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Interview with Jason Lementino. *Sociology of Drag, SIUE,* April 15th

Seth: So, to start, when did you first hear about drag and what was your initial reaction to it?

Lady Luscious: When I first heard about drag is about when I was probably about 21 and I started going to gay clubs in Iowa and I saw a drag queen and like I didn't know before then... straight out of high school in a small town... didn't know nothing about gay culture or nothing. So, I'm like why are they cheering this person on? and like why does she look famous to me? She was hilarious, and then someone explained to me she was a drag queen and then had to explain, you know, it’s a man dressed as a woman at that time, cause now drag is forming into something huge. So back then, it was just men dressing up as women to portray drag. So, that got me curious, I wasn't quite interested in it back then. It was just kind of like "Oh!" but then I loved watching it. I loved doing it or not doing it. just watching and going. so that was about the first time I ever saw when I was 21 so around 2002-2003?

S: So, what are you now, thirty-four?

L: I'm thirty-six.

S: That's a long time to experience it. For me I didn't know about drag till I was in high school being sixteen or seventeen and now I'm only nineteen but... compared to me starting college now and I've studied gender so much because of sociology it’s such a broad aspect to understand. I've studied it in anthropology, political science, sociology, psychology, in specialized sociology classes on gender... it’s still like amazing at how much there is.

S: When did you start performing as a drag artist and why?

L: I started performing about, let’s see, I’ve been here twelve years so twelve years ago. Travis my husband his friend he went to school with at the time in Cahokia they kind of got back together and he reintroduced me into drag because he was actually doing drag. So, we watched him a few times, we went to Grey Fox it was at the time... or was... still is. Went to Grey fox to watch him a few times and he was like "Hey do you want to do drag?" and I'm like "I don't know." and she was like "Bitch you doing drag." so, thanks to... I was able to do my first drag about twelve years ago and it was at grey fox and we thought we looked hot as shit and at that time and looking at the pictures now your like "oh my god we look like uhhhh."

S: But that like all the upcoming tea... it’s a whole story.

L: Yea because everyone thinks they're, when they first start they're like no one can tell you anything you know you think you're hot. you know it all. and like when you start doing it more and you start looking back you're like "girl."

S: And then why did you start performing?

L: Ever since I was little I was always fem. I always like wearing my aunt’s high heels and my mom’s makeup and stuff like that, so it was kind of already there a little bit and experimenting in women's stuff and I also loved to dance. So, when I saw that, when I was twenty-one I saw what they do they actually do makeup, heels, and all that stuff. And they dance that was kind of up my alley, so it wasn't really making me do it, it was a little twisting of my arm just a little bit.

S: Definitely a change.

L: It was just something that kind of reflected who I was deep inside. It was kind of why I decided to do drag.

S: How did your family, friends, and all them receive you being a drag artist?

L: So, of course my friends were more acceptable. Totally right off the bat, all my friends. My friends are my second family. They are my family. It’s a little difficult when you come out gay. I came out gay before I came out as a drag queen of course... sometimes it’s the opposite. So, I already had that disconnect from some family members just for being gay so at that point it was like whatever it doesn't matter if they accept me or not so a lot of them still didn't, they didn't really know probably until a few years back. But like my immediate family like my mom and my brothers... my mom just told me that I would make an ugly girl. that's just what her response was. But it was her way, I think, saying I disapprove in a way. She didn't really like it. My brothers, we're native American so it was... it wasn't... I don't know how to explain it. it was like. its different cultures so like when they say "ehhhhh" you know that means its, theirs shock, but it’s not like... it wasn't a huge deal to them I think they accepted it. because this famous person from my tribe back in the day she was trans I do believe so she was a man that wanted to be a woman and did women things, cooked and cleaned. This is way back when. If you look her up she pops up. All the drag queens were posting things on Facebook about her. "and I'm like that's my culture! that cool!" so when my brothers found out, they were shocked, but it wasn't like a culture shock because they were already aware of other people doing it and I'm talking about back in the 1800's is when that person became what she was. And she was considered part of the god of love so everyone kind of respected her, you know in that aspect and you're not supposed to make fun of gay people because of that. So, my mom was more shocked, she really didn't accept me at that time. Just told me I was ugly. My brothers were shocked but they kind of already understood.

S: So, Miss Lady Luscious Diva, where does your name come from?

