

ABSTRACT

STAGING THE CRITICAL FUNCTIONS OF IDENTITY: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF LATINA DRAG QUEENS

The Latina drag performer's body represents dominant cultural identities scripted to her body, but her performances symbolize a means to disidentify from them. Race, sexuality, gender, and class are clearly demonstrated through Latina drag performances, which represent how the performance of identity can deconstruct the dominant binaries placed on the body. Through ethnographic research and unstructured interviews, this study reveals that Latina Drag performances empower femininity, and in turn, Brown masculinity is deconstructed, revealing that Brown identity can be manipulated through performance of identity. These findings broaden theatrical works of Butler (1988, 1990, 1993), Inda (2000), and Hall (1997) by extending the understanding of identity constructions within dominant norms. The Latina drag queens' performances surface a theoretical perspective that the performance of identity can be a chosen performance, which allows for individual agency to (re)articulate identity constructions within dominant hegemonic and heteronormative norms.

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