

THESIS

DRAMATURGY AND GENDER PERFORMANCE IN FITNESS SPACES

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ABSTRACT

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This study uses theories from symbolic interactionism and feminist theory to understand performance in fitness spaces. Dramaturgical Theory and the theory of Doing Gender are used to address this topic. The first theory is used to examine the way that actors perform their gender within a gym. This includes space, appearance, and props from Dramaturgical Theory. The second concept incorporates ethnomethodology to examine how the actor fashions an intelligible body and uses their modified body to complete certain performances. Along the way the actor builds competency with certain props. This allows them to complete new performances. This research is important in understanding how power is distributed across fitness spaces. Additionally this study provides insights into participant behavior and can be used to understand how actors use and arrange space.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Dr. Peter Hall

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Walking through a University gym or public gym, it is easy to observe patterns of behavior in the gym based upon gender. When I first began my studies of sociology learning about symbolic interactionism and feminist theories expanded my understanding of the same everyday interactions that I had questioned prior to the beginnings of my studies. As I trained for bodybuilding for years at the gym, I would notice women using the treadmills and men in the weight rooms. I would hear comments about it and buzz words like bulking, toning, and shaping entered my awareness. Once sociology became part of my life, I found frameworks to better understand questions such as “why do women do cardio and men lift?” In this new context, such questions could be answered with deeper and more satisfying responses than “they just do.” This process was slow and the depth of which I could conceptualize answers took years of development. I wrote the initial research proposal for what became this project not long after I began my studies of sociology and this document symbolizes a place on the journey of this inquiry.

At present, I turn towards a theoretical examination. When I read the literature on fitness, I felt the area I wanted to contribute the most to, was to further understand the role of the body in gender performance and the use of the body and its adornments as dramaturgical props. I wanted to examine the ways, that during exercise performance, the body is fashioned as a prop to be subsequently used in the performance of gender. During my time developing an understanding of the body and the gym as social experiences, I worked at a gym and trained for a powerlifting meet that unfortunately I was unable to attend when the time came, however the journeys I took in fitness brought me to this point in my research.

This thesis draws upon experience I have had working in a fitness center, that I refer to in this study as “West Coast Gym.” This site is contrasted with a bodybuilding gym and a larger public gym that is located at a university. I detail my experience observing a fitness community and the norms and values present within. This became a central component of this project as the details of my experience in this location began to reveal that these norms were created in the setting by embodied actors and that these norms reflected the values, knowledges, and connections that the actors brought into the location with them.

The gym itself was a location where members of a community met and interacted in a way that was mediated by the fitness space and available props. Props are inscribed with meaning then competency is built with them. Through repeated use, props are able to inscribe meaning upon the body. This process is reproduced through a process of accounting. To contrast West Coast Gym, I incorporated ethnographic experiences within the bodybuilding gym to compare the ways that a different gym and community uses props to construct gender, and how identities are navigated in different spaces.

I draw heavily on Goffman’s theories as well as gender performance theories. In my research I show that the body is not only a prop but a uniquely used prop in fitness locations. It is capable of change and the changes that the body goes through hold different implications than the changing of clothes or adjustment to one’s demeanor. The presence of one’s physical body in space and the comportment of their body demonstrates a competency with specialized props. To show an example, a powerlifter with years of muscle development enters a shared space differently than a new gym member who has not spent as much time exercising. The two bodies allow each individual to engage in the space differently and enable or constrain different

performances. Also, the literal weight of the objects in the gym such as plates, dumbbells, and barbells require a certain amount of strength, competency, and skill to use. To build this skill a participant must engage in physical training and development, a process that enables certain skills and performances as well as one that can be seen as a performance in and of itself.

This research process began as an inquiry into gender in gyms when I was new to sociology but has transformed into a theoretical question and an examination of fitness and gender. In the process I also spent time considering of the role of the researcher in this process. “West Coast Gym” serves as a location of study used not to examine the individual characteristics of that gym as much as to examine the considerations that a researcher might need to take in the pursuit of knowledge production regarding health and fitness. I include this to acknowledge that this research reflects my current and past position in institutions that create knowledge as well as sites of study. I want to de-center the researcher in this case as to show that this knowledge emerges contextually and that the position I hold and have held in relation to these places should not be viewed as any sort of default position in reference to knowledge.

In the pursuit of information, I have drawn upon literature specific to fitness spaces and theoretical assessments on the construction of gender as a continued performative act. The goal of synthesizing this research, as well as drawing ethnographically upon my own work and experience embedded in a fitness institution, have the aim of making methodological suggestions as to how to approach a study of these communities as well as connecting theory to the act of exercise in a new way that includes gender and body modification.

Fitness institutions connect to a market economy and to research this community is an act of power. I seek to involve a standpoint perspective with the goal of utilizing a feminist

epistemology to benefit future research in fitness environments. Standpoint theory is used to analyze this process as a way of recognizing the interconnection of the research process and the production of knowledge about subjects. The research is done in this way to keep a critical lens upon “whom” this knowledge benefits and to attempt to ensure that the process of knowledge production has an overarching normative goal of producing useful knowledge that is valuable to the subjects of research. Additionally, I seek to further their recognition of the power present in the location of study. In producing knowledge in this way, I hope to ensure an equitable outcome of the research process.

The performance of gender lies within a framework of a larger societal level gender ideology that sexes and genders the body in specific ways and places upon the subject a series of constraints and privileges within particular contexts. The gym serves as a setting due to the ability for bodies to interact directly with props in a performance that has allows for a client to modify their body. The shaped body, thus, is a product of this interaction with props. By showcasing the construction of gender, this project aims to challenge binary assessments of gender by showing how they are variously constituted.

In this document I walk through the collection of literature I worked with in this research. I draw from Goffman and prominent theories of performative gender, specifically West and Zimmerman’s “Doing Gender.” Additionally, I discuss a handful of empirical pieces that have brought theory into fitness spaces and provided fascinating insights into the fitness realm. Following this, I begin a discussion of the various places I occupied and had the opportunity to observe. This portion is told similar to a story based on experiences I had and the story is connected to the theories that I use in this process. These stories reflect a sort of retrospective

ethnography where the study of the everyday can occur based on my personal experiences in fitness environments. After that, I connect the experience that I had observing fitness behavior while I was working in the West Coast Gym to training for a powerlifting meet and then to a more formalized note taking experience I had after entering graduate school. These instances provide the ethnographic framework for this paper. In the final section I provide a more formalized discussion of theoretical insights gained from this study. The guiding question of this research is: How does the use of props in the gym change the body so that it is intelligible and becomes part of the actor's performance?

The relevance of this question is that to perform in a gym is a dynamic activity. The prop lies static when unused and mostly unchanged only to be incorporated in various performances by actors. However, the body is a dynamic prop that changes as a result of fitness activities and thus this question is posed to understand how the body should be considered differently than a static prop. To change the body through exercises also requires a level of commitment to routine activities. The body itself is a prop that the actor cannot "change out of" in the same way that clothes are changed, and it cannot be left behind at the gym the way the static props such as the weights are.

What I arrive upon with my research is that props require competency and must be used in specific ways. The ways that an actor engages with the props creates a specific performance. These performances allow the user to present a specific gender and personal performance. Through repetition, these actions change the body and the competency of the individual is improved, which opens the possibility for further performances. I discovered in this research that age and injury in addition to gender are incorporated into the constraints of this process. Lastly,

these performances occur not only in the context of the gym, but are carried on through the changes made to the performer's body outside of the gym.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature for this paper is essential in constructing the theory I wish to present. In terms of dramaturgical theory, I draw upon Goffman's work to identify the concept of the prop as well as setting. The gym serves as both a location for props and a setting for performance. I include both these concepts as I wanted to bring an understanding of props that have meaning attached to them. These meanings are already established upon a prop in a particular setting. I argue this understanding of props should be included in the notion of doing gender.

In terms of ethnomethodological theory I draw upon several theories including the idea of "doing gender." I use this concept as the process of exercise is a repetitive act engaged in with the goal of maintaining a gender identity. Drawing on Garfinkel, I include the notion of intelligibility and gender accounting as the body itself becomes the ultimate form of accounting.

Gym as Performative Space

I use Goffman's dramaturgical theories to look at the gym as a social space in which activities and props within the gym are used to create shared meanings and to aid in successful performances. Goffman's theories offer powerful theoretical tools to examine social life as a performance constituted via numerous components. In this chapter I go into greater detail as to how Goffman's notions of setting, props and appearance factor into my research. I combine these with more ethnomethodological conceptions of gender and performance. I explore both sides of theory as I believe both can be synthesized in a valuable way in the gym. Ethnomethodology brilliantly displays how performances are crafted in the act. I combine Goffman to this as I argue that these acts are only made possible by props, setting, and the building of competency, the

latter requiring time away from the act itself, in the backstage preparing for future performances. I argue that changes in the body are made in the gym and have ramifications outside of the gym and in other social acts in which gender is accounted for. At any given moment the body can be used in the performance of gender, but the long-term practice in the gym, as well as the building of competency with props, opens the door for a greater array of performances as to be discussed in greater further in the following chapters.

I connect these theories to the gym, as I believe that in this location, actors explore and express gender in exaggerated and dramatic ways. The gym is a fascinating stage upon which actors present conceptions of themselves that are in the making before each other's eyes. The gym is a place of health and fitness, but upon extended time amongst participants, it is revealed that social expectations guide and shape behavior that has physical consequences upon the body and the bodily composition of participants. This process is ongoing and takes place over an extended period of time. It occurs over months and years and has, what I believe to be, significant effects on the presentation of self that actors take beyond the walls of the gym. Thus, the self is crafted and made in the gym through physical body modification. Throughout these chapters, these theories are brought together in a way I believe to be valuable to understanding the process of creating and maintaining a gendered body.

Setting

Goffman defines setting as “involving furniture, decor, physical lay-out, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it” (Goffman 1956: 13). The setting is important in this study as the gym serves to facilitate the performances of actors. Goffman (1956) argues that “those that

would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and terminate the performance when they leave it” (13). In this regard, the gym is a setting that actors intentionally travel to for the purpose of specific types of performances that are facilitated by the setting. Though exercise can occur outside of the gym, the gym is a location established for this particular purpose.

The gym itself is laid out in such a way to communicate specific qualities. As with any other social setting, the gym should be viewed as having a unique set of attributes that define it as a discrete social space different from a home or other retail establishment. Within the gym, there are possibilities for different kinds of performances that are unique to the setting. The gym provides props in the form of exercise spaces and equipment that are particular to the gym and expected to be found in the gym. Different items within the gym should be considered to be valuable in different performances as the qualities of each of these items allow the actor to perform a certain way. For example, a weight can be used to increase muscle size or strength and a treadmill to facilitate the development of greater endurance. Thus different ways of using each item can produce the desired performance. Examples of this include using a treadmill to show high levels of endurance or heavy weights to show feats of strength.

The gym divides and positions these props in particular ways. The West Coast Gym is arranged to define the space, cardiovascular equipment at West Coast Gym is arranged in a particular place facing away from the center of activity, the weights form the center of the large room, and the non-weight exercise equipment is placed along the exterior of the central room. The props are grouped based on a set of meanings associated with them. In the bodybuilding gym, the weight area and cardio area are also divided. This establishes expectations not only

when entering into a gym, but also sets an expectation for different spaces within the gym as to how actors are expected to perform. The physical arrangement of props therefore affects the actors in their actions as they are guided by the arrangement of space. For example, to go to an area of West Coast Gym where there are only free weights requires the participant to have a certain set of skills to use these props; the body must be performed with a certain degree of competence. To illustrate such competence, heavy weights cannot be safely used until the user has developed the required strength and coordination. Different techniques are thus used over time to get around this requirement and succeed in lifting heavy weights. This can be seen in doing partial squats, bouncing a barbell off the chest during a bench press, or using the full body in the curl. These techniques however risk the user being mocked or ridiculed for poor form. They also allow the user to move to a higher amount of weight so that the user can justify this poor form by the amount of weight lifted.

Some props within a gym require a certain amount of knowledge to be able to use. There are countless tutorials on the internet surrounding the use of each individual piece of equipment as well as opinions on what the best lifts are and best equipment to achieve different goals. Some pieces of equipment have both instructions and safety warnings posted on them. Even with these instructions, many clients will use trainers to assist in learning how to safely use this equipment. There is still a degree of competency required for these lifts in order to complete the exercises properly and safely.

Teams

In incorporating dramaturgical theory, I also draw upon the concept of teams. This refers to a performance being used to “express the characteristics of the task that is performed and not

the characteristics of the performer” as well as to “do something for a scene of wider scope.” (Goffman 1956: 57). Each actor while engaged in the completion of a performance in the gym, as a whole social scene and one that is divided into certain groups within the gym, engages in performances based on this relative position. In this way the performance is not merely of the self but performed relative to the setting and scene.

A personal trainer in the gym engages in multiple simultaneous performances in the gym. The trainer dresses in a way that reflects the organization as a whole, by wearing the emblem of the gym. The trainer dresses in a way that shows athleticism since not only is knowledge part of being a trainer, but so the presentation of athleticism appropriate to the role. The clothing that is part of the trainer role comes before the individual as it is what is required of the job instead of a personal reflection of the qualities of that trainer. The self is part of this presentation as the trainer works on developing themselves athletically which becomes part of that performance.

Props

The gym itself offers props in the assistance of performance. Of course, these serve as devices for improving one’s fitness, but they also act as devices for performing gender. For example, the amount of weight one lifts and the presentation of the body during these lifts creates a notion of the patron acknowledging a gendered expectation. Goffman states “[w]hile in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray conformity...” (Goffman 1956: 19). This appears in the gym as the patrons perform in a way that conforms to these expectations. The props in the gym are taken by the patrons to perform these acts.

Participants also bring their own props to the gym. Dress and personal items of the clients can be viewed from this perspective as being an aid in a certain type of performance and in preparing the front. These items thus should be regarded as having significance to the working of the gym. A particular item such as a shaker bottle that usually contains supplements and can be purchased at a nutrition store indicates that the client has the goal of transforming their body through the purchase of particular goods and through the consumption of certain products.

Gender

I use doing gender in this study because I want to look at gender not just as being ascribed to certain props, but as being an act. A different actor can take the same prop and through the ways that they use the prop, their gender is presented differently. In doing gender, the actor is creating a body simultaneously as they are performing in the moment. As the gym is a place where the structured routines occur with both an, “in the moment” and lasting performance, I want to incorporate this theory to explore this process. I take this more ethnomethodological approach to move to the ongoing creation of gender and the maintenance required to continue to perform in a way that presents one’s gender.

Using ethnographic experience and theoretical perspectives from literature, I seek with this plan of study, to provide theoretically grounded insight into studying gender as a theme of the fitness space. Connections between the perspectives and future study will be laid out in the discussion section. In this section, drawing upon previously discussed notions of performance, I will discuss the importance of the gender theories from which I am drawing upon to construct the foundation for study and discussion. I draw upon three overarching theoretical perspectives to make sense of gender. I use West and Zimmerman (1987) to create a foundation for

understanding the ways gender is created in action, Butler (1990) to understand the interweaving of gendered bodies with power, and Harding, in addition to other works to incorporate standpoint theory and address the role the researcher has in producing knowledge about a given social location.

Gender as Action

Drawing on “Doing Gender,” I incorporate gender as a “routine, methodical, and reoccurring accomplishment” (West and Zimmerman 1987: 126). This way of defining gender as a creation of routine practice in which fitness environments can serve as “props” for this performance became an underlying foundation for the theoretical discussion of this project (Goffman 1956: 23). As Goffman (1956) proposes that the space in which people occupy serves as a front stage, then in this front stage, which can be viewed as a fitness space, this gender is performed. Johansson (1996) argues the gym is “the venue for the construction of particular gender identities” (32). In this regard, the gym serves as a location where performance can occur within a space that has been arranged with particular social meanings, and in turn can be used by members of the gym as props to “do” a certain gender.