L: When I started twelve years ago, you have to think of your drag name and all this stuff. Well in high school no one could pronounce my last name which was Lementino so they just called me lemons. My first name twelve years ago was Luscious Lemons because I thought I was Luscious, and no one could spell my last name, so I was like lemons. so then, I was like just lemons, and I would like throw lemon heads out and stuff like that. Just for fun. And then I kind of got out of drag a little bit and just to focus on my career and then I became an adult and I felt more like a lady, so I was like well luscious lemons its cute, but I feel like I'm grown now. I feel like an adult so what could i be like let me change my drag name, my persona, who I am, and I thought of it and I was like well why don't i just be the lady and I’ll be lady luscious and that's where lady Luscious came from. My Facebook is Miss Lady Luscious Diva that's because for some reason Facebook won’t let me use Lady Luscious but first name lady as a first name. So, I had to come up with a thing but a lot of people, I wouldn't care if someone like "Miss Lady Luscious Diva" like that totally doesn't bother me. and when I go perform sometimes that's what they say. "Miss lady Luscious Diva!" I don't care, it doesn't bother me.

S: You know if anything, it adds a little bit more.

L: Character! Exactly.

S: So, there are a lot of terms or types of styles of drag from drag queen to drag kings to glamour queens, male impersonators, comedy queens, there’s a lot of them amongst others, are their particular labels you would use to characterize your drag?

L: I don't know how Miss Lady Luscious Diva is kind of slutty. She is a lady, but she is a little slutty. She likes to show a lot of her skin and a lot of her boobage, so, I mean, I think she’s a little slutty. I'm a slutty drag queen! That's all I got to say!

S: We actually bring that up a lot in class, how sexualized is drag? What’s the point of drag to where its cuts off in the end quote unquote, trans and living like that. the performance aspect of drag and doing all that. It's so in depth.

L: I was going to say that's way past, but I can’t do anything sexual in drag for me because I don't want to be a woman, you know what I mean? I like me being a male, but I like dressing up as a woman. All of those fabulous things that women have that's what I like. But I like being a man too.

S: So best of both worlds.

L: Yea, exactly!

S: Well that answers my question what type of drag you do. And then what’s your style of drag: Slutty. I like that. And then, does the type of drag you do affect your life as a drag artist? Because I usually see that you're headlining stuff. You're usually on stage speaking, calling out people, and stuff like that when I see your stuff on Facebook and Instagram and stuff like that.

L: But does it affect my life? Is that what you're trying, was that the question?

S: Affect your life as a drag artist.

L: No, I mean if anything it just adds more to my life. Because like I said all my friends are my family so when you become a drag queen you get to meet new people and I think it adds more to you. I don't think it necessarily does anything to my life? I just think that it adds more, you know kind of like getting a raise. It doesn't do anything with your lifestyle it makes it better. So that's kind of how I look at it.

S: And then I know we go to Attitudes a lot me and my friend because we're good enough now and that's just right there. Those shows are pretty good. Have you ever performed at Attitudes?

L: That's kind of where I started out with... so twelve years ago I started drag and I just felt like... I don't know what I felt? Like in drag. I don't know if I was like well I'm not a drag queen. I don't know if I'm bitchy enough. I just didn't know if it was me I guess. So, I took a break and then I was really craving it. Like I'm like I want to go back on stage like this is me. I felt myself again and then... opened her show at Attitudes called the Kitty Show So, it was amateur drag nights on Wednesday nights. So, I started off there about six years ago now? Five or six years ago. So that's when I restarted my drag again and that's where it started was Attitudes.

S: Who or what has influenced your drag? If anything.

L: I meant most definitely Mariah Carey was my ultimate diva. And Gloria Estefan and Selena and all them. A lot of pop culture really played in my drag because when I was growing up I saw beautiful women performing and I'm like "Oh my god. I want to be that. I want to do that. I want to do that, but I can't. I'm a guy." You know because you're a teenager when you think these things. And, I would just say a lot of pop but deep down I think Mariah Carey was the ultimate diva where she like always wore heels. If you ask me question about Mariah Carey, I'll nail it. Like I was so pissed when RuPaul’s Drag Race had the Mariah Carey thing and they're like "What does Mariah Carey call her followers?" and I was like "LAMBS!" and they were like what? Who?

S: That wasn't too long ago

L: I know! I'm like bitch! I would've got that! But yea, I would say Mariah Carey probably played a huge part. I don't want to be like Mariah Carey where she’s like always beautiful and gorgeous, but I want to be... Because she can also be slutty... So, I'm like the slutty side of Mariah Carey. It's kind of how I perceive myself.

S: Are you up to date on season eleven?

