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“Supergay: A Queer Analysis of the CW’s *Supergirl*”

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Introduction

One of the more famously recognizable superhero symbols in popular culture is the symbol for Superman. A large ‘S’ surrounded by a blocked diamond has splashed across the front page of comic books, multiple television shows, and seen in movies throughout history. But with this symbol comes more than that of recognizing the emblem belonging to the Man of Steel. This symbol is better known as the crest for the House of El, where the ‘S’ icon translates to the words “Stronger Together” in Kryptonian and represents a symbol for hope to the people of Earth (*Arrowverse Wiki*). When we think of this symbol, comic book lovers and cinematic goers alike think of the associated phrase of “Truth, Justice, and the American way”. We think of Kryptonians in blue body suits, red capes, and a large ‘S’ on their bullet proof chests. We think of Superman (Kal-El) and his cousin Supergirl (Kara Zor-El). But what we don’t normally associate with the symbol is the term ‘*queer*’ and we should.

When the television network CW introduced the blonde, blue-eyed, superheronie Supergirl to the Arrowverse (a shared universe of the superhero television shows produced by the CW) in 2015, we were introduced to yet another story of a young person’s journey to become a superhero. And as we watched the pilot episode of *Supergirl*, we as an audience couldn’t help but see the parallels between Kara (Zor-El) Danvers “coming out” as Supergirl as being inherently queer, and this wasn’t without reason. To better understand why Kara’s story can be read as a queer text, we must first dive further into the origin stories of the other superheroes in the Arrowverse in chronological order.

The first superhero show produced by the CW that belongs in this shared universe is *Arrow* (2012 – present). When we first meet the star of the show, Oliver Queen, he has been found by his family after been lost at sea for five years on an abandoned island. When the audience is introduced to this character we quickly learn that Oliver has already donned the green hood of the Arrow long before he is returned home. In this case, Oliver was forced to become the Arrow because of his circumstances, not by choice. As an audience, we see this through a series of flashbacks that covers his experiences from the missing five years of his life. Thus Oliver was already an established vigilante before the audience learns of his identity back at Starling City (*Arrowverse Wiki*). We move on to the next television series that belongs to this shared universe with the show *The Flash* (2014 – present). Barry Allen, a character previously introduced in *Arrow*, stars as a speedster superhero in his own spin-off show. What is important about Barry Allen's transformation into the superhero the Flash is that he was given access to his powers of super speed through a laboratory accident involving chemicals reacting to a lightning strike. And thus, Barry Allen is gifted with powers from the Speed Force and changed into a meta-human (*Arrowverse Wiki*).

By comparing Kara Danvers back story to those of her fellow supers, it becomes increasingly clear to the audience that Supergirl's existence was not predetermined before the narrative of the show, nor was her existence accidental. Rather Kara Zor-El was literally “born this way”, in that she was born and raised (up until the young age of thirteen) on her home planet, Krypton. It is only when Kara arrives on Earth, after the Krypton is destroyed, that she discovers that her alien physiology allows her to naturally gifted with superpowers. It is during the show's pilot episode that we learn that she has been hiding her “true self”, or rather her alien powers, until a plane crash allows Kara to use her powers to save the passengers (and her sister

who is on board said vehicle) and become “outed” as Supergirl (*Arrowverse Wiki*). The entire premise of the show centers on alien origins, masquerading as a human who later leads a dangerous double life as she embraces her true identity once she is on Earth with the help of her community of friends, family, and lovers. Kara Danvers chooses to “out” herself to society when she becomes Supergirl and thus is seen as queer in the eyes of society.

For this essay I am I will continue to examine Kara Danvers’ origin story as Supergirl as a queer text by analyzing Kara’s “coming out” story as Supergirl, the manifestations and implications of Kara as her three separate identities (Kara Danvers, Kara Zor-El, and Supergirl) and how they interact with society, how Supergirl is interpreted as queer as an “other” figure, and the fandom’s interpretation of her interactions with the other characters as questionably queer. As a member of the LGBTQA+ community, I will use my experiences as well as a general knowledge of the community to analyze Supergirl through a queer lens. It should also be noted that I am only commenting on the show up to the end of Season two (as the entirety of Season three has yet to be released).

