same gender, and argue that researchers need to acknowledge the impact of this aspect in the analysis of their findings. They advocated for the use of triangulated data. Bruner and Kelso (1980) used questionnaires, interviews and recorded graffiti in conjunction. They argue that the use of triangulated data may decrease the inconsistent findings produced by graffiti research.

Otta (1993) conducted a comparative study of graffiti with 20 predetermined categories that graffiti inscriptions were coded into. She compared her findings to that of Wales and Brewer (1976) and Barbosa (1985 as cited in Otta, 1993). Her sample was taken from university buildings over a two month period. Otta (1993) found that overall, the second most dominant category was 'politics' (15%) and that both men and women had similar frequencies of political content. She compared this to Barbosa (1985, as cited in Otta, 1993) who reported that more political graffiti was found in university buildings.

Bates and Martin (1980) like many previous studies also sampled universities. They also used content analysis with pre-existing categories based on previous literature and used chi-square statistics to ascertain significant differences over time and across genders and content-categories (Bates & Martin, 1980). Bates and Martin highlight that 'trivial graffiti' (non-socially commenting content) accounts for over 45% of male graffiti

content in their study, compared to 12% of female graffiti. Bates and Martin found that women had more hostile toned inscriptions than men, in contrast with the findings of Bruner and Kelso (1980), and Schreer and Strichartz (1997). They also found that 'issue-oriented content' (social commentary in some way) accounted for over 45% of female graffiti content compared to 21% of male graffiti. Bates and Martin suggest that this lack of male social and political graffiti content may be related to differing avenues of social expression for men and women. They argue that men may have avenues of social expression where they feel their voices are heard and therefore may not feel the need to express 'socio-political' graffiti content compared to women, who may perhaps still feel unheard and lack other avenues of expression (Bates & Martin, 1980). They do however acknowledge that their explications may not reflect the true reasons for the differences in graffiti content, and may just be reflections of their bias (Bates & Martin, 1980).

Clingman (2004) conducted content analysis on latrinalia and interpreted the content categories as a reflection of the graffitiists' intentions. Clingman merely mentions that overall, the most prevalent theme was 'political' at 17,9% of the total graffiti inscriptions. He then further analyses this to inform us that the 'political' theme was the most prevalent female theme at 30,3% of all female inscriptions, and the second most prevalent theme for men at 15,6%. This is also supported by Bates and Martin's (1980) findings that females produced almost twice the amount of political graffiti as males. Even though Clingman claims to use grounded theory, he did not put forward any explanations as to why 'political' content in particular was so prevalent in the latrinalia inscriptions.

Whiting and Koller's (2007) study explored male toilet graffiti at a British university with particular emphasis on the social functions it serves and the discursive structures utilized. Whiting and Koller suggest that latrinalia consists of characteristics of both spoken and written communications, thus making it possible to investigate and analyse latrinalia using methods and theories which apply to textual data as well as social interactions. They argue that graffiti is a mediated linguistic interaction and therefore can be analysed using conversational analysis and theories about communication strategies,

such as politeness theory. This study argues that graffiti retains characteristics of written communication, and can therefore be analysed using discourse analysis (Whiting & Koller, 2007). Whiting and Koller attempt to explore the impact of three interrelated contexts on the structure and function of male latrinalia. The study proposes that the micro-context (physical location of inscription production and reception), the meso-level (social norms and relations of the institution sampled), and the macro-context (the wider socio-cultural context) influence why and how people inscribe latrinalia (Whiting & Koller, 2007).

Whiting and Koller's (2007) findings revealed five utterance/response patterns: zero response; the utterance/response chain; addition/insertion; substitution; and deletion. This study attempted to use politeness theory to predict the likelihood of a latrinalia response, and used discourse analysis to predict the form of a latrinalia response. Whiting and Koller observed that declarations were the least likely latrinalia inscription to induce a response.

Graffiti and Social Norms

Gonos et al. (1976) explored the possible influence of anonymity on the thematic content categories of graffiti. The study's aim was to reveal that the content categories of graffiti may not be positively correlated with the social norms of the society from which it is taken, because graffiti as a medium of expression constrains the type of content that can be expressed (Gonos et al., 1976). Most theories on graffiti hypothesize that graffiti is an accurate indicator of social norms, and then create graffiti theories and interpret findings based on this assumption (Gonos et al., 1976). Stocker, Dutcher, Hargrove & Cook's (1972 as cited in, Gonos et al, 1976) first hypothesis was that graffiti was an accurate indicator of social norms. Stocker et al. (1972) hypothesized that there was a positive correlation between societal condemnation of homosexuality and the frequency of homosexual graffiti. Stocker et al's third hypothesis went on to suggest that the gendered differences in graffiti could be attributed to the differences in the childhood socialization of boys and girls, and a decrease in gender differences in graffiti would be

because of the decrease in differential socialization of the genders as theories of masculinity and femininity evolve.

Gonos et al. (1976) criticises Stocker et al.'s (1972) three hypotheses by providing an alternate hypothesis. Gonos et al. (1976) argue that the relative frequencies of different thematic contents are a reflection of individuals' strong sentiments in opposition to the current values of their society. They hypothesise that an inverse correlation exists between frequencies of graffiti content and social norms and values (Gonos et al., 1976). They argue that if a value is prohibited by society to be publicly expressed, then it is more likely that someone with the need to express that opinion would choose an anonymous medium of expression to 'give voice' to the value (Gonos et al., 1976). In this view, the more society tolerates homosexuality, and prohibits public expressions of homosexual insults, the more anti-homosexual content will be represented in graffiti in order to release expressive pressure (Gonos et al., 1976). Gonos et al. suggest that, instead of childhood socialization as an explanation of any gender differences in the thematic content of graffiti, the content of expressive graffiti should be seen as a result of the normative structures of the community constraining or prohibiting the expression of those values. Values that are being suppressed by a society form the expressive content of graffiti (Gonos et al., 1976). In order for graffiti to contribute to the understanding of a social phenomenon, it must be considered in its original social context.

Obeng (2000) conducted a study on the language attitudes of Ghanaian society and their relationship to the graffiti produced. He found evidence that supports Gonos et al.'s (1976) hypothesis about the inverse relationship between social norms and the thematic content of graffiti. Ghana is supposed to be a tolerant, ethnically and linguistically diverse society, but has high socio-political graffiti content (anti-ethnic and anti-linguistic) (Obeng, 2000). He concluded that the high socio-political content of graffiti showed that Ghanaian bathroom graffiti was used as a forum to communicate discordant social issues affecting the society (Obeng, 2000). Obeng (2000) argued that 'imitation' was present in the inscriptions. This deals with the degree to which a previous inscription elicits a response or influences inscribers to write similar content. It is

important to note that the data Obeng (2000) collected consisted of only 23 inscriptions collected from male bathrooms in the University of Ghana.

Bartholome and Snyder's (2004) latrinalia study found racially and socio-politically diverse patrons of a restaurant were allowed, and even encouraged to write graffiti, which makes this bathroom site slightly different from the other bathrooms sampled in graffiti research. It could be argued that this change in the rules which normally govern the site (public bathrooms) greatly influenced the results of their study so that they could not really be compared to previous research (Bartholome & Snyder, 2004). Bartholome and Snyder suggest that encouraging the patrons to inscribe graffiti took away the prohibiting aspect (the socially prohibited defacing of public property) of the act of inscribing graffiti and put the graffiti inscriber more at ease. Perhaps this is why more female than male graffiti was produced in this study as well as compared to previous research on graffiti. Bartholome and Snyder did not note any significant social or political content, or any significant gender differences. This could perhaps be due to the lack of sensitivity of their content-measuring instrument that was adapted from Anderson and Verplanek (1983, as cited in Bartholome & Snyder, 2004), and as a result, a significant amount of inscriptions were placed in the miscellaneous category.

Gender and Graffiti

There are many social issues that graffiti could grant us an insight into, but the trend in research has been to look at the social issue of gender, and in particular, gender differences in graffiti. A study that is constantly referred to in most of the literature reviewed, is a study by Kinsey (1953). Kinsey found that women inscribed less graffiti content in total, and he concentrated on the amount of sexual and erotic graffiti inscribed (Kinsey, 1953 as cited in Farr & Gordon, 1975). He found that women inscribed less sexual and erotic graffiti than men, and suggested that this was because women (even in the bathroom) were influenced and inhibited by social norms, especially the social norms related to women and sexuality (Kinsey, 1953 as cited in Farr & Gordon, 1975). Kinsey argued that women were socialised to be polite, respectful and sexually submissive and

uninterested. Kinsey hypothesised that the social norms surrounding gender and sexuality operated even in the private space of the bathroom (Kinsey, 1953 as cited in Farr & Gordon, 1975).

