

Symposium Program:

Theorising from experience. Feminism and critical theory today

19.-20. September 2018
Professorboligen, Karl Johans gate 47
University of Oslo, City Campus

Wednesday, 19. September 2018

12.00 Lunch

Session I

13.00 Introduction
Professor Helene Aarseth, University of Oslo

13.15 Key note
The gender of critical theory
Professor Lois McNay, University of Oxford; Professor II, University of Oslo

14.15 1st comment
Ass. Professor Christel Stormhøj, Roskilde University

14.30 2nd comment
Professor Cathrine Holst, University of Oslo

14.45 Discussion

15.15 Coffee/snack break

Session II

15.45 *The concept of woman and its feminist critique*
Ass. Professor Paola Rudan, Bologna University

16.30 *Developing feminist intersectionality theory and the aim of theorising
from experience: Some reflections*
PhD-candidate Amund Rake Hoffart, Örebro University

17.15 *Dorothy Smith and Feminist engagement(s) with Bourdieu*
Postdoc. Rebecca Lund, University of Tampere

Thursday, 20. September 2018

Session III

- 09.00 *Constructing a Working Class Body. The (re)gaining of tradesman's Masculinity*
Postdoc. Jørn Ljunggren, University of Oslo
- 09.45 *What's love got to do with it? Experience and agency in narratives of domestic violence*
Dr. Hannah Helseth, Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies
- 10.30 Coffee/snack break
- 11.00 *Triple incompatibilities? Frankfurt School Critical Theory, Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities and Quantitative Sociology*
Dr. Claus D. Hansen, Aalborg University
- 11.45 *Class-gender intersections and the homology of social and symbolic space*
Ass. Professor Magne Flemmen, University of Oslo
- 12.30 Lunch

Session IV

- 14.00 *Exposed to and invested in the world: the revival of Frankfurt School theory of praxis and its feminist potential*
Professor Helene Aarseth, University of Oslo
- 14.45 *Changing the norm from within: A Frankfurt School inspired view on the social transformation of gender*
Professor em. Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen, University of Oslo
- 15.30 *Concluding reflections*
Professor Lois McNay
Discussion

Abstracts

Key note

The gender of critical theory

Professor Lois McNay, University of Oxford; Professor II, University of Oslo

One of the main ways in which the theorists of the Frankfurt School distinguish their political thought from liberalism is to emphasise its rootedness in a critical unmasking of oppression. Their claim is that, if it is to amount to more than abstract speculation, political thought needs to be grounded in close scrutiny of the negative experiences that are endemic in capitalist societies and attest to its oppressive nature. Although widespread, such experiences are often overlooked, trivialised or routinely denied through pervasive ideologies of individual opportunity, market fairness and so on. Critical theorists aim to shatter these ideological distortions by shining a light on unnoticed types of suffering and interpreting them as subjective symptoms of an intrinsically oppressive social structure. Disclosure of suffering in this way serves to initiate a type of normative critique that is, it is claimed, more radical than liberal thought which formulates moral principles in isolation from social reality. Critique is more radical partly because it takes seriously the negative experiences of ordinary individuals and uses them, rather than speculative ideals, as a guide to normative theorising. It is more radical also because, in contrast to ideas of impartial reflection, critique embodies an engaged notion of political reasoning based in an intrinsic connection between the theorist and those disempowered groups on whose behalf s/he claims to speak. This practical connection imposes on the theorist a certain epistemic responsibility to avoid the type of top-down intellectual prescription that might symbolically compound the already disempowered status of oppressed groups. It requires instead that the theorist understands inquiry as a cross-perspectival enterprise and accordingly reasons in an open, dialogic and self-critical manner. In short, it is the sensibility to suffering that, in the Frankfurt School view, enables the theorist to question the world in the first place, to deepen understanding of the nature and extent of oppression and to reflect on the adequacy of established frameworks of understanding including their own.

On the face of it, the Frankfurt School's animating concern with the lived reality of oppression seems to open up fruitful convergences with types of emancipatory critique such as feminism that have a similar commitment to experientially grounded theory. Like the former, feminism uses its exploration and revaluation of women's experience to deepen explanations of gender oppression and to correct biases and blind-spots in established frameworks of understanding. Given these shared theoretical and methodological concerns, there seems to be potential for a productive exchange between the two strands of normative thought where feminism offers a deeper account of gender oppression than the Frankfurt School has hitherto developed while, in return, the latter furnishes a more developed sociology of capitalism into which insights about women's subordination could be inserted. Moreover, such an exchange is not motivated merely by theoretical similarities but also by pressing social and political concerns. Sociological evidence suggests that neoliberal capitalism not only intensifies existing socio-structural inequalities of gender, as well race and class, but that also that it gives rise to new types of social vulnerability and precariousness which are having a disproportionate effect on women. There is an obvious need then to foster types of interdisciplinary normative inquiry that develop emancipatory strategies from direct scrutiny of these emerging patterns of social oppression. Given their commitment to experientially grounded critique, feminism and Frankfurt School theory seem well placed to contribute to such a project.

