

Introductions: Womanhood & Capital

The drag king workshop doesn't begin with dressing or making up our face to look like a man, but in becoming aware of the cultural orthopedics that constructs everyday femininity, and by disidentifying from the normative nature of politically assigned gender. (Preciado, 366)

In personal reflection of your own constructions of everyday femininity and gender performance: When you *feel* most/least like a “woman”? When do you feel the most/least treated or viewed by others like a “woman”? When/how do you express or perform your femininity versus masculinity? During Bottici’s WHAP! lecture, she speaks specifically on women engaging in anarcha-feminisms. As an AFAB non-binary person working in queer theory, I initially reacted to this specific identification of women as a reinforcement of the binary, another example of feminisms excluding trans and enby experiences. In Bottici’s text “Anarchafeminism,” she expands on this choice to use “woma/en” as a signifier:

... with queer theory path-breaking work aimed at dismantling the gender binary “men” and “women,” it is important to vindicate once again the need for a form of feminism that opposes the oppression of people who are perceived as women and who are discriminated precisely on that basis. Notice here that I am using the term “woman” in a way that includes all types of women: female women, male women, feminine women, masculine women, lesbian women, transwomen, intersex women, queer women, and so on and so forth. (Bottici, “Anarchafeminism”)

Bottici’s use of “woma/en” as a signifier is seemingly queer in the inclusion of all individuals who identify as a woman. The focus on people “perceived as women” employs a focus on gender performativity, expression, or performance of femininity as representative of being viewed as a woman. However, Bottici’s ultimate goal in an anarcha-feminism is to dismantle these connections between perception/performance versus gender identity.

Questioning the coloniality of gender means also questioning the primacy of the visual: it is by seeing bodies that we say: “here is a woman!” or “that is a man!.” But it is also within such a visual register that we have to operate to question such hegemonic and heteronormative views of womanhood and thus open new paths toward subverting them. (Bottici, “Anarchafeminism”)

Here is where I see Bottici’s queer approach to “woma/en” and anarcha-feminism as demonstrated through queer drag king practice—a performative deconstruction of femininity, “questioning the coloniality of gender,” which serves as a practice-based aesthetic disruption of what it means to (not) be a woman. Bodies that subvert the visual “this is what a wo/man looks like” or “this is what gender looks like at all,” queer drag, specifically kings and non-queens (genderfucks, clubkids, monsters, etc...), enable a liberation from hegemonic womanhood and capital.