Drawing on Dworkin (2003), this can be seen in the arrangement of people across a gym. In studying the distribution of women across space in the gym between the weight room and the cardiovascular room Dworkin notes a change between the two rooms in terms of volume and energy (Dworkin 2003: 137). The clothing and performance of the women in the cardiovascular room is different as well. Dworkin (2003) looked at women in this space and the types of bodies they desire to have and argues they are thin but less muscular (139). In examining the gendered distribution between the weight room and the cardiovascular room Dworkin observed the power

that the idea of having a particular body look influences the behavior of people in the gym. The idea of being thin instead of bulking up with muscle inhibits the participation of women in the weight room and draws them to use cardiovascular equipment. Props in the gym help in the moment of performance by indicating the type of performance they want to achieve. Through proper performance the actor engages in a routine actions that build competence and ultimately result in some transformation of the body. This transformation allows the actor to do gender and account for gender.

The quality and intelligible aspects of muscularity and body shape are created by props. As Dworkin observes, the distribution of genders across different props and pieces of equipment, and simultaneously that these props are chosen by performers who have a conscious notion of the way they are shaping or creating their body, shows the necessity of props, and the interpretation of props in the doing of gender. This links to accounting.

Accounting is the notion that one must perform in conscious acts in order for one to maintain their status in a particular group. To be seen a specific way by the audience, the actor accounts or explains their behavior to the audience through certain types of performances. In the context of gender, a person retains their status in a gendered category and the nuances of their particular manifestation of gender are linked to their performance. West and Zimmerman (1987) indicated, gender performance requires accounting, thus the use, the knowledge, and successful performance with a set of props in the pursuit of developing and maintaining the self as a gendered being is present in this cultural setting.

Performance and accounting affect participants at the level of institutional participation in fitness. According to Craig and Liberti (2007) “conceptions of the gym as a masculine institution

continue.” Within the context of the gym, the performative nature of gender is evoked, and the concepts of gender are produced through the actions and meanings of a social actor. The gym context “calls gendered behavior into play so that it is naturalized” (Craig & Liberti 2007).

Marhiri and Rheenan (2010) similarly argue that, “sport is socially constructed as a very physical space, and a very masculine space as well.” These observations connect the socially constructed notion of gender with the physical spaces occupied by social actors. The meanings that these actors bring with them into the space direct action and create this locus as a gendered space, reproducing gendered ideologies. In short, gendered bodies are not born, they are performed. The gym allows a gendered body to be modified and crafted.

In challenging the naturalization of gendered bodies, Dworkin (2001) argues that the hindrances to women participating in exercises and activities that would reduce the presumed dimorphism around sex are entirely structural and not biological. According to Gilbert (1994) “the portrayal of gender on stage, is not only mimetic, but indeed, part of the cultural description of sexual identity.” In these ways the props and space in which participants engage in a gym are part of an ongoing performance. In the continued achievement of gender, Goffman’s dramaturgical work can be employed to incorporate the props and setting of the gym as Goffman states “[i]n addition to the expected consistency between appearance and manner, we expect, of course some coherence among setting, appearance, and manner” (Goffman 1956: 15). In this way the gym serves as a setting where actors put in continuous work on their appearance and perform in certain patterned ways to create a coherent performance.

Gender enters in as it establishes a set of expectations for the actors as well. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that “the ‘doing’ of gender is undertaken by women and men whose

competency as members of society is held hostage by its production” (126). Thus, in the structured setting of the gym the props and tools provided by the gym to the actors are taken up to create a performance of gender they attempt to adequately achieve. The patterning of spaces within the gym based upon gender as observed by Dworkin (2003), in which different settings within the gym are more occupied by different genders and there is an uneven distribution of use between certain props, demonstrates how gender is linked to specific norms of performance. Certain norms and required knowledge change the way that an actor can choose to interact with a given prop. The use of a prop varies across space.

In summary, the routine activities that allow an actor account for gender can be carried out in particular ways and thus imbue props and settings with meaning. These props gain their meaning as the actor uses them to aid in a performance meant to convey meaning. These meanings are carried out in patterned ways across the gym. As the gym allows the modification of bodies, norms are encouraging of the ideal types of gendered bodies. The props and setting of a gym provide an important component in the process of gender performance both within and outside of the setting of the gym. The props in a gym, and the setting itself, as well as a person’s body, are used by patrons to create and validate a given gender performance.

The Body

Butler poses the question “is ‘naturalness’ constituted through discursively constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within categories of sex?” This question is important in delving into the research of the gym in which the body is produced and modified through continuous action. As the gym body is created in the gym, there is additionally the gym itself as a stage of performance as previously discussed. The performances in the gym establish

expectations that are often distinctly gendered in ways that produce gendered bodies. The body thus begins the cycle anew as it becomes a prop embedded with meaning used to constitute future performance, account for current performance, and to fit a discursively defined place within a context of power. The body becomes the subject of power in the gym.

The ways in which these gendered differences in fitness expectations emerge creates a reinforcement of structural forces that may favor a hegemonic masculinity. For example the gym through my observations seems built around the needs of male clients who are focusing on strength based routines. Gyms actively structure customer interactions and foster gendered collective identities in ways that “valorized the physical dominance of men” (Craig and Liberti 2007). The social structure of the gym crafts the interactions of individuals who participate within this context leading to the reproduction of social norms through the action of individuals performing gender. This leads to the conceptualization that these norms are “naturalized,” as “organizational contexts may shape and naturalize gendered behavior” (Craig and Liberti 2007). This point is echoed by Goffman regarding the assumptions by which social actors reify their conceptions of reality and believe that their performance reflects a real state of affairs: “he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which is staged is the real reality,” and regarding audience “his audience is also convinced in this way about the show he puts on” (Goffman 1952). The everyday actions of people in a gym creates a sense of naturalness, not only in the embodied result, but also in the performance itself. If the performance is viewed as real, then it further reinforces the notion that the end product: gendered body must also be real.

Dworkin (2003), however, states that gyms “are sites of struggle where the meaning of gender has been negotiated and contested” (133). Dworkin further elaborates that power in these

areas are shifting to positions in which women are given more powerful subjective positions as opposed to being solely objectified by the fitness institution (Dworkin 2003: 133). Power to define one's body and to respond to the expectations placed upon that body is an iterative process in which submission to expectations placed upon that gendered body are made simultaneously, as the body has the power to push the boundaries and challenge the definition of gender (Dworkin 2003: 134). In this regard, the body has some agentic properties and occupies a space that is subject to larger structures of power. The actor is given the opportunity push back against these social norms. As gender is navigated in this regard, the performances and doing of gender can be used in this process of pushing back, but the actor continually experiences pressure to conform to certain ways of presenting the self.

The act of occupying a certain space in the gym and the engagement with a certain prop and the pursuit of a certain body type are parts of this process of engaging actively with ideologies of gender. This can lead to the potential to account for bodies in different ways. The difference in use of heavy weights between West Coast Gym and the bodybuilding gym by women, for example, illustrates how context affects how one can account for their gender. They engage in a different performances that have a specific meaning to the stage and context they occupy. The body is revealed in the process. It is rendered intelligible in different ways, either due to a perception of health or by the pursuit an idealized body type.

Young (1980) argues that the properties of women's bodies that produce a physical performance can be observed in, and emerge from, social oppression and the gendering of the body and actor. Young argues that as a woman's body is objectified and she creates a distance between herself and the body as an object and this can lead to a "self-consciousness" about the

body that is linked to understandings of potential differences in strength, location, and movement between men and women (Young 1980: 154). Using these categories in a binary way is to examine the way that a person is gendered by society around them and what effects “being gendered” produces in that actor. To examine the coercive gendering of bodies and the subsequent objectification of a woman’s body can be part of developing an explanation for the spatial layout of the gym and the way that different actors occupy different spaces in the gym based on the way that they are gendered.

In related ethnographic work Dworkin (2001) examines expectations female participants in fitness felt based on perceived limits of their strength and muscle size in the gym. Broader societal gender ideologies are thus present in the production of the body; bodies become limited to some degree by ideological assumptions as to what it is capable of doing in the gym.

Appearance

To analyze appearance in the gym the following definition will be utilized: “The ‘appearance’ covers many things, including body size and shape, ‘reputation’ and ‘image,’ clothing, stance, and facial expression” (Rose 1962: 86). The gym as a social scene allows social interactions in which appearance and the implied work that one is doing on their appearance is taken into consideration. Stone (1962) argues “[a]pppearance *means* identification of one another” (91). The activities in gym imply that actors work for the achievement of a fit body type, in which one aims for the development of a healthy-looking body. Appearance is a pivotal aspect of understanding interaction in the gym.

Dworkin (2001) argues that women in the gym hold back on muscular development to achieve an emphasized feminine appearance. The interaction with the props that create the

conception of self in the gym is based on outward appearance as a way of communicating something about oneself to the audience. Klein (1993) examined a hierarchical “caste system” in bodybuilding spaces in which there was a division from the elite bodybuilders, down to those that entered the space to view the spectacle. The appearance of the body worked to mediate this hierarchy with idealized physiques representing a higher space in the social order. Appearance of the body in the gym is a valuable component of understanding interaction, and with the concept of gender introduced to mediate this interaction, shows the way that one’s appearance is factored into their gender performance.

Agency

The previously discussed concepts used to orient this study each link with the concept of agency. The gym provides the user the opportunity to do body work on themselves and the variety of props offers different ways of engaging in this performance. However as West and Zimmerman (1987) argue “[a]ctions are often designed with an eye to their accountability” (136). Furthermore, it is argued that “virtually any activity can be assessed as to its womanly or manly nature...[to “do” gender] is to engage in behavior at the risk of gender assessment” (West and Zimmerman 1987: 136). West and Zimmerman argue this occurs in institutional contexts (136). The gym serves as the overarching social structure in which this action occurs with the use of props. There is a division of activities in the gym that bring either men or women or both to participate, and that the performance with each of these objects is constrained or encouraged by the gender or sex category that one is performing. Thus the choices of participants are structurally constrained by gender expectations. Despite the gym offering an array of possible performances with different props, there nevertheless remains a constraint

placed upon performance as one must account for their performance and their doing of gender. Appearance, props, and the physical body can be assessed in this way.

As mentioned previously, appearance is a significant component as to of how one is assessed. The clothing and exercises are systematically constrained, age and injury further constrain clients in ways that prevent the development of certain appearances in the gym. The body itself is physically constrained as to access to certain props, performance, and the pursuit of certain body types. Gender works as a systemic constraint on the body resulting in clients performing certain exercises and in certain ways to achieve, or not to achieve certain bodily appearances (Dworkin 2001) (Klein 1993). Clothing follows certain norms all of which are under a system pressures based upon gender assessment. This indicates the presence of coercive power from larger systems of gender as well as constraints present from injury and aging that place context specific constraints upon the actors in the gym.

The way that the body is modified in the gym in different ways through the building of muscle or the loss of fat (Dworkin 2003) creates characteristics that can be used in the categorization of sex and accounting for sex. West and Zimmerman argue to test a member of a sex category “stipulates that if people can be seen as members of relevant categories, then categorize them that way” (West and Zimmerman 1987: 133). I argue that competency of a particular exercise, or inversely lack of competency at a certain level of strength becomes a form of reifying a sex. The ability to produce a physique,, that is shaped a certain way creates a constant embodied performance of gender and sex.

The person possesses a body that shapes whether and how their sex category is questioned. In body building, this line becomes blurred and more complicated as muscularity

alone becomes less viable as a way to distinguish sex, this exists though in conjunction with other variables and performances. As in a patriarchal context, strength and muscularity becomes a coded masculine trait. In the context of bodybuilding, it becomes more difficult for female bodybuilders to perform femininity and reconcile a bodybuilding identity with an embodied female identity in an overarching patriarchal context and masculine context of the gym.

To conclude, agency provides for a wide arrange of gender performances in the gym, but there is an overarching set of expectations that can explain some of the patterns of division of spaces in the gym (Dworkin 2003). Theoretically this division is structured by the way that actors account for their gender performance and that this gender performance is part of being recognizable as a member of a sex category (West and Zimmerman 1987). In bodybuilding this structure is pushed back against by female bodybuilders, however instead of setting structure aside in favor of agentic freedom, the female bodybuilder instead navigates a new relationship with this structure.

Props are arranged by the owners of gyms and actors are guided through the use of props by trainers, instructions, or with their own sets of knowledge. Though the arrangement of props acts back upon the actors and their bodies are affected and constrained by the location and positioning of the props, the props are still arranged with intention by an agent to produce this setting, stage, and performance. Goffman (1956) states that “[w]hile we are familiar with the stage arrangements in and around a dwelling place, we tend to be less aware of other stage arrangements” (75). In this regard outside of a home there it is taken for granted that the stage which we enter has been arranged to produce a given performance. In the gym, though the

objects act back upon the clients of the gym, the stage itself is set by an agent that makes expectations about what is demanded by the actors and customers of that gym.

Competency with Props

As participants enter the gym and use weights, machines, and other exercise equipment, they must build a certain degree of physical competency in order to use a prop and achieve a proper performance. As the objects themselves have a physical weight, these objects have a component of acting back upon the actor (Mead 1910). In this regard, a performance requires physical training and mastery of objects in this space and that the training and preparation is ongoing. The physical body is constructed in this process as the trainee builds up the required strength and muscle in order to complete a given task. The gym thus requires that actors not only interact with other actors and produce a performance for the audience, but also that they interact with objects that have both social and physical weight that must be accounted for in order to create a performance.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODS

Introduction and Site Selection

An analysis of theoretical perspectives and existing research on the gym as a social setting have been employed to provide a groundwork for this study. In addition to the analysis of secondary data, this thesis utilizes what I refer to as a retroactive ethnography. In this form of ethnography, I draw upon my experience as an embodied witness to interactions and performances within three different fitness institutions. The first I refer to as “West Coast Gym.” I engaged in training and was an employee of this establishment from where I was able to watch continuous interactions among clients as well as work directly with clients.

Secondly, I will make comparisons to another gym I refer to as “Big Bodybuilding Gym.” I trained at this gym with the purpose of competing in a powerlifting competition. The primary focus will be on “West Coast Gym,” as the majority of my data emerges from approximately ten years of exposure to this gym and almost two years of which was spent as an employee. I incorporate “Big Bodybuilding Gym” in to show that a different location can include different props and be arranged quite differently and thus be conducive to different types of performances.

Finally, I include field notes that I collected at a location I refer to as “Public Gym,” where there is a larger physical space and arrangement of equipment, and where trends congruent with the literature in terms of the division of gender across equipment is found. I wish to emphasize that the Public Gym is a university gym. The implications of such is that there is a specific price to enter. This is not a gym that is open to the general public but one where the public that frequents the gym is composed primarily of undergraduate students, school staff, and

visitors. In Public Gym, I approached this location by incorporating guiding concepts to create coding categories from the observations in the gym. As gender guided my observations of the gym, additional categories also emerged from observation in the social location. These emergent categories came to build the analysis presented in a later chapter.

Data Collection

I use the ethnographic method in this process to show not only the data that can be gathered through an embedded ethnographic experience, but also to indicate the importance of acknowledging the role that the researcher plays in the production of knowledge. Drawing upon Smith's Institutional Ethnography, I employ an ethnographic approach with the goal of recognizing standpoint as well as getting at the power relations that are present in the gym. Precedent for this approach examines the social significance of taken-for-granted activities. Dorothy Smith (2005) states "[i]nstitutional ethnography's impetus is inquiry into the discovery of the social in people's lives and doings" (51-52). As this study sees interest in power as it relates to and allows or constrains different gender performances across different contexts, then it is imperative to examine how these manifest in routinized activities that actors engage in with their body in a fitness location.