Yet, my central contention is that any such fruitful exchange is thwarted, at least for the moment, because of the intellectual direction taken by thinkers of the Frankfurt School in recent decades which undercuts the experiential grounds of a critical theory of oppression, gender or otherwise. What is more, I argue that this gap is not one that can be overcome by simply moving issues pertaining to gender to a more central place in the Frankfurt School's existing critical frameworks. My claim is that it is these very frameworks themselves and the foundational concerns that they tend to prioritise which effectively undermine the stated commitment to critique rooted in the analysis of experience. Against these trends, I argue that a phenomenological basis is indispensable to emancipatory thought and, drawing extensively on feminist work in sociology, political theory and epistemology, I develop an alternative conception of critique that I term theorising from experience. Against objections from Frankfurt School theorists and others, I argue that theorising from experience has neither reductive or relativist implications for political theory. The point of my idea of critique is not to affirm experience per se but to theorise outwards from certain phenomenal realities in order to crystallise and deepen accounts of oppression. In making a case for experientially grounded critique and elucidating in relation to a practical concern with gender oppression, I aim to set out renewed grounds for an exchange between feminism and Frankfurt School theory.

It is not the case that the Frankfurt School has nothing to say about gender oppression; its various members have certainly devoted more attention to the issue than other mainstream democratic theorists. Above all, it is Habermas's influential work on communicative intersubjectivity that feminists have extensively drawn on in developing relational theories of gender. Yet, the Habermasian paradigm is also limited in this regard because its exaggerated rationalism and preoccupation with the issue of universal foundations has prompted a retreat, in his work and that of his successors too, from the primary concern with analysing the lived reality of oppression. This retreat is spurred by Habermas's worry about relativism, namely that while grounding critique immanently in negative experience enables it to offer insight into marginalised life-worlds, it simultaneously deprives critique of wider explanatory and normative relevance. What is true for one group's experience of the world, might not be the case for others and thus a general theory of oppression is undermined. The solution that Habermas and other critical theorists find to this problem is to base critique in a single constitutive principle or 'rational universal' which although internal to social life is sufficiently general to give their thought trans-contextual validity. This move establishes a general foundation for critique whilst avoiding the abstract universalism that critical theorists find so problematic in liberalism. For Habermas and Benhabib, the universal principle is communication, for Honneth recognition, for Forst justification, for Ferrara judgement and so on. Although there are significant differences between their respective formulations, each constitutive principle is held to provide a master narrative or monist interpretative framework through which significant social and political problems can be diagnosed. This foundational turn has given rise, in turn, to debates about meta-theoretical issues of justification and the relative explanatory merits of one monist framework versus another. It is my contention that these have come to dominate critical theory displacing its original interest in developing experientially sensitive explanations of oppression. The concern with sociological analysis has not disappeared entirely but it has become a distinctly secondary analytical task and one that is conducted within the pre-given terms of a single-lens framework. Critical theorists increasingly refer to the realm of social experience in a post-hoc fashion, as a means of validating their monist paradigms rather than using it in a more inductive fashion, as a source of insight into underlying structures of power. My claim is that such paradigm-led theorising has simplifying effects on a critical account of oppression and has pushed Frankfurt School

thought closer to the type of socially deracinated inquiry that they associate with certain types of liberalism.

I examine these simplifying effects through a consideration of the way in which leading thinkers of today's Frankfurt School address the issue of gender oppression. In their monist frameworks, gender is unvaryingly interpreted as a deviation from a uni- foundational norm - for example as an injury of misrecognition (Honneth) or a badly justified relation (Forst) - and this obscures its far more complex social reality. The main problem is that the single-lens focus tends to conceptualise of gender as an interpersonal dynamic between men and women in the domestic/private sphere and fails to appreciate that it is also a matrix of structural forces that influences activity in all social spheres. So, for example, the issue of care is approached largely in terms of the asymmetrical bond between husbands and wives in the family and ignores the more complex picture that emerges from feminist accounts of the globalized care economy. The latter research shows that gendered patterns of care provision stand at the heart of a cluster of deep social problems including a growing deficit and inequality in its provision, the privatisation of welfare state functions, patterns of migration, the exploitation of working class and black female workers and so on. The single lens focus not only leads critical theorists to underestimate the pervasiveness of cycles of gender oppression in modern life but also prevents it from conceptualising its intersectional nature, that is, the ways in which gender interacts with race and class to produce complex and differentiated patterns of subordination, exploitation and violence. The family, for example, is discussed as a unitary ideal type in isolation from social tendencies such as the growth in numbers of female headed, single parent families and increases in child poverty that disproportionately effect working class and black families. Similarly, problems of domestic violence and abuse, if they are addressed at all, are treated as a limit cases rather than as tendencies endemic within family life that are connected to wider dysfunctional social norms. I conclude that these one-dimensional accounts of gender mean that critical theory tends to generate normative proposals that are, at best, tangential to the identification and correction of oppressive power dynamics. Injustices in the provision of care, for example, cannot be corrected by simply 'recognising' more fully women's domestic labour (pace Honneth) but involve developing a range of multi-dimensional redistributive policies that enhance women's equality in all areas of social life and try to break what Susan Okin calls the cycle of gender vulnerability.

