

This is a student project that received either a grand prize or an honorable mention for the Kirmser Undergraduate Research Award.

“You Better Werk, Hunty”: Transformations in drag queen culture in central Kansas

Jakki Forester

Date Submitted: April 20, 2016

Kirmser Award

Kirmser Undergraduate Research Award – Individual Non-Freshman, honorable mention

How to cite this manuscript

If you make reference to this paper, use the citation:

Forester, J. (2016). “You Better Werk, Hunty”:

 Transformations in drag queen culture in central Kansas. Retrieved from <http://krex.ksu.edu>

Abstract & Keywords

This ethnography examines different transformations in drag queen culture in central Kansas, which includes the cities of Junction City, Manhattan, Topeka, and Lawrence. The same performers were followed throughout the various performance locations in different cities. Drag queens define their own identities and explain how and why they identify those ways. A detailed case study of one drag queen provides insight into how this drag queen transforms from one gender presentation to another. Personal transformations of all who assisted with this research is explored as a way to address how drag queen culture both in central Kansas and throughout the United States adhere to, challenge, and transcend hegemonic ideals of femininity. Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity is applied to further analyze the social construction of gender, ways gender is performed, and how drag queens can never fully achieve hegemonic femininity in their performances. The use of space impacts drag queens through perceptions of power and agency within a performance location, but marginalization and oppression in the larger society. The dichotomy juxtaposes two conflicting narratives next to each other – one of inclusion from the queer community and the other of exclusion from the state of Kansas, as a whole. Mixed methods were used to conduct this research including participant observation, ethnography, informal focus groups, three types of interviewing techniques, and photography among others. This ethnography supports some research that already exists, but looks at a queer community in predominantly rural areas, which is unlike other research about drag communities.

Keywords: drag, drag queens, drag queen culture, drag queen aesthetic, gender performativity, rural queer

Course Information

School: Kansas State University
Course Title: Ethnographic Methods
Instructor: Dr. Jessica Falcone

Semester: Spring 2015
Course Number: ANTH 790

This item was retrieved from the K-State Research Exchange (K-REx), the institutional repository of Kansas State University. K-REx is available at <http://krex.ksu.edu>

“You Better Werk, Hunty”¹:
Transformations in drag queen culture in central Kansas

Abstract

This ethnography examines different transformations in drag queen culture in central Kansas, which includes the cities of Junction City, Manhattan, Topeka, and Lawrence. The same performers were followed throughout the various performance locations in different cities. Drag queens define their own identities and explain how and why they identify those ways. A detailed case study of one drag queen provides insight into how this drag queen transforms from one gender presentation to another. Personal transformations of all who assisted with this research is explored as a way to address how drag queen culture both in central Kansas and throughout the United States adhere to, challenge, and transcend hegemonic ideals of femininity. Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity is applied to further analyze the social construction of gender, ways gender is performed, and how drag queens can never fully achieve hegemonic femininity in their performances. The use of space impacts drag queens through perceptions of power and agency within a performance location, but marginalization and oppression in the larger society. The dichotomy juxtaposes two conflicting narratives next to each other – one of inclusion from the queer community and the other of exclusion from the state of Kansas, as a whole. Mixed methods were used to conduct this research including participant observation, ethnography, informal focus groups, three types of interviewing techniques, and photography among others. This ethnography supports some research that already exists, but looks at a queer community in predominantly rural areas, which is unlike other research about drag communities.

Key words: drag, drag queens, drag queen culture, drag queen aesthetic, gender performativity, rural queer

Nathaniel picked a golden blonde wig, with chestnut brown low-lights throughout, off the shelf above the vanity. He combed through it with his fingers; loose strands of blonde hair fell onto the floor. Nathaniel bent at the waist; his face toward the floor. He placed the lace front on his forehead and pulled the rest of the wig around his head. Nathaniel’s naturally platinum blonde hair was about two inches in length at the top and faded down to his neckline, which made placing the wig on his hair easier than those who have longer, natural hair. Nathaniel opened his hands and grabbed the top of his head to hold the wig as he flipped the hair from in front of his face to the back of his head as he stood up by snapping his neck back. He turned to

¹ Originally made popular by RuPaul, a Black drag queen who created and hosts LOGO’s *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, this phrase is used as encouragement within drag culture. It is often used as a way for drag performers to show support toward other performers, as well as audience members toward performers.

face the mirror. With the length of the hair ending mid-back, he adjusted the wig to so it fit on his head properly. He combed through the hair once more with his hands before he used a wide-pronged wig brush.

Standing in front of the mirror, she² added the final step to transform into Brihanna Jayde, a local drag queen of Junction City, Kansas. She adjusted her hair, pulled the sides of the wig down the sides of her face to flow onto the front of her body while having left the back of the wig to go down the back of her costume. She looked in the mirror and fixed her costume. Then, took a seat in one of the dozen chairs in the back room, she put on almost knee-high, black pleather boots, about four inches in height at the heel. She stood up and looked in the mirror one last time before she took her place behind the blood red curtain that separated the back room from the stage at Skivies Bar, located at 921 S. Kansas Ave. in Topeka, Kansas, about eight blocks from the Topeka capital building and an hour east of Junction City.

She peered through a small slit of two of the sections of curtains that separated her and the performer who just finished her performance. She looked down at the floor as the song ended, while, in turn, she closed the separation in the curtains. As the host talked on the microphone, Brihanna Jayde stood in the same position and continued to star at the ground before she heard the beginning of Rihanna's "Right Now," the song she performed that particular set. As the music played, she heard her cue and burst through the curtains onto the stage. The audience cheered and applauded her arrival.

² When fully in drag, the drag queens who assisted with this research identify themselves and other drag queens almost exclusively with female-gendered pronouns. When in the process of transforming into their drag personas, both female-gendered and male-gendered pronouns are used interchangeably. Male-gendered pronouns are used exclusively when these performers are out of drag.

Schacht and Underwood (2004) use drag queen and female impersonator interchangeably in the *Drag Queen Anthology*, defining both “as individuals who publicly perform being women in front of an audience that knows that they are ‘men,’ regardless of how compellingly female – ‘real’ - they might otherwise appear” (p. 4). Taylor and Rupp (2004) further explain how “drag queens... are gay men who dress and perform as but do not want to be women or have women’s bodies...” (p. 115). Although these definitions might hold truth for some drag queens in some geographic areas, these definitions are not accurate for all drag queens, especially those who perform in central Kansas. There are a myriad of identities performers hold outside of their drag personas. Both definitions are exclusionary, even to the performers who worked with those researchers. This ethnography does not use drag queen and female impersonator interchangeably. All drag queens that helped with this research self-identified as drag queens and are referred to as such throughout.

