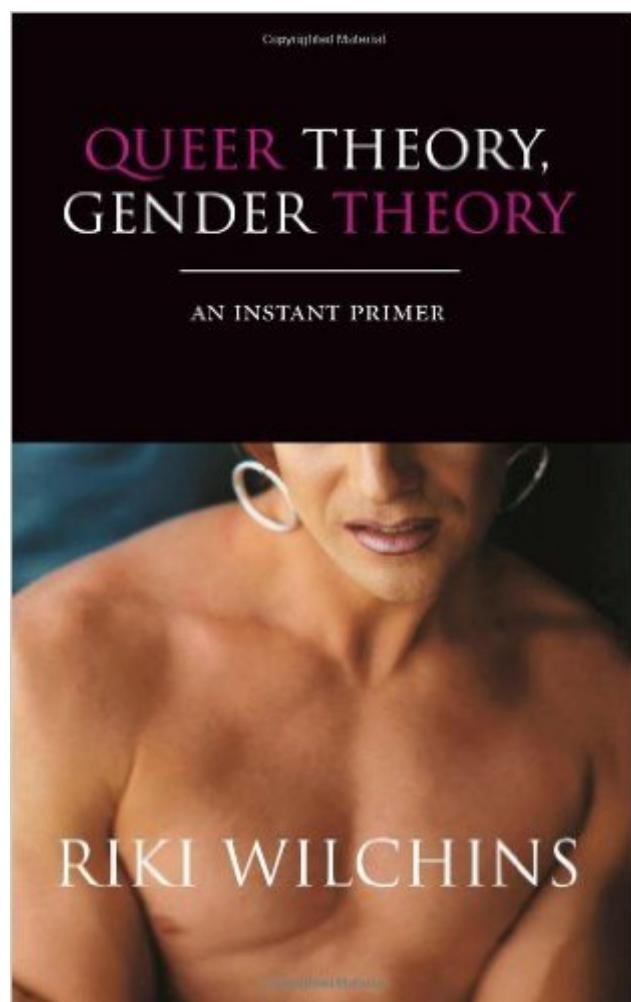


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# Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer



## Synopsis

A one-stop, no-nonsense introduction to the core of postmodern theory, particularly its impact on queer and gender studies. Nationally known gender activist Riki Wilchins combines straightforward prose with concrete examples from LGBT and feminist politics, as well as her own life, to guide the reader through the ideas that have forever altered our understanding of bodies, sex and desire. This is that rare postmodern theory book that combines accessibility, passion, personal experience and applied politics, noting at every turn why these ideas matter and how they can affect your daily life. Riki Wilchins is the founding executive director of the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition. The author of *Read My Lips* and *GenderQueer*. She was selected by Time magazine as one of the 100 Civic Innovators for the 21st Century. •

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In her third book, *Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer*, Riki Wilchins ventures from writing an autobiography (*Read My Lips*) and editing an anthology (*GenderQueer*) to writing theory explicitly. In particular, she seeks to take theory out of its current limited circulation among "academics and graduate students" (1) and reinvigorate its political center and make it accessible to activists. Wilchins begins by giving brief histories of civil rights movements (chapters 1-3), follows with discussions of postmodern theory centered around Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault (chapters 4-6) complete with contemporary examples of uses of postmodern theory (chapters 7 & 8), and then proceeds to discuss postmodern theory's weaknesses (chapter 9-11), notably its lack of "any vision of constructive social engagement and political action" (100), and its tendency not to

account for the varying perspectives people might encounter due to dimensions of difference, specifically race (chapter 10). Similarly focused on limitations and weaknesses, in chapter 11, Wilchins uses Judith Butler's work to assert that identity-based politics, while in some ways facilitate political organizing and movement, inevitably and undesirably create margins and practice exclusion. The final chapter chronicling GenderPAC's founding and continue development and growth are offered by Wilchins as an example of theory being put into action. Wilchins' purpose is to bridge queer theory and human rights activism in order to instill in academics the necessity of putting theory into action, and perhaps more importantly, to offer those unfamiliar with queer theory access to the possibilities such theorizing has opened up and makes available (as evidenced by the book's subtitle "An Instant Primer").

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