

Reading questions for Excluded, by Julia Serano

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Block 3

The third of our four reading blocks spans Chapters 13, 14, and 15.

This block represents a significant argument about how exclusion arises, and how an expectation of homogeneity can lead to marked traits and double standards.

Questions for before you read Block 3

- Mentally have the nature vs nurture debate with yourself. How does it resolve?
- Why are you right or left handed?
- Describe a double bind. What's the way out?
- Describe three double standards in the world of gender and sex.
- What does the term *holistic* mean to you?
- How has shame played a part in your life?

Questions for during and after you read Block 3

Chapter 13, Homogenizing Versus Holistic Views of Gender and Sexuality

- Carry out the argument that Serano makes in favor of a holistic view of gender and sexuality. Which parts conflict with your previous beliefs? What other forms of the nature-vs-nurture debate happen in our society? What happens when you apply a holistic approach?
 - Name the three tenets of the holistic model (pages 152-153)
- On page 167, Serano describes the "biology-is-bad" mindset. What other similar mindsets exist in our society? What's a time you've fallen into one of those mindsets. How did you make it out?
- As far as understanding sexism, what's the major point of Chapter 13?

Chapter 14, How Double Standards Work

- Describe a marked trait.
 - When was the last time one of your traits was marked, and why? How did you deal with it?

- When was the last time you marked another person's trait? Describe a tactic you can personally use to reduce the marking of traits.
- Relate markedness to in/outness. Challenge outness and ingroups.
- How often do you comment on marked traits? How often do you question marked traits? Why? Is it appropriate? Is it not? Are you sure?
- Critique exoticism. Put down the idea that "she was asking for it."
- Describe each of the double binds in this chapter. Describe a time when you experienced each, and find a way out. Relate each to a marked trait.
 - Invisible/visible
 - Credit/detriment
 - Disavow/Identify
 - Accommodating/angry
 - Afflicted/chosen
 - Dupes/fakes
 - Ashamed/shameless
 - Harmless/dangerous
 - Pass/reveal
- What's the way out???

Chapter 15, Myriad Double Standards

- How does intersectional identity relate to experiencing double standards?
- How have you universalized and centered your experience in the last week? What de-centered you?
- Relate: assumption, stereotype, hierarchy. Acceptance, expectation, heterogeneity.
- Must we understand each other?
- Recall the Plato's ideals. Refute them in the realm of the human.
- On page 214, Serano writes: "... [T]he more closely associated a stereotype is with the group, the more likely a group member will be delegitimized for failing to conform to it". Apply this to your life, to the current political moment, to the pandemic.