

Latin American Womens Writing: Feminist Readings In Theory And Crisis

Article

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The intersectional turn in feminist theory: A dream of a common language?

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Abstract

Today intersectionality has expanded from being primarily a metaphor within structuralist feminist research to an all-encompassing theory. This article discusses this increasing dedication to intersectionality in European feminist research. How come intersectionality has developed into a signifier for 'good feminist research' at this particular point in time? Drawing on poststructuralist and postcolonial theory the authors examine key articles on intersectionality as well as special issues devoted to the concept. They interrogate the conflicts and meaning making processes as well as the genealogies of the concept. Thus, the epistemology and ontology behind the 'intersectional turn' in feminist theory is the main concern here. The authors argue that the lack of ontological discussions has led to its very popularity. Intersectionality promises almost everything: to provide complexity, overcome divisions and to serve as a critical tool. However, the expansion of the scope of intersectionality has created a consensus that conceals fruitful and necessary conflicts within feminism.

Keywords

Feminist theory, genealogy, intersectionality, postcolonial theory, poststructuralism

Introduction

We do not need a totality in order to work well; quite the opposite. (Haraway, 'The ironic dream of a common language', 1983)

In the last 10 years the use of the concept intersectionality has practically exploded in European and North American gender research. Special issues have been devoted to the concept and it has been celebrated as one of the more important latest

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