DOCUMENTING THE USE OF APPEARANCES AMONG THE DJ AND

NIGHTCLUB PATRONS

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ABSTRACT

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This is a photo-documentary study of two themes found within the literature on fabulous appearances: the gay nightclub patron and the club DJ. This study used a large Midwestern gay nightclub as the field setting. Fabulousness involves the way patrons costume themselves in order to communicate status within the setting. This study revealed that participants in the setting utilize three different types of self-presentation. These types embody desirable characteristics and ideas of attractiveness that revolve around power, establishing a normalized "gay" identity, and using surreal based characteristics to achieve their goal of being noticed. The DJs served as informal organizers through their appearances and performances. Analysis of the DJ role found that DJs provide visual cues for other participants in the setting on how to act, dance, dress, and behave. This study is the first in depth examination of the role of the DJ and the communicative processes between the DJ and dancers in gay nightclubs.

Lynn Pike PhD., Chair

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study is an exploratory photo-documentary looking at key aspects of making

and doing identity development in gay nightclubs. The goal was to explore the role of

fabulousness, or how individuals costume themselves and take on their roles as night

clubbers (Buckland 2002). This study used Buckland's (2002) Queer World Making

model of nightclub behaviors and sought to explore her idea of fabulousness, the role of

the DJ, and how the two help patrons organize the setting. Nightclubs can be thought of

as extraordinary places where reality is suspended under the illusion created by flashing

lights, loud music, imaginative sceneries, and surreal aesthetics. Displaying carefully

crafted appearances makes up a large part of nightclub patrons' roles (Hodkinson 2002;

Moore 2004). Patrons in this setting seem to go to great lengths to be both seen and stand

out from others. I use the term appearances to describe clothing, props, physique,

hairstyle, body movement, relationship to others in the setting, the way one moves, way

one acts, etc.

Patrons in gay nightclubs craft and display their identities by creating their ideal

self-images. This display of identity building includes creating gender identities,

building a sense of community, and forming comradery with other club goers (Buckland

2002; Hebdige 1989; Hodkinson 2002; Moore 2004; McRobbie 2002). They use these

conventional ideas to create a unique appearance and identity. In a grander sense, if any

one part of this process of identity building is removed the reality becomes more

unstable. As club goers attempt to define themselves, and their reality, they build a world that crystallizes as they add more elements of self-expression to the setting. At the center of this process is Buckland's (2002) notion of fabulousness. Fabulousness is the idea that patrons gain status through presenting unique forms of appearance and thus unique representations of their own marginalized identities. In gay nightclubs these performances are often exaggerated to either set themselves apart from conventional societal notions regarding their gender roles, or adopt exaggerated masculine behaviors to make themselves appear hyper-masculine. By manipulating their appearance they are creating two versions of themselves, one version is their everyday marginalized identity the other is their role as a night clubber. Once they enter the club they are transported from their marginalized selves into another reality where they have power, and their appearance helps make this process happen.

The DJs are central figures in nightclubs. DJs are important figures because they are the vehicle through which music is selected and played. As Buckland (2002) points out, they help convey meaning through the music they play. They also carry with them the added function of being very powerful cultural icons. A sign of the cultural significance of the DJ lies in a recent release of the video game "DJ Hero", this game allows players the ability to create a simulated DJ performance of their own. DJ's often enjoy playing before audiences around the world for large sums of money that reflect their popularity. In gay nightclubs music helps communicate values central to the setting and thus makes them central to the role of defining the identities of gay patrons.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Nightclubs have been examined in the previous literature largely from a historical

angle detailing the history and evolution of rave subculture and the role of the club DJ.

There is however, another way to frame how nightclubs are studied. The nightclub

setting can be examined using the framework of a staged performance consisting of

manipulated appearances. This performance consists of symbolic forms of

communication occurring primarily through unique appearances (dress) and is organized

by the interactions between the DJ and patrons (Goffman 1959; Hebdige 1989;

Hodkinson 2002).

Buckland's Theory

One of the most recent accounts of nightclub interactions comes from Buckland's

(2002) study conducted in the 1990's in New York City. She used 22 clubs as points of

observation, but her study repeatedly mentions only a few of these sites. Buckland

(2002) interviewed 17 patrons, and chose subjects who had vastly different experiences,

backgrounds, and other unique attributes. In her study, she explored the lives of her

patrons and their experiences in gay dance clubs. Her research revealed several key

insights into patrons' activities in dance clubs. Buckland (2002) observed that there are

three components that make the nightclub: dancing, appearances (otherwise called

fabulousness), and the music. Under her model of Queer World Making, music is played

by a DJ who regulates the interactions and behaviors happening on the dance floor. The

setting is shaped by patrons who continuously define themselves through dancing.

Lastly, under her model, appearances are used as a way to convey status, either you have it or you do not, you either fit in with the others in this environment or you do not.

Buckland's (2002) Queer World Making theory has two points which might be perceived as limitations. In her work, Buckland (2002), identifies herself as a club goer but does not fully disclose her insider status. Readers of her work are left to question her status as a member of the Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transsexual (GLBT) community. If she is an outsider, then her role as researcher might not have gone deep enough into the social realities of her participants; her Queer World Making theory could be based on what participants thought she wanted to hear. On the other hand, if she is an insider, how did it impact the validity of her findings? Buckland (2002) is not forthcoming with her reasons for conducting her research.

Buckland (2002) conducted her study because of legal decisions by New York City that would force some of the gay nightclubs to be shut down. At times it seems as though Buckland (2002) is conflicted about being critical of the setting. Her personal stance and her role as a researcher seem at odds with one another. She talks in great detail about the seemingly utopian environment her participants create for themselves, and limits her critique of the club environment. Despite the available literature that notes the short comings of the nightclub environment, Buckland (2002) does not mention some of the negative effects attached to the gay nightclub.

Other researchers have examined the negative impacts nightclubs pose. Ridge (1997), for example, finds that the community that is built from club behavior is

exclusionary to those who do not fit the status quo. Contrary to Buckland's (2002) theory, research is emerging that gay bars foster some dysfunctional features for the gay community, causing them to exclude individuals from the gay community rather than support inclusion (Valentine 2003). Buckland's (2002) theory is built on the idea that the gay nightclub involves participants utilizing behaviors in order to create a world of their own, built on ideas of equality. Ridge (1997) finds that what is occurring in gay bars is a status game where one must fit into a gay role or be ejected from the "in" group. Analyses of gay men's experiences in nightclubs by Valentine et al. (2003: 855) found that, "lesbian and gay identities are literally embodied in terms of appearances and mannerisms." This suggests that the gay experience is class driven, status is obtained through capital; notions of having expensive clothes and expensive tastes are what drive gay society (Ridge et al. 1997; Valentine 2003; Moore 2004). Still others argue that status accumulated from the nightclub comes from one's racial makeup, ethnicity, particular style of appearance, or an accumulation of these traits that comprise the patron's night time identity (Buckland 2002; Hunt 2005; Hodkinson 2002; MacRae 2004).

Lastly, despite the extensive research on gay identities and their components, researchers continue to debate the existence of such a gay identity (Valocchi 1999; McLelland 2000). McLelland's (2000) work in Japan revealed that the notion of a gay subculture is largely a western ideology. We are left with a body of literature suggesting that there is a loose identity formed within the nightclub setting, and that the group label can take on many forms. These constructed realities are made possible through

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appearance and the staging of the setting. Research is occurring that postulates that it is

class that drives the creation of these communities, and in a Marxist tone, explains that

these communities are merely products of consumerism (McRobbie 2002; Valocchi

1999). In spite of this fact, we must hold that these communities are real because the

participants define them as real (Thomas 1928).