I will be using three theorists to support my argument of Supergirl as a queer narrative and an “other” figure: Tom Boellstorff, Susan Bordo, and Judith Butler. While I will be explaining how I will be implementing their theories more in the main part of this essay to its corresponding topic, I will now give an overview of what parts of each theorist I will be using for this essay. For Boellstorff, I am using his book, *The Gay Archipelago*, to explain that since Boellstorff’s believes that external forces help define who you are, Kara heavily relies on society and her peers perception of herself to identify as Supergirl. The second theorist I will use during this essay is Susan Bordo’s text *Unbearable Weight*. I will be using her text as a guide to analyzing Supergirl’s imagery (physical body, gender performance, and “otherness”) to explain

Supergirl as queer in the sense of being different from the norm, rather than queer referring to sexuality. Along with Bordo's critiques on Supergirl's appearance I will be using Judith Butler's work *Subversive Bodily Acts* to compare a drag queen's performance of gender with Kara's performance as her three identities: Kara Danvers, Kara Zor-El, and Supergirl.

“Coming Out” as Supergirl

The CW's *Supergirl* which originally aired on television in 2015 and is currently on its third season is about an alien named Kara Zor-El, cousin to Superman. Kara lives a double life as both Kara Danvers, who is personal assistant to the CEO turned up-and-coming reporter, and Supergirl, who is National City's very own superhero. While Supergirl is quickly accepted as a superhero in her own community, we as an audience see her journey from quiet and shy Kara Danvers to the Girl of Steel, Supergirl. This acceptance and transition from citizen to hero is a direct parallel to a queer “coming out” narrative. When the term “coming out” is used in terms of queerness, the Merriam-Webster dictionary describes this phrase as meaning “to openly declare one's homosexuality to society” (“Come Out”). In case for Kara Danvers, we can compare her “coming out” to society as Supergirl, as similar to a queer “coming out” narrative. So much so that in the pilot show, there is a scene between Kara and her best friend Winn in which she tells him she has a big secret (that she has superpowers) and he thinks that she is “coming out” to him as gay.

Kara: Okay, um, Winn, I'm going to tell you something about me that only three people in my life know. Can I trust you?

Winn: Yeah, yeah, of course.

Kara: Good. Um, I just I really want someone to be excited for me. And I, um right, how do uh, there's something about me that for most of my life, I've run from it. But last night, I embraced who I am and I don't want to stop.

Winn: Oh, my God, you're a lesbian. Oh, Kara, that's why you're not into me. This is, this is great news!

Kara: No. I'm not gay! I'm... I'm her! *SIGHS* The woman who saved the plane (“Supergirl/‘Pilot’”)!

This conversation between the two friends was written as a direct nod to the LGBTQA+ community since the phrasing used by Kara is similar to a “coming out” narrative, even down to her nervous behavior of stuttering her words and her movement of pacing on the rooftop of CatCo World Wide Media during her confession is the show’s writers acknowledging typical “coming out” tropes seen in such scenes. This commonly found narrative is also seen in the case of Alex Danvers (Kara’s adoptive sister) confronting her about showing her powers in public for the first time. In the following conversation between sisters you can easily read the text as having a similar story to that of “coming out” as homosexual in society.

Kara: I almost forgot how to fly. Well, not so much how, but more, more how it feels, like Scared, but good scared. Like, like that moment right before you kiss someone for the first time. And now, now it's like I'm not sure what comes next. Or maybe I am sure and I'm just afraid of what it means. And if it means what I think it means.

Alex: What were you thinking? (SCOFFS) You exposed yourself. To the world. You're out there now, Kara. Everyone will know about you and you can't take that back.

Kara: I don't want to (“Supergirl/‘Pilot’”).

Alex’s response to Kara’s exposure as Supergirl is a reaction commonly seen in the

queer community after someone announces that they something other than heterosexual. This scene is a direct parallel to a queer narrative, which is important since in Season two of the show, there is an entire story arch involving Alex “coming out” as a lesbian (“Supergirl/‘Changing’”). Alex’s embracing of her sexuality is portrayed in such a way that when she “comes out” to her sister, we as an audience can see that this scene is structure almost exactly like how Kara’s acceptance of her new identity as Supergirl. Knowing all of this, we can conclude Kara’s embracing of her Supergirl identity is scripted to be seen as a queer narrative, while Kara is hegemonically “straight” character, Supergirl is an undeniably a queer character, and that Kara has multiple identities that are presented within society.

