

When Subculture Goes Pop Culture

Final Project

Paige Carlson

LIS 550: Information Environments from Non-dominant Perspectives

May 3, 2019

Background

Introduction

Shade. Yas. Words like these have infiltrated today's culture seemingly overnight. "Yas queen" being heard throughout the internet, people throwing shade at just about anyone for just about anything. These words are now popular, a part of a slang that may one day go the way of words such as "groovy" or "the bomb." However, to a group of people, a community that had a documentary made about them called *Paris is Burning* in 1991, these words were their culture and code. They are not words that fade with fads; they are words that join others in deeper meaning: voguing (a dance off), mopping (stealing), reading (before throwing shade).¹ *Paris is Burning* focuses on a New York fashion subculture in the 1980s, nearly forty years ago. The names and people have changed since then, but the culture lives on. Through researching, discussing, and watching, this project aimed to share the rich, often overlooked history of the drag community, and reclaim words that have been appropriated by other people. Following Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book's, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, project suggestions of "Sharing" and "Claiming"² this project aims to help both reclaim vocabulary used by the drag community as well as share their history. Through this literature review and project reflection, explanation about the background of the project, the range of literature on language and drag culture, and the ideas behind the brochure's layout will be explored.

The Issue

¹ *Paris is Burning*, dir. Jennie Livingston, perf. Brooke Xtravaganza (United States: Art Matters Inc., 1991), Netflix, accessed March 17, 2019, Netflix.com.

² Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 2012): 144 - 162

Drag culture has become a staple in pop culture over the past ten years, with the first episode of *RuPaul's Drag Race* airing in 2009. Through this popularity, drag slang and vocabulary has also infiltrated pop culture. This has caused people to use slang without knowing its origins, and often misappropriating the source. This is evident in the podcast *Reply All*, which is credited as the source of inspiration for this project. In episode #69: "Disappeared," host P.J. Vogt recalls the previous episode where he was explaining a tweet to his boss, Alex Blumberg. They came across the word "Yas" and Vogt simply said it was "an emphatic yes."³ Which, truthfully, was not wrong. However, it was in simply passing by the word that they inadvertently pushed its history deeper into obscurity. In fact, Vogt, upon reflecting, explains the problem quite well: "And then we moved on. We just missed this huge story about where the word came from. We were three straight white guys sitting in a room talking about something that, it turns out, we knew basically nothing about."⁴ Drag culture has faced the problem of not being taken seriously, as Simmons points out drag queens are viewed as the "jesters" of the gay community, and are only suitable for the stage.⁵ In Smith's book, she emphasizes a similar issue that those in indigenous populations may face, and a thought process that assisted with this project, "Part of the exercise is about recovering our own stories of the past. This is inextricably bound to recovery of our language and epistemological foundations."⁶

Drag queens may have that jester reputation, priding themselves in showmanship and flash, but seeing only the face and ignoring the history and life behind the mascara creates a

³ P.J. Vogt and Alex Goldman, "69: Disappeared," *Reply All* (audio blog), July 7, 2016, accessed March 16, 2019, <https://www.gimletmedia.com/reply-all/69-disappeared>.

⁴ Vogt and Goldman, "69: Disappeared."

⁵ Nathaniel Simmons, "Speaking Like a Queen in RuPaul's Drag Race: Towards a Speech Code of American Drag Queens," *Sexuality & Culture* 18, no. 3 (2014), 630-648.

⁶ Smith, 40

forgotten past. The drag community is credited with starting the Stonewall Riots in 1969.⁷ Ballroom culture arose out of a need for people to find homes and safety, and a need to show the world who a person could be.⁸ “In a ballroom, you can be anything you want, you’re not really an executive but you’re looking like an executive, and therefore you’re showing the world that I can be an executive,” Dorian Corey from *Paris is Burning* illustrates this fantasy created out of an environment that proved challenging for those in the ball community.⁹ Dorian Corey continues to emphasize his point throughout the documentary, pointing out the root of the desire for the showmanship: “Black people have a hard time getting anywhere ... and those that do are usually straight.”¹⁰ This is the history that is often unknown behind drag culture, and that people are trying to encroach on. Cardi B, for example, filed to copyright “Okurr,” only to face a challenger in Khloé Kardashian, claiming she came up with the word. Neither of these women came up with the word, in fact the popularity of the word is credited with its use on *RuPaul’s Drag Race*.¹¹ It is because of the lack of general knowledge of this group’s history, and the increase in its presence in pop culture, that it becomes important not to forget the reality of their origins.