Farr and Gordon (1975) partially replicated Kinsey's original study. The aim of this study was to investigate and compare changes in American sexuality. Since this was a comparative study, it adopted Kinsey's theory that sexual graffiti was a great source of men and women's suppressed sexual desires (Farr & Gordon, 1975). Kinsey argued that society suppressed the expression of any sexual desires by men or women in that society, but more so for women (Kinsey, 1953 as cited in Farr & Gordon, 1975). Patriarchal societies (like those in South Africa) place little value on the thoughts, feelings and desires of women. Highly conservative societies, like the one sampled in Kinsey's study, perpetuate their conservative ideologies through the socialisation of their gender stereotypes and gender double-standards (Kinsey, 1953 as cited in Farr & Gordon, 1975). These conservative ideologies are then internalised by its members, who feel internal guilt for having any thoughts, feelings or desires that oppose their social norms. When compared with Kinsey's study, Farr and Gordon's results showed that there was an increase in the percentage of 'erotic' graffiti made by women and a decrease in 'homosexual' graffiti for both genders. There was a marked increase in the frequency of female sexual graffiti compared to Kinsey's 1953 study. Farr and Gordon interpreted this to mean that women were less inhibited in 1975 than they were in 1953 which led them to pay greater attention to the sexual aspects of a relationship. This study aimed to illustrate how graffiti could give us insightful information, and be indicative of the prevalent social norms of the time and a legitimate gauge of the moral and cultural values endorsed by the society from which the graffiti originated. Farr and Gordon argued that the changes in the social norms surrounding women manifested themselves in the changes in the frequency of erotic graffiti. They suggest that although women were less inhibited than previously, they were still more inhibited than men, which was illustrated by men making more erotic references than women (Farr & Gordon, 1975).

Farr and Gordon's (1975) comparative study found that gendered thematic content did change between the 1950s and the 1970s. However, Arluke, Kutakoff & Levin (1987) found few changes in the gendered thematic content of graffiti in the decade between the 1970s and 1980s even though there were many changes happening in the societal norms governing gender. One explanation of this was that the childhood gender socializations were still operating, and the emerging ideologies had not had enough time to take hold in the consciousness of individuals, even though they had already become socially accepted (Arluke et al., 1987). However, they did produce one significant finding: an increase in female political content (Arluke et al., 1987; Clingman, 2004; Schreer & Strichartz, 1997). Arluke et al. (1987) also suggest that social roles could extend themselves into private, anonymous spheres (like bathrooms), depending on the degree of internalisation of those roles. Arluke et al., suggested that an increase in the political content of graffiti should be expected in members of an oppressed group, like women (Arluke et al., 1987; Clingman, 2004; Schreer & Strichartz, 1997), and black people (Sechrest & Olson, 1971 as cited in Schreer & Strichartz, 1997). Arluke et al. (1987) suggest that females use graffiti as a way to deal with, and find different ideologies and strategies to domination; and males use graffiti as a way to reassert their dominance.

Differential Functions of Graffiti

Many theories have attempted to account for the gendered difference in thematic content categories. One of the more interesting hypotheses refers to the differential functions that graffiti may serve for men and women (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997). It is hypothesized that graffiti may serve as a psychological safety valve that releases the pressures created by suppressive societies (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997). If this 'safety valve' theory was true for both men and women in society, we would expect there to be small, insignificant differences in thematic gender content for people in the same society. However, most graffiti studies produce significant differences in the thematic content across genders. An alternate hypothesis is suggested: that men may use graffiti as a psychological safety valve to release suppressive social pressure, but women use graffiti

as a form of communication, to give or receive advice about personal situations or things affecting women as a group (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997). Evidence for this hypothesis is given by the differences in the dominant thematic content for men: sexual (Arluke et al., 1987; Bates & Martin, 1980; Otta, 1993; Schreer & Strichartz, 1997), and insulting (Green, 2003; Otta & Santana, 1996) and women: romantic-advisory (Arluke et al., 1987; Otta, 1993; Otta & Santana, 1996), and recently, political (Clingman, 2004; Schreer & Strichartz, 1997).

Green (2003) sampled a university library in his latrinalia study and found that the most dominant topic in male graffiti was politics, both at a macro level (affecting their society or the world) and micro level (affecting their communities); they also discussed social issues that impact on them personally. Women discussed social issues that may have affected them personally or affect women as a group like ‘rape discussions’ (Green, 2003). This reinforces Schreer and Strichartz’s (1997) findings and hypothesis that women use graffiti as a form of communication seeking advice about things that affect women as a group. Green also found that ‘themes’ seem to run in cubicles, and suggests that the high ‘political’ content, to some extent, is as a result of ‘imitation’ where people may be more likely respond to the already existing political comments in the cubicle rather than creating a completely unrelated inscription. This is supported by Obeng’s (2000) findings on ‘imitation’ Ghanaian graffiti.

Factors influencing Graffiti Production

Schreer & Strichartz (1997) hypothesise that the gender of the graffitist and the diversity of the population from which they come could be predictors of the differences in the content of graffiti. A majority of the reviewed literature focuses on the gender differences in graffiti content, but produce inconsistent results. It is hypothesized that these discrepancies could be due to differences in the target populations (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997). It was found that men produced more prejudiced graffiti (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997). Bruner and Kelso (1980) also found that men made more racist and anti-gay remarks than women. Bruner and Kelso found that the tone of female graffiti

was advisory and the tone of male graffiti was derogatory, which is in line with Wales and Brewer's study in 1976. Bruner and Kelso also hypothesised that the differences in the 'erotic' versus 'romantic' content of graffiti, could be as a result of the differences in socially acceptable methods of expression that apply to men and women, and not a real difference in the content itself. Bruner and Kelso found that graffiti reflected the “differential positions of men and women in the social structures” (Bruner & Kelso, 1980, p. 250). They also found that women produced an increased amount of political content, especially political content that affected women as a group, like differential power relations in society (Bruner & Kelso, 1980). This could perhaps be explained by the hypothesised differential functions that graffiti may serve for men and women (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997).

Sechrest & Olson (1971 as cited in Schreer & Strichartz, 1997) looked at four different types of higher learning institutions that tended to vary in diversity, and average socio-economic status (SES). Sechrest & Olson (1971 as cited in Schreer & Strichartz, 1997) found that the content of the gendered graffiti differed. It was found that at the highest SES, there was a decrease in the differences in gendered thematic content (Sechrest & Olson, 1971 as cited in Otta & Santana, 1996). Schreer & Strichartz's (1997) own findings and Obeng's (2000) findings in Ghana also support this hypothesis.

Otta and Santana (1996) sampled university and secondary school bathrooms and hypothesised that gender differences would narrow the higher the level of education and age of inscriber. They collected data over a three month period. They then subjected the data to content analysis along eighteen predetermined categories (Otta & Santana, 1996). Otta and Santana (1996) further analysed the data by performing chi-squared tests on the data to compare differences between genders, sites and among categories. They found that sexual and political themes dominated the university locations, compared to 'sports' and 'presence' in the secondary school. Otta and Santana emphasize the context specific findings of graffiti research by highlighting the differences in graffiti findings in America compared to Brazil. They also comment on the fact that the gender-gap in graffiti is not a general characteristic across American studies either.

Previous South African Graffiti Research

Reddy (2008) investigated the socio-political content that emerged in South African bathroom graffiti in both ‘institutions of higher education’ and off-campus sites. I conducted this study in partial requirement of my honours degree in psychology. That study found that dimensions of a population like, socio-economic status, level of education, diversity of the population, and the gender of the inscriber, have an effect on the amount and content of socio-political graffiti (Reddy, 2008). Although the dominantly negative tone of socio-political graffiti did not differ according to site or gender, men did produce more negatively toned inscriptions than women in this study. The findings suggest that men write more negatively toned inscriptions than women and is supported by most graffiti research. We found more socio-political content was produced by the on-campus than the off-campus sample.

This study found that the most dominant male on-campus (macrosystemic) category was politics (31.7%). It was argued that politics (in patriarchal societies) is predominantly seen as a male domain: more men than women chose to study it and become informed about it, and as a result have stronger and more well informed views on politics, and thus produce more political graffiti as in the findings of that study (Reddy, 2008). The second most dominant male on-campus category was homosexuality, with predominantly negatively toned inscriptions. Although the predominant tone in both male and female graffiti across both sites is negative, females on-campus are slightly less negative than men on-campus. However, I found that a limited focus on the socio-political (macrosystemic) graffiti produced did not fully explore the full potential that latrinalia offers in regard to the sensitive norms and values expressed by this society. This study also recommended that the gendered nature of latrinalia could be an enlightening aspect in the analysis and prediction of content categories and tone.

Gender is Socially Constructed

Gender is argued to be a socially constructed concept that not only refers to the biological sex of an individual, but to the socially constructed norms in a society that determine the boundaries of masculinity and femininity in that society (Pisani, 2008). The social norm of gender, in any society, is not a static concept, and the properties of masculinity and femininity are often propagated by societies and renegotiated by the individuals within those societies (Billington, Hockey, & Strawbridge, 1998).