Confirming Identity Through Others

Kara is an interesting character within the show *Supergirl*, not because she is the lead, but that how Kara acts and how she identifies as is determined not by her own choices, but by whom she is around and the community setting she is in. Boellstorff identifies this phenomenon by stating that how we identify as and how we act is determined by an outside source or external force, such as a community space. This can be seen in the following quote from Boellstorff’s book *The Gay Archipelag*. “The archipelago metaphor permits understanding selfhood and sociality as not possessing sharp external boundaries, yet characterized by islands of difference” (Boellstorff, 7). It is this external force of her community and the people she interacts with that define who Kara identifies and acts as in society as in that she has three different identities: Kara Danvers, Kara Zor-El, and Supergirl.

How Kara identifies in persona while in her community can be place on a spectrum of Kara Danvers (human civilian), Kara Zor-El (alien and Last Daughter of Krypton), to Supergirl (superhero of National City). If we view her identity on this spectrum we can infer that Kara’s

close friends and family members fall in the middle, or rather Kara can truly act as herself (Kara Zor-El) without feeling the need to hide her superpowers, nor her secret identity. Anyone who works at CatCo World Wide Media (Kara's place of employment) would be on the left, in that Kara would only act as human, non-powered, reporter Kara Danvers. And then there are people with whom would be one more than one place on this scale. Take the character of Lena Luthor, for example. This woman in her mid-twenties is the younger sister of the notorious Lex Luthor, and she is also the CEO of L-Corp. When Kara interacts with Lena she portrays herself as either Kara Danvers or as Supergirl. But there are times when she would "slip up", such as her famed quote, "I flew here... One a bus" ("Supergirl/'Welcome to Earth'") in response to Lena's inquiry for a parking voucher, in which the character she is trying to act as on the spectrum is moved between two personas for herself.

Kara's multiple personalities also conflicts with her interactions with her love interests. During Season two we are introduced to an alien (Daxomite), Mon-El with who she later has a rather rocky relationship with for the remainder of the Season. Her relationship is stressed simply because, even though Mon-El is aware that she is both Kara Danvers and Supergirl, how Mon-El interacts with her while she portrays both personalities is very different, in that which persona she portrays is defined by his presence. He is very over protective of Supergirl, her neither supports nor trusts Supergirl's actions, and he doesn't want her to hurt herself, even though she is an established and successful superhero. At the same time, he treats Kara Danvers with more respect and as equals. How Kara is perceived by Mon-El in her different personas relies entirely on how Mon-El decides to treat her. As an outside influence, it is his choice on how he treats Kara which results in how Kara presents herself in his presence. This occurrence ultimately leads to the ending of their seemingly toxic relationship.

This concept of changing personas or actions based on your surrounds is how a queer individual often acts and/or reaffirms one's sexuality when faced with a queer friendly space verses a heteronormative society. *Supergirl* addresses this topic by showing scenes that mimic homosexuals passing as straight in society with scenes that have aliens trying to pass as human while in the city. This can be seen during Kara Danvers first major interview with Lena Luthor in the third episode of Season two. During their interview Lena explains that L-Corp has created an alien detection device that would force a "human-passing" alien to reveal oneself. Kara, who is hiding the fact that she is an alien, tampers with the device with her heat vision so as to not give away the fact that she is not human ("Supergirl/'Welcome to Earth'"). This can be directly paralleled by queer people changing their mannerisms or appearance to better fit in a place with more hegemonic ideals of heterosexuality as the norm. Likewise Boellstorff's concept of identity is influenced by our surroundings is shown again when we are introduced to a secret alien inclusive bar on the outskirts of National City (Boellstorff, 7). Since this bar caters exclusively to aliens, we can directly link this to a gay bar. This is confirmed in the following conversation in which Detective Maggie Sawyer is showing DEO Agent Alex Danvers the bar.