Literature Review

The Origin of Community Language

⁷ Simmons, "Speaking like a Queen in RuPaul's Drag Race: Towards a Speech Code of American Drag Queens," 630-648.

⁸ *Paris is Burning*

⁹ *Paris is Burning*

¹⁰ *Paris is Burning*

¹¹ Arianna Davis, "Did Cardi B Steal "Okurr" From Khloé Kardashian?" Origin Story Of Cardi B and Khloe Kardashian Okurr, April 10, 2018, , accessed April 26, 2019, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/04/196048/cardi-b-khloe-kardashian-okurr-origin>.

Language and slang are important for groups of people to be able to communicate with one another in terms that make sense in the context of a given situation. Slang comes about when there is a need for code, for a group to understand each other, and to create a space that belongs to the group in question. Krisztina Laszlo notes in her article “Language, Identity, and Archives” that “The loss of a language means the loss of many thousands of years’ worth of cultural nuances, rituals, and practices. It is through language that a culture is transmitted.”¹² This highlights the importance of language, and slang is be a huge part of that language.

Language can help a person identify themselves within a group. Cecilia Cutler in the article “Hip-Hop, White Immigrant Youth, and African American Vernacular English: Accommodation as an Identity Choice” discusses this, pointing out that people will decide to mark themselves and conform to groups based on language.¹³ By adapting one’s language towards a group, or consciously choosing to adapt away from a group, a person shows how they identify with said group.¹⁴ This identity proves to be important among minority and oppressed groups, Brown and Casanova notes, emphasizing that these groups use language to unify.¹⁵

¹² Krisztina Laszlo, "Language, Identity and Archives," in *Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity in the U.S. and Canada*, ed. Dominique Daniel, by Amalia Levi, Archives, Archivists and Society (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2014), 119

¹³ Cecilia Cutler, "Hip-Hop, White Immigrant Youth, and African American Vernacular English: Accommodation as an Identity Choice," *Journal of English Linguistics* 38, no. 3 (2010): , accessed April 28, 2019, doi:10.1177/0075424210374551.

¹⁴ Cutler, "Hip-Hop, White Immigrant Youth, and African American Vernacular English: Accommodation as an Identity Choice."

¹⁵ Tamara Mose Brown and Erynn Masi De Casanova, "Representing the Language of the ‘other’: African American Vernacular English in Ethnography," *Ethnography* 15, no. 2 (2013): accessed April 30, 2019, doi:10.1177/1466138112471110.

Aside from unification, language also has the opportunity to mark a person within a group, as stated by Rickford et al.¹⁶ A person is able to create a place for themselves, and express who they are from within a group through the use of language and vocabulary.¹⁷ Douglas Fisher and Diane Lapp use further research to continue to illustrate this idea, “each person has an identity kit that is characterized by experiences, behavior, language and the social expectations of others with whom they interact.”¹⁸ This returns to Laszlo’s quote earlier, personalizing the effect that language has on a community. The culture’s rituals – or experiences, the culture’s nuances – behavior, and practices – social expectations are ever present within what words are used and how they are used.¹⁹

Sense of community, self-identification, and unification are three important aspects when it comes to language usage and creation. Through understanding what words mean, and how they are used, one can understand the importance of everything from word choice to grammatical syntax.²⁰ Brown and Cassanova go so far as to point out that usage of certain types of language – especially African American Vernacular English (AAVE) – can be seen as an act of resistance.²¹ It is this AAVE that is cited with giving the drag community a portion of its lexicon.²² In the

¹⁶ John R. Rickford et al., "Neighborhood Effects on Use of African-American Vernacular English," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112, no. 38 (2015): accessed May 1, 2019, doi:10.1073/pnas.1500176112.

¹⁷ Rickford et al., "Neighborhood Effects on Use of African-American Vernacular English."

¹⁸ Douglas Fisher and Diane Lapp, "Learning to Talk Like the Test: Guiding Speakers of African American Vernacular English," *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 56, no. 8 (May 2013): accessed April 29, 2019, doi:10.1002/jaal.198.

¹⁹ Laszlo, 119

²⁰ Tamara Mose Brown and Erynn Masi De Casanova, "Representing the Language of the ‘other’: African American Vernacular English in Ethnography."