Ecosystems theory argues that there are bi-directional interactions between all levels of a system, and attempts to understand individuals within the context in which they develop (Bronfrenbrenner, 1994). Ecosystem's theory will be more comprehensively discussed in a later chapter. Individuals' subjected to socially constructed norms of masculinity and femininity do not just adopt these roles, but adapt them to be individually relevant and meaningful (Giddens, 1999).

Gender is a socially constructed concept (social construct) that is not binary, static or universal (Hoyle, 2010). Gender is not something that inherently exists due to genes (Hoyle, 2010). There is a commonly overlooked difference between sex (biology / chromosomes) and gender (social construct).

Although I am unable to date the inception of this thought, I have a long-standing history of challenging the concept of gender, both intrapsychically and interpersonally. As a child and adolescent I remember rebelling against others' attempts to gender me. I was constantly preoccupied with the imbalance of power. Why should others get to decide who I should be and what it is possible and not possible for me to do?

The concepts of masculinity and femininity are relative and dynamic; they differ between cultures and are constantly renegotiated within cultures (Weedon, 2004). Gender is one of the most influential social roles we ascribe to (Pisani, 2008). One might ask how and when we acquire this social role. With medical advancements, children are often

gendered long before they are even born, with rooms and clothes in specific colours to indicate gender, and 'gender-appropriate' toys and names. I am not attempting to argue that males and females don't have any biological differences, but rather that nature (genes) has a significant influence on nurture (how the child is treated). I argue that identity construction (through gender role propagation) may even precede the birth of a child. Taking my previous argument into consideration is it not conceivable that our gender roles become unconsciously internalised and experienced as though they originated within us?

Foucault argued that the most effective form of social and ideological norms were the ideas that felt natural, and were experienced as though they were our own ideas, just a part of who we are, a part of our own identity (Foucault, 1991; Weedon, 2004). Foucault's work's main focus was on the social construct of race, but his ideas about the nature of power briefly touch on the social construct of gender. Foucault argued that the most effective ways for governments to rule was to control the thoughts of the people they are trying to oppress (Foucault, 1991). He argued that the internalisation and propagation of social norms would result in oppressed individuals censoring themselves. Foucault coined the term 'surveillance' to refer to this unconscious process of self-censoring (Foucault, 1991). Foucault argued that this internalisation of the thoughts of others meant that the physical presence of the 'other' was no longer necessary in order to influence an individual's behaviour, the individual would themselves constrain their behaviour according to their internalised social norms (Foucault, 1991).

Foucault's ideas about power, surveillance and internalised social norms are well established and accepted concepts in psychological theory. Many psychological theories argue that gender is a socially constructed concept. If gender, like the socially constructed concept of race discussed by Foucault, is internalised, then perhaps his concept of surveillance would continue to operate and obviate the physical presence of the other to influence behaviour. This would result in the internalised gender norms of the individual continuing to influence their behaviour, even in private and anonymous contexts, such as a bathroom stall.

Summary of available literature

Although gender differences in the content of graffiti has been the most studied aspect of graffiti, its focus has been limited. It has been shown that in most contexts, sexuality is the most dominant graffiti content category overall. Within the factor of gender, the categories most focused on have been sexuality, romantic, and erotic content. All other content categories have only been mentioned but not analysed. Many studies stop their analysis of graffiti at a description of the dominant content categories, either over time or across genders. In fact very few studies take a theoretical stand-point in the analysis of their findings, if in fact any analysis takes place.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Brown and Levinson's (1987) 'Politeness theory' is based on the assumption that a model person (MP) possesses two vital characteristics: *rationality* and *face*. Rationality is described as a mode of reasoning an individual utilises during social interactions in order to determine what strategies to employ in order to achieve their goals. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that politeness is a product of peoples' efforts to promote their 'positive' and 'negative' 'faces'. They propose that a person's 'positive face-needs' refers to their needs to belong, to have a 'self' affiliated and identified with a group or collective (Brown & Levinson, 1987). A person's 'negative face-needs' refers to their need for autonomy, to have a self that is unique and distinct from the collective group, a self that is respected and free from oppression (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is suggested that people enact negative or positive politeness depending on which needs they need fulfilled. This is sometimes referred to as *face-work*.

Politeness theory argues that people usually enact more positive than negative politeness. This is usually because people have vested interests in preserving each other's face-needs (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Politeness theory suggests that if the audience member's (listener or reader) face needs are threatened by a face-threatening act (FTA), then the audience member is more likely to threaten the performer's (speaker or inscriber's) face. This leads to a cycle in society where everyone's face-needs are maintained by the 'other', for fear of a retaliatory face-threatening act.

'Face', as it is conceptualised in politeness theory, has sometimes been likened to the concept of 'self-esteem'. Politeness theory suggests that we attempt to maintain and increase our self-esteem during our social interactions by employing politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that we attempt to maintain our self-esteem in both public and private situations.

A 'Face threatening act' (FTA) refers to when an act of communication attempts to infringe on or decrease (threaten) the audience member's (hearer or listener) self-esteem. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that politeness strategies developed in order to deal with FTA's. In any social interaction both the speaker's and hearer's face needs are placed in jeopardy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Brown and Levinson suggest that politeness strategies can be grouped into four broad categories: bald on-record; positive politeness; negative politeness; and off-record indirect strategies. These strategies have developed as a means of "satisfying communicative and face-oriented ends, in a strictly formal system of rational practical reasoning" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 58).

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory argues that it is a formal, deductive, and predictive system. Most critics question the universality of politeness principles. Kopytko (1993) criticises the vague and poorly defined nature of some core concepts utilised by Brown and Levinson: *face*; *rationality*; *reductionism*; and *context*. Kopytko (1993) argues that Brown and Levinson over-value the power of their theory when they assert that politeness theory is deterministic in nature. Kopytko (1993) proposes that politeness theory is more validly and reliably able to describe the 'probabilistic tendencies' of speech communities (such as gender) rather than individuals.

Politeness theory is an appropriate theoretical framework for this research project because it takes into account not just what is said (content), but also how something is said (tone). Through the analysis of the content and tone of latrinalia inscriptions we will be able to predict and explore the politeness strategies utilised by latrinalia inscribers.

Politeness theory argues that women are socialised into employing less face-threatening acts, and as a result, perform more positive-politeness or neutrally polite acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is also suggested that men attempt to reassert their dominance in society by performing more negative-politeness than women (Holmes, 1995). If these socially constructed gender roles are internalised and then performed, we may be able to explore this through examining anonymous graffiti inscriptions in both men and women's bathrooms.

When it comes to graffiti, the immediate face-threat is removed. If politeness theory is used as a theoretical framework to hypothesise about the possible gender differences that may be expressed in graffiti inscriptions, it could increase our understanding as to the ways in which socially constructed concepts such as gender become internalised and performed, even in a private setting such as a bathroom.

Politeness theory was developed in an attempt to understand the interaction between social actors (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The use of the theory in this study is done with an acknowledgement that its application to textual data derived from public bathroom walls, is not ideal. However, inscriptions in a public bathroom satisfy the key concepts of the ‘social interaction’ criterion of the theory, and remain similar enough for the theory to be applied without modification. The previous literature on latrinalia proposes that social norms are internalised so this study assumes that an audience for the social interaction is internalised, and the social actor (graffitist) attempts to save public ‘face’ even in the private setting of the bathroom.

Brunner and Kelso (1987) argued that latrinalia was a “silent conversation among anonymous partners” (p. 240). Whiting and Koller (1997) also argued that graffiti inscriptions be thought of as dialogic, and as attempts by the inscribers to communicate with their hypothesised audiences. Whiting and Koller suggest that latrinalia consists of characteristics of both spoken and written communications, thus making it possible to investigate and analyse latrinalia using methods and theories which apply to textual data as well as social interactions.

CHAPTER 4

AIM AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Aim

Most studies on graffiti have been done on university campuses. However, most graffiti studies have limited their gender-focus to the aspect of erotic or sexual graffiti content, and what influence gender has on the amount of graffiti produced. However, there are other factors, such as the level to which a society is suppressed, that have not been taken into consideration. South Africa's progressive constitution puts a lot of suppressive pressure on its society because of its 'fundamental principals of equality and tolerance' (Hatchard, 1994). South African society, as a result, can be regarded as a potentially suppressed society and a lot of emphasis has been put on being 'politically correct' in public conversation. It has been shown that graffitists do take their audience into account, and like any narrative discourse, the content of graffiti changes when the audience changes. Exploring graffiti is a non-reactive way in which the norms and values of a society can be explored while circumventing the socially desirable answers that respondents may be compelled to give if other reactive methods of inquiry were used.

Graffiti is a gendered conversation, and it is important to explore how men and women talk to others of the same gender (Holmes, 1995). Gender is a social construction that is influenced by the norms of society (Coates, 1998). What it means to be a man or a woman means different things in different contexts (Holmes, 1995). So, this study aims to use graffiti as an index of what gender differences in communication are manifested in South Africa.