The feminist research that I draw on to complicate the Frankfurt School understanding of gender exemplifies my general methodological point that it is attentiveness to the patterns and particularities of women's experience that underpins an adequate understanding of oppression and that drives theoretical improvement and innovation. My account of theorising from experience tackles head on the worry expressed by Frankfurt School theorists that such an approach is necessarily too subjectivist and lacks wider explanatory and normative relevance. This worry is misleading, in my view, partly because it rests on an overly dichotomous distinction between the universal and the particular, the objective and the relative which my alternative conception of critique aims to break down. Against this, I argue that it is possible for critique to be an experientially situated type of theoretical inquiry while still possessing systematic explanatory and normative force. There are two main planks to my argument, one pertains to experience as the object or focus of political thought and the other to the implications it has for the practice of theorising itself. With regard to the object of enquiry, I claim that, while it does not provide a comprehensive account on its own, phenomenological grounding is nonetheless indispensable to critique's capacity to adequately diagnose oppression. Without an appreciation of its subjective dimensions, purely objective and external accounts of oppression may be incomplete, inappropriate or outdated. Disempowered

groups often have experiences that may appear ‘alien’ or are not fully expressible within the terms of an established conceptual framework. Therefore if the critique of oppression is to have ongoing relevance to its social context, then it needs to build into itself responsiveness to this experiential substrate. The point, however, is not to elevate experience as a theoretical end in itself but to think about it in relation to power and to use it as the basis from which to crystallise an understanding of oppression, particularly changing and emergent dimensions that may not yet be publically visible. I show how such a relational phenomenology has often been used by radical thinkers to illuminating and innovative theoretical effect. Feminist theorists of race, for example, have focused on the neglected experiences of Afro-American women not to assert their intrinsic authenticity but to develop an intersectional account of oppression which is used to replace flawed, one-dimensional theories of patriarchy. Similarly post-colonial feminists such as Mohanty have used women’s experiences of domestic violence in a non-Western context to complicate prevailing feminist theories of male violence which are often tacitly ethnocentric. In short, it is by deploying a relational phenomenology that situates embodied experience in the wider social context of power that critique avoids a limiting and naïve subjectivism.

My second set of arguments relate to the epistemological implications that arise for the practice of theorising when it claims, as Frankfurt School critique does, to take the experience of oppression seriously. If by virtue of its situated nature, the exercise of reason is always in some sense an exercise of power then it follows that critique should strive to be alert to the potentially distorting effects that its mode of theorising may have on the disempowered groups who are its object of concern. Differently put, the theorist needs to exercise reflexivity in their intellectual practice. When confronted with the experiences of oppressed groups which may initially seem anomalous, alien or difficult to categorise, s/he should be able to critically reflect upon their theoretical and methodological presuppositions and, where necessary, revise them. This capacity for critical self-scrutiny is important in countering possible conceptual blind-spots and types of theoretical reification that result in rigid and overly prescriptive world –views that may not adequately reflect or even exclude the experiences of disempowered groups. In principle, Frankfurt School theorists endorse such a notion of critique as a reflexive mode of inquiry, indeed this has commonly been regarded as one of its essential strengths in comparison with straightforwardly prescriptive modes of political reasoning. Yet, the foundational turn has meant that, in practice, contemporary critical theory has been steadily in retreat from these reflexive aspects of its intellectual endeavour. This is in essence because the ‘quasi-transcendent’ status bestowed on the principle that governs their monist frameworks shields it from genuinely extensive criticism and hence the supposedly indispensable capacity for reflexive self-scrutiny is constrained. Against this, I show how reflexivity might be enacted in intellectual inquiry when critique is understood as a process of cross- perspectival reasoning where the theorist is necessarily implicated in a practical relation with those s/he studies. Other epistemological features that flow from this dialogical idea of theoretical reasoning include a negativist, interdisciplinary methodology, a problem rather than paradigm led mode of reflection, and a fallibilist approach to normative justification. Although critique construed in this way necessarily eschews strongly universalist modes of thought, it does not fall into relativism as Frankfurt School theorists seem to fear. I explain critique’s general explanatory and normative relevance through the idea of ‘contextual objectivity’ derived in part from the work of feminist social epistemologists (Code, Collins, Harding) and pragmatists (Brandom, Bohman). Objectivity may be relative to context but this does not mean that all interpretations are equally as valid, some are better than others and explanatory merit can be established according to a variety of criteria such as standards of evidence, conceptual logic,

inclusiveness and so on. In the light of such a contextualised notion of objectivity, the overall goal of critique is not the development of a monist framework in which all social problems can be interpreted but the gradual improvement and expansion of epistemic horizons. In bringing feminism and critical theory together around the practical concern of gender oppression, I aim to redress an imbalance in the conversation between the two. While the former has engaged quite extensively with latter, the reverse intellectual take up has been selective at best. I maintain that, in the light of the troubling intellectual gaps provoked by their foundational turn, today's proponents of critical theory might do well to attend more closely to feminist thought as an exemplar of experientially grounded critique that takes the systematic unmasking of oppression as its guiding political light.