²¹ Brown and Casanova, "Representing the Language of the ‘other’: African American Vernacular English in Ethnography."

²² Silva, Daniel, and Robert Lechuga. 2018. "The ABC's of Drag." Audio blog. *Grizzly Kiki* (blog). November 23, 2018. <https://www.grizzlykiki.com/podcast/the-abcs-of-drag>.

podcast *Grizzly Kiki*, hosts Robert and Daniel further illustrate that a lot of the lexicon used today in drag culture comes from gay African American ball culture.²³ An article from Mays et al. notes that while it was certainly common for gay men to use coded language, African American gay men developed this even further due to the added prejudice and oppression against them.²⁴

Through research into language and slang usage, it is easy to see how a culture and community's lexicon is important to their identity individually and as a whole. The drag queens spoken to for this project unanimously pointed out that drag slang did not always simply originate with them, but words were borrowed and exchanged with those who were specifically people of color and gay, the ones at the center of the balls.

From Balls to Shows

As mentioned before, drag culture is becoming increasingly popular thanks to shows like *RuPaul's Drag Race* and it is not uncommon for a university to host a drag show or two throughout the year. However, drag shows as are performed today came from a very real place – the House and Ball community.

The documentary *Paris is Burning* paints a picture of hope and risk. The drag community in 1987 New York is evolving, changing from dramatic, hand-made costumes to expensive, elegant, store-bought costumes.²⁵ The goal is to look ones best, to perform at a Ball, to win a prize, and then at the end of the night – perhaps get invited to join a House. “And the people in

²³ Silva and Lechuga, “The ABC’s of Drag.”

²⁴ Vickie M. Mays et al., "The Language of Black Gay Mens Sexual Behavior-implications for AIDS Risk Reduction," *Journal of Sex Research* 29, no. 3 (August 1992): , doi:10.1080/00224499209551657.

²⁵ *Paris is Burning*

the House would actually take care of you,” P.J. Vogt of the podcast *Reply All* describes, recapping his interview with the father of the House Xtravaganza, José Xtravaganza.²⁶ The people who sought out to win Balls and be invited into the Houses are those who had been kicked out of their own homes for being who they were, the House a safe place for one and their identity. Houses and Balls are still very active today, with Balls being put on by Houses as a way to earn fame and recognition in themed categories, as well as scout out other Black or Latino youth who may be in need of a House.²⁷ Phillips et al. explains that homosexuality and transgenderism have yet to be fully accepted in these communities, and as such the Houses – organized like families with a mother and a father – will reach out to the youth to help provide support and safety.²⁸

Ball culture’s history stretches far into the past, though the House culture took a little while longer to appear. An article by Ivan Monforte notes that the House and Ball community first started to appear in 1869, and grew in popularity until nearly 8,000 people would be in attendance for a ball in the 1920s.²⁹ In the 1970’s, House culture appeared as a response to the ever present racism within the community.³⁰ The Ball culture has grown today to include trophies and cash prizes, with even more ferocity in competition than before – and even to help

²⁶ Vogt and Goldman, "69: Disappeared."

²⁷ Gregory Phillips et al., "House/ball Culture and Adolescent African-American Transgender Persons and Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Synthesis of the Literature," *AIDS Care* 23, no. 4 (2011): , accessed May 1, 2019, doi:10.1080/09540121.2010.516334.

²⁸ Phillips et al., "House/ball Culture and Adolescent African-American Transgender Persons and Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Synthesis of the Literature."

²⁹ Ivan Monforte. "House and Ball culture goes wide." *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 17, no. 5 (2010): 28+. *Literature Resource Center* (accessed May 2, 2019). http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy3.library.arizona.edu/apps/doc/A237756164/LitRC?u=uarizona_main&sid=LitRC&xid=e26c8f1c.

³⁰ Ivan. "House and Ball culture goes wide."

raise money and awareness towards causes such as HIV and AIDS.³¹ House and Ball culture remain strong, parts evolving into drag culture.