This ethnography explores transformations of drag queens and drag culture in central Kansas, which includes the cities of Junction City, Manhattan, Topeka, and Lawrence. Drag queens who assisted with this research defined themselves, their own identities, and how those identities have transformed as they continued to perform. A detailed case study of one drag provides insight into how a drag queen transforms from one gender presentation to another. Although this case study provides an intimate look into this transformation, it is unique to this performer on this particular night; each drag queen has her own way of transforming into her drag identity and is subject to change with time and each performance. Drag queens in central Kansas adhere to, challenge, and transcend hegemonic feminine ideals through their performances. Uses of space, including within the context of a performance site and larger

society, are examined as positions of perceived power and agency are juxtaposed next to oppression and marginalization from the state.

Methods

I have researched the drag community in central Kansas for more than three years. I originally entered this community when I covered the 2012 Mr. Gay Kansas Strip Off at Xcalibur Club³ for *the Collegian*, the daily newspaper at Kansas State University. The event raised funds for the Junction City Teddy Bears, an organization that distributed emergency funds to people living with HIV/AIDS in surrounding communities. Drag queens hosted the event and performed intermittently of the performers participating in the strip off. This was my first real exposure to drag culture anywhere. My interest in the subculture did not end once the coverage article, photos, and cutlines were submitted and published.

During the fall 2012 semester, I was also enrolled in the photojournalism course at K-State. The class final was the produce “A Day in the Life of” photo story about someone affiliated with K-State. As someone who identifies as queer, I chose a subject that interacted with that particular identity of mine. This led me back to drag. The only drag performer at the time who was also a K-State student was Starla Nyte. I was granted immediate access to performers, spaces, and information through previous introduction to Starla Nyte through mutual friends.

Throughout the process of creating the photo story, I spent every Friday and Saturday night at Xcalibur Club. I arrived when the drag performers did and left when the club closed, which was about six to eight hours each night, for four months straight. Every other week, I would also attend Sunday shows at Skivies Bar where I photographed and further researched Starla Nyte. I continued to immerse myself in drag culture once I completed the project. I

³ Xcalibur Club was formally located at 384 Grant Ave. in Junction City, Kansas. The club officially closed May 2014 due to decreased audience attendance and lack of regular drag performers willing to perform at the bar.

continued to photograph shows and observe performers and audience interaction for about a year following the conclusion of the project. There were about eight months when I only attended shows as an audience member and worked less diligently with the research components. In fall 2015, I began taking methods courses at K-State including ethnographic methods, women's studies methods, and American ethnic studies methods. Each of those courses allowed me to continue reaching different components of this culture based on assignment requirements and pedagogies taught within the courses. I continue researching this community today through various qualitative methods.

Many qualitative methods were used to collect information/data. First and foremost, participant observation was and is one of the most beneficial ways of data collection for this research. Akinson and Hammersley (1994) describe participant observation as "... observation being carried out when the researcher is playing an established role in the scene studied" (p. 248). Simply existing with and observing those who assisted with this research provides in a first-hand account of the interactions, conversations, and exchanges occurring between performers and audiences. I can ask for clarification and explanation in the moment I observe something needing further description. Participant observation has now moved into participant action research. I work with the community of drag performers to address issues within the community; once those problems are addressed, I work with the performers to help find solutions for them. This is challenging when the entire community rests on political incorrectness.

I use photography to document drag queens, their transformations, and their performances. Drag culture is aesthetically vibrant. I find it important to convey that through the photographs I take. I communicate with the drag queens to take photos they are proud to have, as well as having photos to include with the research I present.

Informal focus groups are another method I use. Focus groups occur when a small group of people has an informal conversation about a particular topic or subject (Wilkinson, 1999, p. 222). In the back room of bars and clubs when drag performers are getting ready, conversation naturally happens between the performers. These conversations allow performers to discuss their experiences with one another, rather than in a one-on-one setting with me. Either I or a performer who is assisting me will throw out a question, and the entire room will begin submitting their input to the question. Every drag queen has her own unique experience. These informal focus groups are a way for everyone to answer a question while also hearing how others think or feel about a particular topic. To help keep community camaraderie and openness in back rooms, only hand-written notes and photographs are taken; nothing is ever recorded. McCarthy Brown (2001), while in the field researching for *Mama Lola* and Haitian vodou, had to delineate when to record conversations, interactions, and events. McCarthy Brown said there were times when recording was not acceptable, specifically during vodou rituals. Similarly, I had to determine when recording was and was not be acceptable. I would specifically ask those who were assisting me when recording interactions was and was not acceptable. Recording conversations in back rooms unanimously was not an acceptable place to record conversations.

Instances when I did record those who assisted me with this research were and are during one-on-one interviews. Structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviewing techniques are also used. All interviews were then transcribed and coded for themes that surfaced throughout. There were times when I would have formal and very structured interviews with drag queens to get certain questions I had answered. There were other instances when conversations naturally flowed as they did that did not require structure at all with themes and answers that still surfaced.

Location, Location, Location!

Multiple performance locations were and are used to collect information. There is a lack of consistent establishments accessible that host regularly scheduled drag shows in central Kansas. The same performers are used throughout, but the performance locations change. Xcalibur Club, formerly located at 384 Grant Ave. in Junction City, Kansas, was a former field site before it closed in May of 2014 due to poor attendance and lack of drag performers willing to regularly perform. Drag shows were hosted multiple nights a week, every week for the 13 years it was open. Drag queens from Manhattan and Junction City, which are located 20 miles east or west of one another, had to find other performance locations once Xcalibur Club closed. The Devil's Tail, located in Junction City, began hosting monthly host drag shows on Saturdays and is the current location in Junction City used as a field site.

Currently, only annual events are hosted in Manhattan, which are the K-State Drag Show, in McCain Auditorium on the K-State campus, and Little Apple Pride Parade and Celebration, hosted in Triangle Park at the corner of Bluemont, Anderson, and N. Manhattan Avenues.

Topeka has Skivies Bar that hosts weekly drag shows on Thursdays and Sundays. The unfortunate situation with Skivies Bar, though, is that it is closing on March 31. There will no longer be a consistent performance space in Topeka once it closes. Lawrence has once a month drag shows on Thursdays at the JazzHaus.

