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Feminism is Queer: The Intimate Connection Between Queer and Feminist Theory, 2nd ed., by Mimi Marinucci (Book Review)

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Mimi Marinucci. *Feminism is Queer: The Intimate Connection Between Queer and Feminist Theory*, Second edition. London: Zed Books, 2016. ISBN 978-1-78360-675-7.

In this second edition of *Feminism is Queer*, author Mimi Marinucci revisits the connection between queer and feminist theory, expanding it to include topics such as Black Lives Matter and an updated conversation about gender preferred pronouns. The book provides pathways for those friendly to feminist theory to bring queer theory into their introductory gender analysis work with students. This connective roadmap is no small feat for work that often continues to be disconnected in both activist and academic contexts.

Through a detailed review of the different forms of feminism, the author narrows the field to six forms: liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, multi-cultural feminism and global feminism. As the author details, queer theorists are concerned with many of the same theoretical and political issues as those tackled in these feminist approaches. A central premise of the book is that queering is “the process of complicating something, and it is not necessarily limited to sexual contexts” (xxii). Certainly trans and queer scholars in the field of sexuality studies have been applying queer feminism to such subjects as migration, transnational identity, decolonization, disability justice, liberation studies and native sovereignties to name just a few. However, scholars who seek to queer such subjects will not find them in this book as it does not offer much outside of queering in the context of sexuality and Western-centric framing geared towards a women and gender studies classroom.

The task of building a bridge between queer theory and feminist analysis remains a challenging one. Feminists have long questioned why gender studies work would “need” to apply queer analysis. Marinucci confronts this head-on and discusses the shortcomings of using feminist and queer theory on their own, while also pointing to how racism and classism continue to operate in each. The author points to the need to “filter ideas through multiple disciplinary and personal screens” (141). With this in mind Marinucci describes the process of linking queer analysis and feminist analysis as a “layering of screens” offering a better way to screen for racism and classism (141).

One of the most contentious issues queer feminism works to confront is addressing the gender binaries and essentialism that continues to haunt feminist thought. Part of the value that queer theory brings to feminist theory is the ability to challenge this essentialism by troubling the binary construct of the categories “women” and “men.” As Marinucci highlights in Section II entitled *Sex*, queer theory, and trans identities specifically, destabilize this essentialism and binary thinking. “By challenging the binary in this manner, queer theory is capable of resisting essentialism while simultaneously affirming the experiences of people for whom the established categories are problematic, as well as people for whom the established categories are unproblematic” (47). Yet, the “border war” between butch and trans identities along with anti-trans attitudes in feminist discourse continue to resist this integration (76). Exploring the evolution of feminist and queer politics is perhaps strongest in the book where space is made for activist voices. For example, it includes the 2001 petition circulated by queer feminists and directed

Michigan Women's Festival that confronted the festival's "women-born-women policy" and stated: "Many of us had to face discrimination and harassment because of our gender expression, and we see the scapegoating of trans-women as part of the cycle of violence" (74).

The book concludes with a section about queer feminism, considering what a queer feminist politics looks like in action as exemplified by culture jamming, radical cheerleading, zine making and the East Van Porn Collective. These still somewhat dated examples leave the reader wondering what new forms of queer feminist activism have developed over the past decade with a younger generation of activists connected through social media, an excellent conversation for the undergraduate classroom.

This is an approachable introduction to the overlap of and common ground for feminist theories and queer theories. For readers who may be new to feminism theory or queer theory, this text provides engaging exercises for the classroom and extensive resources for exploring complicated terms and concepts.

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