Fabulousness

     <u>Club Patrons</u>. Based on the work about fabulousness by Buckland (2002) and

others, the concept can be defined as the elements of appearance or dress that are used by

patrons to express themselves, become noticed by other patrons, and transform

themselves to craft an ideal self-image. "Participants dressed 'queer' to create

themselves and to be read by a target audience of other queers, which, in a gay, lesbian,

or queer club, can be exploited to the utmost" (Buckland 2002; 39). Dress and

appearance have been identified as important aspects in assuming identities among

marginalized cultures (e.g., youth sub-cultures) (Hebdige 1979). Dress and appearances

allows patrons to communicate ideas through symbols, and more importantly, to develop

a quick measure of status; the old adage of "the clothes make the man" seems very

appropriate here (Hodkinson 2002). Appearances, and particularly dress, allows patrons

to assume a role as though they are wearing a costume for a theatrical performance. The

enforcement of a dress code as a way of barring entry is one way clubs cater to specific

clientele, and points to the seriousness of costuming oneself for this setting (Thorton

1996)[1]. Buckland (2002) identified two ways clothing style determines status: "pulling a look" fabulousness and "serious fabulousness" (38). The "pulling a look style" is about becoming a caricature and the "serious fabulousness" is associated with a clothing style conducive to dancing (Buckland 2002; 38).

Green (2008) suggests that imagery is used by nightclub patrons to heighten their status and increase their desirability, resulting in an improved chance for eliciting sexual encounters. Green's (2008) analysis focuses on how Black men use stereotypes they feel White men have towards them, in order to be perceived as desirable sexual partners. Green (2008) discusses the process of sexual capital which is how appearances are transformed into ways that create status and competition for status amongst clubbers. Thornton (1996) echoes these sentiments in her analysis of social capital. Thornton's (1996) analysis of youth culture leads her to conclude that clubbers use appearance to gain status from onlookers, display shared cultural signifiers through manipulation of their appearance, and become authorities shaping behaviors and rules within nightclub worlds. She points out that the study of fabulousness is challenging because as soon as a particular style becomes popular or "mainstream" it is replaced by a new version (Thornton, 1996).

The Club DJ. The DJ is a main contributor to the atmosphere of fabulousness that is created in the gay dance club. Buckland (2002) reflects on the importance of the DJ only in terms of his/her technical expertise. The literature makes reference to DJs as

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[1] I recount my own experiences trying to get into a nightclub in London, and was denied entry because I did not have the appropriate dress, and was told "I looked like I'd be trouble".

focal points in the nightclub environment; but little work has been done exploring if other levels of interaction exist beyond selecting, mixing, and playing music. Brewster and Broughton (2000) allude to this in their examination of DJ culture, in which they note that DJs take on one of three roles. The first role is concerned with the DJ as a rock icon, and the celebrity status that is achieved through being a DJ. Secondly, the DJ can be seen in terms of a rebel, allowing participants in the culture to differentiate themselves from others in society. Lastly, they see the DJ as occupying space to perform the role of making music (Brewster and Broughton 2000). Most of the analysis conducted by Brewster and Broughton (2000) is in terms of a historical context, and how the world of the DJ evolved into a million dollar industry.

The DJ has been studied most often through the lens of "rave" sub-culture (Spring 2004, Thornton 1996). The "rave" sub-culture participants are viewed by many as the early pioneers of electronic dance music (Brewster and Broughton 2000). Many of the studies examining rave culture note that DJs are the instruments for delivering dance music and talk about their technical aspects of blending songs together. The commercialization of dance music gave rise to an industry which generated iconic DJs who command, in some cases, astronomical fees. Lastly, the DJ is seen as a way to resist main stream attitudes. Much in the way Hebdige (1979) notes that punks use dress and style (appearance) to resist mainstream ideas much in the same way electronic music enthusiasts use dancing and dance music to resist and rebel against an over-arching mainstream culture.

The role of the dance club DJ is that of leader of a larger group interaction. The exchange between the DJ and the dancers can be read as leading the crowd towards gayness, and a coming together to move as one conscious mind. The selection of music, intensity of the beat, fashion, and physical movements of the DJ lead the group towards a definition of gayness. This interaction can also be read as the way in which this setting organizes itself out of chaos. In describing the dance floor as drama, Buckland (2002) observes that dancing involves expressing a shared identity, and displaying the gay cultural heritage. Through spontaneous movements, dancers physically interact with one another; they lose their individual identities to the performance in order to emerge as a group (Buckland 2002; Hebdige 1979; Hodkinson 2002). Through the interplay of the DJ's choice of music and patron dancing, reality is transformed and the environment becomes a landscape where the participant's shared sense of self can be observed by watching other participants. For Buckland (2002) and her participants, dancing involves performing stereotypes that identify them as gay. Buckland's (2002) proposition is that the participants are fighting over the definition of the setting and ultimately what it means to be gay. This process is the core of her Queer World Making theory. Buckland's (2002) theory is lacking because she says little about the interaction between the DJ and the dancers.

Other Sub-cultures

Similarities exist between youth culture and gay culture; a shared identity communicated through symbols that can be found in appearances, the utilization of music and dance; and the shaping of their realities in an almost ritual affirmation that they are a

community which they belong (Hebdige 1979; Ridge 1997; Buckland 2002; Hodkinson 2002; Moore 2004; Hunt 2005). Hodkinson's (2002) Goth study, for example, shows how conformity and group identity are maintained by adhering to a similar appearance. The Goth sub-culture is described as a music-oriented group whose core values are individuality, a fascination with the macabre, and clothing that has a Gothic theme and is usually all black (Hodkinson 2002). I note this group because of the importance placed on appearances and the same rhetoric used in research on Queer identities and other marginalized groups (Goffman 1959; Hebdige 1979; Ridge 1997; Valocchi 1999; Buckland 2002; Hodkinson 2002; McRobbie 2002; Valentine 2003; MacRae 2004; Moore 2004; Westhaver 2005). Physical appearances in gay dance clubs are argued by some researchers to be the basis of status (Harry 1974; Valocchi 1999; Green 2008). The Goth subculture parallels the Queer world because of the construction of a vastly different reality where appearance is paramount for establishing status as a member (Hodkinson 2002). For gay subculture, it involves fabulousness and fashioning oneself to look extraordinary (Buckland 2002). It is, therefore, useful to examine Buckland's (2002) theory further since it is the most comprehensive theory that blends a variety of nightclub behaviors into one research source.