This study aims to address some of the shortcomings of graffiti research by developing an understanding of the gendered content manifested in the racially, politically and gender sensitive context of South Africa. We aim to explore South African bathroom graffiti to investigate if any gender differences exist, as well as the extent to which gender differences impact on the amount, content and tone of bathroom graffiti in South Africa.

Research Hypotheses

In light of politeness theory we may expect:

1. A) In order to reduce ‘face-threatening acts’ (FTA’s) both men and women should produce mainly neutral or positively toned inscriptions, that do not produce or invoke high threat from the audience.
B) Women are more likely to produce neutral or positively toned inscriptions in order to reduce FTA’s.
2. It has also been suggested that men enact more negative-politeness. Negative-politeness refers to an individual’s need and attempt to be recognized, valued and respected as a unique autonomous individual. Due to men enacting more negative-politeness than women, we should find that men produce high intrapersonal content that defines their uniqueness in relation to others in society.
3. A) Due to women more frequently enacting positive-politeness, we should find that women dominantly inscribe interpersonal content, and in an attempt to avoid FTA’s, produce fewer intrapersonal and macrosystemic content than men. Women’s high interpersonal content would satisfy their positive-politeness face-needs by affiliating them with a group or collective.
B) Due to the low possibility (if any) of FTA’s in bathrooms, women are more likely to engage in interpersonal conversations than men.

Even though this study suggests that the contents produced by South African latrinalia may be contextually driven, the functions that those contents serve may still be understood using politeness theory. For example, the ‘intrapersonal’ section of the data comprises of multiple contents, all of which we hypothesise to serve an individuating function, similar to the negative-politeness criterion described in politeness theory.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

This study is a positivist study that draws on qualitative methods of analysis (thematic analysis) and quantitative methods of analysis (statistical analysis). Thematic analysis is used to qualitatively analyse raw data in order to generate content categories thereby generating a frequency distribution, to which quantitative statistical procedures can be applied. This is in line with Bruner and Kelso's (1980) suggestion that a triangulation of perspectives (qualitative and quantitative) may enhance our understanding of graffiti and decrease the inconsistent findings produced by graffiti research.

A paradigm is a belief system that guides social science research. It is a way in which we view the world and construct knowledge about the world (Terre Blanche & Duurheim, 2006). Paradigms are the background knowledge with which we perceive, understand and seek to study the world. Paradigms shape the questions which we ask, and how we plan to answer them (Terre Blanche & Duurheim, 2006). The aim of the Positivist paradigm is to provide a high degree of accuracy and objectivity that can be duplicated due to the law-like stable nature of the reality investigated within this paradigm (Terre Blanche & Duurheim, 2006). The Interpretivist paradigm, unlike the Positivist paradigm, looks at the "internal reality of subjective experience" and not a stable external reality (Terre Blanche & Duurheim, 2006, pg. 6). Unlike in the Positivist paradigm, the researcher does not remove themselves from the research process, in order to claim objectivity, but acknowledges the context in which they and their subjects live. Both the subject and the researcher are not removed from a socio-political setting (Terre Blanche & Duurheim, 2006). This study attempts to traverse both positivist and interpretivist paradigms, resulting in tensions in the research between our ability to generalise to a wider population, and our attempts to validly represent the sample's subjective experience of relatively stable social structures (gender) which impact on their perception of their internal realities.

Sampling

The study only sampled graffiti in on-campus ('institutes of higher education') bathrooms. Since one can never know who exactly inscribed bathroom graffiti any sampling procedures had to be in relation to the site (public bathrooms), and the hypothesised characteristics (such as gender) of graffiti inscribers within that site. The study sampled graffiti in both male and female bathrooms in on-campus locations. The bathroom locations were randomly selected within the campuses with the exception that no residences were sampled because those bathrooms were not readily accessible to the general on-campus population.

The type of sampling used could be called cluster sampling. This study, in line with previous research, suggests that the norms and values of a society are related to the latrinalia inscriptions produced. One of the purposes of this study is to explore the effect of gender on latrinalia produced. As a result, this study attempts to control for or partially minimise the effects of other variables known to influence latrinalia, such as educational level or age. In order to do this, we have to apply our sampling procedures to sites (public bathrooms) within which individuals within the South African society may inscribe latrinalia.

In order to more confidently be able to attribute our findings to the variable being studied, gender, this study samples 'institutions of higher education'. These institutions consist of individuals around a similar age, a majority of whom will have at least a minimum grade 12 educational level. Following conventional reasoning in research design, one would assume that our results would not be able to be generalised to the greater South African population, most of whom are less educated. However latrinalia research suggests that gender differences decrease with higher levels of education. Therefore if gender differences do exist within our sample, it is likely that they would be more pronounced in a less educated sample. Otta and Santana's (1996) findings support their hypothesis that the gender gap in latrinalia narrows the more educated the sample.

The ‘institutions of higher education’ sampled by this study can be thought of as a cluster of the latrinalia inscriptions that can be sampled at other similar institutions in South Africa, and perhaps more broadly, in the general South African population. Sub-clusters within this sampling design tend to have homogeneity within sub-clusters and variance between sub-clusters, which is in line with our cluster-sampling design. We further divide our sample cluster by gender (sub-clusters). Male and female bathrooms within ‘institutions of higher education’ were randomly sampled. Randomly sampling male and female bathrooms were done in order to strengthen our research design, and increase our ability to reliably generalise our findings to our population of individuals within these institutions. In order to more strictly maintain one of the criterion of latrinalia, anonymity, this study only sampled inscriptions within bathroom stalls.

The population to which we will most reliably be able to generalise our findings are the individuals within the ‘institutions of higher education’ which were sampled for this study. We argue that it is also possible to (less reliably) generalise our findings to the population of individuals within similar institutions around South Africa, and that our sample be considered a cluster of that larger population. Although ‘institutions of higher education’ within South Africa are thought of as not truly representative of the larger South African society in terms of socio-economic status, graffiti research has suggested that gender differences narrow the higher the socio-economic status and educational level. In light of this, we argue that if a gender gap exists within our sample, that it would be more pronounced in the wider South African population who are less educated and most of whom are in the low socio-economic status. This will allow us to speculate, with some degree of reliability, about the gender differences in South African latrinalia and how these relate to the values and beliefs of the South African population.

Data collection procedure and method

A male postgraduate student and I collected data for this project during June 2008, after receiving ethical clearance (appendix 1). We collected bathroom graffiti from our respective gender's bathrooms.

Inscriptions

The data was written down in notebooks. Inscriptions(writings or drawings) must be human made, with an instrument that renders the inscription to be either temporary or permanent, and the inscription must also be located in the bathroom stall (Clingman, 2004). In these notations (example in appendix 2) we included: the written inscription / picture / tag that is inscribed, and next to the inscription, we indicated the level of prominence with a number between one and four (appendix 3) that corresponded to a location within the stall. Next to that we have an 'I' like structure where the two horizontal lines indicate the average height of the inscription, and the line in between them indicates if pen (one line) or something thicker than pen was used (two lines).

A single graffiti inscription/unit was identified by similar handwriting, similarity of instrument used to render the inscription, and coherent content flow. After each inscription, a single line was drawn across the page to indicate the end of a graffiti inscription, except in the case of a conversation.

Conversations

A conversation in this study refers to when there is evidence of replies to a graffiti unit. Each reply is considered to be an individual graffiti unit as well as part of the conversation. Each unit in a graffiti conversation was noted down as normal, with the only difference being that a single line was drawn at the end of the whole conversation and not at the end of each inscription. We attempted to maintain the chronological order of the conversation if we could determine any. After all the inscriptions in a stall were noted, then a double line was drawn to indicate the end of a stall. Replies to an original

graffiti unit were coded as ‘responses’ because their content was influenced by the original latrinalia unit.

Tags

A ‘tag’ refers to a type of signature in graffiti. Graffiti pictures were taken down as accurately as possible. Tags were sometimes accurately taken down, or merely indicated as tag in the notebooks, with the rest of the inscription information taken down as normal. At the beginning of a data collection session, the date was noted, and each time bathrooms in new buildings were sampled, it would be indicated along with the date.

Data analysis procedure and methods

Thematic Analysis

Prior to content analysis, thematic analysis involved immersion in the data in order to achieve exhaustive and meaningful content categories. The thematic content categories were mutually exclusive, which meant that a collected graffiti unit could only be coded into one of the thematic content categories; the one that best described that unit of graffiti (as guided by the coding manual). The content categories were also exhaustive, which meant that every unit of graffiti found a meaningful category to which it belonged, and was not simply placed in a ‘miscellaneous’ category, as in previous graffiti studies. We also adopted an ecosystemic perspective on content analysis. This meant that we further analysed and separated the categories in relation to whether the graffiti units within them referred to intrapersonal contents, interpersonal contents or provided a macrosystemic commentary (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Ecosystems Theory

Ecological models of human development attempt to understand individuals within the contexts in which they develop (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological paradigm was introduced in the 1970’s and has had a substantial effect on the ways in which social research approaches the understanding of human behaviour. Ecological models of human development represent a more holistic approach to the

understanding and analysis of human behaviour. This model argues that it would be impossible to validly attempt to understand an individual's behaviour in isolation of the context within which it occurs. This model outlines five inter-related levels of influence which interact with individuals.