L: I am.

S: I love it. Who's your favorite?

L: I think it is Yvie Oddly but then I am liking the Canadian queen…

S: Brooklyn

L: Brooklyn Heights. She's doing really good.

S: Plastique Tiara is just…

L: I don't know about Plastique. Like I don't want to talk bad about her but I just. I do kind of agree with what, what did they say last episode?

S: Personality was a big thing in the last episode.

L: And how everything was about her the last episode. Like three times.

S: See, I see Raja's point but then again like, I pointed this out to... when the season first viewed, like there was no spotlight on Plastique.

L: At all. So, you could maybe...

S: Maybe it was just her time? Or I don't know because like compared she didn't really get any spotlight. In the event kind of training like she was a leader one episode and then you see her look amazing down the runway be her corsets, that's being pointed out now but then like this episode really spotlighted her. And again, she did have Ru's whole speech and hug and things like that

L: Exactly.

S: Her drag mom and her boyfriend at the very end, well that, the boyfriend at the very end was after she already won the competition and that's a little different.

L: That is correct.

S: I still understand the point because a lot of the things don't get any connections to the show.

L: Right. But then at the same time I thought, yea they didn't have no spotlight but if, you know, be like Silky Ganache and soak up that spotlight, you know what I mean? That's why I didn't understand when you go, see I'm very shy as a drag queen. I'm more of a loving, see that also changes my thing because I'm not just a slutty drag queen. I'm actually a loving drag queen. Like I try not to hate, like I try to love everybody, I try not not make fun of anybody, like because I was there. You know what I mean?

S: You can be more than one thing.

L: Yea, exactly. So, in reality if I ever went to Rupaul's Drag Race I feel like I would be like Plastique. Where I'm like so shy, not shy but just like I do my thing but I'm not out there like most drag queens, you know like "Hey Girl Bitch!" You know like that kind of thing, you know I just feel like I'm going to do my stuff until you know someone tries to take

S: Until Competition.

L: Right. Unless someone is going to come at me that's a different story, you know but I feel like, yeah, I can kind of be like Plastique but then you know I would be criticized for not going further, you know?

S: Which, like said, that episode was all about personality, but I honestly loved it because that's one thing that would be really hard to show on stage. You want that strong performance and you block your whole self out. I'm not a performer by any means but like seeing it and just experiencing it.

L: Right.

S: If you don't have personality then you're just a show. so like, you know.

L: Exactly.

S: Its really different.

L: It is really different.

S: So, this one is obviously optional, but do you consider your drag political?

L: No, because my political views are way different, like, I would, like I said, I'm a loving queen. Like I think I'm a hippie deep down inside like I'd rather just not have any politics and just everybody love and have fun and do whatever, you know. And not, not to throw anybody but it's just like, you know, being a native American as well, we didn't have politics or anything, you know, like, and I felt like it was pushed on, you know what I mean? So, it's like we have to do it, you know now. So, I don't know, if I was to do politics I'd kind of view the person, you know whatever political issue it is or whatever and just weigh in a little bit, but I will not go out of my way to like "We need to change this now right here" you know? So, yea, my political reviews are kind of non-existent. I guess. Unless it's hurting our community.

S: Which is a big thing.

L: Exactly. Then, you know, so then it gets harder because then you know I still want to stand up for us and everything, but I don't want to be the person that brings up the issue. I guess, you know what I'm saying?

S: Well that makes sense like don't speak until its actually started.

L: Yeah. Exactly.

S: Yea, that's like me.

L: Don't start anything unless it's gonna happen, you know, it's already there or something.

S: Affecting you at that point. So, are you apart of a drag family, house, or collective, or anything?

L: I am not. I, well I would consider myself a... I had to start off on my own, I guess you can say. Even though you know... you know you still have your sisters. We all consider ourselves sister's, you know and stuff like that, but... got adopted by... so she has the whole... family, all them, so you know, I just kind of. Since I was going on and off in drag I never really got to I guess connect with another family or drag or anything.

S: Adapted into it.

L: Yea, exactly. So, I just kind of say to myself and like I said as well, I feel I'm a different drag queen where odd people don't view me as like a crazy outgoing drag queen. So, I feel like they, you know, like some drag queens say if their a quiet queen then they’re a shady queen. And that's why I think a lot of people think I'm shady because I'm more quiet and that's not the case. It's just, you know I respect people and I love people and you know stuff like that.

S: You'll let them get their say in too.