During my time immersed in drag queen culture in central Kansas, I have experienced first hand the vibrant drag community that exists in this predominantly rural area. The more than three years I have spent with this community allows me to provide a detailed and vivid picture on how this community has transitioned, transformed, and adapted to the changing landscape it is and has been faced with.

With the flip of a wig and grabbing of a microphone: Meet the queens

The seven drag queens who helped with this research vary in every possible way except for their identity outside of drag. All of those who helped with this identify as cisgender (“people whose gender identity matches their [perceived] assignation at birth” (Dargie, Blair, Pukall, Coyle, 2014)), gay (men who are romantically, emotionally, and/or erotically attracted to other men) men when not performing in drag. Drag queens in central Kansas hold a plethora of identities outside of their drag identities. While this is true, I will not compare varying identities of how these performers self-identify outside of drag. Comparisons between these various identities are not parallel and cannot provide accurate context to the experiences of performers.

As mentioned above, the seven performers who helped with this research vary in almost every way possible. Ranging in age from 21 years old to 58 years old and years performing in drag range from three to 25, this group of seven brings diverse perspectives to help explain and/or define drag queen culture in central Kansas. Some of the styles these queens identify as include “fishy,” “fluid,” “comedy,” “pageant,” and “campy.”

Beginning with Monica Moree, see Figure 1, who has performed as a drag queen internationally for more than 25 years. She said she began her career as a “fishy” queen. “Fishiness,” as she describes, is “trying to be as real as possible.” Simmons (2004) explains how “fishiness” is a coveted quality for those on *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, and how drag queens “must defy physicality and construct, if not embrace fully, strong, believable femininity” (p. 636). Monica Moree started her drag career trying to portray white hegemonic feminine ideals. Then, as she continued performing, she added a level of “camp”⁴ to her aesthetic, which allowed more

⁴ “Camp is a vision of the world in terms of style – but a particular kind of style. It is the love of the exaggerated, the ‘off,’ of things-being-what-they-are-not. ... To perceive camp in objects and persons is the understand being-as-playing-a-role. ... Again, camp is the attempt to do something extravagant” (Sontag 1964). The camp aesthetic of

over-the-top makeup and larger hair. But during the last 25 years, she maintained her identity as a “comedy” queen. She interacts and cracks jokes with and at the audience every show she is a part of. Her identity as a “comedy” is the perfect outlet to allow her natural humor to shine.



Figure 1

Brihanna Jayde, see Figure 2, has performed as a drag queen for more than 10 years. She describes herself as a “fluid” queen, incorporating different components of different styles of drag into her performances. She acknowledges she is not a “comedy” or “pageant” queen. But she is a dancer and will prove that each and every time she takes the stage. She is most known for the characters she portrays. Some characters include Neytiri from *Avatar*, a lion costume performed to “He Lives in You (Reprise)/Whine Up” remix from the Broadway musical *The Lion King* and Kat Deluna respectively, Jack Skellington from *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, and most recently, Elsa from *Frozen*. Although she has performed for a decade, she said she is still trying to find herself as a performer.

Monica Moree, as well other drag queens in central Kansas, is personified through over-the-top makeup, costuming, and wigs – all things that set them above and beyond other performers.



Figure 2

Allie Monet, see Figure 3, has also has performed for about 10 years. She said she knew she would never be a “pretty” or “fishy” queen. So she prefers to perform to as a “comedy” queen with a “camp” aesthetic. She said these two styles allow her get away with more during her performances. Her “campiness” features over the top clothing she described as tacky. She said when she first got into drag, she went through her mother’s closet to find outfits, from the 1960s and 1970s, to wear for shows. Although she has performed in drag for a decade, she exclusively performs in benefit or fundraising drag shows for queer community organizations in central Kansas. These fundraisers are usually for the Junction City Teddy Bears HIV/AIDS Emergency Client Fund, Flint Hills PFLAG, and the Flint Hills Human Rights Project.

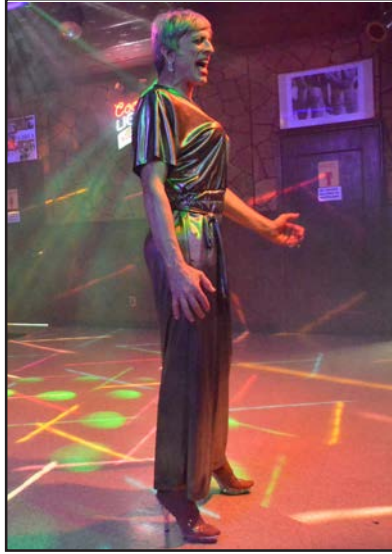


Figure 3

Three drag queens who have performed in drag for more than seven years are Lilkim Chi, Ty Woo, and Victoria Fox. Lilkim Chi, see Figure 4, is well known for her comedy and self identifies as a “comedy” queer. Her comedy tends to blur the line between politically correct and inappropriate. Lilkim Chi said one of her most controversial performances was when she portrayed the Virgin Mary having an abortion of the baby Jesus. When she first started performing in drag, she was more cautious about her comedy than she is now. As the years have gone on, she has translated her everyday goofiness into her drag queen persona. Lilkim Chi hosts the monthly drag show in Junction City, but has hosted multiple shows each week at different bars and clubs throughout central Kansas. When she is talking on the microphone, she frequently evokes laughter from the audience.



Figure 4

Ty Woo describes herself as a “fluid” queen. One way Ty Woo embodies a “fluid” queen is through her resourcefulness she puts into her aesthetic including headpieces, clothing, and accessories. An example was at the 2015 K-State Drag Show. She fashioned a black foam wig that looked as if it were from a comic book, atop her head from the Halloween clearance section of Target. She added black sequins to the curvatures of the bends of the foam, see Figure 5. She also describes her aesthetic as “fluid” because she said there are times she executes a “fishy” look and other times she personifies an over-the-top “camp” aesthetic. She said it all depends on what songs she performs or how others want her persona to be executed when she is hired for events or performing in theater.



Figure 5

When Victoria Fox, see Figure 6, started performing as a drag queen, she said she never wanted to portray a woman, always a character. She started her drag career by impersonating U.S.-based female entertainers like Cher and Lady Gaga. Then she transformed more into a “fishy” aesthetic. She said she always liked costumes, big makeup, and big hair. She currently resides in Texas where drag pageants dominate the drag culture, unlike in central Kansas. Since moving, she has incorporated some of the components of Texas drag into her own persona including larger hair, more extravagant costumes, and more vibrant makeup.