Chapter 3

Specific Aims and Methods

As an insider, I have always looked at the gay nightclub from a critical angle. I have participated in many levels of nightclub culture. I am also an active member of the gay community. Being an insider, and a student of sociology, I have often felt that the nightclub is a perfect setting for doing sociology. By this I am referring to the constant social interaction and symbolic communication that I have witnessed over the years. I have also noticed that the nightclub environment is rich in movement and motion; lending itself well for implementing a documentary photographic study. My aim for this study was to expand on the existing literature by documenting some of the characteristics of people's appearances as they perform their roles as night clubbers. The study of gay spaces is important because they have been shown by past researchers that they are central to the idea of gay communities. Additionally, these spaces generate a great amount of revenue. According to Thorton (1996), UK nightclubs generate more revenue than any other entertainment facility. To study this topic, I employed a documentary mode of photography to study the gay night club scene in order to answer two questions that emerged from the literature:

1. In what ways can documentary photography of gay patrons support and expand Buckland's (2002) theme of fabulousness?

2. In what ways can documentary photography of club DJs support and expand Buckland's (2002) theme of fabulousness?

Methods

The study of gay nightclubs is an overwhelmingly complex topic. In order to narrow my field of observation, I chose two of the themes found in Buckland's (2002) Queer World Making model. The themes that I choose for examination were fabulousness, and the role of the DJ. In the dance club both appearances and the DJ are two central components for participants. The themes were chosen for a variety of reasons. DJs have been noted for their influence over the actions of others in the setting, yet little has been done to examine how they exert their power over these individuals. I chose fabulousness because of the amount of literature on youth cultures which suggest that appearance is extremely central to sub-cultures, and there is a lack of this examination in the study of gay identities. I chose to examine these themes using a documentary photographic approach to collect data. From these themes I created a shooting script (Appendix A) that had a similar function as an interview guide for those conducting verbal interviews with human subjects. After taking the pictures, I narrowed my selection to the photos contained in Appendix B.

I obtained university IRB approval for this study. I justified the ethics of this study by mentioning that photography is common place in this environment. The patrons, photo journalists, and club staff take photographs of other people without obtaining consent of any kind. This is a very public setting where the participants not only expect to be photographed, but want to be photographed. If I would have acquired consent through having subjects sign forms, it would have disturbed the natural

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environment. Participants would have to stop dancing and enjoying their evening, to receive an explanation of what was happening, and the environment would have been altered. As a result, it would have invalidated the results of this study. While I was collecting data I always carried copies of my IRB approval in case anyone inquired about the study, or the legitimacy of the project. No one asked me not to take pictures of them, or expressed concern over how I would be using the photos. The patrons are used to seeing my photograph in a local GLBT newspaper, on video screens throughout the club, and on the club's various websites. I was prepared to not only disclose my study's purpose but to avoid taking or deleting anyone's image who did not want to be a part of this study.

Setting

The specific setting I used was one large Midwestern gay club similar to the ones described in Buckland's (2002) research. The settings in Buckland's (2002) study are what could be called mega clubs. Mega clubs are dance clubs which are often large spaces that can hold several hundred persons, and are often multi-level with different types of entertainment. The largest spot in these clubs is the dance floor, which houses a booth from which the DJ performs. This club, like Buckland's (2002) dance clubs, has only one regular night (Saturday) for dancing, and on average draws around 700 participants. I went in at five different times to observe and photograph behaviors in the club. Specifically, I went in on 2/14/2009 9:00pm, 2/28/2009 10:00 pm, 3/7/2009 12:00 pm, 3/14/2009 9:00pm, and 4/4/2009 10:30 pm. The purpose of staggering the times was to sample the differences in the setting based on time, because Buckland (2002) observed

that timing was a crucial element. She observed that as the night became later, the demographics and behaviors of the participants changed. The later it became the less visible women became, and the more the behaviors of the participants changed from what seemed to be constrained to unhindered (Buckland 2002) . One of these events took place on Valentine's Day, which was a special event and for which the club was decorated. Outside of that event, there were no other special events, so I was capturing the participants in the natural setting. In other words, their identities were not as heightened as club goers attending a special themed event. In order to familiarize myself with the setting on a particular night, I took the approach of dividing the club into thirds. I would stay in place for 30 minutes to observe and document through photographs and take field notes on the behaviors I witnessed, and then move to the next third. This allowed me to limit my scope so I could focus on a few actors at a time. I returned home immediately after collecting data, and proceeded to flesh out my field notes and review the photos.

I used a Cannon Rebel XT SLR camera, with an ISO setting of 1600. Initially, I used the flash but, after some time, I realized that this might influence participants' behaviors. My goal as a researcher was to not disturb the environment any more than absolutely necessary. Thus I did not use my flash for pictures outside of those involving the DJ. My justification for this is that I was hidden behind a curtain on the stage, and my flash could have been interpreted as a strobe light effect. Even though I am a known member of this setting, my reasons for taking photos were different than when I was employed by the club. I did wander throughout the club to take some of my photographs,

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but I tried to remain inconspicuous. This is also something I do even when I am

employed by the nightclub to take photos. The particular setting I chose is much like the

typical dance club found within large and medium-sized cities in the United States. Two

photos were taken each hour, one at the top and one at half past. The end result was a

photo essay, or a collection of photos documenting the behaviors exhibited by club

patrons at one club, as well as an analysis of these behaviors (Rooney 2005).

Selection Criteria

Starting with a pool of 200 photos that I had taken, I went through a process of

narrowing that selection down to the 10 photos presented in the findings of this study,

based on themes from Buckland's (2002) model. The steps I used in the selection of the

photos were as follows:

1. I looked at the technical aspects of the photos (blurry, out of focus, poor

   lighting etc.)[2]. Ninety-six photos were unable to be used due to technical

   problems.

2. I then selected only photos containing themes from my shooting script

   (Appendix A).

3. Lastly, I placed photos along a continuum of the theme choosing those

   that showed the conservative view, the average, and the extreme view.[3]

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[2] This is where most of the photos were edited out of this work. While it would have been advantageous to keep those in this work, the problem of photographic quality could not be avoided with the available equipment. I feel that the work presented here is an accurate portrayal of what I found.

[3] I chose to do this because it allowed me to show the range of the themes. In many ways this allowed me to further conceptualize the ideas found in Buckland's (2002) work. I believe it actually helped to ground these ideas, and develop them further.

For example, the theme of fabulousness was shown along a continuum ranging from what could be considered bizarre appearances (F4) to elegant appearances (F1) shown in photos in (Appendix B).

Out of the remaining 104 photos, 71 were coded under the theme of patron fabulousness, and 33 were coded under the theme of the DJ fabulousness. I further break these down in my findings section.

Documentary Style

Bateson and Mead's (1942) Balinese Character, in which they produced photographs of their participants, is credited with the introduction of photography to the field of social sciences. Visual methods carry with them several unique advantages that have kept researchers revisiting the technique. Photographs display the behavior being described in context, the written word attempts to do this but is no match for a photograph of the very social phenomenon that a researcher is trying to explain (Becker 1995). As a data collection tool photographs helped to simplify the process of collecting data in complex environments (Becker 1995). Photographs also force researchers to clearly define what they are photographing before they enter into the field. In the case of nightclubs, the subjects are in constant motion, there are loud noises, and the lighting gives the illusion of a changing environment. Merely using traditional participant observation techniques would have caused me to lose focus on the subjects. Because the nightclub environment can overwhelm the senses, the behaviors of the participants in the setting can be obscured and distracting. Utilizing photographs allowed me to revisit the setting, and focus on participants' behaviors free from the distractions of loud music and

strange lights. This allowed me to better analyze the participants in the photos outside of the chaos of the environment.

Suchar (1989) states that the goal of documentary photography is to aid in claims made by researchers by acting as proof of the concepts they are discussing. Becker (1995) notes that one benefit of using photography in research is that it takes viewers into the social reality as if they were there with the researcher. Readers are able to see the intricacies of research settings and are given an illustrative aid showing how processes work together (Suchar 1989). In many ways the methods employed in this study on nightclubs illustrates Steiger's (1998) ideas on documentary photography: keeping the tone of the photographs objective, revealing patrons' views of the setting, and showing how social processes come together without providing a value judgment on those behaviors.