L: Exactly, yea exactly. So, I meant, my husband actually does drag so actually technically he is my daughter in drag. So, which is kind of weird when she performs I say this is my husband/daughter Lady Looks.

S: House of Lementino.

L: So, I, in a way I have a family but it's just like me, my husband, you know.

S: Still counts.

L: I don't have like a... Exactly. you know I guess I started it but I'm in a drag family.

S: I like that. Can you talk about what your life is like as a drag artist?

L: So, like from when I start or like all together, what do you mean?

S: All together. Just how has it changed you as a person?

L: It made me more open as far as speaking out for myself and others. Like when I was in high school like I was so, so quiet, you know, people would make fun of me because I was feminine back then too. I had long hair, I had no facial hair like I looked like a girl, but I had a boy's name. You know that kind of thing. So, I was always, like, not really made... I was made fun of, but I was also in, it wasn't really a clique. We were just a group of non-white friends that kind of stuck together. So, we had a Mexican, a black girl, and then me, a native American. So, we kind of stuck together because a majority of our school was white and so if I got made fun of my friend... She would always stick up for me. So, I never had not necessarily a backbone but a mouth to kind of back myself up. But, when I became a drag queen and I saw how drag queens are so like open and honest and stuff like that. It’s kind of helped me open up my...

S: Whole persona.

L: Exactly. So, I mean, it's changed me a lot but in reality, it's also just helped me open up who I am deep inside. You know, I want to show love for everybody and stuff like that. So, I don't know. I think the creativity part as well has opened up because you got to think of, you know, what you want to do. What song you want to do. What wardrobe do you want to play? So, it’s kind of, it’s kind of keeps your mind going as well because you know usually when you grow up you don't have an imagination anymore sometimes, most of the time.

S: Loss of creativity.

L: Yes. So that kind of helps with that, you know, that why I think a lot of kids do like drag queens and stuff because they see how open and crazy they are too.

S: Gender normative is just lame nowadays.

L: Yea, exactly! It really is.

S: I mean, we're supposed to do a degendering experiment for this class too. So, like I'm supposed to change up my style and go as different or do my makeup or something. I've yet to do it, but I'm actually kind of looking forward to it. Because I've never had my makeup done.

L: Really?

S: Yea, I think my cousin tried to do it once, but it was not good, so I just deleted it. But, yea, I'm just excited for that because it's just a change and like I don't honestly know if I'll go in public with it or to work because I won't be able too. But it'll be different to see and like I will definitely take pictures and I may post them who knows.

L: Are there any like straight guys that are in this class?

S: Not that I know of.

L: I was going to say, I'm like

S: There's maybe like four guys in that class.

L: Well see, that would be cool though

S: And I know three of them are gay.

L: I think that that would help like I don't know.

S: Understanding.

S: But it's... You got to break that boundary where...

L: Yea. I know, I know.

S: That people don't want to break.

L: That sucks. They don't.

S: I hate that because like I can talk about gender all day, like I said earlier. And it just won't go through... But then...

L: Yea! It's like

S: "Okay!"... How often do you perform?

L: I do right now about once a month. I can, when I was younger, you know, because again, when you get older you're hurting more. So, right now I do once a month, when I was younger I tried to do every weekend or every show that you possibly could, you know. But, when I got older and, you know of course your career gets in the way a little bit, so you know. But, I do once a month now and that usually just for fundraising. So, I consider myself also a fundraising queen because I just like to do drag for free, you know. A lot of times

S: That was a lot.

L: Yea.

S: You're always inviting me to events, but I can't go because I'm not twenty-one yet.

L: Yea, I know.

S: And it's like Gr...

L: Well, a lot of times, like you look twenty-one. I 'm not going to lie. As long as you're not drinking and stuff like that and if you just go they're not going to say anything.

S: Well that's nice. Then I'll actually bring my friends and stuff.

L: Yea, seriously, no if you go and if you just watch the show and you don't drink, just kind of drink water and stuff like that they won't care. Or you could even let me know and I'll let them know "look hey I have some friends coming that are under twenty-one their... but they’re not going to drink, they're just going to sit in the corner." You know, and a lot of the times they will.

S: I'll say, usually if you like let me know. It's definitely worth it for the fundraising too.

L: Yea.

S: What goes into getting ready for a performance?

L: My god...

S: I heard that Rupaul's makeup can take up to nine hours.