Data was collected through my embedded experience. As a result, it is to be considered as a story about several locations and a thorough analysis of what my experience means in the context of sociological theory. Data was collected from the perspectives of employee, in the case of West Coast Gym, and patron of these gyms. The data of this study is one of the everyday and collected in the pursuit of everyday activities. I hope this data provides a unique look into fitness

locations. The data is gathered during the social scene uninterrupted and with personal knowledge and familiarity with the locations in question.

Data Coding

I created data coding around my observations. I paid special attention to the presentation details of clients these things include clothing and personal items. I differentiated between physical props such as clothing and items and other forms of presentation. I wrote and analyzed details related to the way that participants in the gym moved their bodies in the gym. For this analysis I made note of how they used space in the gym, either psychological space or in the parts of the gym that they occupied. Another area I explored in my analysis was based on the content of what participants said. This was through conversations I was part of or things that were said to me or spoken publicly to members of the gym. All these conversations occurred within the public location of the gym and were thus occurring in front of an audience. In further research it might prove interesting to compare these findings with conversations held privately in an interview setting. Additionally, the actions within the gyms themselves were recorded in the analysis that follows as vitally important to the overall performance.

As I thought about the locations, additional information became apparent to me that might be of sociological interest. Some of this information was included in the paper as a way of further painting the scenery and giving the reader a sense of place. However, as these further details were added to the paper, I began to find additional connections to gender and to overall performance in the gym. These details were thus kept in the paper when the connection to theory was established.

Data Analysis

When preparing my analysis, I thought of this data in two-fold. However, both pieces were part of the same unfolding topic. I thought of things first as props and then compared this data against the category of gender performance. I identified the activities and items as part of a performance. Then once a performative aspect was considered to be important, I analyzed the way that it could hold a deeper level of meaning when gender is entered into the consideration. The question was routinely asked “how does what we know about gender norms give additional meaning to this activity?” I wanted to incorporate what the literature said about fitness activities into what I said about the places I observed and then to push that analysis one step further. As the goal of this research is to study body modification as the end-product of much of the use of props, I wanted to detail the ways that the conscious knowledge of the participant about body modification played into their performance of gender. To illustrate this if one knows that a curl produces over time a larger bicep then I wanted to argue that if one engages in this activity with this knowledge beforehand then they are engaging in that activity with a specific goal in mind. These goals I wanted to bring back to the concept of gender and ask what a person achieves in their performance of gender by changing or attempting to change their body in a specific way.

The ethnographic experiences I have had are presented like a story with the goal of acquainting the reader with the places and the sights and sounds of these environments. The theory is built upon the observations in these places and presented as a way of showing the rich theoretical possibilities present in daily routines as well as the complex outcomes of relatively simple events.

Positionality

The use of the auto-ethnographic approach and acknowledging the role that I, as the researcher, have in theorizing and informing a reflexive narrative for future studies is informed by perspectives from feminist standpoint theory. As a researcher embedded into a personal and shared space with a partial perspective of the data, it is vital to acknowledge that my partial perspective as a researcher shapes the image of the data and social world that is conveyed through writing. The special attention paid to acknowledging standpoint theory is included for the betterment and increased reflexivity of future studies and is important to the study of a complicated social space such as the fitness institution.

Theoretical basis for standpoint is built upon the notion that “feminist standpoint projects...have from the beginning been interested in scientific practices and how to improve them” (Harding 2006: 96). Harding (2006) argues that standpoint projects seek to find ways of engaging in science that “take responsibility of their political accountability” (96). In taking upon research involving my standpoint as a researcher with insider knowledge as to the environment, I am producing a perspective that is rooted in my relative position to clients in the gym and to the staff. This position provides a set of insights into the social environment of the gym due to the close proximity to it. However, my research perspective is a partial perspective. This acknowledgement of position is important to this project and the production of theory.

The position I observed from provides me with a certain viewpoint on social interaction, as I was an employee and trained for powerlifting which provided me with a set of knowledge to understanding the environment. However, this is also simultaneously limiting, as what I can observe and what I proceed from as being of sociological significance is influenced by this

intersection of variables. Thus, this study can provide insight, but only as a limited partial truth with particular insights.

In West Coast Gym I occupied the standpoint of a patron and an employee. This allowed certain conversations to occur between myself and customers that might not have occurred had I not been an employee. As I have accumulated experience with the use of these props from years of involvement in the gym, bodybuilding, and powerlifting, I can identify and navigate the props and spaces in certain ways. However the standpoint is still partial. In meta-theoretical terms this provides a view of some of the advantages and limitations to having this relative position to a fitness center and can perhaps be a guide in future research as to knowledge production about the gym.

What follows is an auto-ethnographic account of my interactions with members of West Coast Gym. All names have obviously been changed and no personal information has been shared. This technique is used to create potential questions to guide future research. The ethnographic data will be compared with the theoretical perspectives in order to demonstrate news ways of approaching fitness by drawing from embedded experiences with the data. In addition to creating additional questions that could guide future research, this study aims to provide additional help in determining the types of questions that should be asked.

These locations of study were chosen to show a difference across fitness institutions with varying clients, settings, equipment, and norms. This is to see the expectations of gender across space, and the effects of large gender ideologies.

CHAPTER 4 - WEST COAST GYM

In this chapter I detail findings from the first location that I refer to as West Coast gym. This gym is a small community gym and exemplifies very different aspects of performance than the larger student gym or the niche bodybuilding gym. The community present at the gym provides unique applications of the theories as well.

West Coast Gym occupies a single large room in a small shopping center in a wealthy neighborhood. The single room of the gym is approximately two hundred feet long. Upon entering to your left are two rows of televisions against windows that are faced by cardio equipment. The machines total 5-6, though the number depends on what machines wore out at any given time and were replaced. To the right is the front desk and going forward into the gym are free weights, machines, and a small back office. At the end of the large room is a hallway with two single-occupancy bathrooms and a back room for solo sessions with trainers.

During my time working out and being employed by the gym, most clients were middle aged or older except for a few high school and college students who had grown up in the area or had parents that worked out there. I became friendly with most of the clients there as it was common to know everyone who worked out there personally, due to the small client base and the small gym. I worked solo on the Saturday shift for the five hours the gym was open that day and would enjoy talking to clients as they worked out, as it would keep the boring shifts interesting. The small gym meant that when clients behaved in a way that annoyed others it was apparent. Clients often knew each other personally and some were connected as neighbors or former co-workers.

Sound in the Gym

The gym was generally quieter than other gyms I have been to. The music would be controlled by whoever was working that day. Internet radio channels were used or personal mp3 players. When the radio channels played loud rock or hip hop often clients would request a change to a “Top 40” station, a country station, or, occasionally, a classical station, with the exception of yoga night when the “spa” channel was used for ambient music.

Loud exercises were usually frowned upon. When I last worked at the gym, I was training with the goal of doing a power lifting meet and practiced the deadlift twice a week. Several clients asked me directly to reduce the volume of the exercise. Occasionally, they would make note to the manager and have the manager ask me if I could be quieter. Doing deadlifts was relatively rare at this gym so it was unusual.

One of the trainers did loud Olympic lifts where he would drop the weight from above his head onto the platform. Those lifts were particularly loud, and clients actively made note of the volume of those lifts some with disapproving facial expressions. He was frequently asked by certain clients to be quieter.

The presence that one has in the gym can be part of a performative act with the use of noise. The loudest patrons were male and added grunts to their lifts, or at times shouts. This positions them differently in the space of the gym and upon the stage as their presence is known beyond the section of the gym they are occupying. Within the Big Bodybuilding Gym, I witnessed groups of bodybuilders who would collectively engage in a performance in which one would perform a lift with grunts, and the others would shout encouragements in loud voices. Sanctions against noise at West Coast Gym, were either expressed verbally by clients or staff

asking an attendee to be quieter, or in nonverbal sanctions, such as looks towards that individual. Some clients made their displeasure known using addition non-verbal methods such as facial expression that would be seen by trainers and staff. This sort of behavior regulates the stage, in that some performances are accepted or sanctioned, and this depends on the environment. As the stage is where actors are always performing, the self and the presentation of self is expressed in the patrons and the expectations they try to set regarding other lifters. As an Olympic lifter performs both physically in a space and performs themselves in that space as an athlete of a particular ilk, the performance has a social context with which to contend.

Sound in bodybuilding spaces is much louder with yells of encouragement or grunts. In West Coast Gym these were not as common. The use of sound whether through the music that is being played or the volume of different performances sets the scene for validating different performances. The music encourages a different set of physical performances. The spa music of the yoga class sets the scene for serene and calm performance in which the low volume of the music has an effect of bringing down the volume of those participating. The loud rock, metal, electronic music, and hip hop of the Big Bodybuilding Gym sets the scene not only for louder performances in which active loud use of equipment occurs but also requires participants to raise the volume of conversations in order to be heard by one another over the music. The volume of the entire gym increases with the music choice. Thus, to perform, and subsequently have one's performance noticed and acknowledged by others in a bodybuilding gym requires a louder more active performance.

In West Coast Gym, the volume of music varied from day to day. Depending on who set the music channel and volume, the genre varied generally between "Top 40" stations and country

music on certain days. The music was part of establishing the atmosphere of the gym and thus the overall volume and tone encouraged active performances in the gym.

As the interaction between a body and weight or machine requires a certain physical contact that is affected by the weight and physical properties of both the object and the body that is engaged with that object, the result is a particular set of sounds such as a client dropping a weight after use, an olympic bar hitting the ground, or a squat being racked. The gym and the weight of objects thus produces sound as they act back against clients through use. The sounds become part of the performance, the sound of a heavy deadlift being set down is part of that performance and part of presenting that lift to the audience as the weight itself can produce that sound when in use.

Similar to weights, the treadmill produces its own mechanical sound as it is in use by a client. The object itself requires a certain audible quality to be made in the use of that object by an actor. The actor has no choice then but to present a performance with audible qualities if they are to use a certain piece of equipment in the gym. The sound then is a way of the object acting back against the client as they are in the process of using it to produce a body and performance as they change the performance with the object to increase or decrease the sounds component.

The personal music players of clients for them becomes part of the soundscape that they take in during the gym. The experience that they create for themselves has some agentic and private qualities as they can change the way that they see the gym, this is part of the back stage. Thus, the performances of others are paired with the sounds that they bring themselves into the gym. The sounds provided electronically to the gym members via music or television also become part of setting the stage. The soundscape of the gym is set by the gym creating a

particular space with objects as well as the sounds that are produced as objects are used in the gym.

The objects and the sounds they produce vary based on the quality and maintenance of the objects. The treadmills for example were waxed to make sure the belt moved more smoothly, the treadmill moving smoothly might produce a different sound than one where the belt is catching or sticking. Weights where bolts are loose or shaking produce different sounds that can be interpreted by clients. Benches that have not been oiled squeak when adjusted. These sounds produced by objects of different qualities change the properties of these objects and therefore change the way that a client might interpret or interact with an object. Thus, on behalf of the company, an employee would maintain the objects to a particular degree so that the client would think a particular way of the object and gym. This was managing the stage and in turn influencing the performance of the actors.

The way that an object is used to produce sound can also be part of a performance. A client may express something different about themselves and their performance with how they handle an object and the resulting sound. The sounds of a particular object such as a loud weight platform, might determine if a client uses it. Racking a squat can be done gently or in a way that produces an unusually loud amount of noise. To put the bar back forcibly creates a loud crash which can bring attention and a kind of reaction to a performance. A bar on a bench press can be lifted in a such a way so that the weight is stopped abruptly on the positive portion of the lift, thus creating a clanging sound with the weights against the bar. This sound changes the way that the performance is done. Though the positive, negative, and eccentric portions of the lift remain the same, that abrupt stop at the top when arms are fully extended, and the resulting metal-on-

metal sounds create a performance that can be heard by other people in the gym. Therefore, that incremental change to how the lift is performed can create a reaction or different interpretation of the lift by audience members. Changes in how a prop is used and the sounds that these changes produce is part of the performance of that exercise and is prop dependent.

Appearance of Staff

Staff at the gym wore a polo shirt with the emblem of the gym on the front along with a pair of athletic pants or shorts. Athletic shoes were most often used, however casual shoes were also acceptable. This presented the trainer to the client as one who is ready to participate in the activity as they are both dressed cleanly to demonstrate professionalism, but also to display athleticism as well. As the trainer is engaged in helping the client achieve a greater degree of physical fitness, the appearance of the trainer as one active or engaged in fitness is important to showing one's aptitude for the task of training. It places the trainer in an aspirational role to the client.

Cleaning

One of my duties while working at the gym was to spray down the machines with a cleaning mixture and wash the windows during the afternoons. A client I'll call Jane, who visited during those times would ask if we could use less strong-smelling sprays. She even went as far as to purchase a spray for me to use at the gym to clean the equipment. Due to the small number of clients and small gym building, the clients were treated with this level of care. In other gyms this may not be the case as franchises for certain gyms might standardize the way that they clean or maintain the gym.

Cleaning is part of maintaining a stage in which actors can work on a performance, as this stage is a public location, part of creating a stage involves meeting the needs of actors. It is considered polite to clean down equipment after use. For this purpose, the gym provides sweat towels to clients. These small towels were laundered in on-site washers, bleached and returned for use. The towels were used by clients, both to wipe sweat off themselves for comfort, but also to clean the machine, weight benches, and handles that may have had sweat on them. In this way the stage is maintained by actors as a way of presenting themselves as polite. The actors also use the towels to maintain their own physical appearance, thus wiping away the sweat and signs of exertion produced by exercises.

As an employee, I was part of maintaining the stage as well as looking clean and professional myself. The gym, though hosting an assortment of exercises that created sweat and exertion was to be maintained in a pristine state for clients. The equipment was cleaned to display no signs of use by clients. The quality of the props that are available to the clients thus changes the client's interactions with the props and the way that the props act back against the client. The physical sensations the clients feel and respond to from a piece of equipment is changed by how that equipment is maintained. A client using a sweat covered bench experiences something different than a clean bench. Therefore, the objects themselves and how they are experienced in a tactile way by clients alters the performance that the client gives to the audience.

Client/Trainer Interactions

The gym was as much a social experience as an exercise experience for some clients. Often clients would come in and have long personal conversations with trainers as they were led

through the exercises. One trainer we'll call James was particularly patient and was a good active listener. I've known him for almost a decade and he really helped mentor me when I got my training certification. He would tell me that people talked to trainers like a therapist and would use the session to vent about things or to just talk about sports. He is one of the employees who has been there the longest and represents the face of the gym in many ways, so he has a lot of friendships with clients. However, in his interactions with clients he is for the most part an active listener as many of the clients tend to monologue on certain subjects. When I had a few instances where I trained clients, I followed suit in active listening and noticed this was a trend with how trainers interacted with their clients. One client we'll call Cathy loved to carry-on one-sided conversations in which she would talk about sports for close to an hour as she exercised. As many of the clients knew each other it was not unusual in the small space for other people to join in the conversation. This has not so much been my case in larger commercial gym settings.

For women in West Coast Gym, the hiring of a trainer allows the woman to use and engage with props and to perform gender in a way that is not performed solo. The use of the bench press and Olympic lifts become part of a woman's performance when the trainer is present but with some clients not in the solo routine. This illustrates how trainers serve as a bridge between the agent and the prop, the structure with its expectations and norms is thus alternatively navigated with the help of a trainer in linking the individual with a certain performance in a shared space.