The specific methods as outlined in this section can be considered documentary style photography. The literature defines the documentary style as a mode of photography where the researcher tries to capture the features of social reality (Becker 1995). This project achieves this because it examines the behaviors of the participants, in order to explain what occurs in the setting. My shooting script, Appendix (A), helped to guide me in what behaviors were central to the setting. This shooting script also met Harper's (1998) criticism that documentary photography needs to be grounded in a deep understanding of the topic. The photographs of the standing social order (reality) inside gay nightclubs is guided by my extensive knowledge as a participant in the setting, and my observations as a researcher (Becker 1995).

Nearly all social science attempts to document the social world in some way (Coles 1997). Some warn however, that it is erroneous to think of documentary photography as providing an absolute truth. When social science methods are used, the data are always interpreted through the lens of the researcher (Coles 1997). As an instrument of this study, I have logged countless hours of field research time through my own lived experience. When using photographs for documentary purposes, the researcher must take into account all the aspects that went into a photo, and all the elements surrounding the human subject in the photograph (Banks 2001). When documentaries are created, they are highlighting a specific behavior or problem that has been brought to the researcher's attention (Newhall 1938). Consideration should be given to what aspects are documented, as well as the realization that there is a certain emotion that causes the researcher to take photographs of particular elements (Newhall 1938). Combining both text and visual media creates a closer representation of the lives of participants (Newhall 1938).

Researcher Role

As defined by Adler and Adler (1987), I took a complete membership researcher role for this study because I am a member of the club's staff, a member of the gay community, and an avid club participant (Adler and Adler 1987). The club has hired me as their special event photographer for four years, thus getting permission from the club owners to take photos for my project was relatively easy. I have also spent time as a nightclub promoter; being responsible for hosting concerts and DJ events at this nightclub. In addition to being employed by the nightclub, I have worked for a gay

newspaper, a local arts newspaper, and with an HIV/AIDS service organization. Being a complete member of the group meant that I knew what to look for, had quick access to a study population that would not fear me, and I would have to simultaneously be a member of the setting and a researcher.

As a complete member, I would have to keep an open mind (and eye) to ensure that my insider status did not bias the data (Adler and Adler 1987; Rooney 2005). I felt that I should try to distance myself in order to maximize the benefits and minimize biases associated with my role. As a social scientist I felt the need to balance my role between being an insider and a researcher. The results of this balancing act led me to become a critical observer. I had the knowledge of an insider and the ability as a social scientist to question what I was observing. One of the limitations I noticed in previous research is the lack of researchers defining their insider status. Since they do not fully disclose and discuss their identities this leads one to interpret how they negotiated their identities as field researchers and insiders.

Being an insider provided me with some benefits of knowing how to go about studying this setting. I was recognized by those I was observing as sharing an insider status, meaning I could move around the club unnoticed. This is due to my role as a photographer for a GLBT newspaper and from working at this particular club. Being familiar with this setting helped me logistically by being familiar with this club's layout, and for having an initial idea about what behaviors I could easily capture and analyze. Even so, I was still concerned with the idea that individuals would try to pose for me, avoid me, or present other problems that would have resulted in me unable to capture

them behaving naturally. I found the most negative effect of my insider status to talk about behaviors without glossing over terms, and finding a language others could understand. This limit was not made easier by a literature that is fractured and contains many glossed over terms.

One of the ways I sought to minimize my role as researcher was to stay outside of the setting for 30 days. I chose to be absent for this period of time because the club rotates its DJ staff every 30 days. The club goers ranged in the how frequently they attend the nightclub: every weekend, once a month, only special occasions, and one time a year. The crowd usually chose to attend based on a variety of factors: who the DJ was for the evening, if there was a special event (New Years, Valentines, Halloween, etc.), and if they had been in the week before. Avoiding the setting for this time period allowed me to enter the setting and look at it with a fresh look. I was distant not only with the setting but also with the participants. I made it a point to come in do my research and leave, further distancing myself from the relationships I had formed with those in the setting. This mechanism allowed me to maximize the chief benefit of my insider role. That is to be able to understand and comprehend the meaning of behaviors (Adler and Alder 1987).

My methodology pushed the scientific aspects of my role and ultimately helped balance this study. Using photographic methods in this study helped me to authentically document my findings and served as evidence of what I witnessed. In many ways the reader is able to place themselves in setting as though they were with me during the process of collecting data (Harper 1989). Using photographs made sense to me since I

knew both from the literature and my own personal experiences appearance was an important aspect of nightclubbing, and I would not be able fully talk about the uses of appearances with text alone (Harper 1994; Smith and Woodard, 1999). This study's conceptualization benefited by using photographs. Even though I was exploring the setting, I was forced to more concretely define what variables I would study and ultimately become more firmly grounded in the literature. The pictures are presented in Appendix B with the letter F for pictures depicting the theme of fabulousness (F1-F7), and D for depictions of the DJ followed by a number (D1-D4).

<p style="text-align:center">Chapter 4</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Findings</p>

<u>Fabulousness</u>

 <u>Club Patrons</u>. The concept of fabulousness takes on many different forms and comes from Buckland's (2002) Queer World Making theory. I not only found evidence among club patrons supporting Buckland's (2002) theory but I was also able to expand upon her theory, and contribute to its development. I found that fabulousness took on three distinct types of appearances. I noticed early on in the study that individuals utilize three different distinct types of self-presentation that are attached to a kind of archetype they are trying to portray. In a sense the way they looked in the club reminded me of hodgepodges of characteristics of high fashion models, or popular images found in magazines (e.g. Out, GQ, Vogue, etc.). Some of these individuals and I had relationships outside of the club, where they appeared very differently than they did on a night out. The fabulousness in Buckland's (2002) model is tied to both high fashion and also to

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appearances which are surreal consisting of caricature like qualities. The more

fabulousness one exhibits, the higher the status within the setting. That is to say the more

they manipulate their appearance to achieve a similarity to their ideal type, and the more

it is noticed by other club goers the more status is given. It seems as though this is

because others use appearances to measure one's commitment to the ritual of the setting

and the group. Fabulousness on one extreme relates to accenting the body in a sexual

manner. On another extreme, fabulousness is used to warp and distort the self-image in a

way that makes fun of individual shortcomings and turns them into positives. An

example of the latter extreme might involve a person wearing extremely large or colorful

glasses, such that poor eyesight may become a vehicle for glamour. I observed that

within fabulousness there were three distinct types of patron self-presentation: power-

based fabulousness, normative-based fabulousness, and surreal-based fabulousness.

     Nine of the patron photos were coded under the specific theme of power-based

fabulousness. They involved patrons wearing dress clothes, suits, dress shirts, and a

variety of other formal wear. Photo (F1), shows a typical example of this theme. It

shows a man in a suit. This man is displaying fabulousness by appearing in a manner

reflecting affluence, power, style, and sophistication and by looking well-kept and

groomed. This type of fabulousness was the most uncommon. It points out a variety of

aspects of night clubbing. The goal of appearances in night clubbing is to heighten one's

status by choosing a particular dimension and appearing (dressing) accordingly. For

example, photo (F2) shows a man who is attempting to highlight his physique. This level

of fabulousness could be thought of as trying to evoke the traditional gender role of

manliness. On the stage of the nightclub these ideas of manliness are exaggerated. The

figure in photo (F1), attaches manliness to having wealth and thus enacts this role by

appearing as though he is very well off. His personal idea of fabulousness is about being

perceived as an international playboy, a Hugh Heffner, a billionaire who never has too

little of anything. He is also sending a message that he is in control. Interestingly

enough, I never saw this individual dance. He spent his time mingling with other club

patrons. Another example of this (F2), which shows a man dressed up above the waist

with a vest and a tie. This participant is different but he is trying to connect to those same

ideas of power and affluence, yet fails to completely assume his role he is trying to utilize

to become fabulousness. Alternatively, the figure in (F3) also is displaying

characteristics of manliness, but he is utilizing his sexual traits to display his manliness.