L: Yea... See, okay so. Oh my god, I'm just going to start from the beginning and go through. So usually, when I do drag, of course you got to take your shower. You got to shave parts of your body that are going to be exposed, so your face, your armpits, your chest, all that stuff. Then, after that you moisturize because makeup can dry your skin out. So, usually after I take a shower and shave and moisturize, I kind of let it sit for a little bit just, so the moisturizer goes away.

S: Set's in.

L: Set's in. And then I will play some music because I'm a person that I can't sit in silence. I kind of have to have music to kind of help me. I don't know why It's just been that way

S: Me too.

L: Yea. So, I play my music and then I roll my makeup bag out of all my makeup brushes. And then I grab my makeup which is a big box of all kinds of makeup.

S: Oh my!

L: Yea. So, then what you have to is decide how you want to do your makeup. You know, so a lot of queens will either do their makeup, you know, like their foundation first or whatever but I like doing, what I found out, you all have your own techniques because at first, I use to do the foundation and then eyes and then lips and all this stuff. So, I though, I was having trouble like when I put my eyes on I have like black under on my cheeks and then I have to like almost to start over because I would have to wipe off all of the foundation and then go back.

S: And layer it all back on.

L: Yes. So now, I do my eyebrows and my eyes first and then I do my foundation which... The eyebrows don't take very long because I just cover over my eyebrows. If I wanted to go more crazy with eyebrows I would have to glue them down.

S: Yea, draw them on pretty much.

L: Yea, and then draw them on which gluing eyebrows, they suck because you have to put like five layers on, comb them down, five layers on, comb them down... And then you have to pat them down with your concealer and all that stuff. And then the powder to set it.

S: To make it disappear.

L: Exactly. So, that's why I just draw them on, on top of my other eyebrows, you know I'll sometimes pluck half my eyebrow so that I can have more... Up higher whatever.

S: Do whatever you do.

L: Exactly. So, I'll do my eyebrows then do my eyes. The way I do is when I do like the cat eye or like the very crease and all that. You have to like slowly to draw them on and be patient because your lines have to be...

S: Sharp.

L: Sharp. They have to be pointed girl! So, so they are so... It's almost like you're literally an artist. Like you're painting a picture, but your lines have to be perfect and stuff like that. So, I make sure that I try to get perfect lines and stuff like that. Then, after your eyes, which that probably right there already took me about fifteen to twenty minutes maybe thirty minutes depending on how things go because you know sometimes it’s a bitch. Yea, so then you're like "god dammit!"

S: That one day you're just so shaky.

L: Yea and you're like "What the fuck!" And then you throw shit because you can't get your eyes. Yea, anyways, that’s just the beginning!

S: That's just the beginning!

L: Right! Right! Then you got to go through the whole other thing. So then after I do my eyes which is normally I do my cat eyes and then I color them in. So, all the black, you know. Then, I will do the crease, which you know makes you have, makes your eyes pop. That's more like it. So, then you draw your crease on and then you want to do your highlighting on your eyes, where you want it lighter, like in between here. Then after you do that, then you clean off your face where there was black dust. You know, like I had that problem before. So, you clean that up. Then, you take, you know, like I said, each queen has their own type of way of doing their makeup. Theirs thousands and thousands of ways. I put on a full underneath like just a...

S: Primer?

L: Foundation. Well, yeah, I forgot. Before all this, yes you put your primer on first. And then you do your makeup. I forgot about that. So, then it helps you.

S: I'm glad I know something about makeup.

L: Exactly. I was like wait I forgot my primer. No, yea, primer then eyes and eyebrows, and then I put a coat of foundation on of just like a skin tone color. And then I will take my lightest foundation, which I just use Miron stick, for like this is like for stage makeup. And then I'll take like the really light and I'll put where it's going to be highlight areas. And then I'll take the darker part of the foundation which is going to be your contour. So, you take the dark where you're going to be dark for your contour and you add it on. And then you blend to the Gods. Girl, you blend! You blend, blend, blend as much as you can to make sure you have no lines. There are some drag queens, like me, like I want like this white to show right here like a line.

S: Like Trixie Mattel has.

L: Exactly. I don't really necessarily want to blend that out. I've been told by some queens "You need to blend!" and I'm like but I don't want too. I was like Roxie Valentine; do you know who that is? Like she has that, you know, I'm like that kind of what I want but I still want to be beautiful just because I'm not going to do crazy makeup like them doesn't mean that I still can't have like an edge.

S: You're unique.

L: You know, yeah, it's my own way of doing my makeup!

S: Every drag artist is different.

