

# Programme for Gender Research 2008-2012

## An overview of Researcher Projects and Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships financed by the programme



### I. Researcher Projects

<b>Project title:</b>	<b>Canonicity, Gender and Critique: The Hermeneutics of Feminism and Canon-Transformations</b>
Project manager:	Professor Jorunn Økland, Centre for Gender Research, University of Oslo
Project period:	2008-2012

#### **Project summary:**

The project will analyse, in a gender-, science- and cultural-critical manner, some philosophical, religious and medical canonised texts. Thus also the historicity of feminism and gender theory will be exposed and shown as dependent on particular canon-related discourses and cultural processes. The project falls into two parts:

1. A material part, where the aim is to rediscover: first, forgotten or underestimated historical women whose writings, public utterances, interventions and subversions of cultural canons have not yet been sufficiently analysed and disseminated. With access to materials from Scandinavian, Spanish, Italian, German and English linguistic domains, this part of the project (which belongs under *The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*) will contribute to renewed, historical groundwork. Then the findings will also be related to the canon in its generally accepted form, so that canon as an ongoing, gendered process is also rediscovered. The notion that women's expressions were forgotten or excluded because they lacked quality, is rejected.
2. In today's (rather ahistorical) gender-theoretical climate this material requires renewed theory formation. The second and theoretical part of the project has as its general aim to increase the reflection on diachronic perspectives in gender-critical theory within a basic hermeneutical framework. The particular aim is to strengthen the reflection on canon as a gendered, historical phenomenon, as process and dynamics. In Oslo, the theory group will rethink how canons have contributed to constructions of gender; the presuppositions of gender theory already given in the European religious and philosophical canons, and how feminism itself is a result of particular historical and conceptual conditions. The project involves two core groups, one Norwegian and one European, of gender scholars from various humanities disciplines.

**Project title: Experts and Minorities in the Land of Gender Equality**

Project manager: Associate Professor Trine Annfelt, Department of Inter-disciplinary Studies of Culture, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Project period: 2009-2012

**Project summary:**

The project raises the question of how ideas and rhetoric concerning gender equality enter into processes which may produce hierarchies and social inequality in a multicultural society. We will study how understandings of equality are intertwined with conceptions of gender, sexuality and ethnicity, and how they may contribute to majoritising and minoritising processes. In what ways may gender equality as discursive and/or social practices regularly be implicated in such processes? The backdrop for this question is the critique of mainstream feminism developed by minority women and postcolonial feminism. Our empirical research will focus on how gender equality is understood, interpreted and developed in a number of meeting points between minority Norwegians and welfare state professional experts. Social work constitutes one of the most important fields of professional expertise in welfare state occupations and social workers in various fields are specialists on welfare issues. The project is designed with a focus on welfare state professionals and consequently will contribute to discussions on possibilities for destabilisation of majority positions in multicultural contexts. In this respect our ambition is to contribute to anti-racist feminism, politics and practices. The project is an interdisciplinary research project in the humanities and social sciences. It will be part of the Nordic Centre of Excellence in welfare research: *The Nordic Welfare State - historical foundations and future changes* and will also contribute to the network EMMA-north

**Project title: Gender, ownership and local culture**

Project manager: Research Director Elisabeth Ljunggren, Nordland Research Institute

Project period: 2008-2011

**Project summary:**

This project examines the gender relations embedded in property relations and traditions of ownership. Relations and management of property and ownership are central for the understanding of socio-cultural gender arrangements and for theories about gender equality. The focus is put on the severely understudied area of gender and ownership and how ideas about gender inform and are constituted by property relations in capitalist societies. Forms of family capitalism, female entrepreneurial activity and local traditions of ownership will be studied to gain understanding on gendered structures within the business sector, and how this is interwoven with the local community and the private sphere. This involves questions concerning how different economic activities are valued and gendered. Local contexts and traditions which seem to favour female ownership and female entrepreneurial activity, as well as situations where female ownership and entrepreneurship are favoured are of particular interest. An interlinked issue is how gendered processes and ideas influence on the growth and innovation processes of women-owned businesses, both related to strategies and values of female business owners and to access to external resources such as financing. The local context is of vital importance. We will explore how specific historical traditions may have shaped particular gender cultures in terms of evaluation of women's economic activities and property management. Researching these issues demands a theoretical approach bridging the traditional barriers between economy and culture. A multi-disciplinary approach is taken to integrate historical and contemporary perspectives, and to

bridge the barriers between studies of economy and culture. A quantitative mapping of the gendered structures of local ownership will be combined with local case studies of gender cultures, enterprises and networks as well as case studies of gendered entrepreneurship, growth and innovation.