This man is expressing power through sexuality. He is showing that he has a physique

that not all the other patrons can possess or obtain.

Forty-two photos were coded as normative-based fabulousness. This type of

fabulousness comprises the majority of night clubbers. By normative I am referring to

appearances that are normal for the setting, but not necessarily normal outside of the

setting.[4] Figure (F4) shows a group example of this type of fabulousness. Figure (F3)

also displays normative fabulousness. In contrast, the figure in (F3), wears much of the

same outfit as figure (F4) but he takes his shirt off in what seems to be a display of his

physique. On the surface, there is really nothing extraordinary about their appearance.

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[4] The fashion world has done a lot of blurring of fashionable ideologies such that boundaries between gay
and straight worlds are difficult to differentiate.

The clothes they wear are nice, but not as expensive as seen in the first type of fabulousness. They wear t-shirts bought at stores such as: Hollister, Abercrombie, American Eagle, Express, etc. These stores are known for having both popular fashion styles and advertising to the gay community at large (Reichert 2007). They spend most of their time dancing. Their display of fabulousness is intended to give the impression that they are part of the community of night clubbers. They do this by appearing to be "cool", and thus part of the "in" and accepted crowd. More importantly they are communicating that they know what images and tastes are supported by their peers, thus communicating that they belong in this place.

The last type of patron fabulousness is concerned with appearances that are unrealistic. There were 20 photos coded as pertaining to surreal-based fabulousness. During my course of observation I found drag queens, gothic looking individuals, and those wearing clothing to what seemed to be to either challenge ideas or inspire laughter. The figures in photo (F5) have a gothic looking appearance. They engaged others through dancing, rather than being in the background. The other clubbers made awkward glances (indicating either disapproval or hilarity towards their appearances), pointed and made faces, and largely avoided the duo. Though some might find this as a negative experience, the importance of fabulousness is that you receive attention even if that attention is negative. The goal is to both present an "authentic" version of the self, and be noticed by others in the setting. On the other hand, perhaps they are adversely received because they remind other clubbers of the fragileness and artificiality of the setting. They also present a critique of the setting. Through their appearance they

remind others that not everyone can fit into the molds that the club environment creates, and that for some individuals it may not be a completely positive experience.

The figure in (F6) however, represents a different usage of surreal-based fabulousness. The people in the club engage him, want to dance with him, and compliment him on his outfit. There are two aspects of his appearance that I wish to draw attention towards. He is simultaneously showing his physical prowess as well as an appearance that would be largely inappropriate outside the setting (pajamas). The individual also carried a stuffed animal that might not be considered a masculine behavior, and contrasts with his adult physique which he is clearly trying to highlight. The appearance of the stuffed animal, as well as the rest of his outfit, differentiates him from others in this category. He has taken the ideas of beauty shared by other patrons in the setting, and transformed them into a surreal outfit. His efforts to call out these ideas held about beauty and image. He has transformed these traits into a surreal state or hyper-real state that seems to say he is fit young and good looking.

Alternatively photos (F5) and (F7) show different ways surreal-based fabulousness is used. While some of the patrons using this form of fabulousness seem to lack the sexual capital desired in the setting, it is not necessarily the case as the figure in (F6) shows. Additionally, a fair amount of ethnic men in the setting seemed to employ this style, despite having a perfectly acceptable physique. Photo (F7) illustrates that the items used in displaying fabulousness may take a variety of forms. This subject uses angel wings to portray that he is angelic in some sort of way. Photo (F5), shows two men utilizing a "gothic" appearance, which in a celebratory environment seems out of place.

It also points to out that the goals and functions within the nightclub setting are to stand out and escape the constraints of everyday reality.

The simple definition of fabulousness would involve listing the pieces that make up the facets of appearance: clothing, props, and accessories that people use to adorn themselves within the nightclub in order to be noticed by others. These elements and accessories come together to give individuals a state of being. Like taking a role in a play, these individuals slip on an identity matching their appearance (costume). The man in photo (F1), for example, is a figure that I did not see on the dance floor that evening, and he seems to be displaying a sense of wealth and power. Most of his time inside the club was spent interacting with other club patrons and watching people dance. Alternatively the figures in photo (F5) danced, but most of their time was spent wandering the club as if to show themselves off. Figure (F6) dressed as an angel or cupid, laughed, and danced all night. It deserves mentioning that the figures in photo (F5) were largely excluded by most of the other patrons. They kept to themselves for a large percentage of the evening. I heard individuals talking about how weird, creepy, or scary they looked. This suggests that they used their appearances this way not to fit into an exalted status within the club setting, but rather because they wished to stand out. The figures in photo (F5) suggest there are other processes going on here which I will talk about in my discussion.

The DJ. DJs are as much participants as they are performers. I not only found evidence among DJs supporting Buckland's (2002) theory but I was also able to expand upon her theory, and contribute to its development. Based on my findings, DJs have

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perhaps the most important role in the nightclub. Due to their position within the

nightclub they are a central focus even if they cannot be completely seen. When there is

confusion about what to do many patrons look to the DJ, as if for information and

instruction on what to do next. The DJ role blends both fabulousness and his /her role as

musician and demonstrates the interactive qualities of the nightclub performance. I found

33 examples of how the DJ performs their role through the concept of fabulousness.

Photo (D1) shows the height of the interaction that can take place between

dancers and the DJ. I found 15 examples of this process. Participants raised their hand

above their heads in a gesture that seemed like they were reaching out to touch the DJ

similar to the classic picture found in the famous portrait of god reaching out towards

man, and in many ways it appeared as though they were reaching for some kind of

ephemeral cloud looming above the dance floor. It also illustrates how the DJ's status is

raised by playing a song familiar to the audience, and engaging them with her own dance

moves. This image shows the importance of the DJ's musical selection (performance), as

well as the communicative qualities that occur between her and the audience. This

interaction would not occur without the simultaneous action of the DJ playing a song

familiar to her audience, and her gesturing with the music. Both processes complement

each other by heightening the interaction, and solidifying what it means to be a member

in this setting. In this instance, being a member of this setting means focusing on the DJ,

knowing or appreciating the song being played, and using gestures that communicate

acceptance and enjoyment of this song. The DJ is the clubber par excellence; she plays

music with which the patrons can identify; she appears in ways similar to others in the setting; and she communicates with the patrons through verbal and nonverbal actions.

This research showed that the role of the DJ is to be an organizer of the interactions within the nightclub. They do this by both playing music and interacting with the night clubbers. This expands upon Buckland's (2002) ideas about the DJ. Buckland (2002) follows much of the perspective of the literature by only analyzing the DJ's role in terms of his/her technical musical expertise. The data from this study reveal that the DJ performs his/her role through a variety of methods, and is far more interactive with his/her audience than what some of the literature would lead us to believe. Part of the DJ role is to behave like a performer in a rock band (Brewster and Broughton, 2000). The DJ is expected to form a kind of connection, similar to a rock star, with the audience.