Today, drag culture can be seen through city events, on television, and on university campuses. This normalization of the culture, however, has only served to expose the problems the drag community may face today. Not taken seriously by gay men who do not partake in drag, and yet also identifying as a part of the LGBTQ community, drag queens find themselves facing a double stigmatization.³² To complicate things further, there is a balance to be struck between the “cost” and the “experience” that comes from imitating a woman that a drag queen will experience.³³ Dressing up and performing are empowering acts for a drag queen. Donning a pseudonym, a drag queen can perform and portray an identity that is separate from their non-drag personality. This combination of the performance and alternate identity is largely a positive experience.³⁴ However, the cost of such freedom can be severe as well. Violence, discrimination, difficulty finding love – all of these are consequences that can arise when a drag queen takes to the stage.³⁵

Drag culture and House/Ball culture can both be seen today. Many people pay tribute to these cultures daily without even realizing even though the cultures remain as distinct as ever.

³¹ Ivan. "House and Ball culture goes wide."

³² Nathaniel Simmons, "Speaking Like a Queen in RuPaul's Drag Race: Towards a Speech Code of American Drag Queens," *Sexuality & Culture* 18, no. 3 (2014): 630-648.

³³ Dana Berkowitz and Linda Liska Belgrave, "'She Works Hard for the Money': Drag Queens and the Management of Their Contradictory Status of Celebrity and Marginality," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 39, no. 2 (2010): 159-186.

³⁴ Berkowitz, " "She Works Hard for the Money": Drag Queens and the Management of Their Contradictory Status of Celebrity and Marginality," 159-186.

³⁵ Berkowitz, "'She Works Hard for the Money': Drag Queens and the Management of Their Contradictory Status of Celebrity and Marginality," 159-186.

Drag Language

With popular television shows and the presence of social media, it is easy to see how vocabulary can spread into the mainstream. However, the origins of these words often get lost as they spread from social media platform to social media platform. It is important to remember how language affects a community, and how it plays into the world of drag.

By 1989, drag culture was beginning to slip into mainstream culture, and with it, some of their words. In the documentary, *Paris is Burning*, news reporters discuss the concept of “voguing,” taking it from the original meaning as explained by a queen: “Voguing is the same as taking two knives and cutting each other up but through a dance form,” turning it into a pop culture sensation popularized by Madonna and described by mainstream media: “This... is voguing, a form of dance that has its roots in Harlem,” “it’s institutionalized showing off,” “it’s just so theatrical, and the energy, it’s terrific.”³⁶ The contrast between the subculture of drag and the mainstream culture in the meaning and usage around the idea of “voguing” is stark. This difference is far from lost on some of those who were in the community during this time, “we were speaking code. You know? For no one else to understand us, just us,” says José Xtravaganza.³⁷

With the use of words in the mainstream, the meaning of the vernacular becomes known among dominant groups. For this reason, Rowan et al. notes, the vocabulary among drag culture and House/Ball culture is fluid.³⁸ This arose out of the desire for the society that was forced underground to be able to communicate with each other, and once mainstream exposure happens,

³⁶ *Paris Is Burning*.

³⁷ Vogt and Goldman, "69: Disappeared."

³⁸ Diana Rowan, Dennis D. Long, and Darrin Johnson, "Identity and Self-Presentation in the House/Ball Culture: A Primer for Social Workers," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 25, no. 2 (2013): doi:10.1080/10538720.2013.782457.

the exclusion that happens naturally due to vocabulary becomes difficult to uphold.³⁹ Rowan et al. further explains the reasoning behind fluidity in a culture's language, once words are understood by the mainstream they lose the appeal as code, and thus are forgotten for newer words.⁴⁰ Though these words may be abandoned by those who created or made them noticeable to mainstream culture, that does not change where they belong originally. The problem comes in when pop culture icons decide to claim these words and phrases for themselves, despite not knowing the importance of the culture the words are coming from.

Aside from usage as code and social identifiers, language also proves itself to be at the center of the drag performance. As Mann states, drag queens use language purposefully to imitate different groups of people – different races, genders, and different sexual identities – to create an elaborate, dramatic show.⁴¹ They know that the people they are imitating do not speak or act the way they are performing, but that is okay – it is why it is a performance.⁴² Using this knowledge, a drag queen during a performance can switch which words she uses in order to demonstrate a different aspect of her identity.⁴³ Much of the literature around drag performance highlights drag's purpose of playing with the idea of fixed identities, showing these identities to be more fluid than mainstream thought normally allows. Through their use of language, drag queens can highlight this fluidity by shifting through their own identities with language cues.⁴⁴

³⁹ Rowan, "Identity and Self-Presentation in the House/Ball Culture: A Primer for Social Workers."