Microsystems refer to interactions in the person's immediate environment. Bronfenbrenner (1994) describes a microsystem as a

“...pattern of activities, social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment.” (p. 39).

Ecosystemic theory argues that enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment of an individual (termed proximal processes), mediated by the content and structure of the microsystem, operate to produce and sustain individual development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The second level of interaction, termed the *mesosystem*, refers to the links between microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An example would be the bi-directional interaction between school (microsystem) and home (microsystem).

The third level of interaction, termed the *exosystem*, consists of the interactional processes taking place between two or more settings,

“...at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).

An example of an exosystem, for a child, would be the influence of their parent's workplace on their home environment. The child is involved in the home environment, but is not directly involved in their parent's workplace; but changes in their parent's workplace can affect the child. For example, if a parent's workplace decides to have

longer work-hours, this affects the child because it limits the availability of the parent in the home environment.

The *macrosystem* (system four) refers to the overarching pattern of the three previous systems discussed, and has been conceptualised as “a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). In particular, it refers to “the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).

The fifth and last system, the *chronosystem*, is Bronfenbrenner’s attempt to account for the passage of time and how it affects the individual and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Ecosystemic theory acknowledges the dynamic nature of individuals and the environments in which they exist, and argues that this is in part a function of the passage of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasises the bi-directional nature of the interaction between all five systems.

Subsequent to thematic analysis and the emergence of content categories, we found that the latrinalia contents could be grouped according to three ecosystemic categories: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and Macrosystemic. Intrapersonal and interpersonal categories consist of microsystemic and exosystemic content and inscriptions about the individual or interactions within the individual’s immediate environment.

The macrosystemic category consists of inscriptions regarding the social structures of society, such as religion and gender. The way in which this study defines macrosystemic graffiti is similar to the way in which Bates and Martin (1980) defined issue-oriented-content as a type of social commentary. In this study macrosystemic content refers to social and political content concerning or affecting groups of people such as ‘race’ groups, genders, political values, economic perspective, views on nationality and commentary on sexual orientation.

Content Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Content analysis was chosen because of its ability to quantify qualitative data such as graffiti texts and pictures so that qualitatively raw data could be quantified and have statistical procedures applied to it (Bryman, 2004). The product of our content analysis was a frequency distribution table, which contained the number of times a particular type of content was mentioned.

This study looked at the actual latrinalia content and not what people said they saw or would write. Arluke et al. (1987) also used content analysis to analyse their data. Content analysis is an unobtrusive and non-reactive measure, which means that, to an extent, we did not have to worry about 'social desirability' and the effect it has on responses, or the relationship between peoples reported beliefs and 'actual' actions (Foster, & Parker, 1995; Oppenheim, 1992). We are also assured anonymity (a central latrinalia characteristic) – the people who wrote the graffiti cannot be identified, and inscribed it with the purpose to produce bathroom graffiti. They had no idea that it as going to be used in this study, so I did not have to worry about 'observer effects' affecting what graffiti content was written.

Content analysis is seen as a way of objectively counting the number of times (called the frequency) a specific item is mentioned in the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). However, content analysis does acknowledge that there is some degree of interpretation involved on the part of the researcher who codes the raw texts (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). To minimise this 'co-constructed data' aspect of content analysis, a coding schedule and coding manual was created (coding rules). These coding rules were created from a thematic analysis of the raw data collected. Since this is an exploratory study, we wanted to see what type of content emerged out of the data rather than imposing a pre-existing list of content categories, derived from previous research. A coding schedule consists of thematic categories, and a coding manual consists of examples or statements of what should be included or excluded from those categories. Our coding rules were created through a consensus between me and my supervisor.

Analysis of Tone

The data was also analysed according to the tone of the graffiti inscription (positive, neutral or negative tone). This was done in order to increase the extent of meaning that can be expressed within the content analysis table and because this study argues that the tone of an inscription could illuminate the intent and meaning of the inscription content.

Reliability

Since reliability is a highly valued goal in quantitative research, an inter-rater reliability test was conducted on each sample of the content analysed data. This was done by giving the coding schedule to someone else and having them code the data collected to see if their results matched that of the original coder (Bryman, 2004). Inter-rater reliability was assessed by the degree of agreement between the two coders and is indicated by a correlation percentage (Bryman, 2004). The inter-rater reliability test, tests the reliability of the coding schedule and tests if it is being strictly followed or not. In content analysis, the coding schedule must be strictly followed; to increase the reliability, objectivity and accuracy of the data produced (Bryman, 2004). Reliability is a way of seeing if a test will produce the same findings when replicated (Foster & Parker, 1995). In content analysis, once the coding schedule is created, it must be strictly followed, so that if someone else uses the same coding schedule to code the same data, then they should produce the same findings. This produces high inter-rater reliability (Bryman, 2004). High inter-rater reliability alerts us to the fact that our coding rules were both being strictly followed and meaningful enough to cover all of the expressed graffiti content.

Although the use of a coding schedule tries to reduce the degree of interpretation required by the researcher, this interpretation still exists to some extent; for example, in choosing content categories and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Content analysis is now seen as a “method for describing and interpreting the artefacts of a society or a social group” (Marshall, & Rossman, 2006, p. 108). This is another reason why content analysis

was a good data analysis method for the purposes of this study since it aimed to explore the complex relationship between social norms/values, an individual's beliefs and the bathroom graffiti produced by their society. Content analysis allows us to describe the graffiti collected in the sample, and make inferences about the society from which they were collected.

Chi-squared Statistical Analysis

After content analysis of the data was completed, I applied chi-squared statistical procedures to frequency tables to compare the data along the lines of different criteria to test this study's research hypotheses. A chi-squared statistical test is used to compare observed versus expected results in line with a research hypothesis, to determine if gender (the independent variable) significantly influences content, amount, and tone (various dependant variables) of graffiti inscriptions. Wales and Brewer (1976) as well as Otta and Santana (1996) also used chi-squared statistical procedures to further analyse their data. Wales and Brewer (1976) highlighted that a strict interpretation of any chi-squared results implies independence of samples. This study, like Otta and Santana (1996) and Wales and Brewer (1976) acknowledge the unlikeliness of a graffiti unit's independence from another graffiti inscription's, but sizable differences in content category frequencies may make up for our weak statistical rigor.

CHAPTER 6

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study has received ethical clearance from the university's ethics committee (appendix 1). Where this study will use examples of content categories (for example, 'John Singh was here'), the names of people used in the graffiti will be 'blanked out' (for example, '[Name] was here'), to further ensure their anonymity (even though they may not have been the ones who wrote the graffiti). Since this study was interested in the sensitive anonymous content of latrinalia, this study does not want any of the sampled sites to incur any adverse affects as a result of this study so, this study will not name any of the sites sampled by this study. Context is important in graffiti, because graffiti is thought to be a useful indicator of the inverse social norms of a society. The sampled 'institutes of higher education' were in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province of South Africa. However, the specific 'institutes of higher education' are not of vital importance.

CHAPTER 7

LIMITATIONS OF THE DESIGN

Although the type of content analysis we propose to apply is very comprehensive and allows us to analyse graffiti along many different lines (amount, content, tone and gender), it still reduced the qualitatively rich text to mere content categories. Future graffiti research should use the type of content analysis outlined in this study and triangulate it with a qualitative method of analysis such as discourse analysis in order to more fully analyse the graffiti inscriptions to provide a richer and more clear understanding of the graffiti produced, and its relationship to the society from which it was sampled.

The institutions of higher education from which this sample was taken may not reflect an ideal representative cross-section of the South African population in terms of: level of education, race, gender and socioeconomic status. However, the sample was randomly chosen from within these institutions and can be compared to other graffiti studies which were also done on 'on-campus' samples. The use of 'on-campus' samples does not discount the values and content expressed by that population but may limit the reliability with which we are able to generalise our findings to the greater South African population.

CHAPTER 8

RESULTS

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Latrinalia in relation to Gender and Tone

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Male	13	96	65
Female	57	99	60
Total	70	195	125

Overall, the most used tone in latrinalia inscriptions is Neutral (195), the second most used tone is negative (125) and lastly positive (70). For males, the most used latrinalia tone is neutral (96), and secondarily negative (65). Females produced mostly neutral (99) and secondarily negatively (60) toned inscriptions.

There is a significant relationship between gender and the tone of graffiti inscriptions produced, $\chi^2(2) = 23.65$, $p < 0.001$.