Figure 6

Finally, Brittany Bottomz, see Figure 7, has only performed as a drag queen for about three years, but she took the central Kansas drag community by storm. She began headlining shows shortly after beginning, which is rare. She categorizes herself as a “fishy” queen. She compared the “fishy” aesthetic to passing as a woman, “like when someone else looks at your face in drag makeup, they say that has to be a woman without realizing it is actually a man in drag.” Brittany Bottomz said she continues to grow as a performer by practicing her performances, dancing, and makeup when not performing.



Figure 7

All seven of these performers have played and still play integral parts in the creation and sustainment of the drag community in central Kansas. There were and are more drag performers in this area with varying identities and styles. But these seven dedicated their time to help with this research. Some perform regularly in central Kansas while others only perform annually. But they are all well known for their craft, talent, and skill.

“You better beat that mug”⁵: An ethnographic case study of Lilkim Chi

Joseph looked down at his section of the wood vanity table in the back room at Skivies Bar and laid down an eight-by-eight inch white, cotton towel. He glanced up at himself in the

⁵ This is a phrase commonly used to describe a drag queen performer once she has completely transformed into her drag persona. The phrase describes a facial aesthetic, used most frequently when the aesthetic upholds white hegemonic notions of femininity.

wall-length mirror before beginning the countless steps he needed to prepare for the show that night. The back room at Skivies Bar is about 15 feet by 7 feet, and has a varnished wood vanity table, chairs, and large mirrors sprawling one long side and one short side of the room. The cotton towel he laid down is permanently discolored with stains from spilled makeup from countless shows. He hoisted a tackle box of makeup onto the vanity, unsnapped it, and countless palettes, concealers, powders, eye shadows, brushes, and other miscellaneous things filled the once empty space

He left the back room to shave his face in the men's bathroom; there was no sink or space to do it in the back room. Joseph returned without facial hair on his jawline, cheeks, neck, or upper lip. He placed his shaving gel and razor back in his suitcase, grabbed a Batman-themed robe, put it on, and faced the mirror. Standing, rather than sitting in a chair, he picked up an original Elmer's glue stick that went on purple and dried clear. He glued down his eyebrows and combed them with an eyebrow brush. Joseph, as well as many other drag queens, has to glue down their natural eyebrows because they are too thick to be considered feminine. Some performers wax or thread their eyebrows for thinner, perceived as more feminine eyebrows, which are not glued down before shows. Joseph pulled out a small, silver portable blow drier to speed up the drying process of the glue.

Once the glue transformed from purple to clear, he applied clown white Ben Nye cream makeup over his eyebrows, which was set with loose powder close to his natural skin tone. Liquid foundation, also close to his natural skin tone, was applied all over his face with his fingers. Although Joseph had a multitude of sponges and brushes before him, his process for this step is always done with his fingers. The blending helped the different colors of his now covered natural eyebrows blend with the rest of his face and neck. He shuffled through a cylindrical

container of makeup brushes for one with short, rounded bristles. Dark cream, many shades darker than Joseph's natural skin tone, was applied to his cheeks, forehead, and nose in a strategic way to contour those facial features. Contouring allowed for his face's natural structure to be enhanced through makeup. Contouring also aided in enhancing or creating feminine qualities on his face. Highlighting cream, which was a few shades lighter than his natural skin tone, was next. It was added above, below, or in between the contoured lines on his cheeks, nose, forehead, below the eyes, and chin. Highlighting allowed for his face to not appear washed out on stage under the harsh stage. The contouring and highlighting were then blended into the foundation previously applied.

This process of contouring and highlighting was repeated with powders of similar shades darker and lighter than his skin tone. The powders were added on top of the creams and liquids. All creams/liquids and powders were then blended with a powder blending brush, the largest brush in his collection. Once his skin makeup was finished, eye makeup came next.

A dark brown cream was applied and mixed with Ben Nye clown white loose powder to make for a light brown that was easy to blend with brown eye shadow. Loose, white glitter was then blended into the brown base mixture, already on both eyelids, and blended into a cat-eye, makeup effect. Black liquid eyeliner was applied in a straight line on both eyelids where the eyelashes emerge from the eyelid. Black solid eyeliner was applied on both lower lids. Although Joseph's eyes were not finished, he moved back to his skin. He applied more highlighting powder down the center of his nose.

Since Joseph glued down and covered up his natural eyebrows, he used a stencil of eyebrows, well a hegemonic version of feminine eyebrows, on his face – thicker near the nose with an arch midway through and became thinner as the eyebrow moved away from the center of

the face. The stencil was placed slightly above where his natural eyebrows were to allow more area on the upper eyelid for makeup. He used loose powder close to his natural skin tone, so the outline of the eyebrows remained on his face once the stencil was removed. The outline was filled in with a medium brown eyeliner pencil. Cream foundation was used around the drawn on eyebrows to create a finished and more polished shape. Once the eyebrows were completed and the liquid liner previously applied dried, Joseph applied gold glitter liquid eyeliner over the black eyeliner on his top eyelids. His makeup was almost complete. He looked at himself in the mirror and just stared at his reflection while other performers around him conversed about getting ready or thinking they were running late.

Although Joseph was ahead of schedule, he continued with his process. He applied dark brown eyeliner around his natural lips, which helped emphasize them. Red lip liner was then applied around the brown and blended together with another brush from his collection. On this particular night, he applied purple lipstick all over his lips within the liner outline and added white cream in the center that created an ombre effect. He blended all the liners and lipstick together. Once finished with his lipstick, he went back to finishing his eyes.

At this point, all liquids and powders on his eyes had properly set. Fake eyelashes were next. The end of a makeup brush was dipped into an 8 oz. bottle of brown eyelash glue, its contents stirred, and applied the glue to one fake eyelash at a time. He blew air from his mouth onto each set of lashes. He set them down on his towel and applied black mascara to his natural eyelashes. Once the glue had semi-dried, Joseph shaped each set of fake eyelashes with a subtle arch to form better to his own eyelashes. He glued each set of fake eyelashes to his own natural eyelashes/upper eyelids and applied more mascara to his new set of eyelashes, which blended the

natural with the fake. Eyelashes were almost always the last step before final touches, which includes last minute blending of all powders all over the face and of shadows on the eyelids.