Certain topics such as politics were not as evenly discussed as sports or family life, though some clients discussed news articles or politics from time to time. Two clients we will call Clyde and Dave used to discuss politics quite a lot amongst each other in a debate like

fashion as they had opposite beliefs. However, interaction was always civil and friendly. The two televisions were generally set to CNN and ESPN. Jane would often request the televisions switched to something like the Food Network instead of the news. Other clients who used the treadmills would often request the Food network too or the classic sports channel. One client Dale (probably in his 50s), would take the remote sometimes even from the drawer of the main desk and change the channels to soccer games. He had trained there a long time and knew the owner personally which he often felt entitled him to special privileges. He would grunt while he worked out loudly, pass gas and burp loudly, and sing loudly to his iPod during his exercises. He would also complain about issues with the gym before driving away loudly in his Porsche. In many ways he would break the interaction order of the gym but usually was friendly with the staff. He would also sometimes leave his large German Shepherd dog tethered by the back door.

Dogs

The gym had a very lax policy about pets. One client I became very well acquainted with, Clarice, had a massive Bernese Mountain Dog who would sit just outside the front door or just inside the gym while she worked out. George, one of the employees would sometimes bring by his Mastiff and the owner of the gym: Jenna would bring her small dog in when she worked out after hours and she would play fetch with the dog in the gym. I even once stopped by the gym to get something on the way to taking my Doberman to the vet and many of the clients went to say hi to her. On another occasion I stopped by with my pit bull/catahoula mix when he was a hyper puppy and everyone enjoyed seeing him. This all shows a very high level of comfort with dogs at the gym which differs greatly from the highly sanitized environments of larger gyms where dogs might be prohibited due to shedding fur or paw prints. Multiple times I had to clean muddy

Mastiff foot prints off the olympic lifting platform. In the physical therapy section of the business several doors down Jenna's dog (a small terrier) would often be seen walking or running freely through the business. I became familiar with Clarice's massive Bernese. She would even babysit George's Mastiff when his family travelled as the two dogs got along.

Dogs become an additional member of the scene when they are brought to the gym as they affect the way that a performance can be had both collectively and individually. On the individual level they can shift a person in a new direction either towards, around, or away from a dog. As the dogs are often positioned at entrances to the gym, the paths of clients are altered as they navigate the dogs. Some clients might elect to pet the dogs or engage with the dogs and engage in conversations with the owners that they might regularly not have. The dogs become part of the social interaction in this way as they change the priorities and action of individuals. As the dog takes up both physical and social space, the entire patterns of the gym are changed by the presence of the dog.

The dog, though controlled to some degree by the owner, is also an actor with certain agentic actions that shape the patterns of the gym. The choices that the dog makes in how to behave, greet clients, or engage with people outside of the gym changes the dynamics of the social scene. Dogs create conversations between gym patrons, change the path that people take, and cause both staff and clients to devote energy to the wellbeing of the dog.

I argue that dogs are agents themselves in the social world and though the intricacies of their knowledge of social interaction is beyond this paper, they are still active participants. People and dog interactions become part of the social dynamics of the gym. Due to the way that

social interactions are affected by dogs, I include them here. Forms of interaction in the gym are changed in these ways both individually and collectively.

Clothing and Bodybuilding

Younger bodybuilding and strength focused clients wore clothing such sleeveless workout shirts which allowed muscle to be more visible. Certain older clients like Dale did the same thing. In this regard clothing is part of gender performance in that it emphasizes the body parts, such as biceps and shoulders, and present a gendered image of strength and muscle. Though some female clients wore sleeveless tank tops, the cut and design of this clothing is different. The men's clothing is more angular and is designed with the express purpose of emphasizing muscle. However, some men would also wear tank tops or stringers designed to show more back and chest development. Stringers are popular in the bodybuilding world and can be purchased on bodybuilding merchandise websites. In this regard clothing serves as a prop employed in gender performance and as part of appearance. Additionally, this prop shows parts of the body that are involved in this performance.

The physical prop of clothing aided the presentation of the body by making it visible and more importantly, making visible the part of the body that is transformed in the act of working out. The parts of the body that are modified are thus a prop in the performance of gender. Gender is done with the body, not a body in a vacuum but a body that is subject to intentional and repeated transformation. The combination of body modification and clothing serves as part of the performance. The doing of gender is dependent not just in the moment of its instantiation but is also reliant upon the props that one incorporates into the performance and the presentation they have honed with their own body. In the gym, performing a gender and displaying an intelligible

gendered body requires clothing as props that display this body work. A long sleeve shirt thus does not achieve the same performative end that these props have, thus to do gender includes this performance prop that exaggerates the body.

Though the clients varied in age and physique, the body itself is made intelligible and utilized in the performance of gender and self through how much of it is put on display in a gym setting. With women, the clothing emphasizes the body differently. Though tank tops are a shared item of clothing, women's tank tops are lower cut in the front and whereas men's muscle shirts drape vertically, women's tank tops were closer fitting around the stomach and waist. Additionally, as opposed to loose fitting basketball shorts, women wore yoga pants and if wearing shorts, they were shorter and often without pockets. These props display the body differently as they emphasize the lower body much more than loose shorts or sweats and the lower cut on tops displays the breasts more. Whereas muscle shirts cover everything except the muscles on display, the clothing as props for women are more revealing and sexualizing.

Clothing works as a form of appearance creation in which the clothing presents to the audience something about oneself to be recognized or interpreted in some form in the context of the gym. The appearance of clothing works not only to emphasize the body but to say something about one's position in systems of gender and class. The presenter and the audience might both share different interpretations of the same appearance and in this communication, though inconsistent, interaction occurs. The appearance is part of what mediates this interaction and allows for collectively produced meanings to develop, this also reifies the present systems in which one works for a place in as the system and can successfully create a co-constructed meaning of an individual. The idea of teams (Goffman 1956) can be employed in regard to

clothing. An actor in the gym performs in a way that expresses their role as well as personal qualities. If they are performing as a bodybuilder then they are dressing the part as well. The presentation of a bodybuilder with certain props and clothing both differentiates them from other members of the gym who are not bodybuilders as well as identifies them with other bodybuilders. Certain brands are created by and for bodybuilders and appear commonly in these spaces. Some members of the gym who have not attained the same size bodybuilding physique will wear these brands and carry certain props to identify with the bodybuilding group and subculture. Certain cultural practices in the bodybuilding community will extend beyond that community and outsiders will try to gain entry by emulating those already a part of the community. The way that a bodybuilder presents and takes up space with presence and volume is part of the overall presentation of the scene and part of what defines a bodybuilding gym, as those are the patrons that compose a significant part of the client base. Though members of the gym might appear to some degree to be acting alone, their performances contribute to the overall scene of a gym. In the collective sense, the bodybuilding gym is a place where a subculture has a home and thus participants in that subculture who have achieved a certain status are part of making that social location as they are a part of everyday scenes in the gym.

To connect to the larger social structure, if clothing that is the norm for women in the gym is part of the performance of an athletic woman it is also a performance of femininity in the gym as it emphasized the sexualized female body. Male athletes differently construct their performance of the male body through clothing and performance. For both, the body becomes part of producing a performance and intelligibility. The emphasis of breasts, legs, and behinds of women, while emphasizing arms, shoulder, and backs of men show a categorization of

difference. When I entered a bodybuilding gym, I expected to see an exaggerated emphasis of this, however I saw female bodybuilders who dressed in similar attire to men, with their arms and shoulders put on display as such a performance was part of their sport. They dressed in clothing such as T-shirts with the sleeves cut or torn off. This is an area I wish to explore in the future as additional resources and time may allow an inquiry into how female bodybuilders choose their attire in the gym.

At West Coast gym however I did not observe any changes to the norm for attire worn by female lifters, nor were there any female bodybuilders. Older female clients wore more casual clothing such as T-shirts and sweat pants as opposed to the tight fitting yoga pants and the low cut tops. The use of clothing as props is significant not only as they work as individual props, used to help present the self, but through the use of negative space with clothing, what parts of the body are displayed and how are they gendered, a social self is constructed. To invoke the concept of doing gender, the display of the body and the total performance are part of preventing the body from being called into question, and the performance overall. The body becomes part of the doing of gender. Working towards a particular looking body is a performative act; developing and honing ones props, or use of props in a setting where this is expected is a performative act of gender.

Saturday Crowd

Dale and Clarice were there almost every Saturday. Dale would come close to closing time with his dog and stay until the last minute. Clarice would generally come early in the day with her dog and talk with me while I worked. She would use the “zero gravity” treadmill to rehabilitate an injury and tell me about her job. I came to know her well and she bought me lunch

from time to time and a cupcake to celebrate me getting into Colorado State for graduate school. Sometimes her husband would go with her to the gym and work out briefly or walk the dog while she was on the treadmill. Several older clients who did not talk much would arrive right at opening on Saturday and leave around 10. Some Saturdays only two or three clients would arrive to work out over the five hours the gym was open. I usually had more freedom to choose music on Saturday as well, and I was the only employee to be in the office on Saturday, it was also a great time to get some of the necessary cleaning done.

The Saturday crowd represented a cohort and due to the atmosphere created, this day was separate from the regular week schedules. Though certain norms remained consistent during this day of the week as to what the appropriate conduct in a gym is, this group had their own autonomy as the scene was different as a result of the actors present. Scenes shift based upon the actors present and are influenced by norms of a certain group. Therefore as a particular cohort has the ability to develop coherence in members and knowledge as to the roles performed by others, then this repeated interaction alters the scene building that occurs. The scene not only reflects the actors present at a given time but also the duration that the cohort of actors have been able to occupy the same scenes and collectively produce a performance. The gym creates norms that direct the type of performance, but the actors create iterations of that performance within the confines of that social space. Developing an understanding of cohorts of actors within a social space and how that cohort might use that space incorporates Goffman's (1956) concept of teams into the social space. The Saturday crowd is a group of actors with differing roles relative to the social space of the gym, but also relative to one another. How the performance is constructed is contingent upon this.

The way that consistency is made with the Saturday crowd was available information to me as the researcher as I was present consistently across Saturdays for the entire duration of the hours of business. During the week the gym is more crowded, and with multiple staff members directing the traffic of patrons, the same consistency was more difficult to observe. However similar cohorts might very well be present at different time slots as the same group of people would often occupy the gym at the same time due to their schedules. In the future, this sort of information could be significant to the continuation of this research and could be extended across multiple social locations.

Exercise Classes

Gina, a trainer, would teach cycle classes twice a week in the morning. As the gym was small, the bikes would be set up in the middle of the gym and she would teach the class usually to 3-4 clients while playing loud dance music. The rest of the clients worked around the spin class easily, and training sessions continued as usual during this time. I became acquainted with a retired couple who would train: Tom and Rebecca. They would come by for the class and knew most of the people working or exercising at the gym as they visited so often. Tom would dress in bike shorts, and workout attire. Rebecca wore more casual clothing.

During times that spin classes were taught, the overall volume of the gym was louder. The stage of the gym changed as the class took up a large amount of the gym spatially and the volume of the class affected the performances of other attendees of the gym. Additionally, the relationship spatially of other attendees relative to certain props was limited by this event. Certain pieces of equipment were either utilized by the class or harder to access. As the bikes being moved to a central location in the gym, clients were prevented from using or retrieving

certain props. If they did access these props, they did so in careful ways that adhered to social norms of politeness.

Twice a week there would be yoga classes, one was taught by Donna and the other by Leslie. They were held in the evenings and brought a regular crowd of people. I attended both classes and the difficulty level was drastic as Donna appealed more towards people who were beginners to yoga, with the positions being simple. She frequently stopped to make sure people could complete the positions safely, whereas Leslie taught a very advanced, fast paced class with a prominent focus on advanced movements.

The music selection was set to the spa channel. Some of the attendees of the yoga class were non-members who paid the class fees to take the yoga class but were not gym members. The classes blended the traditional yoga ideas with exercise. Particularly, Leslie would tell the class which muscles they were training with each position. She would use terms such as “tone” to describe the effects of the exercises. The classes were primarily attended by female patrons. The lighting was lowered to small orange lights during the yoga session. Donna would put additional focus on the breathing exercises and the therapeutic relaxation side of yoga and used perfumed oil to help people relax. The style of the class was emphasized as at the end Donna would have clients do a relaxation pose and lay in silence for the last few minutes. Conversely, Leslie offered the class the opportunity to do a free standing or assisted head stand pose.

Free Weights

The free weights seemed to reflect the gym and the patrons. The maximum weights were 75 lb. dumbbells and not used by many of the patrons. The only dedicated lower body machine was a weightless “hack squat” machine. The trainers would often have clients perform low

weight kettle ball deadlifts or swings for lower body or full body exercise. One of the cable machines was specifically designed for rehabilitation, as it has very short increments between weights allowing for greater customization of the weight level along with the ability to adjust the position of the cables with much more flexibility. Beside this area was a physical therapy table where some trainers would do body resistance exercises or body work on patients.

Along with the free weights, were slam balls and medicine balls provided to teach functional and explosive exercises to the clients. Much of this gym equipment was designed to help people navigate day to day activities and rehabilitate injuries (cable machines/table). They trained for activities such as picking up groceries and boxes (kettle balls and free weights), or were used in preventing injury (slam balls). Everything in the gym was arranged in a way that helped facilitate this goal. In this way, the gym was provided as a tool for the proper integration of clients into a physically demanding role in the larger society. Beyond personal improvements to health and fitness, the gym served to rehabilitate injury to allow for basic movements and functions. The idea of functional fitness was big at this gym with the idea of cosmetic fitness representing a smaller amount of the gym traffic. The small number of young bodybuilders and a few others were there for entirely cosmetic reasons, however many of the older clients viewed cosmetic fitness as a bonus to regaining or building muscle function.

To draw upon Goffman's (1956) dramaturgical theory, the weights in the gym serve as props with which gym patrons are to contend. To enter a gym as a stage involves a presupposition to use props in a normative way. The shared involvement with these props serves as part of a larger performance which constitutes the stage. Though individual aims and roles are part of this group performance, the stage allows the variety of these performances to be achieved

with these props. Actors have an array of items to choose from that are thematically and physically housed within a gym setting. In this regard, to participate with the items and to complete a performance in some regards is an expectation of those entering the gym.

The different props produce a different performance. Though the goal of the gym is a form of health and fitness training, there is the underlying expectation that certain props within the gym will become part of a in situ performance at the site of training, but also in the creation of body which serves as a continuous prop in gender performance. The gym additionally serves as a location where it is expected to engage actively with the body as a prop, through clothing and the props that you use.

Scheduling

Compared to other gyms, West Coast Gym was only open six days a week with shorter hours on weekends. The gym would also close no later than 8 PM on weeknights with a 6 PM closing on Fridays. The gym would be closed on almost every holiday and a few days before each holiday. Larger gyms advertise all hours access that extends year-round regardless of holidays. On the weeks of Christmas and Thanksgiving the gym would have reduced hours and usually around two days closed before Christmas. For the holidays, the gym would put up a few decorations and change the music to Christmas music. The gym owner wanted the employees to be able take time off as well.

Division Between Staff and Patrons

The gym had very little in the way of barriers between what would be accessible to the staff and the gym goers. What barriers did exist would be passed by long term clients. For example, much of our cleaning supplies and other items used by the staff on a daily basis, were

in unlocked cabinets in the hallway across from the bathrooms. In some instances, clients would clean things after use themselves. Personal items were left in cubbies and many of the staff members left personal items in the bathroom in an unlocked cabinet during work such as a change of clothes for working out. The items of clients and staff were always respected by one another. There was never an instance I ever heard of theft occurring at the gym. There were no locked spaces in the gym other than the safe which was often left open. There is a small shed out back with basic supplies such as toilet paper, paper towels, and rarely used exercise equipment. This has a small padlock on it. Things like the remotes would often be used by clients themselves to adjust the tv. We often would leave the remotes out on a filing cabinet for their easy access. Also, the music volume could be adjusted in the back office and often clients would let themselves in to adjust it. Many of the clients had trained so long at the gym that they had personal friendships with the staff and would sometimes sit in the back office and socialize with whoever was there. The gym had a security alarm system when we left for the day, but overall there was a lot of trust for the clients. Nothing was locked within the gym and clients would sometimes forget items overnight. Some clients would leave items in the cubbies for their next workout in plain view.