Maggie: Things aren't always what they appear, Danvers. Look around, what do you see?

Alex: People who've made questionable life choices.

Maggie: Look closer. *Alex reaches for her gun* Whoa, whoa, whoa, easy, easy.

Alex: What the hell is this place?

Maggie: It's a safe haven. Place for off-world'ers to hang out, have a drink. Not feel so alone for a minute ("Supergirl/'Welcome to Earth'").

By Maggie referring to the bar as a “safe haven” for aliens, we can see a direct link to a gay bar in that these are “safe zones” for non-heterosexuals. This can be later confirmed as thinly veiled queerness when you consider that we are introduced to the alien bar by two lesbians, an act that is no way coincidental.

Supergirl as an “other” figure

Supergirl stands apart from the other superheroes within the Arrowverse in that she is queer in the sense of an “other” figure. Since queer can have multiple meanings beside that of expressing homosexuality, I will now refer to Supergirl as queer in that she is an oddity or an outsider within her on community (Dictionary.com). If we take for granted that Kara Zor-El is the true persona of Kara, then we can assume that how Kara presents herself within the show differs depending on if she is performing her identity of either Kara Danvers or Supergirl. The characterizations of both Kara Danvers and Supergirl vary in terms of general appearance and physical performance. Kara’s performing of multiple personalities is not unlike that of a drag queen’s performance of their dual personalities and how they perform all aspects of their identities. Judith Butler’s work *Subversive Bodily Acts* comments on this concept of performing identities in drag culture.

The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed. But we are actually in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance (Butler, 379).

Just as drag queen perform all aspects their separate identities in terms of gender and physical portrayal, so too does Kara Zor-El’s performance of her identity changes whether she is Kara Danvers or Supergirl. The personas of Kara Danvers and Supergirl are, in the simplest of

terms, opposites. Rather these two characterizations of false identity act as double inversions of personalities, as both the far extremes, belonging to Kara Zor-El. Butler's comments on drag queens further explains this concept of identity inversion.

As its complex, [drag] is a double inversion that says, 'appearance is an illusion.' Drag says [Newton's curious personification] 'my outside' appearance is feminine, but my essence 'inside' [the body] is masculine.' At the same time it symbolizes the opposite inversion; "My appearance 'outside' [my body, my gender] is masculine by my essence 'inside' [myself] is feminine (Butler, 378-379).

It is clear on examining the two performed identities of Kara Zor-El, that Kara Danvers and Supergirl are mirror images of one another. This distinction is done purposely in the hopes that the average citizen/villains of National City never learn that Kara Danvers is in fact, Supergirl in disguise. This persona performance between her secret identity and her superhero identity can be separated into two different categories: Physical/aesthetic appearance and physical mannerism/body language.

The physical appearance between Kara Danvers and Supergirl is most noticeable when you consider how they dress within the show. By observing the costume chosen for Kara Danvers, as seen in Figure 1, we can see that she is dressed conservatively in pastel colors and multiple layers. This wardrobe choice is made to purposely contrast to the bold colored, form-fitting uniform worn by Supergirl, as seen in Figure 2. Another costuming choice is to have Kara's hair pulled back away from her face (in some tied back hairstyle) with the addition of lead lined glasses. Since the purpose of the wardrobe choices for Kara Danvers is to be unnoticeable compared to Supergirl's heroic appearance, the tied hairstyle and glasses help change how people perceive the shape of her face and thus help her hide her superhero identity.

The layered clothing, often some sort of blouse with sweater/sweater vest combo is purposely added to help hid her figure and muscle definition in her arms and torso. How her body is



Figure 1

imagination of body morphology has provided a blueprint for diagnosis and/or vision of social and political life” (Bordo, 165).

portrayed in both identities reflect our cultural expectations for both characters. This concept of gender conformity through portrayal of the body is seen in Susan Bordo’s work, *Unbearable Weight*, in the following passage:

“The body, as anthropologist Mary Douglas has argued, is a powerful symbolic form, a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies, and even metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed and thus reinforced through the concrete language of the body. The body may also operate as a metaphor for culture... an