There is a significant relationship between gender and the production of negatively toned graffiti inscriptions or positive and neutrally toned graffiti, $\chi^2(1) = 4.06$, $p < 0.05$, with women more likely producing positive and neutrally toned graffiti than men.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution Comparing Male and Female Latrinalia Content

Content Category	Male	Female	Total	Total %
Intrapersonal	66	37	103	26.41
Name	5	9	14	3.59
Tags	46	7	53	13.59
Personal Desires/Wants	1	7	8	2.05
Idiosyncratic	14	14	28	7.18
Interpersonal	48	141	189	48.46
Humour/Wit	8	15	23	5.90
Affiliation	17	39	56	14.36
Questions	3	18	21	5.38
Responses	16	62	78	20
Sexual Invitation	4	7	11	2.82
Macrosystemic	60	38	98	25.13
Race(comment)	2	10	12	3.08
Race(response)	6	1	7	1.79
Gender	2	0	2	0.51
Religion	2	21	23	5.90
Xenophobia	6	2	8	2.05
Homosexuality	16	3	19	4.87
Politics	19	1	20	5.13
Economic	7	0	7	1.79
Total	174	216	390	

Overall, the most dominantly inscribed ecosystemic category is *Interpersonal content* (48.46%), and the least inscribed is *Macrosystemic content* (25.13%).

The most dominantly inscribed ecosystemic category for males is *Intrapersonal content* (37.93%) and for females is *Interpersonal content* (65.28%). The least inscribed ecosystemic category for males is *Macrosystemic content* (34.48%) and for females is *Intrapersonal content* (17.13%).

There is a significant relationship between gender and the content of graffiti inscriptions produced, with females more likely to produce interpersonal content, and males more likely to produce intrapersonal content, $\chi^2(2) = 54.99$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Female Latrinalia Content in relation to Tone

Content Category	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total	Total %
Intrapersonal	0	37	0	37	17.13
Name	0	9	0	9	4.17
Tags	0	7	0	7	3.24
Personal Desires/Wants	0	7	0	7	3.24
Idiosyncratic	0	14	0	14	6.48
Interpersonal	45	54	42	141	65.28
Humour/Wit	0	14	1	15	6.94
Affiliation	21	6	12	39	18.06
Questions	5	11	2	18	8.33
Responses	18	19	25	62	28.70
Sexual Invitation	1	4	2	7	3.24
Macrosystemic	12	8	18	38	17.59
Race(comment)	2	0	8	10	4.63
Race(response)	1	0	0	1	0.46
Gender	0	0	0	0	0
Religion	8	8	5	21	9.72
Xenophobia	1	0	1	2	0.93
Homosexuality	0	0	3	3	1.39
Politics	0	0	1	1	0.46
Economic	0	0	0	0	0
Total	57	99	60	216	

Inter-rater Agreement: 96.95%

The most dominantly inscribed ecosystemic category for females is *Interpersonal category* (65.28%), and the least inscribed is *Intrapersonal category* (17.13%). Females produce dominantly neutrally toned (45.83%) inscriptions, and almost equally produce positively (26.39%) and negatively (27.78%) toned inscriptions. The dominantly inscribed female content is *Responses*, and secondly *Affiliation* content and the least inscribed contents are *Gender* and *Economic* content.

Within the Intrapersonal category, females produce only neutrally toned inscriptions and the most inscribed content is *Idiosyncratic* content. Within the Interpersonal category, females produce mainly neutrally toned inscriptions and the most inscribed content is *Responses*, and secondly *Affiliation*. Within the Macrosystemic category, females produce mainly negatively toned inscriptions and the most inscribed content is *Religious* content.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Male Latrinalia Content in relation to Tone

Content Category	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total	Total %
Intrapersonal	0	66	0	66	37.93
Name	0	5	0	5	2.87
Tags	0	46	0	46	26.44
Personal Desires/Wants	0	1	0	1	0.57
Idiosyncratic	0	14	0	14	8.05
Interpersonal	4	21	23	48	27.59
Humour/Wit	0	8	0	8	4.60
Affiliation	1	4	12	17	9.77
Questions	2	1	0	3	1.72
Responses	1	4	11	16	9.20
Sexual Invitation	0	4	0	4	2.30
Macrosystemic	9	9	42	60	34.48
Race(comment)	0	0	2	2	1.15
Race(response)	0	0	6	6	3.45
Gender	0	0	2	2	1.15
Religion	2	0	0	2	1.15
Xenophobia	2	0	4	6	3.45
Homosexuality	4	2	10	16	9.20
Politics	0	7	12	19	10.92
Economic	1	0	6	7	4.02
Total	13	96	65	174	

Inter-rater Agreement: 96.3%

The most dominantly inscribed ecosystemic category for males is *Intrapersonal category* (37.93%), and the least inscribed is *Interpersonal category* (27.59%). Males produce dominantly neutrally toned (55.17%) inscriptions, secondarily produce negatively toned inscriptions (37.36%) and least of all, positively (7.47%) toned inscriptions. The overall most dominantly inscribed male content is *Tags*, and secondly *Politics* and the least inscribed content is *Personal Desires/Wants*.

Within the Intrapersonal category, males produce only neutrally toned inscriptions and the most inscribed content is *Tags*. Within the Interpersonal category, males produce mainly negatively toned inscriptions (47.92%) and the most inscribed content is *Affiliation*, and secondly *Responses*. Within the Macrosystemic category, males produce mainly negatively toned inscriptions (70%) and the most inscribed content is *Politics* and secondly *Homosexuality*.

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Male and Female Interpersonal Conversations in relation to Tone

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Male Responses	1	4	11	16
Female Responses	18	19	25	62
Total	19	23	36	78

This study observed 78 responses in total. Responses consisted of 20% of the total latrinalia produced, 20.51% of responses were inscribed by males and 79.49% of responses were inscribed by females.

There is a significant relationship between gender and the likelihood that latrinalia inscribers will enter into conversations, $\chi^2(1) = 27.12$, $p < 0.001$, with females more likely to engage in conversations than males.

Summary and Conclusions of Results

Gender and Tone

There is a significant relationship between gender and the tone of graffiti inscriptions produced, $\chi^2(2) = 23.65$, $p < 0.001$.

Gender and Amount

Females produced more latrinalia inscriptions than males.

Gender and Content

There is a significant relationship between gender and the content of graffiti inscriptions produced, $\chi^2(2) = 54.99$, $p < 0.001$.

The dominant male latrinalia content inscribed is *Tags* and secondly *Politics*. The dominant female latrinalia inscribed is *Responses* and secondly *Affiliation*. The least inscribed male latrinalia is *Personal Desires/Wants*. The least inscribed female latrinalia is *Gender* and *Economic* content.

Hypothesis 1

1. A) Both males (62.64%) and females (72.22%) produce mainly neutral and positively toned inscriptions.
1. B) There is a significant relationship between gender and the production of negatively toned graffiti inscriptions or positive and neutrally toned graffiti, $\chi^2(1) = 4.06$, $p < 0.05$, with females more likely producing positive and neutrally toned graffiti than males.

Hypothesis 2

2. There is a significant relationship between gender and the content of graffiti inscriptions produced, with females more likely to produce interpersonal content, and males more likely to produce intrapersonal content, $\chi^2(2) = 54.99$, $p < 0.001$.

Hypothesis 3

3. A) Females dominantly inscribe interpersonal content and produce fewer intrapersonal and macrosystemic content than males.
3. B) Females are more likely to engage in interpersonal conversations than males, $\chi^2(1) = 27.12, p < 0.001$.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION

Introduction

When I started this project, the question plaguing me was: Are we still gendered, even if no one else is around? The question seemed challenging and perhaps even overly ambitious. However, the medium of graffiti provided me with a unique method of investigation, as well as the opportunity to be able to control for extraneous factors which may influence an individual's behaviour.

Latrinalia inscribers are assured anonymity, so that another person's physical presence cannot influence the content, tone or decision to inscribe latrinalia. Public bathroom stalls were sampled in 'institutions of higher education' using the data collection methods previously outlined. Thereafter content analysis and chi-squared analysis were applied to the raw data.

An important aspect to remember is that latrinalia is a gendered conversation, only other females or males will be able to see what the graffiti inscribers produce. The data was grouped into seventeen content categories, which were further sub-divided into three ecosystemic categories, and lastly chi-squared statistical procedures were applied to the gendered groupings of data in order to investigate our research hypotheses.

Politeness theory was developed in an attempt to explore the underlying power dynamics as they are manifested in individuals' attempts to communicate with another person who has co-presence. Politeness theory argues that men and women, who have co-presence, communicate in gender-specific ways. The application of politeness theory as a theoretical framework allowed me to hypothesise about the manner and direction of influence that gender norms could exert on males and females.

Upon completing this project, the question begs, am I any closer to answering if we are gendered, even in isolation? The short answer would be, yes, there appears to be a

significant relationship between gender and the content, amount and tone of the latrinalia produced. Social science research is conducted to investigate social phenomena, not just a specific concept or field of research. The findings of this study will have an impact on latrinalia research, but it is my hypothesis that the way in which this study was argued will allow future readers and researchers to seize the unique opportunity that graffiti, as a medium of exploration, allows us to investigate the effects of gender on behaviour.