Personal Training

Most of the clients who worked out at the gym would be in the gym if they had a personal training session and rarely if they did not. The gym was originally created as an extension of the physical therapy center and meant that the clients to pursue more advanced fitness goals after their therapy was completed. As a result, the trainers would be booked most times from opening to closing other than their lunch breaks. The trainers would have a fairly

regular schedule with new clients going to new trainers. Often the trainers that had worked with the company for extended periods of time would maintain the same clients for years. George and James would often train the older clients and would make training routines designed to keep the clients interested in going to the gym. James once told me that though working out was a fun activity for some people, he knew that some clients got very bored with their training quickly, so he said he would change the program up frequently. He said that though a repetitive program will offer the best results for most people, if the clients did not stick to the plan it would not work, so he said sacrificing a bit of exercise efficiency was worth it because it kept the clients active if they felt entertained by the program.

Younger clients often did more repetitive programs as they had very specific goals in mind such as building up muscles or training a specific muscle group for sports. Some clients who were rehabilitating an injury would often go through the same set of exercises every time in order to repair and strengthen that part of their body. Clients who wanted general fitness would often do exercises that mimicked day to day activities such as carrying groceries or picking up and moving heavy furniture. These exercises would also teach the clients how to lift safely by generating power in their legs and not compromising their spine when picking up and carrying things.

Some exercises worked specifically on improving hand/eye coordination. One client practiced throwing and catching a football for part of her training session and incorporated throwing and catching a one-pound medicine ball which was approximately the size of a softball. One client who was very elderly would end each session with a final exercise where he would lay down on the ground and then get up again to a standing position without the help of the

trainer, but the trainer would be there for safety and to assist if necessary. The gym was different than larger commercial gyms as this type of training was given adequate space by other clients. Due to the small size of the gym, clients were very conscious of their space, compared to Big Bodybuilding Gym where clients take up large amounts of space.

The most space intensive exercises were olympic lifts. Occasionally some of the older clients would do very light weight olympic lifts on the platform. People would often give a lot of space around the platform when this type of exercise was being performed. The platform held a more central position in the weight lifting area so was generally passed on the way back and forth between the front and the back of the gym.

Gym Culture

West Coast gym had a different culture than other gyms. The ways that the gym operates as discussed thus far show a bit about the culture of the gym that is there. It does not so much emphasize cosmetic goals or an overall fitness culture, instead it is more about the personal relationships between clients, the staff, and the place/objects. The objects serve as props in helping the clients work towards better physical functioning. The exercises assist in these means and give the clients a way of naming their journey and showing their willingness to improve on aspects of their fitness. The equipment is high end and often very well cleaned and maintained as opposed to Big Bodybuilding Gym where older dirtier worn out equipment is preferred as it symbolizes a more rugged, tough persona. The friendly and inviting lighting and carpeting create the space where clients can perform in ways that feel more authentic to their personalities and goals. At the larger Big Bodybuilding Gym I looked at, the walls are painted black with quotes written on them and pictures of athletes and bodybuilders hung on the walls.

At West Coast Gym there is not a single poster in the gym and no written rules or charts on the walls. There are several photographs that sit behind the desk. The lighting is bright, and the walls are painted in lighter colors. The carpet is tan with different colored squares patterned across the gym instead of the dark black rubber floors found in larger gyms. The expectation of rubber floors is that they can handle weights being dropped on them, whereas at this gym the floor is harder and carpeted and does not allow falling weights to bounce thus clients know that dropping equipment risks the fracture of weights. As a result, clients do not drop weights at this gym. Trainers will often assist clients in picking up and putting down weight when they are on the bench so that they don't have to drop the weights at the end of the workout. At Big Bodybuilding Gym, it is common to hear weights drop and only recently has a sign appeared asking for weights to only be dropped from below waist level as it was causing too much damage to the gym equipment. At West Coast Gym, clients gently let down weights. Even the few clients training for bodybuilding do not drop the weights loudly. Many of the older clients train very quietly as they are assisted through their exercises.

At West Coast Gym there is very little competitive activity as clients have a more mutually supportive attitude. Clients often know each other and say something supportive of one another. The Big Bodybuilding Gym I have gone to is also very supportive this support is expressed through friendly competition and loud active support. Clients there will make jokes to one another and sometimes the jokes will be self-deprecating. At times they will directly compete on lifts and with muscle size through posing, as that is significant to the sport. As bodybuilding is a competitive endeavor, it makes sense that a way for clients to support each other would be through a competitive means. It can be seen as a way of testing one's

commitment to the culture and sport, as well as celebrating the difficult tasks associated with bodybuilding. At West Coast Gym, the support is given in different ways as clients will often remark about how it is good to see someone doing well. Sometimes they will say that they are impressed by how strong the other client is getting. Clients thus discuss their progress collectively when they meet with one another, instead of competing individually. As many of the clients know each other and have worked or lived nearby one another they seem to interact in this collective way.

Clients often know each other on a first name basis and there is very little anonymity at this gym. At the larger gyms I have trained at, there is a more pronounced sense of anonymity. Clients do not know each other and must interact in the gym in a more anonymous way. At West Coast Gym, the focus is instead on more community-based interaction as the gym itself also participates in local business events and sends clients and staff to local athletic events. When I was in high school, the local high school had their basketball team train there in the afternoons. The gym itself has close ties to the community and is a fixture there, where local clients can interact similarly to other public social spaces. A school of small children is nearby and some of the kids, upon being dismissed from class, would meet their parents at the gym if their parents were clients. Sometimes the kids would wait and talk to their friends as the parent finished up a workout. Occasionally the small children of clients would be allowed to use certain gym equipment under supervision from the staff. I cleaned the windows in the afternoon and would have to clean them off after the kids walked by, as often some of the kids would look in through the windows so there would be handprints and face prints on the glass. Dust and dirt would be kicked up by the complex cleaning crew and the adjacent hardware store that we shared a wall

with. Often gym clients and staff were familiar with the employees at the neighboring salon or hardware store and we would make company purchases with those business.

The focus of the gym is not based on an idea of elite athletic achievement. The gym stands distant from heavily commercialized fitness culture and serves as much as a social hub and health center as it does a gym. Getting clients healthier is a primary mission of the gym and though some clients go for different reasons, they are generally respectful of the goals of the older clients and those who are overcoming injuries.

At larger more anonymous gyms, I have noticed that clients will respect the privacy of others in a different way, interactions between people who do not know each other are kept to a minimum and are done following careful rituals. An example of this is the spotting ritual on the bench press. In the spotting ritual, a person who requires a spot will either sit by their weights and hope they are offered a spot by another client, sometimes they are, or they politely ask if they can get a spot. It is customary that the spottee and spotter introduce themselves to one another, maybe shaking hands, indicating increased interaction will occur in which the exerciser signals greater trust with the spotter (Hall and Hall 1983). The spotter will ask the spottee on the bench press how many “reps they are going for.” This specific wording occurred regularly during my observations. The spottee then prepares the lift and attempts the established goal. Afterwards the spotter will say something like “I barely helped” or “barely touched the bars” or “good job” and then it is considered polite to excuse oneself. If that spottee needs another spot, they will generally return to that same person as the interaction will be faster and smoother the second time. The spotter often knows to expect this and sometimes keeps an eye on the spottee and anticipates their needs by asking them if they need another spot. Often, they do and sometimes

even help each other in the future. Sometimes it is customary to return the favor and spot the other. In the weight room, this is one of the most common, if sometimes the only interaction between two strangers, that occurs at a regular rate. Another common interaction is when two clients want to share a given piece of equipment. The second client will approach the first client and ask them if they can “jump in.” Sometimes introductions are made, but this is an interaction where the two gym goers are valuing speed and getting out of the other’s way. Often the clients will help each other by adjusting the weight back to what the other client was using for the sake of speed. These two can be combined when clients want to share a bench and thus as they switch off then they can switch off spotting.

The concept of teams from Goffman’s (1956) work can be applied to the spotting ritual. In this exchange the individual adopts certain performative aspects of an expected role in order to assist in the performance of another gym goer. Both benefit, as both performances are acknowledged and given positive reinforcement from one another. The spottee gains the benefit of working on their strength, but provides thanks and positive feedback to the spotter for being part of that performance. The spotter performs a valuable role in the gym, as the expectation that clients with a certain strength proficiency can step into the role of the spotter allows for all members of the gym to engage in heavier weight training and collective athletic achievement. It also is part of routine collaboration between members of a gym that increases the social interaction. This is made possible by the willingness of actors to take up the role for a short time. This takes away from one aspect of their performance but contributes in another way, as they are now a competent spotter and part of the collective.

These two rituals are valuable and could each have a much larger elaboration, but they are here used to describe a more anonymous gym experience than West Coast Gym. This ritual occurred in West Coast Gym occasionally, but was more common in the Public Gym and Big Bodybuilding Gym. In these larger more anonymous gyms, where interaction among stranger was rarer, it was more common for clients to interact with each other in ways that appeared highly scripted and routine, with very little personal information being shared other than at times their first name. In West Coast Gym, the interaction is more open in which clients may even ask one another personal questions about what they have been doing. If a client doesn't know another client, they will often introduce themselves and get to know the other person. As the space of West Coast Gym is so small, it is more beneficial to have these friendlier personal interactions. The performance is more collective in this sense, as collective action is significant to creating a performance.

Certain time slots would draw very predictable crowds. Since people were so regular in their attendance at West Coast Gym and thus regular about what time they were in the gym, they would have no choice but to see the same people every time they attended the gym. As I worked out in the morning and worked in the afternoon, there were some clients I almost never crossed paths with. I was used to more anonymous spaces, so it was new to get to know people in this space. When I was a member of the staff, clients would often ask me about whatever job I was doing such as folding towels, cleaning the windows, or organizing. Clients would ask personal information like where I had gone to college and what I studied, and what. These were ways that clients got to know me a bit better and when I was applying for graduate school, several clients would check in and ask how the process was going and we would compare experiences from

when they were in graduate school or college to my experience in applying and getting all the necessary materials.

I got to know a few clients and the kind of work they did or had done before they retired. Some of them would tell me about where they had gone to school or their travels or their take on the news. It was generally nice to have people to talk to, as it helped the time at work pass faster on longer days. It was interesting to learn about things they had done, and it got rid of the anonymity. Many of the older clients were quicker to talk and introduce themselves. There seemed to be a relationship between age and the quickness with which the clients would introduce themselves. Younger clients would often listen to MP3 players while working out and said very little to clients or staff other than basic greetings. Many of these clients treated the space similarly to an anonymous gym. Middle aged clients varied in personality with some treating the center like an anonymous gym or introducing themselves and asking basic questions. Older clients almost always introduced themselves and said something about what they did and would even sometimes say why they were in the gym. They would ask me what my job was and ask if I was training people or doing financial side work. Since I did a bit of everything on top of basic maintenance activities, I was able to talk to clients during each activity. Following my certification as a personal trainer I was allowed by the gym to answer a new array of questions and guide clients through different workouts.

Overall the culture of the gym is one that is low key and casual with an emphasis on community and a strong connection to the other local business. This model allows the gym to serve the local populace directly. The gym serves as a place for the community to engage in fitness practice together. The gym exists as it is carried on by the clients who are most consistent

in their attendance and participation. The relaxed and friendly attitude that appears in the gym is one that is practiced by the patrons and the staff alike. The practice of these activities in a shared space reproduces those norms and this culture is reproduced simultaneously by gym goers and staff. This is beyond the business model of the gym, as the environment is one that is constantly in the making as order is kept through various rituals. The way that new members are brought into the fold through interaction, introduction, and eventually through the connection of those members to each other and other businesses, is a process of networking. The gym network additionally serves to share resources and connect the gym with other business activities such as collaborations with schools and yoga studios. Additionally, health care providers are connected through the process of physical therapy and fitness. The gym serves in that regard as an extension of the health care system.

The gym is not only a place where a community meets, but also a place where a community is made. In this environment, older members of the community can connect with younger members of the community in ways that might not exist in other spaces. As all people entering the gym are dressed for exercise and titles are left outside, people from many different places and positions and roles can come together to talk and create community together.

The gym also connects the training staff to resources they might not otherwise have in other jobs. Trainers spend significant time with the same clients and the client turnover is slow, with many clients having been attendees since the gym's founding. This community is thus continually made as clients return and meet with the same staff. Though there has been turnover with the staff, there are a handful of staff members who also have worked there since the beginning. From my time there I noticed that the staff members that have remained the longest

have been integrated into the community and enjoy the building of interactions with the clients. George has brought his dog by and his children to work events. James has brought his children to the gym, particularly on Saturdays. The connection of personal family relations with work relations creates this community in a much more deeply connected way. The workers who have stayed longer also have families that are more connected with the gym. James has children who participate in local sports and extracurricular activities in which they are acquainted with the local members of the gym. George leaving his dog with Clarice and knowing the people in the area helps with the connection of the staff with the community. The gym thus becomes a shared activity in which it is not merely the staff presenting and maintaining a space for clients to enter a workout and leave, but instead it is a continual process that must be shared in by the community. The community members that enter the gym are as much a part of defining the gym and the gym experience as the staff. They maintain the interaction and the interaction style that comes to be the gym.

What is expected in the gym environment among patrons is not so much defined by a set of rules given to patrons at the gym but instead through the management of behavior that occurs based on actions and requests by clients. On one instance, I got a phone call and answered it in the back of the gym while I was working out and not working. A client asked if I could do it outside next time as she said the volume was too loud and was distracting. The clients can request music as well and the same client who asked about the phone also asked if we could use a new cleaning spray as the smell was very strong. In politely meeting the requests of clients, we allow them more autonomy in shaping the gym experience. They are allowed decision making power as to what the gym environment and community looks like.

As a company, we valued letting the clients have this freedom. I moved my call outside, we changed sprays, we would set the music the way clients wanted it, we let them change channels, we let them meet their kids in the gym and watched their kids to make sure they were exercising safely, we watched their dogs, and all of these were active ways of forming community and “making” a gym. The gym was a building with weights, the use of which allowed people to perform an activity while gathered there. However, the overlay of interactions and community is of sociological significance. Though the props in the gym allow for interaction and mediate interaction in a specific structured way, the interaction that exist interpersonally and professionally in the building define the rules by which the clients interact.

The clients however each the gym with their own unique knowledge sets and ideas about health and fitness. A client who has never exercised and is entering the gym on bequest of their doctor brings different assumptions, expectations, and ideas about fitness than the young bodybuilder, or the yoga practitioner. Each of them begins interacting with the props differently and conducts themselves in different ways, but despite these differences in assumptions, long term clients learn to interact with each other in new site specific ways. The interaction similarities or differences between clients come to define the space of the gym. Conflict is overcome, or the new client leaves the gym. The coach who did olympic lifts and was asked to be quieter, eventually left as he found a gym that was better fit for him. Several other staff members would move to larger more commercial gyms but the staff that stayed became more connected with the clients and the place. Complaints about the casual business practice drove some staff away as they found a fit for them at other businesses, but those who stayed had more success with the business, and non-material community-based reasons for staying with the

company despite any small conflicts. The connection with the community provided other benefits to staff that stayed. The made up for the lower pay than larger companies. Gathering a larger client base and maintaining a connection to consistent clients lead to much more commission and pay. Part of success as an employee depended on connection to the community. This was apparent in who stayed and left.

Those who are not present in the initial community of people who joined the gym can provide insight into an intersectional analysis of fitness. It is for this reason that I continuously state that this theory is grounded in the spaces that this observation occurred in and not generalizable. It is instead situated. Theory building then must be aware of the absence of populations from the gym due to access and patterns of discrimination that occur in larger society outside of the gym, as well as ideological constraints that are placed upon people and may prevent some from entering or being able to engage in a particular space to begin with. An intersectional analysis provides then a window into what populations occupy fitness spaces and those who are absent.