Figure 2

As a young woman in the working in the field of mass media as a reporter, Kara Danvers is dressed in a way that confirms her femininity. Her wardrobe choices are “safe” in that they do not have bold colors, nor wild prints. Even the style of clothing (blouses with skirts, sweaters and sweater vests, summer dresses) worn by Kara Danvers throughout the show all conforms to the hegemonic ideals of portraying passive femininity through her fashion choices (“Supergirl/‘Pilot’”). And yet Supergirl still queer since as a female superhero she is socially expected to dress in a way that expresses

her femininity; a short skirt with tights that accents her slender legs and a tight fitting shirt that shows off her breasts. And yet because the Kevlar-like long sleeved blue shirt she wears for her uniform instead highlights her muscle definition on her arms and toned abdomen, which demonstrates her powerful physique and portrays her strength, which are seen as highly masculine traits. Likewise, Kara Danvers is never shown to wear high heels, which would make her appear as tall as she normally looks while wearing the boots in her Supergirl uniform. Thus thoroughly canceling out Supergirl's femininity as a superhero while further enforcing her "otherness" as a powerful woman (Bordo).

What is interesting to note is that Kara Danvers and Supergirl differ as personas in how they act around others and their mannerisms while performing their identities. As seen in Figure 1, Kara Danvers rarely is seen with a completely straight back, rather she is slouched over, leaning back, or her shoulders are skewed so that her stance is seen as passive and weak. However, as seen in Figure 2, Supergirl always has a straight posture with squared shoulders when standing, thus emitting strength through her body language. Her typically "hero pose" literally has her legs spread out, back straight, chin up, with her arms bent towards her hips with her hands in fists. Bordo would agree that her pose is a stance typically seen as masculine in that she is taking up space, her stance shows off her muscular body, and the straight back stance with her chin up is a dominant pose (Bordo).

We are no longer given verbal descriptions or exemplars of what a lady is or what femininity consists. Rather, we learn the rules directly through bodily discourse: through images that tell us what clothes, body shape, facial expression, movements, and behavior are required (Bordo, 170).

Here we can see that Supergirl contradicts the image of femininity. Women are expected to be more passive and acted upon instead of doing any action. And yet, Supergirl refutes this claim by literally flying to face the danger. While Kara Danvers is a passive character in that she is never seen confronting a situation, she rips off her outer clothing to reveal her transformation into Supergirl to charge at the dangerous threat. Kara further refutes typical body imagery as feminine by constantly being shown eating outrageous amounts of food. Bordo would say that Supergirl's maintenance of her slenderness contradictory to her eating habits is what distorts her perception as a feminine character. "The ideal of slenderness, then, and the diet and exercise regimens that have become inseparable from it offer the illusion of meeting, through the body, the contradictory demands of the contemporary ideology of femininity" (Bordo, 172). While her body remains slim and trim, she is portrayed as constantly eating food to compensate for all the calories she consumes through her superhero activities. However, instead of commenting on how she eats too much in terms of ruining her figure, she eats in order to gain the necessary energy and still maintains the fit body needed to fight the show's alien villains.

When observing Kara Danvers and Supergirl within society, we can see that Kara is queer, an oddity or "other figure", no matter which persona she portrays. That is because her identities are just that, an identity that is acted and played out depending on her surroundings. Kara Danvers can never truly fit in with society because she is an alien in a predominantly human space. Thus she often "slips-up" on her acting of Kara Danvers, as seen on the previously mentioned comment to Lena Luthor that she flew to her interview on a bus ("Supergirl/'Welcome to Earth'"). Likewise, Supergirl will never truly be accepted in society since she is an alien, an almost god-like figure, within the community when compared to National City's human civilians. Supergirl also forgets to play up her non-biased persona when

situations involve Kara Danvers' friends. Thus when Kara Zor-El has to act as one of these two personas, they will always be seen as queer within her own community.