Gender and Amount

This study observed that females produced more latrinalia than males. This is in contrast with most latrinalia research (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997). Wales and Brewer (1976) also found that females produced more latrinalia in total. In contrast to our own findings, Arluke et al. (1987) found that females produced much less graffiti than males and observed significant differences in gendered graffiti content. Previous graffiti research provides many explanations for why females in their samples may produce less graffiti than males. The most consistent explanations assert that females are more bound by social norms, do not like to deface public property, and choose more socially accepted methods of communication.

Gender and Content

As in this study, Schreer and Strichartz (1997) found that male latrinalia did not significantly contain more sexual graffiti than female latrinalia. However they argued that this may not be a true representation but be a result of large relative differences in the total graffiti produced by males and females. I question the logic of studies that would argue that female liberation should be judged by the degree to which females begin to behave like males.

Our findings suggest that females produced far less political latrinalia than males, and produce more interpersonal/advice-seeking latrinalia. Our findings are supported by a majority of previous research which has shown that females dominantly produce

romantic graffiti (Brunner and Kelso; Otta, 1996; Wales and Brewer, 1976) and advice-seeking graffiti (Cole, 1991; Otta, 1993). In contrast, Schreer and Strichartz (1997) and Arluke et al. (1980) found that female latrinalia in 'institutions of higher education' dominantly focused on political content affecting the female social group as a whole.

Macrosystemic Content

According to the South African constitution, everyone is theoretically equal and entitled to their social and political beliefs without the threat of any kind of discrimination (Hatchard, 1994). This has the potential to create high socio-political suppressive pressure in our sample, thus resulting in the male sample inscribing high socio-political graffiti.

Politics

This study found that the second most dominant male content category was politics. Obeng (2000) also found that men produced high socio-political graffiti content. In contrast, Arluke et al. (1987) found an increase in female political graffiti between the 1970's and 1980's, but still found that men produced more graffiti inscriptions overall. An example of a political inscription in the male sub-cluster is:

Inscription: If You Don't CARE ABout Politics
You Deserve to Live in A SHIT Country

Perhaps since politics (in patriarchal societies) is predominantly seen as a male domain, more men than women chose to study it and become informed about it. As a result they have stronger and more informed views on politics and produce more political graffiti as in the findings of this study. Politics is seen as a male domain, an indication of this is Africa only recently having elected its first and currently only female president. This is indicative of the gendered nature of our society and is reflected in the differences in the gendered graffiti content, as women produce high interpersonal graffiti.

Intrapersonal Content

Arluke et al. (1987) suggested that males who inscribed their data experienced increased gendered-role boundedness than before. Arluke et al. (1987) argued that inscribing graffiti may have assisted the males in their sample in negotiating their masculinity within a particular social context. Our study suggests that this may result in males using graffiti as a tool to reassert their dominance and individuate themselves as unique and powerful social actors who possess agency. We suggest that this may account for our findings of males producing high intrapersonal graffiti content which declares their presence and uniqueness, thus reinforcing their positive self-esteem.

Whiting and Koller (2007) argue that some latrinalia content is inherently more face-threatening than others. Intrapersonal content, representing inscribers' attempts to present themselves as unique autonomous individuals, inherently has a higher face-threat than interpersonal latrinalia content.

Tags

The most dominant male content category is 'tags'. An example of a tag is:

Inscription: [Name] was here
Prominence: 2 Size: 20cm

Tags tend to be inscribed in areas of high prominence with the highest likelihood that they will be seen. Tags also tend to be quite large, also increasing the likelihood that they will not be overlooked or missed by the audience.

The tag indicates the presence and uniqueness of the inscriber, thereby fulfilling the inscribers negative face needs. A tag inherently has a higher face-threat than an interpersonal latrinalia inscription because it utilises no politeness strategies to minimise the face-threat(the imposition on the hearer) of the inscription while simultaneously fulfilling the negative politeness needs by announcing them as a unique autonomous individual within a shared community of practice (gender) of the inscriber and audience.

Interpersonal Content

We found that females produced high interpersonal content and were more likely than males to enter into interpersonal conversations. If females use latrinalia as way to deal with and combat domination, it is therefore not surprising that the latrinalia they produce consist of conversations. Cole (1991) also found that female inscriptions were dominantly interpersonal in nature.

Conversations

An example of a female latrinalia conversation is:

Initial Inscription: I have a problem my boyfriend has a child and he's still in love with the mother of his child but I love him alot

Response 1: Leave him sweetheart he is not worth it, find another guy, there are plenty of them out there!!

Response 2: The man is just being a man. Just don't waste your time find another man for you who doesn't have a child. A child always brings parents together and that will give you a problem

This typical example of a female latrinalia inscription portrays many aspects of the female latrinalia collected in this study. Female latrinalia is often interpersonal and neutrally toned, either describing a personal dilemma, or seeking interpersonal advice from their audience.

Gender and Tone

Our findings suggest that there is a significant relationship between inscription tone and gender, with males more likely to produce negatively toned inscriptions than females. Schreer and Strichartz' (1997) findings are consistent with our results. In their study males were found to produce more insulting latrinalia than females. Schreer and Strichartz argued that the greater amount of insulting latrinalia produced by men is as a result of males attempting to reassert their dominance (reinforcing their sense of masculinity) and venting frustration towards threatening out-groups. Their explanation for this finding was a hypothesised inverse relationship which they argued existed

between the prohibition of prejudice and the production of insulting graffiti (Schreer & Strichartz, 1997).

This study found that males were more likely than females to produce negatively toned inscriptions. An example of a negatively toned latrinalia inscription in the male sample is:

Inscription: THERE IS NO ROOM 4 GAYS SO GO TO HELL – devil is gay Fuck you All Guys this is insane

Gonos et al (1976) argue that the more society tolerates homosexuality and prohibits the expression of homosexual insults, the more anti-homosexual content will be represented in graffiti content in order to release expressive pressures. Tolerance is a publicly accepted South African social norm. Tolerance must however operate within the contradictory ideology of patriarchy. Patriarchy promotes male dominance and heterosexuality as the only accepted sexual orientation. These factors may enhance suppressive pressures in the male sample, and lead to negative homosexual inscriptions being produced to relieve suppressive pressure, and perhaps attempt to reassert their male dominance. Arluke et al (1987) also argue that males may use graffiti as a way to reassert their dominance. Perhaps in an attempt to reassert their dominance and relieve suppressive pressure the male sample in this study inscribed predominantly negatively toned homosexual graffiti.

Employment opportunities are something that affects men in the South African population on a daily basis. Although the South African constitution values equality, it makes an exception with regards to 'Black Economic Empowerment' (BEE) and Affirmative Action (AA) in order to correct some of the injustices of our apartheid past. The South African constitution values equality, and promotes gender equality in an attempt to correct the injustices of our patriarchal society. During apartheid, most jobs (especially those that paid well) were reserved for white men. BEE and AA operate to correct South Africa's Apartheid past by requiring companies to hire more non-white people in all levels of the company, especially management positions with better salaries.

The underlying idea is that the racial composition of companies should reflect the racial composition of the South African society.

Historically, men in South Africa (and most of the world) were given preferential treatment with regards to job opportunities, especially in relation to management positions and jobs thought to be 'male jobs'. In order to correct this past injustice, the South African constitution now promotes gender equality, especially in relations to job opportunities. Gender equality labour laws require most South African companies to hire an almost equal proportion of males and females in all levels of a company. As a result of BEE and gender equality legislations, many males in our sample may be frustrated by few or poor job opportunities, and may look to blame people of other races for this situation, hence producing predominantly negatively toned race(response) inscriptions. This is supported by Bruner and Kelso's (1980) findings that males produce more derogatory graffiti, and Obeng's (2000) findings that men produce high anti-ethnic graffiti content.

Patriarchal ideology conventionally genders social roles in an attempt to define the boundaries of what it means to be male or female. Patriarchal expectations commonly expect males to be the breadwinners and to be 'heads of their families', and in order to claim their male identities, they needed to fulfil these and other characteristics that differentiated them as men. Perhaps the previously outlined hypothesis about the function that graffiti may serve for men is, in this context, valid. The inclination for male latrinalia to be neutral or negatively toned, and for the dominant male latrinalia content to be 'tags' and then 'politics' would make sense if the function that latrinalia is serving for males is to reassert their dominance in an environment where their attempts (inscriptions) would be acknowledged by other men. Perhaps the inscription of latrinalia is an attempt by male inscribers, and female inscribers as well, to behave in gendered ways, and in this performance of their gender, to claim ownership of their gender identity.