L: Exactly! So anyways, so I'll leave that. I'll blend a lot of it in and then I'll leave that there. And then when that is there you have to put on your beige-rose powder. It's just loose powder that you put all over your face to set all the makeup. And I use a lot of that because the more you do because you're sweating and stuff it’s kind of, I don't know it helps create layers.

S: Keep it down.

L: Yea, exactly. So, that also helps you blend as well. When you start putting it on because before you put that on your face looks greasy. you're like "oh girl." And then you put that on. Then you start seeing Lady Luscious come out. Yea, you're like "OO girl! Yes!" So then once you put that on then I go back through and I will take my white, it's called clown white powder, and you put it under your eyes. Where you want highlighted more, you know. But, I'll put it under my eyes, my nose, a dot on my chin, and then here on my cheek again. And then you let it set. So, while it's setting, I'll go ahead and start doing some contouring. So, I'll take a darker powder makeup which is usually, I mean you can use like blush or anything technically. But, you just take a really dark powder and then you start contouring. So, you want your nose to be smaller, so I usually start with my nose first and then I'll do my cheeks because you want that, you know, definition tone. And then you want to do your neck, so your face looks smaller. So, you do your jaw line to your chin then you do up here in the corners of your bead because you want your forehead to be smaller. Which, I don't have that problem because my forehead is small. Like I already have feminine features, so I don't have to do a lot, but I still do some here just to make it, you know, so it blends in my hairline and stuff for the wigs. And then, once that's in I'll brush off my white of my powder after it's set. And then I will start blending the lines. So, like the nose which is will be just like a line you just start blending it in to all your makeup.

S: Blend to the Gods!

L: Yes! Blend to the Gods, you know what I mean? Yea, lines of that of the contour. And after the contour is done, then I do my blush. So, I usually put the blush on top of the contour and then put a little underneath here. And then after that I go back in and darken my black on my eyes if I get anything. And then do my lips, and then do the shimmer highlight. Like the Jefree Star sparkle cheeks, yes. So, and then after that is done you spray your setting spray and then that is it.

S: Drag!

L: Yep! And then you do your hair, your earrings, and put your body on.

S: All the good jazz. I love it. I'm going to have to do it one time. Just the one time.

L: Oh my god but the tucking and the putting the body on... Oh my god... Make sure you pee and go to the bathroom beforehand because you're not going to go for like hours. It sucks.

S: I just don't know if I could tuck.

L: It's hard but you can do it, you can fucking do it. If all these drag queens can tuck even with nine inches, girl, anyone can tuck.

S: If you don't mind this question it is: How do you identify in terms of your sex, gender, identity, and gender expression out of drag?

L: How do I identify?

S: Yes.

L: As a male, yep. As a boy! As a beautiful boy. And that's kind of also... So, I identify as male, you know outside of drag, but I will be accidentally misgendered a lot, you know, go to the gas station or whatever "Thanks ma'am" like this morning I had an eye doctor’s appointment and she was like "Ma'am what're you here for?" And she came closer and saw my chin hairs and she go "oh sorry..." and I was like, you know, that doesn't bother me like it doesn't bother me at all, you know? Because being in drag you're called girl and all this stuff, anyway, it bothered me a lot in high school I think because I didn't come out as gay and I wasn't like into fem.

S: Like your shield was up.

L: Exactly, that shield was up. But, yea.

S: That answers that one. Look at you hit more than one at once.

L: Look at that!

S: How does drag influence your sex and gender identities. You already before did drag, you said...

L: Yes. And so, I meant I'm still gay like I guess I don't want to, I don't know how to explain that.

S: Well this one may help it out: How does drag influence how you think about gender? As a whole, not just one's self.

L: I mean, I would say yea, because you know then you start thinking... I felt bad for the women that have to like to wear this stuff so, you know, you start thinking more into the gender stuff and, you know, when you start trans and all this stuff, then you start understanding like, well then you start questioning yourself. Like, could I do this and, you know, I could wear women's stuff all day, I could possibly be trans but, you know, I think a part of it is, but I still like being a guy. So, that kind of helps me. But I respect, you know, how trans trans people and how women think and even as guys like how the guys think and stuff like that. So, it’s kind of made me, yeah, it’s kind of made me understand a lot of all kinds of gender in a way.

S: That's good. There's so much. Like I was telling you earlier there's just so much.

L: Yeah, even cross dressing like I could see how sexually because a lot of cross dressers do it for sexual reasons. I could see how like the silky fabrics and the stuff could be feeling sexual so and it makes you feel really sexy, I don't know how to explain it. Women's clothes do make you feel sexy. So, I could see how people really feel sexual, you know then again you think of like cross dressers and then you know everything else. But, I would never have sex in drag. That's just not me. I just couldn't do it. It's too hot, your makeup is nasty.