Joseph looked into the mirror after final touches were complete and moved his body closer to the mirror. He sat down, propped his elbows on the counter, and leaned in. He stared at himself as he was now almost completely transformed into Lilkim Chi⁶, a drag queen from Manhattan and Junction City.

Almost three hours after she⁷ arrived at the bar, Lilkim Chi sorted through her bags, suitcases, and other miscellaneous things to find what she needed to get dressed for the show that night. As the clock struck 10 p.m. and a show time of 10:30 p.m., she knew she would be the first performer and host. She had to finish getting ready so the show could start on time. Lilkim Chi sifted through assorted outfits, wigs, and pairs of shoes. She pulled out multiple pairs of panty hose that were all crumpled together in a multi-toned ball. Once Lilkim Chi tucked her penis and balls, she put on four pairs of panty hose and shoved sculpted pads in the panty hose along the sides of her thighs that curled over her butt. The pads personified an hourglass shape, perceived as a hegemonic feminine body type. A shaper was added to smooth out the uneven lines from the panty hose and pads. A black corset was tightly clasped together that covered her abdomen. She put on a black bra to cover her naturally flat breasts, and inserted two spherical foam balls, covered in panty hose to match her skin tone, to allow for the appearance of female breasts.

⁶ Lilkim Chi self-identifies as half Black and half South Korean; as a way to embody both of her identities, her drag persona was picked after Lil' Kim, a 1990s Black female rapper, and kim chi, a traditional South Korean side dish. Although Lilkim Chi said she never planned on ever performing in drag, she said she always had her name picked out.

⁷ Similarly as noted in the opening trope, once Joseph had completely transformed into Lilkim Chi, feminine pronouns were used when referring to the drag persona.

A dress was pulled from her suitcase that looked like it was straight from the 1970s – a magenta, red, lime green, and white paisley pattern set on a navy blue backdrop. The dress barely covered where her legs met, but the sleeves reached her wrists. She sat down and put on fluorescent, lime green peep-toe pumps about six inches in height at the heel, stood up, and smoothed out her dress. She found a wig with long, fire-engine truck red, slightly wavy hair, with dark brown roots that, once flipped onto her head, reached the middle of her back. With the help of a few bobby pins placed strategically throughout the wig, it was safely fastened to her head. She adjusted the hair, looked at herself one last time before hitting the stage, because she was now fully transformed. Lilkim Chi was ready to grab the microphone and begin the show.

Drag queen aesthetic is challenging to describe in detail because every drag queen has her own unique way of preparing for a show. Each process is adapted and amended as drag queens continue in their drag careers. The case study featuring Lilkim Chi examines the length and detail of the process of what one performer went through before she took the stage. Although this is just one example of one performer, each performer has their own unique way of getting ready for a show that is subject to change based on the night, performance, and/or over time. As soon as last call is announced at 1:30 a.m. and the show has concluded, performers take off their wigs, strip out of their costumes, remove makeup, and transform back into their male-bodied selves.

Due to this research being conducted in the United States, the male-female gender binary is strictly imposed on everyone, even those who do not conform to it. The gender binary is imposed through compulsory heteropatriarchy, which was implemented and sanctioned through colonization. "... [I]n order to colonize peoples whose societies are not based on social hierarchy, colonizers must first naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy. In turn,

patriarchy rests on a gender binary system in which only two genders exist, one dominating the other” (Smith, 2006, p. 72). Simply living and existing in the United States, individuals are involuntarily socialized, rewarded, and sanctioned into internalizing and adhering to the gender binary and the hierarchy that exists between the two socially accepted genders. Butler (1990) argues drag performances incorporate multiple identities of the performer including anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance. These three identities all work simultaneously in support and opposition of one another (p.187).

But gender can be disrupted; gender is never fully executed to the societal standard. An example of the disruption actually exists among drag performers.

“The practice by which gendering occurs, the embodying of the norms, is a compulsory practice, a forcible production, but not for that reason fully determining. To the extent that gender is an assignment, it is an assignment which is never quite carried out according to expectation, whose addressee never quite inhabits the ideal s/he is compelled to approximate” (Butler, 1993, p. 22).

Butler states although drag performers are imitating hegemonic white femininity, the gender performance is never fully executed to societal standards. Never able to fully adhere to societal expectations of gender performance means drag performers always have to imitate gender.

“Practice, practice, practice”: Evolution of personal aesthetic

When reflexive about their drag careers, many who assisted with this research echoed similar sentiments about personal growth and transformation over time. One of the key factors for personal growth and transformation for all drag queens a part of this research was to practice their makeup and personal aesthetic.

Victoria Fox began her drag career in Manhattan while a sophomore at K-State. Although she has since graduated and no longer lives in Manhattan, she still remembers her first years of performing. Monica Moree was her drag mentor who helped her navigate the complexities of

drag culture, including personal aesthetic. While in college and involved in multiple on-campus organizations, she still found time to practice painting⁸ her face. “There would be nights I would get done with an exam, and I would go straight home, and all I would do all night was practice painting my face. And if it didn’t work, start over.” When she first began performing, it was challenging to balance all of her commitments. But she learned how to prioritize.

Lilkim Chi said she did not have a drag mentor, unlike Victoria Fox, when she started performing in drag. She said she originally learned how to apply makeup from YouTube channels. Lilkim Chi said she would sit in her bathroom, in front of the mirror, and practice applying different makeup styles. Once she became more comfortable with members of the drag community in central Kansas, she asked other performers about their processes or particular techniques. Since she has now performed for more than seven years, she said eventually “you get what works for you and your face. And if you stay with drag and perform semi-regularly, if not regularly, you are constantly practicing the application and removal process.” She said the trial-and-error process also works for all drag queens.

For the first few years of her career, Brihanna Jayde asked other performers to apply her makeup every single time she performed. “Then, there was one show, in about 2008, when the person who was going to paint my face was running late. It was too close to show time so I said, ‘screw it,’ and just did it myself because I was tired of waiting.” Brihanna Jayde said the more a drag queen performs, the more she will learn. She said she glances at other performers when they are applying makeup to watch others’ processes and also ask questions about other drag queen’s aesthetic techniques.

⁸ “Painting” one’s face is a common phrase used among all who helped with this research. “Painting” ones face is the process of and actual application of makeup to drag queens’ faces. Many described painting their faces as being a work of art. Before any makeup was applied, they viewed their faces as blank canvases. Then, once they completed the makeup application process, or were done “painting” their faces, the work of art was complete.