Fandom's Observation of SuperCorp

Understanding Kara as a queer character makes us acknowledge the existence of the fandom born femslash (the pairing of two females in a non-canon homosexual relationship)

relationship between Kara Danvers/Supergirl and Lena Luthor (fanlore.org). While their characters are treated as platonic friends on the show since Lena's introduction in Season two, significant part of the *Supergirl* fandom reads the chemistry between these two strong women as queer. With the fandom's support of this relationship, known as "shipping/ship", of Kara Danvers a.k.a. Supergirl and Lena Luthor, CEO of L-Corp, the fandom combined their titles to create SuperCorp (fanlore.org)! This power-couple is seen throughout the role playing of Cosplay, fandom fiction websites such as FanFiction and Archive of Our Own, and (as seen in Figure 3) SuperCorp is displayed in fan art all over the internet from Reddit to DeviantArt.



Figure 3. "Corporate Portrait": A SuperCorp DeviantArt work by GLPing

The question becomes how valid is SuperCorp in the eyes of the fandom? While these two characters are never together romantically in the show canonically, the fandom continues to support SuperCorp through their artwork and their online fictional writing websites, as is apparent with the five thousand fanfic works found on Archive of Our Own (Archive of Our

Own.com). It is through camera angles and acting cues between the two actresses that alludes to a veiled homosexual.

In order to better understand the legitimacy of the SuperCorp “ship”, we will thoroughly examine some of the interactive scenes between Lena and Kara Danvers/Supergirl. In Season two, episode eight there is a scene in which Supergirl flies through the balcony door of L-Corp to speak with Lena about Lillian Luthor’s (Lena’s adoptive mother) latest antics (“Supergirl/‘Medusa’”). What is interesting about this scene is that upon Supergirl’s arrival, Lena acts extremely flustered at the hero’s appearance, not with Supergirl’s dramatic air-born entrance, but rather when she enters the room and faces the CEO in her office. The assumption on first seeing this interaction is that Lena’s flustered and stuttering reaction is due to her being overwhelmed by meeting the famed superhero. However, when you consider that this is not the first time that the CEO and the Super have met before, it becomes a clear that Lena’s reaction is due to seeing her again, not them meeting. Since Lena reacts so strongly to Supergirl’s appearance, this scene is read as a flustered gay woman seeing an attractive person.

Another inherently queer reaction between the two friends is in Season 2, episode 12, after Supergirl saves Lena from yet another dangerous situation, the hero tells her that Kara Danvers sent her to save Lena. The next day Kara walks into Lena’s office with the proclamation, “So my office is overflowing with flowers... (“Supergirl/‘Luthors’”), in which we learn that Lena sent them to her as a thank you for saving her life. Simply an act of a platonic thank you gift between two friends, right? Until you consider that at the end of their conversation Lena tells Kara that “Supergirl might have rescued me, but you, Kara Danvers, are my hero” (“Supergirl/‘Luthors’”). This scene can be taken as a statement of application or a declaration of adoration towards Kara.

This scene only continues to confirm the queer reading when Kara finally decides to leave Lena, they hug (for the first time in the series) goodbye in which the camera focuses on Lena's longing face long after Kara turns to leave the room. Since Kara is the leading female in the show it would make sense that the cameras would follow her exist, implying that their friendly interaction is over, until they meet again. However, by focusing on Lena's face we can interpret this moment as a Lena's sapphic feelings emerging for her soon-to-be best friend. Lena's longing look as a form of a romantic reaction to her friend is only furthered confirmed when you consider the only other canonical homosexual relationship in the series (Alex Danvers and Maggie Sawyer) had a similar sequence in which Lena's longing look, is a direct parallel of the longing looks and interactions Alex had with Maggie before they became an established couple.

Another scene that is often mentioned by the fandom as evidence for the SuperCorp relationship is the first time that Lena comes over to Kara's apartment she is smiling her greeting at Kara and looking rather relaxed in posture. However, when Lena realizes that Kara wasn't alone in her apartment (since Alex is currently there too) her face falls, she halts her movement, and you can see her looking Alex up-and-down, before glancing over at Kara not knowing that Alex is Kara's sister ("Supergirl/'Crossfire'"). Due to Katie McGrath's (the actress who plays Lena) excellent acting skills, you can see her face darken in jealousy for a minute, when she sees that Kara was with someone else. Reading Kara and Lena as queer, Lena's reaction is seen as a jealous reaction at the possibility of Kara Danvers having a significant other, especially since we as an audience knows that Alex is gay.