S: That's what I was thinking. You got a lot of makeup on. I just can't imagine it all on.

L: Well right, and then you got padding like what the fuck are you going to do with the padding? You know you look like those beautiful women in padding and makeup and as soon as you start having sex things fall off, you're like "Hold on my boob is coming off. And my butt is going to pop out." So, you're like now you're just a man in makeup, you know what I mean?

S: How has drag impacted or changed you?

L: It kind of goes back to the question...

S: That's what I thought about too.

L: It just helped me be more vocal and helped me stand up for what is right and for what is wrong. If I see someone getting picked on or if I feel like something is not right, I feel like I'm more vocal now, where I could like to stand my ground and be like that's not right you know? So, I mean that's the only thing I think of like that's changed me, just to be the better of bother worlds.

S: Better person, better drag artist. How do you define drag?

L: I define drag as just it is an art form. I think your mind actually changes too when you first think of drag. And it's also culture because, you know, when I thought of drag when I first started it was men dressing up as women for fun. Now it's not necessarily men dressing up as women for fun, it started becoming an art form. You know like, anybody is doing drag, even women are doing drag. You know, transgender, you know, people that were in drag for a while thought like they were more trans, so they'll turn trans. Well, drag

S: Experience drag.

L: Yeah, experience drag. So, and they still do perform and stuff like that. So, I think it just depends on who you are but as for me I view drag as just like an art form. A way for someone to express their other half I guess of their deep inner self.

S: I like that. Anytime you ask for a definition it's going to be different, and that's what I like, because at the beginning of the semester we get asked "What is drag to you?" And like a lot of us say the same answers. Some people in the class have never seen Rupaul's before and entering the class like "Oh drag is just... It's a fun style of art or clothing or cross dressing" and it's not just that. There's so much behind it.

L: Because if you look at each drag queen, you know like mine's a little sluttier and all this stuff but then there's other drag queens that like are like so like monster. You know they do like deep...

S: Like Yvie!

L: Yea! Like Yvie.

S: She has a very different style. I think of Sasha Velour thinking about that too.

L: Yea, just like different and just like crazy. And she's actually from Illinois, I thought that was cool. From where I grew up and I'm like "Oh! bitch."

S: You've pretty much answered this: What do you think the purpose of drag is?

L: Yea, to express yourself, your inner self.

S: And then this one: Do you think drag is sexual? You're a sexy queen.

L: Yea, so I like, it's kind of weird but I like teasing like straight men or men who are attracted to more fem things. I found it sexual, but I would never have sex in drag, but I do find it sexual when you like tease with them and you know joke with them and flirt with them, you know like that kind of thing. Like there was a guy at this last show, like he was just so like he wouldn't take his eyes off of me and I think he liked maybe fem or maybe drag queens. Because there are some gay guys out there that actually just like drag queens. So, it was just fun teasing. You know, you'll rub his face or something like that. It was just fun. I don't know. You flirt.

S: We bring up stuff like that too like why do straight men, even like towards gay people, still have a stereotype against them but they want to go to a drag performance and still sexualize and look up to the drag queen even though quote-unquote it's the same thing as you being a homophobe towards anyone on the street or in that club. But the drag queen is performing and... it's so interesting.

L: There's a lot. And that's funny because when you become a drag queen you also become almost like an instant celebrity in a way because so many people see your and if they like it, they want to follow you. I mean you don't understand how many inboxes of sexual things I've got just out of the blue. "Man, you're hot." Dick pic, you know. Or like "Would you ever do this" or a lot of people even think I'm a woman. When my profile says his profile... his this... you know, and it says drag queen on there. And a lot of guys, you know, if you call them out... You know I'm a drag queen. I'm actually a man. "Oh man I didn't know that" but I think they wanted that secret like something like randevu. It's interesting, it's very interesting. And I'm thinking I wonder if like Lady Gaga gets stuff like this, you know what I mean? Mariah Carey, does she even get dick pics like out of the blue?

S: She rejects them.

L: Right!

S: They have people for that at that point.

L: That's true, yea because especially if you're famous. But you know like it's different like you become a celebrity but it's not like that, it more sexualizing. Something. I don't know. It's interesting.

S: Even though there's controversy about Rupaul's and all that like minor things... How do you feel about Rupaul's Drag Race?