In this club, the DJ is often a point of entry for clubbers first coming into the setting (D2). I called this interaction with the deejay and documented four instances where this occurred. A noticeable number of clubbers went directly towards the DJ booth, and either waved, went up and talked to the DJ, or glanced to see who was playing. This ritual allowed patrons to "strut" themselves throughout the club so that they could look at others and others could look at them. They were in a sense figuring out where to put themselves in relation to others so that they maximize their exposure to others, and be noticed. Additionally, by going into the space occupied by the DJ they increased their status by symbolically stating they were "with the DJ". I documented four occasions of this.

There were eight instances in which the nightclubs focus shifted from the DJ towards the other club patrons. Photo (D3) shows how the interaction can switch from the DJ to the patrons as a result of the DJ not interacting with the crowd. I called this process non-interaction and documented 8 instances in which the DJ did not interact with the clubbers and thus they turned their attention to other patrons in the setting. In photo (D3) the DJ largely does not interact with the crowd, he is hard to see because the stage lighting is dim, and he mostly just stands in his booth for the duration of the evening. If the dancers are not receiving attention from and interaction with the DJ (e.g. D1) they will interact with each other as seen in (D3). I documented eight instances in which the DJ ignored the crowd and the crowd's attention focused on other dancers rather than the DJ.

On six different occasions I documented patrons who seemingly fought with the DJ for attention. Alternatively, (D4) shows how club patrons fight with the DJ for power. I documented 6 instances in which the patrons and the DJ fought for attention. In photo (D4) these patrons stand on a mini stage built from boxes that stand directly in front of the DJ. Up until this point the DJ and the crowd had interacted similarly to that in (D1). These individuals got on this stage, and almost immediately the attention shifted from the DJ to the dancers on the boxes.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study, and the study of this topic, has several important features. It is

important because is sheds light on gaps in current explanations of the construction of

marginalized identities. Contemporary theorists have examined the gay bar as a sexual

field, where the function is to solicit sexual partners. This study shows that what is really

going on is a mimicking of society. Each person takes upon themselves a role when they

enter the nightclub that serves a function. Secondly, the gay bar's original role (to help

organize the community, provide, and provide an overall safe place for the GLBT) has

shifted since the inception of the gay rights movement. We are left with an environment

that is largely post-revolutionary, but is still as popular if not more popular and should be

sensitive to how it has changed. In one sense it has become an institution marking a right

of passage (youth turning 21). It is also a place that offers safe haven for like-minded

individuals, yet paradoxically it excludes those lacking the knowledge, access, or

finances to be included in the community. Lastly, what kind of society have we built in

which individuals have to escape their everyday reality by forming clubs based on their

identity gay or otherwise.

The Concept of Fabulousness

Club Patrons. My first aim was to determine in what ways documentary

photography of club patrons can support and expand Buckland's (2002) theme of

fabulousness. What I observed in the photos was that individuals seeking to fit in with

others mimicked the styles of those whom they perceived to be similar. The three forms of fabulousness can be seen in photos (F1) through (F7) in Appendix B. Clubbers used three different types of self-presentation to project an ideal self-image. These types of self- presentation develop from what the patrons think will make them stand out in both sexual and non-sexual ways from others, while still fitting in with the setting and sharing the same group status. In other words, the aim of each individual is to be the exemplary figure within that type.

These presentations of self revolved around three key concepts related to fabulousness: power, normalization, and surrealism. Power (D1) was expressed by wearing clothing that was associated with the wealthy, thus a suit expressed a person's social class. Normalization was a way of appearing that was largely about expressing ones youthfulness, body type, and other sexual traits. This type of appearance seemed to be propagated by the mass media (especially the fashion industry) as the attractive gay man. The impersonality of the setting allows individuals to assume a role that exaggerated various characteristics. For instance, a person who lacks power (wealth) can still appear that way and call it "sophistication" to justify it as a genuine characteristic they possess. There are others however, on another extreme that take on a fantasy role like that in photo (F5 or F7).

There is no indication that one type of fabulousness is more sought after than another. What is interesting about this is that the figure in photo (F1) (wearing a suit) holds the same level of status as the figure in photo (F4) (wearing a Hollister t-shirt). This implies that status within nightclub settings is more egalitarian, in that you can be

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fabulous without having a high income. A t-shirt for example, definitely does not cost as much as a full suit. To be fabulous is to pick a type of self-presentation that invokes a desired emotion from others, and captures the gaze of others by standing out. Utilizing fabulousness is about portraying a believable role or performance, or about looking so extreme others recognize the performance as a carefully crafted ruse.

Photo (F1) is a prime example of power-based fabulousness. He seems to be trying to portray a role that convinces others he is rich and powerful. These attributes are most common among older men within the nightclub, who are lacking youth and display other desirable characteristics. It may also be used as a tool for those wishing to explore an identity as a rich and powerful person. The anonymity of the setting allows clubbers to explore different ways of presenting themselves to others. They can portray themselves with traits which they might lack outside the nightclub setting. It is important to note though, that those using fabulousness are trying to portray a genuine image. This is true even in the case of men who lack the traits they are portraying. It is not so much they are attempting to deceive others, as it seems they are trying to communicate traits that they feel others are seeking in an effort to be both desired and to fit in.

Figures (F3) and (F4) represent normative based fabulousness, where the participant tries to have other perceive them as fitting in the setting through a popular mode of appearance[5], but also possessing sexually desirable characteristics (F2). The goal of the normative clubber is to become the ideal clubber dressed in line with modern fashion trends (both formal and popular), and have the physical characteristics desired by

[5] The one propagated by the gay popular magazines.

his peers[6]. This mode of fabulousness is safe for clubbers, because it is a familiar role. The ideas that clubbers use to adopt this role come largely from popular culture that is found outside the setting, and popularized by the media. This is the marketed gay image found in magazines and ads appealing to gay men's sexual appetites[7].

For those who lack the ability or motivation to perform the previous roles concerned with wealth and desirability, there is third role which I call surreal fabulousness. Surreal fabulousness can be seen in photos (F5) through (F7). Surreal fabulousness is a mode by which individuals appeared as caricatures of themselves. The goal of patrons utilizing surreal fabulousness is to combine conventional ideas about sexual desirability and either directly contradict them, or heighten them to an extreme level. For example photo (F5) shows figures who are dressed in gothic attire; they are rebelling against conventional notions of sexuality and fabulousness. Figures (F3) and (F6), show how one might go about heightening notions of sexuality to an extreme level. The angel wings (F7) suggest that the figure wearing them possesses divine beauty and the man trying to appear as a boy (F6) is highlighting his youthfulness.

The Club DJ. My second aim was to determine in what ways using documentary photography on club DJs could support and expand Buckland's (2002) theme of fabulousness. DJs have been examined by other researchers as technicians and as such

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[6] In the case of gay clubs that would be a muscular body, six pack abs, strong arms, and a tan. However, this is not an exhaustive list and sexual desirability is up to the interpretation of the viewer and the performer. Secondly, as I previously stated this is the stereotype largely propagated by the mass media (especially the fashion industry).