The concept of woman and its feminist critique
Ass. Professor Paola Rudan, Bologna University

Assuming that in the modern age the concept of woman can be thought only as a political and social concept, this paper argues that its feminist critique has been and is still part of the struggle for its signification, and consequently it can provide an overall critique of power in capitalist society and of its patriarchal character.

Starting from Sojourner Truth's discourse – *Ain't I a Woman?* (1851) – in the first part of the paper I will illustrate the political necessity of distinguishing between «woman as a subject», and the «concept of woman». On the one hand, as Simone de Beauvoir pointed out, the definition of the concept – based on the identification of woman with her body and her reproductive function – is part of a patriarchal strategy of domination. On the other hand, woman as a subject emerges through the very act of contesting the definition of the concept imposed by men and the positions of power and subordination it aims to justify and reproduce. This preliminary distinction is crucial in order to avoid the deadlock generated by some developments of the gender theory, according to which the assumption of «woman» as the reference point of feminist theory unavoidably results in a reproduction of the «heterosexual matrix», and consequently in the exclusion of those subjects that do not conform to its mandate, and in the incapacity of acknowledging other fundamental determinations of identity such as class or race (Wittig, Butler). Though biological determinism is unquestionably a patriarchal strategy for justifying women's subordination, the abandonment of the reference to «woman» in favor of the plural category of «gender» results into the impossibility of accounting for the historical specificity of women's experience, and most of all for their struggle against subordination and oppression. This struggle, which can be detected by inquiring into the different feminist attempts to question the patriarchal definition of the concept of woman, defines in turn a process of subjectification. This process does not presume a given political identity – being it based on essentialized sexual features or rather on a shared oppression – but arises from a dis-identification and a refusal of the positions and roles prescribed by patriarchy as a social order (Rancière).

In the second part of the paper, the critical potential of a feminist history of the concept of woman will be exposed through the reading of two remarkable feminist critiques of capitalist society, namely those articulated by bell hooks and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak starting, respectively, from the perspective of the black and the subaltern woman. As to bell hooks, her historical inquiry into the experience of slavery and the slave trade highlights the way in which the patriarchal construction of the concept of «woman» as a pure and delicate moral being – defined in opposition to the masculine force and savage sensuality of black women – is intended to justify the subordination of women, both white and black, and to establish a racialized sexual division of labor which is so much specifically oppressive for black women, as it is fundamental for the constitution of the United States capitalist society. Aiming to give voice to the experience of black women *as women* against the racist and patriarchal definition of the concept, bell hooks is able to reveal the societal function of rape as a practice of domination. Though this practice has affected black women in a very specific way, it also had fundamental effects in the production and reproduction of the sexual, racial and class hierarchies that organize the capitalist society. Thus, the difference historically embodied by the black woman and the partial perspective it defines allows grasping both differences – between men and women, white and black men, white and black women – and their systematic connection within the frame of «capitalist patriarchy». Spivak, in turn, explores the necessity of understanding the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism through a

feminist reading of Marx's theory of value. The impossibility of conceiving women's «affective labor» in terms of exchange value is what leads Spivak to read capitalism as a totality which is able to connect and organize according to its own logics elements – such as patriarchy – that are not, strictly speaking, capitalist. According to this analysis, it is necessary to understand how this operation takes place historically, and how the identification of woman with her procreative function is transformed in the very moment in which patriarchy and capitalism meet each other. Within this problematic frame, the position of the subaltern woman becomes epistemologically and politically crucial. Her «silence» – which is first of all determined by her identification with a lower stage of capitalist development, or according to the parameters of the emancipation of Western women – is what must be heard in order to understand how capitalism synchronizes heterogeneity and how the specific form of subordination of women in the post-colonial spaces is a fundamental support for the production of value on a global scale.

As it will be shown in the last part of the paper, both hooks' and Spivak's critiques of the patriarchal definition of the concept of woman within capitalist society provide a clear example of what, in speaking of the «Third World Woman», Chandra Talpade Mohanty has defined an «epistemic privilege». This privilege consists in the very fact of occupying a position which is defined as «marginal», but is nonetheless central for capitalism as a globally integrated system. This epistemic privilege allows a criticism of the global operations of contemporary capital, while pointing to the political possibility of a liberation which is not limited to a single category of oppressed subjects, but is rather concretely universal.