⁴⁰ Rowan, "Identity and Self-Presentation in the House/Ball Culture: A Primer for Social Workers."

⁴¹ Stephen L. Mann, "Drag Queens Use of Language and the Performance of Blurred Gendered and Racial Identities," *Journal of Homosexuality* 58, no. 6-7 (2011): , doi:10.1080/00918369.2011.581923.

⁴² Mann, "Drag Queens Use of Language and the Performance of Blurred Gendered and Racial Identities."

⁴³ Mann, "Drag Queens Use of Language and the Performance of Blurred Gendered and Racial Identities."

⁴⁴ Ramey Moore. "Everything Else Is Drag: Linguistic Drag and Gender Parody on Rupaul's Drag Race." *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 3, no. 2 (2013): 15-26.

In drag and House/Ball culture, language plays an important role. Most of the literature puts language as code as an essential part of Ball culture that changes once it hits the mainstream. Literature related to drag culture puts language as a key aspect of drag queen performances, using language as power to question the rigidity in which culture today places identity – especially with gender.

Discussion/Conclusion

The Words

Through all of the research and through speaking with drag queens in both Tucson and in San Francisco, a set of words were come up with. These words will take up the most space in the brochure. Words and phrases like “Ball,” “House Mother,” “House Father,” and “Friend of Dorothy” are chosen because they offer a grounded, more real look into drag culture. These words have roots in painful pasts, and even things that are still happening today with youth needing to find safety in House culture. This is chosen as a direct response to the overarching idea of drag queens being the “jesters” of the gay community. With mainstream media as it is today, it appears that drag culture is highlighted as fun, humorous, and exciting. Which, while drag shows are all three of those, the culture itself has a long past that is rooted in human struggles that should not be forgotten. Other words included are words like “okurrr” and “voguing” which are words that were brought up as being direct examples of words being taken by celebrities (Cardi B and Madonna, respectively) and made popular. Then there are words such as “campy,” “fab,” “fierce,” “gurl,” “hyper queen,” “kiki,” “loca,” “read(ing),” “shade,” “sickening,” “slay,” “T,” “werk,” and “yas.” These are words that could be found easily through social media, without their origin being noted or tagged on anywhere. The meanings of these words as will be written in the final brochure are as follows:

- **Ball** – Organized events where drag queens would perform, often in hopes of being accepted into a House.
- **Campy** – Queens who are over-the top and focused on exaggeration for performance.
- **Drag Mother** – A queen who has taken a younger queen under her wing, often given the younger performer a name.
- **Drag Queen** – One who dresses elaborately and dramatically as a woman for entertainment purposes, usually male.
- **Fab** – Strong compliment, approval.⁴⁵
- **Fierce** – Something that is amazing.
- **Friend of Dorothy** – Code, indicating a person is homosexual.
- **Gurl** – Term of endearment, originating from AAVE.
- **House** – Families drag queens could join, adopting the House's last name. Provides a home and safety.
- **House Mother** – The nurturing head figure of the house.⁴⁶
- **House Father** – The protective head figure of the house.⁴⁷
- **Hyper Queen** – (Also: Faux Queen) A female who dresses and performs as a drag queen.
- **Kiki** – Gossip.
- **Loca** – Spanish, can be both insult and term of endearment, “madwoman” - in drag slang, similar to “queen.”⁴⁸
- **Okurrr** – Exaggeration of "Okay."
- **Read(ing)** – Scrutinizing someone to insult in a crafted and clever way.
- **Shade** – A subtle form of insulting.
- **Sickening** – Someone that is excessively hot.

⁴⁵ Rowan, "Identity and Self-Presentation in the House/Ball Culture: A Primer for Social Workers."

⁴⁶ Phillips et al., "House/ball Culture and Adolescent African-American Transgender Persons and Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Synthesis of the Literature."

⁴⁷ Phillips et al., "House/ball Culture and Adolescent African-American Transgender Persons and Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Synthesis of the Literature."

⁴⁸ Matthew Goldmark, "National Drag," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, no. 4 (2015): accessed April 19, 2019, doi:10.1215/10642684-3123665.

- **Slay** – To succeed in an outstanding way.
- **T** – (Also: The Tea) the truth.
- **Voguing** – A crafted dance-off among competitors at Balls.
- **Werk** – To put in effort and hustle for a positive payoff.
- **Yas** - Emphatic 'yes.'