Brittney Bottomz, Ty Woo, and Allie Monet all shared similar experiences of having to ask for help from other drag queens for their makeup when they were first began performing in drag. Then, with time, they all became more comfortable with application of their own makeup, observing other performers, and asking for help or clarification when needed.

The transformations of these performers directly links to Butler's arguments about gender performativity. Butler states, similarly as the drag queens, repetition creates gender uniformity. It is through this uniformity one is able to see how drag queens are only understood through their transformed gender presentation. "To the extent that this repetition creates an effect of gender uniformity, a stable effect of masculinity or femininity, it produces and destabilizes the notion of the subject as well, for the subject only comes into intelligibility through the matrix of gender" (Butler 1993, p. 21-22). Those assisting with this research repeat their gender performativity, which ultimately leads to uniformity. The uniformity established is a white, hegemonic feminine beauty ideal. Rarely do any of their performances, aside from the occasional cross-over or turn-about show⁹, deviate from hegemonic femininity, especially if it affects their personal aesthetics.

Drag queens who can adhere to and pass under hegemonic femininity are best at subverting their masculinity. Tewksbury (1994) observed drag queens exhibiting this phenomenon.

⁹ Cross over and turn-about shows are the same thing hiding behind the guise of two different names. They are fundamentally similar in the way performers present their gender identity on the stage – a drag queen will take the stage in her masculine identity and a drag king will often become feminized before taking the stage. Schacht (2002) describes turn-about shows as allowing "the drag queens... to appear as 'men,' and more importantly, the 'boys' to be 'girls.'" Much of the excitement surrounding a turn-about show is in the intrigue of trying to figure out the 'real' male identities of the ephemeral drag queens and, relatedly, the expressed rivalry of the participants to present the most compelling feminine image" (p. 161 – 162). Cross over shows were annual events in central Kansas. While Schacht argues audience excitement is drawn from trying to pair a drag persona to the masculine presentation or vice versa, those who helped with this research are all well-known both in and out of their drag personas. They attend drag shows as their male-bodied selves, when not booked in them, to support the larger drag community. Audience excitement at cross over shows in central Kansas comes from which drag queen can imitate or mimic another local performer the most humorously.

“(Physical transformations) are more easily mastered than are the skills of social transformation. The female impersonator must change her social identity from male to female. Hence, not only the visual image needs to be feminine, but so too must the actions and projected attitudes be perceived as feminine. This means that the female impersonator must disassociate herself from all that is masculine, including her social actions and outlooks” (p. 37).

Tewksbury observed the high value placed on appearing as “feminine” as possible while simultaneously subverting anything linked to performer’s masculinity. This is also something I observed in central Kansas, even though the drag queens that helped with this particular research all identify as men when not in drag. Subverting their masculinity is challenging when the drag queen is simply imitating one gender through her persona but his actual identity lies within that drag persona.

Newton (1979) also noted the high premium toward performers who adhered to hegemonic femininity.

“The emphasis on skills and sophistication among singers gives them a very high prestige among the stage performers. However, the performer who is acknowledged as a ‘beautiful glamor queen’ but only a so-so singer will win (sometimes grudgingly) admiration even from the stage impersonators, and will be idolized by the street impersonators. The homosexual subculture values visual beauty, and beating women at the glamour game is a feat valued by all female impersonators and many homosexuals in general” (p. 46).

Adherence to white, hegemonic feminine beauty ideals as closely as possible within drag queen communities, especially within central Kansas, is valued more than when performers have other talents like singing. As previously mentioned, those who helped with this research in central Kansas placed high premiums on idealized white, hegemonic feminine aesthetic.

Only four individuals who assisted with this research self-identified as sometimes or always personifying “fishiness,” but six of the seven prepare themselves before each performance to look as “polished” as possible. The “polished” look they achieve could be and is read as “fishy.” This difference creates conflict between self-identification and actual practice.

Although some drag queens self-identify with a “camp” aesthetic or as a “comedy” queen, they can and do pass under a “fishy” aesthetic. When I observe performers getting ready for a show, sentiments like “you’re so fishy tonight, girl” from other drag performers are directed at some of the performers who do not self-identify as “fishy.” Those informants still accepted the compliment and continued getting ready. Even if a drag queen does not self-identify as “fishy,” this aesthetic is one of the most valuable attributes among those I research in central Kansas.

Support or reject: Discussions about Western hegemonic femininity

There are debates about whether or not drag queens in the United States uphold or resist white, hegemonic feminine beauty ideals. The last three years researching drag queen culture in central Kansas shows how drag queens in this community can and do both support and reject white hegemonic femininity. Whether or not the performer supports or rejects these societal notions is dependent on the performance, the performer, and the impact/message the performer might be trying to convey during her performance.

On most “regular” weekend performances, these seven drag queens, while almost never performing together in the same show, at the same time, or in the same place, will support and reinforce white hegemonic notions of femininity. All seven will wear dresses, skirts, tutus, and/or feminine costuming that support the mirage of their female drag queen personas. They all spend multiple hours applying makeup, including highlighting and contouring their natural, “masculine” features to appear more “feminine.” High heels are always required; when they are not, which I have never personally seen or experienced, performers are shunned and severely sanctioned for their performance. When wigs and accessories are added, the façade of their adherence to white hegemonic femininity is further upheld.

But there are times this white hegemonic femininity is broken; the faced is broken most often with intent to make a point about the social construction of gender. Annually at the K-State Drag Show, Monica Moree transforms from her drag queen persona into Dusty by taking off her wig, outfit, padding, tights, and makeup on stage in front of hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of K-State students, staff and faculty, and community members to “What Makes A Man A Man” by Charles Anzevour. He¹⁰ has sat in his boxer briefs on stage and wiped makeup off rapidly with oil and a cotton towel. He then puts on a pair of male pants, often jeans or leather pants, and a T-Shirt, always conveying a message about the larger queer community intersecting with a personal identity for him. Past T-Shirts have included messages about same-sex marriage, nondiscrimination ordinances (specifically the one that passed and quickly revoked in Manhattan), having an HIV-positive status, and the BDSM/leather community. Monica Moree concludes each and every show she is a part with this performance due to the impact she hopes it has on audience members.