**Project title:                   Multidimensional equality - legislative reforms and judicial practices**

Project manager:                Research Director Mari Teigen, Institute for Social Research  
Project period:                 2009-2012

**Project summary:**

The project represents the first comprehensive attempt to systematically map, and comparatively analyse, the new developments in Nordic anti discrimination politics, which currently are undergoing profound changes. Public policies now aim for an integrated approach to discrimination. They all gradually depart from a dominant (single strand) gender equality framework, and seek to build new frameworks of multidimensional equality. The common basis for these endeavours is mainly found in notions of multiple discrimination, where law and law enforcement become major political instruments to promote equality. Legal anti discrimination frameworks are thus expanded and/or enforcement agencies reorganised, in what seems to be largely parallel political processes in most Nordic countries. The central aim of the project outlined here is to investigate the ways in which the legal and normative demands of multiple equality strands in the Nordic countries addresses/deals with intersectionality. The empirical project is three-parted. The first part will, based on a mapping of multiple strands of equality legislation, make comparisons of variations and changes in the legal traditions of the Nordic countries. The second part will inquire the political processes that have produced the current legal regimes, with a particular interest for how a growing concern for multiple equality strands are reflected, debated and dealt with in political debates and in policy-making. The third part will study multidimensionality and intersectionality in judicial practice by examining attempts of intersectional-sensitive reasoning in the enforcement of non-discrimination legislation.

**Project title:                   Thought as Action: Gender, Democracy, Freedom**

Project manager:                Professor Ellen Mortensen, Centre for Women and Gender  
Research, University of Bergen  
Project period:                 2009-2012

**Project summary:**

Our shared interest in theoretical questioning has led us towards a more rigorous interrogation of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of some of the concepts that are currently being marshalled in the name of democracy and freedom, among them, "citizenship", "human rights", "subject", "sexed bodies", etc. But above all, we wish to explore the possibility of developing and discovering new modes of thinking that are compatible not only with the present, but that will allow us to think future configurations of gender, democracy and freedom. The project's main problematic will focus on the question: Which theories and mode(s) of thought will allow for a thorough rethinking of the questions of gender, democracy and freedom in our global and technological era? Within the parameters of the overall project, the individual researchers will explore three different research areas: i) citizenship ii) bodies and sexualities and iii) new technologies. Theoretically, the project will explore post-structuralist, deconstructive, post-colonial as well as queer perspectives. The main corpus of the project's research will be performed by three individual researchers to be funded within

the project, one senior researcher who will study the concept of citizenship through a critical reflection upon the gendered and sexualized symbolic and cultural assumptions of the modern nation-state and one Ph.D project, to be defined within any of the three research areas. The project will also include a number of partners from our local institutions well as from other national and international institutions, who will pursue individual topics that will be defined within at least two of the research areas.

**Project title:** **Gender and partnership dynamics**  
**Project manager:** Research Director Randi Kjeldstad, Statistics Norway  
**Project period:** 2010-2012

**Project summary:**

Shifts in partnership and family dynamics and gender roles have captured the attention of policymakers across Western countries. How such changes affect men's and women's well-being in partnerships is an important issue, which demands research on the interrelationship between new partnership behaviour, gender relations and well-being. Norway and the other Nordic countries have been viewed as forerunners in gender equality, and much of recent family-demographic changes started in these countries. This makes Norway an interesting and important country for studying these issues. Our point of departure is an investigation of individual gender equality attitudes and practices in partnerships. We aim at identifying, describing and reflecting on individual attitudes and relational practices within couples and how these patterns vary across cultural, social and regional settings. Next, even though heterosexual marriage persists as a strong norm, previously held models of family dynamics are increasingly outdated. For instance, gender egalitarianism and individualism may encourage non-traditional partnerships. By analysing the current patterns of partnership formation and women's and men's partner preferences, we will throw light on the current understanding of marriage and cohabitation in a gender perspective. Last, we will explore the interrelationship between gender equality and partnership well-being. Within couples, individual characteristics, expectations and attitudes are challenged by the partner's ditto and the likelihood of the couple experiencing a happy life together depends on a wide range of circumstances.