***Developing feminist intersectionality theory and the aim of theorising from experience:
Some reflections***

PhD-candidate Amund Rake Hoffart, Örebro University

I found in Professor Lois McNay's keynote abstract an optimism on behalf of feminist theories and their potential to retrieve a more direct connection to the experiences of (gender) injustice that are, arguably, the basis of any kind of feminist thinking or political action. At the core of this vision is the reminder that critical theories, for them to meaningfully be called critical, must aim to "theorise from experience": to attend to and analyse real-life negative experiences of – depending on your theoretical framework – confusion, suffering, injury, injustice, misrecognition, oppression or marginalisation. The hope for recovery presupposes, of course, an antecedent loss. It suggests a development of critical theory in a direction where the dynamics between theory and real-life practices have started to function in a problematic way. If the *raison d'être* of critical theories is their "rootedness in a critical unmasking of oppression", then the move away from paying careful attention to experiences of oppression becomes an internal flaw, something that can be subjected to a form of immanent critique.

Working on a PhD project on feminist intersectionality theories, I have seen how a similar problematic dynamic of theory and practice plays out in one of the dominant strands of feminist theory and activist practice today: the field of intersectionality studies. My contribution to the exploring of the potentials and challenges of McNay's vision will therefore be to reflect on the aim of theorising from experience in light of some examples from my ongoing research on feminist intersectionality theory. What I am particularly interested in exploring here is the effects of the position that intersectionality theory has as, on the one hand, being for or on behalf of marginalised or oppressed subjects, in the sense that intersectionality theories are aiming to provide tools for understanding these subjects' experiences of marginalisation or oppression; and, on the other hand, intersectionality's status as, arguably, *the* paradigmatic approach to the analysis of both identity formation and oppressive societal structures in contemporary feminist theoretical and political discourse. What happens when a theoretical formation that has an explicit goal of theorising from marginalised subjects' experience becomes paradigmatic?

Dorothy Smith and Feminist engagement(s) with Bourdieu
Postdoc. Rebecca Lund, University of Tampere

Smith distances herself from Bourdieu. She emphasizes the concept of habitus, symbolic violence and cultural capital as particularly problematic. Cultural capital constitutes what Smith names "blob-ontology", where the concept is taken to resemble something 'out there'. As a result people, activities and agency disappear (Smith 2005, 56). Habitus "installs the reproduction of the social in the learning and experience of [*individuated subjects*]" [my emphasis]; an abstracted dualism between individual and structure is reified. (Smith 2005, 59) Symbolic violence, as a dimension of power in language, is based on masculine assumptions of confrontation, authority and domination among people. Struggle is presupposed rather than opened up for exploration (Smith 2005, 184-185).

In this presentation I argue that Smith and Bourdieu may serve as complementary scholars in the study of gendered and intersecting power relations. This is made possible through feminist interpretations and re-readings of Bourdieu that emphasize relational experience, agency (e.g. McNay 2004). I also suggest that some critiques of Smith's notion of experience and text, offered by Bourdieudian feminists, are not always fully justified.

Constructing a Working Class Body. The (re)gaining of tradesman's Masculinity
Postdoc. Jørn Ljunggren, University of Oslo

In this paper I argue that the body is of central importance for understanding the practices and social expectations of tradesmen. My talk is based on a newly completed ethnographic fieldwork, where I re-entered my previous occupation as a skilled electrician, and in-depth interviews with tradesmen within different crafts. I show how the construction, and use, of the physical masculine body may serve as a focal point throughout a range of practices at work as well as in social interaction. While the physical body necessarily is with us all in any type of work, it is inescapable within the trades. The embodiment and performance of masculinity taking place in construction work is not only important at the construction site and between the workers there, but also for the tradesmen's world views and their cultural and political preferences. Not least is this corporal dimension of class divisions significant for how tradesmen view themselves and of how they experience to be viewed and ranked by others.

What's love got to do with it? Experience and agency in narratives of domestic violence
Dr. Hannah Helseth, Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies

The promise and problems of romantic love is a highly present part of popular culture and to have a successful love life could be described as important part of being a self-reflexive modern individual. When domestic violence and violence against women is discussed, the starting point is usually the violent and the destructive relationship, not love. I will make an argument that starting with the promise of the romantic relationship could be fruitful to understand women's motives for staying with their partner through and after domestic abuse.

The love-approach relates to one of our findings and the case study of Ann in this paper. Ann both describes herself as, and seems to be, a quite ordinary woman who has been in an extraordinary situation. Her narrative is part of a larger study of 38 interviews with women and men who have experiences violence from their partner. One of our findings is that the women seem ordinary and their abusive partner seems extraordinary. Ann met her abusive partner when she was 23. They did not live together. They did not have children. She was not economical dependent of him. She had good friends and grew up in what she describes as a caring home. Thus, the question is; why did Ann stay for three years with her abusive boyfriend?