Age and Injury as Accounting

There are certain props that can aid in the doing of a gender identity and can be associated with the age of the clients. The personal production of identity should be taken into consideration with the props used and interacted with. To use a prop at an older age due to physical limitations of the body means something different to the user and the audience. Certain clients over 40 at West Coast Gym would remark to me that they would be lifting more weight, except they got older and had experienced new limitations based on their age. Clyde would remark about Dale and his ability to lift large weights for his age and how his performance was

impressive. Age in this case serves as a form of accounting for performance. Clyde would remark about some of the trainers and their ability to bench press a certain amount of weight. He frequently made remarks of this kind and attributed his current fitness level to age, he would always say this with a form of levity, however it serves to account for specific levels of lifting ability. Clyde made important points about safety when lifting and how even small weights run the risk of damaging spinal disks. This is a consideration that trainers make to warn their clients about. In this context a shared safety narrative can work to account for specific lifting and exercise ability.

In a similar narrative, Clarice spoke about her injury in regards to her competitive participation in running events. She made the point that she could not compete at her fullest as she was recovering, the injury was a concrete physical limitation, but injury extended beyond the physical as it was an accounting device to compare oneself with other clients. I personally used similar accounting when I injured my wrist. I had to remove close to one hundred pounds off my bench press as to reduce stress on the joint under a doctor's orders. I would attribute my lower strength levels to the injury. There was a motivation beyond simply explaining an injury as there was an expectation I felt at the time to explain these strength levels based on a personal narrative, and to account. This enters into the equation of gender performance as male gym goers are expected to account for their strength levels if they are not as high as they would like.

James and George would talk about injury and aging. They would recount performing greater feats of strength at a younger age prior to injury and recuperation. Injury and aging become part of personal narrative building and social performance. To exercise with an injury might require the use of zero gravity treadmills, weight belts, wrist wraps, body tape, elbow and

knee sleeves, and ankle braces. In the sense of performance, these props serve in the performance of injury within a gym. To be using one of these props while engaging in an exercise, changes the actor's presence upon the stage. These props serve a physical utility, but they also are part of changing and shaping the interaction between clients. For example, client entering a gym with a knee brace might receive special deference. To present one's story of injury, without involving a prop is an alternative way to ask for deference. To provide positive or empathetic feedback and to offer suggestions as to achievable exercises, or exercises that help in the rehabilitation process, is thus to provide deference to the performance. In this way, the listener of a personal narrative of injury, aids the narrative maker in their performance and provides them with the appropriate feedback to validate their performance and to indicate that they successfully accounted for their body and their gender performance.

To share a narrative of injury or age becomes part of the performance act, sharing this narrative becomes significant to this setting and place, as the setting informs what types of narratives are significant. A narrative of injury or of the issues pertaining to aging situated the speaker as an actor at a particular place upon the stage. To explain the use of certain props illustrates the theoretical bridge this paper attempts to create between this prop understanding and the processual acts involved in "doing gender." It connects to doing gender as the expectation placed upon someone due to their sex can be accounted for when the performer needs to explain a particular performance, for example a lack of a certain strength level. The props are needed then to do gender and account for oneself. The narrative stands in lieu of performing the body in a particular way, in a setting that an actor enters with expectations about themselves and the stage of performance.

Future studies of fitness require an analysis of age when looking at the performance of gender. As the extreme differences in age among clients within West Coast Gym indicate, there are different forms of accounting, performing, and doing gender that exists at the intersection between age and the gender that one is performing. Additional accounting is brought to the performance in the form of injury-based props and narrative sharing to account for performance when the body is not capable of competing physically or exceeding a certain expectation.

Age narratives and injury narratives indicate that there is a relationship that one has between their body and the fitness props, such as free weight, or in fitness performances such as an athletic event or lift competition. Displaying a level of competency with props must then be incorporated into doing gender and performative acts of gender. Though narratives serve as a way to do gender and to account for gender when it is questioned, there is a necessity to include props into this analysis as all this narrative building is focused around the body and its relationship to a certain set of props, in a certain setting, and used in certain performances. Thus, doing gender requires the actor to perform in a specific way with a given set of props and to frame this prop use. West and Zimmerman (1987) explain that situated conduct is used to do gender and is based on expectations placed on the body stemming from ascribed or identified sex. The performance of a certain level of weight and the degree of performance thus changes based on sex and is framed in this narrative form by clients. These are varied ways of succeeding in the performance of gender. The narratives of clients and trainers regarding what they used to be able to perform athletically works to achieve this end as it demonstrates to the audience what the actor's body and embodied sex and gender is or was capable of doing, barring mitigating circumstances.

This process draws of prop and narrative based performing and accounting, bring together a central theoretical assertion of this paper. I argue that this relationship in a shared space with props, where performances are used to do gender, and where gender identity is at stake depending on the performance, indicates the necessity of incorporating these two theoretical perspectives together. Narrative making is a tool of defining one's past, future, and present relationship to props, and is a processual component of their gender identity. During the act of performing gender, an actor might experiences context-specific and societal level expectations. This reaffirms the goal of my theoretical argument of bringing together props and the theory of "doing gender" into a fitness environment and involving bodily acts.

CHAPTER 5 - BODYBUILDING AS A PERFORMANCE

In this chapter I detail a bodybuilding gym and look at the unique aspects that bodybuilding brings to a theory on doing gender. The props, norms, and interactions within this gym are very different than that of West Coast Gym, and the setting itself follows a different design. However, this gym is very similar in that gender is created and accounted for in ways that are mediated through these interactions, props, and the setting of the gym.

Big Bodybuilding Gym

I will examine a setting which is a gym I refer to as Big Bodybuilding Gym. It is a gym that I attended and trained in. Regarding sound, the volume of music at Big Bodybuilding Gym is very high. When I have had headphones in, I can still clearly hear the music. The music here is much more aggressive metal, rock, hip hop, and electronic music. At this gym clients regularly make loud grunts or shouts when performing exercises and I have witnessed clients yelling at their friends while working out to encourage them. Clients generally walk with a posture that takes up as much space as possible with larger swinging steps, chest out, arms swinging. Even the water bottles used by clients are often gallon jugs. Some clients reuse milk jugs to drink from. Clients talk in much louder voices and swear in front of other clients. Weights are often dropped or slammed on the platforms with much louder volume. The heavier weights are more often used, and the client base is predominantly younger participants. In a bodybuilding gym, the use of certain exercises, such as the deadlift, are more part of the regular routine of the gym. This differs from a place like West Coast Gym there are potential sanctions against certain exercises.

The set of props also differs in a larger bodybuilding space. The available performances change in this type of institution as there are a different variety of props present in the space. The way that a client can engage with the space to produce themselves in situ and in the long-term shaping of their body, differs. The use of free weights and the development of strength and physique are emphasized over health focused work. The weight machines and size of certain weights and dumbbells require a different prerequisite set of skills, competency, and required level of strength to engage in performance with these props. The implied skill set to engage with certain pieces of equipment establishes an expectation for the clients in this space. This allows and limits the performances that are available to actors.

The combination of the setting, the props available, and the norms regarding the body in the gym set a different expectation for the accounting of gender and achieving body intelligibility (Klein 1993: 20). This produces the norm for a gender performance. There becomes a set of traits that are assumed to be adhered to that constitute or exclude one from performing a gender (Klein 1993: 17). As the bodies, both the male and the female, that are displayed in the gym are particular to bodybuilding culture. The muscle development required to achieve this physique requires a certain amount of time, skill development, practice, and potentially performance enhancing drugs. Thus, the practice that produces a body creates a very specific prop for which the participant can use in their performances. The intelligibility of a body and what is considered an adequate performance both of self and of the body is context-specific and has a certain set of attributes embedded in the setting. The props that are present are placed in the gym intentionally to enable the completion of a performance.

The desired performance requires effective organization of the props and stage, simultaneously with the interpretation of these props by the user. These layers are further organized in gender specific ways as the final goal of a bodybuilding competition is divided in ways that set different expectations for participants based on gender as indicated as the presence of bikini contests as a large part of bodybuilding events in the contemporary era. As it serves as an important text among bodybuilders Arnold Schwarzenegger's book shows exclusively male bodybuilders. Though there is a very brief section talking about female bodybuilder, the implied norm is that bodybuilding and creating that body and self is provided more to men than women. Though in the place of performance, women are present and in bodybuilding environments engage in more heavy strength focused training.

The Pump: An Act of Performance

In weight training there is the phenomenon of "the pump." The pump is when a muscle has been exerted and fills with blood, making it appear temporarily larger. In bodybuilding style weight training, the pump is a desirable outcome of a workout. It occurs most prominently during arm workouts. This process serves as part of the performance. Achieving a pump provides both physical feedback from the weights and further enlarges and emphasizes the body part being trained. In this way, items such as dumbbells produce an immediate physical change in the body as a result of the body's feedback to exercise. This body part, modified in the moment by a prop becomes part of the immediate performance. The implication of the pump is also that the muscle will become stronger and bigger as it has received an adequate amount of exercise. Arnold Schwarzenegger famously compared the pump to an orgasm (Butler and Fiore, 1977). In this way the pump becomes a masculine expression, with the use of weights being compared to

sex with women. One of the most popular YouTube fitness channels (formerly known as Physiques of Greatness) is now called Pump Chasers.

The pump as an in-situ achievement and an opportunity to display a temporarily larger physique. The comparison of the pump to sexual conquest demonstrates a form of heteronormative gender performance within weight training. The performance, and personal body work in the pursuit of large muscles is placed in comparison with sex. This type of performance indicates some of the norms present in weight lifting culture and further adds to the concept of physical training and manipulation of the body as an act of performance not only of self but of gender.

If the doing of gender becomes expressed in performance (West and Zimmerman 1987), then the pump and display of larger muscles directly serves as an act of doing gender and accounting for one body. This can be achieved in the gym where the results of the pump are visible and where the props to adequately achieve this purpose are present. In order to successfully achieve a desired gender performance, the patron of a gym must attempt to account for, or do gender. This is mediated by the presence of a specific and socially meaningful set of props. The performer can interpret and weigh the options available to them in the gym to complete the desired performance. The body itself is also shown to be rendered intelligible, or in the process of being rendered intelligible. The use of props such as a dumbbell set, shows that all performances, including those that involve manipulation of a physical body, require certain props.

High Fives and Other Gestures of Support

The “High Five” is a gesture used in the context of the gym as in the larger social world to express support for an accomplishment. In the gym, this gesture can be used as an active form of acknowledging that one has accomplished a task. If one were to give a high five to another after lifting a new, larger amount of weight than before, then the high five allows an actor to bestow deference upon another actor’s performance. When the lifter receives a high five, they are accepting deference for their performance and acknowledging their accomplishment (Hall and Hall 1983).

The high five, or other gestures such as a pat on the back serve as a congratulatory gesture that involves physical touch between participants and is offered by the supporting role to give deference to a performance. Beyond the scope of the observations I have made, it would be valuable to examine these forms of deference as they pertain to gender. How are various forms of touch, deference, and gestures used differently to aid in different gender performances?

In the client and trainer interactions, the high five or congratulatory gestures can be used as part of performing the job of personal trainer or coach. They are expected ways in which the trainer provides positive and encouraging feedback to a client and aid in facilitating a training session. As the trainer is helping the client perform work on their body, they are also helping the client learn performances, build competency with props, and gain confidence in their ability to perform certain exercises. The high five serves as a form of regular deference that the trainer can provide to the client as a way of acknowledging that the client is progressing at all of these things.

CHAPTER 6 - DOING GENDER IN A PUBLIC GYM

On four different days I entered the fitness center I will refer to a “Public Gym” with the goal of observation. During these times, I performed a lifting routine that began in the free weight room on the second floor and took me to the machine weight room, also on the second floor, and then to the open area on the first floor which contains additional weights and cardio equipment. The goal was to observe each training area and those engaged in activities there. I began with the sensitizing concept of gender to guide observations. This was quickly confirmed, as gender played an important role in gym interactions. However, observing interactions began to shape the concept in unexpected ways.

It became clear that the gym existed as a male dominated space. This was achieved by the presence and presentation of male participants and by the physical arrangement of the space in which they performed exercises. The activities performed in this space by all actors contributed towards a performance of gender. The way the gym exists as a male dominated space, facilitates this gender performance in men and requires women to navigate the space differently to perform their gender. In this sense, female participants must find a way to use a physical arrangement dominated by male interactions to create their own sense of female identity in the gym. Additionally, the exercises and areas engaged with by actors in the gym allowed men and women to perform their gender in various ways. Within different spaces in the gym these gender performances held different degrees of power.

Male Dominated Space

The physical layout of Public Gym became an important component in creating a binary gendered space. The arrangement of space and the inanimate objects within that space allow the performance of gender through their use. Areas of the gym that aided male participants in performing a masculine identity were physically emphasized and spaces where women could find room to perform a separate female identity were not provided the same attention.

Upon entering the fitness center, participants usually passed by the large basketball court. The basketball court sits next to the changing room and runs parallel to the hallways clients pass to reach the exercise equipment. The basketball court was populated, on all occasions I observed it, by men except for one female player. Additionally, several of the games demarcated teams by doing “shirts and skins,” which requires one team to go bare chested to differentiate them from the other team. This arrangement generally implies an all-male space and could potentially be difficult or uncomfortable for woman to participate in. The emphasis of the basketball court and the presence of almost exclusively male players causes an area of male competition and athleticism to become spatially emphasized in the fitness center.

The other area that consisted almost exclusively of men was the free-weight room. The room generally held between twenty and forty participants at a time. The most women I viewed in this room at a given time were three. The physical spacial arrangement of this room promoted interaction as the room existed in a circular pattern where the bench press stations took center stage, the squat platforms and additional benches were against one wall and against the opposite wall clients lined up to wait their turn on a given piece of equipment. The wall where clients line up is approximately four and a half feet tall and borders the running track, this gives the room an

open layout where participants can be easily viewed by anyone passing by. The circular arrangement of the room facilitates more interaction between lifters, as actors have no choice but to view one another during training.

The adjacent machine weight room is equally male dominated and follows a similar circular design where participants must face each other during training. The machine weight room exists in an open area at the top of the stairs. Beside the machine weight room is a line of cardio equipment. The cardio equipment on the second floor was mostly populated by women with several men in attendance. In contrast to other exercise equipment, the cardio equipment faces a window and is arranged in a linear fashion with the spatial arrangement de-emphasizing interaction. The row faces a window and has its back to the larger room.

A similar layout follows for the downstairs cardio. The area was mostly populated by women, and similar to the second floor, the equipment was arranged linearly facing a window. Some of the cardio equipment was situated beneath the stairs, leaving less room for interaction. On the first floor beside the cardio equipment were two small weight rooms with free weights and machine weights. The maximum weights offered in these rooms were smaller than the second floor and there were more female participants training there. One of these rooms was situated with spatial emphasis, however the other was tucked back in the far corner of the gym with less spatial emphasis.

The lack of spatial emphasis compared to the largest weight room, which housed a male majority, demonstrates a lesser degree of importance paid to the smaller weight room. This smaller room did not offer the same level of weights as the larger room and had mostly female participants. The arrangement of the gym values the production of maximum strength by

emphasizing the larger weight room. In this context men tended to occupy the spaces most conducive to strength development and the spaces where women seemed most comfortable engaging in similar exercises were smaller and had fewer available pieces of equipment.

Within the fitness center, were several group exercise rooms. These rooms offered small exercise classes and yoga classes. These classes were almost exclusively filled with women. The rooms received less spatial emphasis. The rooms had semitransparent paint over the glass or blinds that covered the glass and provided some privacy to the participants. The rooms on the second floor specifically lay outside of the main areas of interaction within the gym and provided less spatial emphasis to the mainly female participants.