**Project title:** *Kommer på engelsk*  
**Project manager:** Senior Researcher Jorun Solheim, Institute for Social Research  
**Project period:** 2010-2012

**Project summary:**

*Kommer på engelsk.*

**Project title:** **Reproductive relations. Production of gendered meanings in the field of reproduction**  
**Project manager:** Professor Merete Lie, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture, Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
**Project period:** 2009/2010-2012

**Project summary:**

The project will study the production of gendered meanings - that is, cultural conceptions of femininities and masculinities, motherhood and fatherhood, female and male bodies - within the context of reproduction and gendered relations. Reproduction is a crucial site of gendered meaning, taking place in public policy as well as in private relations, and it is a site where gender is generally constructed in terms of difference between biological bodies. We ask how the idea of gender equality and emphasis on fatherhood interfere in the cultural production of gender in reproduction. Do cultural values of gender equality have the potential to challenge and displace perceptions of differences and similarities between gendered bodies? And what is gender equality when it comes to reproductive choices? This is an urgent question today because women's right to control over their bodies meet with new demands of gender equality. The project design will cover three important changes in reproductive relationships: the production of masculinities associated to men as fathers, the blurring of nature and culture related to assisted reproduction, and the new matrimonial law as a step to normalising parenthood among same-sex couples. These changes are combined with certain established rights: the almost uncontested right of women to control their fertility, the focus on gender equality, and men's strong position as fathers. These dimensions demark the crossroads that we will enter, theoretically and empirically, and where the particular Norwegian context provides a unique field internationally.

## **II. Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships:**

**Project title:** **Art and foreign policy: The House of Savoy and art as politics**  
**Post-doctor Fellow:** Kristine Kolrud, Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, University of Oslo  
**Project period:** 2008-2011

**Project summary:**

The project examines Duchess Marie Christine of Savoy's use of art within the public sphere of foreign policy. The project will investigate this aspect in particular in connection with the marriage contracted in 1650 between Marie Christine's daughter, Enrichetta Adalaida, and Prince Elector Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria. This marriage signalled a new political course for the duchy and both a carousel and a ballet were given in honour of the newlyweds. Illuminated manuscripts by Tommaso Borgonio record these festivals. Gift exchange between the two ducal houses is documented as well as the sending of art and artists to Munich after the marriage had taken place. The project aims to study if and how Marie Christine used art to emphasise or convey political messages to representatives of foreign states. Interpretation of various types of source material will form the basis of this analysis. Works of art, descriptions of works of art, and descriptions of the contexts in which the art works appeared must be considered in relation to Marie Christine's policy. The understanding of whom the works of art were meant to influence is highly relevant to the project. It is significant to consider how the use of art in the public sphere may have been influenced by Marie Christine's position as female ruler. An analysis of women's use of art in the public sphere must take into

account the shifting understanding of the private/public dichotomy. The study of Marie Christine is of exceptional interest considering her 'masculine' position as ruler and 'feminine' position as dowager duchess. Despite the private/public dichotomy's central position within feminist research early modern female patrons have barely been studied in light of this dichotomy. It is therefore significant to contribute to this field and Marie Christine is a particularly interesting case in this respect.

