

Reading questions for Excluded, by Julia Serano

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Block 1

The first block of content in our four-session reading group for Excluded is entirely from Part 1: On the Outside Looking In.

In the first six chapters, A Word About Words through Reclaiming Femininity, Julia Serano lays the foundation for an argument about inclusion in social movements. Specifically, she describes her own experiences as a white, able-bodied, normatively sized transgender femme bisexual woman, and how those experiences are examples of a larger structural framework. Her experiences are her own, as yours are yours.

Look for moments of exclusion, and the circumstances that lead to it. Focus on your own experiences, your own intersectional identity, and how exclusion relates to normativity.

Questions for before you read Block 1

These questions are intended for you to use, to help focus your mind and heart before engaging with the first block of reading – the introduction thru chapter 6.

- Define homogeneous and heterogeneous.
- Discuss their relationships to groups of people, and inclusion.
- What does it mean to be marginalized?
- Describe your current view of intersectional identity, and how it relates to social interaction and movements.
- What does it mean for something to be normative?

Reflection questions for while or after you read Block 1

The first chapter of the book (not including the introduction, which is valuable) sets up the terminology used throughout the book.

- Does Serano use terms in ways you don't?
- How does her mindful use of umbrella terms act to create inclusion?
- Describe yourself, using her lexicon.

In Chapter 2, Serano describes her experience at Camp Trans, a protest of the active exclusion of trans women at the Michigan music festival.

- What lesson do you take away from this chapter?
- How did her arguments about exclusion resonate with you?
- How have you excluded people from your own activities?

Reflect on the statement "it's hard to write about being a girl", in the context of *On Being a Woman*.

Chapter four, *Margins*, is a description of the ways Serano's identity intersected with her experience as a skin cancer patient.

- How have your identities intersected with your most challenging experiences?
- What are three ways you can act to make the settings you control -- e.g. your classroom, your office, your home -- more welcoming to those with differing identities?

In the context of *Transfeminism: There's No Conundrum About It*, reflect on how single-issue activism begets exclusion.

- Describe how approaching feminism with an intersectional lens can broaden inclusion.

Chapter six, *Reclaiming Femininity*, is an examination of femininity's uses and receptions.

- Debunk the statement "femininity is artificial".
- Debunk the statement "trans women reinforce gender stereotypes."
- Debunk the statement "trans women take up too much space."
- Describe the role of double standards in these statements.
- Reflect on subversive identity.