[7] The marketed gay images are the popular icons found in lifestyle magazines such as GQ, Advocate, OUT, etc.

only their talent and techniques related to how they create music have been examined. However, I found the DJ plays a more active role in the aura of fabulousness created in the club environment. Brewster and Broughton (2000) have participant interviews where DJs talk about their role in terms of putting on a show, but fail to take this information anywhere. Buckland's (2002) analysis of DJs stops at how the DJ uses music to shape the club environment. I agree with Buckland (2002), that the DJ shapes the reality of the club through music. The difference for me is that the DJ also shapes the environment through other means. To limit our scope of examining DJs to only look at them for their innovation in the world of music, is to ignore the other socially significant behaviors in which they engage.

The DJ shapes the environment through both music, and other non-verbal interactions that promote the appreciation of fabulousness. The non-verbal interactions serve as visual cues for the patrons of the nightclub. The function of the cues is to provide information on how to behave. Photo (D1) shows the height of the interaction between the DJ and the dancers. I documented 15 instances of the crowd interacting with the DJ through gestures. The photos show the crowd of dancers and the DJ interacting; pointing at each other and mimicking each other's movements. The evening began as a slow progression from a nearly empty dance floor, to a dance floor consisting of scenes similar to the one in photo (D1). This specific interaction occurred when the DJ played the song "Where's Your Head At" by Basement Jaxx. For electronic music lovers this is regarded as a classic song; for those unfamiliar with the song they can become engaged in the repetitive chorus which is also the song's title.

One way that rules can be established in the setting comes from the DJ acting as an instrument for establishing norms. When the DJ interacts with the crowd the crowd reacts back. An interactive DJ becomes the central figure in the setting; the clubber par excellence. The dancers then look to the DJ for acceptance, as if asking the questions "Am I dancing right?", "Do I look good?", etc. In this sense the DJ is in a position of leadership. If the DJ chooses not to engage the crowd, the patrons will turn their interactions towards other dancers as shown in photo (D3). As an insider, I have yet to see a DJ get as wild of a reaction as I have when he or she interacts with the crowd.

Regardless of the activity level of the DJ, he/she is a central figure of authority in the setting. Their placement on a raised stage symbolizes this heightened role. The advertisements emphasize the DJ's name, and usually contain his or her image. Their status is also reflected by the fact that the DJ is most often the first stop on many club goers' agendas. They came into the club and either looked at the DJ and waved, or went into the DJ booth and visited with the DJ. In this way the patrons not only elevated their status because they were seen to be with the DJ, but they also were able to survey other club goers and the environment. This reinforces my previous finding that part of the participation in this setting involves being seen, and demonstrating status through a variety of tools. This behavior indicates that many of the actions of the night clubbers are directed towards heightening their positions and one way to do that is by associating themselves with the DJ whereby their fabulous appearance is seen and acknowledged.

The DJ and the dancers do not exist entirely as peaceful members occupying the same setting. Photo (D4) shows a group of dancers on a set of boxes that are in front of

the DJ booth. When dancers get up on these boxes they behave in very grandiose ways, dancing and moving their arms about. When I discussed the different forms of fabulousness, I talked about the importance of being seen and noticed. What this photo, (D4), shows is the competiveness of clubber's to be the center of attention. These figures are literally attempting to shift the focus from the DJ to themselves. The greater implication of this is that being the center of attention, and holding that attention is the most important aspects in this setting.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

<u>Limitations</u>

On a simplistic level it may seem that I am arguing that identity and appearances are equal to each other; this is not the case. I am arguing that appearances are one way which identity manifests itself. The concept of fabulousness is very complex, one that is not completely explored here. This is because fabulous appearance is very broad incorporating dress, hairstyle, body movement, relationship to others in the setting, the way one moves, way one acts, etc. It also involves concepts of gender which have not been explored. Another aspect of this study that I did not explore was the blending of styles. It is feasible to assume that one could be both surreal and powerful or many other combinations. This however, is best left to future investigative research. What this study has managed to do is identify a few aspects of appearance and fabulousness in order to open up the idea that the gay bar and nightclub setting has more going on than just soliciting sexual encounters and that individuals communicate in the setting in a variety of ways.

The main limitation of this study comes from two theoretical limitations. First, this is a pilot or exploratory study. Yet, it makes a significant contribution in understanding the way patrons make sense of this setting and challenges past research findings. Secondly, using photographs enables readers to make their own interpretations of the data. What the participants define as "sexy", "powerful", "normal", etc. is subject

to interpretation. This illustrates one positive side of photographs is that it enables us to show the realities we are studying so other viewers can help interpret the data, but it also points out that the concepts of fabulousness relies on subjective meanings. It is a challenge to know if we ever fully understand the concept, let alone if our interpretation is correct. Note though that other research findings do not give the reader the luxury of looking directly upon the field of study. In this study the findings are interpreted from my own point of view. The fact that I am an insider helps the reliability and validity of the study. Still, since only one setting in the Midwest was analyzed it is possible the findings are unique to only this environment. Would the experience of nightclubbing in Hollywood be is vastly different from that in smaller Midwest towns? We will not know the answer unless this study is replicated in other settings. One final limitation of this research is that it is not a comprehensive study of behaviors; it contains only a limited set of aspects that make up the environment. It does not include analysis of male and female interactions, and I did not talk to participants to ask them how they made sense of the ideas I present.

Future research in this area is vast. The concept of fabulousness among both the patrons and DJs deserves further in depth examination. One way to achieve this, and to solve some of the other limitations of this study, should be to directly involve participants in the research process. Photographs seem like a very good fit understanding how the individual pieces come together, especially in this setting. Photo elicitation would allow for a closer involvement with participants. One technique would be to give cameras to different participants and instruct them to take photos on what they feel are important

aspects of the setting, then outside the club interview them about the meanings of their photographs. By allowing participants to control the content, researchers will be allowed to delve into the participants' lives away from the nightclub. It will then be possible to create a stronger dialogue on the benefits and negative aspects that comprise this environment. Regardless of the means a dialogue between those who participate in the setting must be opened in order to understand the setting.

This study supported Buckland's (2002) theory of fabulousness. I elaborated on Buckland's (2002) theory by noting that both patrons and DJs identify with a type of self-presentation that corresponds with their appearance that fits the image they are trying to portray. The three types of self-presentation by patrons that I found and discussed were power-based fabulousness, normative-based fabulousness, and surreal-based fabulousness. The primary function of fabulousness was to enable participants to be noticed by others within the setting.

Through examining the role of the DJ, Buckland's (2002) Queer World Making model was put to test, and was witnessed first-hand. The DJ's role demonstrated that participants need a figure to give them instruction on how to behave in a fabulous manner. Past studies have neglected to show that there is an interactive process happening that is outside the musical performance of the DJ. They have also failed to recognize the other communicative processes that are happening.

At the core of the study of nightclubs and dance venues is the participant's need to connect with others. Since society has decided to provide this outlet for connecting like minded individuals together we must be aware of the processes of how they do this,

but also be aware this environment may pose some problems for those who do not feel

they fit in. As this environment changes to keep up with popular culture, their essential

social functions will remain the same. There are at least two ways future research should

examine nightclubs. First, this type of environment should be looked at for how it affects

community. Buckland's (2002) model seems to suggest that it enhances community, and

in some ways may be the only outlet for some groups, especially as it relates to the GLBT

population. Secondly, this setting should be examined for both its positive and negative

aspects. From this, two questions should guide future research. Do nightclubs pose

benefits to members participating in those environments, and what risks to patrons' social

well-being come about from prolonged time spent inside nightclubs? The only way to

get to the heart of this matter is by asking patrons to become more involved with a study

examining their behaviors as night clubbers.