**Project title: Gender, sexuality and intimacy in autobiographical digital genres**

Post-doctor Fellow: Lin Prøitz, Department of Media and Communication,  
University of Oslo

Project period: 2008-2011

**Project summary:**

The postdoctoral project scrutinizes performances of gender, sexuality and intimacy in autobiographical digital genres. Main research axes are: which significances and effects contemporary digital self-presentations may have for the perception and understanding of gender, sexuality and intimacy, and in which ways new aesthetical representations may influence discourses and conceptions of the private and the public. More specific, the project asks how and to which extent technologies of the self (social network societies, dating-sites, personal blogs) contribute in the (re)negotiation of performances of gender and sexualities. Boundaries between normative and counter-normative significances of gender, sexuality and intimacy are emphasized throughout the project. In conjunction with these aspects, the project will contribute to a theoretical development of digital genre theories, weighting gender, sexuality and intimacy in autobiographical genres within the humanities.

**Project title: Why Rape? Perpetrators, Punishment and Social Narratives; A study of sexual violence offenders from the former Yugoslav wars**

Post-doctor Fellow: Inger Skjelsbæk, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo  
(PRIO)

Project period: 2009-2011

**Project summary:**

The focus in this project is to study the male perpetration of sexual violence in war. The focus will be on the male perpetrators themselves and how they view their actions in hindsight and in light of their punishment. By extension, the project will also focus on the ways in which male perpetrators of sexual violence are situated and perceived within a supranational legal context and the perpetrators' reasoning for committing acts of sexual violence in the war setting. The empirical focus is on male perpetrators of sexual violence during the Bosnian war from 1992-1995, and more specifically the 21 perpetrators who have been sentenced in the ICTY. The overarching aim will accordingly be to classify a body of empirical data - primarily court records and interviews in light of current social psychological theories. In order to study this overarching theme, it is imperative to consider how social narratives and individual identity construction interact with the discourses of gender and memories of the Bosnian war at large. The primary research methods will be literature studies and interviews. The project will investigate: -The ways in which crimes of sexual violence are narrated within the ICTY documentations on sexual violence crimes and its offenders; -The ways in which

legal experts, and others working at the ICTY, have experienced working with sexual violence male offenders within a supranational criminal context; -How a group of men sentenced for sexual violence within the ICTY regard their actions and punishment after having received their sentences. The primary output of this project will be a monograph for international publication with the title *Why Rape?* In addition, I will write one article in Norwegian for a Norwegian scholarly journal as well as op eds. in the national and international press.

**Project title:**                    **Reciprocal Reflections: The Lyrical Dialogue of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath**

Post-doctor Fellow:                Janne Stigen Drangsholt, Department of Foreign Languages,  
University of Bergen

Project period:                    2008-2009

**Project summary:**

In her introduction to *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir asks how it is that the reciprocity that exists between individuals and groups cannot be recognized between the sexes. Beauvoir envisions a social space in which the statement 'I am a woman' will be received as an affirmative part of a reciprocal relationship rather than as a limitation. My theoretical exploration emerges from such problematisations and will investigate the manners in which a mutual sense of reciprocity can be achieved. The project will have an ontologic-ethical as well as an epistemological focus, asking not only how sexual difference is, but what it is. The project will employ the relation between self and other as a dynamic space in which Heidegger's reciprocal reflection may be realised as a practice which allows being to be present in its presence, opening up to the freedom of the in-between. The theoretical structures essential to the project will be investigated cotextually with the combined works of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, whose oeuvres contain challenging and problematic metaphorisations of sex and gender, both in terms of the material body and of more abstract notions of femininity and masculinity, and whose lyrical dialogue offers a mutual reciprocity necessary for the reconstruction of sexual difference. In this, the project is interdisciplinary, comprising a radical (re)comprehension of sexual difference as well as of the normative reading of the Plath-Hughes canon. Based on these discussions the project will examine the dialogue as time-space in which a community can be engendered, in which men and women might make an escape from the categories in which they have hitherto been placed and engage in the reciprocity of *Mitsein*. The project will address an international readership of students and scholars of gender studies, comparative literature, and philosophy/theory in Europe and in the US, and will be founded in a network already established through my dissertation work.

**Project title:**                    **The Fund-Raising Bazaar in Norway: Exploring the gendered production and consumption of goods and material and aesthetic artefacts**

Post-doctor Fellow:                Bente Blanche Nicolaysen, Department of Sociology, University of  
Bergen

Project period:                    2010-2012

**Project summary:**                *Kommer.*