

# Abstracts

## of the Tennovation Research Symposium at the 2021 LGBT+ College Conference Research and Partnership Presentations

Volume 6 • April 2021

### 2021 TENNOVATION RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

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**A Virtual Event hosted by  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
Thursday, April 1, 2021**

### REGISTRATION

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*mtsu.edu/LGBTplusCC*  
Please register to help with  
conference planning.

### WELCOME

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The Tennovation Research symposium highlights the value of research and collaboration consistent with the Tennovation mission statement—  
*Cooperation, Collaboration, Success!*

### SESSIONS

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*See Zoom links in the program*

Welcoming Remarks: LaToya Eaves,  
University of Tennessee-Knoxville  
9:15 am-9:35 am

Gore Center Archive Spotlight  
9:45 am-10:45 am

Tennovation Keynote  
11:00 am-12:00 pm

Poster Presentations  
12:30 pm-2:30 pm

### THANKS

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Thanks to all of the presenters who have generously offered their time and expertise to share their projects with us today.

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### 2021 LGBT+ COLLEGE CONFERENCE

*All Identities—Reclaiming Our Roots*  
[mtsu.edu/LGBTplusCC](http://mtsu.edu/LGBTplusCC)



**GORE CENTER ARCHIVE SPOTLIGHT**

**Thursday, April 1, 2021, 9:45 am**

**Preserving Our Stories.** Presented by Sarah Calise (she/her/hers), *Middle Tennessee State University Gore Center Archive.*

The tale of people engaged in a movement exists, in part, in the ephemera produced by people living in the moment. The photographs, flyers, newspapers and magazines, pamphlets, planning documents, and bits of history tell the story of the struggles and the achievements of a community. The Gore Center at Middle Tennessee State University holds the archive from Nashville's OutCentral that documents the LGBT+ movement in Nashville from the 1980s to the present, focusing on efforts to organize and build a space for people to gather. This presentation will describe these holdings along with MTSU's LGBT+ history dating back to the 1960s, and share some key pieces that tell the story of these important communities.

*Sponsored by Connect*

**TENNOVATION KEYNOTE**

**Thursday, April 1, 2021, 11:00 am**

**Killer Hidden in Plain Sight: The Leading Cause of Death and Disease among LGBTQ Tennesseans.** Jacob Black (he/him/his), *Tennessee Department of Health.*

Despite fifty years of research and millions of dollars spent on treatment, over 1,000 people in Tennessee's LGBTQ community continue to die from tobacco use every year. In this talk, Jacob Black will present the latest data on tobacco use disparities among the LGBTQ population in Tennessee and discuss key factors driving the community's higher tobacco use. The presentation will also highlight resources available in Tennessee to help tobacco users quit and for friends and family to support their quit attempts. At the end of the talk, attendees will be invited to discuss the ways in which they can engage community members, organizations, and leaders to change social norms and subsequently close the gap in tobacco use among the LGBTQ community in Tennessee.

*Sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, Inc. and Middle Tennessee State University College of Behavioral and Health Sciences*

RESEARCH SESSION

Thursday, April 1, 2021, 12:30 pm

• POSTERS •

*Sponsored by Focus*

(1001)

**The Role of Family Relationships in the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young Adults.** Kate Worley (she/her/hers), *Trevecca Nazarene University.*

The sexual minority population is at a higher risk for mental health problems than the general population and often face victimization due to their sexual orientation. Though sexual minority persons are at a greater risk for mental health issues, family and social support often lead to better outcomes for this population. When family support is missing or rejection occurs, sexual minorities often face heightened risks for adverse health outcomes in comparison to persons with support. Additionally, a family's functioning, specifically their level of closeness and their ability to express emotions in a healthy manner likely correlates with better mental health outcomes for sexual minorities.

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(1002)

**The Inkblot Project.** Ray A. White, Ed.S., LPC/MHSP/AS (he/him/his), *Whitewood Counseling & Consultation.*

The Inkblot Project is a work in progress involving the collection of stories and tattoo images from individuals who identify as having been a victim of bullying and/or personal trauma, and who subsequently acquired a tattoo that speaks to that experience. It is ultimately about stories written in flesh resulting in empowerment.