The Explanations

In the final brochure, there are also three sections that are set out to help provide brief background information about drag culture. Each section is about 50 words in length, due to the size restrictions with the brochure itself. In the first section, attention will be paid to drag history, citing Ball and House culture. This is an important aspect to continue to ground a culture that is often lauded as being more silly, less serious. The section reads as follows:

Drag culture grew out of the House and Ballroom culture that has records dating back to the 1860's. In the 1970's, Houses – inspired by the fashion houses of Paris – gained traction. Based on performances during Balls, people would be given invitations to join a House. These Houses provided safety and refuge for LGBTQ people of color, and stand as the foundation for drag culture today.

The second section is dedicated to language and its use in drag, specifically citing AAVE and its role in creating drag vocabulary. Attention is paid in ensuring that AAVE is not ignored, and that the importance of language in a culture is stressed. A group's lexicon can be fun; however it is also very personal to a group. The section reads as follows:

Borrowing from and sharing with African American Vernacular English (AAVE), the drag community uses language for both self-identification and performance. Shared lexicon among a group provides a sense of unity, and can also play a role in an oppressed group's resistance to the dominating group. Drag also uses language in performances as a way to toy with society's idea of fixed identities, using language to create fluidity among gender, sexual, and even racial identities.

The third section is about drag culture in popular culture. It talks about how drag became mainstream, and how it is important to know where the culture came from. Through

understanding origins and ownership, people in the marginalized community can better ensure that their history and lexicon remains theirs. The section reads as follows:

It started with voguing. In 1990, Madonna created the song “Vogue,” inspired by the voguing that could be seen in Balls. This brought the Ball and House culture into the mainstream. Years later, *RuPaul’s Drag Race* would further bring drag culture into pop culture. While this led to increased acceptance it has also lead to the appropriation of words that belong to this subculture. With celebrities like Cardi B further popularizing drag language, it is important to remember the people whose language is being borrowed.

On the back of the brochure, there is a special thanks section. This section names media that has important or interesting perspectives on drag culture. Podcasts like *Reply All* and *Grizzly Kiki* are included, as well as movies like *Paris is Burning* and *The Birdcage*. These provide starting points of interest where those interested in the drag community can continue to do research. This paper itself, once given the okay, will be posted on my own portfolio website and the link provided on the back of the brochure so that people can find it and read it if they so choose. The paper’s bibliography section can provide even more places to look for more information. Finally, a special thanks section is reserved for the drag queens who helped to check over my work and offered guidance in words to include and places to search for information. The name of the brochure is “The Tea,” a reference to the drag word turned internet slang, meaning the truth.

Conclusion

The history and world behind drag and Ball/House culture is deeper than first imagined. While information is not easy to find at first, once the proper search terms are discovered it opens up a world of research and accounts. Drag queens expressed great interest in the project, and a great willingness to help. The brochure is in a near finished state, awaiting response from some drag queens who have offered to check over the work. Once the work is given approval, the brochures are ready to be printed and placed wherever they might be of help. Originally, it

would be placed in LGBTQ centers; however interest in the project has given cause for consideration of other places it may be of use. As a source of information, it should be made available to those who want the knowledge. For future projects along this vein, drag terms throughout different regions and countries could provide an interesting look at the code behind these communities. However, it may be important to understand the society around the drag culture being observed. Homosexuality is still not viewed as acceptable in a few places, and so a project like this could end up putting people in danger if the code becomes known. The words chosen here have been thought of as safe to use, as they are seen in pop culture and any concerns raised by the drag queens checking would be taken seriously. Drag culture and the Ball/House culture both have extensive and important histories that are often ignored, many times because of the elaborate nature of the performances. However these histories should not be ignored, especially if people are interested in using the words that have come from them. Through understanding the use of language in cultures, the drag culture itself, and the use of language as a tool within drag, people can become more aware of the words they use on a day-to-day basis.