Many of the women in our study are resourceful; some of them have master's degrees and one of them has a PhD. Moreover, they have taken their education under rather extreme circumstances, while dealing with custody cases, death threats and violence. In some of the narratives the abusive partner is financial dependent on the women, not the other way around. A study of domestic violence and abuse shows that domestic violence was more prevalent among the ones that reported to have lesser economical resources than others (Thoresen & Hjemdal, 2014). However, there was no difference of prevalence between different educational levels. This study shows that cultural capital does not protect you from abuse. These findings together signify that explanations that rely on the women's status and economical dependency are not sufficient, and a need for a better understanding of what happens in the relationship. I will discuss the case of Ann under three theoretical propositions; love as a patriarchal trick, love as a situation and love as a promise of recognition. The common ground for all of them is an understanding of romantic love as a relational dynamic and resource in the heterosexual couple.

Love as a patriarchal trick describes and criticises the traditional gender norms in the heterosexual relationship as a dynamic where the "man" gains and the "women" gives. Love is here understood as a resource that can be exploited in a relationship. However, this is not a coercive transaction, but a participatory practice that is guided and influenced by gender norms (Jonasdottir, 2011; Holmberg, 1995).

Love as a situation describes the romantic relationship as a series of social interactions that have normative expectations, and these again are part of a communicative morality (Ford, 2018; Garfinkel, 1984; Goffman, 1971). The norms for social interaction, including gendered norms, and the need to make sense of your own and your partner's actions can be fruitful to describe why women in particular act in ways to save their own, the relationship and their partners face in abusive relationships.

Love as a promise of recognition. Romantic love is a way to both preform and evaluate the individual's self-worth, thus, it is an anchor for recognition in an era where social worth is

both uncertain and an ongoing negotiated. Eva Illouz (2012, p. 120) states that: “Social worth is no longer a straightforward outcome of one’s economic or social status, but has to be derived from one’s self, defined as unique, private, personal and non-institutional entity.” Romantic love is understood as something that both have the power to destabilize the boundaries of the self and simultaneously holds a promise of recognition (Barthes, 1978; Illouz, 2012). The promise of love can give clarity to both the vulnerability and why persons stay in abusive relationships.

The three theoretical propositions can contribute to understanding why persons like Ann stay in abusive relationships. An important caveat with each proposition is that their description of oppression reinforces a dualism between psychological traits and cultural norms on the one hand, and political and economic structures on the other. And as a final discussion in the paper I will take this criticism of the notion of recognition into account (McNay, 2008).

Triple incompatibilities? Frankfurt School Critical Theory, Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities and Quantitative Sociology
Dr. Claus D. Hansen, Aalborg University

Critical studies on men and masculinities as a feminist project

According to Beasley (2015), critical studies on men and masculinities (CSMM) are to be situated as part of feminist thinking. This is true of all the major contributors in CSMM regardless if we think of Connell (2005), Messner (1997), Kimmel (1992) or Hearn (2015). Despite differences in their respective views on how to analyse men and masculinities they are all pro-feminist and declare an allegiance to the feminist project. There are, however, quite a few differences between the abovementioned approaches to CSMM. Beasley (2015) identifies two branches: one (ideational) oriented towards the study of multiple (competing) masculinities (e.g. Connell 2005; Messerschmidt 2016) and one (material) based on the 'body-based identity category of men' (e.g. Hearn 2015). Both versions of CSMM employ modernist thinking (e.g. adhering to some version of essentialism comparable to 'second wave' feminism) that 'mainstream' contemporary postmodern feminist theorizing finds problematic.

This tension raises the question on whether CSMM and feminism should always be 'fellow travellers' or companions (Beasley 2015). In the context of this seminar it raises the question on the possibility of theorising from the experience of 'ordinary', suffering *men* and not only from the experiences of suffering women? Employing an intersectional perspective (McCall 2005), I argue that the answer to this question is yes: while some problems and some types of suffering e.g. intimate partner violence in the majority of the cases is the 'problem of men' (Pringle 1993), this is so in an entirely different way with other types of problems highly prevalent among men: homelessness, excess mortality and shortened longevity and fatal occupational accidents? And what about situations where men are wrongfully accused of engaging in sexual violence that leads to preventive measures that put very high restrictions on the majority of men who are not engaged in such heinous acts? (Sex specific rules about changing diapers in kindergarten springs to mind as one Danish example). By reminding ourselves that individual men cannot be reduced to the social category of men overall, this points in the direction of intersectionality.

Frankfurt School Critical Theory (FSCT) and CSMM

McNay (2018) argues that both Habermas' and Honneth's critical theories are problematic because of their foundational and universal character that effectively renders impossible the ideal they strive after: an experientially grounded critique of the lived reality of oppression. (Is this ideal of critique equivalent to what Benhabib (1986, Chapter 4) terms 'critique as crisis theory' where lived crises are used as points of departure for theorising in the works of Marx?)