Politeness and Graffiti

This study used ecosystems theory to more accurately and holistically understand the individuals who have inscribed the latrinalia we collected. Social norms are not static. History records changing social norms over time (the effect of the chronosystem). Arluke et al. (1987) found that even during periods of marked social change (during the late 1960's and early 1970's) and changes in 'sex-role' attitudes, latrinalia produced continued to reflect traditional sex-role attitudes, and observed that graffiti inscribers, even in the private sphere of the toilet stall, frequently employed socially conditioned communication strategies.

This study found that males were more likely than females to produce negatively toned graffiti. Our findings are supported by Brunner and Kelso (1980), who also found that male latrinalia was more derogatory and hostile than female latrinalia.

In contrast to our own findings that females produce significantly more latrinalia than males, Arluke et al. (1987) found that females produced much less graffiti than males and observed significant differences in gendered graffiti content. An analysis of their findings led them to argue that female latrinalia were more likely to reflect polite social norms of communication. Otta and Snatanna (1996) and Whales and Brewer (1976) argue that reflected gender differences in latrinalia are not due to basic differences between the genders, but rather that this finding is mainly due to cultural conditioning.

Arluke et al. (1987) found that female latrinalia, in comparison to male latrinalia, tended to be more socially acceptable with regard to language and content. The socially constructed concept of gender is sometimes called a social role. Social actors ascribe to and claim ownership of the roles they feel applies to them. Arluke et al. (1987) discussed "the power of roles in influencing ultimate reactions... That is, the potency of roles apparently extends itself even to private settings where anonymity is assured" (p.5). Their study argues that an individual's actions, even in a private space, are mediated by internalised social norms (Arluke et al., 1987). One such social norm is that of gender.

Latrinalia: A Gendered Communication

In anonymous contexts, where the risk of immediate face-threat is removed, common sense would argue that gender differences in communication would decrease or be insignificant because the inscriber, in theory, is not being pressured by the 'other' to play their gender role in private.

This study argues that the audience (the other) with which the inscriber is attempting to communicate, is internalised, just as their gender identity is internalised. Narrative theory argues that in all our attempts to communicate, the hypothesised characteristics of our audience influences the content and method of what is communicated. Although the inscriber may remain anonymous, they have some idea of the characteristics of their audience. In this study the hypothesised characteristics of the audience in a female bathroom would be other women of a similar age, who share similar interests (depending on bathroom location), and who may have encountered similar difficulties

The Social Identity model of DEindividuation Effects (SIDE) model argues that physical presence is not necessary for social norms of a salient group identity to influence an individual's behaviour (Rogers, & Lea, 2005). The salient group identity in a bathroom is gender. From the moment we walk into the bathroom, the signs and symbols place our gender identity as the most salient social identity in that context. The cognitive representation of our gender group has norms of communication and expectations of what's acceptable and unacceptable group member behaviour. The SIDE model argues that salient group identity (gender) influences us to communicate in ways congruent with the norms of that social identity.

Within the context of this study, where the likely audience of the anonymous communication is probably someone of the same gender as the inscriber, one would question what leads our sample to communicate in stereotypically gendered ways. The

increased salience of gender in bathrooms influences individuals to communicate using the conventions of the most salient ‘community of practice’ which they share with their audience, thus increasing the likelihood that the inscribers in our study were influenced by the salience of gender in the bathrooms, as well as the knowledge of their gendered audience, resulting in inscribers unconsciously choosing to communicate using gender-typical characteristics of communication.

Our findings that graffiti is a gendered-conversation may in fact support the hypothesis that it is possible for latrinalia to serve two functions for our inscribers:

- 1) Through the use of gendered characteristics of communication, this may increase their sense of belonging with their gender (fulfilling positive politeness needs).
- 2) Through inscribing graffiti and expressing their thoughts, they are able to reinforce and renegotiate their identity within their community of practice (their gender) by exercising their agency as social actors and simultaneously fulfilling their negative politeness needs.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

Many people would agree that we adjust what we say depending on the context we are in. We internalise the rules of the shifting context and censor ourselves. Foucault termed this ‘surveillance’. I do not argue that society does not censor us, but rather that society’s ability to censor us is so great that we internalise society’s values and come to experience them as our own. We then unconsciously propagate these norms in others.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystems theory was used in this study to further analyse the data collected and group the content categories into three broad categories: intrapersonal content, interpersonal content, and macrosystemic content. If society is thought of as a system attempting to maintain equilibrium, perhaps the propagation of norms can be thought of as one of societies’ attempts to maintain equilibrium (the status quo). Systems theory argues that systems put pressure on individuals who attempt to disrupt the system’s equilibrium; is it not then probable that these individuals would then choose an anonymous medium of expression, like latrinalia, to give voice to alternative discourses which challenge social norms?

Let’s think of society as a system which has a ‘face’ and therefore this face can be threatened by FTA’s. What threatens society’s face is the emergence of alternative discourses, which by their very nature attempt to throw the system into disequilibrium. Society’s face is maintained by the individuals and groups within society who ascribe to the societal norms. Both the people in power (defining these norms) and those with less power (merely ascribing to the norms) play roles in order to maintain society’s equilibrium. The system (society) resists change and all players put pressure on individuals who try to break away from these norms and reconstruct meanings in society. One of the most fundamental meanings, a pillar of society, is gender – what does it mean to be male or female? The organic development of norms is understandable as people look for certainty in a fluid, ever-changing world.

Questions of ethnicity or sex are easily answered and supported by empirical evidence. ‘I am an Indian female’, I might say, but the questions of gender and race are more difficult to ascertain. Have you perhaps ever heard someone say “she’s a tom-boy” or “he’s a coconut”? These statements suggest that regardless of the sex or ethnicity of these people, that they are other than what they are expected to be. Is gender a facet of identity forced on individuals by pressure and expectations? Gender is a group identity. Group identities align you with others who think and behave in similar ways. People have multiple roles which they play in different contexts, and those roles combine to form a complex identity. Narrative theory would argue that gender be thought of as a lens through which we perceive and interact with our environment.

When looking at my research question it appears obvious; of course gender influences bathroom graffiti, so why take this topic any further? Because research is not about what we intuitively ‘know’, but about what we can ‘prove’ to a more or less degree. Certainty in the human sciences is a mythical creature we are constantly chasing, and that is because of the *human* part of the human sciences – human beings are anything but static, and so our truths evolve as we do. The degree to which gender influences graffiti cannot be reduced to a single number, and may never really be known. Because the degree to which one thing influences another thing cannot be definitively measured, but rather it is relative, and when accurately gauged is influenced by a number of factors.

This study has found that gender does influence latrinalia. We found that gender does influence the amount, content, and tone of South African latrinalia in predictable ways congruent with gendered norms of communication. Our study’s findings are an important addition to the field of latrinalia research, as well as the field of social science research, due to the unique way in which we have investigated the socially constructed concept of gender, not as something static, but as a dynamic identity which is performed.

CHAPTER 11

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Most latrinalia research has been done on university samples. Our study chose to sample institutions of higher education in order to control for variables other than gender which could influence latrinalia production. However, as stipulated before, this decision to only sample ‘institutions of higher education’ has limited the degree to which we are reliably able to generalise our findings to the greater South African population. Based on previous research findings, it is our hypothesis that our particular focus on gender differences would intensify in a less educated sample. Future latrinalia research should investigate the validity of this hypothesis by comparing data obtained in academic institutions with data collected from general public bathrooms. This advocated research design would increase the generaliseability of the findings produced.

Most latrinalia research does not adopt a theoretical standpoint to the analysis of graffiti. Utilising a theoretical framework in this study allowed me to generate testable hypotheses and situate my findings within body of knowledge. I would recommend that future graffiti research adopt a theoretical standpoint to the analysis and interpretation of their data.

The unique characteristics of latrinalia and the rich well of insights the data offers lends itself to the application and triangulation of various methods of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, like the methods used in this study. A triangulation of perspectives is what is required to comprehensively explore the breadth and depth of the ontology and epistemology of latrinalia data.

This research study, as well as previous research, has argued that latrinalia data be thought of as dialogic textual data, and as such we chose to utilise politeness theory as a theoretical framework. In light of this argument, I advocate that future research utilise discourse analysis and other methods of conversation analysis to analyse latrinalia.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance

Appendix 2: Illustration of Possible Raw Graffiti Inscription Notation


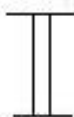


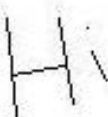



Appendix 3: Meaning of Prominence Numbers: The numbers illustrate the positions in which the inscriptions are written

Appendix 1

Ethical Clearance

Appendix 2

Illustration of Possible Raw Graffiti Inscription Notation

Place	Date
Stall 1	
<p>(Tiles on the walls)</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>(4)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">end of inscription</p>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>(2)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>	
End of cubicle	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>(2)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>G o t o h e l l</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>(Conversation)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <p>TAG / Signature</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: right;"> <p>(3 x 2 3/4) book estimate</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;">  <p style="margin-left: 5px;">pen thickness</p> </div> </div> </div>	

Appendix 3

Meaning of Prominence Numbers:

The numbers illustrate the positions in which the inscriptions are written