“I think about how to end that number more than anything else. These other components of the queer community are things that we experience because we are a part of it. We experience it; we live them everyday. But cisgender, heterosexual men and women who are a part of the audience each year often miss these messages. You don’t go to a drag show to get a social justice narrative, but it is so important for all people to hear this song.”

After the performance, Dusty speaks about the impact he hopes the song and performance had on audience members and explains the justification and explanation for the T-Shirt he chose.

Taylor and Rupp (2006) observed how one of their informants, R.V. Beaumont, closed every weekend show similarly. R.V Beaumont performed the exact same song and transformed out of drag on stage in front of the live audience (p. 13). These performers transcend societal white hegemonic gender norms while on stage to the song “What Makes A Man A Man.”

¹⁰ Although starting the show and this particular performance as Monica Moree, Dusty always concludes this performance as his male-bodied self. Once out of drag, Dusty is referred to with masculine pronouns.

Monica Moree said she aims to convey a social justice message to help those in attendance hear and visually see the intersectionality of a human being and better understand the social construction of gender.

These performances are not cross-over or turn-about shows, but rather performances that transcend audience members' understandings of the gender binary. These performances, in particular, push attendees' boundaries about how gender is understood and/or constructed in the United States. Some drag queens are known for their performances to this song, but other drag queens will never perform to this song. Even if a drag performer never performs to "What Makes a Man, A Man," each drag queen still transcends gender in her own unique way.

Drag aesthetic is a multi-faceted conversation for those inside and outside of the drag subculture. It offers insight into the notions of gender performativity and the impacts of gender performance on the drag queen herself. Drag queen aesthetic in central Kansas supports, negates, and transcends white hegemonic beauty ideals of femininity.

"How's everybody doing tonight?!": Taking the stage

Once on stage, drag queens experience a completely different dynamic than in other aspects of their lives. One of the most common narratives from those who helped with this research was the perception of power or agency each drag queen experiences when performing on stage. This perceived power and agency is a reason why many of these performers have continued performing.

When Lilkim Chi started doing drag, she said she was so nervous; she did not know what to expect. Her first show only had nine people in the audience, but she said people continued to ask her to come back and perform. "I can't explain it – what it's like to be on stage. Just the entire crowd is sitting there and all of their eyes are on me. I can be on stage and just command

all of these people.” She described herself and other drag queens as being local celebrities due to the notoriety they have achieved from performing regularly.

“It’s like an adrenaline high,” Brihanna Jayde said about performing in drag. She said her first experience has stuck with her, even though she has performed now for a decade. Performing in drag helped her find a purpose in life that made her happy.

Brittany Bottomz said she likes to have fun while performing in drag, and she loves when the audience has fun with her.

“It’s really intoxicating to be able to control an audience by simply being on stage,” Monica Moree said about the power she feels every time she takes the stage.

Allie Monet said she loves performing because she loves being the center of attention. She said when she started performing in drag, she was too old to strip again, so this was a way for her to be the center of attention, while also giving back to her community.

All of these anecdotes express perceptions of perceived power through performer’s interactions with and ability to control the audience. Butler (1990) makes the distinction between performing gender against dominant ideology in a theater or on the streets. More variance of gender performativity is accepted on a stage than off.

The drag queens in central Kansas are in positions of perceived power relative to the audience, who are there to watch and/or interact with the show. Berkowitz and Belgrave (2010) describes the perception of power drag queens in Miami Beach, Florida experienced. “Drag queens’ perception of their social status ranged from admiration to alienation. ... [A] handful of participants explained that both heterosexuals and gay men alike regarded them with admiration” (p. 168). There is a position of perceived power and agency drag queens experience when on stage; they command all of the attention from every single person who is in attendance. Drag

queens in central Kansas interact with audience members in between sets of the show, but during their individual performances, all eyes are on the drag performer on the stage. If audience members do not consistently pay attention to the drag performers and/or host of the show or blatantly disrespect them, the audience members are called out in front of everyone else in the bar/club. But this perception of power and agency drag queens experience within the safe space of the club or bar in central Kansas is completely different once the makeup and costumes come off. Drag culture in central Kansas has two extreme images juxtaposed next to each other – the safety and inclusion experienced within the performance space and hostility and exclusion from the state of Kansas as a whole.

Kansas is extreme in its demographics and politics toward marginalized communities, including people of color and the queer community. According to the United States Census Bureau (2014), people of color¹¹ comprise only 24.6 percent of the total population for the entire state of Kansas. In a country that privileges whiteness, the state's demographics lack racial and ethnic diversity. According to the State of Kansas Office of the Secretary of State Voter Registration Statistics (2015), of those registered to vote in the state, 44.5 percent identified as Republicans, 30.7 percent were unaffiliated with a political party, 24 percent identified with the Democratic Party, and 0.8 percent registered as Libertarians. With almost half the state identifying as Republican, a political party that historically has discriminated against marginalized populations, the climate for minority communities is not favorable in Kansas. And finally, according to the Human Rights Campaign State Equality Index (2015), within the state of Kansas, there are zero non-discrimination laws or policies statewide to protect queer people from

¹¹ Categories from the United States Census Bureau included in the term people of color include all but “White alone” and “White alone, not Hispanic or Latino.” The categories included in people of color from the form are “Black or African American alone,” “American Indian or Alaska Native alone,” “Asian alone,” “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone,” “Two or More Races,” and “Hispanic or Latino.”

facing discrimination in housing, public accommodations, education, adoption, foster care, and acquiring insurance or credit. The only statewide nondiscrimination policy applies to state employees in regard to employment. There are some policies to protect some queer individuals. Same sex marriage is legal statewide; same sex parent adoption and de facto parent recognition are also statewide. But because Kansas has a State Religious Freedom Restoration Act, any queer person or perceived queer person can be discriminated against at any time at the discretion of public establishments, including all of the areas listed above without nondiscrimination polices. Hate crime laws in Kansas only prosecute on the basis of sexual orientation not gender identity (pp. 76-77). Politically and socially, Kansas has become increasingly hostile attitude toward marginalized communities, including the queer community. When looking at drag queens in central Kansas who hold multiple layers of oppression, this juxtaposed image appears as inclusion and safe space are found in queer communities while positioned next to exile and discrimination from the state as a whole.