Although Adorno would refrain from talking about his approach as inductive (because 'The conceptual dichotomy of induction and deduction is the scientific substitute for dialectics.' (Adorno 1976)), it is possible to read e.g. the aphorisms of *Minima Moralia* as exactly the effort to theorise from experience in Bernstein's (2001) words: 'to provide a 'reflective' and hence objective expression of subjective ethical experience' (p. 43). A turn to the negative dialectical approach of Adorno can serve as a theoretical framework for formulating an approach to CSMM that also departs from the ideal of theorizing from the experience of ordinary men's suffering in a way similar to an intersectional approach. Feminist have for quite some time been engaged in articulating how the negative dialectical approach of Adorno

could be made of use to the study of women. This is e.g. the case of the anthology edited by O'Neill (1999) that highlights several similarities between the two approaches: 1) the critique of identity thinking and the salvation of non-identity could be seen as similar to feminist critiques of the masculine bias (e.g. Kelly 1985) inherent in mainstream thinking (scientific as well as common sense) and Adorno is also quite often seen as a proto-poststructuralist because of his insistence on the non-identity between concept and phenomenon (e.g. Dews 1995), 2) the critique of essentialism e.g. with respect to categories such as the feminine and 3) the focus upon micrological descriptions of lived experience and especially theorizing from 'damaged life' as Adorno does in *Minima Moralia*.

While the approach used by Adorno is proto-feminist, the more substantial analyses of the feminine and especially the masculine in e.g. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is more problematic (Schlippacke 2001). And this is true of the treatment of homosexuality as well not only in *The Authoritarian Personality* where it is equated with fascism but also in later essays on sexual taboo e.g. where homosexuality is seen as psychologically pathological (Rycenga 2002). In other words, there are no substantial theoretical contributions viz a viz studies on men and masculinities in the writings of Adorno. As Rycenga (2002, p. 367) argues 'his dialectic is incomplete'. However, it is possible to use the negative dialectical approach of Adorno to theorise from the experience of suffering of ordinary men.

Quantitative sociology and theorising gender oppression

The question remains, however, why we would want to pursue this task of theorizing from the experience of ordinary suffering men using quantitative methods when both feminism as well as first generation FSCT remains highly critical of this approach. From a feminist perspective, quantitative methods were dubious because they were often seen as anti-feminist supporting the masculine bias in research by studying males exclusively and focusing only on topics defined by males (Hansen 2017). From FSCT quantitative methods were problematic because of their hegemonic status in the social sciences. It is, however, important to note that quantitative methods per se are not completely without merit according to Adorno (2000). Adorno employs quantitative methods in the renowned study on *The Authoritarian Personality* (TAP) where a comprehensive attempt to identify the potential fascistic individual is pursued. This is done utilizing scaling techniques that aim to disclose hidden patterns in the latent personality structures of individuals that manifest themselves through the answers given to specific questions about different domains (e.g. homosexuality). Buck-Morss (1977) interprets the approach in constructing the F-scale as consistent with Adorno's use of constellations in other parts of his work utilizing more qualitative approaches. In other words, it should be possible to pursue the same strategy with respect to theorizing from the experience of ordinary suffering men.

The approach taken in TAP, however, is mostly deductive. Another way of uncovering 'hidden patterns' in quantitative data – while remaining open to the phenomenon under scrutiny - is the quantitative approach dubbed Geometric Data Analysis (GDA) most famous for the role it plays in Bourdieu's (1984) *Distinction*. This approach emphasizes meticulous description over statistical significance testing and for that reason tries to break with some of the most problematic features of standard causal analyses (Le Roux & Rouanet 2004). The selection of variables for inclusion in the analysis is guided by an ideal of 'homogeneity' as well as 'exhaustivity' and while these terms may seem to run counter to an idea of constructing constellations out of the experience of suffering, the actual procedure of conducting GDA is often an iterative process that necessitates experimenting with different constellations of variables until finally a valid interpretation emerges that sheds light on the

hidden structures of the social space constructed. This open and iterative procedure is a process of interpretation and theorising. The spatial metaphor is consistent with Adorno's sociological oeuvre as the vision of society employed in his writings is network-like and similar to that of Simmel although Adorno emphasises the network as a totality (Hansen 2003; Benzer 2011). Finally, interpreting GDA in terms of intra-categorical intersectional analyses emphasizes the heterogeneity of individual men and women instead of the 'mean' which is the usual focus point of quant analyses. This means that the graphical output of GDA helps illustrate the discrepancy between the position of individual men in the social space and the mean of all men (i.e. the 'normal' position of all men taken together). (see Hansen 2017).

Class-gender intersections and the homology of social and symbolic space

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The question of the relationship between social class and other aspects of stratification, such as gender, is widely debated in sociology. Much as analysts of gender and ethnicity tend to downplay class, class analysis has tended to neglect issues of gender. The charge of neglecting gender has also been directed at Bourdieu, despite his insistence on the importance of gender divisions. In this paper, we draw on Bourdieu's thinking on the subject to provide a detailed analysis of the gendering of the homology between the class divisions ('the social space') and lifestyle divisions ('the symbolic space'). We highlight three crucial points: First, the social space is intrinsically interlinked with gender divisions, as there are marked gender differences along both its primary dimensions -- volume and composition of capital. Second, we show that there are significant gender differences in the symbolic space, as men and women exhibit markedly different lifestyles. Finally, we demonstrate that it would be misleading to contrast class and gender as opposed explanatory principles, as there are indeed significant cultural class divisions both *between* and *among* the genders. We conclude by discussing the implications of this in terms of advancing a truly intersectional analysis of cultural stratification.