The spatial arrangement of the gym provides emphasis to areas most populated by men and that emphasize socially construct male binary identities and contribute to their construction. The centrality of the basketball courts and weight rooms seemed to emphasize male competition, strength, and power. These attributes were favored by their location relative to other areas of the gym, they were most central and visible to anyone passing through the gym. The circular arrangement of weight training areas makes all participants more visible to others they are training with and seems to promote competition since all participants training can be seen alongside other gym participants. In contrast, the areas that most prominently feature women were arranged in a linear fashion and face away from the central areas of the gym. They were in a position of less power as their backs were facing anyone passing by. Additionally, rooms where group exercise occur, and solidarity and mutual achievement are emphasized among primarily female exercise classes were least visible and partially hidden behind blinds.

Throughout the gym were televisions that participants could view while training. On the days of my observations, the televisions broadcasted exclusively professional and college men's football. The presence of this television programming as the norm in the fitness environment emphasizes male athletic achievement and competition. Additionally, football is a sport associated with power and violence and further emphasizes socially constructed attitudes about men. The inclusion of these televisions establishes the tone of the fitness center as one where male dominance in a highly physical sport is normalized.

These data indicate that the fitness center is a location where attributes socially associated with men are emphasized spatially as men are given space to display these traits in a visible and open arrangement. In contrast, traits socially associated with women lack the same emphasis. This indicates a patriarchal arrangement where male traits are given favor over female traits in a shared space.

Gender Performance

Within the gym as a male dominated space I was able to observe the way that both men and women acted in relation to each other. Their performances were relative to the physical arrangement of the space in which they interacted. When organizing the data, I was able to connect my observations to the concept of gender performance. West and Zimmerman (1987) understand gender as "the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate to one's sex category" (127). The gym provides a place of repetitive actions where participants can engage in activities that emphasize and create the physical differences in their bodies that they associate and consider natural to their

sex category and gender. The division of men and women into different areas of the gym in my observations began to form this concept.

I observed primarily men in the free weight room. This area emphasizes training with heavy weights to build maximum strength and muscle size. The concept of gender performance began to form as I watched the way women interacted in a space primarily populated by men. In the instances where women trained with men, the men in all these instances acted as an instructor to the women. In one instance a man explained to two women step by step how to perform a squat. In two other instances a man spotted a woman on the bench press. In the two cases involving the bench press the man provided assistance by touching the bar throughout much of the lift. In one case this man also spotted a fellow male lifter and did not provide the same degree of assistance in the lift. This arrangement with a male instructor to a female trainee creates an unequal and male dominant relationship where the man hold a position of power over a physical activity engaged in by a woman. The direct touching imposes a form of physical control of the movement of a woman's body as she is not in a position to control the weight throughout the whole of the movement and a man imposes himself as an authority.

In one instance a couple was training together. The male participant would hug or kiss and publicly show affection towards his female partner between acts of exercise. This seemed to indicate an act of power where his touching of her body in a male dominated space demonstrated an expectation of his gender performance. In this situation he emphasizes his heterosexuality in a fitness space as an act of performing masculinity. In another situation with a couple training, the male lifter physically guided his female partner through the range of motion required to perform the lift. In this way her athletic achievement was within the control of his physical manipulation

of her movement. Her performance of an exercise within a male dominated part of the gym was altered by her male partner to create a separate performance of gender where her position of power is not changed by her adoption of a male dominated exercise. This maintains a separation where female performance of gender while performing this exercise is influenced by the male actor present.

As weight lifting provides a means to shape and change one's body through repetitive action, in these situations where a man asserts himself as an authority figure over a woman engaging in these activities, he has power in how she shapes her body and performs her gender. The presence of this pattern occurring during all instances of my observations further supports the notion that the gym is a male dominated space. The male dominance in the weight room allows male participants to perform gender with more freedom than female participants who often engaged in the weight room with the assistance from male training partners. Female participants with male training partners engage in male dominated areas and exercises without their female identity being questioned. This connects to the concept of accounting, in which their training partner aids in the performance. Following these observations, I was able to further connect the data with theoretical concepts of gender performance. West and Zimmerman state that gender is used in "legitimizing one of the most fundamental divisions in society" (1987: 126). In this context the continued creation of gendered bodies through training and how interactions change the experience for men and women, creates a "naturalization" of sex differences. Once observations were made, I was able to form this concept from the data. Women that are provided excessive assistance are prevented from achieving the same degree of strength and muscular development they might achieve if they were training independently. This is

carried out in a particular setting established by the physical layout of the gym. The smaller downstairs weight room with more female lifters had lower maximum weights available than the larger male dominated weight room. The use of training as a way of shaping bodies demonstrated a dimension of power to gender performance. As stated by Butler “the gender norms establish what will and will not be intelligibly human...considered real...bodies may be given legitimate expression” (Butler 1990). The male dominated space establishes these norms that are carried out by participants. The act of performing legitimately, becomes a dimension of power. Through observation I was able to connect the interactions and use of inanimate props to the notion of gender performance and these performances to dimensions of power.

Breeching

Despite the common pattern of women in a subordinate role to a man in an instructor position, I observed instances of deviation from the norm. In one instance I observed a woman breaking from this pattern and her deviance from this pattern resulted in a very different form of interaction. In this instance, a woman began performing front squats on one of the squatting racks in the gym. She trained solo with headphones on and began lifting large amounts of weight relative to her body size. During her training she was engaged by men who asked her questions. Because her training was independent of a male training partner guiding her actions, she was given the social freedom to discuss her training as an independent and personal act of achievement that was compared directly to male performance in a male dominated space. Her achievement matched or surpassed the achievement of some men in the gym and therefore resulted in a change in the ways that those men interacted with her. Her performance of strength

in relation to her sex category created a new gender performance that was viewed in relation to male performances as opposed to being seen in relation only to other female participants.

In this situation, the performance of gender becomes an act of power. Women who were performing in a subordinate “trainee” role to a male training partner held less power compared to a woman who challenged male participants in an act that men use within the gym to create their gender performance. This further strengthens the notion that the gym is a patriarchal male dominated space where acts associated with male participants become acts of power and to challenge patriarchal power, a woman must perform at an unexpected level of competency. In this unequal relationship women must succeed at breaking a common pattern in the gym in order to assert a gender identity that is not placed in an unequal power dynamic to men. In this situation her breaching of the norm allowed her to hold a more equal position to male lifters in the gym.

A similar instance occurred on the basketball court involving the single female participant I observed. In this instance the woman dressed identically to the male participants that she was playing with. Within a male dominated space, she had to adopt a male attire to fit in with the group. In both these instances, women within a patriarchal power arrangement adopted qualities associated with men in these spaces. Once they had adopted these qualities, they were allowed a new kind of access and freedom within a male space. The woman playing basketball could play with male players in a shared space and the woman training with heavy weights was treated more equitably by male lifters. This indicates the process of gender performance as well as indicates the patriarchal power arrangement of the gym. These women were given more freedom only after adopting male traits within this space.

Female Spaces

Within the context of a patriarchal system, women were able to establish a separate identity rooted in repetitive performance in the space of the gym. The areas of the gym in which I observed exclusively female participants, were in group exercise classes, in particularly yoga classes. The yoga classes, as previously mentioned, were held in rooms obscured by blinds and away from the center of gym activity. This created a secluded and quieter setting for class attendees. The spatial separation from the busiest exercise areas allow women to create a space for performance, still within a larger space dominated by male expectations, but in a private place and for a female audience.

The use of a separate space regulated by women serves as an act of resistance against male domination. In this sense women are given the space for their experiences and expectations to become the center of importance. Additionally, without any bodily manipulation from men imposed in authority positions, the female class participants can define their level of athletic achievement and intensity. The saliency of yoga as an important aspect of female gender performance in this fitness space was seen beyond the confines of the yoga classrooms. Except for two women, all the women I viewed across the different exercising spaces of the gym wore yoga pants. Yoga pants were the norm dress for female gym participants and identify gender performance in relation to yoga class as a space dominated by female interaction within Public Gym.

Shaping Bodies

In observing the ways that different aspects of the gym were segregated by sex and the processes by which women entered male space it became apparent that the gym served the role

of shaping participants bodies in accordance to their mode of gender performance. In the large weight room which held between twenty and forty participants at any time, the majority were men performing upper body exercises. In the large weight room, a maximum of four people would be performing leg exercises at a time, determined by only four squat racks. Most men in this area performed upper body work. However, in the shared space I observed two women performing lower body exercises outside of the squat rack. These two women performed lunges against the wall of the weight room. Outside of the largest weight room, I observed the same pattern of men emphasizing upper body training and women emphasizing lower body training. From these observations the concept of gender performance became more prevalent where the very act of shaping one's body through repetitive physical exertion is a pivotal aspect of this performance. These acts of shaping one's body were seen through my observations to vary based on the participant's gender.

The spaces that clients of different genders occupied in the gym further emphasized changing one's body as an act of performance. The prevalence of men in areas focused on strength training indicated that the men in the fitness center focused on building stronger or larger bodies and focused on muscular development. Since the majority of participants were women in stretching areas and yoga classes, the data seemed to indicate women were focusing more on flexibility. Women also constituted most of the participants engaged in cardiovascular exercise via the use of machines. These machines focus on improving endurance but also on reducing body size through fat loss.

How clients dressed in these areas gave further indication to their goals in performance. In the weight room I observed many men wearing sleeveless shirts emphasizing arm

development. The women wore more form fitting clothes such as tank tops and yoga pants, emphasizing thinness. In instances where heavier set women were engaging in cardio, I observed that they wore loose fitting t-shirts as opposed to skin tight clothing.

The gym became a space used for shaping bodies in which gender plays the role of guiding these interactions. Because the gym exists as a space dominated by a male presence, there becomes varying levels of power associated with the act of performance.

Implications Found in Public Gym

These findings are congruent with Dworkin's observations at the gym. The end goal of shaping a body in particular way is divided by gender. The use of different props involves different performative acts. The way that gym space is divided by gender shows that there are different expectations based upon gender and sex. Simultaneously as these different areas of the gym shape the body very differently, as they offer different pieces of equipment that facilitate different performances and shape the body in different ways as a prop. The different clothing becomes part of displaying the body. Simultaneously the inclusion of personal items aids in performance as they become part of fostering an identity within this space.

The body is part of the performance and that body occupies different parts of the social stage and involves props that are distributed across this space. Personal items accompany the embodied actors as they cross the stage and find a context in which they fit. The setting is displayed in certain ways that facilitate and influence a performance. There is a more uniform and private space available in the cardiovascular room as the room is arranged in rows with all the participants facing forward, this allows users of these props to perform in alternative ways to participants in the weight room where the gym equipment is arranged in a circular room with

some items taking the center stage over others. The use of mirrors in this room increases the visibility of participants. The setting along with the available props allows performance to be acted out in a specific way.

This performance is not just an in-situ performance but includes the gendering of certain aspects of performance from the physical comportment of the body and the use of props. The actors can thus account for gender in the way that they interact with one another and present themselves, the items that they bring with them into the gym are personal and part of an ongoing performance of gender.

In addition to the performance of gender in the gym, the sex category of actors is accounted for in the gym through the use of personal presentation in a shared social stage and while involving the incorporation of props into the performance,. The body is produced in this way, the use of different weights to intentionally develop certain body parts I argue is part of producing a body as intelligible and as accountable to a certain sex category. In situ this also produces intent which indicates work to perform in a certain way in a stage and with certain props.

CHAPTER 7 - DISCUSSION

This study seeks to draw a theoretical connection between “doing gender” and dramaturgical theory. This work adds to the interest in previous reviewed literature to discuss the way that bodies are idealized in fitness culture. This research seeks to contribute to theories about gender that challenge binary definitions of gender categories. I believe this data demonstrates the continuous constructed qualities of gender and analyzes the role that fitness plays in this process.

There are significant differences between West Coast Gym, Big Bodybuilding Gym, and Public Gym that allow performances to be achieved by actors in contrary ways. I argue that gender guides these performances in context specific ways. This process is apparent in the presentation of props in the gym and arrangement of space. The process is embodied by actors as the props have a long-term effects on shaping the bodies of participants. This incorporates the body to the process of gender creation and the accounting for sex categories.

After examining the findings presented in the previous chapters I would like to re-examine the data presented in the literature review in a new context and build my theoretical synthesis between Dramaturgical Theory with Doing Gender. This final discussion serves to bring together the previously mentioned literature with the data gathered in my observations, and to reiterate the most significant aspects of the theory I wish to present.

Dramaturgy and Gender Performance

The combination of ethnographic experience with existing literature culminates in the assertion of new theoretical ground in combining a theory of props with the act of doing gender. I

refer to this theory as Prop Assisted Gender Performance. In which the meaning, arrangement, and access to props become a pivotal part of a continuous gender performance that involve accounting and intelligibility. This thesis is meant to synthesize two approaches to research in a way that I did not see in the data that I gathered in preparation for this project. The aim of this project is also to include the body as an “earned” prop in gender performance.

Gender is an important social performance and, as extant literature and this study demonstrate, there is significant a relationship between different activities in the gym and gender performance (Dworkin 2003) (Craig and Liberti 2007). There is important theoretical ground to be made in understanding a particular performance as build from habitual activity. Here the study of the everyday activities of actors reveals something greater about society. The methods in this paper were chosen to emphasize this relationship between the “everyday” social reality and a more overarching understanding of gender and performance. The effects of these activities in the gym change the body which is is part of a continuous gender performance and is involved in accounting for a sex category. Competency with props produces the prerequisites within a gym to progress in training intensity, engage in new activities and to competently perform particular physical feats. These activities contain socially ascribed meaning that is significant to the process.

The performance of gender involves the use of props in context specific ways and this culminates in an accountable performance. The actor accounts for the body, and maintains intelligibility of the body. These different components are specific to the gender performed and how the body becomes part of that performance.

Using the settings of West Coast Gym and aspects of the bodybuilding world illustrate the very different ways that props can be engaged with in producing gender. The different settings create a context with a set of expectations placed upon actors in terms of producing their gender. The norms in these spaces also set expectations for actors about how they proceed beyond the gym in performing their gender.

West and Zimmerman (1987) maintain that gender is created through “situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one’s sex category” (127). This research argues that these activities and “situated conduct” involve meaningful settings and props that actors must navigate, interpret, and reconcile with their sex and gender identities. In the gym, different props become categorized based on their appropriateness for the sort of performance an actor wants to undertake. As Dworkin (2003) argues, women, in the gym she studied, wanted less muscular physiques and focused on cardiovascular training, this is consistent with field notes I gathered at the Public University Gym. This indicates that actors a set of “normative conceptions” that they bring into the gym with them as to how they should behave or engage with props. They engage in these activities, knowing that avoiding heavy training will prevent the development of large muscles and that the use of cardiovascular machines will result in the loss of weight. These normative conceptions inform the choice of props and the end goal of developing the body as a prop, performing gender, and rendering an intelligible body under certain constraints. The body is engaged with exercises that have the properties required in producing the body in a particular way. The body becomes a social instrument that is used in the performance of scenes. To extend the performative metaphor, to alter the body allows the actor to be “cast” in new roles in social performances.

In the bodybuilding setting, the body is subjected to heavy training with particular props that create strength and larger muscles which serves as a situated context to do gender. The setting and idealized physiques were defined by images of heavily modified bodies. The use of images serves to illustrate a set of expectations as to the “ideal” gendered body and the male and female bodies are displayed differently in the images. The women, even those with larger muscular physiques, are displayed in less aggressive poses. The sexed body becomes imposed with different expectations for positioning, display, and morphology.

