

## AMERICAN MISOGYNY HANDOUT – APRIL 18, 2022

**Krell begins by discussing an episode of *I Am Cait* in which Angelica Ross's life story was reduced to sex work.** A subsequent episode portrays Ross as an angry Black woman.

What did you take away from Krell's discussion of Angelica Ross's frustrating experience appearing on *I Am Cait*?

**In the second part of their essay, Krell critiques Serano's formulation of transmisogyny.**

Krell writes: "Serano's scholarship . . . elides race and class and allows white middle-classness to stand in as a universal, greatly diminishing the capacity of transmisogyny to describe the oppression(s) that trans women of color, and Black women in particular, face" (232).

Krell cites Marlon B. Ross, who argues that "**whiteness stands in as a universal in canonical theorizing on gender and sexuality**" (233).

Krell critiques Michal Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, arguing that Foucault fails to interrogate how "the distinction between queerness and heterosexuality . . . is made manifest through a mutual middle-class whiteness, without which said difference would not hold" (233).

**Krell aligns themselves with Siobhan Somerville, who "has determined that ideologies of gender/sexuality and race mutually inform one another and have done so since their inception" (233).**

Krell writes:

Building from Somerville and Ross, I argue that the categories upon which Serano's theory of transmisogyny depends not only erase race, class, and nation but are made possible through that erasure. Her work and the contemporary discourse of transmisogyny broadly . . . depend upon hard-line distinctions in the categories "cisgender" and "transgender," as well as "trans femininity" and "trans masculinity," distinctions . . . that both depend upon and reproduce normative whiteness. (233-34)

Krell again criticizes Serano:

[H]ow could the fact that Serano never engages race or class not impact transmisogyny as an analytic? Reading Ross in tandem with Serano reveals how whiteness is constitutive of binary gender as a construct, even when that binary includes transgender identifications. Her theory's implicit normative whiteness proffers rigid boundaries around trans femininity and trans masculinity, imparting upon these categories a distinctiveness that traffics in white middle-class normativity. (234)

On the title of Serano's book, *Excluded*, Krell writes:

[H]er project mutes the ways in which rhetorics of inclusion and exclusion are colonial. A discourse of "inclusion," as many critics of multiculturalism have espoused, is both anti-Black and anti-indigenous in that it posits inclusion as an antidote rather than questioning the structures that produce an inside and outside. 235

The point is not merely that Serano's universalization of whiteness has a negative effect (that it fails to do something, for example, failing to include people of color) but that it also does something. Namely, it forges a theory of transmisogyny through whiteness and middle-classness while purporting to speak to all. The mechanism by which this elision occurs is the hard-line distinction of categories that themselves only hold in a nonintersectional optic. The issue of blackness for transness, then, seems to be that it uncovers the implicitly racist and classist underpinnings of hard-line categories of sex and gender. (235)

**Krell cites Alok Vaid-Menon (2014), a trans femme of color activist, who defines "transmisogyny as the 'policing of femininity on bodies it is understood to not belong to' and insist that all people of color experience transmisogyny. In so doing, Vaid-Menon offers us a definition of transmisogyny that melds trans feminism to antiracism." (236)**

We may need a term like racialized transmisogyny. . . to describe the oppression of non-Black women of color, leaving transmisogynoir to those who experience antiblackness. (236)

**Angelica Ross writes, "Being trans comes at a high cost, but being black and trans can cost you your life."**