

To Be Mindful of Sexual Diversity

For diverse reasons—religious conservatism, misinformation, political strategy and survival, and, yes, even homophobia—feminist movements have generally been reluctant to engage in queer theories and queer politics.

Certainly, there have been a few brave feminists who have attempted to bring the sexuality discourse, in particular that of sexual orientation and sexual identity, into the core of feminist thinking and activism. The use of sexual health and sexual rights frameworks is arguably a significant step towards sexual recognition.

But these courageous moves remain in the margins and are subject to ambiguous, thereby potentially heterosexist, interpretations.

Feminists, however, can no longer deny, ignore, or minimise the role of sexuality within the sex/gender system that they seek to break. The need to engage in queer theorising and activism is becoming more urgent than ever in the global context of rising religious fundamentalism. The so-called unholy alliances among various stripes of the religious right—including the Bush government, the Vatican, and some Islamic countries—are investing significantly to reject any notion of sexual freedom and departures from binary notions of man/woman. The power of the religious right has likewise proven so strong to the point of seriously undermining, and even influencing, the development agenda at an international scale.

It is our belief that this *WIA* issue on “Queering” can help facilitate much-needed thinking and discussion within and between feminist-oriented individuals, groups, communities, and social movements.

The diversity of writers in this issue reflects the variety of queer ideas and actions that have emerged in the South, particularly in Asia and the Pacific. But what is common across these papers is the demand to engage in sexuality discourses not as a matter of political choice but as a feminist imperative.

We would like to thank our contributors who have allowed us to begin the queer discussion within feminist movements. We would also like to credit our guest editor, Malu Marin of Asia Pacific Rainbow, for her insightful comments and suggestions.

We in Isis-Manila hope that with this issue, we will be able to open spaces for further queer theorising and to stimulate the creation of concrete political strategies that are truly inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) people and agenda, and mindful of sexual diversity.


Raijeli Nicole
Editor-in-Chief

A Note from the Guest Editor

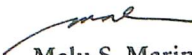
Whether we are organising communities for empowerment, staging pride events for visibility, lobbying for non-discriminatory legislation, discoursing sexuality in the classroom, or facilitating online discussions, we give evidence to a collective reality and carve out a common space in this sexuality-unfriendly world.

Yet formal recognition and understanding of gender and sexuality issues remain scant. Within social movements, such issues have either unified activists or further deepened conflict. Whether they are bound by loose threads or by tight knots, the relationship between lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer (LGBTQ) activists, feminists, and human rights advocates has been a source of tension and/or solidarity.

With stigma and discrimination against LGBTQ people persistently occurring at a global scale, it is an opportune time for participants of these various social movements to engage in meaningful conversations about convergences and differences on gender and sexuality issues. It is not by accident that Isis International-Manila, through *WIA* magazine, decided to devote an entire issue on the theme “Queering.”

While this *WIA* issue celebrates LGBTQ life, it likewise recognises the LGBTQ experiences of harassment, violence, discrimination, and persecution.

As a concept, “queering” is evolving and changing through time. As an experience, it connotes continuous movement and action. Thus, we need to keep the conversation going, to sharpen our analysis, and to approach the issues with a broader, more inclusive look. Queering, after all, is an ongoing journey of rebirth and reconstruction, of redefining meanings and reshaping history.


Malu S. Marin
Guest Editor