

Diversity Thoughts: Trans woman feminism

July 22, 2018

I have been reading the fascinating book "Whipping Girl" by Julia Serano (2007, 2nd Ed. 2016). Though I have a hard copy, I borrowed the audio version from the library and it was a treat to have it read by the author herself.

It will take me several emails to summarize a few take-home or discussion points that stayed with me particularly:

Preface to Second Edition:

- Hierarchy in the queer/trans world: Transsexuals who identify strongly as women or men can be faulted for reinforcing the gender binary, whereas people who blur binary gender distinction are more highly regarded.
- Trans women's expression of femininity has less status than trans men's expression of masculinity (p. xiii)
- Trans women can feel invalidated by the "feminist and queer theory that gender is something we 'do' rather than something we 'are.'" (p. xvi)
- The dominant mindset is that the identities, bodies and expressions of their gender by trans people are different and less legitimate than those of cisgender people (p.xvii)
- Old school feminism has judged trans women for enacting artificial behaviors that are designed to serve patriarchy, not recognizing that femininity can be authentic and part of feminism (p. xix)

Chapter 1:

- Mysogyny is the primary anti-trans sentiment the author, more significant in her opinion than binary gender norms (p.3)
- Many feminists have been unsupportive or even pitted against trans women based on "the assumption that we are really 'men'. Some feminist and women's organizations expressly exclude trans women.

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