L: It's definitely helped open up drag queens as far as accepting other types I guess you could say. So, you know like, instead of just having pageant queens you could just have like queens that just like fundraising queens, you know. They're not spending money to do pageants or stuff like that, you know, but they're still doing drag. Like Yvie Oddly, just like odd things. I think it helps bring out people. I think... was one of the first peoples who was kind of weird in the drag. "weird." that brought a whole different aspect and she actually won so I think it helped open up the spectrum of drag that's out there.

S: Compared to just being the woman and sexual.

L: Exactly. Right.

S: Because she, I know Yvie Oddly came out like a T-Rex once.

L: Exactly. So, it's like, you know it's not, yea, it opened it up where, you know, like I said, when you're growing up you think of drag queens competing, men dressed in women's clothing, like that kind of thing. So, it's definitely opened it up a lot. I know a lot of people may not like it because it also helps take away from queens that are in town, you know what I mean? So, a lot of people will start following drag, Rupaul's Drag Race, but not necessarily tip the queens that are in bars and stuff like that too. So, it's both kind of, you know I agree with, you know it’s kind of cool she opened it up but then still feel like people need to tip their queens at bars and not pay three hundred dollars to buy a ticket to go see a Rupaul's Drag Race, you know what I mean? Or star.

S: Yea, because I know there was just a show last month of Rupaul's star's coming by.

L: The roast show.

S: Yea, something like that, I know it had Latrice Royale, Manila Luzon.

L: So, it was a bunch of them.

S: Yea, and those are a lot of like more way famous queens. Oh, Monet Xchange was there too. If you could change one thing about drag, the drag scene, or the drag community, what would it be and why?

L: I think just to be more accepting of everybody, you know. I think a lot of people when they, a lot of queens when they do drag for a long time and they start becoming really influential in the community, I think they forget the people starting out at the very bottom have a hard time. And I think a lot of queens forget that they were in that position at one time. So, they just need to, you know, open up a little bit and accept and even help, you know. And I know the younger generation coming up are a little more emotional, you know?

S: It's true.

L: It's very true. And it's hard to be that person to kind of look into someones eyes and you know be like I understand, you know, sorry you're feeling that way type of thing, but I think we just need to open our minds and accept and be more helpful instead of saying, you know...

S: I've made it to this point you can figure it out.

L: Yea, exactly. So, you know it's almost like I know it's all free and stuff, you know, it's not like a job. It's almost like going to a job and saying, "Okay you do your own thing." Good luck if you make if not you're fired. So, it'd be awesome if you just had like kind of like help each other, you know. Be sister's that we are and help one another.

S: That's nice.

L: But that's just who I am though, that's just who I am so...

S: The hippie inside.

L: Yea, the hippie inside.

S: What do you think are some misconceptions people have about drag? We kind of hit on this too.

L: Yea, just, I don't know, misconceptions that everyone's a bitch! When no, not every drag queen is bitchy and crazy. But, I don't know, yeah, I just think everyone thinks all the queens are kind of like the same. You know what I mean? And they're not. Everyone is different in their own style and own way. So, because I'll even hear someone saying " Oh, I don't want to go to a drag show. It's all the same stuff." It's like no, it's not. People are different and drag queens are different. You got different things and stuff like that.

S: At Attitudes they got drag kings too that they call out, so you see the drag kings perform, and I think that's really cool.

L: Exactly. And then bioqueens, well I think they just like to be called queens now?

S: We say bioqueens in class.

L: Do you say bioqueens? Okay, because I know there for a while they didn't like the term bioqueen and I can't remember what they, I think they were just called queens or something.

S: It would probably be around there.

L: Anyway, so yeah, bioqueens.

S: And then I think the last one I'm going to ask you, because we've hit on this before, it's about your social identity and all that. If you choose one thing you want people to know about or learn about drag what would it be?

L: To just understand the person. Like that's doing drag. And being open about it. And just, I guess just understand that not everyone is the same. I don't know. I would just say, you know, just be open. I don't know. I mean I want them to see that, you know drag queens have always been here even way back when...

S: Yea, in like in theater and all that.

L: In plays and guys dressed as women, you know, and even for fun, I mean people would probably wear women's things and start laughing. And in a way that's a type of drag, you know. So, I think people just need to open their eyes and I don't know, just accept... accept us for who we are, which it is. And what was the other part of that question?

S: What would you want people to learn or know about?

L: So, and just to learn, yeah, just learn to be respectful to drag queens. I think that would be good.