Similarly, in the West Coast Gym, gender was navigated through the use of body and in the choice of lifts among clients. However, the interaction between clients allowed actors to communicate and complete performances that appear different than in more anonymous spaces. Concepts based on community ties and the relative age and social status of actors affects the performances available. Similar to the Public Gym, the focus among younger male clients on muscle building routines with minimal cardio work, and younger female clients focusing on lighter weight exercises and more cardio was visible on a small scale at West Coast Gym. This was exaggerated in the Public Gym due to the size and number of clients as well as the age of participants. The division in the choice of what to do with one’s body in the gym reflects the use of props in the gym, which influences where one occupies space in the arrangement of the gym equipment.

Space

Specific areas of each gym were designated for different equipment, which concentrates certain social actors, and leads to gender performance being divided across the gym space. In accordance with West and Zimmerman (1987) the use of these props does more than create an in-

situ performance but shapes the body. The body of an actor that has been inscribed with sex or meaning further inscribes this through the performance and through changing their physique with exercises. The space that these performances occur provides different constraints and limitations upon the actors as indicated by the differences between the physical stage in each gym.

The embodied acts of fitness are part of doing gender, they involve a set of props and a relationship between a person, their gender identity, their body, and the audience for which they are engaged in performing for and performing with. The stage is a pivotal component of this process as it guides the performances of the participants and provides them with the means to complete the performance.

Props

In re-examining props, they are approached by an actor with a set of knowledges. Props are arranged thematically in the gym based upon the performance that the actor is trying to achieve through use of the props. With the given props, actors can build competency and complete a performance. An impressive performance with an exercise is given a form of deference by the audience (Goffman 1956). The way that a gym goer might congratulate another at the achievement of a feat serves to give that person deference for what they have accomplished. Additionally, the objects themselves can be a “symbolic extension” of the actor, in that case the weight itself and the amount of weight that was or has been previously lifted by the actor, is looked upon in an admiring way in order to give deference to the individual who completed that task (Goffman 1956: 477). A large deadlift, for example, recently performed can attract admiration from the audience. The competency the actor displayed in that lift with that

prop becomes a way of being bestowed with admiration and confirming the intelligibility of the performance of gender.

The study of props can be extended to gender as a certain competency (or lack of) with certain props can potentially be part of completing a gender performance. In powerlifting and bodybuilding, lifting can be part of the completion of a masculine performance where as Young (1980) examines the way that female athletes hold back on physical feats as “women as conditioned by sexist oppression” (152). The way that one moves their body to complete a physical task pertaining to strength and fitness finds influence in the way that social expectations condition an actor about gender (Young 1980).

When the actor takes up a prop, exhibits competency with the prop, and receives deference from the audience, they are performing gender in the act. West and Zimmerman (1987) discuss the way that a person must complete a performance in order to maintain their gendered designation. The act of getting deference reifies that performance in a gendered lens. The performance is thus gendered, and the recipient of audience attention is involved in convincing the audience as to the quality of their performance. The actor ties a concept of self in the abstract to a physical and bodily task in which understanding to some degree is shared with the audience. However, in incorporating Young (1980) into this understanding, a gendered framework affects an actor and their body prior to the pursuit of a given physical feat. In this way a gendered lens is taken and internalized by the actor and this produces the performance as it affects the way that an actor engages with a physical object

In her field work Dworkin (2001) demonstrates the theoretical connection between ideology regarding gender, and the production of a body which is thus capable of performing in a

certain way. If there is an assumption held by an actor about what their bodies are capable of, and this assumption is shaped by oppressive ideology, then this produces physical differences in sexed and gendered bodies in myriad settings and practices, including the gym and fitness. To perform fitness is to perform a body that is appropriately engaged in fitness. What is considered appropriate and for a given body is a result of the gendered ideologies that are internalized by an actor.

This connection between ideology and the resulting bodily performance can be further applied to what is expected of overweight bodies in the gym and how those can possibly be read as unintelligible in fitness spaces. Though this is beyond this particular paper, it could be a potentially valuable route of study.

Appearance in the Gym

To return to the idea of appearance, in addition to using props, the participants in the gym alter themselves as part of the performance. Though some aspects of appearance are controlled through exercise, and clothing, there are constraints beyond the actor's control, especially if the appearance one seeks to present is different than perceived by the audience (Stone 1962).

Exercise in the gym, and the way that clothing can be used in the context of the gym allows some management by those who enter in how they present themselves. In the gym, context specific clothing is worn to present the body in a way that is specific to the space where the interaction is occurring. Some of this clothing might not be appropriate in performances outside of the gym. In bodybuilding spaces, the display of muscles is the norm, where as in West Coast Gym the display of muscles in the gym is less common.

Appearance also works to account for gender and sex categorization in allowing the participant to present an image to be judged by the audience, with an goal of being categorized in a specific way. Clothing works as part of appearance and clothing is gendered, so the use of clothing not only works as a way of expressing a given gender, but is also worn to conform to certain gendered norms. Appearance works on behalf of the presenter to ask of the audience to gender them in a particular way. This is a form of accounting to the audience with the goal of having that categorization accepted and validated by the audience (West and Zimmerman 1987). To avoid unnecessary “gender assessment” from the audience, the appearance can be controlled not only by clothing but also by practice (West and Zimmerman 1987). Practice can be observed in Dworkin’s work as the female gym participants did not seek to maximize muscle development so as to maintain an idealized female appearance, demonstrating the way that practice in the gym becomes part of controlling one’s appearance and accounting for gender (Dworkin 2001). Conversely in bodybuilding, an emphasized masculine physique is sought by practitioners of bodybuilding through the repetitive practice of weight lifting (Klein 1993). Appearance of the body, which is achieved through practice in the gym, in combination with clothing creates the groundwork for emphasized masculinity and femininity which allows those in the gym to avoid gender assessment.

Intelligibility

Pertaining to the notion of accounting for a sex category, is the concept of producing a body that is read as intelligible. I argue that in addition to the use of props and the interactions and performances inside of a gym, a physical body is produced and manipulated on a consistent basis to produce intelligibility. Butler states that “‘Intelligible’ genders are those which in some

sense institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire” (Butler 1990:23). The stage for performance and the produced and reproduced body, becomes part of this process of producing intelligibility. I argue the use and division of props serves in the production of an intelligible body. The production of the body creates a coherence between these coded gendered props and activities with the body, which is thought to be the essential result, not of practice but of gender. The way that this body is viewed as an essential binary product furthers a binary heteronormative notion of sexual practice.

If bodies are used to create coherence between gender and sex, then the choices of actors are constrained by needing to remain intelligible. This is seen in the gym in the use of exercises and additionally the progression to heavier weights that produce more muscle mass. In the bodybuilding competition, the differentiation of the “bikini competition” from bodybuilding further employs expectation of the gendered and sexed body as well as a connection to sexuality allowing a competition avenue where an intelligible female body is displayed. Female bodybuilders challenge this intelligibility by producing a new sort of body. These various expressions of the body that are made available through routine practice illustrate the importance of examining intelligibility in this analysis.

Acknowledgements and Limitations

Intersectionality

An important acknowledgement of this paper is that the theory presented here is built from the contexts specifically studied. It is not gender alone that creates these contexts, but the intersection of systems of race, gender, class, etc. This is not meant to be generalizable across all contexts, but meant to be a useful tool in understanding these specific contexts or adapted with

awareness to the ways that intersecting systems present themselves to create contexts. The theory presented is not to serve as a universal but as a specific tool created from the contexts in which the data emerges. Gender is present as an overarching system in this paper, but the ways one experiences gender can be changed with respect to how that person experiences race, class, and myriad other social systems.

Standpoint

Before concluding, I want to make note of Feminist Standpoint Theory “feminist standpoint projects...have from the beginning been interested in scientific practices and how to improve them” (Harding 2006: 96). The inclusion of this section is to acknowledge the position of myself as the researcher in the process of gathering this data. My personal experience in training for bodybuilding and powerlifting purposes, employment at West Coast Gym for a time, and training as a personal fitness trainer allow a certain degree of insight. But this position affects how I connect my observations to theoretical perspectives, which theoretical perspectives I employ, which data I consider important to detail, and what data I can observe both based on that position and insider knowledge to the community and location studied. Though these perspectives provide some truth to understanding the situation, it is a partial and incomplete perspective representing one standpoint or position. Williams’s (2002) observes, “race, place, and class structures within communities reinforce particular kinds of femininities.”

To use standpoint avoids the essentialization of a given perspective regarding fitness, gender, and the body. This insight allows access to a space and to certain information but should not place the researcher above those who are engaged with shaping their bodies in the gym. The

experiences and the bodies of participants should not be merely objects but have a subjective perspective on the interactions and performances in the gym and fitness centers.

The use of standpoint creates the context in which the theory emerges and the context in which this theory has the most value in terms of pragmatic use for future study. A similar approach can have situated value across other contexts and the ability to develop context specific theories.

In future research it would be vital to contrast my perspective as a male participant in fitness locations with alternative perspectives. I have tried to address the potential shortcomings of my position as it creates certain blind spots in the data. However there are likely still shortcomings as a result of conducting research from a single perspective. My interactions in the gym are based off of the knowledges that are particular to my position. I gain certain access and past interactions in the gym inform how I maneuver there and what data I see as important. This leaves a great deal of potential for future research to address these potential holes in the research. This allows for a more intersectional approach moving forward.

Since the stage is designed by an actor with the intentions of meeting the expectations of the other actors who enter the fitness space, and that this produces a certain set of performances that align with the performance of gender, I choose to use the props theory over actor network theory for the sake of this study. However, moving forward additional research would be valuable that includes a comparison between a props theory and an Actor Network Theory in a fitness space.

Significance of Research

The motivations to engage in this inquiry in the way that I have, is driven by a desire to more fully incorporate the physical changes and adaptations that the body experiences as a result of fitness activities into a theoretical understanding of dramaturgy and doing gender theories. This paper acknowledges the body not as a static vessel of meaning but as one that can engage in changes. To engage in fitness activities grants the user of this equipment with new competencies with their physical form as well as presents possible limitations. The way fitness enables and restricts activity becomes an important component of gender performance as the audience evaluates the competencies of one's body.

As a trainee engages in weight training, they are modifying their body and building larger muscles. The trainee has developed a competency for more advanced performances that gain a different reaction and interpretation from the audience, simultaneously they are developing their bodies and appearance which also changes their interactions and performances. The threat of having one's gender challenged alters these performances as one places upon themselves certain constraints against activities and ultimately the shape of their body. These constraints inform how participants in the gym move spatially and choose activities. The way that patrons account for injuries, for example, illustrates the way that a perceived expectation from the audience affects how one performs and describes their performance. I argue that this is tied inseparably to gender.

This research provides a stepping stone towards continued studies into body modification and how it becomes a part of a gendered performance. I argue that gender performance not only includes the way that a body and personal presentation of an actor is interpreted by an audience but also involves the way that the person's physical body is intentionally managed by their ac-

tions. These actions come into conflict with social structures and ideologies that inform an actor's choices and compel the actor to constrain themselves in particular ways in order to produce a performance they deem acceptable to their audience.

As fitness and the activities and competencies developed through continuous use of equipment, these practices have effects on the body and the performance of gender. I believe that studies such as this are important to the furtherance of sociological inquiries into gender. The theoretical contributions developed in this paper enable further inquiry into the internalized constraints placed on the actors and how these constraints inform the development of physical capabilities and appearances. These developed qualities are assumed to be natural manifestations but, as this study demonstrated, occur as a result of individual interactions with social structures and follow routine practice and maintenance of activities. This study illuminates some of these processes and provides a framework for further study.

The implications of the research on larger theory is that these types of bodily modifications can be found in other areas of society beyond fitness. Fitness allows access to some aspects of physical performance, but the same principals can be found to be valuables in other areas where the body is constrained in particular ways to allow a certain gender performance.

Conclusion

This study provides a theoretically grounded tool to forward the study of performative gender by including a dramaturgical understanding to produce a theory of gender that involves the use of props and the modification of the body. The theory is built from the gym contexts studied, but studying across more contexts can produced more nuanced theoretical tools that can account for the ways intersecting systems produce situated behavior in the gym.

Theories of ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism can produce common ground in understanding the social world. To demonstrate this in a substantial way the gym has been used as a site of study in which to combine these theories. The gym is an important site of study as the participants in the gym have the ability to take up props to be used, but also the ability to modify their appearance in socially meaningful ways. An entire subculture of body modification can be found in the world of bodybuilding (Klein 1993). This subculture is rich for sociological analysis and valuable to understanding intersecting systems of class, gender, sexuality, able body ability, and race. This work does not fully explore these components but offers theoretical tools and precedent to continue these inquiries in the future.

This exploratory research hopes to provide a guide as to using theory in a new way to study gender, and challenges traditional binaries of gender by exploring the ways that these conceptions of gender are created and constituted through continuous social action involving props. In addition to gender, bodily conceptions of a sexed body are challenged as well as that body is shaped by physical activity and given meaning in a social scene.

This theoretical perspective aims to provide exciting new directions for understanding the body regarding gender and gender performance. More work is required to understand the social scenes for gyms intersectionally, but this thesis should serve as a tool in approaching that process.

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APPENDIX - FIELD NOTES AT PUBLIC GYM

- When spotting a stranger, lifters introduce themselves to the spotter.
- In instance where couples were training there were overt physical signs of affection: extended touching and kissing.
- When paired with female lifters, male lifters in all cases I observed, provided instruction to female lifters.
- In one instance a female lifter trained with heavy weights alone and was approached by several men she didn't know. She had to remove headphones in each case to answer their questions.
- On one day the weight room had three women out of sixteen people, all three were accompanied by men. Of these women in the weight room 4/6 performed primarily lower body work and 2/6 upper body work.
- 13 men in weight room
- 35 men, only around 4 were performing lower body work at any given time.
- When performing lower body work more women used the smith machine compared to men.
- On another day there were two women working solo and two accompanied by men.
- On one day about 1/3 of men wore sleeveless shirts, on another day about 1/2.
- Some men wore fitted baseball caps.
- Primary colors worn by men: grey, blue, green, red. By women: white, purple, pink, grey.
- In the machine weight room there were around 9 people at one instance, one was female working on lower body.

- On every day observing, all women wore yoga pants except for three across all days.
- Men wore sweat pants and shorts, male shorts were all basketball shorts with tall tube socks worn high, several ankle socks. Female socks were primarily ankle or barely visible.
- In the weight room several men used milk cartons to carry their water.
- Small weight room, three women face mirror and use kettle bell. Three women against window. Two men use benches.
- Women with mp3 plays would put them in their shirt front on waist band while performing exercise as yoga pants do not have the pockets that gym shorts do. Some women use arm bands to hold phones and mp3 players.
- Many men used protein shakers to hold water.
- In machine weight room women used smith machine over free weight squat.
- In the cardio machine area 14/16 were women on one day and on.
- In the weight room the televisions played football games and football news. In the downstairs area with smaller weight, the television played a classic sports show also emphasizing football.
- Most men walk with a wide stance with arms swinging, maximizing personal space, women walk with narrow focused stance, arms closer.
- Class with ropes and bands, occupied by women only
- Yoga class, several women participants perform exercises.
- Heavier women wore baggy t-shirts instead of tank tops.
- The stretching areas on the bottom floor were mostly women on all days.
- In group exercise class all participants were female.

- Male lifter trains female lifter and touches her to explain movement, in several cases with men the same touching did not happen.
- In machine room, two men discuss techniques to build muscle, talk about visiting body building forums, want to learn how to build largest muscles possible.
- On the basketball courts, all participants were male except for one woman, she dressed stylistically identical to the men, long socks, large t-shirt with sleeves cut off, and basketball shorts.
- Women training primarily focused on glute, quad, ab, and triceps training
- Women on cardio machines watched comedy television
- All but one swimmer was male.
- One man with two women, teaching them squats. Two instances of women bench pressing helped by significant other. Men provide more spotting support than with other men. No women benching alone.
- Shirts and skins
- Blinds on yoga class, all women.
- Cardio in lines.
- Paint on glass to group exercise, all women.