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(1003)

**Social Inequity in Memories of Shakespeare: The Fetishizing Power of the Globe Theatre.** Reagan Yessler (they/them/their), *University of Tennessee, Knoxville.*

William Shakespeare's works are widely regarded as the pillar of English literature in Western society. An understanding of Shakespearean literature is a form of symbolic or cultural capital, and a lack thereof signals that a person is uncultured, uneducated. However, in his own time, Shakespeare was not so highly regarded. To fully understand the evolution that Shakespeare and his works have undergone, one must consider the modern memory politics that reify the contemporary interpretation of Shakespeare in the Western world at *lieux de memoire* (places of memory), which are shaped by the tumultuous sequence of historical movements that formed Shakespeare's image. The Globe Theatre is a powerful place where the writer's memory is actively curated to cement his legacy into a cohesive narrative. This narrative is selective by nature, unable to include all aspects of Shakespeare's history. To fetishize means that a person, idea, or narrative, is first objectified, then given power as a fixed object of fascination. This fetishization also solidifies its reputational politics. As a fetishized object, any nuance is stripped away, and we are discouraged from understanding the inner workings of how

it is reified and normalized. Because of this fetishization, a simple, unproblematic narrative is created. My main research question concerns the fetishization of Shakespeare, and the role that the Globe Theater plays in retelling, performing, and normalizing this fetish. What aspects of the Globe allow this fetishization to take place? How and to what extent does The Globe fetishize Shakespeare to create one narrative? To what degree is the modern Western gender and sexuality binary—the strict division of male versus female based on genitalia, and the attraction to the ‘opposite’ gender—upheld or critiqued? How is race and class portrayed at The Globe? I address these questions in a discourse analysis that explores how the Globe’s Research Bulletins, Such Stuff podcast, YouTube channel, and social media work to create and spread this fetish, as well as how this fetish both critiques and upholds ideas of gender identity, sexuality, class stereotypes, and racial biases. I conclude this thesis with suggestions on how the Globe might move forward to incorporate more diverse views to leverage this fetish as a means of social progression rather than repression.

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(1004)

**Racial Justice Interview Project.**

Roberta Chevrette (she/her/hers), *Middle Tennessee State University*.

Dr. Roberta Chevrette, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and WGST faculty at MTSU, and the students in her UH 3500 Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar “Rhetoric and the Racialized Other” are conducting a study about the wave of

recent protests in the United States and globally that has drawn attention to the Black Lives Matter movement, the systemic racism Black people continue to face, and issues of racial justice and police reform. As rhetoric, race, and social justice researchers, we are interviewing persons who participated in the protests, and we are very interested in hearing about what motivated you to participate, what the experience was like for you, and how/if the protests have impacted your attitudes about race, racism, and/or racial justice. Stop by during the poster presentation session if you’d like to learn more about the study and how to participate! (IRB Protocol ID: 21-2118 7v)

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(1005)

**It Might Get Better: Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students in the Classroom and Beyond.**

Dr. Shane A. McCoy (they/them/their), *Middle Tennessee State University*.

Traditionally, educational environments have been framed within a heteronormative paradigm; in other words, “...curriculum, campus activities, and individual interactions taking place...assumes all individuals on campus are heterosexual” (Preston and Hoffman 2015, p. 67). Such heteronormative assumptions allow university culture, especially programs and policies targeting student-success and retention, to remain unchallenged (Preston and Hoffman 2015, p. 66). Although MTSU has created several sources for supporting LGBTQIA+ students on campus (e.g., SafeZone Training and various organizations), only a handful of academic courses

explicitly focus on LGBTQIA+ experiences and perspectives. How might university campuses such as MTSU's cultivate LGBTQIA+ students' sense of belonging and well-being? What unique challenges do LGBTQIA+ students encounter and how might these challenges be navigated by faculty? (Martin et al. 2018) Finally, what role might faculty play in facilitating LGBTQIA+ students' sense of well-being? (Linley et al. 2016) This presentation addresses these central questions and provides practical tools for participants to help support LGBTQIA+ students in the classroom and beyond it.

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**(1006)**

**Inhibition of Lesbian and Gay Stereotypes for Story Characters.**

Amber Williams (she/her/hers) & David Copeland (he/him/his), *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*.

People tend to remember stereotypical information about others better than non-

stereotypical information (Fyock & Stangor, 1994), but limited research has examined this effect with information about LGBT characters in narratives (Bellezza & Bower, 1981; Clark & Woll, 1981; McGann & Goodwin, 2007; Snyder & Uranowitz, 1978). This research suggests that, instead of genuinely remembering stereotypical information better, participants tended to guess stereotypical answers. We conducted an experiment where participants read a short story about a gay or heterosexual couple and answered both recall and recognition questions about the character's traits. In contrast to previous studies, our experiment suggests that heterosexual young adults tend to engage in stereotype inhibition, avoiding the use of gay and lesbian stereotypes. This information can be used for understanding how stereotyping occurs and developing interventions to reduce stereotype use.

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