Exposed to and invested in the world: the revival of Frankfurt School theory of praxis and its feminist potential

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Recently, feminist literature has seen a revival of sociological critique of capitalist society. Foucaultian and Marxian inspired strands of feminist critical thinking take issue with the gendered dimension of today's intensified competitiveness and increased instrumentalisation of human pursuits. My concern here is with the Marxian strand of feminist critique. In resonance with early socialist feminist theories, Nancy Fraser (2014) has recently pointed to the way capitalist economy depends upon non-capitalist powers such as women's investment in the maintenance of social bonds and human life powers. Yet, this and other recent contributions to Marxian inspired strands of thinking seem less attentive to the emotional motivations that drive investments in these human bonds and life powers at the subjective level. Neither do they capture the emotional tensions that may arise in the encounter between capitalism urge for intensified competitiveness and the 'objective needs'. This paper discusses notions that might contribute to enhanced conceptualization of how these tensions are lived and experienced differently by subjects that are differently invested in the world. My aim is to contribute to a conception of the gendered dimension of these differences in a way that do not lapse into women as a category or simply conflating resistance with marginalized positions.

I suggest that the praxis-theoretical notion that holds sway in the early Frankfurter school could be productively employed in this pursuit. I am thinking of the Marxian and Freudian inspired notion of human beings 'as needy, sensuous physiological beings, whose freedom and development is dependent on how the metabolism of society and nature is structured and organized (Thompson 2010, Eagleton 2016). My concern is with the sociological question of how different modes of organization of 'the metabolism of society and nature' provide different possibilities for human freedom and self-realization, considered not as freedom from constraints but as self-enhancing engagements with the world (Carleheden 1996, Collier 2003). This emphasis on the substantial possibilities for human self-realization has recently been revived in in Axel Honneth's Critical theory of recognition (McNay 2008). Hartmut Rosa (2016) radicalizes this turn in his notion of *resonance* as the normative good. Resonance concerns not only subject-subject-relations but also includes subject-world-relations. It is the opposite of alienation, and it is in many ways reminiscent of and takes up ideas underpinning Marcuse's notion of Eros or Fromm's notion of love (Schiermer 2016). In short, Rosa argues that the anxiety-driven competitiveness and institutionalized instrumentalisation of human pursuits do not nurture resonance.

However, this shift from subject-subject-relationships to subject-world-relationships also seems to direct attention towards alienation and reification as a more general characteristic of current neoliberal capitalism. The turn to subject-world-relations may thus potentially downplay the classed and gendered dimensions of this societal organization. I suggest that Pierre Bourdieu's notion of socialized subjectivities, habitus, which emerge in exchange with different fields of practice, could be productive in order to develop further this line of thinking. Bourdieu is usually associated with other theoretical traditions. However, particularly in his later writings Bourdieu does actually take up the Marx- and Freud-inspired notion of agents as needy, sensuous physiological beings 'radically exposed to the world', and therefore always open to, and 'invested in the world' (Bourdieu, 2000:140–141). Bourdieu's notion of investments, *illusio*, could be read as a conception of different ways of being exposed to- and thus of different ways of being invested in the world - emerging from engagement with different fields of practice. I suggest that this notion of different ways to be

invested in the world could be fruitfully employed in a feminist critical investigation of the gendered dimension of today's intensified competitiveness and increased instrumentalisation. However, in his theoretical account of different formations of investment, Bourdieu (2000) draws on the notion of recognition, 'the desire to be desired'. In order to combine Bourdieu's notion of different ways of being invested in the world with the Critical theory critique of competitiveness and instrumentalization, I suggest that the notion of investment could be developed along a different strands of psychoanalytic thinking, one that not only emphasizes the desire for recognition, but also capture a desire to engage with the world. One example is Hans Loewald's notion of Eros which offers a conception of libidinal desires a force 'by which ego strives to keep itself connected to the world from which it is differentiating itself' (Lear 1996). I want to explore the way different forms of striving to keep oneself connected to the world, for instance to invest in the maintenance of social bonds and human life powers versus investments in profit-intensive enterprises yield different experiences of misfit with the current way of organizing the metabolism between society and nature.

Changing the norm from within: A Frankfurt School inspired view on the social transformation of gender

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With departure in my recent book *Feeling Gender - a generational and psychosocial approach* (Palgrave 2017) I will discuss different approaches in feminist theory today to the social transformation of gender and gender relations: change through political action, through queering cultural categories and representations, and through everyday life practices. My argument is that there are insights from the old Frankfurter School that are still vital to conceptualize these issues, especially when it comes to the understanding of the gradual historical changes of the feeling of gender in lived experience - but they also need the company of newer psycho-social theories.