

(Ava) Clark
UWTSD
Changemakers
Luci Attala
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Proposal

My research will explore, through a New Materialities lens, the language queer Gen Z individuals use to conceptualize the *self*, and the extent to which this unconsciously parallels the move away from anthropocentric thought and theory in the age of the Anthropocene.

There is something intimately familiar between the language used in the queer community when describing identity, and the ideas explored within the New Materialities movement. Both of which follow themes of fluidity, flux, the abstract, and aesthetic in order to better understand material connections within and outside of the human (Barad, 2003; Ingold, 2011). For queer people, this can emerge when moving away from the rigid social norms and expectations that dominate cisgender-heterosexual spaces.

Queer community spaces can often inspire critical thought on what is considered socially acceptable, and following these lines of questioning tends to organically accelerate an acute awareness of the *self* in relation to the *other*. Despite these occurrences being solidly based in subjective realities, the overlap is significant enough to influence the materials we choose to present ourselves with and aesthetic choices, from clothes to music to hobbies, become intrinsically linked with our perception of collective and personal identity. Incidentally, this simulates similar lines of thought followed in New Materialism.

Though I will primarily be building off of Morton (2013, 2016), Ingold (2011), and Barad's (2003, 2007) work, considering their work heavily inspired my interest in the topic of Materiality in the age of the Anthropocene, I will also be utilizing other theorists' work when applicable. As I go through the process of collecting my own evidence, I plan on expanding on my conclusions and overall thoughts regarding the relevant topics with the help of some of their bigger picture,

complex theories to strengthen and place perspective on my findings, such as that of Morton's *Hyperobjects* (2013).

My goal for this project is to contribute to the discussion of how we conceptualize the *self* in relation to the *other* by contextualizing these elements within the Gen Z queer perspective, particularly in consideration with how the New Materialities Movement pushes us to re-discover these terms.

I will be using two types of ethnographic methodology for this. This includes an auto ethnographic account of my experiences in queer spaces and informal conversations with a few individuals in the demographic I am focusing on for this project. For the conversational aspect, I plan to begin with a set of questions that allows for some specific subjectivity, and then letting the conversation flow from there. The questions will look similar to the following: "How would you describe your understanding of identity? What about your own perception of yourself? What does that look like?"

I believe this to be relevant because cultivating this line of thought helps to build and recognize community, which is especially important when placing human existence into such context requires coming face to face with harsh realities.

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