The most import scene within the second season that helps support the SuperCorp claim is during episode fifteen where Lillian Luthor sends some bad guys to threaten her daughter for

looking into some shady business deals. But instead of scaring her off, they accidentally through her off her balcony to fall to her death. Luckily Kara was able to fly to Lena in time and, as Supergirl, catches her bridal style before attacking the men in retaliation. This rescue scene is so important to read through a queer lens because this directly parallels the common trope with Superman where he often catches a falling Lois Lane (his romantic partner) in the exact same pose in multiple movies, television shows, and cartoons. This “damsel in distress” pose, is mirrored by both Lois Lane and Lena Luthor after being saved by both Supers. This imagery is no accident in that the writers for *Supergirl* purposely positioned Lena to be caught in such a famous position so that DC Comics fans would recognize the scene of a falling woman being caught bridal style by a Kryptonian superhero. Therefore, it’s not a big leap to claim that this scene hints at a homosexual bond between the two women, when they are mirror one of the most famous couples in comic book history (“Supergirl/‘Exodus’”).

After watching these two characters interact on scene there is an undeniable chemistry between the two women. So much so, that in a recent interview with Katie McGrath (the actress for Lena Luthor) with media website TVLine, McGrath confirmed that Lena’s interaction with Kara/Supergirl is queer, although not intentional.

TVLine: Do you remember the first time you heard the term, or who from?

McGrath: Who did I hear it from...? I couldn’t even tell you.... I think it was Melissa [Kara Danvers], actually, who first told me. I’ve played quite a few characters that have either been gay or they’ve had, you know, some very obvious gay undertones, and to be *completely honest*, this was the first time I was like, “Well, this role doesn’t have any!” You’re laughing now — how naive was I? And then after the first episode... I go back and I watch and I was like, “Oh, yeah, now I can see it. That makes sense to

me.... You read it and you've got the characters and you're like, "Oh, yeah, I know this is going to happen." And then there are other times... and [with Lena/Kara] honestly, it just didn't even enter into my head. But then you get the response and you go back and you're like, "Yeah, I can see where that came from." It doesn't bother me at all. I think it's great, because what really makes me feel good is that they can see the characters are working on more than one level. Do you know what I mean? It's not just what we put into it. It's what the writers put in, and the directors, and then what people can take from it. It means that the characters we're playing are not just one dimension, they work on so many levels.

TVLine: You're stirring people's imaginations. You want to do that with a character.

McGrath: Exactly. Of course, it makes you feel really good to know that what you're doing is quality (Mitovich).

It is clear by the interview with Katie McGrath that she acknowledges the queer undertones that happen between Lena and Kara throughout the season. And when you consider the acting cues McGrath uses to convey chemistry with Kara Danvers, in terms of lip bites, lingering eyes, stuttering in speech, accidental sexual innuendos, breath hitches, etc., it becomes abundantly clear to the fandom that their "shipping" of SuperCorp has some legitimacy within the show. However, unless the show writers decide to turn the show in a more queer direction, SuperCorp is doomed to remain hidden as reading between the lines during all Lena Luthor and Kara Danvers/Supergirl interactions.

Conclusion

When *Supergirl* was added to the Arrowverse of the CW in 2015, we were introduced to an over-eager, blonde, blue-eyed, Kryptonian who was fighting as a superheroine to keep

National City safe from all harm. Have three distinctly different identities as Kara Danvers, Kara Zor-El, and Supergirl, the CW presented a superhero whom not only captured our hearts as a hopeful and strong leading woman. But she also captured our attention through her queer narrative when “coming out” as Supergirl. With Kara Danvers representing a heterosexual feminine character, we see her as “straight” hegemonically and sexually, while Supergirl is queer by being an “oddity” within society.

I used three theorists to support my argument of Supergirl as a queer narrative and an “other” figure: Tom Boellstorff, Susan Bordo, and Judith Butler. As an audience, we later see Kara struggling to maintain her different personas, and thus becoming an “other figure” within her community. While Supergirl continues to be an outsider within society, it is through her queerness that we see her as an important and interesting character and a much needed heroine to be portrayed on television today.

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