Bibliography

- Berkowitz, Dana, and Linda Belgrave. "'She Works Hard for the Money': Drag Queens and the Management Of Their Contradictory Status of Celebrity and Marginality." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 39, no. 2 (2010): 159-186.
- Brown, Tamara Mose, and Erynn Masi De Casanova. "Representing the Language of the 'other': African American Vernacular English in Ethnography." *Ethnography* 15, no. 2 (2014): 208-31.
- Cutler, Cecelia. "Hip-Hop, White Immigrant Youth, and African American Vernacular English: Accommodation as an Identity Choice." *Journal of English Linguistics* 38, no. 3 (2010): 248-69. Accessed April 28, 2019. doi:10.1177/0075424210374551.
- Davis, Arianna. "Did Cardi B Steal 'Okurr' From Khloé Kardashian?" Origin Story Of Cardi B and Khloe Kardashian Okurr. April 10, 2018. Accessed April 26, 2019. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/04/196048/cardi-b-khloe-kardashian-okurr-origin>.
- Fisher, Douglas, and Diane Lapp. "Learning to Talk Like the Test: Guiding Speakers of African American Vernacular English." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 56, no. 8 (May 2013): 634-48. Accessed April 29, 2019. doi:10.1002/jaal.198.
- Goldmark, Matthew. "National Drag." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, no. 4 (2015): 501-20. Accessed April 19, 2019. doi:10.1215/10642684-3123665.
- Laszlo, Kriztina. "Language, Identity and Archives." In *Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity in the U.S. and Canada*, edited by Dominique Daniel, by Amalia Levi, 115-24. Archives, Archivists and Society. Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2014.
- Mann, Stephen L. "Drag Queens Use of Language and the Performance of Blurred Gendered and Racial Identities." *Journal of Homosexuality* 58, no. 6-7 (2011): 793-811. doi:10.1080/00918369.2011.581923.
- Mays, Vickie M., Susan D. Cochran, George Bellinger, Robert G. Smith, Nancy Henley, Marlon Daniels, Thomas Tibbits, Gregory D. Victorienne, Olu Kwasi Osei, and Darryl K. Birt. "The Language of Black Gay Mens Sexual Behavior-implications for AIDS Risk Reduction." *Journal of Sex Research* 29, no. 3 (August 1992): 425-34. doi:10.1080/00224499209551657.
- Monforte, Ivan. "House and Ball culture goes wide." *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 17, no. 5 (2010): 28+. *Literature Resource Center* (accessed May 2, 2019). http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy3.library.arizona.edu/apps/doc/A237756164/LitRC?u=uarizona_main&sid=LitRC&xid=e26c8f1c.
- Moore, Ramey. "Everything Else Is Drag: Linguistic Drag and Gender Parody on Rupaul's Drag Race." *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 3, no. 2 (2013): 15-26.
- Paris Is Burning*. Directed by Jennie Livingston. Performed by Brooke Xtravaganza. United States: Art Matters Inc., 1991. Netflix. Accessed March 17, 2019. Netflix.com.
- Phillips, Gregory, James Peterson, Diane Binson, Julia Hidalgo, Manya Magnus, and For The Ymsm Of Color Spns Initiati. "House/ball Culture and Adolescent African-American Transgender Persons

- and Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Synthesis of the Literature." *AIDS Care* 23, no. 4 (2011): 515-20. Accessed May 1, 2019. doi:10.1080/09540121.2010.516334.
- Rickford, John R., Greg J. Duncan, Lisa A. Gennetian, Ray Yun Gou, Rebecca Greene, Lawrence F. Katz, Ronald C. Kessler, Jeffrey R. Kling, Lisa Sanbonmatsu, Andres E. Sanchez-Ordoñez, Matthew Sciandra, Ewart Thomas, and Jens Ludwig. "Neighborhood Effects on Use of African-American Vernacular English." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112, no. 38 (2015): 11817-1822. Accessed May 1, 2019. doi:10.1073/pnas.1500176112.
- Rowan, Diana, Dennis D. Long, and Darrin Johnson. "Identity and Self-Presentation in the House/Ball Culture: A Primer for Social Workers." *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 25, no. 2 (2013): 178-96. doi:10.1080/10538720.2013.782457.
- Silva, Daniel, and Robert Lechuga. "The ABC's of Drag." *Grizzly Kiki* (audio blog), November 23, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2019. <https://www.grizzlykiki.com/podcast/the-abcs-of-drag>.
- Simmons, Nathaniel. "Speaking like a Queen in RuPaul's Drag Race: Towards a Speech Code of American Drag Queens." *Sexuality and Culture* 18, no. 3 (2014): 630-648.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. London: Zed Books, 2012.
- Vogt, P.J., and Alex Goldman. "69: Disappeared." *Reply All* (audio blog), July 7, 2016. Accessed March 16, 2019. <https://www.gimletmedia.com/reply-all/69-disappeared>.