

# Reading questions for Excluded, by Julia Serano

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## Block 2

The second block of reading for our four-session reading group consists of Chapters 7-12.

I deliberately included the Chapter 12 – the first chapter in Part 2 of the book: *New Ways of Speaking*. This is to spur the discussion to start to move toward understanding not just examples and understanding of exclusion, but also a start of a theory of inclusion.

### Questions for before you read Block 2

These questions are intended to get you primed for Block 2 of *Excluded*.

- Describe your sexuality. Are you sexually attracted to people? Who are you attracted to, and why? What's the difference between bisexual and pansexual?
- Describe three ways to be an ally to trans women. Repeat for people of color, persons with disabilities, and people who are non-normatively sized. Now find an intersection, that one can apply to all of those identities.
- How is your identity subversive? Must it be? Ought it be? What if it isn't?
- How are you an insider?
- How is your identity authentic? How do you know who you are?
- How do you reinforce the gender binary?

### Questions for during and after you read Block 2

#### Chapter 7, Three Strikes and I'm Out

- What are some ways in which you find yourself coming out? Do you find it more an experience of boxing yourself in, or freeing yourself?
- Describe a time in your life, when you learned a new word and applied it to your identity.
- How does having a fixed view of ourselves and others set us up for challenge?
- What assumptions do you find yourself making, such that others often have to come out to you about that assumption's trait axis?

## Chapter 8, Dating

- This piece, about dating as a trans woman, was written in 2010, a decade ago. What's changed? How do you think the world of swiping has affected this piece's point?
- Find a statement in this piece that you took personally. Dissect it.
- Find a statement in this piece that resonated with you. Dissect it.

## Chapter 9, Bisexuality and Binaries Revisited

- Describe homogeneity/heterogeneity as it relates to sexuality, both monosexuality and BMNOPPPQ: bisexuality, multisexuality, no-label sexuality, omnisexuality, pansexuality, polysexuality, and queer experimental bisexuality.
- Reframe bisexuality. Try on one of the labels from BMNOPPPQ.

## Chapter 10, How to Be An Ally to Trans Women

- Sum up this chapter in one word. Now, in three. Then in a sentence. Finally, in three sentences. Now, do this in reverse: three sentences, one sentence, three words, one word.
- Apply this pattern to another marginalized community.
- Apply this pattern to a person with several marginalized identities.

## Chapter 11, Performance Piece concludes Part 1 of the book, On The Outside Looking In.

- Debunk the statement "all gender is performance".
- How is your gender fake?
- Why is your gender your gender?

The last chapter in Block 2, Chapter 12, The Perversion of "The Personal is Political", is also the longest. It also appears in Part 2 of the book, New Ways of Speaking.

- A primary point of this chapter is to examine the statement "the personal is political", and how when used in tandem with an assumption of homogeneity it causes exclusion. Make a cogent argument.
- Compare and contrast heterosexism and cissexism. Relate them to other sexism.
- Define "gender artifactualization". Relate it to essentialism, performativeness, and expectations of homogeneity.
- Serano makes three suggestions in the subsection called "Transcending the perversion of The Personal Is Political". (starting on page 134)
  1. Identify marked traits
  2. Cease forwarding gender artifactualization
  3. Stop pretending there is a gender system

What's the main point? What do we accomplish by taking these three steps?  
How can you incorporate these into your work as a leader or activist?