Appendix A: Shooting Script[8]

Theme	Quote w/ page number

Fabulousness
    a. Over the top Queer dress style - the outrageous
    b. Attractive fabulousness
	"Dance clubs- most especially queer dance clubs-were spaces to be fabulous. In these spaces, participants felt encouraged to fashion themselves and to realize their imaginative possibilities through dress, bearing, social interactions, and dance" (36).
	"I wasn't attractive, so I made up for it by being outrageous." (Participant in Buckland reflecting on Fabulousness)

The DJ
    a. The DJ interacting with the dancers (DJ as leader)
    b. Time - as the music drones on the night gets gayer.
    c. The DJ and the dancer influence what music is played the dancers can reject what is happening by leaving the setting.
    d. Utopic imagination
	"Queer life worlds need a sense of order, which in a dance club was performed through the vehicles of music and dance (Buckland 2002, 65). (Buckland 2002, 87).
	As the night progresses the music gets louder and the rhythm is stronger which also coincides with the individuals increased loss of self as seen through more fabulous and 'Gay' behaviors (Buckland 2002, 58).
	 "The collaboration between dancers and DJs and dancers and other dancers produced pleasure through valuing exchange; this reflected a utopic imagination " (Buckland 2002, 66).

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[8] This shooting script has been modified from its original version to include only the topics I described in this thesis. I wanted to study other themes such as dancing among clubbers as social interaction, I was unable to do anything with this theme.
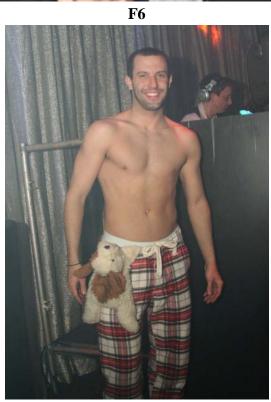
Appendix B: Photos

F1

F2

F3

F4

F5

F6

F7

D1

D2

D3

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Valentine, Gill (2003). "Finding Oneself, Losing Oneself: The Lesbian and Gay 'Scene' as a Paradoxical Space." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27(4): 849-866.

Valocchi, Steve (1999). "The Class-Inflected Nature of Gay Identity." *Social Problems* 46(2): 207-224.

Westhaver, Russell (2005). "Coming Out of Your Skin': Circuit Parties, Pleasure and the Subject." *Sexualities* 8(3): 347-374.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Christopher Thomas Conner

EDUCATION

Degrees
May, 2007   B.A.   Sociology, Indiana University Indianapolis
March, 2010   M.A.   Sociology, Indiana University- Indianapolis
                                   Thesis title: Documenting The Use of Appearances Among The DJ and
Nightclub Patrons

Areas of Specialization
Cultural Studies, Popular Culture, Sexuality, Visual Sociology

PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
2010   Instructor. Social Problems
2006 - 2009   Teaching Assistant for Statistics in Sociology. Conducted group and one on
              one study sessions that consisted of assisting students in comprehending and
              understanding subject material. General responsibilities included taking
              attendance, grading quizzes, and meeting with students outside of class.
2008   Research Assistant for Dr. Ain Haas. Researched literature on Estonian
              Immigrants Returning to Estonia.
2007   Research Assistant for Dr. Robert Aponte. Helped to co-author presentation
              and study on network usage among Latino immigrants in Indianapolis.
2002 - 2005   Teaching Assistant for Sociology Research Methods. Helped students
              understand difficult concepts in research methods and statistics. General
              responsibilities included taking attendance, grading quizzes, and meeting
              with students outside of class.
2001 - 2007   Research Assistant for Dr. Carrie E. Foote. Conduct literature reviews,
              performed data analysis and wrote reports.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
2001 - 2008   Photographer, Nuvo (a weekly newspaper). Provided photographic
              content of diverse, large scale community events.
2001 - 2008   Photographer, UpDowntown (monthly newspaper).   Responsible for
              photographing local events happening within the city with emphasis on
              city government, and small local events.
2001 - 2008   Photographer, The Word (monthly regional newspaper). Covered GLBT
              events and provided photographs for print publication.
2001 - 2008   Photographer, Eden Promotions. Photographed special events with
              emphasis on nightclubs, music related events, the annual AIDS walk, and
              various charity events.

FUNDED RESEARCH

2004 - 2006   Office of Professional Development Undergraduate Research
Opportunities Program Award. What is Goth? A qualitative study on
Goth Behavior, Style, and Identity. Indiana University-Purdue University
Indianapolis. $3,000.

PUBLICATIONS, REPORTS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Publications

2006   Christopher T. Conner and Carrie E. Foote. "AIDS Related Teaching Resources
and Websites" Chapter in Foote-Ardah and Wright (Eds.) *Teaching the Sociology
of HIV/AIDS: Syllabi, Lectures and Other Resources for Instructors and Students,*
Third Edition. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.

Applied Reports

2008   Christopher T. Conner. *Indy Pride Needs Assessment Survey.* Report for the Indy
Pride Inc. Foundation, Indianapolis, IN.

2006   Carrie E. Foote and Christopher T. Conner. *Year Two Evaluation of the Family
AIDS Network Program and Services*. Report for the Mary Rigg Neighborhood
Foundation, Indianapolis, IN.

2005   Carrie E. Foote and Christopher T. Conner. *Year One Evaluation of the Family
AIDS Network Program and Services*. Report for the Mary Rigg Neighborhood
Foundation, Indianapolis, IN.

Presentations

2009   Christopher T. Conner. *Queer Eyes: A Study Of Gay Men's Interactions.* Annual
Meeting for The Society For The Study of Symbolic Interaction. San Francisco,
CA August 14-16 2009.

2008   Christopher T. Conner. *The Business of Music w/ Professor Martin Atkins*.
Special Assembly of Student Union. Indianapolis, Indiana February 14 2008.

2007   Robert Aponte, Carrie E. Foote, Christopher T. Conner. "Poverty, Employment,
and Social Networks: A Comparative Analyses of White, Black and Latinos."
Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, New York City,
NY, August 10-12, 2007.

2006   Christopher T. Conner. "What is Goth? Developing a Sub-Cultural Identity."
Convergence XII Conference. New Orleans, LA. April 13-16, 2006.

AWARDS

2009   Gamma Mu Scholarship
2009   SSSI Travel Award
2007   Indy Pride Educational Grant
2006   Outstanding Sociology Major
2006   Sociology Department Service
2006   Indiana University Indianapolis Honors Research
2006   Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Travel Grant
2001 - 2005   Dean's List IUPUI
2004   Top 15% of Juniors and Seniors

| 2003 - 2004 | Appreciation Award for Student Mentor Services |
| 2001 | Honorable Mention IUPUI for Academic Achievement |

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Sociological Association
European Sociological Association
Golden Key International Honor Society
International Visual Sociology Association
Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction

SERVICE

Academic Service

2007	*Member*, Liberal Arts Student Council
2007	*Member*, Graduate Program Committee
2000 - 2006	*Member*, Undergraduate Student Government at IUPUI
2005 - 2006	*Treasurer*, IUPUI School of Liberal Arts Student Council
2005 - 2006	*Member*, Senate Representative IUPUI Liberal Arts Student Council

Outside Service

| 2006 - 2007 | *Volunteer*, Damien Center, Planned fundraising events, counseled men and women living with HIV/AIDS, minor web development, and assisted with developing marketing materials. |