Victoria Fox said when she performed in drag at PJ's, a former bar in Aggieville (a bar and restaurant district in the center of Manhattan), it was not uncommon to leave the bar still in drag and have others walking on the sidewalk call her a "faggot" and/or other derogatory terms toward her sexuality and/or gender performance identity. Monica Moree, who originally started the drag nights at PJ's on Tuesday nights, said outside of the space that was created at "Heat," the weekly drag shows, was the discrimination. She said queer people just want to live and do what they need to to survive. Monica Moree said, "For those two hours every week, you could forget about whatever else was happening."

The perception of power drag queens experience in central Kansas is a way of coping with the negative experiences they have while navigating through the world outside of performance spaces.

“Outside of the safe space of the stage, drag queens experienced verbal harassment and physical abuse. ... [V]ery few participants outwardly contested marginalization, underscoring how drag queens have little space outside performance to explicitly challenge rigid gender norms and heteronormativity” (Berkowitz & Belgrave, 2010, p. 169).

Due to the rigid gender norms imposed by and sanctioned through compulsory heteropatriarchy, there are few spaces for drag queens and other gender nonconforming/gender nonbinary individuals to challenge the hegemonic gender binary safely. These spaces were and are limited in central Kansas. When these performance and/or safe spaces close, it has a devastating ripple effect on the drag queen community and larger queer community.

As mentioned earlier, there was a bar in Junction City called Xcalibur Club that hosted multiple weekly drag shows for the 13 years it was open. All those who assist with this research performed at Xcalibur Club multiple times; some even beginning their drag careers there. Monica Moree, Victoria Fox, Ty Woo, and Lilkim Chi, among others, regularly hosted drag shows every, or every other, week for multiple years. Xcalibur Club was the only establishment in the Manhattan and Junction City area that was created by and for the queer community and whose target clientele was the queer community.

The drag queens who regularly performed at Xcalibur Club felt displaced and disconnected from those who regularly attended Xcalibur Club. Lilkim Chi described her attachment to the club and her sense of displacement once it closed.

“X was our home. We would sometimes go other places to perform, but we would always come back. It’s like we were homeless for a while. But it wasn’t just the queens – it started a disconnection of people. I personally felt lost. I

didn't know what my next move was going to be. Was I going to stop performing in drag or take my drag elsewhere?"

Lilkim Chi struggled to figure out the next path for her drag career when the closest establishment, to where she lived at the time and could perform in drag at was no longer open.

She also brought up the effect the closing of Xcalibur Club had on patrons. There were many regulars of Xcalibur Club who all knew one another and saw each other every weekend at the bar. It was a network of people who all knew each other through this communal, queer-inclusive space. They would spend a few hours a night or maybe a few nights a week for months or, for some, years with one another. When that space was eliminated, it was challenging to see each other in person as frequently as when Xcalibur Club was open.

Drag performers, especially drag queens, felt the biggest impact when Xcalibur Club closed. Brihanna Jayde said she felt that she "lost a home. A piece of me was left in the club when it closed." She considered quitting performing in drag. She performed a few times in Topeka and a few times in Salina, but it was not until the Devil's Tail offered a space for monthly drag shows that she re-found her passion for performing in drag in central Kansas.

Brittany Bottomz said when Xcalibur Club closed, it completely stagnated her drag career. Performing completely stopped for her; she did not know anyone else or where else to perform. She eventually attended other performance sites in central Kansas. Other performers echoed this sense of displacement and lack of knowing what to do or where to go next. Other establishments were created or provided these safe spaces to perform gender safely were found. Drag careers continued and some even rediscovered their passion for drag.

Conclusion

"Drag is a culture – to survive, cultures have to evolve, always be changing," Brittany Bottomz said about witnessing how drastically the drag community in central Kansas has

changed in the time she has performed. Drag queens in central Kansas bring unique perspectives about gender performativity. These performers both adhere to and challenge white hegemonic feminine beauty ideals through personal aesthetic and transformations each performer experienced during their time performing in drag. They found and/or created safe spaces inclusive of drag queens and performing gender that deviates from the hegemonic Western, male-female binary. The drag community in central Kansas was forced to change and evolve in order to survive. The community has survived and thrived in a state becoming increasingly more hostile toward all marginalized populations. This community was once thought to be dead, but it is very much alive and well and just as vibrant as ever.

References

- Akinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In Denzin, Norman & Lincoln, Yvonna (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (1st ed., pp. 248-260). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Berkowitz, D. & Belgrave, L. (2010). "She works hard for the money": Drag queens and the management of their contradictory status of celebrity and marginality. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 39(2), 159-186.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (2nd ed.). New York City, New York: Routledge Classics.
- Butler, J. (1993). Critically queer. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies*, 1, 17-32.
- Dargie, E., Blair, K. L., Pukall, C. F., & Coyle, S. M. (2014). Somewhere under the rainbow: Exploring the identities and experiences of trans persons. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 23(2), 60-74.
- Gill, A.M. (2015). 2014 State Equality Index. Washington, DC: Human Rights Campaign Foundation.
- McCarthy Brown, K. (2001). *Mama Lola: A vodou priestess in Brooklyn* (2nd ed.). Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Newton, E. (1979). *Mother camp: Female impersonators in America* (2nd ed.). Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
- Schacht, S. P. (2002). Turnabout: Gay drag queens and the masculine embodiment of the feminine. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 43(3-4), 191-200.
- Schacht, S. P., & Underwood, L. (2004). The absolutely fabulous but flawlessly customary world of female impersonators. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 46 (3-4), 4.
- Simmons, N. (2004). Speaking like A queen in RuPaul's drag race: Towards a speech code of American drag queens. *Sexuality & Culture*, 18, 630-648.
- Smith, A. (2006). Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy. In INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Ed.), *Color of violence: The INCITE! anthology* (1st ed., pp. 66-73). Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press.
- Sontag, S. (1966). Notes on "camp". *Against interpretation: And other essays* (6th ed., pp. 275-292) Picador.
- State of Kansas Office of the Secretary of State. (2015). 2015 August voter registration and party affiliation numbers certified (Data file).

- Taylor, V., & Rupp, L. J. (2004). Chicks with dicks, men in dresses: What it means to be a drag queen. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 46 (3-4), 115.
- Taylor, V., & Rupp, L. (2006). Learning from drag queens. *Contexts*, 5 (3), 12-17.
- United States Census Bureau. (2014). Kansas state and county quick facts (Data file). Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/20000.html>
- Tewksbury, R. (1994). Gender construction and the female impersonator: The process of transforming "he" to "she". *Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 15, 27-43.
- Wilkinson, S. (1999). Focus groups: A feminist method. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 23, 221-244.